

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: On July 25, 1996, FSIS published a final rule, "Pathogen Reduction: Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Point (HACCP) Systems," (61 FR 38806). The rule established a HACCP implementation schedule for establishments based on their size. Large plants began implementing HACCP on January 26, 1998. Small plants have a scheduled implementation date of January 25, 1999, and very small plants are required to implement HACCP by January 25, 2000.

After publication of its final HACCP rule, FSIS has been holding a series of public meetings to facilitate implementation of HACCP plans, especially by small and very small plants. The Agency also has provided extensive information and technical assistance that would be helpful to plant managers in development of HACCP plans. FSIS also has developed and distributed generic HACCP models and guidance materials specifically to aid small plant managers.

The upcoming meetings will discuss small plant initiatives, including contacts and a coordinators assistance network, small plant demonstration projects, plant sponsorship, and land grant university workshops. A panel will address the key elements of implementation, and there will be an opportunity to ask questions and seek additional information.

Times and locations of additional small plant implementation meetings scheduled for October through December 1998 will be announced in a future **Federal Register** notice.

Done in Washington, DC, on: September 2, 1998.

Thomas J. Billy,
Administrator.

[FR Doc. 98-24125 Filed 9-8-98; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 3410-DM-P

DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Forest Service

Blue Mountains Natural Resources Institute, Board of Directors, Pacific Northwest Research Station, Oregon

AGENCY: Forest Service, USDA.

ACTION: Notice of meeting.

SUMMARY: The Blue Mountains Natural Resources Institute (BMNRI) Board of Directors will meet on September 25, 1998, at Agriculture Service Center Conference Room, 10507 N. McAlister Road, La Grande, Oregon. The meeting will begin at 9:00 a.m. and continue until 3:30 p.m. Agenda items to be

covered will include: (1) Program status; (2) research results of specific projects; (3) outreach activities; (4) report on Initiatives; (5) presentations by guest speakers; (6) forum for issues discussion; (7) public comments. All BMNRI Board Meetings are open to the public. Interested citizens are encouraged to attend. Members of the public who wish to make a brief oral presentation at the meeting should contact Larry Hartmann, BMNRI, 1401 Gekeler Lane, La Grande, Oregon 97850, 541-962-6537, no later than 5:00 p.m. September 22, 1998, to have time reserved on the agenda.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Direct questions regarding this meeting to Larry Hartmann, Manager, BMNRI, 1401 Gekeler Lane La Grande, Oregon 97850, 541-962-6537.

Dated: September 1, 1998.

Lawrence A. Hartmann,
Manager.

[FR Doc. 98-24175 Filed 9-8-98; 8:45 am]

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DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Forest Service

RIN 0596-AB65

Categorical Exclusion for Certain Ski Area Permit Actions

AGENCY: Forest Service, USDA.

ACTION: Notice; adoption of interim directive.

SUMMARY: The Forest Service is issuing an interim directive to guide its employees in complying with the National Environmental Policy Act when issuance of a ski area permit is a purely ministerial action and no changes are proposed in permitted activities or facilities. The interim directive implements a provision of the Omnibus Parks and Public Lands Management Act of 1996, which states that reissuance of a ski area permit for activities similar in nature and amount to the activities authorized under the previous permit shall not constitute a major Federal action. Public comment on the proposed interim directive published in the **Federal Register** on October 27, 1997 (62 FR 55571) was considered in development of this interim directive.

EFFECTIVE DATE: The interim directive is effective September 24, 1998.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Questions about this action should be addressed to Alice Carlton, Recreation, Heritage, and Wilderness Resources Staff, (MAIL STOP 1125), Forest

Service, USDA, PO Box 96090, Washington, DC 20090-6090, (202)-205-1399.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: To reduce administrative costs, section 701(i) of the Omnibus Parks and Public Lands Management Act of 1996 (16 U.S.C. 497c) states that the reissuance of a ski area permit for activities similar in nature and amount to the activities provided under the previous permit shall not constitute a major Federal action for the purposes of the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (NEPA) (42 U.S.C. 4331 *et seq.*). Agency direction regarding this provision is needed to guide Forest Service employees in complying with NEPA and the Omnibus Parks and Public Lands Management Act of 1996 when ski area permits are issued.

