

Welcome to the Bogus Basin Forest Health Project Public Meeting

The purpose of this meeting is to introduce you to the project proposal and provide you the opportunity to meet with the National Forest Service resource specialists working on this project. Feel free to ask questions, offer opinions and provide written public comment.

Seeking public input is important as the project begins. You will learn about the project proposal today. The goal is to hear your thoughts, concerns and questions regarding how best to improve forest health in and around Bogus Basin Mountain Resort. Your input is appreciated!

How to Comment

Verbal comments are appreciated, but following up with written comments is encouraged.

Written comments can be provided at the public meeting using the comment form provided, or submit them at a later date to: Boise National Forest, Mountain Home Ranger District, Attention: District Ranger Stephaney Kerley, 3080 Industrial Way, Mountain Home, ID 83647; or by fax to 208-587-9217. The office hours for those submitting hand-delivered comments are: 8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Monday through Friday, excluding holidays. Oral comments may also be provided at the Mountain Home Ranger District office during normal business hours via telephone 208-587-7961.

Information will be posted as it becomes available through the Bogus Basin Forest Health Project webpage at <http://www.fs.usda.gov/project/?project=47956>.

Thank you for taking the time to learn and be involved in this important long term plan.

What is the Bogus Basin Forest Health Project?

The purpose of the Bogus Basin Forest Health Project is to manage the forest stands to achieve a diversity of trees to improve forest health and address public safety concerns. The proposed treatments would also improve forest resiliency to uncharacteristic insect, disease and wildland fire disturbance.

The Bogus Basin Forest Health Project was developed in collaboration with the **Boise Forest Coalition**. See **FAQ** for more information.

Location

Bogus Basin Mountain Resort permit area and adjacent lands on Boise National Forest lands in Boise County.

Project area

Approximately 3,700 acres, the majority on the Mountain Home Ranger District and about 200 on the Idaho City Ranger District. All of the land in the proposed project area is National Forest System land, however it surrounds approximately 630 acres of land owned by Bogus Basin Mountain Recreation Association which operates Bogus Basin Mountain Resort. The Resort lands are not included in this proposal. The Resort manages ski lifts and ski runs outside of their private land on the Boise National Forest under a special use permit.

Why is this project being proposed?

A need exists to reduce the threat to public safety caused by hazard trees adjacent to trails and facilities at Bogus Basin Mountain Resort

Due to ongoing incidence of tree mortality, a large number of standing dead trees are present in the Bogus Basin developed recreation area. Large brooms (dense clumps of branches) on trees infected with dwarf mistletoe may fall, especially under the weight of heavy snow. These trees present a safety hazard to the public on alpine and Nordic ski trails and roads, as well as recreation facilities. Although a certain amount of dead standing trees is normal in a forest, in recent years there has been a dramatic increase in the number of trees killed by dwarf mistletoe, Douglas-fir beetle and western bark beetle.

A need exists to reduce dwarf mistletoe infection of Douglas-fir trees and to disrupt the disease cycle while maintaining a healthy forest cover by promoting alternative species

In 2007, representatives from the Forest Health Protection department of the USDA Forest Service reported Douglas-fir dwarf mistletoe infection in almost **80 percent** of all stands within the Bogus Basin area and the majority of those stands were infected at the highest rating class. The group observed large numbers of dead and standing Douglas-fir trees due to the combined effects of dwarf mistletoe infection, Douglas-fir beetle infestation and drought. The group recommended planting alternative tree species within Douglas-fir stands to interrupt the infection cycle.

A need exists to increase forest resilience to uncharacteristic insect, disease and wildfire disturbance by decreasing stand densities within the wildland-urban interface

In ponderosa pine stands, bark beetles have been actively killing trees for many years. Ponderosa pine is more susceptible to bark beetles if they are under stress from growing in dense stands or infected with dwarf mistletoe. Though not as severe as in Douglas-fir, many ponderosa pine trees in the project area are infected with dwarf mistletoe. Most of the ponderosa pine and lower elevation Douglas-fir stands in the project area are at high risk of wildfire due to high densities and heavy fuel loads.

Proposed Actions

Thinning on approximately 775 acres in Douglas-fir stands

This would occur on stands primarily composed of Douglas-fir. These treatments would remove hazard trees and most of the moderate-to-severe dwarf mistletoe infected trees. In some areas, infected trees would be removed in stages to maintain tree cover between ski runs. Commercial forest products would be harvested where feasible.

Thinning on approximately 809 acres in ponderosa pine stands

Thinning would promote development of medium to large size ponderosa pine. Trees infected with dwarf mistletoe and/or with recent bark beetle infestations would be prioritized for removal. All hazard and potential hazard trees near roads and ski trails would be removed. Commercial forest products would be harvested where feasible.

Hazard tree felling with optional removal on approximately 725 acres

Hazard trees would be felled in low density stands inaccessible to harvesting equipment. All hazard or potential hazard trees near roads, structures, ski runs and groomed Nordic trails would be felled.

Fuel abatement activities in conjunction with vegetation treatments on approximately 2,828 acres

Fuel treatments would include piling and burning of slash and und understory burning following vegetation treatments. Within Douglas-fir stands on the higher elevations, slash resulting from thinning and removal of hazard trees would be piled and burned. In the ponderosa pine and lower elevation Douglas-fir stands, an understory prescribed burn would be conducted following thinning.

Fill-in planting of alternative tree species on approximately 496 acres

Following the treatments in Douglas-fir stands between and adjacent to ski runs, approximately 496 acres of ponderosa pine, Douglas-fir, western larch or lodgepole pine would be planted. Trees would be planted to allow for openings for skier passage between runs. Douglas-fir would only be planted in areas where little or no dwarf mistletoe infection is present.

