

River Ranger District, P.O. Box 186, Dubois, Wyoming 82513.

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:** Bob Rossman, Project Interdisciplinary Team Leader, (307) 455-2466.

Field trip: In response to requests received during earlier scoping, a field trip to the proposed project area was conducted for the public on June 24, 1997. Materials developed for participants are available upon request. Informal public meetings will be scheduled as needed throughout the analysis process.

**SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:** Over the last ten years there has been a significant amount of effort devoted to developing a consensus on conducting timber harvest in the Brent Creek area. Public comments were solicited in 1987 and 1991. Many comments were received from concerned citizens, environmental groups, and other governmental agencies as a result of these scoping efforts. Comments received in 1991 were refined into issues by a Forest Service Interdisciplinary Team, representatives of other agencies, and several individuals. An alternative formulation process was begun at this time, but was discontinued due to concern about violating the Federal Advisory Committee Act.

Scoping of a timber sale proposal was reinitiated in 1997. The period ended on May 5, 1997. An Interdisciplinary Team of Forest Service resource specialists reviewed comments raised during this period.

Based in part on these comments, on the history of difficult issues in the Brent Creek area, and on the controversiality of proposed timber sales, the district ranger reevaluated the purpose and need for action and concluded that an environmental impact statement should be prepared. Although scoping is reinitiated through this Notice of Intent, most comments received during earlier scoping efforts are considered applicable and will be retained. People who wish to update their earlier comments, based on the revised purpose and need, are encouraged to do so. The Forest Service particularly welcomes any assistance from commenters in identifying sources of impact on and off the Forest to include in its cumulative effects analysis.

The Deciding Official will be Bob Lee, Wind River District Ranger, 1403 West Ramshorn, PO Box 186, Dubois, Wyoming, 82513, unless the need for a nonsignificant forest plan amendment is indicated. In that event, the Forest Supervisor will be the Deciding Official.

The expected publication date of a draft environmental impact statement is during February of 1998. Following this, a 45 day period will be allowed for public comment on the draft. This comment period will commence on the day the Environmental Protection Agency publishes a "Notice of Availability" in the **Federal Register**. A completed final environmental impact statement is anticipated in July of 1998.

The Forest Service believes it is important to give reviewers notice at this early stage 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 environmental impact 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 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.) Please note that comments you make on the draft environmental impact statement will be regarded as public information.

Note further that comments will be available for public inspection during the analysis process, and that in most cases the name of the commenter will

not remain confidential. Those who submit anonymous comments will not have standing to appeal the subsequent decision under 36 CFR Parts 215 or 217. Persons requesting such confidentiality should be aware that under the FOIA, confidentiality may be granted in only very limited circumstances, such as to protect trade secrets.

Dated: July 1, 1997.

**Rebecca Aus,**

*Forest Supervisor.*

[FR Doc. 97-18129 Filed 7-10-97; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 3410-11-M

## DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

### Forest Service

#### Committee of State Foresters

**AGENCY:** Forest Service, USDA.

**ACTION:** Notice of meeting.

**SUMMARY:** The Committee of State Foresters will meet in Washington, DC, on August 6, 1997, from 10 a.m. to 12 noon. The Committee is comprised of seven members of the Executive Committee of the National Association of State Foresters. The meeting provides an opportunity for Committee members to consult with the Secretary of Agriculture regarding the administration and application of agency programs, administered under Cooperative Forestry Assistance Act of 1978. The Under Secretary for Natural Resources and Environment will chair the meeting. The meeting is open to the public; however, participation is limited to Department of Agriculture personnel and Committee members. Members of the public who wish to attend must register in advance with the person listed under **FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT**. Persons who wish to bring cooperative forestry matters to the attention of the Committee may file written statements with the Executive Secretary of the Committee before or after the meeting.

**DATES:** The meeting will be held August 6, 1997.

**ADDRESSES:** The meeting will be held in the Williamsburg Room, 104-A Jamie L. Whitten Building, 14th and Independence Avenue, S.W., Washington, D.C. 20250.

Send written comments to Joan M. Comanor, Executive Secretary, Committee of State Foresters, c/o Forest Service, MAIL STOP 1109, USDA, P.O. Box 96090, Washington, DC 20090-6090.

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:**

Jerilyn Levi, Staff Assistant, State of Private Forestry, Forest Service (202) 205-1041.

Dated: July 8, 1997.

**Joan M. Comanor,**

*Deputy Chief, State and Private Forestry.*

[FR Doc. 97-18283 Filed 7-10-97; 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 Arkansas**

**AGENCY:** Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) Department of Agriculture.

**ACTION:** Notice of availability of proposed changes in Section IV of the FOTG of the NRCS in Arkansas for review and comment.

