

that the bidder has inspected the sale area and certifies that he or she understands that the Forest Service does not guarantee the amount or quality of the timber or forest product; (17) certification that the bidder will comply with the Forest Resources Conservation and Shortage Relief Act of 1990 as required by 36 CFR 223.87; (18) certification that the bidder has not been or will not be affiliated with the original purchaser of a contract on a timber sale that is being re-offered, when the original contract was terminated for breach or failure to cut; and (19) a list provided by the bidder of affiliates that control or have the power to control the bidder's company.

The tax identification number of each bidder will be entered into a computerized bid monitoring system. This system will be used to determine if speculative bidding or if unlawful bidding practices are occurring. The tax identification number also will be used to facilitate electronic payments to the purchaser. The data gathered in this information collection are not available from other sources.

Estimate of Burden: 370 minutes.

Type of Respondents: Individuals, large and small businesses, and corporations bidding on National Forest timber sales.

Estimated Number of Respondents: 500.

Estimated Number of Responses per Respondent: 2.0.

Estimated Total Annual Burden on Respondents: 6,167 hours.

Comment Is Invited

The agency invites comments on the following: (a) Whether the proposed collection of information is necessary for the stated purposes or the proper performance of the functions of the agency, including whether the information shall have practical or scientific utility; (b) the accuracy of the agency's estimate of the burden of the proposed collection of information, including the validity of the methodology and assumptions used; (c) ways to enhance the quality, utility, and clarity of the information to be collected; and (d) ways to minimize the burden of the collection of information on respondents, including the use of automated, electronic, mechanical, or other technological collection techniques or other forms of information technology.

Use of Comments

All comments received in response to this notice, including name and address when provided, will be summarized and included in the request for Office of

Management and Budget approval. All comments also will become a matter of public record.

Dated: April 23, 2003.

Abigail R. Kimbell,

Associate Chief, National Forest System.

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DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Forest Service

Caribou-Targhee National Forest, Idaho; Aspen Range Timber Sale/Vegetation Treatment

AGENCY: Forest Service, USDA.

ACTION: Notice of intent to prepare an environmental impact statement.

SUMMARY: The Soda Springs Ranger District, Caribou-Targhee National Forest will be preparing an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) to analyze the effects of commercial harvest of conifer trees, prescribed fire, realignment or surface improvement of old roads, and construction of fuel breaks in the Aspen Range analysis area. The legal description for this proposal is T. 8 S., R. 43 E., sections 27, 28, 29, 30, 31, 32, 33 and 34. T. 9 S., R. 43 E., sections 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 17 and 18 of the Boise Meridian, Caribou County.

DATES: Written comments concerning the scope of the analysis must be received within 30 days of the date of publication of this notice in the **Federal Register**. The draft environmental impact statement is expected October 2003 and the final environmental impact statement is expected February 2004.

ADDRESSES: Send written comments to Soda Springs Ranger District, Attn: David Wittekiend, 421 W. 2nd S., Soda Springs, ID 83276.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Questions concerning the proposed action and EIS should be directed to Doug Heyrend, Forester, (208) 547-4356.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

Purpose and Need for Action

The primary purpose of the project is to:

- Provide sawtimber on a sustained-yield basis.
- Release aspen from competing conifer and convert back to early seral species.
- Reduce conifer stand densities to improve vigor.

- Reduce fuel loads in the project area and stands bordering residential homes/cabins along the northwest forest boundary of the Trail Canyon area.

- Reduce sediment and maintenance on roads in project area.

Proposed Action

The proposal is to tractor harvest 881 acres of Douglas-fir, aspen/Douglas-fir and lodgepole pine stands using a variety of silviculture prescriptions. The harvest would be followed by 1,350 acres of prescribed fire to increase aspen cover types and reduce fuel loads in the 12,000 acre analysis area. The harvest volume is anticipated to be about 4.5 million board feet from two timber sales.

Irregular shelterwood/aspen regeneration silvicultural treatments proposed for 590 acres would be the dominant harvest prescription. The prescription would provide flexibility for aspen regeneration, snag preservation, remnant old growth retention and old growth replacement in situations of Douglas-fir bark beetle mortality. The objective for aspen regeneration is to incorporate the majority of the aspen clone for treatment. All aspen treatment areas would use prescribed fire for fuels treatment and site preparation to simulate the natural disturbance for aspen vegetative reproduction by suckers. Larger units that utilize coarse woody debris as barriers increase the success of aspen regeneration by having better dispersion of wild and domestic browsing/grazing animals across treated areas. Temporarily fencing portions of treated areas may be required to ensure regeneration.

Stand improving commercial thinnings and shelterwoods are planned for 196 acres. The focus of harvest activity would be on removing suppressed and intermediate trees to provide crown spacing and growing room (15-30 foot spacing) for residual dominant trees. Natural regeneration will occur over time but would not be immediately necessary to meet stocking standards. Machine fuels treatment (piling) would take place in the 55 acres of shelterwood prescription stands closest to the archery range and a 39 acre stand in North Sulfur Canyon. Prescribed broadcast fire would be used for site preparation of early seral vegetation and fuel treatment on the remaining 102 acres.

The only lodgepole stand planned for harvest is behind the archery range (this area is under special use permit to the Caribou Archers).

A seedtree/improvement cut is proposed for the 39 acre stand.