

Respondents: Commission merchants, dealers, and brokers engaged in the business of buying, selling, or negotiating the purchase or sale of fresh and/or frozen fruits and vegetables in interstate or foreign commerce are required to be licensed under the PACA (7 U.S.C. 499(c)(a)).

Estimated Number of Respondents: 25,550.

Estimated Number of Responses per Respondent: 1.67906.

Estimated Total Annual Burden on Respondents: 119,267 hours.

Comments are invited on: (1) Whether the proposed collection of information is necessary for the proper performance of the functions of the agency, including whether the information will have practical utility; (2) the accuracy of the agency's estimate of the burden of the proposed 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 those who are to respond, including through the use of appropriate automated, electronic, mechanical, or other technological collection techniques or other forms of information technology. Comments may be sent to: Charles W. Parrott, Assistant Chief, PACA Branch, Fruit and Vegetable Division, Agricultural Marketing Service, U.S. Department of Agriculture, Room 2095-South, P.O. Box 96456, Washington, D.C. 20090-6456. All comments received will be available for public inspection during regular business hours at the same address.

All responses to this notice will be summarized and included in the request for OMB approval. All comments will also become a matter of public record.

Dated: August 25, 1997.

Eric M. Forman,

Acting Director, Fruit and Vegetable Division.

[FR Doc. 97-22988 Filed 8-28-97; 8:45 am]

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DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Forest Service

Revision of the Land and Resource Management Plans for the Chippewa and Superior National Forests; Beltrami, Cass, Cook, Itasca, Koochiching, Lake and St. Louis Counties, MN

AGENCY: Forest Service, USDA.

ACTION: Notice; intent to prepare environmental impact statement.

SUMMARY: The purpose of this notice is to inform the public that the Forest Service intends to prepare an environmental impact statement for revising the Chippewa and Superior Land and Resource Management Plans (forest plans) (*pursuant to 16 U.S.C. 1604[f][5] and 36 CFR 219.12*). The Chippewa and Superior National Forests are working together to revise their forest plans. The Forest Service will prepare only one environmental impact statement but will prepare two separate forest plans.

We are now soliciting comments and suggestions from American Indian tribes, federal agencies, state and local governments, individuals and organizations on the scope of the analysis to be included in the draft environmental impact statement for the revised forest plans (*40 CFR 1501.7*). Comments should focus on (1) the proposal for revising forest plans and (2) possible alternatives for addressing issues associated with the proposal.

The current forest plans for the Chippewa and Superior National Forests were approved in June 1986. These plans guide the overall management of Minnesota's two national forests. Six primary decisions are made in forest plans:

1. Forestwide multiple-use goals and objectives (*as required by 36 CFR 219.11[b]*)
2. Forestwide management requirements (*36 CFR 219.27*)
3. Management area direction (*36 CFR 219.11[c]*)
4. Lands suited and not suited for timber management (*36 CFR 219.14, 219.16, 219.21*)
5. Monitoring and evaluation requirements (*36 CFR 219.11[d]*)
6. Recommendations to Congress (if any) (*36 CFR 219.17*)

By law, forest plans must be revised every 10 to 15 years (*U.S.C. 1604[f][5] and 36 CFR 219.10[g]*). In addition, based on public comments received and the results of annual monitoring and evaluation, we have determined the need to make some changes to the primary decisions made in the 1986 forest plans for the Chippewa and Superior National Forests.

The process of revising the forest plans will be narrow in scope, focusing predominantly on vegetation management aspects of those topics identified as being most critically in need of revision. We will also consider the interests of American Indians and Indian Tribes.

Revised plans will address 12 revision topics that have been identified through public comment and through monitoring and evaluation:

1. Biological diversity
2. Habitat fragmentation
3. Ecosystem health
4. Age class distribution
5. Old growth forests
6. Rare natural resource management
7. Silvicultural prescriptions
8. Fire Management
9. Riparian management
10. Fish habitat management
11. Allowable sale quantity of timber
12. Wildlife habitat management

We will also be revising monitoring requirements to provide for better tracking and evaluation of the implementation and effectiveness of revised forest plans. We may make other minor changes, particularly in the standards and guidelines section of the forest plans, to promote greater consistency between the two plans, and to reflect changes made when addressing the 12 revision topics.

In many northern Minnesota communities, the relationship between people and the natural environment in which the needs of people are met predominantly centers around three industries: forest products, tourism, and mining. People also value the opportunities forests provide for enjoying recreation, solitude and scenic beauty.

National forests are integral to the image and sense of place of communities across northern Minnesota. When making decisions in the revised plans, we will examine the economic and social impacts to local communities and at a broader regional level, as well as biological impacts at similar levels.

