

# 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

### Procurement and Property Management; Notice of Intent To Extend a Currently Approved Information Collection

**AGENCY:** Procurement and Property Management, USDA.

**ACTION:** Notice and request for comments.

**SUMMARY:** The Department of Agriculture, as part of its continuing effort to reduce paperwork and respondent burden, invites the general public and other Federal agencies to take this opportunity to comment on continuing information collections, as required by the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995, Public Law 104-13 (44 U.S.C. 3506(c)(2)(A)).

**DATES:** Comment should be received on or before April 15, 1997.

**ADDRESS:** Direct all written comments to Denise Patterson, USDA, Room 1520-S, 1400 Independence Avenue, SW, Washington, DC 20250.

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:** Requests for additional information should be directed to Linda W. Oliphant, (202) 720-3141, USDA, Room 1522-S, 1400 Independence Avenue, SW, Washington, DC 20250.

#### SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

*Title:* Department of Agriculture Guidelines for the Donation of Excess Research Equipment under 15 U.S.C. 3710(i).

*OMB Number:* 0505-0019.

*Expiration Date of Approval:* April 30, 1997.

*Type of Request:* Intent to extend currently approved information collection.

*Abstract:* This action is necessary to obtain approval for use of the forms beyond the current expiration date. The collection of this information will substantiate that property donations are based on need, usability and related to

agricultural sponsored education and research activities. In addition, the information enables the Department of Agriculture to comply with the requirement to report all donations of excess research equipment under the Stevenson-Wydler Innovation Technology Act (Public Law 102-245), U.S.C. 3710(i).

*Estimate of Burden:* Public reporting burden for this collection of information is estimated to average 2 hours per response.

*Respondents:* Not-for-profit Institutions and State, local or Tribal Organizations.

*Estimated number of Respondents:* 50.

*Estimated Number of Responses per Respondent:* 1.

*Estimate, Total Annual Burden on Respondents:* 100 hours.

Copies of this information collection can be obtained from Linda W. Oliphant, (202) 720-3141.

*Comments:* Comments are invited on: (a) whether the proposed collection of information is necessary for the proper performance of the functions of the agency, including whether the information shall have practical utility; (b) the accuracy of the agency's estimate of the burden of the collection of information; (c) ways to enhance the quality, utility, and clarity of the information to be collected; and (d) ways to minimize the burden of the collection of information on respondents, including through the use of automated collection techniques or other forms of information technology.

All responses to this notice will be summarized and included in the request for OMB approval. All comments will also become a matter of public record.

W.R. Ashworth,

*Director, Procurement and Property Management.*

[FR Doc. 97-5475 Filed 3-5-97; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 3410-PA-M

## Forest Service

### Clean Slate Ecosystem Management Project; Nez Perce National Forest, Idaho County, ID

**AGENCY:** Forest Service, USDA.

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

**SUMMARY:** The Forest Service will prepare an environmental impact statement (EIS) to analyze and disclose the environmental effects of applying ecosystem management techniques across the landscape in Main Slate and North Fork Slate Creek drainages. The area is located approximately 19 air miles south of Grangeville, Idaho. Some activities are planned within the North Fork Slate Creek (#1850) Roadless Area. This EIS will tier to the Nez Perce National Forest Land and Resource Management Plan and EIS, which provide overall guidance for achieving the desired forest condition of the area. The purpose of the proposed action is to improve overall vegetative conditions and diversity, restore impacted aquatic resources, and provide goods and services to the public.

**DATES:** Written comments and suggestions should be received by April 7, 1997 to receive timely consideration in the preparation of the Draft EIS.

**ADDRESSES:** Send written comments and suggestions on the proposed action, requests for a map of the proposed action, or requests to be placed on the project mailing list to Jack Carlson, District Ranger, Salmon River Ranger District, HC 01, Box 70, White Bird, Idaho 83554.

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:** Mike McGee, Planner, Salmon River Ranger District, Nez Perce National Forest, HC 01, Box 70, White Bird, Idaho 83554, Phone (208) 839-2211.

**SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:** The following activities are proposed in the Main Slate and North Fork Slate Creek drainages to: Treat approximately 1,100 acres through the use of helicopter, tractor, and cable logging systems, which will produce approximately 8 million board feet (MMBF) of timber; introduce fire for the treatment of both activity generated and natural fuels; use precommercial thinning of saplings and small poles; provide commercial post and pole material; improve watershed conditions by implementing actions such as cutslope revegetation, ditch rocking, culvert replacement, improvement of road drainage and surfacing, partial or complete obliteration on many sections of road, and improvement of the trail system; implement wildlife habitat improvements; implement practices to manage undesirable exotic vegetation; modify existing fish habitat structures in

Slate Creek; analyze and implement access management prescriptions for the existing road and trail system; develop and enhance dispersed recreation sites; and provide interpretive sites for the public.

