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Forest Service takes new gander at timber project

Proposed logging venture was 86'd by federal judge this past summer

By Of the Tribune

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The Nez Perce-Clearwater National Forest will attempt to fix shortcomings with its Hungry Ridge timber and restoration project in the South Fork of the Clearwater River Basin.

The project about 18 miles southeast of Grangeville would have produced an estimated 177 million board feet of timber from about 8,000 acres. Approved by Forest Supervisor Cheryl Probert in the spring of 2021, it and the adjacent End of the World Project were blocked by U.S. District Judge Candi Dale at Boise this past summer, following a lawsuit filed by the Friends of the Clearwater, a Moscow-based environmental group.

Dale said while analyzing the possible environmental effects of the planned timber harvest, the Forest Service failed to meet its own forest plan standards for measuring old growth stands within the project area.

Forest officials announced in a recent news release that they will prepare a supplemental environmental impact statement on the Hungry Ridge Project. According to the news release, the analysis will focus on the impacts of the proposed logging on the old-growth forests in the project area. It will also look at the cumulative effects of logging from both projects on old-growth forests.

The End of the World Project area is about 6 miles south of Grangeville and was projected to produce about 144 million board feet of timber. The combined logging footprint of both project would have been just shy of 26,000 acres, or 40 square miles, and included some large clear

and the construction of more than 40 miles of temporary and permanent roads.

The first chance for the public to comment on the new analysis is expected to be in January.

Forest Service officials said the project is designed to reduce fuel loading in a part of the forest deemed to be at risk for high-intensity wildfires and to improve overall forest health and resiliency.

In addition to logging, the project would have treated about 12,000 acres with prescribed fire, included thinning near private property and actions to improve fish and wildlife habitat.

More information about the project is available at **bit.ly/3BB3jGq**. Those wishing to receive updates about the new analysis can do so by clicking on the “subscribe to email updates” link.

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