
File Code: 1950
Date: December 3, 2020

Dear Interested Citizen:

The Barlow Ranger District on the Mt. Hood National Forest has identified the need to mitigate risks associated with damaged and defective trees along National Forest System (NFS) roads within the perimeter of or adjacent to the White River Fire. The District has identified you as an individual, agency, group, or organization that might be interested in commenting on our proposal to fell and remove these trees.

Background

The White River Fire started from a lightning strike on August 17, 2020 and grew to approximately 17,442 acres. The fire killed or damaged trees adjacent to segments of existing NFS roads. Some of these trees pose a safety risk for vehicle traffic and/or pose a risk to the road system. Some trees were felled and either left in place or removed during fire suppression activities. However, numerous killed or damaged trees remain adjacent to NFS roads that are likely to fail within the next five years.

Purpose and Need for Action

The *purpose* of the project is to provide for long-term public and employee safety and protect NFS roads, particularly in places of frequent and high use for travel. Currently, there is an elevated risk to public and employee safety and road integrity due to numerous fire-killed or damaged trees. Therefore, there is a *need* to reduce risks through the felling of these trees.

Proposed Action

In order to meet the purpose and need, the proposed action is to fell trees within or adjacent to the fire perimeter which are rated as likely to fail within five years that are within striking distance to NFS roads. Trees would be evaluated and rated using the guidelines in *Field Guide for Danger Tree Identification and Response along Forest Roads and Work Sites in Oregon and Washington*.¹

Trees may be felled and removed from roadside areas where the Mt. Hood National Forest Land and Resource Management Plan (Forest Plan) management direction allows. Removal may be accomplished through timber sale contracts or small firewood sales. In some locations, felled trees may remain on site. Residual slash may be treated in some areas to address fuel loading and road maintenance concerns.

¹ Filip, G. et al. 2006. Field Guide for Danger Tree Identification and Response along Forest Roads and Work Sites in Washington and Oregon. R6-NR-TP-021-2106



The project would be designed to be consistent with the Forest Plan, as amended, as well as other applicable requirements. Only NFS roads located on NFS lands would be treated. A map showing the roads proposed for tree removal is included with this letter.

Type of Environmental Analysis

Based on the District's preliminary analysis, the proposed action may be categorically excluded from documentation in an environmental assessment or environmental impact statement. The District anticipates documentation of the project using categorical exclusion 36 CFR 220.6(d)(4): *Repair and maintenance of roads, trails, and landline boundaries*. If extraordinary circumstances requiring further analysis are discovered, an EA or EIS would be prepared.




Invitation to Comment

You are invited to comment on this proposed action. Please submit comments by December 18, 2020. The proposed project area is closed to the public at this time to protect public safety. Please reference the enclosed map. Comments received in response to this scoping notice, including names and addresses of those who comment will be considered part of the public record for this project and will be available for public inspection and released if requested under the Freedom of Information Act. Electronic comments are the preferred method and may be submitted to comments-pacificnorthwest-mthood-barlow@usda.gov. Due to the current concerns regarding the COVID-19 pandemic, I would like to strongly encourage you to submit comments electronically. However, if this is not possible, then specific written comments may also be submitted via mail to the Barlow Ranger District, **ATTN: White River Fire Roadside Tree Abatement Project**; 780 NE Court St.; Dufur, OR 97021. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, offices are closed and hand-delivered comments are not accepted at this time. For additional information, please contact Ashley Popham, NEPA Planner, at ashley.popham@usda.gov.








Sincerely,

KAMERON C. SAM
District Ranger

National Forest System Roads Within the White River Fire Burn Perimeter

-  U.S. Forest Service
-  White River Fire Burn Perimeter
-  NFS Roads

Estimated % Basal Area Mortality

-  0%
-  10%
-  25%
-  50%
-  75%
-  90%
-  >90%



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