

Conservation groups oppose South Shore fuel reduction project

Waiting until just before the comment period ended, opponents to the U.S. Forest Service's plans to thin about 10,000 acres on the South Shore submitted letters questioning the validity of the environmental document.

The South Shore Fuel Reduction and Healthy Forest Restoration Project would treat 10,112 acres; the intent being to target the wildland urban interface and prevent another Angora Fire.

As reported on *Lake Tahoe News* a month ago, an objection to the final EIS by the Oct. 28 deadline would trigger a 30-day resolution period. It's been triggered by Earth Island Justice's John Muir Project, and Echo Lakes Association. Anyone or any entity which had commented on the original environmental impact statement had the right to comment on the latest document.

The conservation groups want the Forest Service to do more analysis. The same woodpecker species that Earth Island said should prevent thinning of the Angora burn area is being cited as a concern with the larger project. With Angora, a judge sided with the Forest Service.

The Forest Service has until the end of the month to respond to the comments it received. Lake Tahoe Basin Management Unit Forest Supervisor Nancy Gibson will be the one decide to approve the project or not. If she signs the record of decision, it could end up in court. If she doesn't sign it, the projects future is murky.

– Kathryn Reed