As part of the overall effort to ensure that treaty rights are honored and responsibilities to American Indian tribes are met, we will routinely consult with and exchange information with tribes on a government-to-government basis throughout the forest plan revision process. This consultation will include the development of goals and objectives that provide for the exercise of tribal hunting, gathering and fishing rights. In addition, we will be sensitive to American Indian religious beliefs (Forest Service Manual 1563).

We are committed to and will continue to participate in statewide land management planning and coordination efforts resulting from enactment of the Minnesota Sustainable Forest Resources Act of 1995. Technical guidelines developed through this process will be considered when developing standards and guidelines in revised plans.

The environmental analysis and decision-making process leading to revised forest plans will include opportunities for public participation

and comment, so that individuals interested in this proposal may contribute to the decision-making process:

Tentative date	Step	Public involvement
Aug. 1997	Notice of intent, proposal.	60-day formal comment period, open house meetings, written comments.
Early 1998	Alternative development.	Public workshops.
Late 1998	Proposed revised plans, draft environmental impact statement.	Formal comment period, open house meetings, written comments.
Late 1999	Final revised plans, final environmental impact statement and Record of Decision.	Informational meetings to explain decision on final plan.

We will provide the public with general notices on opportunities to participate through mailings, news releases and public meetings. In addition to formal opportunities for public comment, we will consider received at any time throughout the revision process.

The Forest Service will host a series of open house meetings to (1) present and clarify proposed changes to forest plans; (2) describe ways that individuals can respond to this notice of intent; and (3) accept comments from the public on the proposal for revising the forest plans.

The following open house meetings will be held from 4 pm to 7 pm on September 17–18, 1997:

September 17 LaCroix Ranger District Office, Cook, MN
 September 18 Gunflint Ranger District Office, Grant Marais, MN
 September 18 Kawishiwi Ranger District Office, Ely, MN
 September 18 Laurentian River District Office, Aurora, MN
 September 18 Tofte Ranger District Office, Tofte, MN
 September 18 Blackduck Ranger District Office, Blackduck, MN
 September 18 Cass Lake Ranger District Office, Cass Lake, MN
 September 18 Deer River Ranger District Office, Deer River, MN
 September 18 Marcell Ranger District Office, Marcell, MN

September 18 Walker Ranger District Office, Walker, MN

The following open house meetings will be held from 7 pm to 9:30 pm, with a presentation on the proposal for plan revisions repeated every half hour:

September 23 Northern Inn, Bemidji, MN

September 25 Earle Brown Continuing Education Center, St. Paul, MN

September 30 MN Interagency Fire Center, Grand Rapids, MN

October 2 Superior National Forest Headquarters, Duluth, MN

DATES: Comments on this Notice of Intent should be received in writing by October 28, 1997.

ADDRESSES: Send written comments to: Forest Plan Revision, Chippewa and Superior National Forests, Route 3, Box 244, Cass Lake, MN 56633–8929. Or direct electronic mail to: chippewa@northernnet.com (ATTN: Forest Plan Revision).

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Duane Lula, Forest Planner, at (218) 626–4383. TTY (218) 626–4399.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: Additional detail on this proposal is available on request. This is in the form of a document titled “Notice of Intent, Description of Proposal for Revising Forest Plans, and Supplementary Information.” You are encouraged to review this additional document prior to commenting on the notice of intent. You may request the additional information by calling the phone number listed above or by writing or e-mail to the addresses listed in this notice.

The DEIS and the proposed revised plans are expected to be published late in 1998. The comment period on the draft environmental impact statement and proposed revised forest plans will be 90 days from the date the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency publishes the notice of availability in the **Federal Register**.

Comments received in response to this solicitation, including names and addresses of those who comment, will be considered part of the public record on this proposed action and will be available for public inspection.

Comments submitted anonymously will be accepted and considered; however, those who submit anonymous comments will not have standing to appeal the subsequent decision under 36 CFR Parts 215 or 217.

Additionally, pursuant to 7 CFR 1.27(d), any person may request the agency to withhold a submission from the public record by showing how the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA)

permits such confidentiality. 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.

The Forest Service will inform the requester of the agency’s decision regarding the request for confidentiality, and, where the requester is denied, the agency will return the submission and notify the requester that the comments may be resubmitted with or without name and address within 10 days.

Special note to reviewers of the draft environmental impact statement: The Forest Service believes that, 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* U.S. 519, 533 [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 90-day comment period on the draft environmental impact statement, 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 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.

The responsible official is Robert T. Jacobs, Regional Forester, Eastern Region, 310 W. Wisconsin Ave., Milwaukee, Wisconsin 53203.

Dated: August 12, 1997.

Robert T. Jacobs,
Regional Forester.

