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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

Forest Plan Amendment for the Curlew National Grassland; Caribou National Forest, Oneida County, Idaho

AGENCY: Forest Service; Department of Agriculture.

ACTION: Notice of Intent to Prepare Environmental Impact Statement.

SUMMARY: The Forest Service will prepare an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) to document the analysis and disclose the environmental impacts of the proposed actions to amend the direction for resource management on the Curlew National Grassland (Grassland) as contained in the Land and Resource Management Plan for the Caribou National Forest and Curlew National Grassland. The Grassland is located approximately 17 air miles west of Malad City, Idaho. The proposed actions are located entirely within the 47,600-acre Grassland. The need for the proposal is to amend existing and create new management direction for the vegetation, riparian, livestock grazing, wildlife and other resources and uses on the Grassland based on a proposed desired range of future conditions.

Direction from the Chief of the Forest Service requires that a separate management plan for each of the National Grasslands be developed. The Caribou National Forest proposes to complete an EIS to amend existing and create new management direction for the Curlew National Grassland. Current direction is found in the 1985 Land and Resource Management Plan for the Caribou National Forest and Curlew National Grassland.

The EIS will address ecological patterns, processes, and management direction for both riparian and upland resources; develop direction for restoration of rangeland vegetation

composition; develop and implement livestock grazing standards; develop soil and watershed management direction; develop and implement direction for sagebrush associated/obligate wildlife species habitat; and develop policy for future utility proposals. The amendment will include ecosystem management goals, objectives, standards and guidelines, and monitoring strategies specific to the Grassland.

DATES: Written comments concerning the scope of the analysis described in this Notice should be received on or before June 2, 1999.

ADDRESSES: Send written comments to: Forest Supervisor, Caribou National Forest, Curlew National Grassland Amendment, Federal Building, 250 South 4th Avenue, Pocatello, Idaho 83201. Electronic mail may be sent to: pcomment/r4_caribou@fs.fed.us. Please reference the Curlew Amendment on the subject line.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION: Questions concerning the proposed action and EIS should be directed to Scott Feltis, Interdisciplinary Team Leader, Caribou National Forest, Pocatello, Idaho, phone: (208) 236-7500.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: This EIS will tier to the final 1985 EIS for the Land and Resource Management Plan for the Caribou National Forest and Curlew National Grassland (Forest Plan). This Forest Plan provides the overall guidance (goals, objectives, standards and guidelines, and management area direction) to achieve the desired future condition for the area being analyzed, and contains specific management area prescriptions for the Grassland. The specific objectives of this proposal are:

- To develop direction for restoration of rangeland vegetation composition.
- To develop and implement livestock grazing standards.
- To develop soil and watershed management direction.
- To develop direction for sagebrush associated/obligate wildlife species habitat.
- To develop policy for future utility proposals.
- To develop management direction for both riparian and upland resources.

Public scoping for this proposal will be initiated with the publication of this Notice. An Analysis of the Management Situation (AMS) was released to the public on February 25, 1999 and is

available electronically at www.fs.fed.us/r4/curlew or by written request to the address provided above. Opportunities will be provided to discuss the Grassland Plan with the public. The public is invited to help identify issues that will be considered in defining the range of alternatives in the Environmental Impact Statement.

Preliminary Issues/Concerns

- **Riparian Condition.** Some riparian areas and stream channels have deteriorated and are no longer functioning properly. This has resulted in a deterioration or loss of deep-rooted riparian vegetation, reduced water quality, and degraded habitat for many aquatic and terrestrial species. Some upper watersheds, not managed by the Forest Service, have contributed to past flooding, channel scouring and sediment within the Grassland.

- **Sage Grouse and Other Sagebrush-Associated Species and Habitats.** Sage grouse populations on and adjacent to the Grassland have declined over the past 20-25 years. Historic expansion of agriculture on non-federal lands has reduced the extent of sagebrush habitats in the Curlew Valley area. Changes in some of the remaining habitat from fragmentation, invasion of exotic plant species, disruption of natural fire cycles, use by livestock and loss of native species diversity have contributed to declines in sagebrush habitat quality and wildlife species, some to the point of needing special attention.

