

Notices

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This section of the FEDERAL REGISTER contains documents other than rules or proposed rules that are applicable to the public. Notices of hearings and investigations, committee meetings, agency decisions and rulings, delegations of authority, filing of petitions and applications and agency statements of organization and functions are examples of documents appearing in this section.

DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Farm Service Agency

Information Collection; End-Use Certificate Program

AGENCY: Farm Service Agency, USDA.

ACTION: Notice; request for public comment.

SUMMARY: In accordance with the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995, the Farm Service Agency (FSA) is seeking comments from all interested individuals and organizations on the extension of information collection currently used in support of the End-Use Certificate Program.

DATES: Comments about this notice must be received in writing on or before June 3, 2003, to be assured of consideration. Comments received after that date will be considered to the extent practicable.

ADDRESSES: Comments concerning this notice should be addressed to Sharon Miner, USDA, Farm Service Agency, Warehouse and Inventory Division, Program Development Branch, STOP 0553, 1400 Independence Avenue, SW., Washington, DC 20520-0553, (202) 720-6266; or by e-mail to: Sharon.Miner@usda.gov. Comments may be submitted via facsimile to (202) 690-3123.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

Description of Information Collection

Title: End-Use Certificate Program.

OMB Control Number: 0560-0151.

Type of Request: Extension of currently approved information collection.

Expiration Date of Approval: June 30, 2003.

Abstract: This information collected is used to ensure that Canadian wheat does not benefit from USDA or Commodity Credit Corporation assisted export programs. The End-Use Certificate Program is covered at 7 CFR

part 782. The North American Free Trade Agreement Implementation Act requires USDA to establish the end-use certificate system for Canadian wheat. Accordingly, Farm Service Agency requires information from the importers, subsequent buyers, and end-users to assist in tracking the Canadian wheat within the U.S. marketing system.

Estimate of Annual Burden: Average 0.215 hours per response.

Type of Respondents: Wheat importers, traders, and end-users.

Estimated Annual Number of Respondents: 421.

Estimated Number of Responses per Respondent: 128.

Estimated Total Annual Burden on Respondents: 4,520 hours.

Comment is invited on: (1) Whether this collection of information is necessary for the stated purposes and the proper performance of the functions of the agency, including whether the information will have practical or scientific utility; (2) the accuracy of the agency's estimate of the burden of the collection of information, including the validity of the methodology and assumptions used; (3) ways to enhance the quality, utility, and clarity of the information to be collected; and (4) ways to minimize the burden of the collection of information on respondents, including the use of automated, electronic, mechanical, or other technological collection techniques or other forms of information technology.

All comments received in response to this notice, including names and addresses when provided, will be a matter of public record. Comments will be summarized and included in the submission for Office of Management and Budget approval.

Signed in Washington, DC, on March 28, 2003.

James R. Little,

Administrator, Farm Service Agency.

[FR Doc. 03-8308 Filed 4-4-03; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 3410-05-P

DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Forest Service

Klamath National Forest, California, Meteor

AGENCY: Forest Service, USDA.

ACTION: Notice of intent to prepare an environmental impact statement.

SUMMARY: The Forest Service will prepare an environmental impact statement on a proposal to conduct vegetative management activities using a variety of methods on National Forest System lands in the Salmon River watershed near the towns of Sawyers Bar, Forks of Salmon, and Cecilville in Siskiyou County, California. Timber harvest and associated activities are proposed on approximately 744 acres. Removal of non-commercial trees and brush are proposed on approximately 131 acres. No new road construction is proposed. Some road decommissioning is proposed. All activities would likely occur within three to five years of the decision being made.

DATES: Comments concerning the scope of the analysis must be received within 14 days of the publication of this notice in the **Federal Register**. The draft environmental impact statement is expected by May 2003 and the final environmental impact statement is expected by September 2003.

