



United States Department of the Interior
BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT
Four Rivers Field Office
3948 Development Avenue
Boise, Idaho 83705
(208) 384-3300



In Reply Refer To:
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August 25, 2014

Dear Interested Parties:

This is to notify you that the Bureau of Land Management (BLM), Four Rivers Field Office has completed a Decision Record for the Garden Mountain Fuels Management Project. An Environmental Assessment (EA No. DOI-BLM-ID-096-2004-055) in May of 2005 and Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) in February of 2006. The Decision Record has been delayed pending acquisition of necessary road easements.

The project area is two miles northeast of Crouch, Idaho, and east of State Highway 55. The purpose of the treatments is to:

- reduce the risk of a stand-replacing crown fire to resources and communities around Garden Mountain
- improve suppression success by creating fuelbreaks that would protect lives and public and private property
- improve forest health conditions
- meet goals identified in the Cascade RMP (USDI BLM 1987) and the National Fire Plan (NFP, Cohesive Strategy, Goals 1, 2, and 3)

The EA and FONSI provide an analysis of impacts of the treatments that are associated with the approved actions and alternatives. The Decision Record outlines the activities that will take place and rationale for these activities.

The complete Decision Record can be found at the web address shown below. In summary, my decision is:

Decision - It is my decision to implement the proposed activities (shaded fuel break and forest health improvement treatments in Units 2, 3 and 4) that are economically viable at this time. These units (710 acres), which are on the lower slopes of Garden Mountain and closest to the subdivisions, hold the greatest promise of mitigating the wildfire risk to the five nearby subdivisions.

Rationale – Implementation of the shaded fuel break and forest health improvement treatments in Units 2, 3 and 4 would reduce the potential of the late summer perennial winds from the southwest pushing a running crown fire toward the housing subdivisions. These activities would reduce the potential by breaking up the vertical and horizontal continuity of the forest canopy and ground fuels on the BLM lands closest to the housing subdivisions.

The original forest health improvement treatment proposed for Unit 1 (helicopter yarding) would not be implemented since it is not economically viable at this time due to the present high cost of helicopter logging and mediocre lumber market. Additionally, Unit 1 is on the mid-to-upper slopes of Garden Mountain, furthest from the subdivisions and therefore, poses less wildfire risk to the subdivisions.

It is my belief that, at this time, the nearby subdivisions are best served by initiating the proposed activities on the lower slopes and foregoing the treatment of the upper slopes. To postpone lower slope activities, with scant evidence that helicopter logging will be economical within the next 10 years, would put the communities at unnecessary risk in the interim.

The FONSI, EA, and Decision Record are available at.....

<https://www.blm.gov/epl-front-office/eplanning/projectSummary.do?methodName=renderDefaultProjectSummary&projectId=38921>

For a copy of these documents on a CD you may contact Frank Marsh, Four Rivers Field Office, at (208)384-3389 or at fmarsh@blm.gov.

Sincerely,

Tate Fischer
Four Rivers Field Manager

Enclosure: Decision Record
CC list:
ICL Public Lands Office
Idaho Department of Fish and Game
Idaho Department of Lands
Idaho Wildlife Federation
The Wilderness Society
Western Watersheds Project