

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.

[FR Doc. 99-19294 Filed 7-27-99; 8:45 am]

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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.

The scoping process will include the following:

- Identification of potential issues;
- Identification of issues to be analyzed in depth;
- Elimination of insignificant issues or those which have been covered by a relevant previous environmental process;
- Exploration of alternative ways to implement the proposed actions based on the issues identified during the scoping process; and
- Determination of environmental effects of the proposed action and alternatives (i.e. direct, indirect, and cumulative effects and connected actions).

The draft EIS is expected to be filed with the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and to be available for public review by December 1, 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 Forest Service believes it is important to give reviewers notice at this early stage of several court rulings related to public participation in the environmental review process. First, a reviewer 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 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 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 that substantive comments and objectives 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).

The final EIS is scheduled to be completed in November, 2000. In the final EIS, the Forest Service is required to respond to comments and responses received during the comment period that pertain to the environmental consequences discussed in the draft EIS and applicable laws, regulations, and policies considered in making the decision regarding this proposal. Rick Scott, District Ranger, is the responsible official and as responsible official, he will document the Chalk Creek Timber Sales project decision and rationale in a record of Decision. That decision will be subject to Forest Service Appeal Regulations (36 CFR Part 215).

Dated: July 12, 1999.

Rick Scott,
District Ranger.

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DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Forest Service

Intergovernmental Advisory Committee Subcommittee Meeting

AGENCY: Forest Service, USDA.

ACTION: Notice of meeting.

SUMMARY: The Intergovernmental Advisory Committee will meet on August 5, 1999, at the Embassy Suites Portland Downtown, 319 SW Pine Street, Portland, Oregon 97204-2726. The purpose of the meeting is to continue discussions on the implementation of the Northwest Forest Plan. The meeting will begin at 9:30 a.m. and continue until 3:30 p.m. Agenda items to be discussed include, but are not limited to: information sharing on salmon restoration and recovery from the Soil and Water Conservation District perspective; a presentation of the Regional Community Economic Revitalization Team Report; and progress reports on ongoing implementation issues. The IAC meeting will be open to the public and is fully accessible for people with disabilities. Interpreters are available upon request in advance. Written comments may be submitted for the record at the meeting. Time will also be scheduled for oral public comments. Interested persons are encouraged to attend.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Questions regarding this meeting may be directed to Don Knowels, Executive Director, Regional Ecosystem Office, 333

SW 1st Avenue, P.O. Box 3623, Portland, OR 97208 (Phone: 503-808-2180).

Dated: July 20, 1999.

Donald R. Knowles,
Designated Federal Official.

[FR Doc. 99-19234 Filed 7-27-99; 8:45 am]
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DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Rural Housing Service

Notice of Request for Comments on Information Collection Package

AGENCY: Rural Housing Service (RHS), USDA.

ACTION: Proposed collection; Comments requested.

SUMMARY: In accordance with the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995, this notice announces the Rural Housing Service's intent to request approval of an Information Collection Package in support of the program for servicing the Agency's Community Programs loans and grants.

DATES: Comments on this notice must be received by August 27, 1999 to be assured of consideration.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: For inquiries on the Information Collection Package, contact Tracy Gillin, Regulations and Paperwork Management Branch, at (202) 692-0039. For program content, contact Beth Jones, Senior Loan Specialist, Community Programs Servicing and Special Authorities Branch, RHS, USDA, 1400 Independence Ave., Mail Stop 0787, SW, Washington, DC 20250-0787, Telephone (202) 720-1498, E-mail epjones@rdmail.rural.usda.gov. Comments should be submitted to Ms. Gillin at USDA—Rural Development, 1400 Independence Ave., SW, Mail Stop 0742, Washington, DC 20250-0742.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

Title: 7 CFR 3570-E, Servicing of Community Programs Loans and Grants.

Type of Request: New information collection.

Abstract: The Rural Housing Service (RHS) is a credit agency within the Rural Development mission area of the United States Department of Agriculture. Rural Development is authorized by Section 306 of the Consolidated Farm and Rural Development Act (7 U.S.C. 1926) to make loans to public agencies, nonprofit corporations, and Indian tribes through the Community Facilities program for the development of essential community facilities primarily serving