



Los Padres National Forest

Schedule of Proposed Environmental Actions

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April-June, 2001

DEAR FRIEND

The purpose of the "Schedule of Proposed Environmental Actions" (SOPA) is to provide you with an overview of environmental analyses currently in progress or recently completed in Los Padres National Forest pursuant to the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA). We hope that this information will help you become involved early in the decision-making process for those projects which might interest or affect you.

The SOPA is issued quarterly (January, April, July, October). Projects are listed by county and by the categories described below. Each description includes a brief explanation and location of the project, current status, the estimated decision date, and the name of the project leader.

For further information regarding specific projects, opportunities for participation, or the availability of documents, please contact the appropriate project leader at the Forest Service office listed under each project. For general information on the environmental analysis process, contact Forest Planner, Jim Turner, in the Forest Supervisor's Office. For all other matters regarding the SOPA, contact Kathy Good in the Public Affairs Office.

Analyses Being Scoped

This category includes new projects for which public input is being or is about to be solicited.

Analyses Completed

This category includes projects which have been categorically excluded from documentation in an Environmental Assessment (EA) or Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) and which have culminated in the preparation of a Decision Memo (DM) as required by Chapter 31.3, FSH 1909.15.

Analyses Documented

This category addresses recently completed EA's and EIS's for which a Decision Notice (DN) has been issued.

Analyses in Progress

This section includes projects currently under analysis.

FORESTWIDE

Analyses Being Scoped

None.

Analyses in Progress

Oil and Gas Leasing Analysis. Forestwide analysis to identify lands which should or should not be made available for oil and gas leasing. The decisions made as a result of this analysis will not result in on-the-ground activities. Any exploration, drilling or field development which might be proposed following the forestwide study would require further analysis and separate site-specific decisions. A Draft EIS is expected in Spring 2001. Contact: Al Hess, Team Leader, Ojai Ranger District.

MONTEREY COUNTY

Analyses Being Scoped

South Coast Ridge Road Timber Stand Improvement. Proposal to cut the brush around seedlings and saplings on 40 acres along the South Coast Ridge Road. Estimated decision date: Spring 2002. Contact: John Kelly, Forester, MPRD.

Hunting Guide and Outfitter/Guide SUP. Proposal to conduct guided hunting trips using stock and camping equipment on National Forest System Lands within the Ventana and Silver Peak wilderness areas. Estimated decision date: September 2001. Contact Manuel Madrigal, Recreation Officer, MRD.

Analyses Completed

None.

Analyses Documented

Control of Invasive Weeds on the Big Sur Coast.

Proposal to treat with herbicides non-native invasive weeds at twelve sites (approximately 36 acres) on the Big Sur Coast. The method of application will be low pressure spraying on target plants. Estimated decision date: April 2001. Contact: Jeff Kwasny, Resource Office, MRD.

Analyses in Progress

Coast Highway Management Plan (CHMP). The CHMP is a two-phase effort: Phase 1 relates to storm damage activities and Phase 2 is a more comprehensive planning effort that addresses corridor management on a larger scale. The Phase 1 effort is intended to develop interagency agreements and facilitate storm damage response for future years including consideration of potential material disposal sites, on and off National Forest System lands. Environmental analyses will be conducted on each potential site before any decision is made to permit their use as material deposit sites. Estimated decision date: unknown. Contact: Jeff Kwasny, Resource Officer, MRD.

Monterey Institute for Research in Astronomy (MIRA).

Proposal to renew the MIRA Special Use Permit to continue operating a year-round observatory within the existing site plan on Chews Ridge. T19S, R4E, Sec 6, MDB&M. Estimated decision date: July 2001. Contact: William Metz, District Ranger, MRD.

Big Sur Coastal Grazing Permits. Authorization of livestock grazing on the following eight grazing areas/allotments: Gorda, Twitchell, Buckeye, Alder Creek, Salmon Creek, Torre Canyon, San Carpoforo and other recently acquired National Forest System lands. This analysis will be used in the decision-making process to authorize or not authorize grazing, and if authorized, to what extent. Estimated decision date: September 2001. Contact: Jeff Kwasny, Resource Officer, MRD.

