

on November 3–4, 1999, to review and discuss five issues: (1) Extending USDA's Meat and Poultry Inspection Program to Additional Species (Inspection Methods Standing Sub-Committee), (2) Reinforcing the Food Code by Adopting Key Food Safety Provisions as Federal Performance Standards, (3) Regulatory Reform (Inter-Governmental Roles Standing Sub-Committee), (4) HACCP Systems In-depth Verification Review, and (5) *E. coli* 0157 Action Plan (Resource Allocation Standing Sub-Committee). Three standing subcommittees of the full committee will also meet on November 3, 1999, to continue working on issues discussed during the full committee session. All interested parties are welcome to attend the meeting and to submit written comments and suggestions concerning issues the Committee will review and discuss. A schedule of when issues are scheduled for discussion is available on the FSIS Homepage at <http://www.fsis.usda.gov>.

DATES: The full Committee will hold a public meeting on Wednesday and Thursday, November 3–4, 1999, from 8:30 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. Subcommittees will hold public meetings on November 3, 1999, from 7:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m.

ADDRESSES: The full Committee meeting will take place at the United States Department of Agriculture, Whitten Building, 14th and Independence Avenue, S.W., Washington, DC in the Jefferson Room. The subcommittees will meet in the Adams, Roosevelt, and Washington Rooms of the Quality Hotel & Suites, Courthouse Plaza, 1200 North Courthouse Road, Arlington, Virginia 22201 (703) 524–4000. Send written comments to the Food Safety and Inspection Service (FSIS) Docket Clerk: Docket 99–044N, Room 102 Cotton Annex Building, 300 12th Street, S.W., Washington, DC 20250. Comments may also be sent by facsimile (202) 205–0381. The comments and the official transcript of the meeting, when it becomes available, will be kept in the Docket Clerk's office at the address provided above.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Contact Michael N. Micchelli at (202) 720–6269, FAX (202) 720–2345, or E-mail michael.micchelli@usda.gov.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

Background

On February 12, 1997, the Secretary of Agriculture renewed the charter for the Advisory Committee on Meat and Poultry Inspection. The Committee provides advice and recommendations to the Secretary of Agriculture pertaining to Federal and State meat and

poultry inspection programs pursuant to sections 7(c), 24, 205, 301(a)(3), and 301(c) of the Federal Meat Inspection Act and sections 5(a)(3), 5(c), 8(b), and 11(e) of the Poultry Products Inspection Act. The Administrator of FSIS is the chairperson of the Committee. Membership of the Committee is drawn from representatives of consumer groups; producers, processors, and marketers from the meat and poultry industry; and State government officials. The current members of the National Advisory Committee on Meat and Poultry Inspection are: Terry Burkhardt, Wisconsin Bureau of Meat Safety and Inspection; Dr. James Denton, University of Arkansas; Caroline Smith-DeWaal, Center for Science in the Public Interest; Nancy Donley, Safe Tables Our Priority; Carol Tucker Foreman, Food Policy Institute, Consumer Federation of America; Dr. Cheryl Hall, Zacky Farms, Inc.; Kathleen Hanigan, Farmland Foods; Dr. Lee C. Jan, Texas Department of Health; Alice Johnson, National Turkey Federation; Dr. Collette Schultz Kaster, Premium Standard Farms; Dr. Daniel E. LaFontaine, South Carolina Meat-Poultry Inspection Department; Michael Mamminga, Iowa Department of Agriculture; Dr. Dale Morse, New York Office of Public Health; Rosemary Mucklow, National Meat Association; and Gary Weber, National Cattlemen's Beef Association. On September 20, 1999, the Secretary of Agriculture appointed two new members to the Committee: Donna Richardson, Howard University Cancer Center and Magdi Abadir, Cuisine Solutions.

The Committee has three standing subcommittees to deliberate on specific issues and make recommendations to the whole Committee and to the Secretary of Agriculture.

Members of the public will be required to register at the meeting. There is no pre-registration required. The meeting agenda will be available on the FSIS Homepage at <http://www.fsis.usda.gov>. Persons requiring a sign language interpreter or other special accommodations should notify Michael N. Micchelli, by October 18, 1999.

