

This notice appeared in the October 14, 2020 editions of the *Challis Messenger* and *Arco Advertiser*. It also appeared in the October 15 edition of the *Salmon Recorder Herald*. The Challis Messenger and Salmon Recorder Herald are the papers of record for the Salmon-Challis National Forest

Opportunity to Comment

Bayhorse, Salmon-Challis Fuels Reduction and Restoration, North Zone Vegetation Improvement, and Stormy Projects

30-Day Comment Period Under 36 CFR 218

The Salmon-Challis National Forest (Forest) is soliciting comments for the Bayhorse, Salmon-Challis Fuels Reduction and Restoration, North Zone Vegetation Improvement, and Stormy projects. I am contacting interested persons, groups, and agencies to request comments on these projects.

Project Descriptions

Bayhorse

The proposed action includes a variety of hazardous fuels reduction treatments over approximately 9,000 acres. Treatment types may include prescribed fire, hand thinning, and pile burning and may also include removal of non-commercial and commercial forest products. Currently, the Forest is planning to prepare an Environmental Assessment. Portions of this project fall with an Idaho Roadless Area. For more information, see the project website at: <http://www.fs.fed.us/nepa/fs-usda-pop.php/?project=58881>.

Salmon-Challis Fuel Reduction and Restoration

The Forest proposes to authorize prescribed burning and hand treatment of vegetation across the Forest on acres that need restoration or maintenance outside of designated wilderness. The overall project area where these activities could occur is roughly 2.4 million acres. This project does not propose commercial timber harvest. Currently, the Forest is planning to prepare a Categorical Exclusion. Portions of this project fall within Idaho Roadless Areas across the Forest. For more information, see the project website at: <http://www.fs.fed.us/nepa/fs-usda-pop.php/?project=58813>

North Zone Vegetation Improvement

The proposed action includes a variety of vegetation enhancement treatments across the North Zone of the Forest including whitebark and aspen restoration, fuels reduction, and prescribed fire. The overall project area where activities could occur is roughly 1.4 million acres. This project does not propose commercial timber harvest. Currently, the Forest is planning to

prepare a Categorical Exclusion. Portions of this project fall within Idaho Roadless Areas across the North Zone of the Forest. For more information, see the project website at:

<http://www.fs.usda.gov/project/?project=56749>

Stormy Farm Bill

The proposed action includes hand and mechanical treatments over approximately 3,000 acres to create resilience to disease and insect infestations by increasing growing space for existing trees, decreasing hazardous fuels, and creating conditions needed for healthy tree growth. This project includes removal of non-commercial and commercial forest products. Currently, the Forest is planning to prepare an Environmental Assessment. For more information, see the project website at: <http://www.fs.fed.us/nepa/fs-usda-pop.php/?project=58729>

Level of Documentation and Comment Period

The Salmon-Challis has made a preliminary determination that these projects may be disclosed using either a Categorical Exclusion or an Environmental Assessment. Scoping, comment, and analysis will determine the final disclosure.

For the two projects where an Environmental Assessment is currently anticipated, this notice would serve as the comment period per 36 CFR 218 Subparts A and B.

For the two projects where a Categorical Exclusion may be prepared, this public comment period will aid the Forest in determining if issues of potential significance may be present. If so, the Forest may prepare an Environmental Assessment. To facilitate an Environmental Assessment, this notice would serve as the comment period per 36 CFR 218 Subparts A and B. If a Categorical Exclusion is utilized regulations at 36 CFR 218 would not apply.

This announcement will appear in the legal notice section of the *Challis Messenger* and *Salmon's Recorder Herald*, which are the papers of record for the Forest.

How to Comment and Timeframe

Individuals and organizations wishing to be eligible to object must meet the information requirements of 36 CFR 218 Subparts A and B. It is the responsibility of persons providing comments to submit them by the close of the comment period. Only those who submit timely and specific written comments regarding the proposed project during a public comment period established by the responsible official are eligible to file an objection under §218.

Written, facsimile, hand-delivered, and electronic comments concerning this action will be accepted for 30 calendar days following the publication of this notice in the *Challis Messenger* and the *Recorder-Herald*. The later of the two legal postings in the *Recorder-Herald* will be used to calculate the 30 calendar days. The publication date in the newspaper of record is the exclusive means for calculating the comment period for these projects. Those wishing to

comment should not rely upon dates or timeframe information provided by any other source. The regulations prohibit extending the length of the comment period.

Written comments must be submitted to the responsible officer: Salmon-Challis National Forest, ATTN: Chuck Mark, 1206 S Challis St, Salmon, ID 83467. The office business hours for those submitting hand-delivered comments are: 8:00 am to 4:30 pm Monday through Friday, excluding holidays. Due to Covid-19, those wishing to hand-deliver comments should make prior contact with the Forest at 208-756-5100 to make arrangements. Comments can also be submitted by FAX to 208-756-5151. Electronic comments must be submitted in a format such as an email message, plain text (.txt), rich text format (. rtf), or Word (.doc) to comments-intermtn-salmon-challis@usda.gov . In cases where no identifiable name is attached to a comment, a verification of identity will be required for objection eligibility. If using an electronic message, a scanned signature is one way to provide verification.

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. Comments received in response to this request will be available for public inspection and will be released in their entirety if requested pursuant to the Freedom of Information Act.

Additional information regarding these projects can be obtained from Jeff Huntzman by contacting the Salmon-Challis Supervisors Office at 208-756-5100 or through comments-intermtn-salmon-challis@usda.gov.