SAN LUIS OBISPO COUNTY

Analyses Being Scoped

Brookshire Prescribed Burn. Proposal to use management ignited prescribed fire to treat approximately 18,000 acres of standing chaparral vegetation to reduce the threat of catastrophic wildfire by reducing the fuel loading, and to restore watershed health. The project boundary lies to the east of Tepusquet Canyon along the national forest boundary, south of Madre peak, north of Barrel Springs Campground, and will run on the west side of the Sierra Madre Ridge Road from Madre Peak to Miranda Pines Campground in the Sisquoc and Cuyama watersheds. T23N, R18E, Sec 31, 32; T11N, R17E, Sec 4-10, 16-21, 29, 30; T11N, R18E, Sec 6; T12N, R17E, Sec 36;

T11N, R17E, Sec 1, 11-15, 22-36; T10N, R17E, Sec 1-12, 14-18, 20-22, 27, 28, SBBM. Estimated decision date: June 2001. Contact: Carol Henson, Forest Fuels Officer, SBRD.

Cerro Alto Trail Reroute. Proposal to reroute a steep 1,000 foot section of the trail to reduce soil erosion. The project includes brush removal and establishing new trail tread. The trail will be rerouted to a grade of approximately 6% to 7%. The Cerro Alto Trail is located in T29S, R11E, Sec 12, MDB&M. Estimated decision date: unknown. Contact: Ken Kunert, SLRD.

Analyses Completed

None.

Analyses Documented

San Lorenzo Mining Claims. The District Ranger on March 27, 2001, signed a Decision Notice and Finding of No Significant Impact for the environmental assessment that addressed the placer mining proposal in the North Fork of Willow Creek. T30S, R16E, Sec 1&2, MDM. The selected alternative was the miner's proposal with mitigation measures, including avoidance of two cultural sites. Implementation is scheduled for May 2001. Contact: Dennis Cooper, Lands and Minerals Officer, SLRD.

Integrated Vegetation Management for PG&E Line.

The District Ranger on January 17, 2001, signed the Decision Notice and Finding of No Significant Impact for the environmental assessment that addressed the integrated vegetation management for PG&E's Diablo-Midway 500 kv transmission line. Implementation is scheduled for March/April 2001. Contact: Dennis Cooper, Lands and Minerals Officer, SLRD.

Analyses in Progress

Eastern Star and Denver Abandoned Mines. Proposal by the Forest Service to reclaim two abandoned mines. T8N, R29W, Sec 18 and T8N, R20W, Sec 29, SBBM. Estimated decision date: unknown. Contact: Dennis Cooper, Lands and Minerals Officer, SLRD.

American Tower Additions to Communications Facility at Tassajera Peak Site.

Proposal by American Tower to add a new tower at an existing site (formerly owned by AT&T) at the Tassajera Peak Communications Site, T29S, R12E, Sec 20, MDM. Estimated decision date: unknown. Contact: Dennis Cooper, Lands and Minerals Officer, SLRD.

Coast Highway Management Plan (CHMP). The CHMP is a two-phase effort: Phase 1 relates to storm damage activities and Phase 2 is a more comprehensive planning effort that addresses corridor management on a larger scale. The Phase 1 effort is intended to develop interagency agreements and facilitate storm damage response for future years including

consideration of potential material disposal sites, on and off National Forest System lands. Environmental analyses will be conducted on each potential site before any decision is made to permit their use as material deposit sites. Estimated decision date: unknown. Contact: Jeff Kwasny, Resource Officer, MRD.

San Carpofozo Grazing Permit. Authorization of livestock grazing on the San Carpofozo allotment and other recently acquired National Forest System lands. This analysis will be used in the decision-making process to authorize or not authorize grazing, and if authorized, to what extent. Estimated decision date: June 2001. Contact: Jeff Kwasny, Resource Officer, MRD.

