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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

Development of the Land and Resource Management Plan for the Midewin National Tallgrass Prairie; Will County, IL

AGENCY: Forest Service, USDA.

ACTION: Notice; intent to prepare an Environmental Impact Statement.

SUMMARY: The purpose of this notice is to inform the public that the Forest Service intends to prepare an environmental impact statement for the development of the Midewin National Tallgrass Prairie Land and Resource Management Plan (Prairie Plan) (pursuant to 16 U.S.C. 1604 and 36 CFR 219.12).

We are now soliciting comments and suggestions from individuals, organizations, Federal agencies, State and local governments, and the Native American community on the scope of the analysis to be included in the Draft Environmental Impact Statement for the Prairie Plan (40 CFR 1501.7). To be most useful, comments should (1) consider the purposes for which Midewin was established as outlined in the Illinois Land Conservation Act of 1995 (PL 104-106, section 2914); (2) identify specific concerns about the Prairie Plan Proposal, and; (3) offer possible alternatives for addressing issues associated with the proposal.

Forest Service Land and Resource Management Plans set forth goals, objectives, advisable courses of action, and limitations to actions for National Forest System lands. The advisable courses of action and limitations to actions are called standards and guidelines. Some standards and guidelines will apply prairie-wide, while others will apply only to specific subdivisions, or management areas, of the prairie. The Prairie Plan will include a framework for monitoring and

evaluation to determine whether progress is being made toward reaching the goals, objectives, standards, and guidelines established in the plan. Monitoring and evaluation allows for adaptive management so adjustments can be made to the Prairie Plan as needed. There are six primary decisions that are made in Forest Service Land and Resource Management Plans as follows:

1. Unit-wide multiple-use goals and objectives (36 CFR 219.11 (b))
2. Unit-wide management requirements (36 CFR 219.27)
3. Management Area direction (36 CFR 219.11 (c))
4. Monitoring and evaluation requirements (36 CFR 219.11 (d))
5. Lands suited/not suited for timber production (36 CFR 219.14)
6. Recommendations to Congress (if any) (36 CFR 219.17)

For purposes of writing the Prairie Plan versus those plans written for National Forests, items 1-4 above will serve as the primary decisions to be made. With reference to item 5, the Midewin National Tallgrass Prairie does not contain lands suited for timber production because "the land is not forest land * * * (36 CFR 219.14 (a) (1))." The reference for item 6 specifically mentions recommendations of "potential wilderness areas" which, given the cultural history, existing roads and railroad beds, is not relevant to Midewin lands.

In addition, project and activity level decisions may be made so long as they are specifically identified in the Record of Decision and site specific environmental effects are disclosed in the Environmental Impact Statement as required by the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA).

In June, 1992, the U.S. Army confirmed its intentions to decommission the Joliet Army Ammunition Plant (JAAP) located just north of Wilmington, Illinois, and 40 miles southwest of Chicago, Illinois. As a result of the issues and attention the closure of the JAAP generated, the Joliet Arsenal Citizen Planning Commission (JACPC), comprised of 24 members representing various conservation organizations and State and local governments, was formed and assigned the task of developing a concept plan that would outline a strategy for the future ownership and management of

the decommissioned arsenal. The plan was a concept map that provided for the conversion of 3,000 acres into two industrial parks, the development of a 910-acre National Veterans Cemetery, the creation of a 455-acre County landfill, and the establishment of a 19,000-acre prairie. The concept map was unanimously approved by the JACPC on May 30, 1995.

Legislation was drafted based on the JACPC concept map and signed as the Illinois Land Conservation Act of 1995 on February 10, 1996, adopting the JACPC concept map and establishing the Midewin National Tallgrass Prairie (MNTP). MNTP is a unit of the National Forest System and will be managed in cooperation with the State of Illinois in accordance with the Illinois Land Conservation Act of 1995 and the "laws, rules, and regulations pertaining to the National Forest System * * * (Section 2914 (b) (1))."

That portion of the Illinois Land Conservation Act of 1995 that is most significant to the planning process is Section 2914(c) which states that "(t)he Midewin National Tallgrass Prairie (MNTP) is established to be managed for National Forest System purposes, including the following:

I. To manage the land and water resources of the MNTP in a manner that will conserve and enhance the native populations and habitats of fish, wildlife, and plants.

