



File Code: 1950

Date: January 18, 2008

Dear Interested Party,

The enclosed document describes a proposal by the Bridger-Teton National Forest, Jackson Ranger District, to implement an integrated vegetation management project to control the spread of Mountain Pine Beetles and address screening between Highway 89 and three developed recreation sites. The project consists of 3 treatment areas in the Snake River Canyon, with the legal description of T37N, R117W, Sections 1, 2 and T37N, R116W Section 6. (See the attached map and aerial photographs). This letter serves two purposes. The first is to request your input regarding the scope of the analysis that we will conduct in complying with the National Environmental Policy Act. The second purpose is to provide you with a description of the proposed action so you may submit formal comments pursuant to the Notice, Comment, and Appeal Procedures at 36 CFR 215. Please provide your comments on this action as described below.

My preliminary determination is that this proposal falls within a category of actions listed in the Forest Service NEPA Handbook (FSH) that are excluded from documentation in an Environmental Assessment (EA) or Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) and there are no extraordinary circumstances that would preclude use of the category. (FSH 1909.15, Chapter 30, Section 31.2.14 – Commercial and non-commercial sanitation harvest of trees to control insects or disease not to exceed 250 acres, requiring no more than ½ mile of temporary road construction, including removal of infested/infected trees and adjacent live uninfested/uninfected trees as determined necessary to control the spread of insects or disease.)

In a recent decision on the lawsuit *Earth Island Institute v. Ruthenbeck*, the Federal District Court for the Eastern District of California struck down the Forest Service provision at 36 CFR 215.4(a). That provision had excluded projects such as this one from public notice, comment, and appeal. I now am providing you with the opportunity to comment on “Snake River Canyon Recreation Site Timber Sale” pursuant to provisions at 36 CFR 215.5 and 215.6. This comment period is intended to provide those interested in or affected by this proposal an opportunity to make their concerns known prior to a decision being made by the Responsible Official.

How to Comment and Timeframe

Written, facsimile, hand-delivered, oral, and electronic comments will be accepted for 30 calendar days following publication of this notice in the Casper Star Tribune. The publication date in 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.

In submitting comments, please provide: (1) your name, address, telephone number, and organization represented, if any; (2) title of the document on which the comment is being submitted; (3) specific facts along with supporting reasons that you believe should be considered by me; and (4) your signature.

Only those who submit timely comments will be eligible to appeal my final decision on this project. Comments received in response to this notice of proposed action, including names and addresses of those



who comment, will be considered part of the public record and will be available for public inspection.

Submit written comments to:

Jackson Ranger District
attention: Dale Deiter, District Ranger
P.O. Box 1689
JACKSON, WY 83001

The office business hours for those submitting hand-delivered comments are: 8:00 AM to 4:30 PM Monday through Friday, excluding holidays. Oral comments must be provided at the Responsible Official's office during normal business hours via telephone 307-739-5410 or in person; or at an official agency function (i.e. public meeting) that is designed to elicit public comments. Electronic comments must be submitted in rich text format (.rtf) or Word (.doc) format to: ***comments-intermtn-bridger-teton-jackson@fs.fed.us***. The subject line must contain the name of the project for which you are submitting comments. For electronically mailed comments, the sender should normally receive an automated electronic acknowledgement from the agency as confirmation of receipt. If the sender does not receive an automated acknowledgement of the receipt of comments, it is the sender's responsibility to ensure timely receipt by other means. For appeal eligibility each individual or representative from each organization submitting comments must either sign the comments or verify identity upon request.

Comments received in response to this solicitation, including names and addresses of those who comment, will be considered part of the public record on this proposed action and will be available for public inspection. Comments submitted anonymously will be accepted and considered; however, those who submit anonymous comments will not have standing to appeal the subsequent decision under 36 CFR Parts 215 or 217. Additionally, pursuant to 7 CFR 1.27(d), any person may request the agency to withhold a submission from the public record by showing how the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) permits such confidentiality. Persons requesting such confidentiality should be aware that, under the FOIA, confidentiality may be granted in only very limited circumstances, such as to protect trade secrets. The Forest Service will inform the requester of the agency's decision regarding the request for confidentiality, and where the request is denied, the agency will return the submission and notify the requester that the comments may be resubmitted with or without name and address within 15 days.

If you need additional information regarding this proposal, please contact me at the Jackson Ranger District, or Linda Merigliano, at (307) 739-5427. I will be looking forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,

Dale Deiter
JACKSON DISTRICT RANGER

Enclosures – Notice of Proposed Action, Project maps

