



United States
Department of
Agriculture

Forest
Service

Gila NF

2610 N. Silver Street
Silver City, NM 88061

Reply To: 1920

Date: September 2, 1988

Dear Interested Party:

In an effort to keep you informed of the changes to the Gila National Forest Land Management Plan, we have enclosed Amendments 2 and 3 with accompanying Decision Notices.

Thank you for your continued interest in the management of the Gila National Forest.

Sincerely,

for D. W. DAHL
Forest Supervisor

Enclosures



Caring for the Land and Serving People

FS-6200-28b(4/88)

DECISION MEMO

PONDEROSA PINE FUELWOOD THINNING
VEGETATION MODIFICATION PRACTICES AMENDMENT FOR MANAGEMENT AREA
5C

USDA Forest Service - Gila National Forest
Mimbres Ranger District

In the Forest Plan 396 acres in Management Area 5C were designated as suitable for timber management activities. The planning model, however, did not schedule any vegetation modification activities in these areas during the 10 to 15 year planning period.

Before the plan was finalized, the Mimbres District began making ponderosa pine fuelwood available to help satisfy the ever increasing demand for commercial fuelwood. These fuelwood activities were used to thin tentatively suitable stands of ponderosa pine. Normally, ponderosa pine thinning is accomplished by paying thinning contractors. The accomplishment of thinning through commercial fuelwood harvest results in a monetary return to the government rather than the normal thinning cost.

It is my decision to amend the Forest Plan and provide the opportunity to continue the fuelwood thinning operations on the 396 acres of suitable timber in Management Area 5C. The attached Replacement Page 160 should be substituted for the original page 160 in the plan.

This is a non-significant Forest Plan amendment. It will not significantly change the multiple-use goals and objectives for long-term land and resource management. It will add to the long-term economic efficiency of managing the suitable timber in Management Area 5C. The thinning would not effect unroaded areas. There are no known Threatened or Endangered Species occurring in the areas. A cultural resource clearance will be obtained before any thinning occurs. This decision is subject to administrative review under 36 CFR 211.18.

Based upon the environmental analysis and past experience with thinning ponderosa pine, it is my decision to categorically exclude this thinning activity and the Forest Plan amendment from further documentation under the NEPA process. This amendment and the fuelwood thinning activity that it relates to can proceed immediately.

9/6/88
Date

Stephen V. Kelly
D.W. DAHL
for Forest Supervisor

Proposed Vegetation Modification (Continued):

<u>Resource</u>	<u>Practice</u>	<u>Acres</u>
Wildlife Prescribed Burns:		
	PJ Shrub	80
	Ponderosa Pine/Mixed Conifer	20
Wildlife Browse Pruning:		
	PJ Shrub	10
Fuels Management:		
	Hazard Reduction	500
Range Treatment Pending		
Additional Funding		
	PJ	11830
Range		
	PJ	2800
Fuelwood PJ:		
	Fuelwood harvest	2080
Suitable Timber:		
	Precommercial Thinning	396
Unsuitable Timber:		
	Salvage harvest	100
<u>Timber Suitability Acres:</u>		
	Forested Lands withdrawn (Wilderness)	67,022 Acres
	Unsuitable Pinyon/Juniper	73,920 Acres
	Unsuitable Forested Lands (physically unsuitable or not capable)	14,612 Acres
	Forested Lands not appropriate	25,736 Acres
	Suitable Timber	<u>396 Acres</u>
	Total forested Lands	181,686 Acres

RESOURCE	ACTIVITY	APPLICABLE		
		AREA	STANDARDS AND GUIDELINES	
5C	RECREATION	AO1	All	Maintain the Continental Divide National Scenic Trail corridor to the Visual Quality Objective of preservation within wilderness and Partial Retention outside wilderness.
5C	WILDERNESS	BO1	Gila Wilderness	Establish the acceptable social and biological Limits of change for the Gila Wilderness and establish capacities in the first decade, with emphasis on social carrying capacity.
			Aldo Leopold Wilderness	Establish the acceptable social and biological Limits of change for the Aldo Leopold Wilderness and establish capacities in the first decade, with emphasis on social carrying capacity.
5C	WILDLIFE	CO1	All	Primary wildlife planning emphasis is on game species and T&E species. Management plans for T&E species will be addressed as recovery plans are completed and approved. Plans and inventories will be conducted to meet the objectives indicated in the management emphasis.
				Complete three habitat studies/inventories and two habitat implementation schedules per decade.
		CO2	All	Habitat inventories will be keyed to project areas integrated with other resource uses.

DECISION NOTICE
FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT
AND
AMENDMENT TO GILA NATIONAL FOREST LAND MANAGEMENT PLAN
SIERRA COUNTY, NEW MEXICO
IVANHOE/EMPORIA PLAN OF OPERATION
ST. CLOUD MINING COMPANY

The St. Cloud Mining Company has submitted a Plan of Operation under the mining regulations, to develop a mine and remove ore from a site in Turkey Creek (Section 22, Township 10 South, Range 9 West). A significant part of the proposal includes improved vehicle access to the mine site. The proposal calls for construction of a 14-foot wide improved road, to a fair weather standard.