SANTA BARBARA COUNTY

Analyses Being Scoped

Figueroa Mountain Timber Stand Improvement. Proposal to cut the brush around seedlings and saplings on 60 acres on the East Pinery Plantation and Catway Road areas. Estimated decision date: Spring 2002. Contact: John Kelly, Forester, MPRD.

Camino Cielo Fuelbreak. Proposal to treat standing chaparral in a 300 foot wide band for a distance of approximately 40 miles along the West and East Camino Cielo Roads from Refugio Road east to Divide Peak. T4N, R25W; T5N, R24-32W, SBBM. Some of the fuelbreak has been in existence since the 1970's. The purpose of the project is to reconstruct/restore the existing fuelbreak to reduce the threat of catastrophic wildfire in the urban interface with Goleta, Santa Barbara and Montecito. The fuelbreak will be designed to maintain a diversity of vegetation age, size and density with mosaic patterns of unburned islands within the fuelbreak perimeter. This will result in irregular shapes and spotty patterns in the brush to maintain a natural appearance over time. The proposed work would be accomplished using a combination of the following methods: cutting the brush and stacking it by hand; mechanical brush crushing; chipping; pile burning and burning of standing brush using drip torches and a terratorch. Public scoping will begin in Spring 2001. Estimated decision date: August 2001. Contact: Diane Cross, Fuels Planner, ORD.

Winchester Gun Club. Analysis of the Winchester Gun Club special use permit renewal. T5N, R28W, Sec 18 & 19; T5N, R29W, Sec 13 & 14, SBBM. Estimated decision date: Fall 2001. Contact: Sharon Sprouse, District Ranger, SBRD.

Special Use Permits and Lease for Communication Sites and Access Roads. American Towers Inc. has purchased the building and tower structure at an existing and approved electronic communications site

in Olive Canyon, southeast of New Cuyama, in T9N, R26W, Sec 24, SBBM. The proponent proposes to continue to operate the existing facility under a new Special Use Permit. No new construction of additional structures (e.g. buildings or towers) will be authorized. Estimated decision date: Winter 2001. Contact: Loreigh Brannan, Special Use Administrator, MPRD.

Analyses Postponed

Montecito Community Fire Protection Plan. The Montecito Fire Protection District is proposing to reduce hazardous fuels in the community of Montecito, including a small area of National Forest System land along Southern California Edison access roads. They propose to clear flammable vegetation for a distance of 25 feet along the access roads, and clear three or four other areas to approximately 200 feet as fire equipment safety zones. T4N, R26W, Sec 3-5, SBBM. Contact: Carol Henson, Fuels Planner, SBRD.

Santa Cruz Prescribed Burn. Proposal to use management ignited prescribed fire to treat approximately 9,200 acres of standing chaparral vegetation. The purpose of the project is to reduce the threat of catastrophic wildfire by reducing the fuel loading and restore watershed health. This project is within the Santa Cruz watershed. T7N, R27W, Sec 30-32; T7N, R28W, Sec 9, 10, 15, 16, 21-28, 34-36; T6N, R27W, Sec 5-9, 16-18; T6N, R28W, Sec 1, 2, 12, SBBM. Carol Henson, Fuels Planner, SBRD.

Analyses Completed

McMenemy Connector Trail Project. In a Decision Memo signed on March 19, 2001, the District Ranger approved a proposal to construct a 0.75-mile section of hiking trail on National Forest land in T5N, R26W, Sec 5, SBBM. The project includes the construction of 0.75 miles of hiking trail to provide a connection between the existing McMenemy Trail and the Edison Catway. The trail will be adopted and maintained by the Montecito Trails Foundation under a memorandum of understanding. Contact: Kerry Kellogg, Wilderness and Trails Manager, SBRD.

Analyses Documented

None.

