

I. Introduction

Background

This is the Final Environmental Impact Report (FEIR) for the comprehensive update to the Jackson Demonstration State Forest (JDSF) Management Plan. Adoption of the Plan by the California Board of Forestry and Fire Protection (Board) is a project subject to the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA)¹ as defined by statute and the CEQA Guidelines². The Board, as lead agency, prepared a Draft Environmental Impact Report (DEIR) pursuant to CEQA for consideration and certification prior to the Board's approval of a final version of the Plan.

The DEIR was first circulated for public review and comment, commencing on December 16, 2005 and ending on March 1, 2006. Subsequent to the close of public review, and in response to the comments received, the Board proposed substantive changes to the direction for management at JDSF. Those management changes were reflected in a new CEQA alternative (Alternative G) selected on September 12, 2007, by the Board as the new "Proposed Project", replacing the original Proposed Project (Alternative C1) identified in the 2005 DEIR. In accordance with CCR §15088.5 the Board recirculated the Draft EIR (RDEIR) for additional public and agency review from June 1 through July 16, 2007.

On September 12, 2007, the Board directed the Department to prepare this FEIR, including responding to public and agency comments received during the two comment periods and hearings. In addition, the Department was directed to prepare a Final Forest Management Plan (FFMP) that reflected the changes in management and required mitigation found in Alternative G.

On October 10, 2007, following its review of the DEIR and RDEIR the Board made several changes to the DFMP. In summary these changes were with regard to the: (see Board motion at end of this chapter):

- Composition and responsibilities of the Jackson Advisory Committee;
- Responsibility for identifying stand structure on future research projects;
- Allowable annual harvest expected to be within a range of 20-25 MMBF per year, not to exceed 35 MMBF per year;
- Enjoined THPs and Casper Creek research projects are not subject to the interim restrictions.

These changes to the Plan do not require recirculation of the DEIR because:

- The changes are within the scope of the analysis found in the DEIR and RDEIR, or;
- The change could not result in a significant effect to the environment and is therefore covered by the "General Rule" [CCR 15061(b)(3)].

In accordance with CEQA the Board, prior to approving the FFMP, must:

- Certify the FEIR;
- Make written findings with regard to the significant effects identified in the EIR; and
- Prepare a statement of overriding considerations if there are significant effects which are not avoided or substantially lessened.
- Adopt a Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Plan (MMRP). The MMRP provides the "framework" that ensures impacts are mitigated through application of the specified measures identified in the EIR.

¹ Public Resources Code §21000 et seq.

² Title 14, California Code of Regulations [CCR] §15000 et seq.

FINAL EIR FOR JDSF MANAGEMENT PLAN

Following the approval of the Project (approval of the Final Forest Management Plan) the Board must file a Notice of Determination with the State Clearinghouse.

Organization of FEIR

A table in the front of the FEIR provides an index to comments by the name of the comment submitter and the comment number that was assigned to all written comments.

Section II provides eighteen General Responses. These responses respond to the most frequent comments received on the DEIR, RDEIR, and Management Plan. General Response 2 provides an overview of the ADFMP.

Section III provides the responses to comments from federal, state, and local government agencies. Response letters were sent to all agencies at least 10 days prior to certification of the FEIR.

Section IV provides, in multiple pieces, the written comments received on the DEIR, RDEIR, and Management Plan during the CEQA comment periods. Written comments are organized according to whether they were received electronically or by physical delivery. Distinct individual comment letters are presented separately from modified form letters.

Section V presents the form letters and responses.

Section VI presents the oral testimony received at the four hearings the Board held during the CEQA comment periods for the DEIR and RDEIR.

Section VII presents corrections and additions to the DEIR and RDEIR. Many of these corrections were pointed out by reviewers. The Board appreciates their help in improving these documents.

A separate Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Plan (MMRP) is to be adopted by the Board. The MMRP will provide a compilation of the mitigations to be applied under the Forest Management Plan and the requirements for monitoring and reporting on implementation and effectiveness. The MMRP will dovetail with Chapter 5 of the ADFMP, Monitoring and Adaptive Management.

Board Motion of October 10, 2007

1. That the Jackson Advisory Committee be as follows:

To be appointed by the Director, subject to approval of both membership and charter by the Board.

Membership – to be defined in the committee charter and to include persons with knowledge of forest resource issues; be drawn from a variety of interests, including local and beyond, environmental, timber management, and recreational; have expertise in relevant scientific disciplines, e.g., forestry, botany, ecology, fish biology. The charter will specify the number of members. Members do not “represent” particular interests – they are chosen for knowledge and are to represent the public interest.

Provides advice/recommendations to:

- *Board and Director/Department re issues relevant to review of Plan for possible changes in the initial three-year review period.*
- *Director/Department and Board re ongoing implementation issues*
- *Board and Director/Department on any policy matters.*

FINAL EIR FOR JDSF MANAGEMENT PLAN

The Department will seek public and Board input regarding the committee charter, responsibilities, composition, and members.

Other Committees

Department's Demonstration State Forest Advisory Group

Already exists.

Addresses issues re demonstration forests, primarily on a statewide basis

Board Statewide Committee on Research

To be re-established

Appointed by Board

Board staff and the Department will assure consistency/coordination among three committees, each with a separate and different function.

2. That the following language recommended by the Mendocino Working Group be reflected in the discussion of stand structure:

“Decisions on stand structure for future unspecified research projects be developed by JDSF staff in cooperation with researchers, DSFAG, and, when functioning, the [Jackson Advisory Group]”

3. That the language of Table II.4, page II-28, Alternative G, of the Re-circulated Draft EIR be changed to reflect that allowable annual harvest is expected to be within a range of 20-25 MMBF per year, and shall not exceed 35 MMBF per year.

4. The Board also acknowledges that:

A. The enjoined THPs are not subject to interim restrictions.

B. The CalFire/PSW Research Station's planned Casper Creek research projects are not subject to the interim restrictions.