ADDRESSES: Send written comments to Margaret Boland, Forest Supervisor, Klamath National Forest, 1312 Fairlane Road, Yreka, California 96097.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Lynda Karns, Team Leader, at the above address or call (530) 841-4469.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

Purpose and Need for Action

The purposes of the proposed action are to maintain stand health by leading stands into a resilient condition where they can provide a sustained yield of wood products; to reduce the risk of losing these stands to catastrophic fire; to maintain unique wildlife habitats; and to provide an economical, safe, and environmentally sensitive transportation system. The need for treatment was identified when the existing condition was compared with the desired condition from the Klamath National Forest Land and Resource Management Plan. These needs or opportunities are taken from the Upper South Fork of the Salmon River Ecosystem Analysis, the North Fork Salmon Watershed Assessment, the Lower South Fork of the Salmon River Ecosystem Analysis, and the Klamath National Forest Forestwide Roads Analysis.

Proposed Action

The Salmon River District of the Klamath National Forest proposes timber harvest and associated activities on approximately 744 acres in the Salmon River Watershed. Harvest prescriptions include 313 acres of commercial thinning, 317 acres of group selection, 36 acres of green tree retention (some acres are double-counted with the thinning acres), 28 acres of seed tree/sanitation, and 50 acres of salvage. All acreages are approximate. Helicopter, cable, and tractor logging systems would be used. Harvest activities would occur on matrix land, which includes the land allocations of General Forest, Partial Retention, and Recreational Wild and Scenic Rivers (WSRs). Selected stream channel areas and unstable areas in the Riparian Reserve land allocation would be thinned to move these areas towards their desired condition. Associated activities including reforestation, precommercial thinning, browse protection, hardwood felling, hand grubbing and chainsaw release of planted trees, gopher control, and mastication (grinding up) of non-commercial trees would occur on matrix land. Project-generated fuels would be treated through a combination of hand piling, prescribed burning, yarding and removal of unmerchantable material, tractor piling, and other mechanical treatment.

Non-commercial trees and brush would be masticated on approximately 131 acres in nine stands outside of timber sale units. Habitat improvement activities would include low-intensity underburning in oak stands, repairing a fence, repairing the outlet to a pond, and improving two water developments.

No new road construction is proposed. One road would be stormproofed (made self-maintaining), one unclassified road would be improved and added to the transportation system, six unclassified roads would be decommissioned, and two roads would have maintenance level changes.

The legal description is Township 37–40 North, Range 11–12 West, Mount Diablo Meridian and Township 10 North, Range 8 East, Humboldt Meridian. All activities would likely be completed within three to five years of the decision being made.

Possible Alternatives

An alternative that includes timber harvest and associated activities on approximately 650 acres, mastication of non-commercial trees and brush on 41 acres outside of timber sale units, oak

underburning, and improving two water developments would also be considered. Road work would be similar to the proposed action.

Responsible Official

Margaret Boland, Forest Supervisor, USDA Forest Service, 1312 Fairlane Road, Yreka, California 96097 is the Responsible Official.

Nature of Decision To Be Made

The Forest Service must decide whether it will implement this proposal, an alternative design that moves the area towards the desired condition, or not implement any project at this time.

Scoping Process

In October 2002, this vegetation management project was included in the Klamath National Forest's Schedule of Proposed Actions, which was posted on the Klamath National Forest's internet web site and mailed to interested parties. In January of 2003 a scoping letter for the proposed vegetation management project was mailed to 82 people, groups, and agencies. The scoping letter was sent to those who expressed interest in the proposal, who owned property adjacent to the project area, and to agencies with responsibilities for local resource management. This notice of intent invites additional public comment on this proposal and initiates the preparation of the environmental impact statement. Due to the extensive scoping effects already conducted, no scoping meeting is planned. The public is encouraged to take part in the planning process and to visit with Forest Service officials at any time during the analysis and prior to the decision.

While public participation in this analysis is welcome at any time, comments received within 14 days of the publication of this notice will be especially useful in the preparation of the draft environmental impact statement. The scoping process will include identifying potential issues, significant issues to be analyzed in depth, alternatives to the proposed action, and potential environmental effects of the proposal and alternatives.

