

**NOTICE OF PREPARATION OF A SUBSEQUENT PROGRAMMATIC  
TIMBERLAND ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REPORT (PTEIR)  
NOTICE OF 30-DAY PTEIR SCOPING PERIOD AND REQUEST FOR WRITTEN  
SCOPING COMMENTS  
NOTICE OF PUBLIC SCOPING MEETING  
REGARDING REVISIONS TO THE HEARST FORESTS PTEIR**

**Project Title:** Modifications to the Programmatic Timberland EIR Hearst Forests

**Applicant:** Hearst Forests

**Lead Agency:** California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (CALFIRE)

**Project Location:** A map of the project location is attached. The Hearst Forests is comprised of approximately 80,989 acres located in Shasta and Siskiyou counties. The property surrounds the unincorporated community of McCloud then continues southeast towards McCloud Reservoir, Grizzly Peak, and the upper basin of Kosk Creek and east towards Bartle. The property is comprised of almost one contiguous block with a few smaller isolated parcels. The property is currently divided into four management blocks. The property lies at the geographic intersection of the Klamath and Cascade Ranges and has an elevation range of 2,800 to 6,100 feet above mean sea level (MSL). Soils are primarily volcanic in the northern extent of the property and transition to a combination of sedimentary and metamorphic origins in the areas surrounding the McCloud Reservoir. The property is almost entirely composed of forested land with some minor components of meadows, rock outcroppings, brush fields, waterbodies, and small developments. The property maintains existing access through a developed network of service roads suitable for harvesting activities. The forested portions are composed of mixed conifer, pine, true fir, montane riparian, and montane hardwood stands. Stands are generally natural with a small component of plantations split between stands that are less than 20 years old, and an older component planted in the 1970s from brush field conversions. 12,644 acres of the Town Block are encumbered by the Dogwood Conservation Easement held by Pacific Forest Trust.

The Klamath-Cascade area, where the property is located, contains the headwaters of the Sacramento and McCloud rivers and tributaries.

**Notice of Preparation:** CALFIRE is the Lead Agency under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) and is preparing the Subsequent Programmatic Timberland Environmental Impact Report (PTEIR) for the project addressed as modifications to the 1998 PTEIR for Hearst Forests. This Notice of Preparation (NOP) will initiate a 30-day scoping period beginning on April 8, 2025. The scoping period will close on May 7, 2025. The purpose of the NOP is to solicit guidance as to the scope and content of the Subsequent PTEIR including potential environmental impacts of concern and mitigation measures or alternatives that should be considered.

**Project Summary:** A Subsequent PTEIR is being prepared under the direction of the CALFIRE. CALFIRE, as the Lead Agency for this Subsequent PTEIR, is responsible for assessing the anticipated environmental consequences of implementing the proposed timber operations; identifying mitigation measures to minimize, reduce, or avoid adverse environmental impacts; and evaluating a reasonable range of alternatives to the proposed project.

The proposed program/project includes the following revisions to the project site and operational activities analyzed in CALFIRE's 1998 PTEIR:

**1. Expanded Project Site:** The project site is proposed to be expanded by approximately 20,010 acres to a total of 80,989 acres to encompass properties purchased by Hearst Forest in 2023. Although the expansion area is highly comparable to lands and habitats addressed in the 1998 PTEIR and will continue to employ similar uneven-aged management objectives, the following project elements will be addressed in the PTEIR:

- Conservation Easement that includes the provision for public access and limited non-motorized recreation not previously analyzed in the 1998 PTEIR.
- Larger project footprint in relation to the Wildland Urban Interface (WUI) not previously analyzed in the 1998 PTEIR.
- Expanded project area included within several CalWater planning watersheds not previously analyzed in 1998 PTEIR.

**2. Fuel Hazard Reduction & Non-Commercial Vegetation Treatment:** While wildfire risk mitigation was not robustly analyzed previously, the 1998 PTEIR examined fuel management activities including lopping, chipping, or burning logging slash in all harvest units and harvesting and chipping small trees in dense stands. The Subsequent PTEIR will evaluate adding non-commercial fuel reduction activities including the creation of fuel breaks using manual treatment, mastication, herbicide treatment, and pile burning, especially in areas adjacent to critical infrastructure and the WUI.

**3. Expansion of Allowed Silvicultural Prescriptions:** Repeated entries using individual tree selection has resulted in a reduction of the number of age classes present in some stands. The problem is more pronounced in true fir stands with a brushy understory. Group selection silviculture is permitted under the 1998 PTEIR. Similar to the 1998 PTEIR, uneven-age silviculture will remain the dominant management regime.

In addition, mortality, high fuel loads, and overstocked forest conditions in Late-Seral Management Areas and the McCloud River Preserve threaten the values for which the areas were targeted for maintenance of the late-seral conditions. The PTEIR will expressly enable timber management and fuel reduction to protect late-seral stand conditions and reduce wildfire risk in all areas of the property. Limited tree removal currently occurs within the McCloud River Preserve and Late-Seral Management areas. The project would allow additional selection, commercial and pre-commercial thinning, sanitation salvage, and fuels reduction silviculture to occur within those areas to protect and enhance late-seral composition and structural elements.

