

REQUEST FOR COMMENTS
CORRECTED NOTICE

USDA FOREST SERVICE
UINTA NATIONAL FOREST
HEBER RANGER DISTRICT
WASATCH COUNTY, UTAH

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

The purpose of this notice is to correct the legal notice published February 25, 2005, regarding the Bryant's Fork Forest Health/Spruce Bark Beetle Treatment. The Project is an authorized hazardous fuels reduction project as defined by the Healthy Forests Restoration Act (HFRA) of 2003. Projects authorized under the provisions of HFRA are subject to the requirements of 36 CFR 218 and are not subject to the notice, comment and appeal provisions set forth in 36 CFR 215.

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 fell 100-150 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. The 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.

Substantive comments previously submitted on the proposed project will be considered. If you have any additional comments, please send them to the Responsible Official, Julie King, District Ranger 2460 South Highway 40, Heber City, UT 84032; phone (435)654-0470; fax (435)654-5772. Comments may also be hand delivered during normal business hours from 8:00 to 5:00 pm, Monday through Friday, excluding federal holidays or may be e-mailed to 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.

A legal notice of opportunity to object to the proposed HFRA project will be published upon completion and mailing of the Environmental Assessment to interested parties who have previously requested to receive the assessment or who have provided specific written comments related to the proposed project.