



EXECUTIVE OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT
COUNCIL ON ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20503

March 6, 2015

Mr. Thomas L. Tidwell
Chief
United States Forest Service
Washington, DC 20250

Dear Chief Tidwell:

CEQ is authorizing alternative arrangements in accordance with 40 C.F.R. § 1506.11 for the proposed Westside Fire Recovery Project outlined in your March 6, 2015, letter and the attached memorandum of March 5, 2015, from the Regional Forester (copies attached).

Specifically, you have requested alternative arrangements that:

1. Shorten the comment period for the draft Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) from 45 to 30 days;
2. Eliminate the minimum 90-day requirement between publication of the Notice of Availability of the draft EIS and the publication of the Record of Decision (ROD); and
3. Eliminate the 30-day waiting period between publication of the final EIS and the ROD.

We are granting your request to shorten the comment period for the draft EIS from 45 to 30 days, and will continue to consider whether to grant your request to eliminate the 90-day requirement and the 30-day waiting period, based upon continued progress to enhance the outreach and engagement with the public and local stakeholders in the development of the preferred alternative and its environmental consequences.

The preferred alternative that is being developed for the final EIS will draw components from the alternatives that were developed after public scoping and will be displayed in the draft EIS. This alternative arrangement takes into account that approach and your commitments to:

1. Enhance the public and stakeholder engagement begun during the scoping initiated by the Notice of Intent to prepare the EIS which was published in the *Federal Register* on October 15, 2014;
2. Post the draft EIS on the project's website for public review prior to filing the draft EIS with the Environmental Protection Agency and publishing the official Notice of Availability in the *Federal Register*;
3. Continue communication with the Siskiyou County Citizens Advisory Committee, Western Klamath Restoration Partnership, and Westside Klamath Steering Committee;



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4. Continue strengthening the on-going government-to-government consultation with the Federally recognized Quartz Valley Indian Reservation, the Karuk Tribe, and other Tribes within the affected area;
5. Actively discuss and exchange information with interested parties on the potential parameters of the components of the alternatives and their projected environmental consequences during the public review and comment period and thereafter as the final EIS is prepared. Discussions will include:
 - a. Focusing treatments on major system roads and lands previously identified for timber production (e.g., plantations, and timber matrix areas);
 - b. Limiting work in late successional reserve and riparian areas;
 - c. Limiting impacts from the wildfires such as sedimentation impacts (e.g. North Fork of the Salmon River, Klamath River, Critter Creek), and potential impacts from proposed treatments (e.g., viewshed impacts on Wild and Scenic Rivers);
 - d. Using prescribed fire in areas including steep slopes, stream buffer zones, and around salmon bearing waters;
 - e. Strengthening and maintaining strategic fuel breaks around communities and important infrastructure;
 - f. Limiting work during wet weather;
 - g. Assessing current science on snag retention in order to better understand the effects of fire and proposed treatments;
 - h. Emphasizing the development of future forested habitat for species protected under the Endangered Species Act (e.g., Northern Spotted Owl, Fisher);
 - i. Identifying treated and untreated areas for monitoring ecosystem response and post-treatment effectiveness;
 - j. Identifying ways to capture the economic value of burned timber to support and accomplish restoration objectives; and
 - k. Treating areas to reduce the effects of severe fire in future wildfire events.

We appreciate your personal attention to this matter, and look forward to working with you as you continue planning for the Westside Fire Recovery Project.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Mike Boots", is written over a horizontal line.

Michael J. Boots

Council on Environmental Quality