

District Ranger Decisions

Bienville Ranger District: Clarion-Ledger, published daily in Jackson, MS.

Chickasawhay Ranger District: Clarion-Ledger, published daily in Jackson, MS.

Delta Ranger District: Clarion-Ledger, published daily in Jackson, MS.

De Soto Ranger District: Clarion-Ledger, published daily in Jackson, MS.

Holly Springs Ranger District: Clarion-Ledger, published daily in Jackson, MS.

Homochitto Ranger District: Clarion-Ledger, published daily in Jackson, MS.

Tombigbee Ranger District: Clarion-Ledger, published daily in Jackson, MS.

Ashe-Erambert Project: Clarion-Ledger, published daily in Jackson, MS.

National Forests in North Carolina, North Carolina

Forest Supervisor Decisions

The Asheville Citizen-Times, published daily in Asheville, NC.

District Ranger Decisions

Appalachian Ranger District: The Asheville Citizen-Times, published daily in Asheville, NC.

Cheoah Ranger District: Graham Star, published weekly (Thursday) in Robbinsville, NC.

Croatan Ranger District: The Sun Journal, published weekly (Sunday through Friday) in New Bern, NC.

Grandfather Ranger District: McDowell News, published daily in Marion, NC.

Highlands Ranger District: The Highlander, published weekly (May-Oct Tues & Fri; Oct-April Tues only) in Highlands, NC.

The Crossroads Chronicle published weekly (May-Oct Tues & Fri; Oct-April Tues only) in Cashiers, NC The Sylvia Herald, published weekly on Thursday in Sylva, NC.

Pisgah Ranger District: The Asheville Citizen-Times, published daily in Asheville, NC.

Tusquitee Ranger District: Cherokee Scout, published weekly (Wednesday) in Murphy, NC.

Uwharrie Ranger District: Montgomery Herald, published weekly (Wednesday) in Troy, NC.

Wayah Ranger District: The Franklin Press, published bi-weekly (Wednesday and Friday) in Franklin, NC.

Ouachita National Forest, Arkansas, Oklahoma

Forest Supervisory Decisions

Arkansas Democrat-Gazette, published daily in Little Rock, AR.

District Ranger Decisions

Caddo Ranger District: Arkansas Democrat-Gazette, published daily in Little Rock, AR.

Cold Springs Ranger District: Arkansas Democrat-Gazette, published daily in Little Rock, AR.

Fourche Ranger District: Arkansas Democrat-Gazette, published daily in Little Rock, AR.

Jessieville Ranger District: Arkansas Democrat-Gazette, published daily in Little Rock, AR.

Mena Ranger District: Arkansas Democrat-Gazette, published daily in Little Rock, AR.

Oden Ranger District: Arkansas Democrat-Gazette, published daily in Little Rock, AR.

Poteau Ranger District: Arkansas Democrat-Gazette, published daily in Little Rock, AR.

Winona Ranger District: Arkansas Democrat-Gazette, published daily in Little Rock, AR.

Womble Ranger District: Arkansas Democrat-Gazette, published daily in Little Rock, AR.

Choctaw Ranger District: Tulsa World, published daily in Tulsa, OK.

Kiamichi Ranger District: Tulsa World, published daily in Tulsa, OK.

Tiaki Ranger District: Tulsa World, published daily in Tulsa, OK.

Ozark-St. Francis National Forest: Arkansas

Forest Supervisory Decisions

The Courier, published daily (Sunday through Friday) in Russellville, AR.

District Ranger Decisions

Sylamore Ranger District: Stone County Leader, published weekly (Tuesday) in Mountain View, AR.

Buffalo Ranger District: Newton County Times, published weekly (Thursday) in Jasper, AR.

Bayou Ranger District: The Courier, published daily (Sunday through Friday) in Russellville, AR.

Pleasant Hill Ranger District: Johnson County Graphic, published weekly (Wednesday) in Clarksville, AR.

Boston Mountain Ranger District: Southwest Times Record, published daily in Fort Smith, AR.

Magazine Ranger District: Southwest Times Record, published daily in Fort Smith, AR.

St. Francis Ranger District: The Daily World, published daily (Sunday through Friday) in Helena, AR.

National Forests and Grasslands in Texas, Texas

Forest Supervisor Decisions

The Lufkin Daily News, published daily in Lufkin, TX.

District Ranger Decisions

Angelina National Forest: The Lufkin Daily News, published daily in Lufkin, TX.

Davy Crockett National Forest: The Lufkin Daily News, published daily in Lufkin, TX.

Sabine National Forest: The Lufkin Daily News, published daily in Lufkin, TX.

Sam Houston National Forest: The Courier, published daily in Conroe, TX.

Caddo & LBJ National Grasslands: Denton Record-Chronicle, published daily in Denton, TX.

Dated: April 16, 1997.

R.F. Carpenter,

Deputy Regional Forester for Operations.

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DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Forest Service

Payen, English, and Pass Creek Range Allotments, Tahoe National Forest, Nevada and Sierra Counties, CA

AGENCY: Forest Service, USDA.

