

Requests to be placed on this mailing list should be sent to the comment address stated above.

Consulting and Collaborating With Tribal Governments

The United States has a unique legal relationship with Indian tribal governments as set forth in the Constitution of the United States, treaties, statutes, Executive orders, and court decisions. In fulfillment of our Government-to-Government responsibilities, the Forest Service will be working with Tribal governments in order to address natural and cultural resource issues, treaty rights, and any issues that significantly or uniquely affect Tribes. Meaningful consultation will assure that tribal issues will be addressed within the most critical context of current and projected interests, values, objectives for and uses of national forest lands.

Comment Requested

This notice of intent initiates the scoping process, which guides that development of the environmental impact statement. This revision effort is being undertaken to develop management direction that may help contribute to basic agency goals of ecological, social and economic sustainability.

Early public participation will identify the topics to be addressed during Forest Plan revision. The preceding discussion of preliminary revision topics is based upon our assessment of a Plan monitoring and evaluation results; public and agency input during project planning and Plan amendment efforts; and socioeconomic, demographic and political changes. We expect this list to change as people engage in the planning process.

An atmosphere of openness is one of the objectives of the public involvement process, in which all members of the public feel free to share information with the Forest Service regularly. All parts of this process will be structured to maintain this openness.

The Forest Service is seeking information, comments, and assistance from individuals, organizations, tribal governments, and federal, state, and local agencies who are interested in or may be affected by the proposed action (36 CFR 219.6). The Forest Service is also looking for collaborative approaches with members of the public who are interested in forest management. Federal and state agencies and some private organizations have been cooperating in the development of assessments of current biological, physical, and economic conditions. This

information will be used to prepare the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS). The range of alternatives to be considered in the DEIS will be based on public issues, management concerns, resource management opportunities, and specific decisions to be made. Public participation will be solicited from known interested and affected public. News releases will be used to give the public general notice, and public scoping opportunities will be offered in numerous locations. Public participation activities will include (but will not be limited to) requests for written comments, open houses, focus groups, field trips, and collaborative forums.

Public participation will be especially important at several points along the way. The first formal opportunity to comment is during the scoping process (40 CFR 1501.7). Scoping includes (1) identifying potential issues, (2) from these, identifying significant issues or those that have been covered by prior environmental review, (3) exploring alternatives in addition to No Action, and (4) identifying the potential environmental effects of the proposed action and alternatives.

Early Notice of Importance of Public Participation in Subsequent Environmental Review

A draft environmental impact statement will be prepared for comment by the winter of 2003. The comment period on the draft environmental impact statement will be 90 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 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

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 Quality Regulations for implementing the procedural provisions of the National Environmental Policy Act at 40 CFR 1503.3 in addressing these points.

(Authority: 40 CFR 1501.7 and 1508.22; Forest Service Handbook 1909.15, Section 21)

After the comment period on the DEIS ends, comments will be analyzed, considered, and responded to by the Forest Service in preparing the Final EIS. The FEIS is scheduled to be completed in 2005. The responsible official will consider the comments, responses, environmental consequences discussed in the FEIS, and applicable laws, regulations, and policies in making decisions regarding these revised Forest Plans. The responsible official will document the discussions and reasons for the decisions in Record of Decisions for the revised Plans. The decisions will be subject to appeal in accordance with 36 CFR 217.

Dated: April 23, 2002.

Bradley E. Powell,

Regional Forester, Forest Service-Northern Region.

[FR Doc. 02-10548 Filed 4-29-02; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 3410-11-M

DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Forest Service

Notice of Resource Advisory Committee Meeting

AGENCY: North Central Idaho Resource Advisory Committee, Grangeville, Idaho, USDA, Forest Service.

ACTION: Notice of meeting.

SUMMARY: Pursuant to the authorities in the Federal Advisory Committee Act (Pub. L. 92-463) and under the Secure Rural Schools and Community Self-Determination Act of 2000 (Pub. L. 106-

393) the Nez Perce and Clearwater National Forests' North Central Idaho Resource Advisory Committee will meet Friday, May 17, 2002 in Lapwai, Idaho for a business meeting. The meeting is open to the public.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: The business meeting on May 17, begins at 10:00 AM, at Richard A. Halfmoon Tribal Council Chambers, Main Street and Beavers Grade, Lapwai, Idaho. Agenda topics will include review of proposed projects and project selections. A public forum will begin at 2:30 PM (PST).

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Ihor Mereszczak, Staff Officer and Designated Federal Officer, at (208) 983-1950.

Dated: April 23, 2002.

