



Dear Interested Party,

The Lowman Ranger District of the Boise National Forest would like to know your concerns, questions, and suggestions regarding a proposal to mitigate threats from hazard trees, salvage merchantable dead or dying trees, decommission unauthorized routes causing resource damage, and plant tree seedlings in portions of the 2016 Pioneer Fire area. The proposal has been identified as the North Pioneer Fire Salvage and Reforestation Project. The responsible official for this project and the decision is Cecilia R. Seesholtz, Forest Supervisor, for the Boise National Forest.

The project area is located on National Forest System lands on the Boise National Forest, immediately north and south of Lowman, Idaho, and about 74 miles northeast of Boise, Idaho, in Boise County. Attachment 1: North Pioneer Fire Salvage and Reforestation Proposed Action includes a description of the proposed action and maps with specific locations identified. The scoping letter, attachments, and additional project information are available on the project web page: <https://www.fs.usda.gov/project/?project=50789>.

The purpose of this email is to share with you the attached information regarding the proposed North Pioneer Fire Salvage and Reforestation project and invite you to open-house meetings scheduled the week of February 6 to discuss any questions concerning the attached proposal (see dates and meeting locations below).

As identified in Attachment 1 of the scoping letter on the [project web page](#), immediate implementation is essential to successfully accomplish the project purpose and need (e.g., address hazard trees posing risks to public health and safety prior to the next recreation season). Therefore, the Boise National Forest intends to request an emergency situation determination (ESD) to facilitate immediate implementation of the proposed activities during the 2017 field season. Only the Chief and Associate Chief of the Forest Service may grant an ESD (36 CFR 218.21(a)).

An emergency situation at 36 CFR 218.21(b) is defined as follows:

A situation on National Forest System (NFS) lands for which immediate implementation of a decision is necessary to achieve one or more of the following:

- 1. Relief from hazards threatening human health and safety*
- 2. Mitigation of threats to natural resources on NFS or adjacent lands*
- 3. Avoiding a loss of commodity value sufficient to jeopardize the agency's ability to accomplish project objectives directly related to resource protection or restoration.*

If the Chief decides this project qualifies for an ESD, the project will be exempt from the objections process. This exemption allows us to implement the project as soon as the environmental analysis is completed and the decision is signed. Providing for immediate implementation following completion of the environment review allows the Boise National Forest to remove hazards safely, complete associated resource protection/restoration projects, and capture enough commodity value to market some of the trees. Often if material proposed for removal cannot be sold, many of the project's objectives cannot be met. Even if an ESD is granted, many opportunities for the public to be involved in planning this project will still exist, including responding to this proposed action, attending open houses, and commenting on the environmental analysis. Refer to Attachment 2 on the [project web page](#) for more information concerning an ESD.

How to Provide Comments

The Forest Service is contacting interested persons, groups, and agencies to gather pertinent feedback concerning the attached proposal. To be most useful, please make your comments as specific as possible. Your comments will help us further identify and address any specific benefits, issues, or concerns about this proposal.

Electronic, written, hand-delivered, and facsimile comments concerning this project will be accepted for 30 calendar days following publication of a legal notice in *The Idaho Statesman* (newspaper of record). The legal notice is scheduled to be published on January 28, 2017. The publication date in the newspaper of record is the exclusive means for calculating the comment period for this proposal. Those wishing to comment should not rely upon date or timeframe information provided by any other source. Regulations prohibit extending the length of the comment period.

Comments may be submitted through the North Pioneer Fire Salvage and Reforestation Project webpage: <https://www.fs.usda.gov/project/?project=50789>. To submit comments using the web form, select "Comment on Project" under "Get Connected" on the right panel of the project's webpage.

Email comments must be submitted in a format such as an email message, plain text (.txt), rich text format (.rtf), Adobe (.pdf), or Word (.doc) to comments-intermtn-boise-lowman@fs.fed.us. Please put "Pioneer North" in the subject line of e-mail comments. Comments must have an identifiable name attached or verification of identity will be required. A scanned signature may serve as verification on electronic comments.

Written comments must be mailed to: Boise National Forest, Lowman Ranger District, Attention: John Kidd, District Ranger, 7359 Highway 21, Lowman, ID 83637 or faxed to 208-259-3366. The office hours for those submitting hand-delivered comments are: 8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., Monday through Friday, excluding holidays. Comments received in response to this request will be available for public inspection in the "[Public Comment Reading Room](#)" on the project webpage and will be released in their entirety, if requested, pursuant to the Freedom of Information Act.

Individuals and entities who have submitted specific written comments at this stage (i.e., scoping) will be eligible to object if the ESD is not approved. Issues raised in objections must be based on previously submitted written comments specific to the proposed project or activity unless the objection concerns an issue that arose after the opportunities for comment.

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, available for public inspection, and released if requested under the Freedom of Information Act.

Open House Meetings

We recognize the importance of the public involvement process for this project and are aware that, should it be approved, the expedited emergency procedure impacts the structure of that process. Thus, we will be employing a variety of communication options to share and receive information from interested parties, including hosting three open house meetings during the week of February 6:

- February 8: Boise, Best Western at the Airport, 6 p.m.–8 p.m.
- February 9: Idaho City, High School Cafeteria, 6 p.m.–8 p.m.
- February 10: Garden Valley, High School Multi-purpose room, 6 p.m.–8 p.m.

Project team members will be in attendance to answer questions and share maps and other materials. These maps and materials will also be available on the project website:

<https://www.fs.usda.gov/project/?project=50789>.

Future Communications

To better serve the public, we are utilizing a new electronic messaging program that will allow us to communicate with interested members of public like you. This new program will allow you to manage subscriptions to Forest Service project electronic mailing list(s) and access immediate electronic information to project documents.

To take advantage this electronic information system, you must access the [North Pioneer Fire Salvage and Reforestation project web page](#), select the “Subscribe to Email Updates” link from the “Get Connected” menu, and provide your email address. After providing your address, you can also self-subscribe to additional Forest Service project electronic mailing lists and provide additional contact information, if desired, through the “Subscriber Preferences” link.

You may go online now to switch to electronic communication. If you wish to remain a hard-copy postal subscriber, please respond to this request for scoping comments with your desire to stay on the mailing list, even if you don’t have specific comments on the proposed action.

If you have any questions concerning this proposal, please contact John Kidd, Lowman District Ranger, at (208) 392-7300 or jkidd@fs.fed.us, or Clint VanZile, Pioneer North Team Leader, at (208) 365 7018 or cvanzile@fs.fed.us. Thank you for your continued interest and participation in this process.

Sincerely,

Melissa Yenke
Boise National Forest
Acting Forest Planner
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Boise, ID 83709
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Additional information about the Pioneer Fire Recovery and Restoration Effort is available on the following web pages:

- **Pioneer Fire Recovery and Restoration Web Page:** <https://www.fs.usda.gov/detail/boise/home/?cid=fseprd530485>
- **Pioneer Fire BAER Information:** <https://inciweb.nwccg.gov/incident/5052/>