

## **Lone Pine Canyon Fuels Reduction Project Proposed Action**

Front Country Ranger District  
San Bernardino National Forest  
**April 30, 2004**

The Front Country Ranger District of the San Bernardino National Forest is proposing the Lone Pine Canyon Fuels Reduction Project. The 3600-acre proposed project area is located in T2N, R6W Sections 4,5,6,8,9,10,15, and 16 , T2N, R7W Section 1, T3N, R6W, Sections 30-33 and T3N, R7W Sections 25-27 and 36 bounded by Lone Pine Canyon Road and the community of Wrightwood in San Bernardino County, California.

### **OBJECTIVES, PURPOSE AND NEED OF THE PROJECT**

The Lone Pine Fuel Reduction Project was designed with the following objectives:

- **To Protect People.** To propose activities that will decrease the risk to life due to wildfire for the residents and visitors of the Wrightwood community.
- **To Protect Property.** To propose activities that will decrease the risk due to wildfire to homes and property within Wrightwood.
- **To Decrease Fireline Intensity.** To propose activities that will decrease potential fireline intensity in order that reasonable suppression activities can be employed.
- **To Reduce Risk of Resource Damage.** To propose fuel reduction activities that will reduce fire intensity in order to reduce watershed, visual and wildlife habitat damage associated with wildfire. To propose activities that will reduce the likelihood of fire carrying outside of the project area. In addition, this project considers recent wildfires within the projects watershed. The project is designed to prevent sedimentation issues associated with high intensity and catastrophic wildfire.

This project is designed to offer protection for the community of Wrightwood by creating a fuels buffer on the National Forest. This is an area of chaparral fuels with scattered clumps of coniferous trees. Due to the density of chaparral in the Lone Pine Canyon there is a higher than normal chance of an uncontrollable fire running up the canyon as if in a funnel. This project will be used to mitigate the increased potential by giving the fuels a mosaic appearance over time. This mosaic would support the Forest Land Resource Management's (FLRMP) preferred alternative as indicated on IV-30 of the FLRMP.

### **PROPOSED ACTION**

Specific project activities in forested stands would include:

- Establish 2 fuel breaks along ridge lines just east of Wrightwood. These breaks would be created by mechanical disc and may be up to 300 feet wide.
- Re-establish fuel break system within Lone Pine Canyon

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- Prescribe burn lower portions of Lone Pine Canyon systematically in order to provide a continuous mosaic of fuels in the Canyon. This would include the establishment of control lines.

The project consists of a systematic set of actions in order to enable a prescribe burn. First, two fuel breaks will be established between the burn units and the community. These breaks serve as protection from wildfire and contingency areas during prescribe burning. Hand crews and mechanical methods will be used to create a buffer around the units prior to burning. Existing fuel breaks will be reopened where possible to establish control points along the edges of the units as needed, however some new line will be created where there is no existing line. Mechanical lines will be plowed with a large disk. These plowed lines will “chop” up the existing fuels and embed portions of it into the soil thus giving a wider buffer with less visual impacts. The Prescribe burn has been divided into five units, each to be burned separately, with rotation of these burns determined by their location in the canyon. Units at the top of the Canyon (west) would be burned first.

### **Methodology and Prescriptions**

1. Fuel breaks must be established prior to prescribed burning
2. Hand lines and plow disc will be used to establish fuel breaks
3. Hand fire and helitorch methods are recommended
4. In coniferous stands, hand buffers will be established such that low intensity fires can be established in these stands prior to unit ignition

### **Visual Quality Prescriptions**

5. Unit Design and Layout
  - a. Blend units including fuelbreaks with natural landscape features such as natural openings and rock outcrops where possible given fuel objectives. This will create free form vegetative shapes that mimic natural patterns.

### **Recreation Prescriptions**

6. Fuel breaks will be terminated 50 ft from Lone Pine Canyon road in order to decrease illegal A.T.V. activities
7. Activities will be coordinated with management of the Pacific Crest Trail, limiting impacts to users of the system.

### **Wildlife and Plant Prescriptions (including Threatened, Endangered and Sensitive Species)**

8. Where possible, retain 9 large down logs per acre of all age and decay classes (12” diameter at the smallest and at least 20 feet long), in all treatment areas, when available.
9. During fuel break establishment, a biologist will be present during implementation of the fuel break operation. The on-site biologist using mapped rock outcrop maps will work with the operator to avoid rock piles during the operation.
10. The project area will be surveyed for sensitive plants prior to project implementation where potential habitat has been identified within the project area. Occurrences of

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sensitive and watchlist plants located during field surveys or located during project implementation will be flagged and avoided or further evaluated during project implementation.

11. In compliance with the Migratory Bird Treaty Act, if ground bird nests were found during project implementation, activities would stop in the immediate area, until evaluated by a biologist.

### **Heritage Prescriptions**

12. Prior to project implementation, heritage resource assessments and surveys will be conducted in accordance with the "Regional Programmatic Agreement" (hereafter referred to as the Regional PA). In general, all historic properties will be flagged and avoided by project actions. All historic properties, extant within the Area of Potential Effect, would be identified, recorded, and the perimeter of the boundaries marked with flagging and a suitable buffer applied. No ground disturbing activities would occur within these boundaries and buffers unless specified below:
13. When project activities do occur within the boundaries of Heritage Properties or unevaluated Heritage Sites the following conditions will be applied as Standard Mitigation Measures.
  - a. Felling and removal of hazard, windthrow, and salvage trees may occur within historic properties under the following conditions: Felled trees may be removed using only the following techniques: hand bucking and carrying, rubber tired loader, crane/self loader, and/or helicopter logging.
  - b. Equipment operators shall be briefed on the need to reduce ground disturbances (e.g., minimizing turns).
  - c. No skidding or tracked equipment shall be allowed within historic property boundaries.
  - d. All such activities mentioned above will be monitored by qualified heritage specialists at the time of tree removal.
14. If additional cultural resources are discovered during project implementation, work will stop in that area immediately until heritage resource specialists can evaluate the site.

### **Watershed Prescriptions**

15. Follow Forest Plan Best Management Practices.
16. All perennial and intermittent stream courses, wetlands, etc will be buffered with a 100 foot Stream Management Zone (SMZ). Fuel reduction treatments may occur in the SMZs with equipment exclusion. Ephemeral stream courses will be buffered with a 50 foot equipment exclusion zone.

### **Noxious Weeds Prescriptions**

17. A field reconnaissance of the project area (prior to implementation) and a noxious weed assessment will be developed for the project. The noxious weed assessment will specify areas where disturbance from equipment, fire, and project-related weed vectors will not be permitted.

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18. Implement the standard Region 5 “C” clause used during timber projects for noxious weed prevention. Any heavy equipment used during project implementation will be free from noxious or invasive exotic weeds before entering the project area. If any equipment enters a weed occurrence in the project area it will be washed to remove weed propagules prior to leaving the project area. Equipment staging areas will be weed-free.

**Maintenance**

19. All of the above prescriptions may be used in order to maintain the project area in desired conditions for the life of this decision.

**DECISION TO BE MADE**

The decision to be made by District Ranger Gabe Garcia, the responsible official, is whether to implement this project as proposed, as modified to address any unresolved conflicts, or not at all.

This proposed project would be consistent with San Bernardino National Forest Land and Resource Management Plan and Record of Decision.