

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 scoping 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 developing issues and alternatives. To assist the Forest Service in identifying and considering issues 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.

John R. Logan, District Ranger, is the responsible official for this environmental impact statement. His address is U.S. Forest Service, Gardiner Ranger District, P.O. Box 5, Gardiner, MT 59030.

Dated: May 4, 1998.

David P. Garber,

Forest Supervisor, Gallatin National Forest.

[FR Doc. 98-13285 Filed 5-18-98; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 3410-11-M

DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Forest Service

Timber Harvest, Reforestation, Road Construction and Road Closure Near Buck Creek, Taylor Creek and Eldridge Creek Drainages; Gallatin National Forest, Gallatin County, Montana

AGENCY: Forest Service, USDA.

ACTION: Notice; intent to prepare environmental impact statement.

SUMMARY: The USDA, Forest Service, will prepare an environmental impact statement (EIS) to disclose the environmental effects of timber harvest, reforestation, and road construction and closure in the vicinity of Buck Creek, Taylor Creek and Eldridge Creek drainages (herein referred to as the Taylor Fork Project), located in the Madison Mountain range, Gallatin National Forest, Hebgen Lake Ranger District, Gallatin County, Montana. The Taylor Fork project is one of several projects being proposed on the Gallatin National Forest to contribute timber volume to facilitate acquisition of approximately 54,000 acres of lands currently owned by Big Sky Lumber Company (BSL) located within the

proclamation boundary of the Gallatin National Forest. These lands are checkerboard inholdings that originate as part of the construction grants given to the Northern Pacific Railway Company by the Federal Government in the late 1800's and early 1900's. In addition, this project will contribute toward providing a flow of wood products from National Forest lands.

The Gallatin National Forest Land and Resource Management Plan (Forest Plan) provides overall guidance for land management activities, including timber and road management, within the area. The proposed actions of timber harvest, reforestation, road reconstruction, road construction, and road closures are being considered together because they represent either connected or cumulative actions as defined by the Council on Environmental Quality (40 CFR 1508.25). This EIS will tier to the Gallatin Forest Plan Final EIS (September, 1987).

DATES: Written comments and suggestions should be on or before June 18, 1998.

ADDRESSES: Submit written comments and suggestions on the proposed management activities or a request to be placed on the project mailing list to Stan Benes, District Ranger, Hebgen Lake Ranger District, Gallatin National Forest, P.O. Box 520, West Yellowstone, Montana 59758.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Julie Shea, EIS Team Leader, Forest Ecology Group, Gallatin National Forest, Phone (406) 585-1655.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: Timber harvest and reforestation is proposed on approximately 560 acres of forested land in the Taylor Fork project area, which has been designated as suitable for timber management by the Gallatin Forest Plan. The timber harvest operations and general administration of National Forest lands will require construction up to 3.0 miles of new roads and reconditioning up to 12.0 miles of existing road. The EIS will also analyze a proposal of restoring up to 50 miles of existing road that currently are not open to public use.

The Gallatin Forest Plan provides the overall guidance for management activities in the potentially affected area through its goals, objectives, standards and guidelines, and management area direction. The primary purpose of this project is to utilize available timber volume within the Taylor Fork area as one of several federal exchange assets to be used to facilitate acquisition of approximately 54,000 acres of lands currently owned by BSL located within the proclamation boundary of the

Gallatin National Forest. These lands are checkerboard inholdings that originate as part of the construction grants given to the Northern Pacific Railway Company by the Federal Government in the late 1800's and early 1900's.

Another purpose for the BSL/Taylor Fork Timber Sale proposal is to contribute toward providing a flow of wood products from National Forest lands identified as "suitable" for timber production, as directed in the Gallatin Forest Plan (Forest Plan, pg. II-1). The forested areas being considered for harvest are identified as productive Forest lands available for timber harvest provided grizzly bear habitat objectives are met. The purpose of road construction and reconstruction is to access stands of timber to be harvested. All new roads will be effectively closed to vehicle travel after completion of post-sale activities.

The purpose of closing roads is to minimize future road maintenance costs, reduce sedimentation, and to regulate overall open road density to maintain or improve big game habitat security.

The project area consists of approximately 560 acres of National Forest land located in T8S, R3E, Sec 22 and 26; and T9S, R3E, Sec 10, 11, 15 and 16, P.M. MT. Road work is proposed across private land in T8S, R3E, Sec 27 and 35. The majority of the harvesting would occur within the Taylor Creek and Eldridge Creek area, and south of Buck Creek located in the Madison Mountain range.

