

# 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

#### The 64-Acre Tract Intermodal Transit Center, Lake Tahoe Basin Management Unit (LTBMU), Placer County, CA

**AGENCY:** Forest Service, USDA.

**ACTION:** Notice, intent to prepare environmental impact statement.

**SUMMARY:** The Forest Service will prepare an environmental impact statement (EIS) to address issuing a permit to authorize construction and operation of an Intermodal Transit Center on a portion of the tract known as the "64-Acres". This site is located to the west of California State Route 89 just south of Fanny Bridge over the Truckee River, in Tahoe City, California.

**ADDRESSES:** Written comments concerning the Draft EIS should be sent to the responsible official, Forest Supervisor, attention: 64-Acre Tract Intermodal Transit Center, LTBMU, 870 Emerald Bay Road, Suite 1, South Lake Tahoe, California 96150.

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:** Direct questions concerning the proposed action to Joe Oden, Forest Planner, at (530) 573-2653 or at the above address.

**DECISION TO BE MADE:** The decision to be made for this EIS is whether to issue a Special Use Permit authorizing the construction and operation of an Intermodal Transit Center on the 64-Acres Tract. If a permit is issued, what conditions, requirements and mitigations should be included to protect the environment?

**PURPOSE AND NEED:** The proposal's purpose is to provide an Intermodal Transit Center in the Tahoe City area to support existing and future transit operations. Traffic congestion has long been considered a problem in the Tahoe Basin and numerous planning efforts have been undertaken to reduce dependence on automobile travel and to

enhance transit as an effective alternative. One of the constraints to effective transit in the Tahoe Basin is that there have been limited facilities to support their operation and to provide safe transfer points for transit riders, especially during periods of inclement weather. This facility will transport visitors to the Lake of the Sky Interpretive Center, also to be built on the 64-Acres tract.

#### PROPOSED ACTION AND ALTERNATIVES:

The proposed action includes issuing a permit authorizing the construction and operation of a transit center and associated parking facilities to be located on the northwest portion of the tract. Associated with the transit center would be roadway system improvements and recreation trail alterations necessary to accommodate the new facility. The proposed transit center would provide parking for six buses at a time. The facility would also provide an enclosed structure with a heated waiting area to serve 40 patrons. A parking area is to be provided with 130 spaces to support the Intermodal Transit Center. Intermodal transportation includes bicycling, roller blading and walking as well as bus, shuttle and taxi transportation. The transit center and parking will support all of these uses. This proposal is consistent with Forest Service multiple use plans and it does not violate the section 4(f) of the Department of Transportation Act. In addition to the proposed action and no action, various parking and traffic circulation alternatives may be evaluated in the EIS.

**ISSUES:** Traffic impacts, parking, and the need for a transit center on this site are likely to be the main issues. Air quality, water quality, visual, noise, recreation, and biological resources will also be addressed.

**SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:** The Tahoe City Community Plan and the TRPA Regional Transportation Plan/Air Quality Plan both recognize the need for a transit facility in the Tahoe City area to support existing and potential transit operations. The tract has been identified in adopted plans and policies as the location for the facility because of the proximity of the site to Tahoe City and because the location provides an effective transfer point for transit serving the north shore, west shore and the Truckee River area including the town of Truckee.

An Environmental Assessment (EA) for this proposal was distributed for public review and comment February 11, 1999. The EA was tiered to the Lake of the Sky environmental Impact Statement. Other documents that contributed to the preparation of the EA include the Tahoe City Community Plan, the Sixty-four Acres Tract Multimodal Transportation Center Study Final Report May, 1994, and the LTBMU Forest Plan. A scoping meeting for the EA was held on May 1, 1998, in Tahoe City. There were two noticed public hearings on the EA: Tahoe City on February 24, 1999 and San Francisco on April 8, 1999. The project was discussed at the North Tahoe Advisory Council meeting August 13, 1998. Scoping meetings for the EIR/TRPA EIS were held July 14 (Tahoe City) and July 15, 1999 (Incline Village Nevada). Scoping letters inviting input on the EIS/EIS are being sent to all those who expressed an interest in this project. Scoping input and public comments that were received on the EA, as well as additional written comments and suggestions postmarked by August 31, 1999 will be addressed in the EIS/EIR. No additional scoping meetings are planned at this time.

Implementation of the management proposal would require several permits or licenses from other agencies including the Tahoe Regional Planning Agency, Placer County, and Caltrans. Compliance with the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (16 U.S.C. 470 et seq.) is required. Placer County is the lead for the EIR and TRPA will also take action on the EIR/EIS in conformance with the Agency's Code of Ordinances.

The decision will be made by Lake Tahoe Basin Management Unit Forest Supervisor, as the Forest Service is the lead agency under NEPA. Placer County is the lead state agency under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA).

