



Los Padres National Forest

Schedule of Proposed Environmental Actions



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January – March, 2002

Welcome to the SOPA

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 analysis category. Each description includes a brief explanation and location of the project, current status, the estimated decision date, and the name of the project leader. **Analyses Being Scoped** - new projects for which public input is being or is about to be solicited. **Analyses Completed** - projects that 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** - recently completed EA’s and EIS’s for which a Decision Notice (DN) has been issued. **Analyses in Progress** - projects currently under analysis.

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.

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 this study would require further analysis and separate site-specific decisions. **The DEIS has been distributed for public review and comment. Public comments must be submitted in writing no later than February 15, 2002, to:** Project Manager Al Hess at the Ojai Ranger District Office. Comments may be sent via e-mail to ahess@fs.fed.us. The DEIS and accompanying information is available at all five ranger district offices, the Forest Supervisor’s Office, and at several public libraries. The complete DEIS and accompanying information, including a list of libraries, is available on the forest website at www.r5.fs.fed.us/lospadres. Contact: Al Hess, Team Leader, ORD.

MONTEREY COUNTY

Analyses Being Scoped

Hunting Guide and Outfitter/Guide SUP

Proposal to conduct guided hunting trips using stock and camping equipment on forest lands within the Ventana and Silver Peak wildernesses. Estimated decision date: September 2002. Contact Manuel Madrigal, Recreation Officer, MRD.

Analyses Completed

Big Sur Grazing Permits

On October 30, 2001, Acting Monterey District Ranger John Bradford signed Decision Notices to not re-issue grazing permits on the Torre Canyon, Twitchell and Buckeye Allotments; and re-issue Term Grazing Permits on the Gorda, Alder Creek and Salmon Creek Allotments. In a Decision Notice signed on November 2, 2001, Los Padres National Forest Supervisor Jeanine Derby made the decision to issue a Term Grazing Permit on the Cozy Cove Ranch. Contact: Jeff Kwasny, Big Sur Ecosystem Manager, MRD.

Analyses Documented None.

Analyses in Progress

Monterey Defensible Fuel Profile Zones

Proposal to manage fuels using prescribed fire and mechanical treatments adjacent to roads and campgrounds. The proposal also includes

maintenance of existing fire lines and safety zones by planting of native grasses and trees. The purpose of this project is to create safety zones to protect Forest users and enhance fire suppression capability. The Monterey DFPZ project consists of ten units outside of wilderness areas including the following: three units within the Arroyo Seco Gorge; one unit in Reliz Canyon; one unit in the Piney Creek area; one unit at Skinner Ridge and one unit at Manuel Peak. The remaining areas are along Tassajara Road, Cone Peak Road, Nacimiento-Fergusson Road and Coast Ridge Road. Estimated decision date: Winter 2002. Contact: Steve Davis, Battalion Chief, MRD.

Coast Highway Management Plan (CHMP)

Proposal to authorize disposal of landslide material that falls onto Highway 1 along the south Big Sur Coast at two sites on National Forest System lands near Gorda. Estimated decision date: Winter 2002. Contact: Jeff Kwasny, Big Sur Ecosystem Manager, MRD.

M.I.R.A.

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: March 2002. Contact: District Ranger, MRD.

SAN LUIS OBISPO COUNTY

Analyses Being Scoped **None.**

Analyses Completed

San Carpoforo Grazing Permit

On November 2, 2001, Los Padres National Forest Supervisor Jeanine Derby signed a Decision Notice to re-issue a Term Grazing Permit on the San Carpoforo Allotment. The Decision Notice also incorporates suitable grazing lands from the Sea Vista and Sur Sur Ranches into the San Carpoforo Allotment. Contact: Jeff Kwasny, Big Sur Ecosystem Manager, MRD.

