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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

Forest Service

Interior Columbia Basin Ecosystem Management Project, Northern, Intermountain, and Pacific Northwest Regions

DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

Bureau of Land Management

[ID918-1610-00-UCRB]

Interior Columbia Basin Ecosystem Management Project, States of Oregon, Washington, Idaho, Montana, Wyoming, Utah, and Nevada

AGENCIES: Forest Service, USDA; Bureau of Land Management, USDI.

ACTION: Notice of extension of comment period for draft environmental impact statements (EISs).

SUMMARY: On June 12, 1997, the Forest Service and the Bureau of Land Management published a notice of availability of two draft EISs in the **Federal Register** (62 FR 32076). That notice stated that a 120-day comment period was provided for the Eastside Draft EIS and for the Upper Columbia River Basin Draft EIS. This notice is to inform interested parties that the comment period has been extended.

DATES: Comments on the two draft EISs must now be submitted or postmarked no later than February 6, 1998.

ADDRESSES: Copies of the Eastside Draft EIS may be obtained from ICBEMP, 112 E. Poplar Street, Walla Walla, WA 99362 or by calling (509) 522-4030. Copies of the Upper Columbia River Basin Draft EIS may be obtained from ICBEMP, 304 N. 8th Street, Room 250, Boise, ID 83702 or by calling (208) 334-1770, ext. 120. The Draft EISs are also available via the internet (<http://www.icbemp.gov>).

Comments on the Eastside draft EIS should be submitted in writing to ICBEMP, 112 East Poplar Street, P.O.

Box 2076, Walla Walla, WA 99362.

Comments on the Upper Columbia River Basin draft EIS should be submitted in writing to ICBEMP, 304 N. 8th Street, Room 250, Boise, ID 83702. If your comments are in regard to both draft EISs, they may be sent to either office. Comments may also be made electronically by accessing the Project home page (<http://www.icbemp.gov>), where a comment form is available.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: EIS Team Leader Jeff Walter, 304 N. 8th Street, Room 250, Boise, ID 83702, telephone (208) 334-1770 or EIS Deputy Team Leader Cathy Humphrey, 112 East Poplar Street, P.O. Box 2076, Walla Walla, WA 99362, telephone (509) 522-4030.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: The Bureau of Land Management's planning regulations require that a 90-day public comment period be provided for a draft plan and draft environmental impact statement (43 CFR 1610.2(e)). The Forest Service's planning regulations provide that the draft environmental impact statement be available for public comment for at least three months (36 CFR 219.10(b)). In recognition of the complexity of the draft EISs for the Interior Columbia Basin Ecosystem Management Project (ICBEMP), the Bureau of Land Management and Forest Service set a comment period of 120 days—30 days longer than required.

During the first two months of the comment period, we received several requests for extension of the 120-day comment period. The requestors cite the length and complexity of the two draft EISs and point out that many who have particular interest in the management of the public lands have little time to spare during the summer and early fall months, since these are critical periods for making a living and recreating. They also point out that the science information was not all published by the time the draft EISs were made available. It has been suggested that the comment period be extended for as little as two months and as much as one year.

Managers of the ICBEMP sincerely want to provide adequate opportunity for the public to read, comprehend, and comment on one or both of the two draft EISs so that the EIS team can include needed changes in the final EIS. The extension granted carries the comment period past the critical work and recreation months of summer and early

fall. A much longer extension would result in higher costs of the Project without commensurate increase in the opportunity for meaningful public participation.

We find that a four-month extension to February 6, 1998, balances the desire expressed by interested and affected members of the public to comment meaningfully, and the desire of the agencies reasonably to expedite the process to conclusion.

Dated: August 28, 1997.

Martha Hahn,

State Director, Bureau of Land Management.

Dated: August 28, 1997.

Robert W. Williams,

Regional Forester, U.S. Forest Service.

[FR Doc. 97-23574 Filed 9-4-97; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 4310-11-M

DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Forest Service

USDA-Forest Service/Crown Pacific Limited Partnership Land Exchange, Deschutes, Fremont and Winema National Forests, Deschutes, Jefferson, Klamath and Lake Counties, OR

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 exchange lands in Central and Southern Oregon. The exchange would result in the transfer of approximately 33,000 acres of National Forest System (NFS) lands for approximately 38,800 acres of Crown Pacific lands in Deschutes, Jefferson, Klamath and Lake Counties in the State of Oregon. Transfer of these lands will result in consolidation of NFS land ownership.

The EIS will be consistent with the Deschutes, Fremont and Winema National Forests Land and Resource Management Plans (LRMPs) (as amended), which provide overall guidance of all land management activities on the Deschutes, Fremont and Winema National Forests.

