

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

Forest Service

Clearwater National Forest, Idaho County, Idaho; JJ Vegetation Restoration

AGENCY: Forest Service, USDA.

ACTION: Notice of Intent to Prepare an Environmental Impact Statement.

SUMMARY: The JJ Vegetation Restoration Planning Area is located west of the Powell Ranger Station, Lochsa Ranger District, Clearwater National Forest, Idaho County, Idaho. Proposed activities are located in the Lochsa River drainage. The purpose of the project are: (1) To design and implement vegetation treatments using ecosystem management principles within the forest stands that are at high risk of change in the next decade, (2) to restore forest health in timber stands being affected by Douglas-fir bark beetles and root rot disease, and (3) to restore and maintain aquatic ecosystem structure and function to provide historic habitat conditions for aquatic species.

The Lochsa Ranger District (Powell Ranger Station) will begin public scoping on the JJ Vegetation Restoration project with the publication of this Notice. This area was identified in the Lost Postman Watershed Analysis as a high priority for treatment to improve the tree species composition and structure. Fire suppression over the last fifty years has permitted shade tolerant grand fir and Douglas-fir trees to grow into the forest under the overstory ponderous pine and large fire resistant Douglas-fir trees. This has created an overstocked, two-story forest that is susceptible to root rot and Douglas-fir back beetle. The tree mortality and subsequent fuel buildup, including ladder fuels, has created a forest condition at high risk for catastrophic change. Silvicultural action at this time

can restore the healthy productivity and natural ecologic condition of this forest.

Therefore, the Powell Ranger Station of the Lochsa Ranger District is proposing to prepare the JJ Vegetation Restoration Analysis to evaluate the environmental effects of using timber harvest and prescribed fire to reduce tree density and restore a more natural tree species composition and structure. Timber harvest and prescribed fire is proposed on approximately 700 acres. Helicopter logging units using a combination of improvement cuts and shelter-wood regeneration methods are planned. This would yield about 7 mmbf of timber for commercial sale. No new roads would be constructed. Existing helicopter landing sites along Highway 12 would be used. The JJ's Analysis will also consider a reasonable range of alternatives to the proposed action.

This project will be designed to reduce the density of forest vegetation on this overstocked, south facing hillside as outlined in the Lost Postman Watershed Analysis. The subsequent reduction in biomass and fuels will reduce the risk of a lethal, stand replacement wildfire. The proposal will also be designed to reduce the effects of Douglas-fir bark beetles and root rot disease on tree mortality. This will have the added benefit of maintaining the scenic quality of the forest as viewed from the Lochsa River (a Wild and Scenic River) and Highway 12. Enhancement of wildlife habitat for species such as the flammulated owl, black-backed woodpecker, fisher and elk is also a benefit of the proposed action.

This project level EIS will tier to the Clearwater National Forest Land and Resource Management Plan (Forest Plan) and Final EIS (September 1987), which provides overall guidance of all land management activities on the Clearwater National Forest.

Analysis will be conducted in compliance with the Clearwater Forest Plan lawsuit Stipulation of Dismissal agreement between the Forest Service and the Sierra Club, et al (signed September 13, 1993).

DATES: Comments in response to this Notice of Intent should be received in writing on or before November 23, 1998 to receive timely consideration in the preparation of the Draft EIS. The Draft EIS is planned to be filed with the

Environmental Protection Agency in March 1999. The Final EIS and Record of Decision are expected to be issued in December 1999.

ADDRESSES: Send written comments and suggestions on the proposed action or requests for a map of the proposed action or to be placed on the project mailing list to Dennis Elliott, Deputy District Ranger, Powell Ranger Station, Clearwater National Forest, Lolo, Montana 59847.

Responsible Official: James L. Caswell, Forest Supervisor, Clearwater National Forest, will be the Responsible Official for this project.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Dennis Elliott, Deputy District Ranger, Powell Ranger Station, Clearwater National Forest, (208) 942-3113.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: In 1997, the Lost Postman Watershed Assessment was completed. This assessment recommended a variety of management actions designed to restore forest health. Because of the wide range of actions and their dispersed locations, it was elected not to propose and analyze all of the recommendations in one single project. Instead, a logical array of smaller individual projects which are not connected actions have been proposed. The JJ Vegetation Restoration proposal is one of the recommended actions.

Preliminary issues include the following:

- How will the proposed action and alternatives maintain or enhance the long-term sustain-ability of these ecosystems through vegetation management? How will they address vegetation structure and composition, insects and diseases, maintenance of wildlife habitat and production of wood products?
- How will the proposed action and alternatives protect the quantity and quality of water and aquatic habitat?
- How will the proposed action and alternatives provide high quality recreation opportunities, especially maintaining the use and enjoyment of the Lolo Trail and Lochsa Wild and Scenic River Corridors? How will the views from the Lolo Trail and the Lochsa River corridors be protected?
- How will the proposed action and alternatives be designed to produce goods and services yet minimize impacts to other resources? Will the

actions pay for themselves without resulting in a deficit timber sale?