Preliminary Issues

Six preliminary issues have been identified for this proposal as follows: (1) Timber harvest and underburning could reduce the quantity and quality of habitat providing for northern spotted owl (NSO) nesting, roosting, foraging, and dispersal activities in Critical Habitat in the Matrix. (2) Timber harvest in conjunction with past cumulative effects in the upper Jones Gulch

Drainage could trigger slope failure in the dormant landslide area below. (3) Timber harvest, fuel reduction, and road activities, could cause soil erosion or trigger slope failure, which could increase sediment in streams, contributing to cumulative effects to water quality. (4) Timber harvest, fuel reduction, and road activities could increase sediment in streams, affecting the habitat of anadromous fish. (5) Logging in riparian reserves could cause erosion and result in sedimentation in streams. (6) Portions of units located along the North Fork of the Salmon River, which is designated as Recreational in the WSR System, could adversely affect WSR values.

Comment Requested

This notice of intent initiates the scoping process, which guides the development of the environmental impact statement. The public is encouraged to take part in the process and is encouraged to visit with Forest Service officials at any time during the analysis and prior to the decision. The Forest Service will be seeking information, comments and assistance from Federal, State, and local agencies and other individuals or organizations that may be interested in, or affected by, the proposed vegetation management activities.

Early Notice of Importance of Public Participation in Subsequent Environmental Review

A draft environmental impact statement will be prepared for comment. The comment period on the draft environmental impact statement will be 45 days from the date the Environmental Protection Agency publishes the notice of availability in the **Federal Register**.

The Forest Service believes, at this early state, it is important to give reviewers notice of several court rulings related to public participation in the environmental review process. First, reviewers of draft environmental impact statements must structure their participation in the environmental review of the proposal so that it is meaningful and alerts an agency to the reviewer's position and contentions. *Vermont Yankee Nuclear Power Corp. v. NRDC*, 435 U.S. 519, 553 (1978). Also, environmental objections that could be raised at the draft environmental impact statement stage but that are not raised until after completion of the Final EIS may be waived or dismissed by the courts. *City of Angoon v. Hodel*, 803 F.2d 1016, 1022 (9th Cir. 1986) and *Wisconsin Heritages, Inc. v. Harris*, 490 F. Supp. 1334, 1338 (E.D. Wis. 1980).

Because of these court rulings, it is very important that those interested in this proposed action participate by the close of the 45-day comment period so that substantive comments and objections are made available to the Forest Service at a time when it can meaningfully consider them and respond to them in the final environmental impact statement.

To assist the Forest Service in identifying and considering issues and concerns on the proposed action, comments on the draft environmental impact statement should be as specific as possible. It is also helpful if comments refer to specific pages or chapters of the draft statement. Comments may also address the adequacy of the draft environmental impact statement or the merits of the alternatives formulated and discussed in the statement. Reviewers may wish to refer to the Council on Environmental Quality Regulations for implementing the procedural provisions of the National Environmental Policy Act at 40 CFR 1503.3 in addressing these points.

Comments received, including the names and addresses of those who comment, will be considered part of the public record on this proposal and will be available for public inspection.

(Authority: 40 CFR 1501.7 and 1508.22; Forest Service handbook 1909.15, Section 21)

Dated: March 31, 2003.

Margaret J. Boland,
Forest Supervisor, Klamath National Forest.
[FR Doc. 03-8318 Filed 4-4-03; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 3410-11-P

DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Forest Service

Sierra Nevada Forest Plan Amendment, Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement

AGENCY: Forest Service, USDA.

ACTION: Notice of intent to prepare a supplemental environmental impact statement.

SUMMARY: The Department of Agriculture, Forest Service, Intermountain and Pacific Southwest Regions will prepare and consider a supplemental environmental impact statement (SEIS) for a proposal to amend the Record of Decision (ROD) for the Sierra Nevada Forest Plan Amendment, which was signed on January 12, 2001. Specifically, the proposed action responds to changed circumstances and new information identified during a year-long review of the Sierra Nevada Forest Plan

Amendment. The proposed action would amend the Land and Resource Management Plans for the Humboldt-Toiyabe, Modoc, Lassen, Plumas, Tahoe, Eldorado, Stanislaus, Sierra, Sequoia, and Inyo National Forests, the Lake Tahoe Basin Management Unit. As done for the original ROD, the Regional Forester for the Pacific Southwest Region has delegated authority to adopt any changes on behalf of the Regional Forester for the Intermountain Region.

