

OPPORTUNITY FOR PUBLIC COMMENT

District: Payette National Forest, McCall Ranger District
Project Name: Salmon River Helicopter Repeater Special Use Authorization
Responsible Official: Lisa J. Klinger, McCall District Ranger
Project Contact: Rebecca Havens, Lands Program Manager, 208-634-0416, rahavens@fs.fed.us
Scoping Period: Comments requested by December 9, 2016
Submit Comments: Via webform on the project webpage
Project Webpage: <http://www.fs.usda.gov/project/?project=50476>

Project Description:

The US Forest Service is proposing to issue a Special Use Authorization (SUA) for a new term to Salmon River Helicopters for a radio repeater to continue to facilitate their helicopter communications in remote areas. The self-contained repeater, approximately 8' X 4' X 5' with an antenna and solar powered via attached panels, is currently installed on top of Bear Pete Mountain. The radio repeater has been in operation, via various permitting actions, on Bear Pete Mountain since 2000. This authorization would allow Salmon River Helicopters to maintain their radio repeater by helicopter and enter into a long term special use permit.

Purpose and Need:

The purpose of the Salmon River Helicopters radio repeater is to provide support for the safe and continued operation of this helicopter business. Salmon River Helicopters provide aerial operations in support of public services such as power line construction, firefighting, heavy lift construction, repeater replacement, and agricultural services. This project helps fulfill the Forest Plan goal to issue a special use authorization that serves the public and promotes public health and safety on National Forest System lands. Design features will be considered in the analysis and included in the terms and conditions of the permit to avoid or minimize undesirable impacts to Forest resources and visitors in compliance with applicable laws, policies, and regulations.

This project is being evaluated as a categorical exclusion under the National Environmental Policy Act as provided for in 36CFR 220.6(e)(15) - *Issuance of a new special use authorization for a new term to replace an existing or expired special use authorization when the only changes are administrative, there are not changes to the authorized facilities or increases in the scope or intensity of authorized activities, and the applicant or holder is in full compliance with the terms and conditions of the special use authorization.*

As a categorical exclusion there are no additional designated public comment periods for this project so this “scoping” phase is the best opportunity for public input.

Project Area:

The project area is located on National Forest System lands almost 3 miles east of the Burgdorf Guard Station. The repeater will be maintained on Bear Pete Mountain. T22N., R4E., Section 4, Boise Meridian, Idaho County, Idaho. The project is located in the French Creek Idaho Roadless Area and is managed under the backcountry restoration theme. See Figure 1 for a map of the project area.

Figure 1. Project Site

