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DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Forest Service

Information Collection; Request for Comments; Forest Industries Data Collection System

AGENCY: Forest Service, USDA.

ACTION: Notice.

SUMMARY: In accordance with the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995, the Forest Service announces its intention to request a reinstatement of a previously approved information collection. The Forest Service will survey wood-using mills to determine the volume of logs (roundwood) and wood chips the mills received. This information will enable the agency to assess the trends in the use of logs and wood chips as required by statute.

DATES: Comments must be received in writing on or before October 4, 1999.

ADDRESSES: All comments should be addressed to: Eric Wharton, Forest Inventory and Analysis, Northeastern Research Station, 5 Radnor Corporate Center, Suite 200, Forest Service, USDA, Radnor, PA 19087-4585.

Comments also may be submitted via facsimile to (610) 975-4200 or by email to: ewharton/ne_fia@fs.fed.us.

The public may inspect comments received at the Northeastern Research Station, 5 Radnor Corporate Center, Suite 200, Radnor, Pennsylvania.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Eric Wharton, Northeastern Research Station, at (610) 975-4052; or Bruce Hansen, Northeastern Research Station, at (304) 431-2727.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

Background

The Forest and Range Renewable Resources Planning Act of 1974 and the Forest and Rangeland Renewable Resources Research Act of 1978 require the Forest Service to evaluate trends in the use of logs and wood chips, to

forecast anticipated levels of logs and wood chips, and to analyze changes in the harvest of these resources. The information will be collected by Forest Service personnel at the following Forest Service research stations: Northeastern Research Station (Radnor, PA), North Central Research Station (St. Paul, MN), Southern Research Station (Asheville, NC), Rocky Mountain Research Station (Ogden, UT), and Pacific Northwest Research Station (Portland, OR).

Upon reinstatement of this information collection, the Forest Service will collect information from primary wood-using mills, which includes small, part-time mills, as well as large corporate entities. Primary wood-using mills are facilities that use harvested wood in log or chip form, such as sawlogs, veneer logs, pulpwood, and pulp chips, to manufacture a secondary product, such as lumber or paper.

To collect the information, Forest Service personnel will use the following questionnaires: Pulpwood Received, [State, Year] and Logs and Other Roundwood Received, [State, Year]. The questionnaires will be mailed to mills in a number of different States. The title of each questionnaire includes the State and the calendar year for which information will be collected. Respondents will return the completed questionnaires by mail in self-addressed, postage-paid envelopes.

Respondents will answer questions that include the type of logs or wood chips that have been harvested, the volume of logs or wood chips that have been received by the mill, the geographic locations from which the logs or wood chips have been harvested, the variety of tree species that have been harvested and received by the mill, the prices the mill has paid for the logs or wood chips, and the volume of byproducts that have been produced as a result of the manufacturing process, such as bark, sawdust, and slabs.

Description of Information Collection

The following describes the information collection to be reinstated:
Title: Pulpwood Received.
OMB Number: 0596-0010.
Expiration Date of Approval: December 31, 1998.

Type of Request: Request for reinstatement of a previously approved information collection.

Abstract: Questionnaires will be mailed to large paper companies, as well as to a few smaller pulping companies. Forest Service personnel will evaluate the information collected from the pulp mills to monitor the volume, types, species, sources, and prices of timber products harvested throughout the Nation. The data collected will be used to provide essential information about the current drain on the Nation's timber resources for pulpwood industrial products.

Data from this collection of information is not available from other sources.

Estimate of Burden: 0.5 hours.

Type of Respondents: Primary users of industrial pulpwood and wood chips.

Estimated Annual Number of Respondents: 222.

Estimated Annual Number of Responses per Respondent: 1.

Estimated Total Annual Burden on Respondents: 111 hours.

Description of Information Collection

The following describes the information collection to be reinstated:
Title: Logs and Other Roundwood Received.

OMB Number: 0596-0010.

Expiration Date of Approval: December 31, 1998.

Type of Request: Request for reinstatement of a previously approved information collection.

Abstract: Questionnaires will be mailed to primary wood-using mills, which include small, part-time mills as well as large corporate entities. The collected information will be evaluated by Forest Service personnel to monitor the volume, types, species, sources, and prices of timber products harvested throughout the Nation. The data collected is used to provide essential information about the current drain on the Nation's timber resources for use as industrial products, other than pulpwood products.

Data from this collection of information is not available from other sources.

Estimate of Burden: .84 hour.

Type of Respondents: Primary users of industrial roundwood products.

Estimated Number of Respondents: 2,687.

Estimated Number of Responses per Respondent: 1.

Estimated Total Annual Burden on Respondents: 2,257 hours.

Comment Is Invited

The agency invites comments on the following: (a) Whether the proposed collection of information is necessary for the stated purposes or the proper performance of the functions of the agency, including whether the information will have practical or scientific utility; (b) the accuracy of the agency's estimate of the burden of the proposed collection of information, including the validity of the methodology and assumptions used; (c) ways to enhance the quality, utility, and clarity of the information to be collected; and (d) ways to minimize the burden of the collection of information on respondents, including the use of automated, electronic, mechanical, or other technological collection techniques or other forms of information technology.