[FR Doc. 97-22313 Filed 8-28-97; 8:45 am]

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DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Forest Service

Notice of Intent; Environmental Impact Statement for the Crane and Rowan Mountain Timber Sales, Tongass National Forest, Stikine Area, Petersburg, AK

AGENCY: Forest Service, USDA.

ACTION: Notice of intent to prepare an Environmental Impact Statement.

SUMMARY: This proposed action was announced on April 1, 1997 as two separate Environmental Assessments (EA), one each for the Crane and Rowan Mountain Timber Sales. The decision to prepare EAs for these projects was based upon, among other things, several prior extensive environmental analyses that have been conducted for similar projects. Individually they did not indicate a significant effect to the human environment. After considering the public input, we have decided to document the analysis of these two proposed timber sales in an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS).

1. Purpose and scope of the decision. The purpose of the projects is to make available for harvest approximately 10–15 million board feet (MMBF) of timber from the Crane Timber Sale and approximately 9–12 MMBF from the Rowan Mountain Timber Sale. These projects will contribute sawlog and utility timber volume and related employment and income opportunities to the timber industry in Southeast Alaska and will help meet the goals and objectives of the Revised Tongass Land Management Plan.

The geographic location of this proposed project is the north portion of Kuiu Island and includes value comparison units (VCU) 399, 400, 402, and 421. The western portion of VCU 420 (west side of Port Camden) is also included. Timber harvesting and roading has occurred in all of the VCU's.

The decision to be made is:

(1) Whether or not timber harvest will occur in the Crane and Rowan Mountain project area;

(2) How much timber will be harvested;

(3) Location and design of harvest units;

(4) Location and design of road construction and potential reconstruction; and

(5) What mitigation measures and monitoring will be implemented.

A reasonable range of alternatives will be developed, including a No Action alternative. No additional road building or timber harvest would occur under the No Action alternative.

2. Scoping and public participation. Public scoping for these projects began on April 1, 1997. We mailed a scoping letter to interested groups, organizations, and members of the public who indicated an interest in the project by responding to the Stikine Area Project Schedule, or who otherwise notified the Stikine Area that they were interested in the Crane and Rowan Mountain Timber Harvest Projects. This Notice of Intent constitutes an extension of this scoping process, which will end September 19th, 1997. At the time of this notice, a scoping letter is being mailed to interested groups, organizations, and members of the public explaining the transition from an Environmental Analysis to an Environmental Impact Statement Process.

Scoping results from the April 1, 1997 mailing have reinforced the preliminary issues identified and did not suggest additional issues. The issues as noted in the April 1 mailing are listed below:

1. Cultural Resources—How should timber management activities be designed to protect cultural resources?

2. Economics—How should the project be designed to contribute to the economic health of Southeast Alaska?

3. Fish—How should fish habitat be managed and what effect would timber harvest and related activities have on fish habitat?

4. Recreation—How should recreation opportunities be protected or enhanced in the design of timber management activities?

5. Soil—How should timber management activities be designed to protect the soil resource? What effects would activities have on soil productivity?

6. Subsistence—How should timber management activities be designed to protect traditional subsistence uses? What effect would activities have on subsistence uses and users?

7. Timber Management—How should the project be designed to provide for efficient and long-term timber management?

8. Scenery—How should timber management activities be designed to protect areas of high scenic quality and

what effect would activities have on the landscapes of Kuiu Island?

9. Water Quality—How should timber management activities be designed to protect water quality? What effects would activities have on water quality?

10. Wildlife Habitat—What effects would timber harvest and related activities have on wildlife habitat?

DATES: Comments concerning the scope of the analysis should be received in writing by September 19, 1997.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Information relating to the supplement may be obtained by contacting Bob Gerdes, Interdisciplinary Team Leader, USDA Forest Service, P.O. Box 309, Petersburg, AK 99833.

EXPECTED TIME FOR COMPLETION: A draft EIS is projected for issuance approximately 2 months from the date of the Notice of Intent, or October 17, 1997.

The Final Environmental Impact Statement and Record of Decision is expected to be released by March 30, 1998. The Responsible Official will make a decision regarding this proposal after considering public comments, and the environmental consequences displayed in the Final Environmental Impact Statement, and applicable laws, regulations, and policies. The decision and supporting reason will be documented in the Record of Decision.

PUBLIC COMMENT: Interested parties are invited to comment. The comment period on the Draft EIS will be 45 days from the first day after publication of notice of availability in the **Federal Register** by the Environmental Protection Agency. 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 helpful for comments to refer to specific pages or chapters 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 while addressing these points.

In addition, Federal court decisions have established that reviewer's of Draft EISs 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.* versus NRDC, 435 U.S. 519, 533 (1978). Environmental objections that could