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

SUMMARY: The U.S. Department of Agriculture, Forest Service, Tahoe National Forest will prepare an environmental impact statement (EIS) to evaluate three grazing allotments. The analysis will lay the groundwork for amending the Allotment Management Plans (AMPs) by determining what levels of livestock will be allowed on the land, the allowable amount of vegetation that can be grazed, the timing of grazing, and the methods to control the distribution of livestock on the allotments. The allotments are located on the Sierraville Ranger District, Sierraville, California, in portions of T19N, R12E-R17E, MDB&M.

The primary objectives of the proposals are to: (1) Manage grazing to ensure that affected vegetation, including the woody and shrub components are maintaining sustainable, diverse, and healthy plant communities; (2) where areas are degraded, manage grazing to restore trend towards, and subsequently maintaining, the ecological health of these areas such that they attain desired conditions within then years; (3) manage grazing to provide for and maintain necessary habitats for diverse populations of plant and animal species, including those that are sensitive, threatened, or endangered; (4) manage grazing so that precipitation is able to

enter the soil surface at appropriate rates, the soil is adequately protected against accelerated erosion, and fertility is maintained at appropriate levels; (5) manage grazing to maintain the integrity of streambanks and ensure that where streambank conditions have been degraded, the level of use will allow for increased stability and an upward trend; and (6) develop a set of grazing strategies in conjunction with the above objectives that would maintain economical and sustainable operations.

The agency invites comments and suggestions on the scope of the analysis. In addition, the agency gives notice of the full environmental analysis and decision-making process that will occur on the proposal so that interested and affected people are aware of how they may participate and contribute to the final decision.

DATES: Comments should be made in writing and received by May 23, 1997.

ADDRESSES: Written comments concerning the project should be directed to Sam Wilbanks, District Ranger, Sierraville Ranger District, PO Box 95, Sierraville, CA 96126.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Sam Wilbanks, District Ranger, Sierraville Ranger District, Sierraville, CA 96126, telephone (916) 994-3401, or Jerry Sirski, Project Team Leader, at (916) 994-3401.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: Review of the three permits is important in order to conserve riparian habitats, meadow systems, fish and wildlife habitats, and other resources. In addition, Congress has mandated, under Public Law 104-19, to conduct this review using procedures specified in the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA). This analysis will lay the groundwork for amending the Allotment Management Plan (AWPs) of these three areas. All three plans are out of date. The Payen AMP is 20 years old; the Pass Creek and English AMP's were originally part of a larger plan that is 40 years old. In the time since these plans were approved, new scientific information on the management of rangeland and aquatic ecosystems has been developed. Although permits have been adjusted over the years to adapt to new information, revision of the current AMPs is in order.

In preparing the environmental impact statement, the Forest Service will identify and analyze a range of alternatives that address the issues developed for the respective allotments. One of the alternatives will be no grazing. Other alternatives will consider differing levels of grazing. An ecological approach will be used as part of this

analysis. This means that the needs of people and environmental values will be blended in such a way that this area's desired condition would represent a diverse, healthy, productive, and sustainable ecosystem.

Public participation will be important during the analysis, especially during the review of the draft environmental impact statement. The Forest Service is seeking information, comments, and assistance from Federal, State, and local agencies and other individuals or organizations who may be interested in or affected by the proposed action. This input will be used in preparation of the draft environmental impact statement. The scoping process includes:

1. Identifying potential issues.
 2. Identifying issues to be analyzed in depth.
 3. Eliminating insignificant issues or those which have been covered by a relevant previous environmental analysis.
 4. Exploring additional alternatives.
 5. Identifying potential environmental effects of the proposed action and alternatives (i.e., direct, indirect, and cumulative effects and connected actions).
 6. Determining potential cooperating agencies and task assignments.
- The following list of issues has been identified through initial scoping:
- (1) What should be the permitted capacity for each allotment?
 - (2) Should the inactive unit of the Pass Creek Allotment be stocked with livestock?
 - (3) What is the appropriate class of livestock for each allotment?
 - (4) How will livestock be managed on each allotment?
 - (5) What is the proper season of use?
 - (6) What improvements are needed?
 - (7) What variables should be monitored in the monitoring plan?

Comments from other Federal, State and local agencies, organizations, and individuals who may be interested in, or affected by the decision, are encouraged to identify other significant issues. Public participation will be solicited through mailing letters to potentially interested or affected mining claim owners, private land owners, and special use permittees on the Sierraville Ranger District; posting information in local towns; and mailing letters to local permittees, politicians, school boards, county supervisors, and environmental groups. Continued participation will be emphasized through individual contacts. Public meetings, depending on interest, will be used as a method public involvement during preparation and review of the draft environmental impact statement and will be

announced in newspapers of general circulation in the geographic area well in advance of scheduled dates.

The draft EIS is expected to be filed with the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and to be available for public review by July, 1997. The comment period on the draft EIS will be 45 days from the date the EPA publishes the notice of availability in the **Federal Register**.

The Forest Service believes, at this early stage, 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 EIS 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 the 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 EIS.

To assist the Forest Service in identifying and considering issues and concerns on the proposed action, comments on the draft EIS should be as specific as possible. It is also helpful if comments refer to specific pages or chapters of the draft EIS. Comments may also address the adequacy of the draft EIS 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.

The final EIS is expected to be available by October, 1997. The responsible official is Sam J. Wilbanks, District Ranger, Sierraville Ranger District, Tahoe National Forest.

Dated: April 18, 1997.

John H. Skinner,
Forest Supervisor.

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