- **Forage Utilization.** Grazing utilization standards for seeded and native vegetation types currently do not exist in the 1985 Forest Plan. Livestock forage utilization needs to consider, and be compatible with, other resource values and needs. During the analysis of Grassland resources, a determination of rangeland capability and suitability will be made.

- **Vegetation Composition and Structure.** Vegetation seedings have changed species composition, reduced biological diversity, changed species interactions, reduced wildlife habitat quality and forage availability. When compared with native plant communities, seedings have reduced the system's ability to buffer against changes. Sagebrush structure is trending toward older age classes, resulting in a lack of understory diversity, reduced herbaceous production and reduced watershed condition due to losses of

ground cover. Bulbous bluegrass, a non-native grass species, was seeded on 18,000 acres of the Grassland during the 1940's and 1950's. While having value as a sod forming, ground cover species, it is not desirable from a wildlife habitat or forage production perspective. Opportunities exist to treat bulbous bluegrass-dominant sites and revegetate with a desirable mix of native and non-native grass, forb and shrub species.

- **Intermingle Lands.** A mix of private and state and federal land ownerships lie within, and surround the Grassland. Activities on adjacent ownerships within the Curlew Valley are not always compatible with Grassland management objectives and sometimes influence activities, management options and resource conditions on the Grassland. Because of these influences, ability to fully implement the 1985 Forest Plan direction is hindered in some instances.

- **Cumulative Effects.** Cumulative impacts of the proposal need to be identified and evaluated, including past, ongoing, and future management on the Grassland, given the geographic setting of the Grassland in relation to the ownerships and activities.

The Forest Service is seeking information and comments from Tribes, Federal, State and local agencies as well as individuals and organizations who may be interested in, or affected by, the proposed action. The Forest Service invites written comments and suggestions on the issues related to the proposal and the area being analyzed. Information received will be used in preparation of the Draft EIS and Final EIS. For most effective use, comments should be submitted to the Forest Service within 30 days from the date of publication of this notice in the **Federal Register**.

Preparation of the EIS will include the following steps:

1. Define the purpose and need for action.
2. Identify potential issues.
3. Eliminate issues of minor importance or those that have been covered by previous and relevant environmental analysis.
4. Select issues to be analyzed in depth.
5. Identify reasonable alternatives to the proposed action.
6. Describe the affected environment.
7. Identify the potential environmental effects of the alternatives.

Steps 1 and 2 have started; steps 2 through 4 will be completed through the scoping process. Step 5 will consider a range of alternatives developed from the key issues. To date, two alternatives have been drafted The No Action

Alternative continues the direction and management of the 1985 Forest Plan. The Proposed Action was developed in response to issues listed above. Step 6 will described the physical attributes of the area to be affected by this proposal, with special attention to the environmental factors that could be adversely affected. Step 7 will analyze the environmental effects of each alternative. The direct, indirect and cumulative effects of each alternative will be analyzed and documented. Additional alternatives will be developed in response to public issues, management concerns, and resource opportunities identified during the scoping process. In describing alternatives, desired vegetation and resource conditions will be defined. Preliminary information, including a map of the Proposed Action is available for review at the Westside Ranger District Offices (Malad and Pocatello) and the Supervisor's Office (Pocatello). Elements of the Proposed Action are presented below.

The Proposed Action

The Proposed Action applies a riparian/wetland areas prescription which establishes a zone of special emphasis that restricts activities to those which will not compromise prescription goals or reduce water quality below that needed to comply with state water quality requirements and sustain beneficial uses. Riparian forage utilization is not to exceed 30 percent or a 6-inch minimum stubble height (whichever is attained first) directly adjacent to the stream channel. In contrast, the 1985 Forest Plan (No Action Alternative) manages riparian areas at a minimal custodial level, limiting actions to those activities required to comply with existing laws, regulations, and executive orders. Also, no forage utilization standards are identified.