Section 701(i) of the 1996 act applies to issuance of permits for up to the maximum tenure allowable under the National Forest Ski Area Permit Act of 1986 (the Ski Area Permit Act) (16 U.S.C. 497b) for existing ski areas when permit issuance involves only administrative changes, such as issuance of a permit when no changes to the Master Development Plan and no new facilities or activities are authorized, to the following: (1) To a new owner of the ski area improvements; (2) to the existing owner upon expiration of the current permit; or (3) to a holder of a permit issued under the Term Permit and Organic Acts converting to a permit under the Ski Area Permit Act. The effect of section 701(i) is that an environmental impact statement is not required for issuance of permits under these circumstances.

The Forest Service currently authorizes ski areas on National Forest System lands through permit issuance under the Ski Area Permit Act. The permit provides the legal framework for the use and occupancy of National Forest System lands, including terms for renewal; conditions for issuance of a new permit in the event of sale of the ski area improvements to another owner; permit tenure; fee schedules and payment methods; accountability and reporting requirements; liability and bonding requirements; and any other customized terms and conditions needed to ensure consistency with applicable forest land and resource management plans or to meet the requirements of other applicable laws.

The Ski Area Permit Act, its implementing regulations at 36 CFR 251.56, and existing policy in Forest Service Manual (FSM) section 2721.61e provide that under ordinary

circumstances ski area permits will be issued for a duration of 40 years unless specific situations, such as financial aspects of the transaction or the adequacy of the Master Development Plan, suggest a shorter duration.

The National Forest Management Act (NFMA) (16 U.S.C. 1600, 1604) requires that resource plans and permits, contracts, and other instruments for the use and occupancy of National Forest System lands shall be consistent with the land management plans. Ski area permits are subject to this requirement.

The forest planning process provides for public involvement in land allocation decisions, including those affecting ski areas. Where appropriate, forest land and resource management plans and associated environmental impact statements (EIS's) consider long-term consequences of allocating public lands for a ski resort and may establish standards and guidelines for lands allocated for ski area development. NFMA also requires revision of forest plans at least every 15 years.

To ensure that forest plans remain current, implementing regulations at 36 CFR 219.10(g) require (1) review of the conditions on the land covered by a forest plan every 5 years to determine whether conditions or public demands have changed significantly and (2) revision of the forest plans ordinarily every 10 years, and at least every 15 years.

A ski area Master Development Plan is required for all ski areas authorized under the Ski Area Permit Act. The Master Development Plan determines the boundaries of the ski area and appropriate development of the area, including facilities and activities, over time. All Master Development Plans require NEPA analysis, usually documented in an EIS, which includes consideration of the relatively permanent nature of ski areas and estimates of the reasonably foreseeable cumulative effects. Due to the long-term nature of Master Development Plans, much of the initial NEPA analysis is programmatic. Subsequent site-specific NEPA analysis is required for Master Development Plans for most ski areas prior to authorizing activities or changes to facilities or ski area operations. Master Development Plans must be reviewed periodically, approximately every 5 years, as required by the permit issued under the authority of the Ski Area Permit Act. This review determines whether NEPA analysis is current or whether changing resource conditions or changes in management standards and guidelines may necessitate subsequent NEPA analysis

and appropriate changes to ski area operations.

Operating Plans also are required by the Ski Area Permit Act for ski area permits. These plans, which govern ski area operations and maintenance, are updated annually. Operating Plans may identify proposed activities, such as significant hazard removal and erosion control, which may require additional NEPA analysis.

Requirements related to forest land and resource management plans, Master Development Plans, and activities proposed under Operating Plans that may have resource effects already provide for full NEPA analysis and periodic reviews for ski areas. Therefore, in reviewing the language and intent of the Omnibus Parks and Public Lands Management Act of 1996, which provides in section 701(i) that issuance of permits authorizing activities similar in nature and amount to activities authorized under the previous permit shall not constitute a major Federal action for NEPA purposes, the agency has concluded that such strictly ministerial actions should be categorically excluded from documentation in either an EIS or an environmental assessment (EA) and should be added to the existing categorical exclusions already set out in Forest Service policy. Accordingly, the agency proposed to issue an interim directive adding a categorical exclusion which would cover ski area permit reissuance with only administrative changes to the existing list of categorical exclusions established by the Chief in section 31.1b of the Environmental Policy and Procedures Handbook (FSH 1909.15). The handbook contains direction for Forest Service employees in meeting agency NEPA compliance obligations. Section 31.1b currently contains eight categories for routine administrative, maintenance, and other actions that normally do not individually or cumulatively have a significant effect on the quality of the human environment and, therefore, may be categorically excluded from documentation in an EIS or an EA unless scoping indicates extraordinary circumstances exist.

