

*OMB Number:* New.

*Expiration Date of Approval:* New.

*Type of Request:* The following describes a new information collection requirement and has not received approval by the Office of Management and Budget.

*Abstract:* The data in this information collection will be used to identify the range of perceptions, concerns, and attitudes the public has toward changes in land use along the Washington State I-90 corridor within and in close proximity to the Mt. Baker-Snoqualmie and Wenatchee National Forests. The data also will be used to identify the characteristics about the I-90 corridor that the respondents value most; to explore the differences in opinion of various groups on how to use National Forest and adjacent land; and to ascertain the perceptions that the diverse group of respondents has regarding the Forest Service's land management practices and policies. Additionally, the data will be used for amendments and revisions of forest plans, as well as in assessing proposed National Forest projects and activities. Respondents include wildlife, silviculture, timber, land planning, wildland conservation, business and development professionals, biologists, and residents along the I-90 corridor.

The Forest Service will provide data from this information collection to other agencies and organizations, such as city and county planning commissions, the Washington Department of Natural Resources, and the Mountains to Sound Greenway Trust (a non-profit Seattle-based organization working to create a greenbelt along the I-90 corridor from Seattle to Ellensburg). The results of the study also will be available to the participants upon request and will be published in community newspapers and organization newsletters.

The Forest Service Pacific Northwest Research Station, People and Natural Resources Program has entered into a cooperative agreement with the University of Washington to facilitate the collection of information. University of Washington staff, in collaboration with Forest Service Pacific Northwest Research Station staff, will write and administer the survey and analyze the survey results.

Respondents will be selected in such a way as to help ensure representation from all interested groups.

University of Washington staff, along with Forest Service staff, will ask respondents to complete a survey assessing their concerns about changes in how to use National Forest and adjacent land along the Washington State I-90 corridor, their familiarity with the issues related to changes in use

of these lands, their attitudes toward changes in the use of these lands, their ethnic and economic background, their education level, their name, and their address.

Data gathered in this information collection is not available from other sources.

*Estimate of Burden:* 30 minutes.

*Type of Respondents:* Respondents will include wildlife, silviculture, timber, land planning, wildland conservation, business and development professionals, biologists, and residents along the I-90 corridor.

*Estimated Number of Respondents:* 1000.

*Estimated Number of Responses per Respondent:* 1.

*Estimated Total Annual Burden on Respondents:* 500 hours.

#### **Comment Is Invited**

The agency invites comments on: (a) 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; (b) the accuracy of this agency's estimate of the burden of the proposed collection of information, including the validity of the methodology and assumptions used; (c) ways to enhance the quality, utility, and clarity of the information to be collected; and (d) ways to minimize the burden of the collection of information on respondents, including the use of automated, electronic, mechanical, or other technological collection techniques or other forms of information technology.

#### **Use of Comments**

All comments received in response to this notice, including name and address when provided, will be summarized and included in the request for Office of Management and Budget approval. All comments will also become a matter of public record.

Dated: April 5, 1999.

**Robert Lewis, Jr.,**

*Acting Associate Chief.*

[FR Doc. 99-9335 Filed 4-13-99; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 3410-11-P

## **DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE**

### **Forest Service**

#### **Lemolo Watershed Projects, Diamond Lake Ranger District, Umpqua National Forest, Douglas County, Oregon**

**AGENCY:** Forest Service, USDA.

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

**SUMMARY:** The USDA, Forest Service, will prepare an environmental impact statement (EIS) for a variety of connected resource projects within the Lemolo watershed planning area of the Diamond Lake Ranger District. These projects were developed according to direction in the Umpqua National Forest Plan, as amended, and in response to recommendations in the Diamond Lake/Lemolo Lake Watershed Analysis. They are intended to restore, to the extent possible, the desired vegetation patterns in the planning area by approximating natural disturbance processes while providing economic benefits to the local economy. The projects being proposed include several timber sales, the construction of temporary and system roads, site preparation, planting, the burning of natural fuels, road decommissioning, and soil restoration. These projects are proposed for implementation in the year 2000 and 2001. The planning area is located approximately 80 miles east of Roseburg, Oregon. 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 may become aware of how they can participate in the process and contribute to the final decision.

**DATES:** Comments concerning the scope of the analysis should be received in writing by May 21, 1999.

**ADDRESSES:** Send written comments and suggestions concerning this proposal to J. Dan Schindler, District Ranger, Diamond Lake Ranger District, 2020 Toketee Ranger Station RD, Roseburg, Oregon 97447-9704.

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:** Direct questions about the proposed action, or EIS to Pat Williams, ID Team Leader/Timber Sale Planner, Diamond Lake Ranger District, 2020 Toketee Ranger Station RD, Idleyld Park, Oregon 97447-9704, or (541) 498-2531.

**SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:** The area being analyzed in the Lemolo Watershed Projects EIS encompasses approximately 71,800 acres of National Forest land on the Diamond Lake Ranger District. The planning area include all or portions of sections 24 through 28 and 33 through 36, T25S, R5½E; sections 30, 31 and 32, T25S, R6E; sections 32 through 36, T25½S, R6E; sections 31, 32 and 33, T25½S, R6½E; sections 10 through 15, 22 through 25 and 36, T26S, R5E; sections 1 through 36, T26S, R6E; sections 4 through 9, 15 through 21 and 27 through 35, T26S, R6½E;

sections 1, 12 and 13, T27S, R5E; sections 1 through 28 and 33 through 36, T27S, R6E; sections 3 through 10, 17, 18, 19 and 30, T27S, R6½E; and sections 1, 2, 3, 10, 11 and 12, T28S, R6E, Willamette Meridian, Douglas County, Oregon.

This proposal is based on the need to achieve several objectives for matrix lands within Management Areas 5 and 10 of the planning area. These objectives are described in the 1990 Umpqua National Forest Land and Resource Management Plan (LRMP) and page B-1 of the Record of Decision (ROD) for Amendments to Forest Service and Bureau of Land Management Planning Documents Within the Range of the Northern Spotted Owl. The focus for Management Area 5 is managing the Oregon Cascades Recreation Area (OCRA) consistent with the intent of the Oregon Wilderness Act. Toward this end, the proposed action includes the decommissioning of approximately two miles of roads in the OCRA. The focus of Management Area 10 is the supply of timber to local and regional economies on a cost efficient, sustainable basis. The ROD states that the production of timber and other commodities is an important objective for the Matrix. The ROD states further that one of the objectives of matrix is to provide ecological diversity at the landscape scale in the form of early-successional habitat through commercial timber harvest.

The Diamond Lake/Lemolo Lake Watershed Analysis recommends that harvest prescriptions in the analysis area should create a high level of vegetative diversity in both structure and pattern by replicating natural disturbance processes. Towards this end, the priority in the Lodgepole Pine Type is to conduct regeneration harvests in overstocked lodgepole pine stands older than 70 years to reduce the potential for mountain pine beetle epidemics. There is also an opportunity to reduce stand densities to a more desired condition around Lemolo Lake by commercially thinning some of those stands.

From a total planning area of 71,800 acres, the proposed action identifies a need to harvest approximately 1,670 acres under several different silvicultural treatments that include approximately 940 acres of commercial thinning, approximately 490 acres of regeneration harvests, and approximately 240 acres of partial cutting. As proposed, this harvest may be accomplished via three to six timber sales. In conjunction with the sales, implementation of the proposed action will necessitate the construction of 5.4

miles of system roads, the reconstruction of 33.2 miles of existing roads, the construction of 3.5 miles of temporary roads with subsequent obliteration, the decommissioning of 10 miles of road, the construction of two permanent helicopter landings, the expansion of an existing rock pit by two acres, and the burning of natural fuels on approximately 530 acres. Some of the areas prescribed for harvest will require a helicopter yarding system, others will require a skyline yarding system, and others can be harvested with ground-based equipment. The 1,670 acres proposed for harvest are estimated to yield 31.0 million board feet of timber. To put this estimated yield in a perspective that is easier to visualize, the lumber derived from this proposal could build approximately 3,100 low-income family dwellings and provide other wood products, such as chips and fiber, for the regional economy.

As part of the analysis process under the National Environmental Policy Act, the Umpqua National Forest has begun the scoping process for this project. Preliminary issues identified to date include the following:

- Potential effects on the Northern Spotted Owl and its habitat.
- Potential effects on Wolverine habitat.
- The harvest of timber in a visually sensitive area.
- Potential effects on Lynx habitat.

One of the purposes of this notice of intent is to solicit input from the public. At this very early stage of the analysis process, there are no alternatives to the proposed action other than the No Action Alternative. The scoping is intended to identify issues which may lead to the development of alternatives to the proposed action.

In addition to this notice, the public has been notified of the environmental impact statement through the Umpqua National Forest's April, 1999, Schedule of Proposed Actions (SOPA). Scoping for this project will also include an open house in Roseburg, Oregon, on April 21, 1999. Based on the preliminary issues, the Responsible Official has determined that it is appropriate to proceed with an environmental impact statement.

Public comments are appreciated throughout the analysis process. The draft EIS is expected to be filed with the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and be available for public review by October, 1999. 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 final EIS is scheduled to be available in December, 1999.

The Forest Service believes it is important to give reviewers notice of this early stage of public participation and of several court rulings related to public participation in the environmental review process. First, reviewers of a draft EIS 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 Corps. v. NRDC*, 435 U.S. 519, 553 (1978). Also, environmental objections that could have been raised at the draft stage may be waived or dismissed by the court if not raised until after completion of the final EIS. *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 substantive comments and objections are made available to the Forest Service at a time when it can meaningfully consider 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 statement. 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 of 40 CFR 1503.3 in addressing these points.)

In the final EIS, the Forest Service is required to respond to substantive comments and responses received during the comment period that pertain to the environmental consequence discussed in the draft EIS and applicable laws, regulations, and policies considered in making a decision regarding the proposal. The Responsible Official is Don Ostby, Forest Supervisor for the Umpqua National Forest. The Responsible Official will document the decision and rationale for the decision in a Record of Decision. The decision will be subject to appeal under 36 CFR part 215.

Dated: April 5, 1999.

**Marty Santiago,**

*Acting Deputy Forest Supervisor.*

[FR Doc. 99-9275 Filed 4-13-99; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 3410-11-M