The draft EIS is anticipated to be filed with the Environmental Protection Agency and made available to the public for comment in November 1999. The final EIS and Record of Decision is expected in April 2000. The decision will be appealable under Forest Service regulations found at 36 CFR part 217.

The comment period for the draft EIS will be at least 45 days from the date the Environmental Protection Agency

publishes the notice of availability in the **Federal Register**.

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. First, reviewers of draft EIS's 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 EIS stage but that are not raised until after completion of the final EIS may be waived or dismissed by the courts. *City of Angoon v. Hodel*, 803 F.2d 1016, 1022 (9th Circuit, 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 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 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 at 40 CFR 1503.3 in addressing these points.

**Linda Massey,**

*Acting Forest Supervisor.*

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## DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

### Forest Service

#### Chalk Creek Timber Sales, Willamette National Forest, Lane 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) on a Proposal Action to harvest and regenerate timber and thin

young stands created by past regeneration harvest. The proposal also calls for the construction, reconstruction, and decommissioning of roads within the Chalk Creek, McKinley Creek, and Hamner Creek drainages of the North Fork of the Middle Fork of the Willamette River watershed. The planning area is bounded by the North Fork of the Middle Fork of the Willamette River on the east, Alpine River to the west and north (the watershed boundary between the North Fork and the Fall Creek watershed) and an unnamed ridge to the south which separates Hamner Creek and High Creek. The area is approximately 40 air miles east of the City of Eugene and 12 air miles northeast of the City of Oakridge. The Forest Service proposal will be in compliance with the 1990 Willamette National Forest Land and Resource Management Plan as amended by the 1994 Northwest Forest Plan, which provides the overall guidance for management of this area. These proposals are tentatively planned for implementation in fiscal year 2001 and 2002. The Willamette National Forest invites written comments and suggestions on the scope of the analysis. The agency will also give notice of the full environmental analysis and decision-making process so that interested and affected people are made aware as to how they may participate and contribute to the final decision.

**DATES:** Comments concerning the scope and implementation of the analysis should be received in writing by September 1, 1999.

**ADDRESSES:** Send written comments and suggestions concerning the management of this area to Rick Scott, District Ranger, Middle Fork Ranger District, Willamette National Forest, P.O. Box 1410, Oakridge, Oregon 97463.

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:** Direct questions about the proposed action and the scope of analysis to Kristie Miller, Planning Resource Management Assistant or Tim Bailey, Project Coordinator, Middle Fork Ranger District, phone 541-782-2283.

**SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:** The Chalk Creek Planning area is entirely within the North Fork of the Middle Fork of the Willamette River watershed, which is designated as a Tier 2 Key watershed by the Northwest Forest Plan (ROD, C-7). Tier 2 Key watersheds contain important sources of high quality water. A Watershed Analysis was completed for the North Fork of the Middle Fork of the Willamette River in September, 1995.

The purpose of this project is to harvest timber in a manner that

implements the management objectives, and to implement various resource restoration activities to meet Key Watershed objectives.

The proposed actions include harvesting timber in one to several commercial thinning timber sales over the next five years, and one regeneration harvest timber sale to be sold in the year 2001. Both thinning and regeneration timber sale proposals involve temporary road construction, system road reconstruction, and system road decommissioning. This analysis will evaluate alternative ways of addressing the Forest Service proposal to harvest approximately 15 million board feet. Approximately 3 million board feet would be from thinning about 600 acres of young stands created by past clearcut harvest. Approximately 12 million board feet would from regeneration harvest on about 200 acres. All the above proposed harvest would require some temporary road construction and reconstruction of existing system roads.

The Chalk Creek planning area comprises about 9,500 acres, all of which is National Forest System lands. Of the 9,500 acres about 4,200 acres (44%) have been previously harvested and regenerated. Of the remaining acres, approximately 1,450 acres (15%) is in a late-successional stand condition [ranging in ages from 80 to 170 years], and 3,500 acres (37%) is in an old-growth stand condition [stand ages exceeding 200 years]. The planning area contains about 200 acres (2%) of non-forest vegetation types. Management areas that provide for programmed timber harvest are Scenic (11c) and General Forest (14a). Other land allocations in this planning area are Late-Successional Reserves, Riparian Reserves, Wild and Scenic River Corridor, Special Wildlife Habitats, and one Old-Growth Grove.

Preliminary issues identified for this analysis include water and stream quality, habitat fragmentation, economic benefit, reduction of habitat considered critical for the northern spotted owl, and road management.

The Forest Service will be seeking information, comments and assistance from Federal, State, local agencies, tribes, and other individuals or organizations who may be interested or affected by the proposed project. This information will be used to determine the issues significant to the development and analysis of alternatives, to determine the appropriate range of alternative ways of implementing the proposed action, and to guide the analysis of effects. This input will be used in preparation of the draft EIS.