



United States
Department of
Agriculture

Forest
Service

Fishlake National Forest
Fremont River Ranger District
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File Code: 1950
Date: 03/05/2007

Subject: Pollywog Habitat Enhancement Project

Dear Interested Citizen,

The Fishlake National Forest, Fremont River Ranger District, proposes a combination of mechanical treatment (mowing), prescribed fire and seeding of selected areas on 300-500 acres of sagebrush to improve habitat for the Utah prairie dog. The Forest Service would like to provide you with some information about the project and invite you to comment on the proposed action. The responsible official for this action is Kurt Robins, District Ranger.

Location

The proposed project is located on the Fishlake National Forest, Fremont River Ranger District in: T.31 S. R.1E. Sections 15-17, 20-22 and 29 (see enclosed map). Treatment would focus primarily in dense sagebrush communities, within or adjacent to occupied and historic prairie dog complexes located in the Pollywog Lake area.

Purpose and Need

The purpose of this project is to enhance habitat for the Utah prairie dog, a federally threatened species. Much of their range, once dominated by shrub-grassland mosaics, has become densely populated by sagebrush. Restoring a mosaic of grasses and forbs into the landscape would improve habitat suitability for increased prairie dog productivity.

Proposed Action

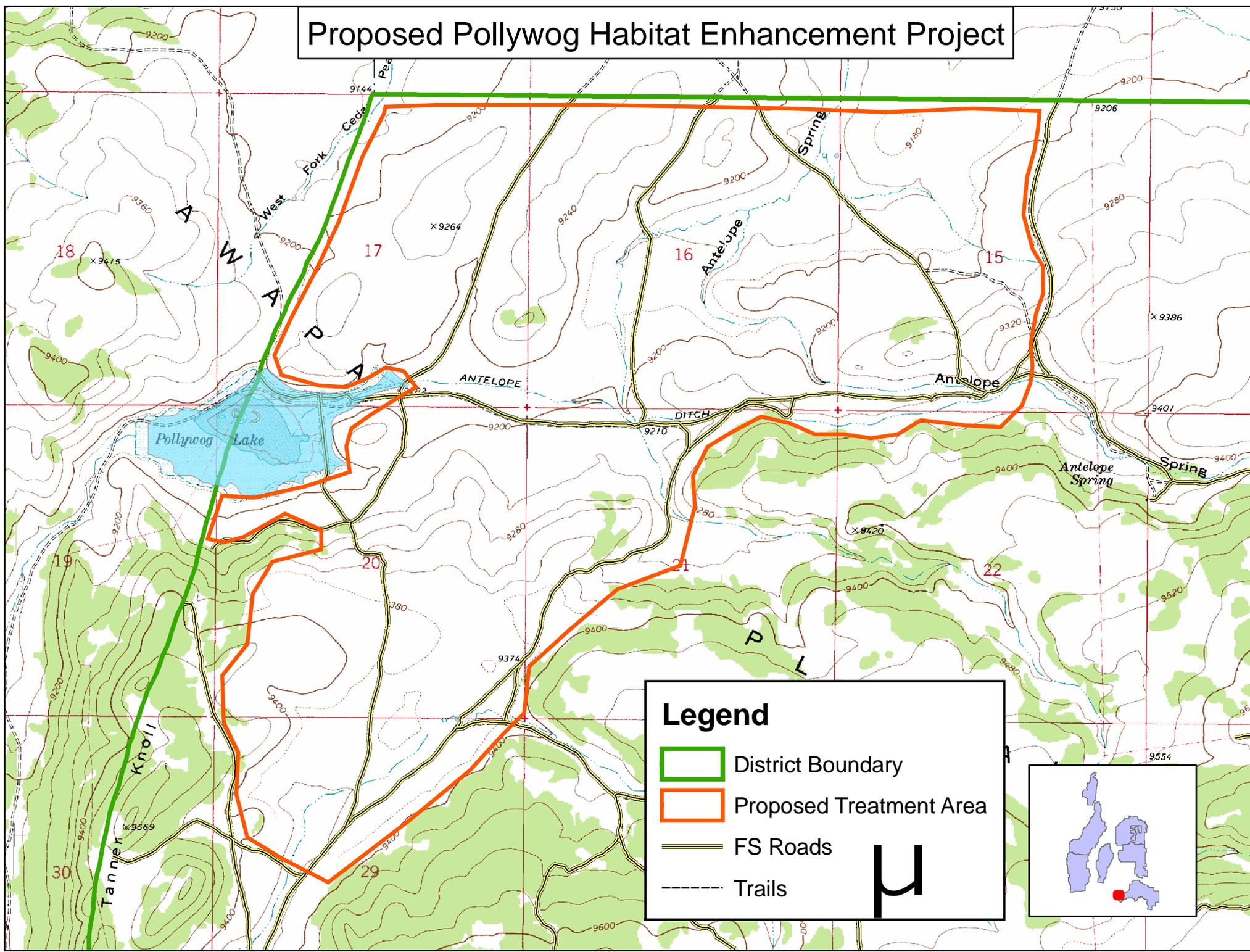
A tractor or bobcat would be used to mow approximately 300-500 acres of black, silver and mountain big sagebrush to stimulate the production of forbs and grasses. Prescribed fire would be used as a tool in areas that are too rocky for mowing. Treatment design would mimic the size and shape of natural shrub-grassland patterns to benefit the Utah prairie dog and be compatible with sage grouse brood rearing habitat and livestock grazing. Where needed, a native mix of grasses and forbs would be seeded to supplement the existing understory species beneficial to prairie dogs. Grazing would be deferred a minimum of one year within the treatment units. Implementation would occur in the summer of 2007 if approved.