The Proposed Action applies Grassland-wide forage utilization levels not to exceed approximately 50 percent on seeded sites and 45 percent on native vegetation sites. In contrast, the 1985 Forest Plan does not specifically identify forage utilization levels. However, the Grassland has been managed (through allotment management plan direction) to not exceed 60 percent forage utilization regardless of vegetation type.

The Proposed Action sets a goal of managing for a diversity of sagebrush canopy cover class ranges on the Grassland: ten to 30 percent of the Grassland acres in early seral status (0–5 percent canopy cover; early age and structure); 40–60 percent of the

Grassland acres in mid seral status (6–15 percent canopy cover; mid-age and structure); 30–50 percent of the Grassland acres in late seral status (>15 percent canopy cover; mature and overmature age and structure). In contrast, the 1985 Forest Plan does not provide management goals for sagebrush canopy cover.

Other vegetation management direction found in the Proposed Action includes an objective to treat 4,000 to 6,000 acres of bulbous bluegrass (an undesirable grass species) dominant sites and revegetate with desirable native and non-native grass, forb and shrub species over a ten year period. In contrast, the 1985 Forest Plan does not provide specific direction for the treatment of bulbous bluegrass. The 1985 Forest Plan does provide direction for revegetation proposals which includes a avoiding establishing monocultures and maintaining a variety of desirable grass, forb and shrub species; however, there is no reference to native versus non-native plan species. In addition to the treatment of bulbous bluegrass sites, the Proposed Action would treat, over a ten-year period, between 1,000 and 3,000 acres of sagebrush with canopy covers greater than 15 percent. Vegetation treatments under the Proposed Action would total between 5,000 and 9,000 acres over a ten-year period (an average of 500 to 900 acres annually). The 1985 Forest Plan proposes to treat approximately 18,700 acres over a ten-year period (1,870 acres annually).

The Proposed Action designates the Sweeten Pond and tree row acres as special wildlife areas and sets forth objectives to construct an additional impoundment in the Sweeten Pond area and establish an additional ten miles of tree rows over the next ten years. In contrast, the 1985 Forest Plan does not identify additional improvements specifically for wildlife. The Proposed Action provides guidance for the management of Forest Service designated sensitive species; the 1985 Forest Plan does not provide such guidance. The Proposed Action provides guidance for sage grouse habitat management including deferring habitat manipulation practices within a 0.25 mile radius of active sage grouse leks and provides for a seed mix that includes vegetation species preferred by upland birds during the pre-nesting, nesting and brood rearing periods, and guidance to provide residual cover to meet the needs of spring period ground nesting wildlife. In contrast, the 1985 Forest Plan guidance defers habitat manipulation practices within 1.9 miles of active sage grouse leks; no sagebrush

control where sagebrush cover is less than 20 percent or on steep slopes; no sagebrush control along streams, meadows or secondary drainages; application of sagebrush treatments in irregular patterns; and where possible, avoid complete kill or removal of sagebrush.

The Proposed Action includes the identification and development of monitoring protocols specific to Grassland resources.

The Proposed Action sets a goal to engage in collaborative efforts with adjacent landowners, Soil Conservation District and the Natural Resource Conservation Service to conserve soil, watershed and riparian resources. In contrast, the 1985 Forest Plan does not provide direction for such efforts.

Agency representatives and other interested people are invited to visit with Forest Service officials at any time during the EIS process. Two specific time periods are identified for the receipt of formal comments on the analysis. The two comment periods are, (1) during the scoping process (the next 30 days following publication of this Notice in the **Federal Register**) and, (2) during the formal review period of the Draft EIS.

The Draft EIS is estimated to be filed with the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and available for public review and comment in January, 2000. At that time the EPA will publish an availability notice of the Draft EIS in the **Federal Register**.

