

**Request for Comments
Notice of Proposed Action**

**Highway 6 Pinyon-Juniper Treatment Project
Humboldt-Toiyabe National Forest
Ely Ranger District
White Pine and Nye Counties, Nevada
February 1, 2013**

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

We are proposing this project to maintain and enhance sagebrush and mountain brush communities which provide important habitats for Rocky Mountain elk, sage grouse, mule deer and other sagebrush obligate species. This project involves the cutting of small pinyon and juniper trees that are invading the mountain sagebrush and mountain brush habitats near Currant Creek on the Ely Ranger District. Potential treatment areas will be between 5 to 500 acres in size within the project area. Trees selected for removal are young encroaching trees (e.g., less than 100 years of age or less than eight feet tall) that have established within the mountain brush and sagebrush habitats. On an average there are about 10-50 trees/acre. Slash generated from the treatment will be left on the ground to provide a microclimate that will retain moisture and facilitate the establishment and growth of grasses. This treatment will maintain and enhance the sagebrush-grass community type.

We will mechanically cut young pinyon and juniper trees within the project area. Approximately 6,000 acres may be treated within the larger project area. The treatments will involve chainsaws, brushers, loppers and/or hand saws. Vehicles will stay on existing roads and trees to be cut within individual project areas will be accessed by foot.

PROJECT LOCATION

The project area is located within the White Pine Mountain Range on the Ely Ranger District about 40 miles southwest of Ely, Nevada. The project area does not involve any treatments within wilderness areas. See enclosed map.

THE DECISION TO BE MADE

The decision to be made is whether or not to cut small pinyon and juniper trees from mountain brush and sagebrush communities.

HOW WE WILL FIGURE OUT WHAT TO DO

We will use the issues we receive from you to analyze the effects of implementing the project. After hearing from you, we will decide how to meet our goals and what measures we can take to eliminate or reduce any negative effects.

HOW YOU CAN HELP US DECIDE WHAT TO DO

We ask that you think about this proposal and let us know if you support the project or if you have concerns and specifically what those concerns are. This comment/scoping period provides those interested in or affected by this proposal an opportunity to make their concerns known prior to any decision being made.

In light of a recent court ruling (*Sequoia ForestKeeper v. Tidwell*, 11-cv-00679-LJO-DLB (E.D. Cal.)), the Forest Service will provide public notice, comment, and opportunity for administrative appeal for projects and activities documented with a "Decision Memo" (36 CFR 220.6(e)) until new instructions are

issued by the Washington Office, or the Agency issues regulations addressing the Court's ruling. In addition, the Forest Service will prepare Decision Memos and offer notice, comment and appeal opportunities for timber sales and proposed approvals of oil or gas exploration and development activities that rely upon Section 390 of the Energy Policy Act of 2005. Only those who provide comment or express interest in this proposal during this comment period will be eligible to appeal the decision pursuant to 36 CFR part 215 regulations.

HOW TO COMMENT AND TIMEFRAME

Written, facsimile, hand-delivered, oral, and electronic comments concerning this action will be accepted for 30 calendar days following the publication of this notice in the Ely Times, Ely NV. The publication date in the newspaper of record is the exclusive means for calculating the comment period for this analysis. Those wishing to comment should not rely upon dates or timeframe information provided by any other source. The regulations prohibit extending the length of the comment period. It is the responsibility of persons providing comments to submit them by the close of the comment period. Written comments must be submitted to: Jose Noriega, District Ranger, Ely Ranger District 825 Ave. E Ely NV 89301. The office business hours for those submitting hand-delivered comments are: 7:30 am to 4:30 pm Monday through Friday, excluding holidays.

Oral comments must be provided at the Responsible Official's office during normal business hours via telephone (775) 289-3031 or in person, or at an official agency function (i.e. public meeting) that is designed to elicit public comments. Electronic comments must be submitted in a format such as an email message, pdf, plain text (.txt), rich text format (.rtf), or Word (.doc or .docx) to kathyjohnson@fs.fed.us. In cases where no identifiable name is attached to a comment, a verification of identity will be required for appeal eligibility. If using an electronic message, a scanned signature is one way to provide verification. Individuals and organizations wishing to be eligible to appeal must meet the information requirements of 36 CFR 215.6.

Comments received in response to this solicitation, including names and addresses of those who comment, will be considered part of the public record for this project, will be available for public inspection, and released if requested under the Freedom of Information Act.

We want to hear from you ...

