

# REQUEST FOR COMMENTS

**USDA Forest Service  
Uinta National Forest  
Heber Ranger District  
Wasatch County, Utah**

## **Proposed Action for Bryant's Fork Forest Health/Spruce Bark Beetle Treatment**

The Heber Ranger District of the Uinta National Forest is seeking public comment on a proposed action to treat forest health issues in spruce/fir and aspen/fir stands on National Forest system lands in the Bryant's Fork drainage of the Heber Ranger District. The Bryant's Fork drainage is on the west side of Strawberry Reservoir approximately 25 miles south of Heber City, Utah.

The proposed action for the spruce/fir stands is to implement a selective timber harvest to address a rapidly developing spruce bark beetle infestation. Several years of drought, abundant host trees, and mild winters have likely contributed to a recent rapid expansion of bark beetle populations in this drainage. The proposed action would thin the stands to create a greater diversity of age classes and structure, as well as promote natural regeneration. This treatment would promote forest health and longevity of the spruce component by reducing vulnerability to spruce bark beetle attack. Monitoring would be done after the timber sale to identify areas where natural regeneration is not adequate, and revenues from the sale would be used to plant trees. The proposed action for the aspen/fir stands would be to clear-cut an approximately 48 acre unit to regenerate aspen. This aspen stand is in the advanced stages of being replaced by sub-alpine fir which is resulting in increased fuel loading and potential fire hazard for the Bryant's Fork summer home community. Regenerating the aspen stand would also contribute to restoring the natural potential of this site which has probably been altered to favor sub-alpine fir due to a history of fire suppression.

It is important to understand there is a separate proposal currently being scoped to drop 75-125 trap trees in the Bryant's Fork drainage this May to help contain the 2005 flight of spruce bark beetle. The trap trees provide an opportunity to manage the spruce bark beetle spread until a longer term solution can be implemented which is the selective timber harvest. These proposed actions are in the same drainage and the cumulative effects of both will be analyzed in the environmental analysis. The actions are not connected since they could occur independently of each other and do not need to be addressed in the same document.

The Forest Service encourages your substantive comments on this proposed action, along with supporting reasons that the responsible official should consider in reaching a decision. Comments should include the information required pursuant to 36 CFR 215.6(a)(3), as published in the Federal Register on June 4, 2003. Your comments will be used to help prepare an environmental analysis of and make a decision on the proposed action and any alternatives.

To maintain eligibility for appeal, each individual or, for an organization, an authorized representative, must submit substantive comments and must sign the comments or otherwise verify their identity.

Send substantive comments to the Responsible Official for this project, who is Julie K. King, Heber District Ranger, P.O. Box 190, Heber City, Utah 84032; phone (435) 654-0470; FAX (435) 654-5772; or you may hand-deliver your comments to the above address during normal business hours from 8:00 am to 5:00 pm, Monday through Friday, excluding federal holidays. Email comments may be sent to [comments-intermtn-uinta-heber@fs.fed.us](mailto:comments-intermtn-uinta-heber@fs.fed.us). The opportunity to comment ends 30 days following the date of publication of this legal notice.

Comments received in response to this solicitation, including names and addresses of those who comment, will be considered part of the public record for this project and will be available for public inspection and will be released if requested under the Freedom of Information Act.

Additional information on the proposed action may be obtained by contacting Julie King, Heber District Ranger, 2460 South Highway 40, Heber City, UT 84032; phone (435) 654-0470; FAX (435) 654-5772.