

**DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE****Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service**

[Docket No. 97-076-1]

**Procedures for Importing Animals Through the Harry S Truman Animal Import Center****AGENCY:** Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service, USDA.**ACTION:** Notice.

**SUMMARY:** We are giving notice of the date and location of the lottery for authorization of the use of the Harry S Truman Animal Import Center (HSTAIC) in calendar year 1998. We are also giving notice of the period during which applications must reach the Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service in order to be included in the lottery.

**DATES:** To be included in the lottery for authorization to use HSTAIC in calendar year 1998, applications must be received no earlier than October 1, 1997, and no later than October 15, 1997. Deposits must be received by November 26, 1997. The lottery for authorization to use HSTAIC during 1998 will be held on December 3, 1997.

**ADDRESSES:** Completed applications and deposits must be sent to the Administrator, c/o Import-Export Animal Staff, National Center for Import-Export, VS, APHIS, USDA, 4700 River Road Unit 39, Riverdale, MD 20737-1231. Application forms may be obtained by writing to the same address, or by calling the telephone number provided under the heading "For Further Information Contact". The lottery will be held at USDA, APHIS, Conference Room 3B01CN, 4700 River Road, Riverdale, MD.

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:** Dr. David Vogt, Senior Staff Veterinarian, Animals Program, National Center for Import-Export, VS, APHIS, suite 3B30, 4700 River Road Unit 39, Riverdale, MD 20737-1231, (301) 734-8423.

**SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:** The regulations in 9 CFR part 92, §§ 92.430, 92.431, 92.522, and 92.523 (referred to below as the regulations), set forth the conditions under which importers may qualify animals to enter the United States through the Harry S Truman Animal Import Center (HSTAIC) in Fleming Key, FL.

Because the demand for quarantine space at HSTAIC has traditionally exceeded the space available, the regulations provide that a lottery will be held each year during the first 7 days of December, to determine the priority of

applications for the following calendar year. To be included in the December lottery, applications must reach the Import-Export Animals Staff of the Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) no earlier than October 1, and no later than October 15 of the year of the lottery. Additionally, applicants must send a deposit in the form of a certified check or money order in the amount of \$32,000, payable to the United States Department of Agriculture, Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service, for each application. APHIS will not consider an application unless we receive this deposit from the applicant on or before November 26, 1997. In the event that the Import-Export Animals Staff receives no more than one application between October 1, 1997, and October 15, 1997, the lottery will not be held, and APHIS will grant exclusive right to use HSTAIC during the calendar year 1998 in the order applications are received.

Applicants should be aware that the HSTAIC facility must meet standards set by the Florida Department of Environmental Protection. The availability of HSTAIC for use for 1998 lottery applicants will be dependent upon HSTAIC meeting these standards.

**Authority:** 7 U.S.C. 1622; 19 U.S.C. 1306; 21 U.S.C. 102-105, 111, 114a, 134a, 134b, 134c, 134d, 134f, 135, 136, and 136a; 31 U.S.C. 9701; 7 CFR 2.22, 2.80, and 371.2(d).

Done in Washington, DC, this 20th day of August 1997.

**Terry L. Medley,**

*Administrator, Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service.*

[FR Doc. 97-22646 Filed 8-25-97; 8:45 am]

**BILLING CODE 3410-34-P**

**DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE****Forest Service****Basalt Mountain Timber Sale Analysis, White River National Forest; Eagle County, Colorado****AGENCY:** Forest Service, USDA.**ACTION:** Notice of intent to prepare an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS).

**SUMMARY:** The U.S. Department of Agriculture, Forest Service will prepare an Environmental Impact Statement to disclose effects of alternatives to harvest live and dead Engelmann spruce, sub-alpine fir, lodgepole pine, aspen and associated road construction and reconstruction within the Basalt Mountain Timber Sale planning area, on the Sopris Ranger District of the White River National Forest.

**DATES:** Comments concerning the scope of the analysis should be received in writing by October 12, 1997.

**ADDRESSES:** Send written comments to Kevin Riordan, District Ranger, Sopris Ranger District, White River National Forest, PO Box 309, Carbondale, CO 81623. The Forest Supervisor Martha J. Ketelle, P.O. Box 948, Glenwood Springs, CO 81602 is the Responsible Official for the Environmental Impact Statement and Record of Decision.

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:** Timothy M. Snowden, Project Coordinator, Sopris Ranger District, 620 Main Street, Carbondale, CO 81623, (970) 963-2266.

**SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:** On July 9, 1996 the White River National River Forest solicited comments for a Draft Environmental Assessment for the proposed action under Pub. L. 104-19. The Interdisciplinary Team has determined that the proposed action and alternatives to that action represent a roadless area entry. Therefore, an Environmental Impact Statement is required as per Forest Service Handbook 1909.15, Section 20.6. The proposed action is to harvest approximately 6.0 million board feet from approximately 1,400 acres of live and dead sawtimber and poletimber using ground-based yarding, and to construct and reconstruct approximately 14.2 miles of specified road.