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

Kathy Johnson
Wildlife Biologist
Ely Ranger District
825 Ave E
Ely, NV 89301
775-289-5121
kathyjohnson@fs.fed.us

Highway 6 Pinyon-Juniper Treatment 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 3, 2013 to: Kathy Johnson, Wildlife Biologist (kathyjohnson@fs.fed.us), or Jose Noriega, District Ranger (jnoriega@fs.fed.us), 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: _____

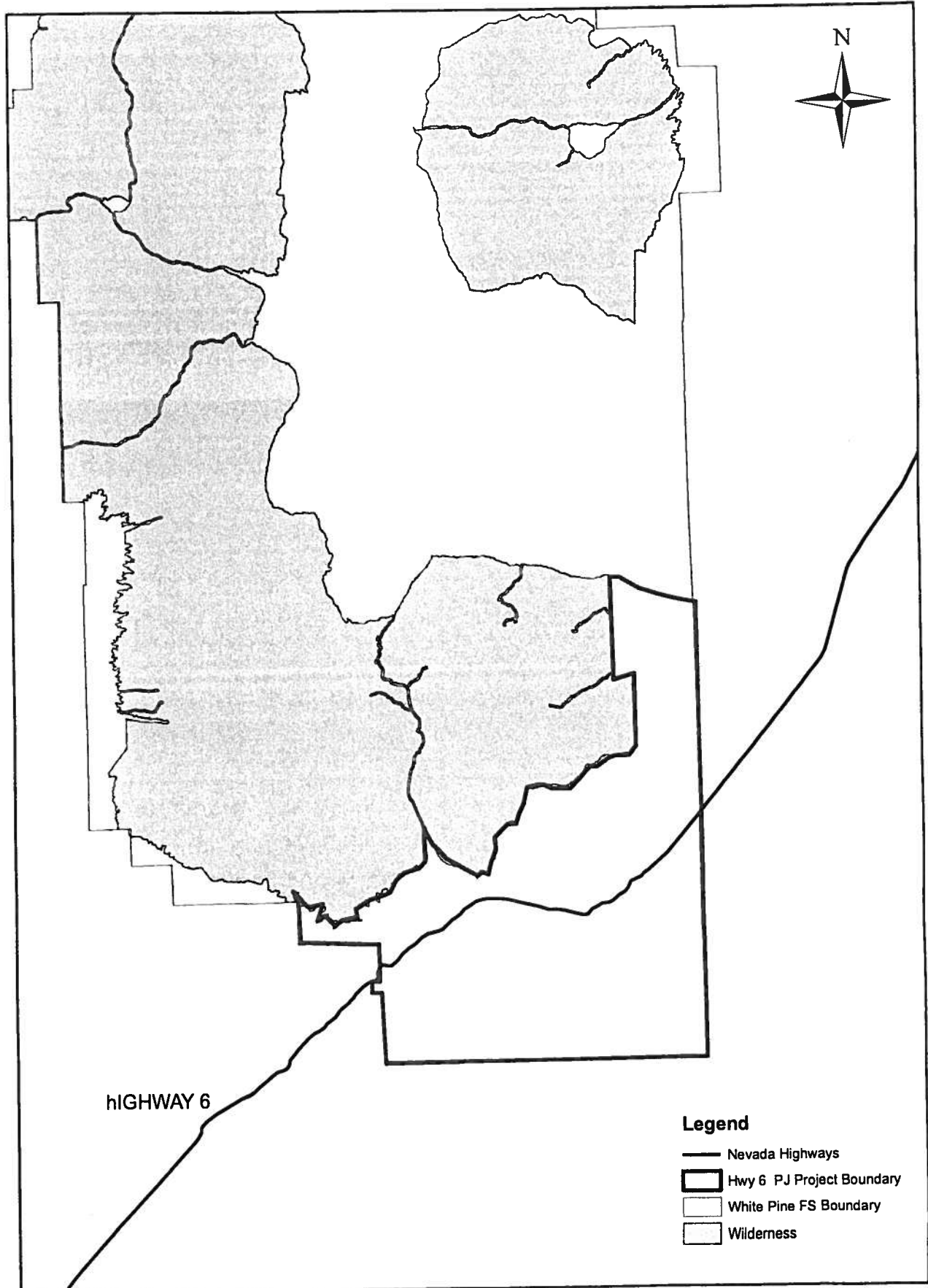
Organization: _____

Address: _____

Contact Phone Number: _____

Here are my concerns, issues, and/or ideas about the Highway 6 Pinyon-Juniper Treatment Project:

Hwy 6 PJ Project



Legend

- Nevada Highways
- ▭ Hwy 6 PJ Project Boundary
- ▭ White Pine FS Boundary
- ▭ Wilderness

0 3 6 12 Miles