

**File Code:** 1950

**Date:** 08/08/2018

Dear Interested Party,

The United States Forest Service, Mammoth Ranger District of the Inyo National Forest is proposing to undertake the Red's Meadow Hazardous Fuels Reduction Project. The area in and around Red's Meadow as well as east along highway 203 is densely forested and susceptible to high severity crown fires. These conditions are hazardous to visitors as there is only one ingress and egress into the area which could easily be blocked or become inaccessible in the advent of a wildfire. High fuel loads and the potential resulting high severity wildfire pose a significant threat to the safety of visitors and firefighters, as well as campgrounds, resorts, and trailheads. In addition, a high severity fire would damage the San Joaquin watershed, and adversely impact the San Joaquin River. Such a fire could result in flooding, sedimentation of the river, mortality of trout, and reduce recreation opportunities. Existing dense stand conditions are also detrimental to forest health, resulting in increased mortality due to drought and pest and pathogen outbreaks.

The Red's Meadow Hazardous Fuels Reduction Project would address the above issues by thinning standing and surface fuels in order to reduce fuel loads and potential wildfire severity on 2,149 acres within the project area (see enclosed map). Treatments will be designed to create defensible space around roads to improve ingress and egress, and reduce fuels around campgrounds, resorts, and developed recreation areas. This will reduce the likelihood of high severity fire, reduce the hazard to fire fighters and visitors, and improve the likelihood of buildings being protected from wildfire. It will also improve forest health by increasing residual tree vigor as a result of increased growing space following thinning, and reduce the impact of wildfire to the San Joaquin watershed.

In general, treatments are designed to reduce tree densities, ladder fuels, and surface fuels in order to reduce the likelihood of crown fires, and reduce intensity of surface fires.

Fuels reduction treatments will include:

- Thinning of select trees up to 30 inches in diameter, and conifers encroaching in meadows or stands of aspens
  - Thinning of trees which are dead or dying from insect outbreaks or are infected by pathogens
- Retaining larger more vigorous fire resistant and resilient trees
- Ground-based equipment will be used to remove trees in areas with slopes less than 30%
- Hand labor, suspension systems, or aerial methods (cable / helicopter logging), may occur on steeper slopes
- Boles of trees greater than 8 inches in diameter may be sold as fuel wood or as sawlogs to be processed by contractors or the public
- Slash and residual material will be disposed of thorough: chipping, piling and burning, removal from the area, or other means
- Broadcast burning of units to reduce surface fuel loading may occur

\*For a detailed list of treatments see attached proposed action document\*



The proposed action is enclosed in this letter under "Proposed Action for Red's Meadow". For further information on the project as it progresses please check Inyo National Forest Schedule of Proposed Action (SOPA) or contact Eric Vane, North Zone Vegetation Management Planner, at the Mammoth Ranger Station at 2400 Highway 203, phone (760) 924-5509, or email [ericdvane@fs.fed.us](mailto:ericdvane@fs.fed.us).

#### How to Comment and Timeframe

The proposed action is currently available for public response. With this letter we would like to invite your input regarding issues, opportunities, concerns, and suggestions for the proposed project.

This project is a hazardous fuel reduction project as defined by the Healthy Forest Restoration Act (HFRA), section 101(2), that is subject to comment pursuant to 36 CFR 218, subparts A and C. Only those who submit timely project-specific written comments during this public comment period, are eligible to file an objection. There will be no other opportunity for written public comment. Individuals or representatives of an entity submitting comments must sign the comments or verify identity upon request.

Written comments may be submitted by fax (760-924-5537) or by hand-delivery to the Mammoth Ranger Station at 2400 Highway 203, during normal business hours (Monday- Friday 8:00 A.M – 4:30 P.M). Electronic comments may also be sent to [ericdvane@fs.fed.us](mailto:ericdvane@fs.fed.us) in the following acceptable formats: plain text (.txt), rich text (.rtf), Adobe (.pdf), or word (.doc). They can also be mailed to Gordon Martin, c/o Eric Vane, Mammoth Ranger Station, P.O. Box 148, Mammoth Lakes, CA, 93546. Comments must be postmarked no later than September 7, 2018. Only those individuals or organizations who submit specific written comments during this scoping period will have standing to file an objection.

We will also be hosting a public meeting to discuss this project at the Mammoth Ranger Station (2400 Highway 203, Mammoth Lakes, CA) in the auditorium at 6:00 P.M on August 21, 2018.

Please contact Eric Vane, Fuels Planner, at the Mammoth Ranger Station at 2400 Highway 203, phone (760)924-5509, or email [ericdvane@fs.fed.us](mailto:ericdvane@fs.fed.us) for more specific information about how to provide comments on the project.

Sincerely,



Gordon P. Martin  
District Ranger