Analyses Documented **None.**

Analyses in Progress

Shaw Ridge Motorized Access Management

Proposal to convert a temporary year-round closure to a permanent seasonal closure to protect threatened and endangered species during the spring breeding season. Would involve installation of a gate and pipe fencing to enforce the seasonal closure and measures to "screen" off-highway vehicle users to ensure that they have adequate vehicle capacity and skill to navigate the "experts only" route to and from Branch Creek. May include creation of a switchback trail for ATV's and motorcycles and a barrier near the Logan Ridge turnoff to discourage inexperienced OHV operators from continuing. T32S, R17E, Sec 19, 20 and 28. Estimated decision date: March 2002. Contact: Manny Madrigal, Recreation Officer, SLRD.

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, Landscape Architect, SLRD.

Communications Facility at Tassajara Peak

Proposal by American Tower to add a new tower at an existing site (formerly owned by AT&T) at the Tassajara 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)

Proposal to authorize disposal of landslide material that falls onto Highway 1 along the south Big Sur Coast at two sites on National Forest System lands near Gorda. Estimated decision date: Winter 2002. Contact: Jeff Kwasny, Big Sur Ecosystem Manager, MRD.

SANTA BARBARA COUNTY

Analyses Being Scoped

Highway 166 Shooting Area

Proposal to analyze current use and facilities and develop a plan to address litter, vandalism and public safety concerns at this site. The site is located on the south side of Highway 166, just inside the national forest boundary two miles east of the Pine Canyon Station. Estimated decision date: Spring 2002. Contact: Manny Madrigal, Recreation Officer, SLRD.

Sisquoc Grazing Allotment Permits

Authorization of livestock grazing on the following eleven grazing areas/allotments: Aliso, Branch Canyon, Santa Barbara Potrerros, Sisquoc, Sisquoc SUP, Figueroa, Buckhorn, South Fork La Brea, Porter, Pine Canyon, and Noel SUP on National Forest System Lands. Includes use and maintenance of system and non-system roads and trails in relation to existing permits. Portions of the following allotments are located within the boundaries of the San Rafael Wilderness: Branch Canyon, Santa Barbara Potrerros, Sisquoc, Figueroa, South Fork La Brea and Pine Canyon. In addition, the Sisquoc Allotment contains the Wild and Scenic River corridor, the Figueroa Allotment contains the Manzana Creek proposed Wild and Scenic River corridor, and the South Fork La Brea Allotment contains the La Brea Creek proposed Wild and Scenic River corridor. The analyses will be used in the decision-making process to authorize or not authorize grazing, and if authorized, to what extent. Estimated decision date: September 30, 2002. Contact: Annie Buma or Judy Hahn, Project Managers, ACT2 Enterprise Unit, (530) 493-1721.

sight distance. T5N, R28W, Sec 2, SBBM. Estimated decision date: Winter 2002. Contact: Vicki Collins, Acting Resource Officer, 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 2002. 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. Contact: Gary Montgomery, Range Specialist, SLRD.

De Vault, Durbiano, Venadito 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. Contact: Gary Montgomery, Range Specialist, SLRD.

KERN COUNTY

Analyses Being Scoped

Communication Sites and Access Roads

American Towers Inc. has purchased the building and tower structure at the top of Mount Abel (Cerro Noroeste) in T9N, R22W, Sec 26, SBBM. The proponent proposes to operate the existing facility under a new Communication Site Lease Agreement. No new construction of additional structures will be authorized. Estimated decision date: unknown. Contact: Loreigh Brannan, Special Use Administrator, MPRD.

McGill Campground Water System

Proposal to reconstruct the existing spring box to meet State water quality standards; repair the waterline between the spring box and the McGill storage tank; install a "bag type" filtration system inline above the McGill tank; and repair the water distribution system within McGill Campground. T8N, R21W, Sec 4, SBBM (Ventura County) and T9N, R21W, Sec 34 and 35, SBBM (Kern County). Objective is to upgrade the water system to meet current State standards for potable water systems and provide drinking water at McGill Campground on a seasonal basis. Estimated decision date: June 2002. Contact: Don Trammell, Recreation Officer, MPRD.