Additional Public Notification

Pursuant to Department Regulation 4300–4, "Civil Rights Impact Analysis," dated September 22, 1993, FSIS has considered the potential civil rights impact of this public meeting on minorities, women, and persons with disabilities. FSIS anticipates that this public meeting will not have a negative or disproportionate impact on minorities, women, or persons with disabilities. However, public meetings generally are

designed to provide information and receive public comments on substantive issues which may lead to new or revised agency regulations or instructions. Public involvement in all segments of rulemaking and policy development are important. Consequently, in an effort to better ensure that minorities, women, and persons with disabilities are made aware of this public meeting and are informed about the mechanism for providing their comments, FSIS will announce it and provide copies of this **Federal Register** publication in the FSIS Constituent Update.

FSIS provides a weekly FSIS Constituent Update, which is communicated via fax to over 300 organizations and individuals. In addition, the update is available on line through the FSIS web page located at <http://www.fsis.usda.gov>. The update is used to provide information regarding FSIS policies, procedures, regulations, **Federal Register** Notices, FSIS public meetings, recalls, and any other types of information that could affect or would be of interest to our constituents/stakeholders. The constituent fax list consists of industry, trade, and farm groups, consumer interest groups, allied health professionals, scientific professionals and other individuals that have requested to be included. Through these various channels, FSIS is able to provide information with a much broader, more diverse audience. For more information and to be added to the constituent fax list, fax your request to the Office of Congressional and Public Affairs, at (202) 720–5704.

Done at Washington, DC on: October 5, 1999.

Thomas J. Billy,
Administrator.

[FR Doc. 99–26559 Filed 10–8–99; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 3410–DM–P

DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Forest Service

BHROWS (Big Game Habitat Restoration on a Watershed Scale) Project; Clearwater National Forest, Clearwater County, ID

AGENCY: Forest Service, USDA. As lead agency for this project, the Forest Service, with assistance from the Idaho State Department of Fish and Game, will cooperate with other Federal agencies, as well as County, State, and tribal governments who display an interest in the project, and who require assessment and concurrence.

ACTION: Notice of intent to prepare an environmental impact statement (EIS)

for the improvement of the elk habitat situation within North Fork Clearwater River subbasin.

SUMMARY: The Forest Service will prepare an environmental impact statement (EIS), titled BHROWS: Middle-Black, to disclose the environmental effects of vegetative management proposals aimed at improving the elk habitat situation within the Middle North Fork and Upper North Fork (Black Canyon) watersheds of the North Fork Clearwater River subbasin.

Both watersheds, totaling approximately 156,000 acres, are entirely on National Forest lands within the North Fork Ranger District of the Clearwater National Forest, Townships 38–41 North, Ranges 7–11 East, Boise Meridian, Clearwater County, Idaho.

The BHROWS project is a part of the Clearwater Basin Elk Habitat Initiative, a coalition of many diverse groups sharing a common interest in the future and management of elk and elk habitat in the Clearwater River basin.

While elk concerns provide the impetus for the BHROWS project, elk are only part of a much larger ecosystem picture. Thus, this analysis is based on the philosophy of ecosystem management, featuring observation and replication of natural disturbance processes, such as wildfire. In so doing, this analysis will look beyond elk at the major processes that shape the North Fork ecosystem.

The proposal and subsequent effects analysis will meet the intent of the Clearwater Forest Plan, using an ecosystem management approach for the analysis area. Management Areas within the analysis area include: A3, emphasizing dispersed recreation; B2, emphasizing proposed wilderness; C3, emphasizing big-game winter range; C4, emphasizing big-game winter range and timber production; C8S, emphasizing big-game summer range and timber production; E1, emphasizing growth and yield of timber; M1, emphasizing research natural areas; M2, emphasizing riparian management; and US, emphasizing lands unsuitable for timber production.

