

Scoping Document

Request for Comments

Adaven Vegetation Restoration Project

USDA Forest Service – Humboldt-Toiyabe National Forest
Ely Ranger District
Nye County, Nevada
February 29, 2012

PURPOSE AND NEED

The purpose and need for this project is to reduce expansion of pinyon pine and Utah juniper stands through the use of prescribed fire and mechanical treatments on approximately 5,000 acres. Also to restore vegetation health, reduce the threat of fire to the structures along the Cherry Creek and Pine Creek drainages, and promote under story regeneration in sage-steppe, and mountain shrub communities. There is also a need to increase diversity and create a mosaic of age classes and structure to restore and improve wildlife habitats in the project area.

LOCATION

The Project Area includes National Forest System lands in the Quinn Canyon Range in east-central Nevada near Adaven, along the Cherry Creek and Pine Creek drainages on the north and south sides of the project area. The project area is approximately 106 miles west, southwest of Ely, Nevada as shown on the enclosed map.

PROPOSED ACTION

This project will utilize mechanical methods and prescribed fire to treat vegetation communities within a 11,381 acre project boundary. This project may treat up to 5,000 acres of vegetation in a mosaic pattern. Prescribed fire treatments may occur during any season of the year within established prescriptions. Prescribed fire treatments may include:

- Ground ignition methods
- Aerial ignition using helicopters
- Management of naturally occurring wildfires

Mechanical treatments will likely be used around private lands, and along road edges to reduce the threat of fire to those lands and improve wildlife habitats in areas where prescribed fire would be difficult to implement and achieve objectives. Mechanical treatment methods that may be used include:

- Hand cutting/thinning with chainsaws (contracts/agreements)
- Chipping
- Commercial green fuelwood harvest using mechanized vehicles or other equipment.
- Slash created from treatments may be disposed through jackpot burning, chipping, or removal from the project area.

These treatments will create a diversity of age classes and structure to improve the health of vegetation communities and reduce the threat of wildfires. The project will create a mosaic of numerous openings that ideally will range from 0.25 to 200 acres in size scattered across the landscape. Larger openings may occur, particularly when utilizing prescribed fire as a tool. The following are the priority for treatments:

- 1) Reduce the threat of fire to the private lands within and adjacent to the project area.
- 2) Restoration of sagebrush steppe and mountain brush communities through the treatment of pinyon-juniper using either prescribed fire or mechanical methods.
- 3) Maintenance and improvement of big game winter ranges using mechanical treatment methods.
- 4) Restoration and improvement of riparian communities.

PROPOSED MITIGATION MEASURES

Wildlife

- No northern goshawks are known to occur in the area. If a nesting goshawk is identified during implementation, a nest area will be delineated and treatments will avoid this area during the nesting and fledgling periods.

Weeds

- During implementation, wash all vehicles prior to entering the project area to avoid transmission of invasive and/or noxious weeds seeds.
- As needed, control of noxious weeds and invasive species would be done under the Forest's approved treatment program.
- Prescribed fire treatments will avoid areas with concentrations of cheatgrass.

Heritage

- Avoid burning known historic wood features within the project area. Hand clearing of vegetation around these features may be done as needed to protect the sites.
- Avoid active ignition of other known cultural sites.

Range

- Grazing of prescribed burn areas will be prohibited for minimum of two years to ensure adequate recovery of the treatments.

Public Safety

- Roads within the project area would be closed to the public for the brief time that operations are in progress.
- Signs would be posted, as would a notification through public media.
- Local residents, permittees, and local governments would be notified by personal contact.
- The prescribed fire treatment areas would be checked and cleared of any campers, hunters, and any other recreational users prior to implementation.

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

Public involvement in the NEPA process is essential. Scoping is performed as one of the first steps to receive input from interested individuals, organizations and government agencies including federal, state, and local agencies. We invite you to submit written comments stating your concerns and issues that are relevant to the proposed project. We are currently in the early stages of planning on this project and your comments will help us to refine the proposal. We will utilize your comments to assist us in determining how and where to implement treatments. We will also use the comments we receive from you to analyze the effects of implementing this project.

To encourage public participation, the Forest Service will mail information to interested parties. Public involvement will be ongoing throughout the analysis process; however, at certain times public input will be specifically requested. Comments are requested by **March 30, 2012**. Comments received, including the names and addresses of those who comment, will be considered part of the public record on this proposal and will be available for public inspection. You must submit written comments or contact us if you want to ensure that you remain on the mailing list for this project.

WE WANT TO HEAR FROM YOU ...

If you would like more information or to comment on this proposal, write or call:

Carol Carlock, Fuels Specialist or
Jose Noriega, District Ranger
Ely Ranger District
825 Ave E
Ely, NV 89301
775-289-3031
ccarlock@fs.fed.us or jnoriega@fs.fed.us

**Ely Ranger District – Humboldt-Toiyabe National Forest
Adaven Vegetation Restoration Project**

Comment Form

We have provided this form for your convenience. Please use this or any other format to let us know your concerns or ideas about this project. Send comments by March 30, 2012 to: Carol Carlock, Fuels Specialist, or Jose Noriega, District Ranger, Ely Ranger District, 825 Avenue E, Ely, NV 89301.
For your information: names and individuals commenting on Forest Service proposals may be released if requested under the Freedom of Information Act.

Name: _____
Organization: _____
Address: _____
Contact Phone Number: _____

Here are my concerns, issues, and/or ideas about the Adaven Vegetation Restoration Project:

Please check all that apply...

- I have information about the area that may be helpful in the decision.
Feel free to contact me at _____.**
- Please send me the final decision document.**
- I have no further interest in this proposal and do not want to receive further mailings.**