

File Code: 2460/1950

Date: July 16, 2007

Dear Interested Party:

The Olympic National Forest is in the process of planning and conducting environmental analysis on the development of management guidance for commercial uses of Special Forest Products (SFPs) on the Forest. The project will cover the entire Forest and provide for management consistency. It will focus on the ecological aspects of the SFPs program rather than the administrative part.

SFPs are defined as nontimber, renewable, vegetative natural resources. There are three types of SFPs collection allowed on the Forest as described below.

- *Tribal Use:* Traditional noncommercial gathering by American Indians affiliated with a recognized tribe for cultural, spiritual, and medicinal use.
- *Personal/Incidental Use:* Collection of materials for personal use/consumption, not for sale or resale after intermediate processing.
- *Commercial Use:* Collection of materials for the primary purpose of sale, resale, or use in a manufacturing process resulting in a finished product that will be sold.

As mentioned above only the commercial use aspect of the SFPs program will be included in this analysis. Tribal and personal/incidental SFPs collections are relatively minor and are categorically excluded from documentation in an environmental assessment or environmental impact statement.

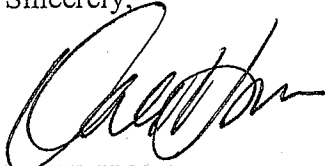
The attached NEPA framework describes the project's Purpose and Need (the why) and the Proposed Action (the what). The Proposed Action was developed by an interdisciplinary team and is the Forest's initial response to the Purpose and Need. Comments received from you and others will be used to refine the Proposed Action or develop alternatives to it. The interdisciplinary team will then analyze the Proposed Action and alternatives using best available science, professional experience, and local knowledge.

The purpose of this letter is to invite your participation in the NEPA analysis during our public scoping process. Comments in support or in opposition are welcome. In particular, if you have information you feel the Forest Service may not be aware of, or feel you have issues (points of dispute, debate, or disagreement) regarding potential effects of this proposed action, please send those issues in writing to the project leader (Tim Davis, 1835 Black Lake Blvd. SW, Suite A, Olympia, WA 98512), or e-mail: comments-pacificnorthwest-olympic@fs.fed.us by August 17,



2007. Those who respond to this scoping will be notified when the Environmental Assessment for this project is available for a thirty day review and public comment period. If you have no comments at this time, but would like to remain involved, please let us know.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Dale Hom", written in a cursive style.

DALE HOM
Forest Supervisor

Enclosure

cc: Timothy E Davis

Special Forest Products
NEPA Framework

July 2007

Purpose and Need

The demand for harvest of Special Forest Products (SFP) for commercial use is increasing, and there are concerns related to protecting resources and sustaining levels of SFPs. Based on these considerations the purpose of this proposal is to establish a consistent and implementable Forest-wide program for management of commercial use SFPs that protects resources and provides opportunities for use of SFP resources at sustainable levels.

Proposed Action

The action proposed by the Forest Service to meet the purpose and need would determine which commercial special forest products (SFP) may be gathered, where on the Forest harvest would be prohibited, and identify management requirements.

SFPs are grouped in this environmental document to facilitate assessing environmental impacts of alternative means of managing the SFPs program, as well as to allow management flexibility as new SFPs are identified. The groups are based on product similarity, collection methods, and effects on plants. The four groups are:

- Group 1: Plants, Shrubs, and Trees – Total Removal
- Group 2: Plants, Shrubs, and Trees – Partial Removal
- Group 3: Fungi
- Group 4: Wood Products

The following Management Requirements/Program Design Features would be common to all four groups of SFPs.

- Commercial harvesting will be prohibited in Wilderness Areas, Research Natural Areas, Botanical Areas, and Developed Recreation Sites and Administrative Sites.
- Commercial harvesting will be prohibited in Bald Eagle Management Areas (BEMAs) during the nesting season.
- Only non-motorized harvest methods will be permitted.
- Areas encompassed by sensitive archaeological or historical sites will be excluded from SFP collection.
- Harvest levels within an identified harvest area will be established based on professional judgment, monitoring, and customer demand.

Requirements for each product groups are as follows.

Group 1: Plants, Shrubs, and Trees – Total Removal

Transplants

Transplants are any plants, shrubs, or trees that are dug for the purpose of transplanting live native plants. Historic and recent demand for these products has been low and well below levels related to product sustainability, consequently an absolute limit on commercial harvest would not be established.

