



U.S. Forest Service

Stanislaus National Forest
19777 Greenley Road
Sonora, CA 95370
Voice: 209-532-3671
Web: <http://www.fs.usda.gov/stanislaus>

News Release

Media Contact: Rim Fire Recovery
209-532-3671 Ext. 244
rimgfirerecovery@gmail.com



Stanislaus National Forest Supervisor signed Rim Fire Hazard Tree Decision Notice

Sonora, Calif. (April 28, 2014)...Susan Skalski, Stanislaus National Forest Supervisor, signed a Decision Notice and Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) for the Rim Fire Hazard Trees (Rim HT) Environmental Assessment (EA) on April 25, 2014. The decision authorizes: 1) hazard tree removal along 194 miles of high use roads (Forest roads, County roads and Highway 120), and across 1,329 acres of National Forest System (NFS) lands within and adjacent to developed facilities, 2) road maintenance on 170.5 miles of Forest roads and, 3) seventeen (17) detailed requirements designed to implement the Forest Plan and minimize effects. The EA and Decision Notice/FONSI are available online at: http://www.fs.fed.us/nepa/nepa_project_exp.php?project=43032.

The Rim Fire started in a remote area of the Stanislaus near the confluence of the Clavey and Tuolumne Rivers on August 17, 2013. Exhibiting high to extreme fire behavior with multiple flaming fronts, the fire made runs of 30,000 to 50,000 acres on two consecutive days. Over the next several weeks it burned 257,314 acres, including 154,530 acres of NFS lands, becoming the third largest wildfire in California history. The Rim HT project includes high use roads and facilities where varying degrees of fire severity and tree mortality occurred. As snags and fire-damaged trees weaken and fall, they pose an immediate danger to the lives, safety and property of people in the area. As such, portions of the Rim Fire area are closed due to dangerous conditions. The current temporary Forest Order (STF 2014-01) opens portions of the previous closure area and prohibits public use in the remaining portions until November 18, 2014.

"I am very pleased to see the Rim HT decision notice issued," said Jim Junette, team leader for the Rim HT interdisciplinary team that completed the EA. "The team completed a tremendous amount of work in a very short time in order to allow implementation of the project this field season. The Rim HT project is an important first step toward restoring safe access to the burned area, and allows us to move forward on our overall restoration work."

The Rim HT project is the first of multiple recovery and restoration projects that may be proposed over the next several years. The Rim Fire Recovery (Rim Recovery) project is the second project currently in progress. The Forest Service is preparing an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) to include salvage of dead trees, removal of hazard trees along low standard roads, fuel reduction for future resiliency to fire, and, road improvements for proper hydrologic function. The Forest Service will publish a draft Rim Recovery EIS seeking public comment early in May 2014.

For additional information regarding this project, contact Jim Junette at the Stanislaus National Forest; 19777 Greenley Road; Sonora, CA 95370 or call (209) 288-2114.

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