Analyses Completed

Frazier Park Defensible Fuel Profile Zone

In a Decision Memo signed on December 5, 2001, District Ranger Thomas Kuekes approved a proposal to improve an existing DFPZ to provide defensible space for homes in the town of Frazier Park. The DFPZ was constructed originally as a fuelbreak 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 DFPZ 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 winter or fall of 2002. The brush would be cut by hand and piled. Excess brush piles and standing sage, buckwheat and rabbitbrush within the DFPZ boundary would be burned using hand-carried drip torches. The piles would be burned during the winter or fall of 2002, and the standing brush would be burned later. Contact: Carol Henson, Forest Fuels Specialist, SBRD.

Pine Mtn Club Defensible Fuel Profile Zone

In a Decision Memo signed on December 5, 2001, District Ranger Thomas Kuekes approved a proposal to continue construction of a shaded DFPZ 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 DFPZ 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 DFPZ 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 brush would be cut in 2002. The pile burning would occur in the fall of 2002 or winter of 2003. Contact: Carol Henson, Forest Fuels Specialist, SBRD.

Analyses Documented

None.

Analyses in Progress

Special Use Permit for Organization Camp

Proposal to renew a permit to continue operating a year-round organizational camp on national forest land west of Pinyon Pines at the base 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 Hwy and Mil Potrero Hwy. T9N, R21W, Sec 26, SBBM. The applicant proposes to upgrade the facility to make it fully accessible to persons with disabilities 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

McGill Campground Water System

Proposal to reconstruct the existing spring box to meet State water quality standards; repair the waterline between the spring box and the McGill storage tank; install a "bag type" filtration system inline above the McGill tank; and repair the water distribution system within McGill Campground. T8N, R21W, Sec 4, SBBM (Ventura County) and T9N, R21W, Sec 34 and 35, SBBM (Kern County).

Objective is to upgrade the water system to meet current State standards for potable water systems and provide drinking water at McGill Campground on a seasonal basis. Estimated decision date: June 2002. Contact: Don Trammell, Recreation Officer, MPRD.

Ojai Community Defense Zone

Proposal to reduce hazardous fuels and improve watershed health in the Ojai area, and provide protection and defensible space for firefighters and public safety in the event of a wildfire. The Ojai Community Defense Zone Project will consist of various methods of fuel reduction including creation of defensible fuel profile zones (DFPZ), broadcast burning, mechanical treatment, hand cutting and piling, and pile burning. The project covers approximately 40,000 acres and will be implemented over several years. The project will be a cooperative effort with Ventura County Fire Protection District and the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection. T4N, R21W, Sec 6; T5N, R21W, Sec 19, 20, 29, 30, 31, 32; T4N, R22W, Sec 1 and 2; T5N, R22W, Sec 15-36; T4N, R23W, Sec 5, 6 and 7; T5N, R24W, Sec 31-36; T4N, R24W, Sec 1-12, 14-22, 27-30, SBBM.

Estimated decision date: September 2002. Contact: Carol Henson, Forest Fuels Officer, SBRD.

Bighorn Sheep Prescribed Burn

Proposal to use management ignited prescribed fire to treat approximately 22,640 acres of standing chaparral vegetation to reduce hazardous fuel loading. In addition, the proposal would rejuvenate forbs and brush for wildlife, provide browseway corridors for bighorn sheep, provide a buffer for the Sespe Wilderness and Condor Sanctuary, and reduce the threat of negative impacts from a high intensity fire in the Sespe and Santa Clara watersheds. The treatment would produce mosaic vegetation patterns with varied age, size and density that maintain a natural appearance over time. The project boundary lies south of the MPRD line, west of Cobblestone Mountain and Ant Campground, north of Ant and Alder Creek Campgrounds and Ten Sycamore Flat, and east of Sycamore Canyon. T6N, R21W, Sec 23-26, 36; T6N, R20W, Sec 7-33, T6N, R19W, Sec 7-11, 14-22 and 27-30, SBBM. Estimated decision date: September 2002. Contact: Carol Henson, Forest Fuels Specialist, SBRD.