These issues will be refined and developed in detail as scoping proceeds. Comments on the issues and suggestions for additional issues are welcome in response to this Notice of Intent.

Public scoping and involvement will begin with the publication of this notice. A scoping letter that describes the proposed action and preliminary issues will be mailed to members of the Powell NEPA mailing list. The interdisciplinary team will be working to develop a range of alternatives to the proposed action and to assess the environmental effects of the alternatives. One of the alternatives will be the "No Action" alternative. Other alternatives will examine varying levels and locations for the proposed activities to achieve the proposal's purposes, as well as to respond to the environmental issues and other resource values. Comments concerning the range of alternatives or possible environmental effects would be useful to the team in completing their analysis.

The Clearwater National Forest Land Management Plan provides the land management direction for the JJ's Planning Area. Forest Plan Management Areas in the JJ's analysis include the following:

E1-Timber producing land managed for healthy forests and optimum tree growth.

A7-Recreation River Corridor managed for dispersed recreation, water quality and visual resources.

C4-Big game winter range managed for browse and timber production.

It is anticipated that the environmental analysis and preparation of the draft and final environmental impact statements will take about one year. The draft environmental impact statement can be expected in March 1999 and a final environmental impact statement can be expected in December 1999.

A 45 day comment period will be provided for the public to make comments on the draft environmental impact statement. This comment period will be in addition to scoping and will begin when the Environmental Protection Agency's Notice of Availability of the Draft EIS appears in the **Federal Register**. A Record of Decision will be prepared and filed with the final environmental impact statement. A forty-five day appeal period will be applicable.

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. To be most helpful, comments on the draft environmental statement should be as specific as possible and may address the adequacy of the statement or the merits of the alternatives discussed (see Council on Environmental Quality Regulations for implementing the procedural provisions of the National Environmental Policy Act at 40 CFR 1503.3).

In addition, Federal court decisions have established that reviewers of draft environmental impact statements must structure their participation in the environmental review of the proposal so that is meaningful and alerts an agency to the reviewers' position and contentions. *Vermont Yankee Nuclear Power Corp. v. NRDC* 435 US 519, 553 (1978). Environmental objections that could have been raised at the draft stage may be waived if not raised until after completion of the final environmental impact statement. *City of Angoon v. Harris*, 490 F. Supp. 1334, 1338 (E.D. Wis. 1980). The reason for this is to ensure 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.

Comment received in response to this solicitation, including names and address 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 Part 215 or 217.

I am the responsible official for this environmental impact statement. My address is Clearwater National Forest, 12730 Highway 12, Orofino, ID 83544.

Dated: September 29, 1998

Douglas E. Gochnour,

Acting Forest Supervisor, Clearwater National Forest.

[FR Doc. 98-27116 Filed 10-8-98; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 3410-11-M

DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Forest Service

Yakima Provincial Advisory Committee

AGENCY: Forest Service, USDA.

ACTION: Notice of meeting.

SUMMARY: The Yakima Provincial Advisory Committee will meet on October 7, 1998, at the Cle Elum Ranger District office, 803 W. 2nd. Street, Cle

Elum, Washington. The meeting will begin at 9:00 a.m. and continue until 4:00 p.m. During the morning segment of this meeting the group will be visiting the upper Cle Elum Valley area, and during the afternoon they will be reconvening in Cle Elum to discuss dispersed recreation management. All Yakima Province Advisory Committee meetings are open to the public. Interested citizens are welcome to attend.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:

Direct questions regarding this meeting to Paul Hart, Designated Federal Official, USDA, Wenatchee National Forest, 215 Melody Lane, Wenatchee, Washington 98801, 509-662-4335.

Dated: September 14, 1998.

Sonny J. O'Neal,

Forest Supervisor, Wenatchee National Forest.

[FR Doc. 98-27203 Filed 10-8-98; 8:45 am]

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COMMITTEE FOR PURCHASE FROM PEOPLE WHO ARE BLIND OR SEVERELY DISABLED

Procurement List; Proposed Additions and Deletions

AGENCY: Committee for Purchase From People Who Are Blind or Severely Disabled.

ACTION: Proposed additions to and deletions from Procurement List.

SUMMARY: The Committee has received proposals to add to the Procurement List a commodity and services to be furnished by nonprofit agencies employing persons who are blind or have other severe disabilities, and to delete commodities previously furnished by such agencies.

Comments must be received on or before: November 9, 1998.

ADDRESSES: Committee for Purchase From People Who Are Blind or Severely Disabled, Crystal Gateway 3, Suite 310, 1215 Jefferson Davis Highway, Arlington, Virginia 22202-4302.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Beverly Milkman (703) 603-7740.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: This notice is published pursuant to 41 U.S.C. 47(a)(2) and 41 CFR 51-2.3. Its purpose is to provide interested persons an opportunity to submit comments on the possible impact of the proposed actions.

Additions

If the Committee approves the proposed addition, all entities of the Federal Government (except as