Permits would specify numbers, species, and plant size of transplants; and not allow harvest within 100 feet of stream channels. No high elevation species would be available as transplants, including Alaska yellow cedar, subalpine fir, white bark pine, and mountain hemlock. To minimize disturbance to an area, holes created by digging the transplant would be refilled with locally available material by the permittee. Transplants would be available for harvest from late fall through early spring.

Group 2: Plants, Shrubs, and Trees – Partial Removal

Greenery

Greenery includes cuttings from salal, swordfern, bear grass, huckleberry, and Oregon grape; which are used by the floral industry. Commercial harvest of salal would be limited to 2,400,000 pounds per year (equates to 800 permits as currently being sold on the Forest). Commercial harvest of bear grass would be limited to 300,000 pounds per year (equates to 100 permits). For all other greenery products the historic and recent demand for these products has been low and well below levels related to product sustainability, consequently an absolute limit on commercial harvest would not be established.

Only partial clipping of a plant without removal of the roots would be allowed. Salal harvest would only remove new plant growth. Harvest timing of specific species is noted in the following table.

Species	Harvest Period
Salal	October through May
Beargrass	August through May
Huckleberry foliage	Late fall through winter
Oregon grape	Plant dormant season
Swordfern	Late summer, early fall

Cascara

Cascara bark is harvested and sold for the production of a laxative. Commercial harvest of cascara bark would be limited to 24,000 pounds per year (equates to 30 permits as currently being sold on the Forest).

Harvest would be permitted in May and June. A maximum of 50 percent of a stem's circumference would be harvested, by stripping off the bark, to ensure the plants survival. Trees would not be felled.

Bentwood

Shoots of some hardwood species, including alder, vine maple, and willow, are used in making crafts and furniture. Historic and recent demand for these products has been low and well below levels related to product sustainability, consequently an absolute limit on commercial harvest would not be established.

Harvest would be permitted in the spring. All slash and debris generated by harvest activities would be lopped and scattered so that it is no closer than 15 feet from the edge of roads, ditches, culverts, and streams.

Cones

Conifer tree cones, primarily true firs and Douglas-fir, are collected for seed sources and for ornamental purposes. Historic and recent demand for these products has been low and well below levels related to product sustainability, consequently an absolute limit on commercial harvest would not be established.

Harvest would be permitted in the fall. Felling or otherwise damaging any tree or shrub would be prohibited. Tree climbing for collection would not be allowed.

Group 3: Fungi

Mushrooms

Mushrooms would be harvested, primarily in the fall and spring. Commercial harvest of mushrooms would be limited to 15,000 pounds per year (equates to 60 14-day permits as currently being sold on the Forest).

Harvest would be by cutting at ground level, not by pulling. Raking or other surface disturbance of moss, organic matter, duff, or soil larger than the diameter of the mushroom cap would be prohibited. Surrounding vegetation or down woody debris would not be allowed to be disturbed.

Group 4: Wood Products

Commercial harvest of the following wood products would be limited by product availability and actual harvest levels would be determined on a case by case basis.

Sawlogs and Blowdown pieces; Post and Poles

Only material designated by the Forest Service would be harvested, and collection would be prohibited within 100 feet of stream channels. Harvest would occur year-round. There would be a 6 inch maximum diameter limit on standing live or dead trees, with no diameter limit on down wood. All slash and debris generated by harvest activities would be lopped and scattered so that it is no closer than 15 feet from the edge of roads, ditches, culverts, and streams.

Size limits would be established for the following product categories.

Standing green or down:

Teepee & Bean Poles – less than 4 inches in diameter

Posts – 6 to 16 feet long, 4 to 6 inches in diameter

Rails – 2 to 4 inches in diameter

Down wood only:

No diameter limit but up to \$500 in value

Cedar Shake Bolts

There would be no harvest of standing cedar. Tribal cultural use of down cedar would be a priority. Only material designated by the Forest Service would be harvested. Collection would be limited to along roadsides and prohibited within 100 feet of stream channels. Collection would occur year-round. All slash and debris generated by harvest activities would be lopped and scattered so that it is no closer than 15 feet from the edge of roads, ditches, culverts, and streams.