



Notice of Proposed Action

Opportunity to Comment

Carson Ranger District Jacks Valley Habitat Improvement and Fuels Reduction Project

Humboldt-Toiyabe National Forest
Douglas County, Nevada

United States
Department of
Agriculture

Forest Service

February 21, 2008

Comments Welcome

The Carson Ranger District of the Humboldt Toiyabe National Forest welcomes your comments on a proposal to enhance wildlife habitat and to reduce fuel loading in the Jacks Valley Wildlife Management Area.

Written, facsimile, hand delivered, oral, and electronic comments concerning this action will be accepted for 30 calendar days following the publication of the 36 CFR 215 Notice of Proposed Action in the Reno Gazette Journal. For detailed information on how to provide comments please refer to the "Comment Process" section of this document.

Purpose and Need

The purpose of this project is to improve wildlife habitat and reduce fuel loading in the Jacks Valley Wildlife Management Area. The Jacks Valley Wildlife Management Area is managed by the Forest Service and the Nevada Department of Wildlife as critical winter range for mule deer. Vegetation in this area, including bitterbrush and sagebrush is currently in a decadent, overgrown condition and provides less than desired nutritional value for mule deer. Therefore, there is a need to improve habitat conditions for mule deer and other wildlife by removing decadent brush to allow for resprouting of new, more nutritious vegetation. The overgrown vegetation has also created a considerable fuels

hazard to the properties that surround the Management Area, including Jacks Valley, Alpine View and Indian Hills residential areas. This project responds to the goals and objectives outlined in and is consistent with the Toiyabe National Forest Land and Resource Management Plan (1986), as amended by the Sierra Nevada Forest Plan Amendment Record of Decision (January 2004) and helps move the project area towards desired conditions described in the plans.

The Proposed Action

The Forest Service proposes to enhance wildlife habitat and reduce fuel loading in the Jacks Valley Wildlife Management Area. The analysis area encompasses approximately 3336 acres and is located in Douglas County, Nevada T14N R19E Sections 1, 2, 11, 12, 13, 14, 23, 24 and T14N R20E section 18. The project is designed to improve wildlife habitat and reduce fuel loading on approximately 20 to 60 percent of the analysis area. Proposed activities include mastication, and mowing. Hand thinning, piling and burning is proposed on areas too steep for mastication. Approximately 20 to 60 percent of the analysis area will be effectively treated for wildlife habitat improvement and fuels reduction. Treatment will take place along the forest service boundary creating a fuel break approximately 100 feet wide and along existing interior road systems creating a fuel break approximately 200 feet wide on each side of the road. Small interior strategically placed landscape area treatments (SPLATs) will be placed to enhance wildlife habitat and reduce fuel loading. The fuel treatment areas will be cut in irregular patterns and a mosaic of live brush left to provide habitat for wildlife. Tilling is proposed on approximately 20 acres where soil is compacted and vegetation is absent. Seeding is proposed on the treated areas to establish native grasses and reduce the potential of invasive weed spread which will help to enhance wildlife habitat. Rock barriers will be placed where illegal access is most likely to occur, this will allow for seeded areas to germinate. Maintenance will include repeated entries every 3 to 5 years and will incorporate mowing, mastication, prescribed fire, hand thinning, animal treatments, additional seeding and noxious/invasive weed treatments. Implementation is expected to begin in the fall of 2008. Work will occur in the fall and winter months. Maintenance will occur every 3 to 5 years as needed. Fuels reduction treatments will not occur during extreme fire conditions.

A proposed action may be categorically excluded from further analysis and documentation in an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) or Environmental Assessment (EA) only if there are no extraordinary circumstances related to the proposed action and the proposed action is within a category listed in section 31.12 or 31.2 of Forest Service handbook 1909.15. My preliminary assessment is that this proposal falls within 31.2 (6) – *Timber stand and/or wildlife habitat improvement activities which do not include the use of herbicides or do not require more than one mile of low standard road construction.* I would make a final determination after reviewing the public comment and the preliminary analysis.

Comment Process

The Forest Service encourages your comments on this proposed action, along with supporting reasons that the responsible official should consider in reaching a decision.

Written, facsimile, hand-delivered, oral, and electronic comments concerning this action will be accepted for 30 calendar days following the publication of this notice in the Reno Gazette Journal. The publication date in this newspaper, the newspaper of record, is the exclusive means for calculating the comment period for this proposal. You should not rely upon dates or timeframe information provided by any other source. Written comment must be submitted to: Acting District Ranger, Michael Diem, Carson Ranger District, 1536 South Carson St. Carson City, NV 89701 or fax to 775-884-8199. The office business hours for those submitting comments in person are: 8:00 am to 4:30 pm Monday through Friday, excluding holidays. Electronic comments must be submitted plain text (.txt), rich text format (.rtf), or Word (.doc) to *comments-intermntn-humboldt-toiyabe-carson.@fs.fed.us*. Comments must have an identifiable name attached or verification of identity will be required. A scanned signature may serve as verification on electronic comments.

It is the responsibility of persons providing comments to submit them by the close of the comment period. Those who provide substantive comments during this comment period are eligible to appeal the decision under the regulations. Individuals and organizations wishing to be eligible to appeal must provide the information identified in 36 CFR 215, including:

- Name and Address;
- Title of the proposed action;
- Specific comments (36 CFR 215.2) on the proposed action, along with supporting reasons that the Responsible Official should consider in reaching a decision;
- Signature or other verification of identity upon request; identification of the individual or organization who authored the comments(s) is necessary for appeal eligibility;
- For multiple names or multiple organizations, a signature must be provided for the individual authorized to represent each organization, or for each individual that wishes to have appeal eligibility, and
- Individual members of organizations must submit their own substantive comments to meet the requirements of appeal eligibility as an individual, comments received on behalf of an organization are considered as those of the organization only.

To maintain eligibility for appeal, each individual or, for an organization, an authorized representative, must submit substantive comment on this proposed action and must sign the comments or otherwise verify their identity. Comments received in response to this solicitation, including names and addresses of those who comment, will be considered part of the public record for this project and will be available for public inspection and will be released if requested under the Freedom of Information Act.

For further information on the Jacks Valley Habitat Improvement and Fuels Reduction project, please contact Steve Howell, Project Manager at 775-882-2766.

Sincerely,

Michael Diem
Acting District Range

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PROPOSED JACKS VALLEY HABITAT IMPROVEMENT AND FUELS REDUCTION PROJECT