Pursuant to Council on Environmental Quality regulations at 40 CFR parts 1500–1508, the Forest Service published the proposed interim directive in the **Federal Register** on October, 27, 1997 (62 FR 55571), to provide notice and opportunity to comment. The 60-day comment period closed on December 26, 1997. The comments received were considered in development of the interim directive,

the text of which is set out at the end of this notice.

Because the agency plans to propose additional revisions to this handbook within the next year, the agency has concluded that this new ski area permit categorical exclusion should be issued as an interim directive. Upon completion of other revisions to this handbook, this interim directive will be incorporated into an amendment at that time.

The categorical exclusion will help expedite issuance of permits associated with sales of ski areas to new owners, which account for some 50 to 75 percent of all ski area permit issuances annually. Nationally, 15 to 30 permit issuances under the authority of the Ski Area Permit Act are completed each year. That number is expected to continue rising based on corporate restructuring and the continuing trend toward consolidation in the ski industry.

The categorical exclusion also will facilitate conversion from permits that were issued under prior authorities to permits under the Ski Area Permit Act. It was the intent of the Ski Area Permit Act to convert permits issued under prior authority to the Ski Area Permit Act as rapidly as possible. The Ski Area Permit Act permit provides better environmental protection than previous authorities by requiring NEPA analyses to be conducted, reviewed, and revised frequently as resource conditions and proposed changes to ski area operations warrant. The Forest Service has greater discretion with permits authorized under the Ski Area Permit Act to ensure that updates to operations occur under terms that require periodic review and NEPA analysis. Approximately 75 to 80 percent of the 135 ski areas located on National Forest System lands have permits issued under the Ski Area Permit Act. It is in the public interest to encourage the remaining 20 to 25 percent to convert as soon as possible to permits issued under the authority of the Ski Area Permit Act.

Analysis and Response to Public Comments

One letter was received during the comment period from a trade association representing ski area owners and operators. Of the 135 ski resorts authorized to operate on National Forest System Lands, 122 are members of this association. The comments in the letter were given full consideration in adoption of the final interim directive.

The association expressed general support of the proposed interim directive. They also expressed some concern about the applicability of

"extraordinary circumstances" in relation to the proposed categorical exclusion and suggested the Forest Service add clarifying language. The association commented that they believe section 701(i) of the Omnibus Parks and Public Lands Management Act of 1996 excludes the reissuance of a ski area permit from the NEPA process. They said that creation of a categorical exclusion for such actions, however, accomplishes the intent of Congress in the act to allow no new development or environmental impacts beyond projects already approved in an existing Master Development Plan. They said the categorical exclusion would allow the expeditious transfer and term extension of current ski permits and would place the environmental decisions where they belong: At the time of the forest planning process and the master development planning analysis. Therefore they are in general support of the interim directive as proposed.

The association voiced concern that application of "extraordinary circumstances" should not preclude the use of a categorical exclusion for permit reissuance which is purely ministerial in nature. They said the interim directive should make it clear that the "extraordinary circumstances" provisions do not apply to permit term reissuance with purely administrative changes and should not delay reissuance of the permit.

The Forest Service agrees that this categorical exclusion for permit reissuances, when no changes have occurred in the Master Development Plan and no new facilities or activities are authorized, meets the requirements and the intent of the act. The Forest Service further agrees with the association that use of a categorical exclusion for permit reissuance when changes are purely ministerial meets the requirements of NEPA. Regulations of the Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ) at 40 CFR 1508.4 set the requirements regarding application of "extraordinary circumstances" provisions. Detailed direction on how to apply the "extraordinary circumstances" provisions to categorical exclusions is set out in section 30.3 of FSH 1909.15 and is not within the scope of this interim directive. This interim directive is limited to adding the categorical exclusion to the list of categories established by the Chief of the Forest Service and set out in section 31.1b of Forest Service Handbook (FSH) 1909.15. The interim directive has been reviewed by the Council on Environmental Quality pursuant to

regulations at 40 CFR 1507.3. The text of the interim directive is set out at the end of this notice.

