
File Code: 1950
Date: May 2, 2018

Dear Interested Party:

I am pleased to announce the release of the Gila National Forest's (Forest) Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) for the Luna Restoration Project, and seeking your input. The Luna Restoration Project is located along the western portion of the Quemado Ranger District around the community of Luna. The 185,586 acre Luna planning area is part of the larger Escudilla Landscape, a 279,470 acre landscape planning area that extends across both the Apache-Sitgreaves and Gila National Forests.

The DEIS and maps may be downloaded from the Forest's website at: <http://www.fs.usda.gov/detail/gila/home/?cid=STELPRD3828973>. The DEIS discloses the environmental impacts associated with proposed treatments involving: vegetation, prescribed fire, watershed, roads, recreation, and wildlife. There are four alternatives in the DEIS including the No Action, the Modified Proposed Action and the two additional alternatives, which are modifications to the Modified Proposed Action alternative. Alternative C is the preferred alternative.

Alternatives contain project-specific amendments to the Gila Forest Plan, which will be prepared under the 2012 Planning Rule. These project-specific amendments are a one-time amendment to the Gila Forest Plan for related activities proposed, and to be implemented under the Luna Restoration Project only.

A Notice of Availability (NOA) of the DEIS will be published in the Federal Register on or shortly after May 7, 2018. The date of publication in the Federal Register marks the start of the 45-day comment period for the Luna Restoration Project DEIS. Check the project web page (<https://www.fs.usda.gov/detail/gila/home/?cid=STELPRD3828973>) for the exact date of publication.

Commenting on the DEIS

We invite and encourage you to review the DEIS and maps, and provide us with comments. It is important to remember that this is just a draft. Your comments will be critical in refining this DEIS prior to the final decision, which is anticipated to be released in fall 2018. Try to make your comments as specific as possible to the proposed activities and alternatives for the Luna Restoration Project.

How to Comment and Timeframe

Specific written comments (§218.2) on the proposed project will be accepted for 45 calendar days following publication of the Notice of Availability (NOA) in the Federal Register. Only individuals or entities (as defined by 36 CFR 218.2) who submit timely and specific written comments (as defined by 36 CFR 218.2) about this proposed project or activity during this or another public comment period established by the Responsible Official will be eligible to file an objection. Other requirements to be eligible to submit an objection are defined by 36 CFR 218.25 (a) (3) and include name, postal address,



title of the project and signature or other verification of identity upon request and the identity of the individual or entity who authored the comments. Individual members of an entity must submit their own individual comments in order to have eligibility to object as an individual. A timely submission will be determined as outlined in 36 CFR 218.25 (a) (4). It is the responsibility of the sender to ensure timely receipt of any comments submitted.

In compliance with the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA), please be advised that all information provided with your comments will become part of the public record and will be available for public inspection. This includes your name and all contact information provided.

Comments should be within the scope of the proposed action, have a direct relationship to the proposed action, and must include supporting reasons for the Responsible Official to consider (36 CFR 218.2). Specific written comments must be submitted via mail, fax, or in person (Monday through Friday, 8:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., excluding holidays) to: Adam Mendonca, Forest Supervisor, ATTN: Luna Restoration Project; 3005 E. Camino del Bosque, Silver City, NM 88061; FAX: 575-388-8222. Electronic comments including attachments may be submitted by email in word (.doc), rich text format (.rtf), text (.txt), portable document format (.pdf), and hypertext markup language (.html) to comments-southwestern-gila@fs.fed.us.

How to Get Information

The document and maps will also be available for review at the Quemado Ranger District office. If you have any questions about the NEPA process, or how to provide comments please contact the Environmental Coordinator, Lisa Mizuno, at (575) 388-8267 or comments-southwestern-gila@fs.fed.us. If you have specific questions regarding the project, or are unable to access the Forest website contact Emily Irwin, District Ranger, at 575-773-4578.

Sincerely,



ADAM MENDONCA
Forest Supervisor

Enclosures