Proposed Action

An assessment, titled BHROWS Assessment 8/16/99, was completed for the entire North Fork Clearwater River subbasin (840,000 acres). The results indicate that the following current vegetative species and age class distributions would not have occurred under natural conditions: (1) Western white pine, once the dominant cover type, has been replaced by dense, young

stands of Douglas-fir and grand fir which are shorter lived and less resistant to many insects and diseases; (2) lodgepole pine cover types have nearly doubled and are approaching the end of their life cycle, putting them at risk from mountain pine beetle attack and large-scale, stand replacing fires; and (3) early successional stages, which provide forage habitat for big game, now occupy less than one-third of their historical range. These shifts in vegetative conditions have resulted in the loss of elk habitat and have contributed in part towards the decline of elk populations within the analysis area.

The proposed action is designed to restore vegetative patterns across the analysis area to a more natural condition than what currently exists, and by so doing, restore populations of native wildlife species, such as elk, to near-normal distribution and abundance. It includes treating up to 28,700 acres of uniform stands of trees (primarily mid-successional stages), located mostly on the breaklands and colluvial midslopes. This portion of the landscape would be changed from a uniform cover of trees to a more natural mosaic of tree cover and openings. Also treated would be approximately 1,850 acres of lodgepole pine stands in the higher elevations, with most of these stands being converted to early successional stages. Portions of 4,600 acres of recently acquired lands in the northeast corner of the analysis area would be planted with blister rust resistant white pine and larch. Some of the area proposed for planting is currently covered with thick brush and/or logging slash and would have to be cleared prior to planting. Also within the analysis area are approximately 10,000 acres of brushfields, some of which are too old or too tall to provide needed forage for elk and other wildlife. This project will consider rejuvenating selected brushfields, primarily those that are no longer providing suitable forage for elk, and are on deep soils and near a tree seed source.

Methods of treatment for the above activities would mimic natural disturbance patterns and patch sizes and would probably consist of prescribed fire, slashing (hand or mechanical), timber harvest (primarily helicopter yarding), or combinations thereof. Most of the areas treated would be planted with seral species of trees (primarily white pine and larch) and/or shrubs (redstem ceanothus, willow, and maple). Other areas treated would rely on natural tree regeneration and the resprouting of existing shrub species. At this time, road activities needed for

treatment access are expected to be minimal, consisting of the reconstruction of existing roads and the possible construction of temporary roads for skyline yarder access or helicopter landings.

For the purpose of protecting the natural condition and biodiversity of the area, an integrated pest management approach to noxious weed control would be proposed on selected sites along area roads, trails, and disturbed sites. This approach would consider the use of physical/mechanical, chemical, and/or biological management techniques, depending on specific sites and weed species. Since dormant seeds in existing weed populations can germinate several years after treatment, follow-up treatments would be proposed, as would the treatment of new infestations, provided such treatment fits within the scope of this analysis.

Because some streams in the area are not meeting desired instream conditions for cobble embeddedness, some of the erosion sources in the watershed would be corrected by obliterating up to 150 miles of roads in the Coyote/Game/Lick Creek areas. Depending on future access needs, some of these roads may be proposed for long-term intermittent status, rather than full obliteration. Such roads would be closed to motorized traffic and placed in a condition to assure they do not require active maintenance.

Preliminary issues identified by the interdisciplinary team include the effects of the proposed action on roadless areas, old growth habitat, water quality, fish habitat, air quality, threatened/endangered/proposed/sensitive species, scenic resources, recreation, forest health, tribal treaty rights, and heritage resources. Mitigation measures, project design features, and alternatives to the proposed action will be analyzed to address these issues and others that may surface during public scoping.

Public Involvement

Public participation will be an important part of this analysis. Issues which emerge from public scoping will be used to develop additional alternatives to this proposal. Methods being used to solicit public comment include news releases, weekly radio interviews, newsletters, and monthly meetings with the Clearwater Elk Recovery Team, a self-organized group of private citizens. A mailing list of interested public will be maintained, and a web page for this project and the Clearwater Basin Elk Habitat Initiative can be accessed by logging on to:

www.fs.fed.us/rl/clearwater/cei/ceihome.htm.

Comments concerning the scope of the analysis should be received in writing within 30 days from publication of this notice. Send written comments to Douglas Gober, District Ranger, 12370 B Highway 12, Orofino, ID 83544.