Regulatory Impact

This interim directive has been reviewed under USDA procedures and Executive Order 12866 on Regulatory Planning and Review. It has been determined that this is not a significant rulemaking. This interim directive will not have an annual effect of \$100 million or more on the economy nor adversely affect productivity, competition, jobs, the environment, public health or safety, nor State or local governments. This interim directive will not interfere with an action taken or planned by another agency nor raise new legal or policy issues. Finally, this action will not alter the budgetary impact of entitlements, grants, user fees, or loan programs or the rights and obligations of recipients of such programs. Accordingly, this interim directive is not subject to OMB review under Executive Order 12866.

Moreover, this interim directive has been considered in light of the Regulatory Flexibility Act (5 U.S.C. 601 *et seq.*), and it has been determined that this action will not have a significant economic impact on a substantial number of small entities as defined by that act.

Environmental Impact

This interim directive establishes a categorical exclusion for permit issuance under the authority of the Ski Area Permit Act that is a purely ministerial action. Programmatic and site-specific decisions and disclosure of environmental effects concerning ski area allocations, facilities, and activities are made in forest land and resource management plans, in ski area Master Development Plans, and in connection with activities proposed under Operating Plans that may have resource effects, with full public involvement and in compliance with NEPA procedures. Section 31.1b of Forest Service Handbook 1909.15 (57 FR 431, September 18, 1992) excludes from documentation in an environmental assessment or impact statement rules, regulations, or policies to establish Service-wide administrative procedures, program processes, or instruction. The agency's assessment is that this interim directive falls within this category of actions and that no extraordinary circumstances exist which would require preparation of an environmental assessment or an environmental impact statement.

No Takings Implications

This interim directive has been analyzed in accordance with the principles and criteria contained in Executive Order 12630, and it has been determined that the interim directive does not pose the risk of a taking of Constitutionally protected private property. Executive Order 12630 does not apply to this interim directive because it consists primarily of technical and administrative changes governing authorization of occupancy and use of National Forest System lands. Forest Service special use authorizations for ski areas do not grant any right, title, or interest in or to lands or resources held by the United States.

Controlling Paperwork Burdens on the Public

This interim directive does not contain any recordkeeping or reporting requirements or other information collection requirements as defined in 5 CFR part 1320 and, therefore, imposes no paperwork burden on the public. Accordingly, the review provisions of the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995 (44 U.S.C. 3501 *et seq.*) and implementing regulations at 5 CFR 1320 do not apply.

Unfunded Mandates Reform

Pursuant to Title II of the Unfunded Mandates Reform Act of 1995 (2 U.S.C. 1531-1538), which the President signed into law on March 22, 1995, the agency has assessed the effects of this interim directive on State, local, and tribal governments and the private sector. This interim directive does not compel the expenditure of \$100 million or more by any State, local, or tribal governments or anyone in the private sector. Therefore, a statement under section 202 of the act is not required.

Civil Justice Reform Act

This interim directive has been reviewed under Executive Order 12988, Civil Justice Reform. When this interim directive is adopted, (1) all State and local laws and regulations that are in conflict with this interim directive or which would impede its full implementation would be preempted; (2) no retroactive effect would be given to this interim directive; and (3) it would not require administrative proceedings before parties may file suit in court challenging its provisions.

Dated: August 27, 1998.

Robert Lewis, Jr.,

Acting Associate Chief.

Interim Directive to Forest Service Handbook

Note: The Forest Service organizes its directive system by alpha-numeric codes and subject headings. Only those sections of chapter 30 in Forest Service Handbook (FSH) 1909.15, Environmental Policy and Procedures Handbook, which include the interim directive that is the subject of this notice, are set out here. The audience for this interim directive is Forest Service employees charged with issuing and administering ski area permits. This interim directive adds the following category to the list of categorical exclusions in FSH 1909.15, section 31.1b:

9. Issuance of a new permit for up to the maximum tenure allowable under the National Forest Ski Area Permit Act of 1986 (16 U.S.C. 497b) for an existing ski area when such issuance is a purely ministerial action to account for administrative changes, such as a change in ownership of ski area improvements, expiration of the current permit, or a change in the statutory authority applicable to the current permit. Examples of actions in this category include, but are not limited to:

a. Issuing a permit to a new owner of ski area improvements within an existing ski area with no changes to the Master Development Plan, including no changes to the facilities or activities for that ski area.

b. Upon expiration of a ski area permit, issuing a new permit to the holder of the previous permit where the holder is not requesting any changes to the Master Development Plan, including changes to the facilities or activities.

c. Issuing a new permit under the National Forest Ski Area Permit Act of 1986 to the holder of a permit issued under the Term Permit and Organic Acts, where there are no changes in the type or scope of activities authorized and no other changes in the Master Development Plan.

