

lands which are suitable for timber harvest, provided that big game summer habitat objectives are met.

**Management Area 13.**—These are areas that contain special habitat characteristics which are allocated as Old-Growth. Local road construction is permitted, providing that they are restricted following use to protect snag characteristics.

**Management Area 14.**—These are areas that contain productive timber lands which are suitable for timber harvest, provided that grizzly bear habitat objectives are met.

**Management Area 15.**—These are areas that contain productive timber lands which are suitable for timber harvest while providing for other resource values.

**Management Area 17.**—These are areas that contain productive timber lands which are suitable for timber harvest while achieving scenery management objectives in major travel routes.

**Management Area 19.**—These are areas that contain steep slopes requiring only activities which minimize surface disturbance and maintain a health vegetative cover.

The Forest Service will consider a range of alternatives. One of these will be the "No Action" alternative, in which none of the proposed activities will be implemented. Additional alternatives will examine varying levels and locations for the proposed activities to achieve the desired conditions, as well as to respond to the issues and other resource values.

The EIS will analyze the direct, indirect, and cumulative environmental effects of the alternatives. Past, present, and projected activities on National Forest Lands will be considered. The EIS will disclose the analysis of site-specific mitigation measures and their effectiveness.

Public participation is an important part of the analysis. It will start with the initial scoping process (40 CFR 1501.7) which will begin with the publication of the notice. In addition, the public is encouraged to visit with Forest Service officials at any time during the analysis and prior to the decision. The Forest Service will be seeking information, comments, and assistance from Federal, State and local agencies and other individuals or organizations who may be interested in or affected by the Proposed Action. Public meetings are scheduled for February 28th in Troy, Montana, and March 1st at the Upper Ford Work Center on the Kootenai National Forest. Comments from the public and other agencies will be used

in preparation of the Draft EIS. The scoping process will be used to:

1. Identify potential issues.
2. Identify major issues to be analyzed in depth.
3. Eliminate minor issues or those which have been covered by a previous environmental analysis, such as the Kootenai Forest Plan EIS.
4. Identify alternatives to the proposed action.
5. Identify potential environmental effects of the Proposed Action and alternatives (i.e. direct, indirect, and cumulative effects).
6. Determine potential cooperating agencies and task assignments.

The principle environmental issues identified to date are related to:

1. Vegetation for wildlife habitat and watershed recovery.
  2. Security for Threatened, Endangered, and Sensitive species.
  3. Reallocation of designated Old-Growth.
  4. Protection of fish habitat and water quality.
  5. Sustaining natural processes.
  6. Entry into Roadless areas.
- Other issues commonly associated with salvage harvesting and road construction include: heritage resources, soils, and scenery management. The list may be verified, expanded, or modified based on public scoping for this proposal.

Consultation with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service has been ongoing with regard to listed species. The Montana Department of Health and Welfare-Division of Environmental Quality, Montana Department of Fish and Game, and the Kootenai Salish Indian Tribe will also be consulted.

While public participation in this analysis is welcome at any time, comments received within 30 days of the publication of this notice will be especially useful in the preparation of the Draft EIS, which is expected to be filed with the EPA and available for public review in June, 1995. A 45-day comment period will follow publication of a Notice of Availability of the draft EIS in the **Federal Register**. The comments received will be analyzed and considered in preparation of a final EIS, which will be accompanied by a Record of Decision. The final EIS is expected to be filed in September, 1995.

The Forest Service believes it is important at this early stage to give reviewers notice of several court rulings related to public participation in the environmental review process. First, reviewers of draft EIS's must structure their participation in the environmental review of the proposal so that it is

meaningful and alerts an agency to the reviewer's position and contentions *Vermont Yankee Nuclear Power Corp. v. NRDC*, 435 U.S. 519, 513 (1978). Also, environmental objections that could be raised at the draft EIS stage but that are not raised until after completion of the final EIS may be waived or dismissed by the courts *City of Angoon v. Hodel*, 803 F.2d 1016, 1022 (9th Cir, 1986) and *Wisconsin Heritages Inc. v. Harris*, 490 F.Supp. 1334, 1338 (E.D. Wis., 1980). Because of these court rulings, it is very important that those interested in this Proposed Action participate by the close of the 30 day comment period so that substantive comments and objections are available to the Forest Service at a time when it can meaningfully consider them and respond to them in the final EIS.

To assist the Forest Service in identifying and considering issues and concerns on the proposed action, comments should be as specific as possible. Reviewers may wish to refer to the Council on Environmental Quality Regulations for implementing the procedural provisions of the National Environmental Policy Act at 40 CFR 1503.3 in addressing these points.

I have the final authority for issuing a decision regarding this proposal. I have delegated the responsibility of preparing the EIS to Three Rivers District Ranger, Michael Balboni. My address is Kootenai National Forest, Supervisor's Office, 506 Hwy 2 West, Libby, MT 59923.

Dated: January 30, 1995.

**Robert L. Schrenk**

*Forest Supervisor.*

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### Fall Creek Postfire Project, Payette National Forest, Idaho

**AGENCY:** Forest Service, USDA.

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

**SUMMARY:** In the summer and fall of 1994, the Blackwell Fire covered 56,000 acres of Payette National Forest northeast of McCall, Idaho. The Forest Service intends to prepare an Environmental Impact Statement for the Fall Creek portion of the wildfire area to assess and disclose the environmental effects of a proposal. The purpose of the Proposed Action is to remove fire-killed and imminently dead timber, recover its economic value and meet socio-economic demands of local communities, reduce fuel loading, reforest the area, and retain and enhance wildlife habitat.