

Line Analysis Area. Endemic spruce beetle populations usually live in windthrown trees but as populations increase they may enter susceptible, large diameter trees. Spruce stands are highly susceptible to spruce beetle when they are on highly productive sites, have an average diameter at breast height greater than 16 inches, have a basal area greater than 150 square feet per acre, and are stands that are predominantly spruce.

The Count Line area contains these types of stands which are most susceptible to spruce beetle infestation. Significant spruce beetle activity was first observed in the County Line Analysis Area during the winter of 2003. Monitoring since then has shown spruce beetle infestations spreading through many of the stands in the analysis area at levels, which are resulting in significant spruce mortality. While spruce beetle epidemics cannot be stopped, stand management can reduce the adverse effects of beetle infestations and the resulting tree mortality.

The responsible Official is the forest Supervisor, Rio Grande National Forest, 1803 West Highway 160, Monte Vista, CO 81132. The NEPA decision to be made by the USFS official is whether to perform sanitation/salvage treatments to heavily impacted stands, whether to perform preventive thinning to susceptible stands, and whether to close 2.1 miles of open system road and convert it to a non-motorized trail.

No Action: The No Action Alternative is the current USFS management situation. Under this alternative, USFS would not treat stands currently infested with spruce beetle, would not perform preventative thinning in susceptible stands, and would not close 2.1 miles of open system road and convert it to a non-motorized trail.

Proposed Action: This alternative emphasizes forest health restoration activities by managing spruce stands to create conditions less favorable to the spread of spruce beetle, reducing the spruce beetle population in the analysis area. This alternative proposes to thin 715 acres of spruce-fir and to conduct sanitation/salvage harvest on 841 acres. Trap trees would be utilized in the preventative thinning areas. Following timber harvest activities 693 acres would be planted to spruce. This alternative requires 5.1 miles of pre-haul maintenance, 1.8 miles of dust abatement, 15.6 miles of road reconstruction, 0.3 miles of road re-alignment, and 2.1 miles of road closure and conversion to a non-motorized trail. From 24 to 29 MMBF of spruce

sawtimber would be harvested under this alternative.

Alternative C: This alternative addresses forest health restoration activities by reducing the spruce beetle population in the analysis area. This alternative proposes to conduct sanitation/salvage harvest on 841 acres. Following timber harvest activities 693 acres would be planted to spruce. This alternative requires 5.1 miles of pre-haul maintenance, 1.8 miles of dust abatement, 10.7 miles of road reconstruction and 0.3 miles of road re-alignment. From 22 to 25 MMBF of spruce sawtimber would be harvested under this alternative.

Comments Requested

This Notice of Availability initiates the public comment process that guides the development of the Final EIS. The USFS invites written comments and suggestions on the proposed action and alternatives, including any issues to consider, as well as any concerns relevant to the analysis. In order to be most useful, comments should be received by February 07, 2005. Comments received in response to this notice, including names and addresses of those who comment, will be considered part of the public record on this Proposed Action and will be available for public inspection. If you wish to withhold your name or street address from public review or from disclosure under the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA), you must state this prominently at the beginning of your written comment. Such requests will be honored to the extent allowed by law, but persons requesting such confidentiality should be aware that under the FOIA, confidentiality may be granted in only very limited circumstances, such as to protect trade secrets. The USFS will inform the requester of the agency's decision regarding the request for confidentiality, and where the request is denied, the agency will return the submission and notify the requester that the comments may be resubmitted with or without name and address within a specified number of days. All submissions from organizations and business, and from individuals identifying themselves as representatives or officials of organizations or businesses, will be available for public inspection in their entirety. Comments submitted anonymously will be accepted and considered; however, those who submit anonymous comments will not have standing to appeal the subsequent decision under 36 CFR Part 215. Upon completion of the Final EIS the document will be provided to the public

for review and comment. Comments and USFS responses will be addressed and contained in the Final EIS.

Dated: December 23, 2004.

Cindy Rivera,

Acting Forest Supervisor.

[FR Doc. 04-28691 Filed 12-30-04; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 3410-11-M

DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Forest Service

Tuolumne County Resource Advisory Committee

AGENCY: Forest Service, USDA.

ACTION: Notice of meeting.

SUMMARY: The Tuolumne County Resource Advisory Committee (RAC) will meet on January 24, 2005 at the City of Sonora Fire Department, in Sonora, California. The purpose of the meeting is to review the Five-Year Vegetation management Plan, considerations for the leveraging of funds, and environmental requirements for non-Forest Service projects.

DATES: The meeting will be held January 24, 2005, from 12 p.m. to 3 p.m.

ADDRESSES: The meeting will be held at the City of Sonora Fire Department located at 201 South Shepherd Street, in Sonora, California (CA 95370)

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Pat Kaunert, Committee Coordinator, USDA, Stanislaus National Forest, 19777 Greenley Road, Sonora, CA 95370 (209) 532-3671; E-mail pkauner@fs.fed.us.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: Agenda items to be covered include: (1) Five-Year Vegetation Management Plan overview; (2) leveraging of funds for projects; (3) field trip needs/desires as related to showcasing projects; (4) concept paper regarding fuels reduction projects; (5) CEQA/NEPA environmental requirements for non-forest Service projects; and (6) public comment on meeting proceedings. This meeting is open to the public.

Dated: December 22, 2004.

Jerome E. Perez,

Deputy Forest Supervisor.

[FR Doc. 04-28657 Filed 12-30-04; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 3410-ED-M

DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Forest Service

Notice of Lincoln County Resource Advisory Committee Meeting

AGENCY: Forest Service, USDA.