USDA United States Department of Agriculture | Forest Service | Los Angeles River Ranger District | 12371 N. Little Tujunga Cyn. RD
San Fernando, CA 91342
818-899-1900 Voice
626-447-8992 TTY

File Code: 1950-1/5150-1
Date: August 28, 2009

Dear Interested Party,

The Los Angeles River Ranger District (LARRD) of the Angeles National Forest (ANF) is conducting an environmental analysis under the provisions of the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) to evaluate a fuels reduction project in the La Crescenta area. We are soliciting public input of the issues to be addressed in the environmental analysis. Initiation of this fuels reduction project is proposed to begin in FY 2011 and involves vegetation treatments on 280 acres.

This project will involve collaboration with the County of Los Angeles, and private land owners in the Pickens Canyon area. The legal description of the proposed project is: T.2 N., R.13 W., Sections 10,13,14,15,23,24,25,26,27 (see enclosed map).

The purpose of this project is to reduce the build up of hazardous fuels on the east side of Ocean View Blvd. in the La Crescenta area, and adjacent areas of private land. This project will provide for increased defensible space, firefighter safety, and reduce flame heights and radiant heat. As one of the most heavily used urban forests in the nation, the Angeles National Forest will be working in partnership with local communities, and private land owners to develop and integrate fuels treatments across multiple ownerships, to better protect communities and reduce the potential for catastrophic fires. This analysis is a collaborative process that integrates the wildfire protection planning efforts of the ANF, public, and private landowners, so that they complement one another.

Proposed activities would consist of mechanical treatments, hand cutting and chipping, and fuel break re-construction. No new roads will be constructed as a result of this proposed action.

The vegetation located approximately 300' next to private and LA County land will be treated. The brush type vegetation within the first 50 feet will be reduced to 4" or less in height. The brush type vegetation within 50' to 150' will be reduced to no more than 25% standing vegetation above 4" in height. The areas 150' to 300' from the boundaries will be thinned to no more than 50% standing vegetation above 4" in height. The larger standing brush will be pruned to a single trunk and half the existing height. In all these areas the trees will be pruned to 10' or half the height. Treatments will be accomplished by hand crews using chainsaws and hand tools. Cut brush will be chipped or removed. A masticator may be used in portions of the project area depending on steepness of slope. Brush may also be crushed by a dozer pulling a disc.
This project proposes reestablishing an existing fuel break system in the Pickens canyon, and Mt. Lukens area. This would require removing vegetation for up to 300 feet on either side of the center of the ridge, leaving no more than two tons of flammable fuel per acre. Any combination of mechanical disking, Crushing, masticating, drum crushing, chainsaw cutting and chipping may be employed. Hand crews using chainsaws will be used where dozer access is not possible. 100% ground disturbance is to be assumed in some areas.

Project activities will be designed to minimize soil disturbance to the extent practical, consistent with project objectives. Strategies and guidelines from the 2005 Forest Plan will be implemented. This includes the Noxious Weed Management Strategy for Southern California found in Appendix M, Part 3, page 121 of the Forest Plan.

These fuels treatment projects would satisfy two priority goals of the Forest Service: *Goal 1 Reduce the risk from catastrophic wildland fire*, and *Goal 2- Reduce the impacts from invasive species.*

A Biological Assessment and Evaluation (BA/BE) and Archaeological study will be completed on the proposed project. Any recommended protection measures for resources of concern will be implemented.

The proposed action is consistent with Strategy Fire 5, in part 2, page 130 of the Forest Plan. A portion of the strategy states to develop a plan to minimize propagation of invasive nonnative species during fuels management activities. This treatment plan will be developed and approved by the Forest botanist.

This project is authorized under the Healthy Forests Restoration Act of 2003 (HFRA) and will therefore be subject to the objection procedure at 36 CFR 215.

Comments should be submitted in writing and will be accepted until September 29, 2009. Issues and concerns should be addressed to:

Mike McIntyre, District Ranger
Los Angeles River Ranger District
12371 N. Little Tujunga Canyon Road
San Fernando, CA 91342

Comments may also be submitted via FAX to (818) 896-6727 or electronically to mmcintyre@fs.fed.us. All comments received become a part of the project record and are available for public review. Upon completion of the environmental analysis, an opportunity to comment will be provided to those who have previously expressed an interest in these types of projects and those who respond to the scoping letter.

If you have any questions regarding this proposal, please contact Scott Lowden or me at (818) 899-1900.

Sincerely,

MICHAEL J. MCINTYRE
District Ranger