II. To provide opportunities for scientific, environmental, and land use education and research.

III. To allow the continuation of agricultural uses of lands within the MNTP consistent with section 2915(b).¹

IV. To provide a variety of recreation opportunities that are not inconsistent with the preceding purposes.

This is the public's opportunity to get involved with the planning process for a new unit for the Forest Service that has been closed to public access for more than 50 years. The site has had little or no established uses other than agricultural leases and some hunting

¹ No agricultural special uses authorization shall be issued for agricultural purposes which has a term extending beyond the date 20 years from the date of the enactment of this title, except that nothing in this title shall preclude the Secretary of Agriculture from issuing agricultural special use authorizations or grazing permits * * * after twenty years * * * for purposes primarily related to * * * resource management activities consistent with the purpose of the Midewin National Tallgrass Prairie (Section 2915 [b][3]).

opportunities. The MNTP is in its infancy of development and, within the parameters of the Illinois Land Conservation Act of 1995 and the laws and regulations that guide Forest Service programs, the Forest Service needs to know how the public would like to see the MNTP developed and managed.

Numerous site tours, presentations, displays, Focus Group Sessions, meetings, and a Trails Working group have already taken place to provide information regarding Midewin, its history, the legislation, and the Forest Service planning process to individuals and organizations that have expressed an interest in the development and management of the MNTP. The meetings included two pre-Notice of Intent public workshops hosted by Midewin, in May, 1998, to review a draft Notice of Intent. Information gathered from these opportunities has been used to identify an initial set of significant issues that will need to be addressed in the Environmental Impact

Statement. Those issues include: automobiles, bison and/or elk reintroduction, camping, cultural resources, dog trialing, emergency response, environmental education and interpretation, fishing, herbicide treatment, hunting, internal transportation system, prescribed fire, recreation facilities, trail systems, wetland restoration, and woody vegetation management.

Based on the issues identified to date, the purposes for the management of the MNTP as outlined in the Illinois Land Conservation Act of 1995 and listed in this Notice of Intent, and the JACPC concept map, Medewin has developed a Prairie Plan proposal. This proposal will serve as the basis upon which individuals and organizations may comment regarding issues, concerns, or opportunities provided or not provided by the proposal. Issues, concerns, and opportunities already identified (listed above) and others raised through the comment period for this Notice of Intent will be evaluated and used to develop

alternatives to the proposal for the Environmental Impact Statement.

The primary activities that would occur under the proposal include: development of seed-producing nursery beds; reintroduction of bison and elk; integrated pest management; gradual conversion of cultivated row crops to prairie habitats; prescribed fire; wetland restoration; woody vegetation management; environmental education and interpretation programs; research opportunities; use of domestic livestock; designated access points; fishing for educational programs; hunting; internal transportation system (e.g., bus or tram); rail line access; recreation facilities (e.g., shelters picnic areas); an automobile loop; and a system of trails.

The environmental analysis and decision-making process leading to the Prairie Plan will include opportunities for public participation and comment, so that individuals interested in this proposal may contribute to the decision-making process:

Tentative date	Step	Public involvement
June 1998	Notice of Intent, Plan proposal	60-day formal comment period, written comments, open house meeting.
Fall, 1998	Alternative Development	Public workshops.
February, 1999	Draft Environmental Impact Statement, Proposed Plan	90-day formal comment period, written comments, open house meetings.
August, 1999	Final Environmental Impact Statement, Final Plan	Informational meetings to explain Plan decisions.

We will provide the public with general notices of opportunities to participate through mailings, news releases, a public meetings, various organizational newsletters, and the internet. Midewin's internet address is <http://www.fs.fed.us/mntp/>. In addition to formal opportunities for public comment, we will consider comments received at any time throughout the planning process. Midewin will host open house meetings to: 1) explain the planning process; 2) provide clarification of the proposal for the Prairie Plan; 3) describe ways that individuals can respond to this Notice of Intent; and 4) accept comments from the public on the proposal for the Prairie Plan.

The following open house meetings will be held from 5 PM to 8PM:

- July 21, 1998—Beverly Bank, Wilmington, IL
- July 23, 1998—Morton Arboretum, Lisle, IL
- July 28, 1998—Governor State University, University Park, IL
- July 29, 1998—Evanston Public Library, Evanston, IL
- July 30, 1998—Morris Public Library, Morris, IL

DATES: Comments on this Notice of Intent should be received in writing by August 31, 1998.

ADDRESSES: Send written comments to: Prairie Planning, Midewin National Tallgrass Prairie, 30071 South State Route 53, Wilmington, Illinois 60481.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Karen Nash, Planning Team Leader, at (815) 476-3135 or, to leave a message, (815) 423-6370. E-mail address: knash/r9_midewin@fs.fed.us.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: Additional detail on this proposal is provided in the "Notice of Intent to Prepare an Environmental Impact Statement, Description of the Proposal for the Prairie Plan, and Supplementary Information" and is available upon request. Those interested in Midewin and the planning process are encouraged to review this additional document prior to commenting on the Notice of Intent.