No new permanent roads would be constructed. Some new construction of temporary roads and helicopter log landings would occur and some re-construction of existing roads would occur. Temporary roads that are constructed or re-constructed will be recontoured after use.

A watershed analysis, called the Slate Creek Implementation Area Assessment, was recently undertaken for the entire Slate Creek watershed. The Clean Slate project is located within the Slate Creek watershed. One of the primary purposes of this watershed analysis was to collect and display historic conditions and processes and document how management activities have influenced the current conditions of the watershed. From this, management opportunities were identified that would best fit with the natural character and processes of the watershed. This proposal is moving forward with some of the recommendations made in the Slate Creek Watershed Assessment.

The Forest Service will consider a range of alternatives to the proposed action. One of these will be the "no action" alternative, in which none of the proposed action will be implemented. Additional alternatives will examine varying levels and locations for the proposed activities, including entry into the Roadless Area, to achieve the proposal's purposes, as well as to respond to the issues and other resource values.

Public participation is an important part of the project, commencing with the initial scoping process (40 CFR 1501.7), which starts with publication of this notice and continues for the next 30 days. In addition, the public is encouraged to visit with Forest Service officials at any time during the analysis and prior to the decision. The Forest Service will be seeking information, comments, and assistance from Federal, State, and local agencies, the Nez Perce Tribe, and other individuals or organizations who may be interested in or affected by the proposed action.

Comments from the public and other agencies will be used in preparation of the Draft EIS. The scoping process will be used to:

1. Identify potential issues.
2. Identify major issues to be analyzed in depth.
3. Eliminate minor issues or those which have been covered by a relevant previous environmental analysis, such

as the Nez Perce National Forest Plan EIS.

4. Identify alternatives to the proposed action.

5. Identify potential environmental effects of the proposed action and alternatives (i.e., direct, indirect, and cumulative effects).

While public participation in this analysis is welcome at any time, comments received within 30 days of the publication of this notice will be especially useful in the preparation of the draft EIS, which is expected to be filed with the Environmental Protection Agency and available for public review in May, 1997. A 45-day comment period will follow publication of a Notice of Availability of the draft EIS in the Federal Register. The comments received will be analyzed and considered in preparation of a final EIS, which is expected to be filed in [July,] 1997. A Record of Decision will be issued not less than 30 days after publication of a Notice of Availability of the final EIS in the Federal Register.

The Forest Service believes it is important at this early stage to give reviewers notice of several court rulings related to public participation in the environmental review process. First, reviewers of draft EISs must structure their participation in the environmental review of the proposal so that it is meaningful and alerts an agency to reviewer's position and contentions. *Vermont Yankee Nuclear Power Corp. v. NRDC*, 435 U.S. 519, 513 (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 objections are 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 should be as specific as possible. 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.

I am the responsible official for this environmental impact statement.

Dated: January 31, 1997.

Coy G. Jemmett,

*Forest Supervisor, Nez Perce National Forest, Route 2, Box 475, Grangeville, ID 83530.*

[FR Doc. 97-5543 Filed 3-5-97; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 3410-11-M

## **Yakima Province Advisory Committee**

**AGENCY:** Forest Service, USDA.

**ACTION:** Notice of meeting.

**SUMMARY:** The Yakima Province Advisory Committee will meet on March 12, 1997, in the Cle Elum Ranger District office warehouse conference room, 803 W. 2nd Street, Cle Elum, Washington. The meeting will begin at 9:00 a.m. and continue until 3:00 p.m. Agenda items to be covered will include agency updates and information relative to the development and role of an advisory subcommittee in providing advice on the Snoqualmie Pass Adaptive Management Area. All Yakima Province Advisory Committee meetings are open to the public. Interested citizens are welcome to attend.

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:** Direct questions regarding this meeting to Paul Hart, Designated Federal Official, USDA, Wenatchee National Forest, 215 Melody Lane, Wenatchee, Washington 98801, 509-662-4335.

Dated: February 25, 1997.

Glenn Hoffman,

*Acting Forest Supervisor, Wenatchee National Forest.*

[FR Doc. 97-5458 Filed 3-5-97; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 3410-11-M

## **ARCTIC RESEARCH COMMISSION**

### **Notice of Meeting**

Notice is hereby given that the U.S. Research Commission will hold its 46th Meeting at 9:00 a.m. on Monday, March 24, 1997, at the National Science Foundation, 4201 Wilson Boulevard, Arlington, VA 22230. Agenda items include:

- (1) Call to order and approval of the Agenda
- (2) Approval of the minutes of the 45th Meeting
- (3) Reports of Congressional Liaisons
- (4) Agency Reports
- (5) Research News

The focus of the meeting will be on Arctic Ocean Research.

Any person planning to attend this meeting who requires special accessibility features and/or auxiliary aids, such as sign language interpreters must inform the Commission in advance of those needs.