

Legal Notice of Proposed Action
Willow Basin
Wildland-Urban
Interface Fuels
Treatment Project

The Moab/Monticello Ranger District on the Manti-La Sal National Forest proposes to mechanically thin vegetation within the Willow Basin wildland-urban interface (WUI), which directly poses a threat to private property and public and firefighter safety. The intent of this project is to reduce hazardous fuels in strategic locations on Forest Service lands which will help with subsequent suppression efforts to control wildfires that start within and outside treated areas.

The project area is approximately 1,725 acres, of which, about 1,000 acres of mechanical fuels treatment would occur. Mechanical thinning would be employed to breakup the fuel continuity and ladder fuels in the Gambel oak, pinyon-juniper and other mountain shrub communities that surround private lands and critical access routes that will be utilized by private residents, firefighters and suppression equipment. Crown separation would be created by thinning between individual trees, groups of trees, or groups of hardwood shrubs to provide a more open, savannah-like appearance with

reduced crown and fuel continuity. Follow-up of pile/jackpot burning would occur in the thinned areas. Periodic maintenance treatments of similar nature to reduce litter, breakup fuel continuity, and reduce fuel accumulation would be required in the future to maintain fuels at post-treatment levels.

The Forest Service has made a preliminary assessment that this proposal falls within categories of actions listed in Forest Service Handbook (FSH) that are excluded from documentation in an Environmental Assessment (EA) or Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) and that no extraordinary circumstances exist that would preclude use of the categories (FSH 1909.15, Chapter 31.)

The Forest Service is seeking information and comments from Federal, State, and local agencies as well as individuals and organizations that may be interested in, or affected by the proposed action. The Forest Service invites written comments and suggestions on the issues related to the proposal and the area being analyzed. Information received will be used in the preparation of an environmental analysis as required under the National Environmental Policy Act and to determine if this

project meets the criteria for Categorical Exclusion. A decision as to whether the project will be categorically excluded is expected to be made by September 2007.

This decision is subject to appeal pursuant to Forest Service regulations at 36 CFR 215. Appeals must meet the content requirements of 36 CFR 215.14. Only individuals or organizations who submitted comments or otherwise expressed interest in the project during the comment period may appeal. Appeals must be postmarked or received by the Appeal Deciding Officer within 45 days of the publication of this notice in the Moab Times-Independent. This date is the exclusive means for calculating the time to file an appeal. Time-frame information from other sources should not be relied on. Incorporation of documents by reference is not allowed. The Appeal Deciding Officer is Alice B. Carlton, Forest Supervisor on the Manti - La Sal National Forest. Appeals must be sent to: Appeal Deciding Officer, Intermountain Region USFS, 324 25th Street, Ogden, Utah 84401; or by fax to 801-625-5277; or by email to: appeals-intermtn-regional-office@fs.fed.us. Emailed appeals must be submitted in rich text (rtf), Word (doc) or portable document format (pdf) and

must include the project name in the subject line. Appeals may also be hand delivered to the above address, during regular business hours of 8:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Monday through Friday.

A public meeting regarding this proposed project will be held at the new Moab Senior Center on July 26, 2007 from 4-7:00 pm. Written comments must be submitted to Lee Johnson - District Ranger or Brenda Dale - Team Leader, Moab/Monticello Ranger District, PO Box 820, 496 East Central, Monticello, UT 84535. The office business hours are: 8:00 am - 4:30 pm Monday through Friday, excluding holidays. Oral comments must be provided at the Responsible Officials office during normal business hours via telephone (435-587-2041) 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 rich text

format (.rtf) or Word (.doc) and should be e-mailed to comments-intermtn-mantilasal-moabmonticello or bdale@fs.fed.us. Faxed comments may be sent to 435-587-2637. Comments must meet the information requirements of 36 CFR 215.6. Only those who submit timely comments will be eligible to appeal the subsequent decision under 36 CFR 215.

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