

DEPARTMENT: Board of Supervisors

BY: Supervisors Pickard & Balmain
PHONE: 966-3222

RECOMMENDED ACTION AND JUSTIFICATION:

Discussion and Action to Submit Response to the Sierra Nevada Forest Plan Amendment (SNFPA) Draft Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement (SEIS) (Continued from 8-26-03).

BACKGROUND AND HISTORY OF BOARD ACTIONS:


District Ranger Dave Martin gave a presentation on August 26, 2003, relative to the Sierra Nevada Forest Plan Amendment (SNFPA) Draft Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement (SEIS), noting that public comments were to be received by September 12, 2003.

ALTERNATIVES AND CONSEQUENCES OF NEGATIVE ACTION:

The Board members comments would not be sent and thus they would not be addressed by the United States Department of Agriculture.

Financial Impact? () Yes (X) No	Current FY Cost: \$	Annual Recurring Cost: \$
Budgeted In Current FY? () Yes () No () Partially Funded		
Amount in Budget: \$ _____		List Attachments, number pages consecutively
Additional Funding Needed: \$ _____		_____
Source:		_____
Internal Transfer _____		_____
Unanticipated Revenue _____ 4/5's vote		_____
Transfer Between Funds _____ 4/5's vote		_____
Contingency _____ 4/5's vote		_____
() General () Other		_____

CLERK'S USE ONLY:

Res. No.: 03-326 Ord. No. _____
Vote - Ayes: 4 Noes: Stetson
Absent: _____
 Approved
() Minute Order Attached () No Action Necessary

COUNTY ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICER:

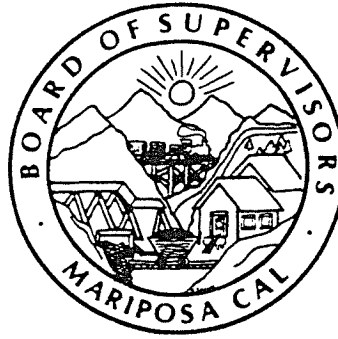
_____ Requested Action Recommended
_____ No Opinion
Comments:

The foregoing instrument is a correct copy of the original on file in this office.
Date: _____
Attest: MARGIE WILLIAMS, Clerk of the Board
County of Mariposa, State of California
By: _____
Deputy

CAO: _____

Mariposa County Board of Supervisors

District 1 LEE STETSON
District 2 DOUG BALMAIN
District 3 JANET BIBBY
District 4 GARRY R. PARKER
District 5 BOB PICKARD



RICHARD H. INMAN
County Administrative Officer

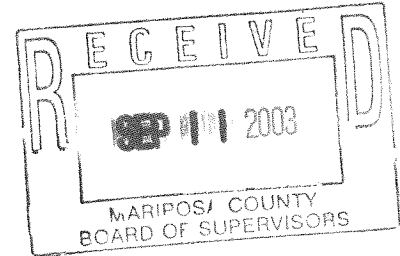
MARGIE WILLIAMS
Clerk of the Board

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September 9, 2003

Mr. Jack Blackwell
Regional Forester, Pacific Southwest Region
Sierra Nevada Forest Plan Amendment DSEIS
Post Office Box 221090
Salt Lake City, Utah 84122-1090



Re: Comments on the Sierra Nevada Forest Plan Amendment – DSEIS

Dear Mr. Blackwell,

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the Sierra Nevada Forest Plan Amendment (SNFPA) Draft Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement (DSEIS). The Mariposa County Board of Supervisors is very concerned with the future of the Sierra National Forest in several areas. First, the forests in Mariposa County are dangerously heavily fueled to the point that the threat of catastrophic wild fire is at an all time high. Second, our country's demands for forest products have not decreased but in fact have increased in recent years. Third, past management practices of the Forest Service coupled with the effect of the environmental movement has crippled the private timber industry to the point of extinction.

We believe the solutions needed for managing the Sierra National Forest will require an aggressive plan that has many partners including but not limited to the Forest Service, the State of California, local governments, private industry, and private property owners. The DSEIS does not go far enough in addressing long term sustainability through the proposed fuel reduction plan contained in Alternative (S2) the preferred alternative, nor does this alternative go far enough as a long term solution by addressing forest products which we believe is a necessary component in sustainability for the long term.

In December 2001, you chartered the Sierra Nevada Forest Plan Amendment Review Team to evaluate the SNFPA for any needed changes relative to six specific areas. (1) *Pursue more aggressive fuels treatment while still protecting Old Forest conditions and species at risk.* We believe that Alternative (S2) fails to meet both the short and long term goals in addressing fuel treatment. Mariposa County desires the Forest Service to pursue more aggressive fuel reduction management such as described in Alternative (F4), which emphasizes fuel treatments in a strategic pattern and in watersheds with the greatest fire hazard and risk having the highest priority. In addition, Alternative (F4) will have the highest degree of protection for the Old Forest



and species at risk, is the most likely to reduce acres lethally burned each year by wildfire, and would provide the greatest protection for property within the Wildland Urban Intermix (WUI).