Environmental Analysis

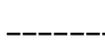
The District Ranger on the Fremont River Ranger District has made a preliminary assessment that this proposal falls within a category of actions listed in the Forest Service NEPA Handbook (FSH) that are excluded from documentation in an Environmental Assessment (EA) or Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) and that no extraordinary circumstances exist that would preclude use of the category (FSH 1909.15 (Chapter 30)). The proposed action is a routine activity as defined in FSH 1909.15 Section 31.2 and fits Category 6: "Timber stand and/or wildlife habitat improvement activities which do not include the use of herbicides or do not require more than one mile of low standard road construction."

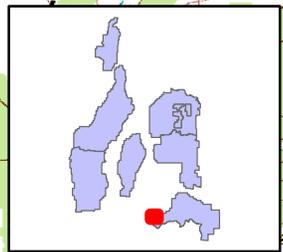


Proposed Pollywog Habitat Enhancement Project



Legend

-  District Boundary
-  Proposed Treatment Area
-  FS Roads
-  Trails



Formal Notice and Opportunity to Comment

This comment period provides those interested in, or affected by, this proposal an opportunity to make their concerns known prior to a decision being made by the Responsible Official. It is being provided pursuant to the July 2 and September 16, 2005 orders issued by the U.S. District Court for the Eastern District of California in Case No. CIV F-03-6386JKS. Only those who submit timely responses during this comment period will be accepted as appellants. If you choose not to reply to this notice, your name will be removed from our project mailing list and you will not receive any future mailings regarding this proposal.

Written, facsimile, hand-delivered, and electronic comments concerning this action will be accepted for 30 calendar days following the publication of this notice in *The Richfield Reaper*, Richfield, Utah. This publication date is the exclusive means for calculating the comment period for this analysis. Those wishing to comment should not rely upon dates or timeframe information provided by any other source.

Written comments must be submitted to: Kurt Robins, District Ranger, Fremont River Ranger District, PO Box 129, 138 S. Main, Loa, Utah 84747. Hand-delivered comments must be provided at the Responsible Official's office during normal business hours (8a.m. to 4:30p.m., M - F). If submitting comments via FAX send to (FAX: 435-836-2366). Electronic comments must be submitted to: comments-intermtn-fishlake-loa@fs.fed.us. Use the name of the project as the subject line. Please provide name, address, and telephone number. In cases where no identifiable name is attached to an electronic message, a verification of identity will be required for appeal eligibility. A scanned signature is one way to provide verification.

It is the responsibility of persons providing comments to submit them by the close of the comment period. Individuals and organizations wishing to be eligible to appeal must provide the following information:

1. Name and address;
2. Title of the proposed action;
3. Specific comments on the proposed action
4. Signature or other verification of identity since identification of the individual or organization who authored the comment(s) is required for appeal eligibility;
5. For multiple names or multiple organizations, a signature must be provided for the individual authorized to represent each organization, or for each individual that wishes to have appeal eligibility; and
6. Individual members of organizations must submit their own comments to meet the requirements of appeal eligibility as an individual. (Comments received on behalf of an organization are considered as those of the organization only.)

The Forest Service will consider all timely, comments in reaching a final decision on this proposal. Comments received in response to this solicitation, including names and addresses of those who comment, will be considered part of the public record on this proposed action and will be available for public inspection.

Scoping

The thirty day comment period described above will also serve as the “scoping” period for this proposal. During this scoping process the public may raise issues or provide site-specific information relevant to the proposed action. The analysis team will consider all issues and information.

Additional information regarding this proposed action can be obtained from Joanne Stenten, Wildlife Biologist, (435) 425-9525.

Sincerely,

KURTIS A. ROBINS
District Ranger

Enclosure: Project area map