The areas of proposed timber harvest and reforestation would occur within Management Area 13. Timber harvest would occur only on suitable timber land. Road construction and reconstruction would occur in this management area plus Management Area 7 when crossing streams. Below is a brief description of the applicable management direction.

Management Area 13—This management area consists of forested, occupied grizzly bear habitat. The productive Forest lands area available for timber harvest provided grizzly bear habitat objectives are met. Management goals for MA 13 include: (1) managing vegetation to provide habitat necessary to recover the grizzly bear; (2) meet grizzly bear mortality reduction goals as established by the Interagency Grizzly Bear Committee; (3) allow a level of timber harvest compatible with Goal 1; and (4) meet State water quality standards and maintain stream channel stability.

Management Area 7—These are riparian zones or areas where vegetation

is present that requires either free or unbounded water or soil moistures in excess of what is normally found in the area. Lands within this management area are suitable for timber harvest as long as soil, water, vegetation, fish, and dependent wildlife species are protected. These suitable lands must also be adjacent to other management areas suitable for timber management.

The Forest Service will consider a range of alternatives. One of these will be the "no action" alternative, in which none of the proposed activities would be implemented. Additional alternatives will examine varying levels and locations for the proposed activities in response to issues and other resource values.

The EIS will analyze the direct, indirect, and cumulative environmental effects of the alternatives. Past, present, and projected activities on both private and National Forest lands will be considered, including the effects caused by recent and past harvesting and road construction on private lands. The EIS will disclose the analysis of site-specific mitigation measures and their effectiveness.

Public participation is an important part of the analysis, commencing with the initial scoping process (40 CFR 1501.7), which will occur during May 1998. In addition to this initial scoping, the public may visit 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 and other individuals or organizations who may be interested in or affected by the proposed action. No public meetings are scheduled at this time.

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 issues to be analyzed in depth.
3. Eliminate insignificant issues or those which have been covered by a relevant previous environmental analysis, such as the Gallatin 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).
6. Determine potential cooperating agencies and task assignments.

The following principle issues have been identified so far:

1. The potential effect of proposed timber harvest and associated road

development on grizzly bear habitat (primarily security and cover).

2. The potential of proposed timber harvest and associated road development activities to displace grizzly bears use within the sale area.

3. The potential for proposed harvest and associated road development to affect water quality and stream conditions.

Other issues commonly associated with timber harvesting and road construction include: effects on native fisheries, old growth habitat, big game species, sensitive wildlife and plant species, cultural resources, soils, and scenery in the area. This list will be verified, expanded, or modified based on public scoping for this proposal.

The Draft EIS is expected to be filed with the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and available for public review in August of 1998. At that time, the EPA will publish a Notice of Availability of the Draft EIS in the **Federal Register**. The comment period on the Draft EIS will be 45 days from the date the EPA's notice of availability appears in the **Federal Register**. It is every important that those interested in management of the Taylor Fork project area participate at that time. The Final EIS is scheduled to be completed by mid-November, 1998.

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, 533 (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 30-day scoping 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 developing issues and alternatives. To assist the Forest Service in identifying and considering issues, comments should be as specific to this proposal 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. My address is Gallatin National Forest, P.O. Box 130, Federal Building, Bozeman, MT 59771.

Dated: May 6, 1998.

David P. Garber,

Forest Supervisor.

[FR Doc. 98-13287 Filed 5-18-98; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 3410-11-M

DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

Submission for OMB Review; Comment Request

DOC has submitted to the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) for clearance the following proposal for collection of information under the provisions of the Paperwork Reduction Act (44 U.S.C. chapter 35).

Agency: Bureau of the Census.

Title: Annual Retail Trade Report.

Form Number(s): B-151, B-151-A, B-151D, B-153, B-153D.

Agency Approval Number: 0607-0013.

Type of Request: Revision of a currently approved collection.

Burden: 9,817 hours.

Number of Respondents: 23,700.

Avg Hours Per Response: 25 minutes.

Needs and Uses: The Bureau of the Census conducts the Annual Retail Trade Survey to collect annual totals of sales, inventories, inventory valuation methods, purchases, and accounts receivable balances from a sample of retail establishments in the United States. The estimates compiled from this survey are critical to the accurate measurement of total economic activity and are used in computing such indicators of economic well-being as the Gross Domestic Product and the National Income and Product Accounts. Survey results also provide valuable information for economic policy decisions and actions by the government and are widely used by private businesses, trade organizations, professional associations, and others for market research and analysis.

This request for revision informs OMB of a recent change in sample design. This redesign has increased the number of respondents by about 3,000, while decreasing, on average, the number of data requests to each respondent.