

moderate/high intensity wildfires, as well as minimizing the spread of wildfire originating from developed areas onto forested lands. There is a need to treat the surface (dead and down fuels) and ladder fuels to reduce the risk of spread and intensity of wildfire.

Proposed Action

The Whisky Ridge Ecological Restoration Project proposes to;

- Restore key wildlife structures and improve wildlife habitat by maintaining and restoring key components that are utilized for shelter, reproduction sites, resting or food sources;
- Increase resiliency of mixed conifer, pine and fir stands through density management by beginning the process of returning treatment areas to conditions more closely resembling those present prior to the early 1900s;
- Maintain or improve growth and vigor of pine, mixed conifer, and fir stands, as well as conifer plantations through density management;
- Minimize the effects of wildland fire in the high risk (probability of ignition occurring), high hazard (availability of fuels to sustain a fire) wildland urban intermix area, and surrounding forest by reducing the potential for uncharacteristically large and severe wildfire and facilitate conditions that result in low-to-moderate severity wildland fire;
- Treat surface and ladder fuels to reduce the potential for a surface fire to transition into a sustained crown fire;
- Allow for the reintroduction of fire as a process restoration tool;
- Recover failed conifer plantations and openings by planting conifers within specific sites;
- Use integrated weed management to prevent and control infestations of noxious weeds;
- Restore production and enhance vitality of culturally gathered plant material;
- Protect the historic values and characteristics of archaeological and historical cultural resources and improve their integrity by reducing fuels within cultural resource sites;
- Restore and stabilize degraded watershed features such as meadows, streams, and riparian features by improving channel stability;
- Decommission unapproved trails that are contributing to resource degradation;
- Review the Sierra National Forest Motorized Travel Management plan and determine if any roads within the Project area recommended for potential decommissioning should be addressed under this proposal;

- Minimize livestock impacts to riparian features by developing range improvements (e.g. off-site water developments).

The Whisky Ridge Ecological Restoration Project encompasses 18,285 acres. Approximately 7,500 acres would be analyzed for treatments.

Possible Alternatives

To comply with NEPA, the Forest Service will evaluate additional alternatives to the proposed action developed based on public comments. A no action alternative to provide a baseline for comparison to the action alternatives will be included within the EIS. Each alternative will be explored and evaluated, or rationale will be given for eliminating an alternative from detailed study.

Responsible Official

The Responsible Deciding Official is Scott G. Armentrout, Forest Supervisor, Sierra National Forest, 1600 Tollhouse Road, Clovis, CA 93612.

Nature of Decision To Be Made

The Forest Supervisor will decide whether to implement the proposed action, take an alternative action that meets the purpose and need or take no action.

Scoping Process

The notice of intent initiates the scoping process, which guides the development of the environmental impact statement. The project is included in the Sierra National Forest's quarterly scheduled of proposed actions (SOPA). Information on the proposed action will also be posted on the Sierra National Forests Web site, <http://www.fs.fed.us/nepa/fs-usda-pop.php/?project=37829>, and will also be advertised in both the Fresno Bee and the Oakhurst Sierra Star. This notice of intent initiates the scoping process, which guides the development of the environmental impact statement.

Comments submitted during this scoping period should be in writing and should be specific to the proposed action. The comments should describe as clearly and completely as possible any issues the commenter has with the proposal. It is important reviewers provide their comments at such times in such a manner that they are useful to the agency's preparation on the environmental impact statement.

Dated: April 4, 2012.

Scott G. Armentrout,
Forest Supervisor.

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DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Forest Service

Gore Creek Restoration Project; Intent To Prepare an Environmental Impact Statement

AGENCY: Medicine Bow-Routt National Forests, Forest Service, USDA.

Project: Gore Creek Restoration Project.

ACTION: Notice of intent to prepare an environmental impact statement.

SUMMARY: In accordance with the National Environmental Policy Act, notice is hereby given that the Forest Service, Medicine Bow-Routt National Forests, will prepare a Draft Environmental Impact Statement to disclose the environmental consequences of the proposed Gore Creek Restoration Project (Gore Creek). The Gore Creek analysis area encompasses approximately 76,000 acres of National Forest System (NFS) land with 6,900 acres of interspersed private land.

The Yampa Ranger District is proposing a variety of actions in the Gore Pass area to improve watershed health and reduce potential erosion issues. Timber harvesting that took place outside of previously analyzed timber sale boundaries has resulted in impacts that had not been previously analyzed. Before rehabilitation can be completed, a new analysis must be conducted to address the previous activities and the proposed rehabilitation activities.

In order to complete previously analyzed vegetation management projects, an analysis of additional temporary roads needs to occur. Included in the analysis is the further consideration of the roads that would be necessary to complete both proposed, remaining timber management activities and the restoration activities. The analysis will be used to determine the best methods for minimizing watershed impacts from the current roads, proposed roads and road construction. Included in the analysis of the existing and proposed road construction will be the consideration of restoration of dispersed campsites within riparian areas within the project area, which may be impacting watershed health. Also included in the analysis will be the effects of disposing of merchantable timber and other vegetation resulting from emergency clearing work within the power line right-of-ways in the analysis area.

DATES: Comments concerning the scope of the analysis should be received by 30

days from the publication of this Notice. The Draft Environmental Impact Statement is expected to be available for public review in January 2013, the Final Environmental Impact Statement is expected to be available in March 2013, and the Record of Decision is expected to be released in March 2013.

