



# News Release

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## Westside Fire Recovery Project Comment Period Opens Today

**Yreka, CA** - The Klamath National Forest is inviting public comments for the preparation of the Westside Fire Recovery project. Planning information is available at <http://1.usa.gov/1t57p2q>.

The Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for the project will propose to reduce safety hazards, obtain the maximum economic value from burned timber, and increase the likelihood and speed of reforestation on about 63,883 acres burned with high severity in the Beaver, Whites and Happy Camp Complex fires from this summer.

The planned project area includes 162,264 acres of National Forest lands on the west side of the Forest. Watersheds affected include Beaver Creek, Horse Creek, Humbug Creek, Elk Creek, Indian Creek, Lower Scott River, Seiad Creek, Thompson Creek, Ukonom Creek, Klamath River, French Creek, Scott River, and North and South Fork Salmon Rivers.

**The official 30-day scoping comment period is Oct. 15, 2014-Nov. 14, 2014.**

**Comments on the proposed action should be submitted within 30 days of the date of publication in the Federal Register of the Notice of Intent to prepare an Environmental Impact Statement, dated November 15, 2014.**

There will be other points in the planning process when comments will be requested. It is also anticipated that public information meetings will be held at various points. The Forest Service seeks information, comments and assistance from federal, state and local agencies and individuals or organizations interested in or affected by the proposed action.

**Send comments to:** Patricia A. Grantham, Forest Supervisor, Klamath National Forest, 1711 South Main Street, Yreka, CA 96097, ATTN: Westside Fire Recovery Team Leader, or fax to 530-841-4571. Submit electronic comments at the Klamath National Forest's project webpage: <http://www.fs.fed.us/nepa/fs-usda-pop.php/?project=45579> by selecting the "Comment on Project" link in the "Get Connected" group at the right hand side of the project webpage.

**For further information contact:** Wendy Coats, Klamath National Forest, Yreka, CA 96097. Phone: 530-841-4470. Individuals who use telecommunication devices for the deaf (TDD) may call the Federal Information Relay Service (FIRS) at 1-800-877-8339 between 8 a.m. and 8 p.m., Eastern Time, Monday through Friday.

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## Additional Project Purpose Information

1. This project will reduce safety hazards to Forest users, adjacent landowners and Forest workers from falling trees and hazardous fuels conditions.
  - It is important safety is maintained and hazardous fuels conditions reduced where they exist within the Wildland Urban Interface, especially within one-quarter mile of private property in burned areas or within areas where fire suppression-related activity occurred.
  - Infrastructure, especially utility lines, roads, trailheads, campgrounds, fire lookouts and bridges need to be maintained for use by the public and Forest workers.
2. The project will seek to obtain the maximum economic value from burned timber by offering a sale while the wood is still marketable.
  - Capturing the marketability of the timber provides the agency a viable means of meeting forest management needs, since the timber sale can be used to fund restoration. Selling the timber while it still has value also increases the amount of area that can be treated using currently available funding.
3. Ecosystem sustainability is promoted by increasing the likelihood and speed burned, previously forested areas are restored.
  - Although wildfires have some benefits (e.g., snag and downed wood creation), intensely burned forested areas may be slow to recover and heavy fuel loading will result from fallen snags predisposing an area to higher intensity and higher severity wildfires in the future.
  - Planting conifer seedlings will better ensure a burned area will return to a forested condition as soon as possible.
4. The proposed action will treat a total of about 63,883 acres of National Forest System lands within the 214,848-acre project boundary with:
  - 10,600 acres of salvage harvest,
  - 21,872 acres of roadside hazard treatment,
  - 11,411 acres of hazardous fuels treatment and
  - 20,000 acres of site preparation, planting and vegetation release.

(Note: Acres do not account for the overlap in treatment types. Treatment acreages are approximate at this point and will be adjusted and refined following the comment period.)

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