Approximately 900 acres of the total project area would not be treated due to operational constraints, conservation of old forest habitat, sensitive areas and/or lack of need.

Transportation

Construction of approximately 4.7 miles of temporary roads

The temporary roads would be constructed to facilitate hauling. All temporary roads would be rehabilitated to original condition within 3 years of completion of the project.

Road maintenance activities on approximately 9 miles of existing ski area maintenance roads to facilitate commercial timber harvest

These existing roads are within the Bogus Basin permit area and used to access lifts and other facilities. Road maintenance activities include, but are not limited to, road prism blading, spot aggregate placement, drainage improvements, roadway cleaning and roadway ditch/culvert inlet cleaning.

Proposed Haul Routes

One aspect of the project involves hauling harvested timber from the site to the highway in order to transport to the mill. The Forest Service only has jurisdiction on National Forest System roads, however, contractors will be required to inform the Forest Service of haul route choices. The Forest Service can also recommend routes and impose timing restrictions, if necessary.

The proposed haul routes for vegetation removal could include any or all of the following:

1) National Forest System Road 374 to Harris Creek Road (National Forest System Road 307) to Horseshoe Bend

Material in the west and central portion of the project area could be hauled north to Harris Creek Road (NFS road 307) to Horseshoe Bend. This route would likely require more extensive pre-haul, during haul, and post-haul road maintenance in order to create and maintain a safe haul route.

2) National Forest System Road 297 to Bogus Basin Road to Boise

Material in the west and central portion of the project area could alternately be hauled down Bogus Basin Road and enter the interstate or state highway system via any of the following:

- Downtown Boise (Harrison Boulevard to Interstate 184)
- North and west Boise (Hill Road to State Highway 55)
- Through the foothills and Hidden Springs (Cartwright and Dry Creek Roads to State Highway 55)

Using these haul routes would minimize the miles of gravel road maintenance thus reducing total road maintenance costs. Reduced road maintenance costs would allow a larger proportion of income generated from the sale of the timber to be utilized on non-commercial treatments in the project area, such as thinning and hazard tree removal.

National Forest System Road 366 (Pine Creek Road) to National Forest System Road 364 (Grimes Creek Road) to State Highway 21- Material in the east end of the project area must be hauled out through this route because of the current road configuration.

FAQ

Q: What is the Boise Forest Coalition?

A: The Boise Forest Coalition (BFC) is a citizen-led group of members with a diversity of perspectives on forest management that work to provide the Boise National Forest with recommendations on large-scale forest projects. The BFC addresses natural resource, economic, recreational, and societal needs that are compatible with forest plan direction and are economically realistic. See boiseforestcoalition.org for details.

Q: How was the BFC involved in the development of the Bogus Basin Forest Health Project?

A: The Coalition committed to work with the Boise National Forest on this project. The Forest then presented the proposal to the Coalition for their consideration. After meeting on the topic, the BFC then submitted a list of recommendations and considerations to the Forest. The Boise National Forest then revised the proposal based on these recommendations and presented these changes to a meeting of the Coalition.

Q: How is this project related to the 2014 Farm Bill?

A: The motivation for this project began in March 2014 when Idaho Governor "Butch" Otter submitted a request to the Secretary of Agriculture to designate landscape scale treatment areas on National Forests within Idaho. These forests are considered to be at high risk of insect and disease mortality pursuant to Section 8204 of the

2014 Farm Bill. In May of 2014, the Chief of the Forest Service Tom Tidwell agreed to designate the landscape areas requested in Idaho. The Bogus Basin Forest Health Project falls within one of the 50 landscape areas in the State of Idaho designated to be at high risk of insect and disease mortality.

Q: If the project is completed, does that mean there will be no more treatments necessary?

A: Controlling dwarf mistletoe and promoting forest health is a long-term, continuous process. Treatments would need to be implemented in a certain order and in stages. Some treatments may need to be repeated every 5 to 10 years, such as removal of infected and beetle killed hazard trees.

Q: When would the treatments occur?

A: Most mechanical treatments and commercial harvests would occur from late June through October, depending on ground conditions and timing restrictions related to wildlife. Treatments could potentially start in fall 2016 or summer 2017. All mechanical treatments could be included in an Integrated Resource Stewardship Contract or could be implemented with separate service and timber sale contracts.

Q: Where would these temporary roads be built?

A: The proposed temporary roads would be newly constructed or located on old roadbeds and existing trails and would be closed to public motorized use during implementation of the project. Pre-existing trails would be restored to original condition as soon as practical following completion of thinning treatments. All new and reconstructed temporary roads would be rehabilitated within 3 years of completion of project.

Q: How will this project affect skiers?

A: Recreational users of the project area will be considered throughout the process. Some proposed actions that provide for user safety and recreational experience include cutting felled trees adjacent to downhill ski runs into smaller pieces, de-limbed and oriented parallel to the slope. Some small areas between alpine ski runs may be closed to skiers for a few years to avoid damage to newly planted trees. Planting would happen in stages to minimize closed areas. Logging operations would not occur during ski season, weekends, holidays or opening days of various hunting seasons.

Q: How will this project affect summer recreation users at Bogus Basin?

A: Some trails and areas in the vicinity may be closed temporarily while the project is in progress. The closures will be done cyclically to avoid large-scale area closures.

Q: Will there be no more infected or dead trees upon completion of this project?

A: Not all hazard trees or dwarf mistletoe infected trees will be removed. Some dead trees within a forest are natural and provide wildlife habitat.