DATE: The draft EIS is expected to be filed with the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and available for public review in November 1999. The comment period on the draft environmental impact statement will be 45 days from the date the Environmental Protection Agency publishes the notice of availability of the draft EIS in the **Federal Register**. The final EIS is scheduled to be completed by March 2000.

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 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). Also environmental objections that could be raised at the draft environmental impact statement stage but that are not raised until after completion of the final environmental impact statement 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 objections are made available to the Forest Service at a time when it can meaningfully consider them and respond to them in the final environmental impact statement.

To assist the Forest Service in identifying and considering issues and concerns on the proposed action, comments on the draft environmental impact statement 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 environmental impact statement or the merits of the alternatives formulated and discussed in the statement. Reviewers may wish to refer to the Council on Environmental Regulations for implementing the procedural provisions of the National

Environmental Policy Act at 40 CFR 1503.3 in addressing these points.

Comments received in response to this solicitation, 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.

Deciding Official

The responsible official for decisions regarding this analysis is James Caswell, Clearwater National Forest Supervisor. His address is 12730 Highway 12, Orofino, ID 83544. He will decide whether or not to select an action or mix of actions to improve the ecological condition of the analysis area and best meet the habitat needs of elk and other wildlife species.

Point of Contact: Further information about this project can be obtained by contacting George Harbaugh, Interdisciplinary Team Leader, at the above address or by calling (208) 476-4541.

Dated: September 28, 1999.

Deanna M. Riebe,

Acting Forest Supervisor.

[FR Doc. 99-26464 Filed 10-8-99; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 3410-11-M

DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Forest Service

Supplement to the Final Environmental Impact Statement for the Mt. Ashland Ski Area, Rogue River National Forest, Jackson County, Oregon

AGENCY: Forest Service, USDA.

ACTION: Cancellation of a supplement to a final environmental impact statement.

SUMMARY: On January 19, 1999, a Notice of Intent (NOI) to prepare a supplemental environmental impact statement for the Mt. Ashland Ski Area on the Ashland Ranger District of the Rogue River National Forest was published in the **Federal Register** (64 FR 2873). This notice is being withdrawn because a NOI that specifically reflects the expansion proposal for Mt. Ashland Ski Area will be published. The Forest Service NOI to prepare a supplemental is hereby rescinded.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Linda Duffy or Steve Johnson, Ashland Ranger District, Rogue River National

Forest, 645 Washington Street, Ashland, Oregon 97520, telephone 541-858-2402; email address is sjohnson/r6pnw.rogueriver@fs.fed.us.

Dated: September 30, 1999.

Robert W. Shull,

Acting Forest Supervisor.

[FR Doc. 99-26480 Filed 10-8-99; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 3410-11-M

DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Forest Service

Mt. Ashland Ski Area Expansion, Rogue River National Forest, Jackson County, Oregon

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

SUMMARY: The USDA, Forest Service will prepare an environmental impact statement (EIS) to document the analysis and disclose the environmental impacts of the proposed action to expand the Mt. Ashland Ski Area (MASA). The project area is located approximately 7 miles south of Ashland, Oregon, within the Siskiyou Mountains in Southern Oregon. The proposed expansion would include construction of a new chairlift and associated ski runs; a surface lift providing novice skiers access to proposed runs; additional parking areas; maintenance access roads; and necessary supporting infrastructure—sewer, water, and power lines. All proposed expansion projects are within the existing Special Use Permit area boundary. Proposed action would be implemented by MAA after Forest Service authorization is granted. Full implementation is expected to take 2-3 years. The agency will give notice of the full environmental analysis and decision making process on the proposed expansion so interested and affected members of the public may participate and contribute in the final decision.

DATES: Additional comments concerning the scope of this analysis should be received by October 29, 1999.

ADDRESSES: Submit additional written comments to Linda Duffy, District Ranger, Ashland Ranger District, Rogue River National Forest, 645 Washington Street, Ashland, Oregon, 97520.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Linda Duffy or Steve Johnson, Ashland Ranger District, Rogue River National Forest, 645 Washington Street, Ashland, Oregon, 97520, Telephone (541) 482-3333; FAX (541) 858-2402; email address is sjohnson/r6pnw_rogueriver@fs.fed.us.