

You are subscribed to Huckleberry Landscape Restoration Project for USDA Forest Service. The Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) is now available, public comment period to begin soon.

Dear Interest Party,

The Council Ranger District, Payette National Forest, is seeking public comment on the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) for the Huckleberry Landscape Restoration Project.

The Huckleberry Landscape Restoration Project is within the Forest's 800,000 acre Weiser-Little Salmon Headwaters Project area and part of the Collaborative Forest Landscape Restoration Program (CFLRP). The Proposed Action was developed in response to Agency direction and policy, input from interested members of the public, and from recommendations received in comments provided by a local collaborative, the Payette Forest Coalition (PFC).

The Project area is located 15 miles west of New Meadows, Idaho on the Payette National Forest, Council Ranger District, in Adams County. It encompasses approximately 67,000 acres within the Brownlee Reservoir Subbasin, including the Indian, Lick, and Bear Creek subwatersheds near the communities of Bear and Cuprum, Idaho. Proposed restoration activities include timber harvest, biomass harvest, road reconstruction, road realignment, temporary road construction, road storage, road decommissioning, culvert removal, culvert replacement, thinning of sub-merchantable trees, prescribed fire, and other actions.

Specific vegetation treatments are proposed to enhance northern Idaho Ground squirrel habitat, a threatened species as listed by the Endangered Species Act, as well as species dependent on dry coniferous forests (e.g., white-headed woodpecker), while maintaining habitat for other Forest sensitive and ESA-listed species. Proposed recreation improvements include developed and dispersed recreation site improvements, motorized and non-motorized trail development and realignment, trailhead improvements, and the conversion of Smith Mountain Lookout to a public rental cabin.

The Notice of Availability (NOA) for the DEIS is expected to appear in the Federal Register June 21, 2019. The opportunity to comment ends 45 days following the date of publication of the NOA in the Federal Register. A legal notice of the opportunity to comment will be published in the Idaho Statesman, the legal newspaper of record, soon after the NOA is published.

How to Comment and Timeframe

The Environmental Protection Agency is expected to publish a Notice of Availability (NOA) for the DEIS in the Federal Register on June 21, 2019. Comments concerning this action will be accepted for 45 days following that date. The publication date of the NOA in the Federal Register is the exclusive means for calculating the comment period for the DEIS. Those wishing to comment should not rely upon dates or timeframe information provided by any other source. A legal notice of the opportunity to comment will be published in the Idaho Statesman, the legal newspaper of record, soon after the NOA is published.

The preferred method to submit comments is electronically via the project webpage at: <https://www.fs.usda.gov/project/?project=50218>.

Simply click on “Comment/Object on Project” under the “Get Connected” panel on the right side of the page and fill out the web form with your comments. Electronic comments may also be attached to the web form submitted in a format such as pdf, plain text (.txt), rich text format (.rtf), and Word (.doc or .docx).

Written comments will also be accepted and may be submitted to Keith Lannom, Forest Supervisor, Payette National Forest, 500 North Mission Street Building 2, McCall, Idaho 83638 or by fax to 208-634-0744. The office business hours for those submitting hand-delivered comments are 8:00 am to 4:30 pm Monday through Friday, excluding holidays.

Establishing Eligibility to Object

This project is subject to 36 CFR 218.7 parts (a) and (b). In order to be eligible to file an objection, specific written comments related to the project must be submitted during scoping, or during the comment period on the draft EIS in accordance with procedures in 40 CFR 1506.10, or during any other periods public comment is specifically requested on this EIS (36 CFR 218.5). Individual members of organizations must have submitted their own comments to meet the requirements of eligibility as an individual. Objections received on behalf of an organization are considered as those of the organization only. Comments must have an identifiable name attached or verification of identity will be required. A scanned signature may serve as verification on electronic comments. For objection eligibility each individual or representative from each entity submitting timely and specific written comments regarding the proposed project must either sign the comments or verify identity upon request. Names and addresses of those who comment and/or file objections will become part of the public record. All comments received will be published with authorship information in the public reading room on the project webpage.

For additional information, please contact Mark Fox, Project Leader at the Council Ranger District, 208-253-0164, mark.fox@usda.gov.