Alamo Prescribed Burn

Proposal to use management ignited prescribed fire to treat approximately 12,700 acres of standing chaparral vegetation and mixed conifer forest in the Piru and Alamo watersheds to reduce the threat of a catastrophic stand-replacing fire by reducing hazardous fuel loading. In addition, the project will improve forest health, rejuvenate forbs and brush for wildlife and provide a buffer for the nearby Sespe Wilderness and Condor Sanctuary. The project boundary lies to the east of forest road 8N12 from Lockwood Flat to Dutchman Campground, and east of forest road 8N01 from Dutchman CG to the intersection of road 6N10, north of 6N10 from the intersection with 8N01 to trail 19W05, west of 19W05 from the intersection of 8N01 to trail 19W04, west of 19W04 from the intersection of 19W05 to the intersection of Piru and Smith Fork, south of Piru from Smith Fork to 8N01, and south of trail 20W07 from the intersection of 8N01 to the intersection of 8N12. T7N, R20W, Sec 13-16, 20-29, 33-36; T6N, R20W, Sec 1-4, T7N, R19W, Sec 14-23 and 27-33; T6N, R19W, Sec 4-6, SBBM. Estimated decision date: September 2002. Contact: Carol Henson, Forest Fuels Specialist, SBRD.

Piru Allotments

Proposal to analyze grazing on the Piru, Temescal and Potholes allotments on the Ojai Ranger District. Includes 30 cow/calf pairs on the Piru/Potholes allotment and 30 cow/calf pairs on the Temescal allotment. T5N, R18W, SBBM. Estimated decision date: Spring 2002. Contact: Al Hess, Resource Officer, or Terry Austin, Resource Forester, ORD.

Analyses Completed

None.

Analyses Documented

None.

Analyses in Progress

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. Estimated decision date: Winter 2002. Contact: Diane Cross, Fuels Planner, ORD.

Casitas Watershed Hazardous Fuels

Proposal to improve the protection of the Casitas Watershed from wildfires by enhancing and improving existing fuelbreaks that were constructed in the 1970's and by reducing the existing hazardous fuels. The proposed actions include reconstruction and restoration of the existing fuelbreaks (also known as Defensible Fuel Profile Zones, DFPZ) and the use of prescribed fire to reduce hazardous fuels. The proposed fuelbreak maintenance project is designed to incorporate a mosaic vegetation pattern averaging 300 feet wide and approximately 12 miles long (Laguna, Chismahoo-Coyote, Santa Ana). The end result will incorporate a diversity of vegetation age class, size and density with mosaic patterns of unburned islands within the perimeter. The result will be a natural appearing feature of irregular shapes and patterns in the brush designed to naturally complement the existing landscape. 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 hand-carried drip torches and/or terratorches. T4N, R24W, Sections 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 8, 10, 11, 12, 17, 19, 20, 27, 28, 29, SBBM. Estimated decision date: Winter 2002. Contact: Carol Henson, Forest Fuels Specialist, SBRD.

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 2002. 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: Spring 2002. Contact: Charlie Robinson, Recreation Officer, ORD.

Forest Plan Update

We are currently revising the Land and Resource Management Plans (Forest Plans) for the four southern California National Forests: the Angeles NF, Cleveland NF, Los Padres NF and San Bernardino NF. A draft EIS is expected in December 2002. Public workshops are scheduled in January and early February throughout southern California including communities near Los Padres National Forest. For workshop schedule and other information, maps, references visit the planning website at www.r5.fs.fed.us/sccs, or call the toll-free information line at (866) 252-8846. For questions specific to Los Padres National Forest, contact your local District Ranger or the Los Padres NF Public Affairs Office at (805) 968-6640.

RESPONSIBLE OFFICIALS

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