ADDRESSES: Send written comments to Jack Lewis, Yampa District Ranger, P.O. Box 7, Yampa, Colorado 80483 or email comments to comments-rocky-mountain-medicine-bow-yampa@fs.fed.us. All comments, including names and addresses of commenters, when provided, are placed in the record and will be available for public inspection and copying. The public may review the comments at the Yampa Ranger District, 300 Roselawn Ave., Yampa, Colorado 80483. Visitors are encouraged to call ahead to (970) 638-4516 to facilitate entry into the building.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Jamie Krezelok, Project Manager, Hahn Peaks/Bears Ears Ranger District, 925 Weiss Drive, Steamboat Springs, Colorado 80487, (970) 870-2256 or email—jkrezelok@fs.fed.us. Individuals who use telecommunication devices for the deaf (TTF) may call the Federal Information Relay Service (FIRS) at 1-800-877-8339 between 8 a.m. and 8 p.m., Eastern Standard Time, Monday through Friday.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

Purpose and Need for Action

The *purpose* of the Gore Creek project is to address the environmental impacts created during implementation of the Rock Creek decision and reduce current impacts associated with roads in the analysis area.

The needs for the proposed action include:

- Analyzing the landings, slash piles, and skid trails that were inadvertently created during timber sale activities.
- Analyze effects of temporary roads needed to complete the Rock Creek sales.
- Analyze additional proposed actions associated with completing the Rock Creek sales.
- Analyze the clean-up activities for powerlines in the analysis area.
- Improve watershed health through relocation and/or decommissioning of roads and dispersed campsites that may be causing adverse impacts to stream networks within the project boundary.

Proposed Action

The Yampa Ranger District of the Medicine Bow-Routt National Forests, proposes to authorize vegetation

management and restoration activities on specified areas within the Gore Creek Restoration project area in order to meet or move toward desired conditions in a specified timeframe. Vegetation treatments may include; piling and stacking of timber that has already been cut, removing decks, and pile burning. Associated rehabilitation activities on landings, slash piles, skid trails, and temporary roads may include; ripping, seeding, slash, re-contouring, scarification, and erosion control. Watershed improvement projects are proposed on National Forest System Roads (NFSR) 185, 241, 242, 243, and 246 and may include; changing primary type of use on portions of existing roads, improving drainage on roads, re-routing portions of system roads, road decommissioning, new road construction, and dispersed campsite decommissioning along streams.

Responsible Official

The Official responsible for this proposal is Jack H. Lewis, District Ranger, Yampa Ranger District, The responsible Official will consider the analysis and conclusions of the environmental effects and then document the final decision in a Record of Decision (ROD).

Nature of Decision To Be Made

The Gore Creek Restoration Environmental Impact Statement will document the site-specific management proposals, alternatives to the Proposed Action, and the analysis of the effects of the activities proposed in the alternatives. It will form the basis for the Responsible Official to determine: (1) Whether or not the Proposed Action and alternatives are responsive to the issues, consistent with Forest Plan direction and if not whether a Forest Plan amendment would be necessary, meet the purpose and need, and are consistent with other related laws and regulations directing National Forest Management activities; (2) whether or not the information in the analysis is sufficient to implement proposed activities; and (3) which actions, if any, to approve.

Comment Requested

This notice of intent initiates the scoping process that guides the development of the environmental impact statement. Comments that are site-specific in nature are most helpful to resource professionals when trying to narrow and address the public's issues and concerns.

All comments will be reviewed and considered to identify relevant issues. Issues that cannot be resolved through

design features or minor changes to the Proposed Action may generate alternatives to the Proposed Action. This process is driven by comments received from the public, other agencies, and internal Forest Service concerns. To assist in commenting, a scoping letter providing more detail on the project proposal has been prepared and is available to interested parties at <http://www.fs.usda.gov/projects/mbr/landmanagement/projects>. Contact Jamie Krezelok, Project Coordinator, at the address listed in this notice of intent if you would like to receive a copy.

Dated: April 4, 2012.

Melissa A. Dressen,
Yampa Acting District Ranger.

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DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

Submission for OMB Review; Comment Request

The Department of Commerce will submit to the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) for clearance the following proposal for collection of information under the provisions of the Paperwork Reduction Act (44 U.S.C. chapter 35).

Agency: U.S. Census Bureau.

Title: Generic Clearance for Geographic Partnership Programs.

OMB Control Number: 0607-0795.

Form Number(s): Various.

Type of Request: Extension of a currently approved collection.

Burden Hours: 200,450.

Number of Respondents: 39,109.

Average Hours per Response: 15 hours on average.

Needs and Uses: The U.S. Census Bureau requests approval from the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) for a three year extension of the generic clearance called the Geographic Partnership Programs (GPPs) that covers a number of activities needed to update or conduct research on the Master Address File/Topologically Integrated Geographic Encoding and Referencing (MAF/TIGER) System. The information collected by these programs in cooperation with tribal, state, and local governments is essential to the mission of the Census Bureau and directly contributes to the successful outcome of censuses and surveys conducted by the Census Bureau. The generic clearance allows the Census Bureau to focus its limited resources on actual operational planning, development of procedures, and implementation of programs to update and improve the geographic and