The comment period on the Draft EIS will be 45 days from the date the EPA notice of availability appears in the **Federal Register**. It is important that those interested in this proposed action participate at that time. To be the most helpful, comments on the Draft EIS should be as specific as possible and may address the adequacy of the statement or the merits of the alternatives discussed (see the Council of 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 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). 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.*

Hodel, (9th Circuit, 1986) and *Wisconsin Heritages, Inc. 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 be meaningful to consider them and respond to them in the final EIS.

To assist the Forest Service in identifying and considering issues and concerns related to the proposed action, comments on the Draft EIS should be as specific as possible. Referring to specific pages or chapters of the Draft EIS is most helpful. Comments may 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 of Environmental Quality Regulations for implementing the procedural provisions of the National Environmental Policy Act, 40 CFR 1503.3 in addressing these points.

The Final EIS is expected to be released in August, 2000.

The Regional Forester, Intermountain Region, who is the responsible official for the EIS, will then make a decision regarding this proposal, after considering the comments, responses, and environmental consequences discussed in the Final Environmental Impact Statement, and applicable laws, regulations, and policies. The reason for the decision will be documented in a Record of Decision.

Dated: April 21, 1999.

Jerry B. Reese,

Forest Supervisor, Caribou National Forest.
[FR Doc. 99-10946 Filed 4-30-99; 8:45 am]
BILLING CODE 3410-11-M

COMMISSION ON CIVIL RIGHTS

Agenda and Notice of Public Meeting of the Minnesota Advisory Committee

Notice is hereby given, pursuant to the provisions of the rules and regulations of the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights, that a meeting of the Minnesota Advisory Committee to the Commission will convene: (1) Tuesday, May 25, 1999, at 1:00 p.m. and recess at 6:00 p.m.; and (2) reconvene Wednesday, May 26, 1999, at 9:00 a.m. and adjourn at 1:00 p.m. at the Red River Inn and Conference Center, 600 30th Avenue, Moorhead, Minnesota. The Committee will hold a two day factfinding meeting to gather information on "Civil Rights Issues Facing Minorities in Moorhead, Minnesota."

Persons desiring additional information, or planning a presentation

to the Committee, should contact Constance M. Davis, Director of the Midwestern Regional Office, 312-353-8311 (TDD 312-353-8362). Hearing-impaired persons who will attend the meeting and require the services of a sign language interpreter should contact the Regional Office at least ten (10) working days before the scheduled date of the meeting.

The meeting will be conducted pursuant to the provisions of the rules and regulations of the Commission.

Dated at Washington, DC, April 27, 1999.

Carol-Lee Hurley,

Chief, Regional Programs Coordination Unit.
[FR Doc. 99-10931 Filed 4-30-99; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 6335-01-P

DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

Bureau of the Census

1999-2001 Company Organization Survey; Proposed Collection; Comment Request

SUMMARY: The Department of Commerce, as part of its continuing effort to reduce paperwork and respondent burden, invites the general public and other Federal agencies to take this opportunity to comment on proposed and/or continuing information collections, as required by the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995, Pub. L. 104-13 (44 U.S.C. 3506(c)(2)(A)).

DATES: Written comments must be submitted on or before July 2, 1999.

ADDRESSES: Direct all written comments to Linda Engelmeier, Departmental Forms Clearance Officer, Department of Commerce, Room 5033, 14th and Constitution Avenue, NW, Washington, DC 20230.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Requests for additional information or copies of the information collection instrument and instructions should be directed to Paul Hanczaryk, Bureau of the Census, Room 2747, Federal Building 3, Washington, DC 20233-6100; telephone (301) 457-2580.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

I. Abstract

The Census Bureau conducts the annual Company Organization Survey (COS) in order to update and maintain a central, multipurpose business register, known as the Standard Statistical Establishment List (SSEL). In particular, the COS supplies critical information to the SSEL concerning the establishment composition, organizational structure, and operating