

Notices

Federal Register

Vol. 63, No. 9

Wednesday, January 14, 1998

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

Nevada/Dalton Project; Including Timber Harvest, Prescribed Fire, Fish and Wildlife Habitat Improvement, Road Construction, Road Obliteration, and Travel Management; Helena National Forest, Lewis & Clark County, Montana

AGENCY: Forest Service, USDA.

ACTION: Notice; intent to prepare Environmental Impact Statement.

SUMMARY: The USDA, Forest Service is gathering information and preparing an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for the Nevada/Dalton Project located approximately 26 air miles northwest of Helena, Montana.

The Forest Service proposes to treat approximately 1630 acres with regeneration harvest treatments, 320 acres with commercial thinning, 160 acres with commercial thinning, 1670 acres with grass/shrub/underburning, and 1000 acres of aerial herbicide treatment of noxious weeds. The proposal would also hydromulch erosive sites along existing roads and install other erosion control structures within the project area. Approximately 7 miles of new system road construction is needed to access treatment areas. The new roads will be obliterated after harvest. An additional 7 miles of existing road would be obliterated also. The proposed action would implement a new travel management plan that identifies designated routes which would be available for motorized vehicle use with a mix of seasonal and vehicle type restrictions.

The proposal is designed to help achieve the goals and objectives of the 1986 Helena National Forest Plan and move selected areas towards the desired conditions identified from the Forest Plan. These needs are supported by the findings of the Blackfoot Landscape

Analysis. The purpose is to maintain healthy, sustainable ecosystems that (1) reduce fire risk, (2) provide wildlife habitat similar to the habitat that existed when fire was a natural component of the ecosystem, (3) protect solid and water, (4) provide recreation opportunities, and (5) provide wood for people's use.

A Forest Plan amendment is proposed to change management direction for the M-1 management area. Further analysis of the proposed action and alternatives to that proposal may result in a decision(s) that include amendments to the Forest Plan.

DATES: Comments concerning the scope of the analysis should be received in writing on or before February 17, 1998.

ADDRESSES: The responsible official is Thomas J. Clifford, Forest Supervisor, Helena National Forest, Supervisor's Office, 2880 Skyway Drive, Helena, MT 59601. Phone: (406) 449-5201.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:

Gilbert Zepeda, District Ranger, Lincoln Ranger District, P.O. Box 219, Lincoln, MT 59639. Phone: (406) 362-4265; or Tom Andersen, Interdisciplinary Team Leader, Helena National Forest, 2880 Skyway Drive, Helena, MT 59601. Phone: (406) 449-5201 [Ext. 277].

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: The project would occur on National Forest lands of the Lincoln Ranger District. The activities would take place within portions of T.12N., R.7,8,9 W., T.13N., R.7,8,9,10W., and T.14N., R. 10W., Montana Principle Meridian.

Portions of the prescribed fire treatment units, road construction and tree harvest are within the Ogden Mountain roadless area and Nevada Mountain roadless area.

The decisions to be made, based on this environmental analysis, are:

1. Whether or not to treat the vegetation at this time, and if so, how would the treatments be accomplished.
2. What type of transportation system will be necessary to accomplish the vegetation management objectives, while considering other resource transportation needs and objectives.

The EIS will tier to the Helena Forest Plan Final EIS of April 1986, that provides program goals, objectives, and standards and guidelines for conducting management activities in this area. All activities associated with the proposal will be designed to maintain or enhance the resource objectives identified in the

Forest Plan and further refined in the Blackfoot Landscape Analysis.

The Forest Service is seeking information and comments from Federal, State, and local agencies together with organizations or individuals who may be interested in or affected by the proposed action. The Forest Service invites written comments and suggestions on the issues for the proposal and the area being analyzed. Information received will be used in preparation of the Draft EIS.

Preparation of the EIS will include the following steps:

1. Identification of issues to be analyzed in depth.
2. Identification of additional reasonable alternatives.
3. Identification of potential environmental effects of the alternatives.

Timber harvest includes even-aged management treatments such as clearcutting with reserves, seed tree with reserves, and shelterwood with reserves. Intermediate treatment such as commercial thinning will also be considered. Prescribed burning will be used to treat nonforested and forested vegetation. Alternatives to this proposal will include the "no action" alternative, in which none of the proposed treatments would be implemented. Other alternatives will examine variations in the location, amount and method of vegetative management.

The preliminary issues identified are:

1. The effects on forest health and sustaining ecosystems.
2. The effects on recreation and visual resources.
3. The effects on wildlife.
4. The effects on the roadless and wilderness character of the Ogden Mountain and Nevada Mountain Roadless Areas.
5. The effects on fish, water quality, and riparian areas.

