



United States
Department of
Agriculture

Forest
Service

Pike and San Isabel
National Forests
Cimarron and Comanche
National Grasslands

Pikes Peak Ranger District
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File Code: 1950

Date: November 5, 2013

Dear Interested Citizen:

The Pikes Peak Ranger District, Pike-San Isabel National Forest, is requesting your comments regarding the Hy-Brook Thinning proposal. The project area is located north of Divide, Colorado, T12S, R70W Sections 1,8,12,13,16,17,21 and T12S, R69W Sections 6,7,8, Teller County (119), Colorado (08) 6th P.M. (refer to attached maps). This request initiates the scoping process under the requirements of the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and its implementation regulations. Scoping is a procedure by which the Forest Service identifies important issues and determines the extent of analysis necessary for an informed decision on a proposed action. It is anticipated that this decision under NEPA would be an Environmental Assessment.

I am requesting your input and involvement in a proposal to treat approximately 829 acres with a variety of silvicultural treatments. Treatment prescriptions would be in accordance with overall management objectives as directed by the Pike-San Isabel National Forest Land and Resource Management Plan (LRMP). LRMP prescriptions for this proposed project are as follows:

- 7A – Management emphasis is on wood-fiber production and utilization (sawtimber).
- 7D – Management emphasis is on wood-fiber production and utilization for products other than sawtimber.

The overall purpose of the Proposed Action for the Hy-Brook Thinning project is to implement management direction from the Pike-San Isabel National Forest Land and Resource Management Plan and to manage for ecosystem needs. Specifically for the Hy-Brook Planning Area: needs include:

Improvement of Forest Health

Existing forested stands within the project area have high tree densities with a high incidence of insect infestation and dwarf mistletoe; this in turn has increased the risk of hazardous fuels within the project area which is considered Wildland Urban Interface (WUI). Improvement to overall forest health will be accomplished by managing high insect and disease areas to encourage more stable and resilient forest vegetation conditions and to reduce hazardous fuels within the WUI.



Contribution of Commercial Timber to the Front Range Long Term Stewardship

The planning area acreage has been prescribed as wood-fiber production and utilization within the LRMP. Wood-fiber produced from this project area will be utilized as sawtimber, chips, and public fuelwood for the general public.

In attainment of the purpose and need for this ecosystem management action, the following goals are associated with the Hy-Brook Planning Area.

Reduce hazardous fuels, reduce crown fire potential and obtain conditions that are more resilient to wildland fires. Lower Fire Regime Condition Class (FRCC) to historic fire regime levels and reintroduce fire on the landscape as a management tool.

Enhance and restore ponderosa pine stands closer to historic conditions.

Enhance and protect species diversity and stand resiliency through control of the spread of disease agents (dwarf mistletoe and mountain pine beetle) by applying silvicultural treatments and rehabilitative practices to selected stands.

Maintain and restore aspen stands.

Maintain, restore or improve soil and water quality conditions.

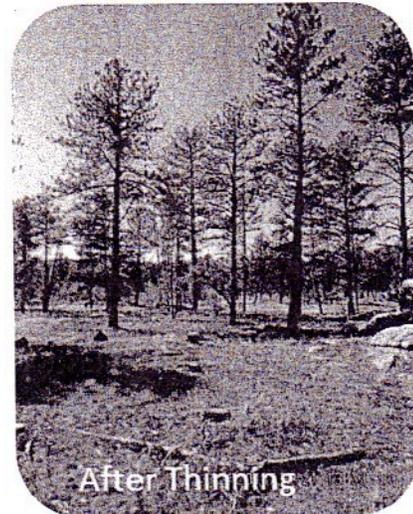
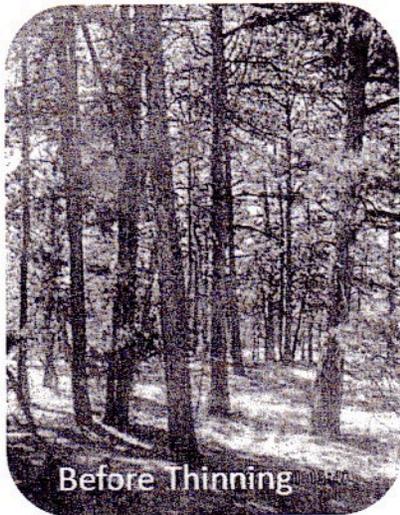
Provide forest products as a by-product of meeting the above objectives, including the removal of dead, dying and infested trees.

The following treatments are proposed within the Planning Area and are summarized below (refer to attached map):

Density Management (829 acres) – This treatment involves the selective removal (thinning) of some trees within a stand to increase growth in the remaining trees. Stands receiving this treatment are often even-aged. This form of treatment is generally referred to as commercial “thinning” and favors retention of the healthiest trees that best meet structural and compositional goals. Density Management treatment within this project area would be attained by mechanical methods (ground based) of harvesting and on-site hand thinning.

The two most important benefits of this type of treatment are retention, which favors the healthiest trees, and stand thinning, which reduces competition between dominant and co-dominant trees and wildfire risk. (See photos below).

It is anticipated that, where appropriate, trees could be removed through commercial harvest and or on-site hand thinning. The majority of these stands are accessed by the existing road system, road maintenance would occur on the existing road prism such as; ditch line cleaning, new culverts where needed, drain dips where needed and re-contouring for safe hauling and passage of public vehicles. No new permanent roads would be constructed. Short temporary roads or spurs (.4 miles) would be needed to access some stands (refer to attached map); after the proposed project is completed these temporary roads would be ripped and seeded.



Broadcast Burn (829 acres) - Often thought of as a “prescribed burn,” broadcast burns are defined as, “the controlled application of fire to wildland fuels in their natural or modified state over a predetermined area.” Broadcast burns are often conducted to reduce wildland fire fuel loads, restore the ecological health of an area, or to clear weeds. Broadcast Burning within the Hy-Brook planning area would be used where appropriate to reduce thinning slash and any slash created by on-site hand thinning. Broadcast Burning would be completed by Forest Service fire personnel following Federal and State prescribed burning protocols’.

There would be no treatments within Riparian Zones.

I am interested in hearing any comments, concerns or issues you may have regarding this proposed action. A decision has not been made; this letter is part of the continuing public involvement process associated with project environmental analysis. Those who respond to this request for involvement will be kept informed of our progress and notified when our analysis is complete. Note all comments received in response to this solicitation will be part of the public record and will be made available for public review and release pursuant to the Freedom of Information Act (5 USC 552). Comments concerning the scope of this project must be received within 30 days of the publication of this notice in the newspaper of record.

To assist the Forest Service in identifying and considering issues and concerns on the proposed action, comments should be as specific as possible. Only individuals or entities who submit timely and specific written comments will have eligibility to file an objection under 36 CFR 218.8. For objection eligibility, each individual or representative from each entity submitting timely and specific written comments must either sign the comment or verify identity upon request. Issues raised in an objection must be based on previously submitted timely, specific written comments regarding the proposed action unless based on new information arising after the designated comment opportunities.

For additional information regarding the Proposed Action, please call Jim Fiorelli at (719) 836-3870. Please mail comments to Pikes Peak Ranger District, 601 South Weber Street, Colorado Springs, Colorado 80903 ATTN: Jim Fiorelli or fax comments to (719) 836-3875 ATTN: Jim Fiorelli. You may also e-mail comments to jfiorelli@fs.fed.us, in the subject line write ATTN: Hy-Brook.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Allan D. Hahn". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "A" and "H".

ALLAN D. HAHN
District Ranger

Enclosures (2)