



United States
Department of
Agriculture

Humboldt-Toiyabe
National Forest

Santa Rosa
Ranger District

SCOPING DOCUMENT



SOUTH FORK of the QUINN RIVER RESTORATION PROJECT

April 25, 2008

**Humboldt-Toiyabe National Forest
Santa Rosa Ranger District
Humboldt County, Nevada**

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PURPOSE AND NEED

The purpose of this proposal is to protect high value sagebrush habitats on the Santa Rosa Ranger District from the impacts of catastrophic wildfires. The purpose is also to reduce the fire return interval in the project area to allow recovery of the sage brush and riparian habitats within the South Fork of the Quinn River Watershed. The need is to reduce fuels and manipulate in strategic locations to create a series of defensible fuel breaks and greenstrips.

BACKGROUND

Over the past several decades large portions of the South Fork and East Fork of the Quinn River Watersheds have been severely impacted by repeated catastrophic wildfires. The impacts from these wildfires have adversely affected important habitats for sage grouse, pygmy rabbits, mule deer and other sagebrush dependent species. Future fires in the area pose a serious risk to important habitats for thousands of sage grouse within the Santa Rosa Population Management Unit. Over the past 20 years three separate wildfires have burned all or portions of the South Fork of the Quinn River Watershed resulting in the loss of most sagebrush habitats, impacts to riparian areas, and increased infestations of cheatgrass and noxious weeds. A large portion of the fires affecting the project area are human caused and originate at lower elevations near McDermitt, Nevada. These fires are generally fueled by large areas infested with cheatgrass. This proposal has been developed in cooperation with the Nevada Department of Wildlife and the Winnemucca District of the BLM.

LOCATION

The project area is located near the confluence of the South Fork of the Quinn River and the East Fork of the Quinn River approximately 7 miles east of McDermitt, Nevada and is shown on the attached map. The project area is located immediately adjacent to the Fort McDermitt Indian Reservation. The legal description for the project area is sections 10, 11, 12, 13, 15, and 22 of T47N, R39E; and sections 7, 8, and 18 of T47N, R40E, Mount Diablo Meridian.

PROPOSED ACTION

This project will create a series of green strips and fuel breaks along the boundary between the Santa Rosa Ranger District and the Fort McDermitt Indian Reservation. The fuel breaks will be created by maintaining existing system roads in the project area utilizing a dozer or similar equipment. Adjacent to the fuel breaks, greenstrips between 50 to 100 feet in width will be created.

In areas where system roads do not exist, greenstrips will be planted to slow the progression of wildfires. On the western portion of the project area greenstrips will be created by using a tractor and Dixie harrow followed by a seed drill to plant fire resistant perennial plants. The width of greenstrips will vary dependent upon the topography; however, they are expected to be less than 100 foot wide. In the late fall or early winter forage kochia will be seeded when fresh seed becomes available. The seed mixture for this project will include both native and non-native species which are resistant to fire.

On the eastern portion of the project area greenstrips will be created by using a tractor and seed drill to plant fire resistant perennial plants. In the late fall or early winter forage kochia will also be seeded when fresh seed becomes available. No Dixie harrow treatments will occur in this area due to access issues.

The project area will be monitored to ensure success. Best Management practices related to noxious weeds will be followed. Weed infestations will be treated in accordance with existing Forest Service policy and direction. Following treatment the project area will be monitored for noxious and invasive weeds.

CONTACTS

For information or if there are questions, contact project coordinator Boyd Hatch or District Ranger Jose Noriega at (775)623-5025 Extension 5. The address is Santa Rosa Ranger District, 1200 East Winnemucca Blvd., Winnemucca, Nevada 89445. Our fax number is (775)625-1200. Comments may also be emailed to jnoriega@fs.fed.us and must include the authors name and address.

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

Public involvement in the NEPA process is essential. Scoping is performed as one of the first steps to receive input from interested individuals, organizations and government agencies including federal, state, and local agencies. We invite you to submit written comments stating your concerns and issues that are relevant to the proposed project. Comments received in response to this scoping document and from personal contacts will be considered during the analysis of this project.

To encourage public participation, the Forest Service will mail information to interested parties. Public involvement will be ongoing throughout the analysis process; however, at certain times public input will be specifically requested. Comments are requested by **May 27, 2008 and should be sent to District Ranger, Santa Rosa Ranger District, 1200 E. Winnemucca Blvd., Winnemucca, Nevada 89445.** Comments received, including the names and addresses of those who comment, will be considered part of the public record on this proposal and will be available for public inspection. You must submit written comments or contact us if you want to ensure that you remain on the mailing list for this project.

South Fork Quinn River Restoration Project

