

1999. Previously scheduled meetings included those held each month from May through July, 1999 and the upcoming meeting scheduled for August 4, 1999, 1:00–3:00 p.m. The Forest Service scheduled these public meetings to inform interested people about its progress in the development of the Sierra Nevada Forest Plan Amendment Environmental Impact Statement and to provide information about other Sierra Nevada Framework activities.

In response to continued public interest in the Sierra Nevada Framework Project activities, additional meetings are scheduled for the first Wednesday of each month, September through December 1999. *Public meetings* will be held at the Sierra Nevada Framework Project Office, 801 I Street, Sacramento, California, 95814, Room 484 as follows: *Wednesday, September 1, 1999, 1:00–4:00 p.m.*

Wednesday, October 6, 1999, 1:00–4:00 p.m.

Wednesday, November 3, 1999, 1:00–4:00 p.m.

Wednesday, December 1, 1999, 1:00–4:00 p.m.

In response to public interest, the September public meeting will conclude with a discussion of the modeling design of fire behavior, fuel loading and fire effects.

In addition to the public meetings, the USDA Forest Service Pacific Southwest Region and Research Station are convening “science workshops” in which the public is invited to hear diverse science perspectives on the condition and management of Sierra Nevada ecosystems. Along with hearing from scientists, the public will be provided an opportunity to dialogue with scientists about concerns and possible approaches to management practices in Sierra Nevada ecosystems.

The first science workshop to discuss Sierra Nevada old-forest ecosystems is scheduled for *August 24 and 25, 1999, 8:00 a.m.–5:00 p.m.* each day, in *Freeborn Hall, University of California, Davis*. Additional science workshops are tentatively planned for aquatic, riparian and meadow ecosystems, September, 1999, Fresno, California; and assessment of environmental consequences of proposed management activities, October, 1999, Reno, Nevada.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Please see the USDA Forest Service Region 5 World Wide Web site www.r5.fs.fed.us or contact USDA Forest Service, Sierra Nevada Framework Project, Room 419, 801 “I” Street, Sacramento, CA 95814; phone number 916–492–7554; TTY via PacBell relay (800) 735–2929.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: The USDA Forest Service Pacific Southwest Region and the Pacific Southwest Research Station are integrating new science into management of the national forests of California. The effort is called the Sierra Nevada Framework Project. One objective of the Framework Project is to amend forest plans in conformance with the National Forest Management Act and the National Environmental Policy Act. The Sierra Nevada Forest Plan Amendment Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) will amend national forest plans for the Humboldt-Toiyabe, Modoc, Lassen, Plumas, Tahoe, Eldorado, Stanislaus, Sierra, Sequoia, and Inyo National Forest, and the Lake Tahoe Basin Management Unit. Other activities of the Framework Project involve improving long-term cooperation and coordination among the Forest Service, tribes, local governments, state and federal agencies.

On November 20, 1998, the Region published a Notice of Intent in the **Federal Register** identifying five problem areas to address in an Environmental Impact Statement: old forest ecosystems; aquatic, riparian and meadow ecosystems; fire and fuels management; noxious weeds; and, lower westside hardwood ecosystems. Prior to drafting the Notice of Intent, the Pacific Southwest Region and Pacific Southwest Research Station reviewed recent science and gathered public comment and related information during a series of 37 community workshops throughout the Sierra and other locations in California and Nevada. Publication of the Notice of Intent initiated a 60-day opportunity for public comment, including 27 additional community workshops. To date, the Forest Service has received nearly 3500 comments via letters, postcards, and e-mail. Response to these comments is integrated into the alternatives being developed to address the five problem areas.

In response to the significant public interest in the development of alternatives, the Forest Service is making available summary descriptions of alternatives that may appear in the draft EIS. The Forest Service is not soliciting public comment on these preliminary drafts, but is making them available so people may be better prepared to comment on the draft EIS when it is published.

At present, several alternatives are being developed by the Forest Service. These alternatives reflect extensive public comment and suggestions, as well as recent scientific information. To view summaries of these draft alternatives, please see the USDA Forest

Service Region 5 World Wide Web site www.r5.fs.fed.us or contact USDA Forest Service, Sierra Nevada Framework Project, 801 I Street, Room 419, Sacramento, CA 95814 to receive a copy by mail.

Dated: July 26, 1999.

Kent P. Connaughton,

Deputy Regional Forester.

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DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Forest Service

Squirrel Meadows-Grand Targhee Resort Land Exchange Targhee National Forest, Teton County, WY

AGENCY: Forest Service, USDA.

ACTION: Revision of the Notice of Intent to prepare an Environmental Impact Statement for the Squirrel Meadows-Grand Targhee Resort Land Exchange as published in the **Federal Register** page 54039 to 54040 on October 17, 1997 (Vol. 62, No. 200). This revision includes a change of the Responsible Official, acres of land to be exchanged by both parties, and project schedule.

SUMMARY: The USDA, Forest Service is preparing an Environmental Impact Statement to document the analysis and disclose the environmental impacts of a proposed land exchange with Booth Creek, Inc., dba Grant Targhee Resort.

This revised Notice of Intent is to document some minor changes in the process.

- In the original NOI, the tentative date for filing the Draft EIS was May of 1998 and the Final EIS was scheduled for December, 1998. Due to the gathering of additional social and economic information and the creation of additional design concepts, the Draft EIS is not scheduled to be filed in August, 1999, and the final EIS about April of 2000.

