

3. State of Alaska, Department of Natural Resources

—Tideland Permit and Lease or Easement

4. State of Alaska, Department of Environmental Conservation

—Solid Waste Disposal Permit
—Certification of Compliance with Alaska Water Quality Standards (401 Certification)

Responsible Official

Bradley E. Powell, Forest Supervisor, Ketchikan Area, Tongass National Forest, Federal Building, Ketchikan, Alaska 99901, is the responsible official. The responsible official will consider the comments, responses, disclosure of environmental consequences, and applicable laws, regulations, and policies in making the decision and stating the rationale in the Record of Decision.

Dated: May 1, 1997.

Robert L. Vaught,

Acting Forest Supervisor.

[FR Doc. 97-11975 Filed 5-7-97; 8:45 am]

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DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Forest Service

Rock Mountain Region; Environmental Impact Statement for Uncompahgre National Forest Travel Plan; Grand Mesa, Uncompahgre and Gunnison National Forests; Gunnison, Hinsdale, Mesa, Montrose, Ouray, San Juan and San Miguel Counties, Colorado

AGENCY: Forest Service, USDA.

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

RESPONSIBLE OFFICIAL: Robert Storch, Forest Supervisor of the Grand Mesa, Uncompahgre, and Gunnison National Forests, 22550 Highway 50, Delta, Colorado 81416.

SUMMARY: The Forest Service will prepare an environmental impact statement on a proposal to revise the existing Uncompahgre National Forest Travel Plan. The existing travel plan was implemented in 1984 as directed by the 1983 Land and Resource Management Plan for the Grand Mesa, Uncompahgre and Gunnison National Forests. The 1991 Amended Land and Resource Management Plan for the Grand Mesa, Uncompahgre and Gunnison National Forests identified a need to refine travel management on the Forest.

The purpose of revising the existing Uncompahgre National Forest plan is to

provide safe access to and through the National Forest to support resource management and to provide a variety of recreation opportunities for public users, while protecting the environment.

Reasons why the National Forest is proposing to revise the existing travel plan include: 1) There is a need to plan for the current as well as the future recreation demands which will be placed on the Forest. There has been an increase in the amount and a change in the type of public recreational travel on the Uncompahgre National Forest since 1984. 2) There is a need to provide transportation systems that provide recreational opportunities for many different users. Most transportation routes on the Uncompahgre National Forest developed as access for commodity uses, such as livestock grazing, timber harvesting and mining, and were not designed or located for recreational travel. 3) There is a need to restrict indiscriminate vehicle travel off of roads and trails. Currently much of the Uncompahgre National Forest has an open travel designation, which means off-route travel with motorized vehicles is allowed so long as resource damage does not occur. However, unplanned and unauthorized routes have developed through off-route use, and efforts to close routes or restrict travel to meet Forest Plan objectives have been ineffective as a result of the open travel. 4) There is a need to make travel management consistent between the four Ranger Districts on the Uncompahgre National Forest and the various Counties, especially concerning travel by off-highway vehicles (OHVs).

The decisions to be made in revising the Uncompahgre National Forest Travel Plan include: 1) Determining which area-wide travel management option(s) will be applied to what specific areas. Options are: (a) open travel, off-route travel by motorized and mechanized vehicles is allowed. (b) restricted travel, travel by motorized and mechanized vehicles is allowed only on designated routes with the possible exception of snowmobile travel occurring on snow. (c) closed travel, travel by motorized and mechanized vehicles is not allowed. 2) Determining which Recreation Opportunity Spectrum (ROS) setting will be maintained in specific areas. 3) Determining the roads and trails that will comprise the transportation system for the Uncompahgre National Forest. 4) Determining the uses to be allowed on each specific road and trail. 5) Amending the Forest Plan to incorporate changes needed based on the four previous decisions.

The Forest Service held a series of 38 public meetings between April 1994 and June 1996 to discuss travel management issues and alternatives. Written comments from people unable to attend these meetings were also accepted. As a result, the following issues were identified; 1) Open road/trail density exceeds Forest Plan standards (as related to habitat effectiveness) in some areas. 2) Unauthorized routes are developing on National Forest System land. 3) Closing some and designating other routes will result in increased use and damage from concentrating use on the remaining open routes. 4) Riparian/aquatic habitats and other special resources need to be protected. 5) Wet season access needs to be managed to prevent damage to vegetation, soils and water quality. 6) There are conflicts between different types of recreational users. 7) Indiscriminate motorized travel during hunting season conflicts between different types of recreational users. 7) Indiscriminate motorized travel during hunting season conflicts with hunting experience and results in unauthorized route development. 8) Habitat capability is affected by travel. 9) Big game distribution is affected by travel. 10) There are conflicts with winter recreation and big game winter range. 11) There are conflicts with existing and proposed routes in important habitat. 12) Threatened, endangered and sensitive species and their habitat needs to be protected.