Analyses in Progress

NACO West Outfitter/Guide SUP. Proposal to renew the special use permit for NACO West to conduct two and four hour guided horseback trail rides on Aliso/Lower Oso/Upper Oso Trail loop, Arroyo Burro Trail, and Arroyo Burro Road, Mateus and River Trail loop. Estimated decision date: Summer 2001. Contact: Jeff Bensen, Recreation Officer, SBRD.

Santa Ynez River Ford. Proposal to reconstruct the ford located just past the county-maintained Paradise Road on the Forest Service-maintained river road,

adjacent to the Lower Oso Day Use Area. The ford was partially demolished by El Nino storms and has since been shored up with gravel to allow recreationists access to the Lower Santa Ynez Recreation Area. The proposed action is to reconstruct the ford and relocate it slightly (approximately 150 feet) upstream in order to reduce the length (and cost) of the river crossing and improve public safety by increasing sight distance. T5N, R28W, Sec 2, SBBM. Estimated decision date: Spring 2001. Contact: Sharon Sprouse, District Ranger, SBRD.

Riverside/White Rock Recreation Facilities. Proposal to construct recreation and interpretive facilities along Paradise Road in the Manzanita and Cabin Lane areas, and west of the White Rock Picnic Area, in the Lower Santa Ynez Recreation Area. T5N, R28W, Sec 3, SBBM. Estimated decision date: Summer 2001. Contact: Jeff Bensen, Recreation Forester, SBRD.

Happy Canyon Allotment. Proposal to analyze grazing on the Happy Canyon Allotment on the Santa Barbara Ranger District. Includes 73 cow/calf pairs and 3 bulls from March 1 to February 28. T7N, R29W, SBBM. Estimated decision date: September 2001. Contact: Gary Montgomery, Range Specialist, SLRD.

De Vault, Durbiano, Venadito SUP for Livestock Area. Proposal to analyze grazing on three small special use pastures in order to re-issue grazing permits. Includes DeVault for 10 yearling cattle from March 1 to July 30; Durbiano for 5 horses from January 1 to December 31; and Venadito for 5 cow/calf pairs from February 15 to June 30. Estimated decision date: September 2001. Contact: Gary Montgomery, Range Specialist, SLRD.

KERN COUNTY

Analyses Being Scoped

Frazier Park Fuelbreak. Proposal to improve an existing fuelbreak to provide defensible space for homes in the town of Frazier Park. The fuelbreak was originally constructed in the early 1970's and is located north of Frazier Park, T9N, R19W, Sec 31 and T9N, R20W, Sec 25 and 26, SBBM. The proposed fuelbreak maintenance project is designed to incorporate a mosaic vegetation pattern averaging 150 feet wide and three miles long to help maintain a natural appearance. Work would be accomplished in the fall of 2001. The brush would be cut by hand and piled. Excess brush piles and standing sage, buckwheat and rabbitbrush within the fuelbreak boundary would be burned using hand-carried drip torches. The piles would be burned during the late fall of 2001 or winter of 2002, and the standing brush would be burned in the spring of 2002. Public scoping will begin in April 2001. Estimated

decision date: August 2001. Contact: Diane Cross, Fuels Planner, ORD.

Pine Mountain Club Fuelbreak. Proposal to continue construction of a shaded fuelbreak on National Forest land at the eastern boundary of the community of Pine Mountain Club in cooperation with Kern County Fire Department. T9N, R22W, Sec 21 and 22, SBBM. The vegetation type is pinyon and Jeffrey pine with inter-mixed canyon live oak and scrub oak. The fuelbreak would be approximately 0.75 mile long by 100 feet wide and would provide defensible space for homes in Pine Mountain Club. The existing condition is approximately 60 to 70 percent canopy cover and the desired condition is to reduce the canopy cover to 30 to 40 percent. The fuelbreak will be designed to resemble a park-like setting. The work will be accomplished by cutting, stacking and burning the excess brush piles using hand-carried drip torches. The proposed timeframe for cutting the brush would be in the fall of 2001. The pile burning would occur in the fall of 2001 or winter of 2002. Public scoping will begin in April 2001. Estimated decision date: August 2001. Contact: Diane Cross, Fuels Planner, ORD.