The Forest Service will analyze and disclose in the DEIS and FEIS the environmental effects of the proposed action and a reasonable range of alternatives. The DEIS and FEIS will disclose the direct, indirect and cumulative environmental effects of each alternative and its associated site specific mitigation measures.

Public participation is especially important at several points of the analysis. Interested parties may visit with the Forest Service officials at any

time during the analysis. However, two periods of time are specifically identified for the receipt of comments. The first comment period is during the scoping process when the public is invited to give written comments to the Forest Service. The second review period is during the 45 days review of the DEIS when the public is invited to comment on the DEIS.

The DEIS is expected to be filed with the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and available for public review in September 1998. At that time, the EPA will publish a notice of availability of the DEIS in the **Federal Register**.

The comment period on the DEIS will be 45 days from the date the notice of availability is published in the **Federal Register**.

At this early stage in the scoping process, the Forest Service believes it is important to give reviewers notice of several court rulings related to public participation in the environmental review process. First, reviews of 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. NDRG*, 435 U.S. 519, 553 (1978). Secondly, environmental objections that could be raised at the draft environmental impact statement stage, but that are not raised until after completion of the FEIS 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. 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 FEIS.

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 the specific pages or chapters of the draft statement. Comments may also address the adequacy of the DEIS 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.)

After the comment period ends on the DEIS, the comments will be analyzed

and considered by the Forest Service in preparing the FEIS. The FEIS is expected to be filed in February 1999.

Dated: January 5, 1998.

Thomas J. Clifford,

Forest Supervisor, Helena National Forest.

[FR Doc. 98-821 Filed 1-13-98; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 3410-11-M

DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Forest Service

National Urban and Community Forestry Advisory Council

AGENCY: Forest Service, USDA.

ACTION: Notice of meeting.

SUMMARY: The National Urban and Community Forestry Advisory Council will meet in Charlotte, North Carolina, February 19-21, 1998. The purpose of the meeting is to review the status of the 1998 Challenge Cost-Share Grant Program, continue discussion on emerging issues in Urban and Community Forestry, and hear reports from the principal investigators of completed projects awarded under the Challenge Cost-Share Grant Program.

DATES: The meeting will be held February 19-21.

ADDRESSES: The meeting will be held at the Holiday Inn—Center City, 230 North College Street, Charlotte, North Carolina. A tour of local projects will be given February 19, 9:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.

Individuals who wish to speak at the meeting or to propose agenda items must send their names and proposals to Suzanne M. del Villar, Executive Assistant, National Urban and Community Forestry Advisory Council, 1042 Park West Court, Glenwood Springs, CO 81601.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:

Suzanne M. del Villar, Cooperative Forestry Staff, (970) 928-9264.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: The meeting is open to the public. Persons who wish to bring urban and community forestry matters to the attention of the Council may file written statements with the Council staff before or after the meeting. Public input sessions will be provided. Individuals who have made written requests by February 6, will have the opportunity to address the Council. Council discussion is limited to Forest Service staff and Council members.

Dated: January 7, 1998.

Larry Payne,

Acting Deputy Chief, State and Private Forestry.

[FR Doc. 98-853 Filed 1-13-98; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 3410-11-M

DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Rural Housing Service

Notice of Recipients of Fiscal Year 1997 Section 515 Loan Funds

AGENCY: Rural Housing Service, USDA.

ACTION: Notice.

SUMMARY: The Rural Housing Service (RHS) has compiled a list of all recipients of fiscal year (FY) 1997, Section 515 loan funds. This action is taken to inform the public of recipients of FY 1997 Section 515 funds. The intended effect is public awareness.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:

Tracee L. Lilly, Loan Specialist, Rural Rental Housing Branch, Multi-Family Housing Processing Division, Rural Housing Service, USDA, Stop 0781, 1400 Independence Avenue S.W., Washington, D.C., 20250, telephone (202) 720-1604 (this is not a toll free number).

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

Programs Affected

This program is listed in the Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance under Number 10.415, Rural Rental Housing Loans.

Discussion of Notice

The information available is an 11 page compilation that lists borrower names, names of the general partners, project name and location, number of units developed, and RHS loan amount. This information is available to all interested parties and can be obtained by writing the following address: USDA, RHS, Multi-Family Housing Processing Division, Stop 0781, 1400 Independence Avenue, S.W., Washington, D.C., 20250. The request must be accompanied by a self-addressed, self-stamped envelope. Envelopes must be a minimum of 11"x9" in size, and bear first class postage of \$.55. Requests without the required return envelope and postage will not be acknowledged or responded to.

Dated: January 6, 1998.

Jan Shadburn,

Administrator, Rural Housing Service.

[FR Doc. 98-923 Filed 1-13-98; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 3410-XV-U