As a result of public input, five alternatives were developed and will be analyzed in the environmental impact statement. Alternatives vary in the emphasis placed on providing different recreational opportunities; ranging from providing more non-motorized settings, to providing more motorized settings, to no change (no action). Restricting travel by motorized and mechanized vehicles to routes designated for those types of use is common to the four action alternatives.

The decision to prepare an environmental impact statement is a result of preliminary analysis indicating that some of the effects to the human environment from revising the Travel Plan may be significant. All public comment received to date will be considered in this analysis. Parties who previously expressed interest have been informed individually by mail that this analysis is continuing. No additional public meetings are planned; however, the Forest Service will consider any new information that may be received as a result of this notice of intent. Written comment should be sent by May 15, 1997.

DATES: Publication of Draft EIS: June 1997; Final EIS: September 1997.

ADDRESSES: Send written comments to Uncompahgre National Forest Travel Plan, USDA Forest Service, 2250 Highway 50, Delta, CO 81416.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Steve Hemphill, Team Leader. Phone: 970-874-6600. FAX: 970-874-6698.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: 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 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 environmental impact stage but that are not raised until after completion of the final environmental statement 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 propose 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 meaningful consider them and respond to them in the final environmental impact statement.

To assist the Forest Service 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 to Environmental Quality Regulations for implementing the procedural provisions of the National Environmental Policy Act at 40 CFR 1503.3 in addressing these points.

Dated: April 21, 1997.

Robert L. Storch,

Forest Supervisor.

[FR Doc. 97-11949 Filed 5-7-97; 8:45 am]

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DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Forest Service

Southwest Washington Provincial Advisory Committee Meeting Notice

AGENCY: Forest Service, USDA.

ACTION: Notice of meeting.

SUMMARY: The Southwest Washington Provincial Advisory Committee will meet on May 21, 1997, at the Pack Forest Conference Center (Pack Hall) in Eatonville, Washington. For directions call (360) 891-5102. The meeting will begin at 10 a.m. and continue until 5 p.m. The purpose of the Advisory Committee meeting is to (1) Utilize the Province Health Matrix and Watershed Analyses, to advise on proposed Timber sales, for the Wind River and White Salmon Basins, and (2) Present draft alternatives on the Cispus Adaptive Management Area.

Agenda items to be covered include: (1) 1997-1998 Timber Sale Program on the Wind River and White Salmon Basins, (2) Updates from Subcommittees on the Social and Economic Indicators of Basin Health, (3) Presentation of draft alternatives for the Cispus Adaptive Management Area, (4) Update on Plum Creek Land Exchange, and (5) Public Open Forum. All Southwest Washington Provincial Advisory Committee meetings are open to the public. Interested citizens are encouraged to attend. The "open forum" provides opportunity for the public to bring issues, concerns, and discussion topics to the Advisory Committee. The open forum is scheduled as part of agenda item (5) for this meeting. Interested speakers will need to register prior to the open forum period. The committee welcomes the public's written comments on committee business at any time.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Direct questions regarding this meeting to Sue Lampe, Public Affairs, at (360) 891-5091, or write Forest Headquarters Office, Gifford Pinchot National Forest, 10600 NE 51st Circle, Vancouver, WA 98682.

Dated: May 2, 1997.

Claire Lavendel,

Deputy Forest Supervisor.

[FR Doc. 97-12022 Filed 5-7-97; 8:45 am]

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DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Natural Resources Conservation Service

Proposed Change to Section IV of the Field Office Technical Guide (FOTG) of the Natural Resources Conservation Service in Louisiana

AGENCY: Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), U.S. Department of Agriculture.

ACTION: Notice of availability of proposed changes in the NRCS National Handbook of Conservation Practices for review and comment.

SUMMARY: It is the intention of the NRCS in Louisiana to issue revised conservation practice standards: Firebreak (code 394), Forest Stand Improvement (code 666), Prescribed Burning (code 338), Tree/shrub Establishment (code 612), Tree/shrub Pruning (code 660), Access Road (code 560), Waste Storage Facility (code 313), and Composting Facility (code 317), in Section IV of the FOTG.

DATES: Comments will be received on or before June 9, 1997.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:

Inquire in writing to Donald W. Gohmert, State Conservationist, Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), 3737 Government Street, Alexandria, Louisiana 71302. Copies of the practice standards will be made available upon written request.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: Section 343 of the Federal Agriculture Improvement and Reform Act of 1996 states that revisions made after enactment of the law to NRCS State Technical Guides used to carry out highly erodible land and wetland provisions of the law shall be made available for public review and comment. For the next 30 days the NRCS in Louisiana will receive comments relative to the proposed changes. Following that period a determination will be made by the NRCS in Louisiana regarding disposition of those comments and a final determination of change will be made.

Dated: April 29, 1997.

Donald W. Gohmert,

State Conservationist, USDA, Natural Resources Conservation Service.

[FR Doc. 97-11997 Filed 5-7-97; 8:45 am]

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