[FR Doc. 98-24181 Filed 9-8-98; 8:45 am]

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DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

International Trade Administration

[A-580-815 & A-580-816]

Certain Cold-Rolled and Corrosion-Resistant Carbon Steel Flat Products From Korea: Preliminary Results of Antidumping Duty Administrative Reviews

AGENCY: Import Administration, International Trade Administration, Department of Commerce.

ACTION: Notice of preliminary results of antidumping duty administrative reviews.

SUMMARY: In response to requests from three respondents and from the petitioners in the original investigation, the Department of Commerce ("the Department") is conducting administrative reviews of the antidumping duty orders on certain cold-rolled and corrosion-resistant carbon steel flat products from Korea. These reviews cover three manufacturers and exporters of the subject merchandise. The period of review ("POR") is August 1, 1996, through July 31, 1997.

We preliminarily determine that sales have been made below normal value ("NV"). If these preliminary results are adopted in our final results of administrative reviews, we will instruct U.S. Customs to assess antidumping duties equal to the difference between export price ("EP") or constructed export price ("CEP") and NV.

Interested parties are invited to comment on these preliminary results. Parties who submit argument in this proceeding are requested to submit with the argument: (1) a statement of the issue; and (2) a brief summary of the argument.

EFFECTIVE DATE: September 9, 1998.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:

Cindy Sonmez (Union), Becky Hagen or Steve Bezirgianian (the POSCO Group), Lisette Lach (Dongbu), or James Doyle, Enforcement Group III—Office 7, Import Administration, International Trade Administration, U.S. Department of Commerce, 14th Street and Constitution Avenue, N.W., Room 7866, Washington, D.C. 20230; telephone (202) 482-0961 (Sonmez), -1102 (Hagen), -0162 (Bezirgianian), -0190 (Lach), or -0159 (Doyle).

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

Applicable Statute

Unless otherwise indicated, all citations to the statute are references to the provisions effective January 1, 1995,

the effective date of the amendments made to the Tariff Act of 1930 ("the Act") by the Uruguay Round Agreements Act ("URAA"). In addition, unless otherwise indicated, all citations to the Department's regulations are references to the provisions codified at 19 CFR Part 351 (62 FR 27296—May 19, 1997).

Background

The Department published antidumping duty orders on certain cold-rolled and corrosion-resistant carbon steel flat products from Korea on August 19, 1993 (58 FR 44159). The Department published a notice of "Opportunity to Request an Administrative Review" of the antidumping duty orders for the 1996/97 review period on August 4, 1997 (62 FR 41925). On August 29, 1997, respondents Dongbu Steel Co., Ltd. ("Dongbu") and Union Steel Manufacturing Co., Ltd. ("Union") requested that the Department conduct an administrative review of the antidumping duty order on corrosion-resistant carbon steel flat products from Korea. Also, on August 29, 1997, Pohang Iron and Steel Co., Ltd. ("POSCO") requested that the Department conduct administrative reviews of the antidumping duty orders on cold-rolled and corrosion-resistant carbon steel flat products from Korea. On September 2, 1997, petitioners in the original less-than-fair-value ("LTFV") investigations (AK Steel Corporation; Bethlehem Steel Corporation; Inland Steel Industries, Inc.; LTV Steel Company; National Steel Corporation; and U.S. Steel Group A Unit of USX Corporation) requested that the Department conduct administrative reviews of the antidumping duty orders on cold-rolled and corrosion-resistant carbon steel flat products from Korea with respect to all three of the aforementioned respondents. We initiated these reviews on September 19, 1997 (62 FR 52092—September 25, 1997).

Under the Act, the Department may extend the deadline for completion of administrative reviews if it determines that it is not practicable to complete the review within the statutory time limit of 365 days. On March 31, 1998, the Department extended the time limits for the preliminary results in these cases. *See Certain Cold-Rolled Carbon Steel Flat Products and Certain Corrosion-Resistant Carbon Steel Flat Products from Korea: Antidumping Duty Administrative Reviews: Extension of Time Limit*, 63 FR 16971 (April 7, 1998).