(2). *Achieve consistency with the National Fire Plan to ensure goals of community protection and forest health are accomplished.* Again, the preferred Alternative (S2) falls short of accomplishing this goal through an active management plan versus the aggressive management plan as described in Alternative (F4). The goals of the National Fire Plan are to improve fire prevention and suppression, reduce hazardous fuels, restore fire-adapted ecosystems, and promote community assistance. Alternative (F4) through a more aggressive approach better accomplishes these goals while offering greater flexibility to local communities. Alternative (F4) provides managers the flexibility for applying mechanical treatment however the treatment involving the mastication process should be further refined to avoid unnecessary foot and leg injuries to domestic animals and wildlife as a result of the sharp objects that are created because of this process. Further, it is desired that communities and local governments that are adjacent to the National Forest be given more weight in the public process. Far too often the views and concerns of citizens who reside and work in rural communities are not given enough emphasis. The Sierra Forest is so diverse that many management practices demand site specific preparations that are better understood by the local communities and governments.

(3). *Harmonize the decision with Herger-Feinstein Quincy Library Group (HFQLG) Forest Recovery Act to implement the pilot project to the fullest extent possible.* We agree that the SNFPA severely limits the Plumas and Lassen Forests, and the Sierraville ranger district in the Tahoe National Forest from implementing the HFQLG Pilot Project. We further agree with the recommendation to apply more effective vegetation management treatments while retaining the largest trees within treatment areas and applying HFQLG Record of Decision land allocations, standards, and guidelines and with proceeding with the Lassen Plumas Administrative Study to allow the forests to meet the objectives of the project.

(4). *Reduce the unintended and adverse impacts on grazing permit holders.* While the preferred Alternative (S2) is estimated to eliminate impacts on 14 grazing permit holders, the other two alternatives continue to impact allotments. The SNFPA fails to provide enough flexibility to maintain protection of sensitive species while reducing adverse impacts to grazing permit holders. Similar to what is in Alternative (F4), increasing forest manager's flexibility to adapt to site specific conditions would reduce the adverse impacts to grazing permit holders.

(5). *Reduce the unintended and adverse impacts on recreation users and permit holders.* In general all of the alternatives have localized effects on certain activities on national forest lands. The SNFPA should provide direction to the Forest Service to coordinate with local jurisdictions before adjusting rules and uses that may cause adverse impacts.

(6). *Reduce the unintended and adverse impacts on local communities.* The residents of Mariposa County would benefit greatly through aggressive wildfire protection measures as well as related improvements in air and water quality. We also support greater economic opportunities for our citizens through the use of wood products removed as part of hazardous fuels and forest health products. The Sierras are over loaded with vegetative fuels, which should be made available for solving part of California's energy shortage. These fuels will need subsidizing in some manner however, as mentioned earlier we believe the solutions can be achieved if a collaborative team is assembled made up of stake holders from all sectors. Further, we believe the short and long term solutions for healthy sustainable forests are through active forest management specifically through higher timber harvest volumes.

In conclusion, the Mariposa County Board of Supervisors request that when implementing the SNFPA that you provide to the greatest extent possible, the most aggressive fuel reduction process with the most flexibility to adapt a balanced site specific strategy for our communities. We also request for a time extension to allow for more public input.

Thank you for your thoughtful consideration of these comments and please contact me or Supervisor Balmain if you have any questions.

Sincerely,


BOB PICKARD
Chairman

BP/mbh

cc: Congress Member, George Radanovich
Board of Supervisors
Regional Council of Rural Counties

bcc: Margie Williams, Clerk of the Board



COUNTY of MARIPOSA

P.O. Box 784, Mariposa, CA 95338 (209) 966-3222

BOB PICKARD, CHAIR
GARRY R. PARKER, VICE-CHAIR
LEE STETSON
DOUG BALMAIN
JANET BIBBY


DISTRICT V
DISTRICT IV
DISTRICT I
DISTRICT II
DISTRICT III



MARIPOSA COUNTY BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

MINUTE ORDER

TO: SUPERVISOR PICKARD
SUPERVISOR BALMAIN

FROM: MARGIE WILLIAMS, Clerk of the Board 

SUBJECT: RESPONSE TO THE SIERRA NEVADA FOREST PLAN AMENDMENT DRAFT
SUPPLEMENTAL ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT
Resolution No. 03-326

THE BOARD OF SUPERVISORS OF MARIPOSA COUNTY, CALIFORNIA,

ADOPTED THIS Order on September 9, 2003

ACTION AND VOTE:

Discussion and Action to Submit Response to the Sierra Nevada Forest Plan Amendment (SNFPA) Draft Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement (SEIS) (Continued from 8-26-03) (Supervisor Balmain and Supervisor Pickard)

BOARD ACTION: Discussion was initiated by Chairman Pickard relative to active management of our forests, the need for biomass to be a part of the solution, and the need to generate high priority revenues. Supervisor Balmain advised that of the forest products California utilizes, approximately 80% are imported.

Supervisor Stetson announced that he was not in favor of the letter as it stands. He felt he had not had enough time to review the letter and would not support it at this time. (M)Balmain, (S)Parker, Res. 03-326 was adopted approving the Board's response with changes as discussed and adding a request for a time extension to allow for more public input/Ayes: Balmain, Bibby, Parker, Pickard; Noes: Stetson.

Dick Kuntsman was recognized by the Chairman and provided information to the severity of the fire situation and fuel accumulation in Mariposa County.

Trudy Williams was recognized by the Chairman and advised that if the Supervisors were to provide individual responses, she would be able to support them; however, as a collective response, she would not support the response.

cc: File