

Scoping Notice

Proposal to Conduct the Anthony Timbers Aspen Enhancement Treatment

Project Summary

The Bureau of Land Management's Worland Field Office is proposing to treat about 125 acres of aspen woodland over the next 5 years. The proposed treatment area is about 13 miles northeast of Hyattville, Wyoming in parts of Section 2 in Township 51 North, Range 89 West and Section 35 of Township 52 North, Range 89 West.

The project is in and around Anthony Timbers on BLM and private managed land. The area consists of Mountain and Wyoming Big Sagebrush with quaking aspen, Utah juniper, and limber pine invasion. Within the proposed project perimeter, about 70% of the invading conifers would be cut off at their stumps and then slash piled and burned when snow is on the ground. Little to no sagebrush and no aspen would be removed.

This treatment would be conducted by the BLM in cooperation with the Hamilton Ranch, Ltd. and Eva and Kevin Negus.

The project would take place in the summers of 2007 through 2012. The objectives of this project are to: 1) decrease the number of encroached conifers by 70%, 2) protect the sagebrush community from the adverse consequences of stand-replacing fire, 3) protect private property from wildfire, and 4) improve wildlife habitat by promoting germination and establishment of forbs and perennial grasses.

Issues

Quaking aspen (*Populus tremuloides* Michx.) is a small but critical component of the forested lands of the west slope of the Bighorn Mountains. Aspen provides forage and cover for diverse bird and mammal species and also contributes to soil and water conservation. Aspen stands often act as natural fuel breaks during wildfires because fuels are usually moister in aspen stands than in surrounding conifer forest. Conifer crown fires will often drop to the surface in aspen stands or may extinguish after burning only a few meters into them. Aspen is intolerant of shade. Though aspen produces abundant seed, it regenerates primarily by developing new shoots, called suckers, along the root system of the parent tree, a process called "suckering". Enhancing and conserving aspen stands is a primary goal of the BLM to decrease wildfire and improve wildlife habitat.



Figure 1. Anthony Timbers juniper encroachment documented 26 April 2005.

Please contact Eve Warren of the Worland Field Office at 307.347.5109 or worland_wymail@blm.gov if you have concerns about the project or would like to participate in its planning.