

Notices

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This section of the FEDERAL REGISTER contains documents other than rules or proposed rules that are applicable to the public. Notices of hearings and investigations, committee meetings, agency decisions and rulings, delegations of authority, filing of petitions and applications and agency statements of organization and functions are examples of documents appearing in this section.

DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Forest Service

Sequoia National Forest, California; Tobias Forest Ecosystem Restoration Project

AGENCY: Forest Service, USDA.

ACTION: Notice of intent to prepare an environmental impact statement.

SUMMARY: The Forest Service proposes ecological restoration in the Tobias Forest Ecosystem Restoration Project (Tobias Project) by encouraging a healthy and diverse forest ecosystem that is resilient to the effects of wildfire, drought, disease, and other disturbances. The Tobias Project is located in the Greenhorn Mountains on the Western Divide Ranger District, between Alta Sierra and Johnsondale in Tulare County, California. This project would commercially thin stands of mature trees, smaller than 30 inches in diameter at breast height (dbh), to increase heterogeneity and resilience on 1,290 acres. Hand thinning or mastication of immature trees and prescribed burning are proposed on 4,130. To restore the historic species composition, areas selected for thinning would favor Jeffrey and sugar pines, oak, and other shade intolerant species.

DATES: Comments concerning the scope of the analysis must be received by March 2, 2015. The draft environmental impact statement is expected March 2015 and the final environmental impact statement is expected August 2015.

ADDRESSES: Send written comments to George Powell, Acting District Ranger, Western Divide Ranger District, 32588 Hwy. 190, Springville, CA 93265. Comments may also be sent via email to comments-pacificsouthwest-sequoia@fs.fed.us, or via facsimile to (559) 539-2067.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: O'Dell Tucker, Planner, Western Divide

Ranger District, 32588 Hwy. 190, Springville, CA 93265.

Individuals who use telecommunication devices for the deaf (TDD) may call the Federal Information Rely Service (FIRS) at 1-800-877-8339 between 8 a.m. and 8 p.m. Eastern Time, Monday through Friday.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

Background

On August 12, 2014, a Notice of Intent to prepare an environmental impact statement for the Tobias Forest Ecosystem Restoration Project was published in the **Federal Register**, Vol. 79, No. 133, on pages 47082 to 47083. The Forest Service after reviewing comments and initial analysis of the proposed action and additional alternatives has decided to amend the proposed action and issue a new Notice of Intent to prepare an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS), for the Tobias Forest Ecosystem Restoration Project. This Notice of Intent gives the public an opportunity to review and comment on changes made to the proposed action. The publication of this Notice of Intent begins another scoping period for the environmental impact statement for the Tobias Project.

Purpose and Need for Action

The changes to the initial proposed action would help the Tobias project better meet the purpose and need for the project. The purpose of the project is to restore and maintain the forests throughout the project area to promote a healthy, diverse forest ecosystem that is resilient to the effects of wildfire, drought, disease, and other disturbances. There is a need to increase diversity in age, density, and stand structure; modify tree species composition to favor oaks and pines (Jeffrey and sugar) over incense-cedar and white fir; modify fuel conditions to reduce the risk of uncharacteristically large, stand-replacing fires; improve wildlife habitat structure for resting, roosting, denning, and nesting purposes for forest-dependent wildlife species; support local economies with sustainable and cost-effective use of any byproducts of project implementation; improve watershed conditions by decommissioning some roads when the project concludes, in addition to routine maintenance of existing roads.

Proposed Action

The proposed action would use ground skidding and skyline yarding to commercially thin in stands of mature trees smaller than 30 inches in diameter at breast height (dbh) to increase heterogeneity and resilience on 1,290 acres. Hand thinning of immature trees less than 10 inches dbh is proposed for 1,280 acres. Mastication is proposed on 2,400 acres of small, immature trees. The proposed mastication treatments would be implemented on slopes up to 35 percent. Prescribed fire would be introduced on the landscape after thinning and mastication are completed to reduce surface fuels and promote natural regeneration of species indigenous to the project area. Underburning is proposed for 450 acres in the home range core areas (HRCA) for the California spotted owl. Large snags and large woody debris would be protected. Riparian areas and meadows would be protected and improved. Approximately eight (8) miles of road decommissioning is proposed to improve the watershed condition, stream habitat, and water quality. The proposal also includes 450 acres of fuelbreak treatment along ridgelines.

Possible Alternatives

In addition to the proposed action, the EIS will evaluate the required No Action Alternative, an alternative that uses non-commercial treatments, and an alternative that is consistent with the interim guidelines for California spotted owl (CSO) or subsequent CSO Conservation Strategy.

Responsible Official

The responsible official is Kevin B. Elliott, Forest Supervisor, Sequoia National Forest, 1839 South Newcomb Street, Porterville, CA 93257.

Nature of Decision To Be Made

The responsible official will decide whether to adopt and implement the proposed action, an alternative to the proposed action, or take no action with respect to the Tobias Forest Ecosystem Restoration project.

