



File Code: 1950

Date: April 23, 2007

Dear Interested Party:

You have received this letter because you have shown interest in the planning of the Catherine Forest Restoration project. Please find below a website address to the Catherine Forest Restoration Project Environmental Assessment, a Healthy Forest Restoration Act (HFRA) project. The project falls under HFRA because it is designed to achieve the following in the Klickitat County Wildland Urban Interface:

- To reduce wildfire risk to communities through a collaborative process, and
- To protect, restore, and enhance forest ecosystem components in Fire Regime Condition Class 2 and 3 tree stands.

Fire regimes describe the historic frequency and severity of wildland fires. Under the natural fire regime in Catherine, fires occurred at a frequency (0-35 years) repetitive enough to kill younger trees and brush. This repetitive burning reduced the fuel loading (including ladder fuels) for the next fire. Thus, under the natural fire regime, fires tended to burn at the ground surface rather than in the tree crowns. Fire suppression and the resulting exclusion altered this regime by removing an important pattern of disturbance and renewal.

Condition class is an expression of the difference between the current condition of vegetation types and the condition during the historic fire regime. It is used as a proxy for the probability of severe fire effects. (e.g., the loss of key ecosystem components - soil, vegetation structure, species; or alteration of key ecosystem processes - nutrient cycles, hydrologic regimes). Condition class is useful as an index of ecosystem risks attributable to an occurrence of wildland fire under the current regime of fire suppression.

The project proposes several actions to achieve the objectives of improving fire resiliency and the reintroduction of fire as an integral part of habitat restoration on National Forest System lands in Klickitat County near Catherine Creek and on Burdoin Mountain. The CRGNSA proposes to thin and underburn approximately 2510 acres of Fire Regime I, condition class 2 and 3 tree stands in the Wildland-Urban Interface in the Catherine Creek area, to underburn approximately 1300 acres and retain 290 acres in untreated buffers:

A hardcopy of the document is also available upon request. The environmental assessment (EA) can be found at the following address on the CRGNSA website:

<http://www.fs.fed.us/r6/columbia/forest/projects>, Project and Plans, Catherine Forest Restoration.

Predecisional Review Process

This project is subject to the objection process pursuant to 36 CFR 218 and is not subject to the notice, comment, and appeal procedures found at 36 CFR 215. This means that the decision will not be made until after a 30-day objection period. During this period, only those individuals and organizations who previously submitted written comments specific to this project during scoping, or other opportunities for public comment, have standing to file an objection.



How to File an Objection

Objections, including attachments, must be filed by mail, fax, e-mail, or hand delivery to the appropriate Reviewing Officer within 30 days from the publication date of this notice in the Oregonian. Letters of objection must meet the specific content requirements found in 36 CFR 218.7. The objection must be in writing with sufficient description of the following:

- Project Name and Forest Service unit location of the project that is subject to the objection (Catherine Forest Restoration, CRGNSA),
- Name of the deciding officer (Daniel T. Harkenrider),
- Objector's name, address, telephone number, and signature,
- Identification of a lead objector if multiple names are listed,
- Description of the aspects of the project addressed by the objection,
- Specific issues, and
- Suggested remedies for each issue raised.

Objections must be submitted to:

Linda Goodman, Regional Forester,
USDA, Forest Service Region 6
PO Box 3623 ATT: 1570 Appeals/Objections
333 SW First Avenue
Portland, Oregon 97208-3623

Hand delivery at the address shown above may be done during normal office hours of Monday-Friday 7:45 AM to 4:30 PM (except legal holidays). The fax number is: 503-808-2255.

Electronic objections written in the e-mail or in acceptable formats (.pdf, .doc, or .rtf) may be submitted to: appeals-pacificnorthwest-regional-office@fs.fed.us

It is the responsibility of objectors to ensure that their objection is received on time.

The publication date of the notice in the Oregonian is the exclusive means for calculating the time period to file an objection. Those wishing to object should not rely on dates provided by another source (although this letter is planned to be dated on the same day as the notice appears in the Oregonian).

The CRGNSA Area Manager may not issue a decision for this project until the Reviewing Officer has responded to all pending objections. If no objections are filed within the 30-day period, the decision may occur on the fifth business day following the end of the objection period (May 30, 2007). Please contact Diana L. Ross at 541-308-1716 or dlross@fs.fed.us if you have any questions about this notice or wish to request a hardcopy of the EA.

Sincerely,

/s/Daniel T. Harkenrider

DANIEL T. HARKENRIDER
Area Manager