The DEIS and the proposed Prairie Plan are expected to be published early in 1999. The public comment period for the DEIS and proposed Prairie Plan will be 90 days from the date the U.S. Environmental Protection

Agency publishes the Notice of Availability in the **Federal Register**.

Comments received in response to this solicitation, including names and addresses of those who comment, will be considered part of the public record on this proposed action and will be available for public inspection. Comments submitted anonymously will be accepted and considered; however, those who submit anonymous comments will not have standing to appeal the subsequent decision under 36 CFR parts 215 or 217.

Additional, pursuant to 7 CFR 1.27(d), any person may request the agency to withhold a submission from the public record by showing how the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) permits such confidentiality. Persons requesting such confidentiality should be aware that, under the FOIA, confidentiality may be granted in only very limited circumstances, such as to protect trade secrets.

The Forest Service will inform the requester of the agency's decision regarding the request for confidentiality, and, where the requester is denied, the agency will return the submission and notify the requester that the comments

may be resubmitted with or without name and address within 10 days.

The Forest Service believes that, at this early stage, it is important to give notice to those intending to review the DEIS of court rulings related to public participation in the environmental review process. First, reviewers of a DEIS 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* U.S. 519, 533 [1978]). Also, environmental objections that could be raised at the DEIS stage but 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*, 409 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 90-day comment period on the DEIS, 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 DEIS should be as specific as possible. It is also helpful if comments refer to specific pages or chapters of the DEIS or the merits of the alternatives formulated and discussed in the statement.

Reviewers may wish to refer to the Control 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 responsible official is Robert T. Jacobs, Regional Forester, Eastern Region, 310 W. Wisconsin Avenue, Milwaukee, Wisconsin 53203.

Dated: June 22, 1998.

Robert T. Jacobs,
Regional Forester.

[FR Doc. 98-17093 Filed 6-25-98; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 3410-11-M

DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Forest Service

Oregon Coast Provincial Advisory Committee Meeting

AGENCY: Forest Service, USDA.

ACTION: Notice of Meeting.

SUMMARY: The Oregon Coast Provincial Advisory Committee (PAC) will meet on July 9, 1998, in Tillamook, Oregon, at the Shilo Inn, 2515 N. Main Street (Highway 101), Tillamook, OR. The meeting will begin at 9 a.m. and continue until 3:30 p.m. Agenda items to be covered include: (1) Reports from PAC Subcommittees (Adaptive Management Area and Water Quality/Fish); (2) flood analyses by State of Oregon and other agencies, (3) road management, and (4) landscape level research. All Oregon Coast Provincial Advisory Committee meetings are open to the public. Two 15-minute open public forums are scheduled for 10 a.m. and 2:15 p.m. Interested citizens are encouraged to attend. The committee welcomes the public's written comments on committee business at any time.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Direct questions regarding this meeting to Trish Hogervorst, Public Affairs Officer, Bureau of Land Management, at (503) 375-5657, or write to Forest Supervisor, Siuslaw National Forest, P.O. Box 1148, Corvallis, Oregon 97339.

Dated: June 18, 1998.

James R. Furnish,
Forest Supervisor.

[FR Doc. 98-16987 Filed 6-25-98; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 3410-11-M

DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Natural Resources Conservation Service

Cochgalechee Creek Watershed, Russell County, AL; Availability of No Significant Impact

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 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 Cochgalechee Creek Watershed, (Russell County, Alabama).

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Ronnie D. Murphy, State Conservationist, Natural Resources Conservation Service, 3381 Skyway Drive, Auburn, Alabama, 36830, (334) 887-4535.

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, Ronnie D. Murphy, State Conservationist, has determined that the preparation and review of an environmental impact statement are not needed for this project.

The project purpose is flood prevention. The planned works of improvement include: selective clearing and snagging, and sediment removal in Cochgalechee Creek from 1000 feet downstream of Brickyard Road to Seale Road (2 miles), and selective placement of riprap around bridges.

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 Ronnie D. Murphy, State Conservationist.

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

Ronnie D. Murphy,
State Conservationist.

[FR Doc. 98-16988 Filed 6-25-98; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 3410-16-M

COMMITTEE FOR PURCHASE FROM PEOPLE WHO ARE BLIND OR SEVERELY DISABLED

Procurement List Additions

AGENCY: Committee for Purchase From People Who Are Blind or Severely Disabled.

ACTION: Additions to the Procurement List.

SUMMARY: This action adds to the Procurement List services to be furnished by nonprofit agencies employing persons who are blind or have other severe disabilities.

EFFECTIVE DATE: July 27, 1998.

ADDRESSES: Committee for Purchase From People Who Are Blind or Severely Disabled, Crystal Gateway 3, Suite 310, 1215 Jefferson Davis Highway, Arlington, Virginia 22202-4302.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Beverly Milkman (703) 603-7740.