DATES: Scoping is not required for supplements to environmental impact statements (40 CFR 1502.9(c) 4(4)). There was extensive public involvement in the development of the proposed action and the Forest Service is not inviting comments at the time.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Kathleen S. Morse, Interdisciplinary Team Leader, USDA Forest Service, Pacific Southwest Region, 1323 Club Drive, Vallejo, CA 94592. Phone: (707) 562-8822.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

Background

Over the past decade, the Forest Service has conducted large-scale land and resource management planning efforts for the Sierra Nevada bioregion. In 1992, the Forest Service Pacific Southwest Research Station published *The California Spotted Owl: A Technical Assessment of its Current Status* (CASPO Technical Report), which initiated a Sierra Nevada-wide planning effort to address concerns about declining California spotted owl populations. In January 1993, the Forest Service completed an environmental assessment that proposed guidelines for California spotted owl conservation based on measures described in the CASPO Technical Report. On January 13, 1993, the Regional Forester decided to adopt these guidelines for the Pacific Southwest Region as an interim measure to protect California spotted owl habitat until a long-term conservation strategy could be developed.

The Forest Service analyzed options for a long-term California spotted owl strategy in a draft environmental impact statement (EIS) released in February 1995 and a revised draft EIS released in 1996. In 1997, the Secretary of Agriculture chartered a Federal Advisory Committee (FAC) to review the revised draft EIS. The FAC concluded that the revised draft EIS was insufficient as either a California spotted owl management plan or as a broader ecosystem management plan.

In early 1998, the Chief of the Forest Service directed the Regional Forester of the Pacific Southwest Region to develop

an ecosystem strategy for conserving California spotted owls, old forest ecosystems, and other forest resources, considering the recommendations of the FAC committee and recent scientific information presented in the Sierra Nevada Ecosystems Management Report (SNEP) to Congress, published between June 1996 and March 1997. The SNEP Report included four volumes of scientific assessments for the Sierra Nevada bioregion, with accompanying large database and maps. In November 1998, the Forest Service published a Notice of Intent to prepare an EIS to amend Land and Resource Management Plans for 11 national forests in the Sierra Nevada and Modoc Plateau and Regional Guides for the Intermountain and Pacific Southwest Regions to address five problem areas: old forest ecosystems and associated species; aquatic, riparian, and meadow ecosystems; fire and fuels; noxious weeds; and lower westside hardwood ecosystems. In May 2000, the draft EIS for the Sierra Nevada Forest Plan Amendment (SNEPA) was released. The final EIS for the SNFPA was released in January 2001 and the Record of Decision was signed on January 12, 2001.

As the Forest Service was preparing the Notice of Intent for the SNFPA, the Herger-Feinstein Quincy Library Group Forest Recovery Act (HFQLG Forest Recovery Act) became law in October 1998 as part of the Department of Interior and Related Agencies Appropriations Act. The HFQLG Forest Recovery Act required the Forest Service to conduct a 5-year pilot project to implement certain resource protection measures and management activities on the Plumas, Lassen, and Tahoe National Forests. Based on the direction in the HFQLG Forest Recovery Act, the Forest Service prepared an environmental impact statement (EIS) evaluating the impacts of the pilot project. In August 1999, the Lassen, Plumas, and Tahoe Forest Supervisors issued the Record of Decision (ROD) and the Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS) for pilot project implementation. Subsequently, the pilot project area was included in the SNFPA and management direction for the pilot project was changed to reflect the January 12, 2001 decision.

On November 16, 2001, the Chief of the Forest Service completed his review of 234 appeals of the SNEPA ROD. The Chief affirmed the SNFPA ROD. However, in his appeal decision, the Chief instructed the Regional Forester of the Pacific Southwest Region to re-evaluate the SNFPA decision in light of recent and repeated severe fire seasons and a need to aggressively manage