Use of Comments

All comments, including names and addresses when provided, will become a matter of public record. Comments received in response to this notice will be summarized and included in the request for Office of Management and Budget approval.

Dated: July 23, 1999.

Robert Lewis, Jr.,

Deputy Chief for Research & Development.

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BILLING CODE 3410-11-P

DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE**Forest Service****Quartzite Watershed Management Project, Colville National Forest, Stevens County, Washington**

AGENCY: Forest Service, USDA.

ACTION: Notice of intent to prepare environmental impact statement.

SUMMARY: The Forest Service, USDA, as lead agency, will prepare an environmental impact statement (EIS) on a proposal to conduct vegetation and road management, and implement riparian and wetland management. The Proposed Action will be in compliance with the 1988 Colville National Forest Land and Resource Management Plan (Forest Plan) as amended, which provides the overall guidance for management of this area. The Proposed Action is within portions of the Thomason Creek, Sherwood Creek, and Upper Cottonwood Creek drainages on the Colville Ranger District and is scheduled for implementation in fiscal year 2001. The Forest Service invites written comments and suggestions on

the scope of the analysis. The agency will give notice of the full environmental analysis and decision making process so interested and affected people may be able to participate and contribute in the final decision.

DATES: Comments concerning the scope of the analysis should be postmarked by September 3, 1999.

ADDRESSES: Send written comments and suggestions concerning the management of this area to Catherine H. Lay, Acting District Ranger, 255 West 11th Kettle Falls, Washington, 99141.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Questions about the Proposed Action and EIS should be directed to Catherine H. Lay, Acting District Ranger, or to Ed Shaw, Planner, 755 S. Main Street, Colville, Washington 99114 (phone: 509-684-7000).

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: As a result of ecosystem analysis, the Colville National Forest is proposing watershed management activities in the Quartzite Watershed. We recently completed the Quartzite Ecosystem Analysis, an analysis that considered all lands within the Thomason, Sherwood, and Upper Cottonwood drainages. One of the key findings of the analysis is that fire exclusion has changed forest vegetation. These changes in upland forest density, understory composition, and tree species have increased forest susceptibility to insects, disease, drought and atypical fire. The objective of vegetation management proposals is to improve ecosystem integrity by moving the vegetation toward the natural range of variation; by developing forest matrix, patches and corridors that are consistent with fire landscapes; and by improving the landscape patterns of native species habitats. A second ecosystem analysis finding is that vegetation diversity and in-stream fish habitat in low elevation riparian areas has deteriorated. The objective of riparian and wetland management is to improve ecosystem integrity by increasing the diversity of vegetation, and by improving in-stream fish habitat in low elevation riparian areas. A third ecosystem analysis finding concerns roads. Forest roads provide access to conduct needed management. The benefits of forest roads are many. However, the ecosystem analysis notes that road corridors create habitat for noxious weeds that displace native plants. They also have introduced change to a variety of wildlife habitats. The connectivity of wildlife travel corridors has been disrupted in many places where roads cross riparian areas. In addition, road access has fragmented

seclusion habitat for large home range vertebrates. Objectives for road management proposals are to upgrade, maintain and develop those roads which are necessary for long-term land management and important to public access, and to eliminate unneeded roads.

The Proposed Action includes vegetation management using pre-commercial and commercial thinning and harvest on about 4,600 acres. Prescribed Fire would be used on up to 6,500 acres. A variety of road management activities are included. To increase vegetation management feasibility the proposed action includes 11.5 miles of new road construction. (The National Forest will develop alternatives to the proposed action that do not construct new roads.) To improve wildlife habitat and water quality, 1.25 miles of road will be closed in the Woodward Meadows area. And to improve public safety, a steep section (0.25 miles) of the Jay Gould Ridge Road will be closed. In addition, the proposed action would improve fisheries by applying gravel to roads and improving road drainage at seven stream crossings. The Proposed Action also includes 100 acres of riparian and wetland improvement activities in Woodward Meadows, which is located in the Upper Cottonwood Creek drainage. These activities include dechanneling previously channeled streams through the meadow (roughly 2000 feet), creating pot holes and planting native riparian plants to improve wildlife habitat.

The projects would be located approximately 2 to 10 miles east of U.S. Highway 395 near Chewelah, Washington. The Quartzite Watershed Management Projects are proposed within the Thomason Creek, Sherwood Creek, and Upper Cottonwood Creek drainages on the Colville Ranger District. This analysis will evaluate a range of alternatives for implementation of the project activities. The area being analyzed is approximately 23,300 acres, of which 10,600 acres are National Forest System lands. The other ownership areas are included only for analysis of effects. The breakdown of management emphasis on the National Forest System Lands is as follows: 2% is for old growth dependent species habitat; 3% is for recreation; 18% is for big game winter range; 20% is for scenic/winter range; 20% is for wood/forage; and 37% is for scenic/timber. The project area does not include any wilderness, RARE II, or inventoried roadless areas.

Some of the preliminary issues that were identified include: scenery, water