**SUMMARY:** It is the intention of NRCS in Arkansas to issue a new conservation practice standard Prescribed Grazing (Code 528A); and revised conservation practice standards Fish Stream Improvement (Code 395) and Forest Site Preparation (Code 490) and Fence (Code 382) and Streambank and Shoreline Protection (Code 580) in section IV of the FOTG.

**DATES:** Comments will be received until August 11, 1997.

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:**

Inquire in writing to Kalven L. Trice, State Conservationist, Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), Room 5404 Federal Building, 700 West Capitol Avenue, Little Rock, Arkansas 72201-3225. Copies of the practice standards will be made available upon written request. Phone 501-324-5445.

**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 Arkansas will receive comments relative to the proposed changes. Following that period a determination will be made by the NRCS in Arkansas regarding disposition of those comments and a final determination of change will be made.

Dated: June 23, 1997.

**Jerry L. Mitchell,**

*Acting State Conservationist, USDA, Natural Resources Conservation Service, Little Rock, Arkansas.*

[FR Doc. 97-17652 Filed 7-10-96; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 3410-16-M

**DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE****Natural Resources Conservation Service****National Commission on Small Farms**

**AGENCY:** Natural Resources Conservation Service.

**ACTION:** Notice of intent to establish a Federal Advisory Committee with a request for comments. Notice of public meeting.

**SUMMARY:** The U. S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) proposes to establish the National Commission on Small Farms (Commission). The purpose of the Commission is to gather and analyze information regarding small farms and ranches and recommend to the Secretary of Agriculture a national policy and strategy to ensure their continued viability. This notice seeks comments on concerns and issues that the Commission should address. The Commission members will be appointed at a later time. The first public meeting of the Commission is July 28, 1997.

**DATES:** Written comments must be received on or before August 11, 1997. These comments will be summarized and presented to the Commission prior to their next meeting.

**PLACE, DATE AND TIME OF MEETING:** The Commission will meet from 9:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. on July 28 at the Agricenter International, Banquet Room, C Wing, 7777 Walnut Grove Road, Memphis, TN 38120. The first part of the meeting will be devoted to getting the Commission organized and the remainder of the meeting will be dedicated to listening to oral statements that will be limited to seven (7) minutes. Interested parties wishing to provide oral or written statements should contact Jennifer Yezak Molen, Director, National Commission on Small Farms, prior to the meeting.

**ADDRESSES:** Comments and statements should be sent to National Commission on Small Farms, U.S. Department of Agriculture, P.O. Box 2890, Room 5239, South Building, Washington, D.C. 20013.

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:** Jennifer Yezak Molen, Director, National Commission on Small Farms, at the address above or at (202) 690-0648.

**SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:** Pursuant to the Federal Advisory Committee Act (5 U.S.C. App.), notice is hereby given that the Secretary of Agriculture intends to establish the National Commission on Small Farms, hereinafter referred to as the Commission. The purpose of the Commission is to gather and evaluate background information, studies, and data pertinent to small farms and ranches, including limited-resource farmers. On the basis of the review, the Commission shall analyze all relevant issues and make findings, develop strategies, and make recommendations for consideration by the Secretary of Agriculture toward a national strategy on small farms. The national strategy shall include, but not be limited to: changes in existing policies, programs, regulations, training, and program delivery and outreach systems; approaches that assist beginning farmers and involve the private sectors and government, including assurances that the needs of minorities, women, and persons with disabilities are addressed; areas where new partnerships and collaborations are needed; and other approaches that it would deem advisable or which the Secretary of Agriculture or the Chief of the Natural Resources Conservation Service may request the Commission to consider.

The Secretary of Agriculture has determined that the work of the Commission is in the public interest and within the duties and responsibilities of USDA. Establishment of the Commission also implements a recommendation of the USDA Civil Rights Action Report to appoint a diverse commission to develop a national policy on small farms.

The Commission will be headed by a Chairperson and two Vice-Chairpersons. In the absence of the Chairperson, one of the Vice-Chairpersons, as designated by the Chairperson, will act in his/her stead. Administrative Staff support essential to the execution of the Commission's responsibilities shall be provided by the Natural Resources Conservation Service.

Commission members shall be appointed by the Secretary of Agriculture. The Commission may have as many as thirty (30) members representing a mix of perspectives, experience, and ethnic and geographic diversity. Members will represent small farms and ranches, finance, commerce, rural communities, nonprofit organizations, academia, state and local governments, Native Americans, farmworkers, and other interests as the Secretary determines.

Equal opportunity practices, consistent with USDA policies, will be