Based on the analysis in the Environmental Assessment, for the Ivanhoe/Emporia Plan of Operation, it is my decision that the Gila National Forest Land Management Plan be amended and Alternative 2C, Republic Realignment, be adopted. The selected alternative will allow access via a realignment of existing Forest Development Road 4081.1 from State Highway 59 to Turkey Creek, with the following stipulations: (1) the cultural resource site located along this alignment be avoided (Report #1986-06-210); (2) a final decision on road closures be made after additional public input; (3) use of undisturbed Forest land around the mine site be postponed until the Mining Company can better predict needs and impacts; and (4) the realignment, maintenance and use of Forest Development Road 4081.1 be authorized by a Road-Use Permit.

The amendment to the Forest Plan would result in a change to the first forest wide standard and guideline on page 27 of the Forest Plan. The acreage in the Poverty Creek area that will be managed to maintain semi-primitive recreation opportunities will be reduced to 7,850. Construction of the road will result in direct impacts to semi-primitive recreation opportunity, in the Poverty Creek area, of 10 acres and indirect impacts of approximately 2,400 acres. Because this portion of the area is already roaded and impacted by mining activity, and no objection was voiced by the group who had concerns over this area, through the Forest Plan process, I have determined this amendment to be nonsignificant.

The alternatives considered in evaluating the St. Cloud Mining Company's request included: No action (Alternative 1), four access routes from the north (Alternatives 2A, 2B, 2C, and 2D), two routes from the east (Alternatives 3A, and 3E), one route from the west (Alternative 4A) and one route from the south (Alternative 4E) of Turkey Creek. Alternatives were evaluated based on their effects on semi-primitive recreation opportunities, effects on riparian/floodplains areas, road system impacts, and impacts to private lands. Alternative 2C had the least overall impact.

I have determined through the environmental analysis that this is not a major federal action that would significantly affect the quality of human environment; therefore, an environmental impact statement is not needed. This determination was made considering the following factors: (1) there are no

irreversible resource commitments or irretrievable loss of timber production, (2) there are no apparent adverse cumulative or secondary effects, (3) the physical and biological effects are limited to the area of planned development and use, and (4) no known threatened or endangered plants or animals are within the affected area.

This decision is subject to administrative review (appeal) as per CFR 211.18 and may be implemented immediately.

Richard J. Jordan
Acting FOREST SUPERVISOR

2/13/87
DATE

RESOURCE

ACTIVITY

STANDARDS AND GUIDELINES

	A09	Manage the following areas to maintain these existing Semi-Primitive recreation opportunities. The areas are identified by the following geographic features or known landmarks:
		Nolan 10,830
		Mother Hubbard 6,090
		Hells Hole 18,860
		Lower San Francisco 25,560
		The Hub 7,770
		Brushy Springs 5,790
		Frisco Box 38,100
		Brushy Mountain 7,890
		Aspen Mountain 17,603
		Wagon Tongue 7,560
		Eagle Peak 20,075
		Devil's Creek 87,095
		Gila Box 24,350
		Elk Mountain 4,475
		T Bar 6,980
		Canyon Creek 7,285
		Contiguous to Gila Wilderness 72,465
		Taylor Creek 6,130
		Stone Canyon 7,340
		Wahoo Mountain 22,080
		Poverty Creek 7,850
		Dry Creek 29,560
		Contiguous to Aldo Leopold 96,055
		Largo 13,110
		Sawyer's Peak 64,200
		Meadows Creek 34,000
		Contiguous to Blue Range 10,795
	A09	A forest recreation opportunity guide (ROG) will be prepared during the first decade.
	A13	Within the Gila National Forest and that portion of the Apache National Forest administered by the Gila National Forest, maintain a recreation stay limit of no longer than 30 days in a consecutive 45 day period for general dispersed recreation, and 14 days for developed sites.
	A15	Manage for dispersed recreation at less than standard service level.
	A15	Maintain existing dispersed recreation facilities (fencing, gates, signs, etc.) to Condition Class 2 as minimum.
	A15	Replace or remove improvements where they no longer serve intended purpose and/or when they present a public health or safety hazard.
	A15	Clean and maintain throughout normal use season 100 percent of all known intensive use areas. Annual clean up of commonly used sites will follow the last deer hunting season. Garbage removal will be via pack-in/pack-out policy.
	A16	No new summer home sites will be established.
WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT	CO1	Manage for indigenous species. Exotic species capable of reproducing in native habitats will not be introduced or allowed to invade National Forest System lands.
	CO1	Establish current baseline for indicator species habitats and monitor trends at ten year intervals. Cooperate with New Mexico Department of Game and Fish in monitoring indicator species populations.