Pine Mountain Club Dwarf Mistletoe Suppression Treatment. Proposal to treat Jeffrey pine stands infected with dwarf mistletoe adjacent to Pine Mountain Club, and assist Pine Mountain Club Property Owners Association in suppressing and stopping the spread of the disease. Estimated decision date: Spring 2002. Contact: John Kelly, Forester, MPRD.

Pacific Bell Cable Replacement. Proposal by Pacific Bell to replace existing phone lines with digital cable lines across approximately 7 miles of National Forest System lands along Cuddy Valley Road and Mil Potrero Road. Project would involve trenching, in the existing road prism where possible. Estimated decision date: January 2002. Contact: Mike Foster, Acting District Ranger, MPRD.

Special Use Permits and Lease for Communication Sites and Access Roads. American Towers Inc. has purchased the building and tower structure located at the top of Mount Abel (Cerro Noroeste) in T9N, R22W, Sec 26, SBBM. The proponent proposes to continue to operate the existing facility under a new Communication Site Lease Agreement. No new construction of additional structures (e.g. buildings or towers) will be authorized. Estimated decision date: Summer 2001. Contact: Loreigh Brannan, Special Use Administrator, MPRD.

Analyses Completed

None.

Analyses Documented

None.

Analyses in Progress

Special Use Permit for Organization Camp. Proposal to renew a Special Use Permit to continue operating a year-round organizational camp on national forest system land due west of the community of Pinyon Pines at the base of the northeast flank of Mt. Pinos. The site is currently occupied by the El Camino Pines/Frontier Pines Camp and is located along Frontier Road, 0.5 mile southwest of the intersection of Mt. Pinos Highway and Mil Potrero Highway. T9N, R21W, Sec 26, SBBM. The applicant proposes to upgrade the facility to make the camp fully accessible to physically challenged individuals through minor modifications to existing buildings. A limited number of new buildings would be constructed and some existing structures would be relocated to more clustered locations. The applicant proposes to increase the capacity of the camp from approximately 140 people to approximately 200 people. Estimated decision date: unknown. Contact: Loreigh Brannan, Special Uses Administrator, MPRD.

VENTURA COUNTY

Analyses Being Scoped

Laguna Fuels Project. Proposal to conduct a 9,800 acre phased prescribed burn in cooperation with the Ventura County Fire Department, the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection and the Ventura County Air Pollution Control District. The project is located in the Casitas watershed, west of Lake Casitas and south of Laguna Ridge. T4N, R24W, Sec 8-17, 20-22, 27-28. Approximately 5,350 acres of the planned burn are on National Forest land, 2,140 acres are on private land inside the forest boundary, and approximately 2,300 acres are on private land outside the forest boundary. The purpose of this project is to use prescribed fire to lower the risk of large destructive wildfire by reducing fuel loading. A combination of pile and broadcast burning will be utilized using hand-carried drip torches, terratorches and a heli-torch. The objective is to remove 60-70% of the standing fuels in a manner resembling a low to medium intensity, naturally occurring backing fire. The project will be implemented in 3-4 phases over a period of approximately 10-15 years to lessen the impact to Lake Casitas. Public scoping will begin in April 2001. Field surveys and analysis will be conducted from March through July. Estimated decision date: August 2001. Contact: Diane Cross, Fuels Planner, ORD.

Rose Valley Environmental Education Center.

Proposal to reissue a special use permit for an approximately 5-acre facility in Rose Valley, 12 miles north of Ojai. The decision will permit the use of the government owned facility at Rose Valley to a private

or non-profit organization that can best contribute to the recreational and educational character of the area. The permitted area is approximately 5 acres of the existing facility; including buildings, fences, infrastructure and associated facilities excluding the large warehouse and associated acreage. The most recent use of the facility was by Ventura County Sheriff's Honor Camp and the Ojai Valley Youth C.R.E.W. A formal Request for Proposals will be distributed. Proposals considered may include but are not limited to: environmental education including wilderness values and endangered species and habitats, outdoor natural laboratory, local and regional school field trips, extended stays on site for education, outfitter guide trips to local areas, university type research, demonstration site for alternative electrical use at the facility, maintenance of adjacent campgrounds and/or additional camping on site plus retail facilities for local recreationists will be considered. Selection of the proponent will be based on the proposals ability to make a positive contribution to the recreational and environmental education character of Rose Valley and the greater Ojai and Ventura areas. Estimated decision date: Summer 2001. Contact: John Bridgwater, District Ranger, ORD.

