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DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Forest Service

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

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) for a set of proposals to implement a salvage timber sale and several other related restoration and rehabilitation projects within the Beaver Creek Project Area. The EIS will tier to the 1990 Land and Resource Management Plan (Forest Plan) for the Wallowa-Whitman National Forest, which provides the overall management direction for the area. The Forest Service proposed action will be consistent with the Forest Plan.

The proposed projects are primarily located with the Beaver Creek Municipal Watershed in the Beaver Creek, West Fork Beaver Creek, and Beatty Creek drainages on the La Grande Ranger District, approximately 15 air miles south and west of La Grande, Oregon. The project area consists of 16,000 acres. The following activities are proposed: (1) Salvage of dead and down trees to reduce fuel loadings, harvest of other trees to improve stand health and vigor; (2) development of associated road systems; (3) construction of a reduced fuel corridor system; (4) exchange of a low quality stand of allocated old growth for another stand of high quality old growth; (5) completion of structure protection measures; (6) implementation of bank and instream water quality restoration practices in areas of known damage; and (7) re-introduction of fire in a portions of the project area to reduce

fuel loadings and enhance a ponderosa pine site.

The projects would be implemented from Fiscal Year 1998 into the year 2000. The agency invites written comments and suggestions on the scope of this project. In addition, the agency gives notice of this analysis so that interested and affected people are aware of how they may participate and contribute to the planning process and final decision.

DATES: Comments concerning the scope of the analysis should be received in writing by January 31, 1997.

ADDRESSES: Send written concerns and comments to Robert P. Rainville, District Ranger, La Grande Ranger District, 3502 Highway 30, La Grande, Oregon 97850.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Direct questions about the proposed action and EIS to Cindy Whitlock, Project Coordinator, 3502 Highway 30, La Grande, Oregon 97850, phone (541) 962-8501.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: The purpose of the Forest Service proposal is to maintain, protect and enhance water quality within the project area through creation of a fuel reduction corridor network (18 miles of fuel reduction corridors), reduction of fuel loadings through salvage of the insect killed existing dead timber (5.0 million board feet (MMBF) from 892 acres), proactive management of other high priority stands to improve stand growth and vigor to meet long term desired ecosystem and management goals (1.0 MMBF from 299 acres), implementation of riparian restoration activities (5 miles of project area streams), and improvement of the old growth network within the area by replacing allocation of poor quality stands with ones of higher quality. The proposed action will be consistent with the Forest Plan, which provides goals, objectives, standards and guidelines of the various activities and land allocations on the forest.

The Forest Plan allocates the project area into four management areas (MAs): (MA1) Timber Production Emphasis, less than 1% (12 acres); (MA3A) Wildlife/Timber, 86% (14,000 acres-Big game summer range); (MA3) wildlife/Timber, 2% (309 acres); (MA15) Old Growth Preservation, 9% (1,400 acres). Private lands (320 acres) and also included within the project area

boundary (2% of the area). Although excluded from Forest Service activities, project access and the condition of private lands will be considered during alternative development and when analyzing potential cumulative effects.

The Key issues identified to date include:

1. Wildlife Habitat—(short-term and long-term considerations, big game and non-game habitat needs, road construction and densities, and old growth effectiveness/availability).
2. Stand Health—(tree mortality, reduced tree stocking levels, progression to the desired future condition)
3. Water Quality/Riparian Health, Fisheries—(water quality, quantity, flow, temperature, and timing, and riparian vegetation condition).
4. Economics
5. Roadless Area Character

A range of project alternatives will be considered, including a no-action alternative. Based on the issues gathered through scoping, the action alternatives will vary in (1) the amount and location of acres considered for treatment, (2) the amount of road constructed for access, (3) the silvicultural and post-harvest treatments prescribed, (4) the number, type, and location of rehabilitation projects, and (5) the amount of time needed to move the area toward its Desired Future Condition.