- The original Responsible Official was the Regional Forester, Intermountain Region. The Responsible Official now is Jerry B. Reese, Forest Supervisor, Targhee and Caribou National Forests, 420 N. Bridge St, St. Anthony, Idaho 83445.

- The original NOI proposed exchanging up to 265 acres of NFS lands for 330 acres of private ground. The alternatives now is considered in the analysis propose exchanging up to 195 acres of NFS land for approximately 385 acres of private land.

DATES: These changes are minor and no formal comment period will be initiated.

ADDRESSES: Send correspondence to Jack Haddox, Teton Basin Ranger District, PO Box 777, Driggs, Idaho 83422.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Questions concerning this revised Notice of Intent the proposed action and the EIS should be directed to Patty Bates, Teton Basin District Ranger, Targhee National Forest, Telephone: (208) 354-2312.

Dated: July 23, 1999.

Jerry B. Reese,

Forest Supervisor, Targhee National Forest, Intermountain Region, USDA Forest Service.
[FR Doc. 99-19647 Filed 7-30-99; 8:45 am]

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DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Forest Service

South Pyramid Timber Sales, Willamette National Forest, Linn 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 to harvest timber, regenerate harvested lands, construct or reconstruct forest roads, and associated mitigation projects in the South Pyramid subwatershed. The legal description for the planning area is T12S, R5E, sections 19, 28-34. The planning area is approximately 4,637 acres in the Middle Santiam Watershed.

The planning area is primarily designated Matrix-General Forest by the Northwest Forest Plan, with Riparian Reserves, Late Successional Reserve, and Matrix-Special Habitat Areas composing the rest of the landbase. The planning area includes many acres of overstocked 90-150 year forest, where growth rates have slowed. Information and analyses created during the Middle Santiam Watershed Analysis will also be considered when designing this project. This proposal is tentatively scheduled for implementation in fiscal year 2000-2003. The Willamette National Forest invites written comments and suggestions on the scope of this analysis, in addition to those comments received as a result of local public participation activities. The agency will also give notice of the full environmental analysis and decision making process so that interested and affected people are informed 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 August 16, 1999.

ADDRESSES: Please send written comments and suggestions concerning the South Pyramid Timber Sales to Mike Rassbach, District Ranger, Sweet Home Ranger District, Willamette National Forest, 3225 Hwy 20, Sweet Home, Oregon 97386.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Questions about the Proposed Action and scope of analysis should be directed to Brian McGinley, Resource Planner, Sweet Home Ranger District, Willamette National Forest, 3225 Highway 22, Sweet Home, Oregon 97386, phone 541-367-5168.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: The Northwest Forest Plan has designed most of the forest's timber production capability to come from Matrix-General Forest lands. The purpose and need for this proposal is to improve tree growth rates and/or quality of overstocked matrix forests, and harvest timber in a landbase that is Matrix Land-General Forest, where timber management is a dominant resource objective. The Forest Service proposal will comply with the 1990 Willamette National Forest Land and Resource Management Plan, as amended by the 1994 Northwest Forest Plan.

This Proposed Action will consider regeneration harvest and/or commercial thinnings to meet project goals, and will compare conventional logging systems with helicopter logging. This project is expected to yield a volume of 4.0 to 4.4 million board feet, part of which will be achieved by thinning at least 40 acres of forest stands to improve growth rates reduced by overstocking. Other activities being considered are likely to involve: reforestation, managed standard improvements, road closures and obliteration, wildlife habitat enhancement, and noxious weed control.

Preliminary resources issues identified that will influence alternatives developed for this project are: old growth habitat retention; maintenance of large, unroaded landscape blocks; economic and biologic effects of logging systems; and northern spotted owl dispersal habitat. Other issues that will be addressed through project design are: edge effects of management on a neighboring Late Successional Reserve, big game habitat conditions, and habitat connectivity with adjacent watersheds.

Alternative have been developed around the Proposed Action addressing the dominant issues and will be

compared to the "No Action" Alternative. One action alternative focuses on harvesting the least number of acres and staying out of the unroaded landscape blocks. To achieve project goals, this alternative proposes to regeneration harvest 77 acres (47 acres of which are old growth habitat) and thin 48 acres. Conventional skyline and tractor logging systems will be used. This alternative will require 1.1 miles of new road construction and the obliteration of 0.6 miles of road.

A second action alternative focuses on preserving old growth habitat and avoiding regeneration harvesting or road construction within large unroaded landscape blocks. Because only thinning is proposed, this alternative requires 287 acres (209 acres of which lies within the Pyramids unroaded landscape block) to meet project objectives. Helicopter logging will be used for most units, with only 0.8 miles of new road needed and the obliteration of 0.8 miles of road.

A third action alternative tries to balance the desires of preserving old growth and maintaining large, unroaded landscape blocks by regeneration harvesting 39 acres (23 acres of which is old growth habitat) and thinning 161 acres outside or around the edge of the Pyramids landscape block. This alternative proposes to construct 1.2 miles of new road and the obliteration of 0.6 miles of road.

The decisions to be made from the information and analysis include: number and location of harvest units; silvicultural prescriptions for each harvest unit; logging and transportation systems to access units; priorities of mitigation projects; selection of monitoring needs around this project.

Initial scoping began in November 1997. The forest Service will be seeking additional input and comments from other agencies, organizations and individuals who may be interested or affected by the proposed project. Additional input will be helpful in identifying resource issues not currently identified, and in developing alternatives for a draft EIS.

Comments received in response to this notice, including names and addresses 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 Parts 215 or 217. Additionally, pursuant to 7 CFR 1.27(d) any person may request the agency to withhold a