



United States
Department of
Agriculture

Forest
Service

Tonto National Forest
Tonto Basin Ranger District

28079 N. Az Hwy 188
Roosevelt, AZ 85545
Phone: 928.467.3200
Fax: 928.467.3239

File Code: 1950
Date: 08/12/2016

Dear Interested Party:

We are currently soliciting comments on the proposed Tonto Basin Green Waste Disposal Site project on the Tonto Basin Ranger District. The proposed project action would develop a site adjacent to Forest Service Road 491, just off Highway 188 approximately 2 air miles northeast of the town of Tonto Basin. The legal location for the proposed project is Township 6N, Range 10E, Section 10.

In a cooperative effort with community leaders and local representatives, a Southern Gila County Community Wildfire Prevention Plan was created to look at options that would reduce wildland fire risks around the town of Tonto Basin. The planning process identified that an additional green waste disposal site near the community could reduce the random dumping of green waste on National Forest land near the community, provide a site for accumulating the waste and managing the removal of the waste through scheduled controlled burning.

In addition to the increasing accumulation of green waste there is an increased presence of fire adapted non-native and invasive species such as red brome grass. The increase in such species on disturbed soils, in and around the community and roadways, increases the fuel load and the threat of fire to community property, wildlife and native vegetation in the area. In addition, there is an increasing threat to the firefighters attempting to protect this area should a fire occur.

As described in the 1985 Tonto National Forest Land and Resource Area Management Plan (Amendment 25), Wildland/Urban Interface- Wildland Fires in the Interface pose an immediate threat to life, property and adjacent resources. There should be active participation with all interested parties to develop strategic interface management measures to reduce Wildland Fire threats to life, property and resources, address issues of Forest health, and provide for community partnerships including treatments of vegetation and fuels and access needs.

Currently, one Green Waste Disposal site exists near the Town of Roosevelt on the Tonto Basin District. This site has been successful in engaging the community in management and centralizing the accumulation of a large volume of Green Waste.

The purpose of this proposed action is to reduce the random accumulation of green waste fuels in and around community developments and centers. It is in these areas that fuels create the highest threat to members of the community and to firefighters battling fires that occur.

There is a need to provide a location that green waste can be accumulated and, ultimately, disposed of by burning.



It is proposed that the Green Waste Disposal site be developed adjacent to Forest Road 491, just off of Highway 181 and one half mile east of an existing waste transfer station. Development would include clearing of vegetation on the one acre site, fencing the site and installing a cattle guard and a gate. The site would be maintained through a cooperative agreement with the Community that would address limiting unwanted trash and keeping the site area clean.

The fencing, gate and cattle guard would be installed in accordance with Forest Service Standards. The fence line would be maintained clear of brush and vehicle activity inside of the site should help prevent future plant growth after clearing. The site would be continually monitored to ensure proper drainage and that site activities do not cause increased erosion and transport of soil off site.

The proposed action must address the following management concerns, as they relate to compliance with the Tonto National Forest's Land Management Plan:

- Compliance with the National Environmental Act
- Control of random dumping of waste and accumulation of fuels in the National Forest around the communities
- Support of the community in compliance with the Southern Gila County Community Wildfire Prevention Plan
- Compliance with the requirements/clearances for Heritage and Biological Resources

Comments may be submitted by mail or electronically. So that they are most useful to the planning process, please submit comments by September 9, 2016.

When submitting comments please keep them specific to this project. Comments not specific to the project will be considered outside the scope of the analysis and will not be considered. If you are offering information you wish to be considered for this analysis please specify exactly how the material relates to the project.

Comments received in response to this notice, including names and addresses of those who comment, will be considered part of the public record and will be available for public inspection. Electronic comments must show the name and address of submitter. Comments submitted anonymously will be accepted and considered. Any persons may request the agency to withhold a submission from the public record by showing how the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) permits such confidentiality (7 CFR 1.27(d)).

If you have any questions concerning this process, please feel free to contact me at 928-467-3200.

Sincerely,



KELLY L. JARDINE
District Ranger