Rice-Wills Prescribed Burn. Proposal to conduct a 2660 acre prescribed burn project in cooperation with Ventura County Fire Department, the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection and the Ventura County Air Pollution Control District. The project is located north of Rancho Matilija and south of Wills Canyon in T4N, R23W, Sec 5-7, SBBM. Approximately 1,040 acres are on National Forest land and approximately 1,620 acres are on private land. The purpose of the project is to use prescribed fire to lower the risk of a large destructive wildfire by reducing fuel loading. It is an extension of ongoing cooperative projects in the Ojai frontcountry. A combination of pile and broadcast burning will be utilized using hand-carried drip torches, terratorches and a heli-torch. The objective is to remove 60-70% of the standing fuels in a manner resembling a low to medium intensity, naturally occurring backing fire. Public scoping will begin in April 2001. Estimated decision date: June 2001. Contact: Diane Cross, Fuels Planner, ORD.

Analyses Completed

None.

Analyses Documented

Rice-Wills Allotment. In a Decision Memo signed on March 6, 2001, the Ojai District Ranger authorized grazing on the Rice-Wills Allotment. The permit was re-issued for 15 cow/calf pairs, 1 bull and 4 yearlings from March 16 through August 16, for a term of 10 years. A copy of the Decision Notice and Finding of No

Significant Impact is available upon request from the Ojai Ranger District Office. Contact: Gary Montgomery, Forest Range Specialist, SLRD.

Sisar Allotment. In a Decision Memo signed on March 6, 2001, Ojai District Ranger John Bridgwater authorized grazing on the Sisar Allotment. The permit was re-issued for 5 cow/calf pairs and 1 bull on the Sisar pasture from April 1 through June 15, for a term of 10 years. A copy of the Decision Notice and Finding of No Significant Impact is available upon request from the Ojai Ranger District Office. Contact: Gary Montgomery, Forest Range Specialist, SLRD.

Analyses in Progress

Gold Hill OHV Trail. Proposal to construct an off-highway vehicle trail to provide an alternate OHV route between the Hungry Valley State Vehicular Recreation Area and the MPRD's eastside OHV trail system. T7N, R19W, Sec 4-8 and 18, SBBM. Objective is to remove OHV use on Gold Hill Road to improve public safety while maintaining existing recreation opportunities. Approximately 5 miles of trail would be constructed. Estimated decision date: Spring 2001. Contact: Don Trammell, Recreation Officer, MPRD.

Sespe Fire Management Plan. Proposal to develop a fire management plan for national forest lands within the Sespe watershed. The plan would allow prescribed natural fire (lightning) to fulfill its natural ecological role, define management-ignited prescribed burn units, and allow for control, contain and confine fire tactics to be implemented within the watershed. Estimated decision date: unknown. Contact: Diane Cross, Fuels Planner, ORD.

Ojai Valley Gun Club. Proposal to renew the existing special use permit for the facilities in Rose Valley. T5N, R22W, Sec 4, SBBM. Estimated decision date: unknown. Contact: Charlie Robinson, Recreation Officer, ORD.

RESPONSIBLE OFFICIALS

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Are you interested in the effort to update the Land and Resource Management Plans (Forest Plans) for the four southern California National Forests? For information, maps, references and public participation opportunities, visit our website at www.r5.fs.fed.us/lospadres and click on the "Forest Plan Update" heading, or contact the Public Affairs Office at (805) 968-6640.