
File Code: 5150
Date: August 22, 2017

Dear Neighbor,

The Boulder Ranger District is seeking public comments on the proposed BRD Defensible Space Project in Boulder and Gilpin counties. The purpose of this project is to expand defensible space by creating openings in the forest canopy, thinning, and aspen enhancement on National Forest System (NFS) lands adjacent to non-Forest Service lands.

This proposed project includes vegetation management activities on approximately 1,210 acres of NFS lands adjacent to private property throughout the district. Over the last decade, the number of acres and homes burned in wildfires has increased dramatically. More than 1,000 homes have been destroyed in wildfires in Colorado since 2012.

The analysis area includes NFS lands adjacent to all non-Forest Service lands within the Boulder Ranger District proclaimed boundary except for such lands within the City of Boulder Arapaho glacier watershed, City of Longmont Button Rock reservoir, NFS wilderness areas, NFS roadless areas, NFS lands that are habitat for Preble's jumping mouse, and the Forsythe II project boundary. These areas are either not eligible for treatment under this proposal and require more extensive analysis or the USFS doesn't foresee future requests due to the adjacent properties being owned by city entities. The area within Forsythe II is currently covered under the Forsythe II Environmental Analysis.

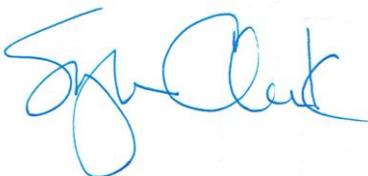
This project will complement defensible space mitigation work that has been completed by private landowners by allowing them to treat up to 300 feet on NFS lands through manual felling of trees and slash disposal (landowners will be responsible for removing trees & slash from NFS lands); it will also support defensible space objectives and work completed by Wildfire Partners with Boulder County, Gilpin County, and all of the Community Wildfire Protection Plans located within the Boulder Ranger District boundaries.

The project planning team is currently considering possible treatments and developing project design criteria based upon on-going field and survey work in the area. Their findings will be reported in an environmental document and will take into account input from the public.

My preliminary assessment is that the scope of this work falls within a Categorical Exclusion (CE), and therefore neither an Environmental Assessment, nor an Environmental Impact Statement is required. Specifically, we would be using Categorical Exclusion 6: Timber stand and/or wildlife habitat improvement activities that does not involve use of herbicides or do not require more than 1 mile of road construction. 36 CFR 220.6(e)(6). If the CE is used, my decision on this project is not subject to objection.

Comments can be mailed to the Boulder Ranger District Office at 2140 Yarmouth Ave; Boulder, CO 80301; or emailed to comments-rocky-mountain-arapaho-roosevelt-boulder@fs.fed.us, on or before September 22, 2017. For additional information, contact Colin Hutten at 303-541-2524.

Sincerely,



SYLVIA CLARK
District Ranger