Scoping Process

The Forest Service has decided to analyze this project under an EIS; therefore any scoping has to be published in the **Federal Register** as a Notice of Intent (NOI). This NOI will

initiate another 30-day scoping process, which guides the development of the EIS. It is important that reviewers provide their comments at such times and in such a manner that they are useful to the agency's preparation of the environmental impact statement. Therefore, comments should be provided prior to the close of the comment period and should clearly articulate the reviewer's concerns and contentions. If reviewers commented during one or both of the previous scoping and NOI periods, and your comments are the same, you do not need to comment again; your previous comments will be considered during the preparation of the environmental impact statement and you will be eligible to file an objection under the 36 CFR part 218 regulations.

Specific written comments are defined as comments ". . . within the scope of the proposed action, have a direct relationship to the proposed action, and must include supporting reasons for the responsible official to consider." (36 CFR 218.2). Submission of timely, specific written comments is a prerequisite for eligibility to file an objection under the 36 CFR part 218 regulations.

Comment Requested

This project will follow the new objection procedures as directed by 36 CFR part 218. The objection process provides an opportunity for members of the public who have participated in opportunities for public participation provided throughout the planning process to have any unresolved concerns receive an independent review by the Forest Service prior to a final decision being made by the responsible official. Only those who provided specific written comments during opportunities for public comment are eligible to file an objection.

Comments received in response to this solicitation, including the names and addresses of those who comment, are part of the public record on this proposed action. Comments submitted anonymously will be accepted and considered, however anonymous comments will not provide the Agency with the ability to provide the respondent with subsequent environmental documents.

Authority: 40 CFR 1501.7 and 1508.22; Forest Service Handbook 1909.15, Section 21.

Dated: January 26, 2015.

Kevin B. Elliott,
Forest Supervisor.

[FR Doc. 2015-01775 Filed 1-29-15; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 3410-11-P

DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

Submission for OMB Review; Comment Request

The Department of Commerce will submit to the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) for clearance the following proposal for collection of information under the provisions of the Paperwork Reduction Act (44 U.S.C. chapter 35).

Agency: U.S. Census Bureau.

Title: Annual Wholesale Trade Survey.

OMB Control Number: 0607-0195.

Form Number(s): SA-42, SA-42A, SA-42(MSBO), SA-42A(MSBO), SA-42(AGBR), SA-42A(AGBR).

Type of Request: Reinstatement, with change, of an expired collection.

Number of Respondents: 7,210.

Average Hours per Response: 30 minutes.

Burden Hours: 3,663.

Needs and Uses: The Annual Wholesale Trade Survey (AWTS) covers employer firms with establishments located in the United States and classified in wholesale trade as defined by the North American Industry Classification System (NAICS). This sector comprises two main types of wholesalers: (1) Merchant wholesalers that sell goods on their own account (including sales offices and sales branches, except retail stores, maintained by manufacturing, refining, or mining enterprises apart from their plants or mines for the purpose of marketing their products) and (2) electronic markets, agents, and brokers that arrange sales for purchases for others generally for a commission or fees.

Respondents are separated into three classifications: (1) Merchant wholesale establishments, excluding manufacturers' sales branches and offices; (2) manufacturers' sales branches and offices; and (3) agents, brokers, and business-to-business electronic markets. The survey requests firms to provide annual sales, annual e-commerce sales, year-end inventories held inside or outside of the United States, method of inventory valuation, total operating expenses, purchases, and, for selected industries, commissions, and sales on their own account. These data are collected to provide a sound statistical basis for the formation of policy by various government agencies, as well as to serve as a benchmark for the estimates compiled from the Monthly Wholesale Trade Survey [OMB No. 0607-0190]. Results will be available, at the United States summary level, for selected

wholesale trade, and/or manufacturer's sales branches and offices and agents, brokers, representatives and electronic markets, industries approximately fifteen months after the end of the reference year.

Every 5 years, AWTS requests data on detailed operating expenses. During the next three years, detailed operating expenses will not be collected. The last time AWTS collected detailed operating expenses was in 2013 for the 2012 survey year. The plan is to reinstate these questions in 2018 as part of the 2017 AWTS data collection. Estimates are published based on NAICS, which has been widely adopted throughout both the public and private sectors.

The Bureau of Economic Analysis (BEA) uses the data to estimate the change in private inventories component of gross domestic product (GDP) and output in both the benchmark and annual input-output (I-O) accounts and GDP by industry. Data on sales taxes, which are collected on this survey quinquennially, are also used to prepare estimates of GDP by industry and to derive industry output for the I-O accounts. Data on detailed operating expenses, which will now be collected on this survey quinquennially, are used to produce national estimates of value added, gross output, and intermediate inputs and serve as a benchmark for the annual industry accounts, which provide the control totals for the GDP-by-state accounts.

The Bureau of Labor Statistics uses the data as input to its Producer Price Indexes and in developing productivity measurements. Private businesses use the estimates in computing business activity indexes.

Other government agencies and businesses use the data to satisfy a variety of public and business needs such as economic market analysis, company performance, and forecasting future demands.

In an effort to migrate our economic program toward online reporting and reduce paper usage, the AWTS encourages respondents to use the option of returning their data via the Census Bureau's online reporting system (Centurion). The Centurion system is designed to be secure and flexible for users. It allows respondents to complete and file in one session or to save and return over multiple sessions.

For the first time during the 2013 processing year, our initial mailing contained a letter and flyer that provided instructions on how to report data and receive help online, and did not include a paper questionnaire.

Affected Public: Business or other for-profit.