The proposed action is consistent with programmatic management direction contained in the *Rocky Mountain Regional Guide for Standards and Guidelines* (1983) and in the *Land and Resource Management Plan for the White River National Forest* (LMP, 1984). The LMP allocated the proposed timber sale area to wood fiber production and utilization of sawtimber products, with a small portion of the sale area being allocated to managing for the habitat needs of one or more management indicator species. Both allocations allow for timber harvest.

The site specific environmental analysis documented in the EIS will assist the Responsible Official in determining which actions are needed to meet the following objectives: promote long term ecosystem health by returning age, class and species diversity in the forest vegetation, control and prevent forest disease and insect infestations, provide for recreation and visual quality, maintain or enhance quality wildlife habitat, reduce accumulated natural fuel loading and provide wood products for the nation. Based on initial agency scoping and public comment the preliminary issues

include the effects of vegetation management on area wildlife and wildlife habitat, recreation use, wildfire risk, and the transportation system. Preliminary alternatives include, but are not limited to:

1. No Action, no vegetation management would be proposed except existing firewood and Christmas tree gathering.

2. Alternatives based on the White River National Forest LMP.

a. Generate 6 million board feet of saw timber treating 1380 acres, including 6.4 miles of new road construction (to be closed after sale), and recruiting 500 acres for future old growth forest.

b. Generate 2.5 million board feet of saw timber treating 653 acres, including 4.6 miles of new road construction (to be closed after sale), and recruiting 972 acres for future old growth.

c. Generate 7 million board of saw timber treating 1452 acres, including 7 miles of new road construction (3.9 miles to remain open after sale), 500 acres for future old growth recruitment.

d. Generate 3 million board feet of saw timber treating 712 acres, including 0.2 miles of new road construction (to be closed after sale), and 972 acres for future old growth recruitment.

3. Alternatives yet to be developed.

Alternatives will be carefully examined for their potential impacts on the physical, biological, and social environments so that tradeoffs are apparent to the decisionmaker.

The decision to be made by the Forest Supervisor, based on the pending analysis to be documented in this EIS are:

Should the vegetation in the Basalt Mountain area be managed for timber harvest at this time? And, if so; Should road construction be allowed for timber harvest in this area?

How does the inclusion of parts of the proposed sale in former roadless area surveys influence the current and long term LMP direction of managing the area for wood fiber production? Which alternative best fits the White River LMP prescription and ecosystem health priorities of the Forest Service?

Permits and licenses required to implement the proposed action will, or may, include the following: consultation with U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service for compliance with Section 7 of the Threatened & Endangered Species Act; review from the Colorado Division of Wildlife, and clearance from the Colorado State Historic Preservation Office.

Public participation will be fully incorporated into preparation of the EIS. The first step is the scoping process, during which the Forest Service will be

seeking information, comments, and assistance from Federal, State, and local agencies, and other individuals or groups who may be interested or affected by the proposed action. No public meetings are planned for this project. Public comments received during initial scoping and those raised during public review of the Draft Environmental Assessment for this project will be incorporated into this EIS. The Forest Service predicts the draft environmental impact statement will be filed during the winter of 1997/1998 and the final environmental impact statement and record or decision during the spring of 1998.

The comment period on the draft environmental impact statement will be forty-five 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 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 forty-five 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 Quality Regulations for implementing the procedural provisions of the National Environmental Policy Act at 40 CFR 1503.3 in addressing these points.

Dated: August 19, 1997.

**Martha J. Ketelle,**

*Forest Supervisor.*

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## DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

### Natural Resources Conservation Service

#### Choctaw Watershed, Bolivar County, Mississippi

**AGENCY:** Natural Resources Conservation Service, USDA.

**ACTION:** Notice of a finding of no significant impact.

**SUMMARY:** Pursuant to Section 102(2)(C) of the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969; the Council of Environmental Quality 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 Choctaw Watershed, Bolivar County, Mississippi.

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:** Homer L. Wilkes, State Conservationist, Natural Resources Conservation Service, Suite 1321, A.H. McCoy Federal Building, 100 West Capitol Street, Jackson, Mississippi 39269, telephone 601-965-5205.

**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, Homer L. Wilkes, State Conservationist, has determined that the preparation and review of an environmental impact statement are not needed for this project.

The project concerns a watershed plan for the purpose of providing assistance to the disadvantaged residents of Choctaw Watershed to solve the problems associated with impaired water quality. Works of improvement consist of one facultative lagoon and associated sewer line installation.

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