Public participation will be especially important at several points during the analysis, beginning with the scoping process (40 CFR 1501.7). The Forest Service will be seeking information, comments, and assistance from Federal, State, local agencies, tribes and other individuals or organizations who may be interested in or affected by the proposed project. This input will be used in preparation of the draft EIS. Continued scoping and public participation efforts will be used by the interdisciplinary team to identify new issues, determine alternatives in response to the issues, and determine the level of analysis needed to disclose potential biological, physical, economic, and social impacts associated with this project. The scoping process includes:

1. Identification of potential issues.
2. Identification of issues to be analyzed in depth.
3. Elimination of insignificant issues or those which have been covered by a relevant previous environmental process.

4. Exploration of additional alternatives based on the issues identified during the scoping process.

5. Identification of potential environmental effects of the proposed action and alternatives (i.e. direct, indirect, and cumulative effects and connected actions).

The draft EIS is expected to be filed with the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and to be available for public review by August, 1997. 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 notice appears in the Federal Register. At that time, copies of the draft EIS will be distributed to interested and affected agencies, organizations, and members of the public for their review and comment. It is important that those interested in the management of the Wallowa-Whitman National Forest participate at that time.

The Forest Service believes it is important to give reviewers notice, at this early stage, of several court rulings related to public participation in the environmental review process. First, reviewers of a draft EI must structure their participation in the environmental review of the proposal so that it is meaningful and alerts the 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 and respond to them in the final EIS.

To assist the Forest Service in identifying and considering issues and concerns on the proposed actions, 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 EIS. Comments may also address the adequacy of the draft EIS or 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 for completion by January, 1998. In the final EIS, the Forest Service is required to respond to substantive comments received during the comment period for the draft EIS. Robert M. Richmond, Forest Supervisor of the Wallowa-Whitman National Forest, is the responsible official. He will decide which, if any, of the proposed project alternatives will be implemented. His decision and reason for the decisions will be documented in the Record of Decision. That decision will be subject to Forest Service appeal regulations (36 CFR Part 217).

Dated: December 19, 1996.

R.M. Richmond,

Forest Supervisor.

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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 commodities and services to be furnished by nonprofit agencies employing persons who are blind or have other severe disabilities.

EFFECTIVE DATE: January 29, 1997.

ADDRESS: Committee for Purchase From People Who Are Blind or Severely Disabled, Crystal Square 3, Suite 403, 1735 Jefferson Davis Highway, Arlington, Virginia 22202-3461.

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

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: On September 20, November 1 and 8, 1996, the Committee for Purchase From People Who Are Blind or Severely Disabled published notices (61 F.R. 49435, 56511 and 57849) of proposed additions to the Procurement List.

After consideration of the material presented to it concerning capability of qualified nonprofit agencies to provide the commodities and services and impact of the additions on the current or most recent contractors, the Committee has determined that the commodities and services listed below are suitable for procurement by the Federal Government under 41 U.S.C. 46-48c and 41 CFR 51-2.4.

I certify that the following action will not have a significant impact on a substantial number of small entities. The major factors considered for this certification were:

1. The action will not result in any additional reporting, recordkeeping or other compliance requirements for small entities other than the small organizations that will furnish the commodities and services to the Government.

2. The action will not have a severe economic impact on current contractors for the commodities and services.

3. The action will result in authorizing small entities to furnish the commodities and services to the Government.

4. There are no known regulatory alternatives which would accomplish the objectives of the Javits-Wagner-O'Day Act (41 U.S.C. 46-48c) in connection with the commodities and services proposed for addition to the Procurement List.

Accordingly, the following commodities and services are hereby added to the Procurement List:

Commodities

Pallet Base and Cover Assembly

8140-01-341-0916

8140-01-160-0231

8140-00-084-0377

8140-01-339-4789

8140-01-160-0230

8140-01-090-5793

8140-01-273-6043

8140-01-291-2524

Services

Janitorial/Custodial

U.S. Courthouse, 300 S. Fourth Street, Minneapolis, Minnesota

Switchboard Operation

Department of Veterans Affairs, New Jersey Health Care System, East Orange, New Jersey

This action does not affect current contracts awarded prior to the effective date of this addition or options that may be exercised under those contracts.

Louis R. Bartalot,

Associate Director for Facility Operations.

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BILLING CODE 6353-01-P

Procurement List; Proposed Additions

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

ACTION: Proposed additions to procurement list.