The Forest Service invites written comments and suggestions on the issues and management opportunities for the area being analyzed.

ADDRESSES: Send written comments to Sally Collins, Forest Supervisor, Deschutes National Forest, 1645 Highway 20 East, Bend, Oregon 97701.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Paul Claeysens, Project Coordinator, 1645 Highway 20 East, Bend, Oregon 97701, phone 541-383-5540.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: The Forest Service is initiating this action in response to a request by Crown Pacific to exchange lands that will provide public benefits while improving management opportunities. Consolidation will enable the Forest Service to implement more effective ecosystem-based management; better protect wetlands and riparian areas; and decrease the potential of urban development of private inholdings within NFS boundaries. Lands acquired in the exchange by the Forest Service will be managed in accord with the LRMPS.

The proposed action will exchange lands that are loosely clustered into three groups. The first, northernmost group, is located a short distance west and northwest of Bend, within the Bull Creek drainage near the Upper Deschutes River. The second and largest group is located southwest of Bend. This group is roughly U-shaped, begins west of La Pine, extends southward through Gilchrist/Crescent along the Little Deschutes River, and circles east across Highway 31, then north. The third group is largely on the Fremont National Forest in Klamath and Lake Counties and lies south of Highway 31.

An initial scoping letter was mailed on April 22, 1996. Four public involvement meetings were held between August and October 1996. These meetings were held in Bend, La Pine, Gilchrist/Crescent, and Fort Rock. Additional public meetings are contemplated. Based on analysis completed to date, it was determined that an EIS is needed. Information and data previously gathered will be carried forward in this EIS.

Issues that have been identified to date include: old growth allocations, late and old structural stands, mule deer winter range, sensitive plant species, and cultural resources.

At this time, alternatives being considered include: no action and exchanging lands as identified in the proposed action. The EIS will analyze the direct, indirect, and cumulative environmental effects of the alternatives. Past, present, and projected activities on both private and NFS lands will be considered. The EIS will disclose the analysis of site-specific mitigation.

Public participation is important. Comments from the public will continue to be used to:

- Identify, confirm or redefine potential issues.
- Identify, confirm or redefine major issues to be analyzed in depth.
- Eliminate minor issues or those which have been covered by a previous environmental analysis, such as the Deschutes, Fremont and Winema LRMPS.
- Identify alternatives to the proposed action.
- Identify, confirm or redefine potential environmental effects of the proposed action and alternatives (i.e. direct, indirect, and cumulative effects).
- Determine potential cooperating agencies and task assignments.

The draft EIS is expected to be filed with the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and available for public review in November 1997. The comment period on the draft EIS will be 45 days from the date the EPA publishes the notice of availability in the **Federal Register**. At that time, copies of the draft EIS will be distributed to interested and affected agencies, organizations, tribes, and members of the public for their review and comment.

It is important that those interested in the management of the Deschutes, Fremont and Winema National Forests participate at that time. The Forest Service believes it is important to give reviewers notice at this stage 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 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 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 made 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 these issues and concerns on the proposed action,

comments on the draft EIS 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 EIS 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.)

The final EIS is scheduled to be completed in February 1998. In the final EIS, the Forest Service is required to respond to comments and responses received during the comment period that pertain to the environmental consequences discussed in the draft EIS and applicable laws, regulations, and policies considered in making the decision regarding this proposal.

Sally Collins, Forest Supervisor, Deschutes National Forest, Charles Graham, Forest Supervisor, Fremont National Forest, and Bob Castaneda, Forest Supervisor, Winema National Forest, are the responsible officials. As the responsible officials, they will document the Forest Service/Crown Pacific Land Exchange decision and the reasons for the decision in the Record of Decision. That decision will be subject to Forest Service appeal regulations at 36 CFR Part 215.

Dated: August 21, 1997.

Sally Collins,

Forest Supervisor, Deschutes National Forest.

Dated: August 22, 1997.

Charles Graham,

Forest Supervisor, Fremont National Forest.

Dated: August 26, 1997.

Bob Castaneda,

Forest Supervisor, Winema National Forest.

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DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Forest Service

Beaver Creek Salvage Timber Sale and Other Restoration Projects, Wallowa-Whitman National Forest, Union County, OR

AGENCY: Forest Service, USDA.

ACTION: Revised notice of intent to prepare an environmental impact statement.

SUMMARY: On December 30, 1996, a notice of intent to prepare an environmental impact statement (EIS) for the Beaver Creek Salvage Timber