**4. Updated Best Management Practices:** Best Management Practices (BMPs) will be updated to reflect current requirements of the California Forest Practice Rules and the General Order for Timber Management Activities of the Central Valley Regional Water Quality Control Board (CVRWQCB).

**5. Integrate Adaptive Programmatic Mitigation Agreements into the PTEIR:**

Integrating the adaptive programmatic mitigation agreements of other agencies into the PTEIR will maximize synergies and ensure the protection of threatened and endangered species and other sensitive resources. These include the Spotted Owl Management Plan (SOMP)/Spotted Owl Resource Plan (SORP), Master Agreement for Timber Operations (MATO), Incidental Take Permit (ITP), Waste Discharge Requirements (WDRs), and McCloud River Redband Trout Conservation Agreement.

**6. Realign and Adjust Late-Seral Management Zone (LSMZ) Acres:**

The original Late-Seral Management Zone (LSMZ) boundaries were created to facilitate the development and connectivity of late-seral stage habitats. Over the last 30 years, certain areas previously identified as LSMZ have been determined to: 1.) Create unfunctional strips of habitat that are too small to have a significant beneficial ecological effect; 2.) Be operationally unfeasible; and 3.) Increase the risk of catastrophic wildfire due to increases in fuel loading and connectivity. LSMZ area boundaries will be modified to remove the limited areas that do not possess LSMZ characteristics. These include a previously logged portion of Angelica Ridge, non-functional narrow strips adjacent to WLPZ boundaries, and a portion of the property southeast of the McCloud Dam. The latter-designated area extends into an operational area and would be better protected by aligning the LSMZ with a property line of PG&E to better align with LSMZ objectives.

**7. Realignment and Enhancement of Preserve Boundary:**

The revised PTEIR proposes to make limited changes to the McCloud Preserve boundaries to simplify operations and enhance the protection of Preserve areas. The proposed changes will result in a net increase of Preserve acres within the ownership. These include minor modifications to the Preserve boundaries consistent with functional management boundaries such as roads and powerlines. This includes areas around the estate where the Preserve areas will be increased by moving the boundary closer to roads. The boundary will be extended farther up Huckleberry Creek, adding in portions of McBride and Huckleberry Meadows. Limited areas will be removed that do not exhibit the characteristics of old growth consistent with the Preserve designation. This includes an odd appendage extending up Fan Gulch and the reduction of a small area up Angelica Ridge to align with an operational break in slope.

**Area of No Impact:** An Initial Study has been completed for the project and will be available at [www.https://ceqanet.opr.ca.gov/](http://www.ceqanet.opr.ca.gov/). Based on the completion of the Initial Study and early scoping with public agencies, the following areas were determined to have (1) no impact with regard to the impact thresholds, or (2) have no change over baseline conditions analyzed previously in the 1998 PTEIR and will therefore not be analyzed further in the PTEIR:

**Aesthetics** – No significant change over baseline conditions

**Agriculture and Forestry Resources** – No significant change over baseline conditions

**Energy** – No significant change over baseline conditions

**Greenhouse Gas Emissions** – No significant change over baseline conditions

**Hazards and Hazardous Materials** – No significant change over baseline conditions

**Land Use Planning** – No impact

**Mineral Resources** – No impact

**Noise** – No significant change over baseline conditions

**Recreation** – No significant change over baseline conditions

**Population and Housing** – No impact  
**Public Services** – No impact  
**Transportation** – No significant change over baseline conditions  
**Utilities and Service Systems** – No impact

The following resource areas will be addressed in detail in the Subsequent PTEIR:

**Air Quality** – To evaluate pile-burning activities not previously addressed in the 1998 PTEIR.

**Biological Resources** – To address changes to programmatic agreements and documents including SOMP/SORP, MATO, ITP, WDRs, and the McCloud River Redband Trout Conservation Agreement.

**Cultural Resources/Tribal Cultural Resources** – To evaluate areas not previously covered in the 1998 PTEIR.

**Geology and Soils** – To address requested changes by the California Geological Survey.

**Hydrology and Water Quality** – To address changes in silvicultural prescriptions not previously evaluated in the 1998 PTEIR.

**Wildfire/Wildfire Risk** – To address the changes in silvicultural practices and actions in LSMZ and McCloud Preserve not previously evaluated in the 1998 PTEIR.

**Notice of Public Scoping Meeting:** CALFIRE will hold a public scoping meeting for agencies and individuals to learn more about the CEQA process for this project and to receive comments about the scope and contents of the Subsequent PTEIR document, including what potential environmental impacts should be addressed in depth in the Subsequent PTEIR. The merits of the project will not be discussed at the meeting. No comments regarding the approval or denial of the project will be heard at the meeting and no decision to approve or deny the project will be made at the meeting. The meeting will be held on April 30, 2025, at 5:30 p.m. in McCloud, CA.

**Point of Contact**

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