Ihor Mereszczak,

Acting Forest Supervisor

[FR Doc. 02-10521 Filed 4-29-02; 8:45 am]

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DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Natural Resources Conservation Service

Notice of Availability of a Finding of No Significant Impact for the Sandstone Creek Watershed in Roger Mills County, OK

AGENCY: Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) in Oklahoma, U.S. Department of Agriculture.

ACTION: Notice of Finding of No Significant Impact.

SUMMARY: Pursuant to section 102(2)(c) of the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969; the Council on Environmental Quality Regulations (40 CFR part 1500); and the Natural Resources Conservation Service Regulations (7 CFR part 650); the Natural Resources Conservation Service, U.S. Department of Agriculture, gives notice that an environmental impact statement is not being prepared for the Sandstone Creek Watershed, Roger Mills County, Oklahoma.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: M. Darrel Dominick, State Conservationist, Natural Resources Conservation Service, 100 USDA, Suite 206, Stillwater, Oklahoma 74074, (405) 742-1206.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: The environmental assessment of this federally assisted action indicates that the project will not cause significant local, regional, or national impacts on the environment. As a result of these findings, M. Darrel Dominick, State

Conservationist, has determined that the preparation and review of an environmental impact statement is not needed for this project.

The project purposes are flood control and watershed protection. The planned works of improvement include the rehabilitation of two aging floodwater retarding structures and associated land treatment for sediment control.

The Notice of a Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) has been forwarded to the Environmental Protection Agency and to various Federal, State, and local agencies and interested parties. A limited number of copies of the FONSI are available to fill single copy requests at the above address. Basic data developed during the environmental assessment are on file and may be reviewed by contacting M. Darrel Dominick.

No administrative action on implementation of the proposal will be taken until 30 days after the date of this publication in the *Federal Register*.

Dated: April 10, 2002.

M. Darrel Dominick,

State Conservationist, Oklahoma.

[FR Doc. 02-10536 Filed 4-29-02; 8:45 am]

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DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Natural Resources Conservation Service

Notice of Availability of a Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI)

AGENCY: Natural Resources Conservation Service, USDA.

ACTION: Notice of availability of a Finding of No Significant Impact for a project on the South Slough Estuarine Research Reserve for review and comment.

SUMMARY: The NRCS has issued a Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) for a stream restoration project on the South Slough National Estuarine Research Reserve. A copy of the FONSI and the final Environmental Assessment (EA) is available for public review at the following locations:

- NRCS Office, 382 North Central, Coquille, OR 97423
- Coquille Public Library, Coquille, OR 97423
- Coos County Courthouse, 250 North Baxter, Coquille, OR 97423
- South Slough National Estuarine Research Reserve, Estuarine and Coastal Science Laboratory, Post Office Box 5417, Charleston, Oregon 97420.
- Coos Bay public library, 525 Anderson, Coos Bay, OR 97420

- North Bend public library, 1800 Sherman, North Bend, OR 97459
- Additional copies may be obtained by contacting Tom Purvis, NRCS, 541-396-2841.

DATES: Comments will be received for a 30-day period commencing with this date of publication.

ADDRESSES: Address all requests and comments to Tom Purvis, District Conservationist, Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), 382 North Central, Coquille, OR 97423; (541) 396-5106 (FAX).

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Tom Purvis, (541) 396-2841.

Dated: April 18, 2002.

C. R. Vigil, Jr.,

Acting State Conservationist, Portland, OR.

[FR Doc. 02-10535 Filed 4-29-02; 8:45 am]

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DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Rural Telephone Bank

Sunshine Act; Meeting

AGENCY: Rural Telephone Bank, USDA.

ACTION: Privatization Committee Meeting.

TIME AND DATE: 8:30 a.m., Tuesday, May 7, 2002.

PLACE: Conference Room 5030-South Building, U.S. Department of Agriculture, 1400 Independence Avenue, SW., Washington, DC.

STATUS: Open.

MATTERS TO BE DISCUSSED: The business advisor will present reports on projects completed to date and discuss the proposed outreach program, operational blueprint, and legislative review requirements.

ACTION: Staff Briefing for the Board of Directors.

TIME AND DATE: 2 p.m., Tuesday, May 7, 2002.

PLACE: Conference Room 5030-South Building, U.S. Department of Agriculture, 1400 Independence Avenue, SW., Washington, DC.

STATUS: Open.

MATTERS TO BE DISCUSSED:

1. Progress report on privatization study.
2. Office of the Inspector General's audit report on fiscal year 2001 financial statements.
3. Current telecommunications industry issues.
4. Administrative issues.

ACTION: Board of Directors Meeting.