

Notices

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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

Foreign Agricultural Service

Trade Adjustment Assistance for Farmers

AGENCY: Foreign Agricultural Service, USDA.

ACTION: Notice.

The Administrator, Foreign Agricultural Service (FAS), today denied a petition for trade adjustment assistance (TAA) that was filed on February 13, 2004, by the Michigan Fish Producers' Association, representing channel catfish fishermen in Michigan.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: Upon investigation, the Administrator determined that landed prices for channel catfish did not decline by more than 20 percent during the January–December 2003 marketing year, a condition required for certifying a petition for TAA.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Jean-Louis Pajot, Coordinator, Trade Adjustment Assistance for Farmers, FAS, USDA, (202) 720–2916, e-mail: trade.assistance@fas.usda.gov.

Dated: March 8, 2004.

A. Ellen Terpstra,

Administrator, Foreign Agricultural Service.
[FR Doc. 04–6191 Filed 3–18–04; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 3410–10–M

DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Forest Service

Payette National Forest, Idaho; Meadows Slope Wildland Fire Protection Project

AGENCY: Forest Service, USDA.

ACTION: Revised notice of intent to prepare an environmental impact statement.

SUMMARY: The USDA Forest Service published a Notice of Intent to prepare an environmental impact statement (EIS) for the Meadows Slope Wildland Fire Protection Project in the **Federal Register** on December 2, 2002 (Volume 67, Number 231, pages 71531–71532). A revised Notice of Intent is being issued for several reasons (Forest Service Handbook 1909.15, part 21.2):

1. It has been more than six months since filing the original Notice of Intent;
2. Specifics of the proposed action have been refined and better described due to more site-specific information;
3. The Payette National Forest's revised Land and Resource Management Plan was approved in July 2003; and
4. The project falls under the Healthy Forest Restoration Act of 2003, Pub. L. 108–148.

The USDA Forest Service will prepare the Meadows Slope Wildland Fire Protection Project EIS. The proposed action is to create a half-mile wide fuelbreak on National Forest System lands to reduce the risk of damage to rural homes, private property, and National Forest resources from wildland fires. The agency gives notice of the full National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) analysis and decision-making process so that interested and affected people know how they may participate and contribute to the final decision.

DATES: Comments need to be received by April 19, 2004.

ADDRESSES: Send written comments to Kimberly A. Brandel, District Ranger, New Meadows Ranger District, Payette National Forest, P.O. Box J, New Meadows, Idaho, 83654.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Questions about the proposed action should be directed to Sylvia Clark, Interdisciplinary Team Leader, at the above address, phone (208) 347–0300.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: The Meadows Slope project area is about four miles east of New Meadows and three miles northwest of McCall, and approximately 6,450 acres in size. It is located in Sixmile-Threemile, Lower Goose, Little Creek, Little Goose Creek, Middle North Fork Payette River, and Payette Lake sub-watersheds on the New Meadows and McCall Ranger Districts. The purpose and need for this action is to (1) reduce crown fire risk, (2) reduce forest fuel loading, and (3) reduce risk to life, property, natural

resources, and suppression resources on National Forest System lands surrounding the Timber Ridge, Rock Flat, King's Pine, and Crescent Rim Subdivisions, and additional private developments adjacent to the project area.

The proposed action includes a variety of activities to meet the purpose and need. (1) Harvest timber on approximately 3,292 acres, producing approximately 12.7 million board feet (MMBF), using tractor and skyline logging systems. The silvicultural method used would be free thinning with reserve shelterwood/seed tree. (2) Hand pile and burn approximately 939 acres within Riparian Habitat Conservation Areas. (3) Non-commercial thin approximately 1481 acres. (4) Salvage dead and dying timber killed by fir engraver beetle and other pests or weakened due to light, water, or nutrient competition which may increase the fire potential within the project area. (5) Restore 74 acres of unproductive soil by obliterating roads, skid trails and/or landings in order to meet the Forest Plan Standard for total soil resource commitment (TSRC). (6) Road management would include 43 miles of maintenance, 20 miles of reconstruction, and 1.25 miles of new construction. (7) Ensure desired species composition by planting and/or natural regeneration of fire-tolerant Douglas-fir, ponderosa pine, and western larch seedlings on 804 acres following fuelbreak activities. (8) Treat harvest-generated fuels on approximately 4,773 acres (both commercial and non-commercial harvest acres). Treatments would include machine piling and burning (excavator piling would be used where slopes exceed 35 percent); broadcast burning; and/or yarding tops. (9) Monitor and treat noxious weeds, if created, within the fuelbreak area. A total of 5,712 acres would be treated with this proposed action.

Preliminary issues for this project include effects on water quality, soil productivity, wildlife, habitat, recreation, access management, visual quality, forest vegetation, and fish habitat.

The Healthy Forest Restoration Act, Title I, Section 104(c), sets forth requirements on alternatives to be analyzed. This document will analyze a no-action alternative, the proposed action, and an additional alternative

proposed by the local community. The no-action alternative will serve as a baseline for comparison of alternatives.

Comments received in response to this notice, including names and addresses of those who comment, will be part of the project record and available for public review.

The Forest Service is seeking information and comments from other Federal, State, and local agencies; Tribal governments; organizations; and individuals who may be interested in or affected by the proposed action. This input will be used in preparation of the EIS.

Comments will be appreciated throughout the analysis process. The draft EIS will be filed with the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and is anticipated to be available for public review by autumn 2004. The comment period on the draft EIS will be 45 days. It is important that those interested in the management of the Payette National Forest participate at that time.

The Forest Service believes, at this early stage, it is important to give reviewers notice of several court rulings related to public participation in the environmental review process. First, reviewers of draft environmental impact statements 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*, 435 U.S. 519, 553 (1978). Also, environmental objections that could be raised at the draft environmental impact statement stage but that 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, 1002 (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 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 final environmental impact statement.

To assist the Forest Service in identifying and considering issues raised by the proposed action, comments on the draft environmental impact statement should be as specific as possible. It is also helpful if comments refer to specific pages or chapters of the draft statement. Comments may also address the adequacy of the draft environmental

impact statement 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 45-day comment period ends on the draft EIS, the Forest Service will analyze comments received and address them in the final EIS. The final EIS is scheduled to be completed in spring 2005. The Responsible Official is the Payette National Forest Supervisor. The decision will be documented, including the rationale for the decision, in a Record of Decision (ROD). The final environmental impact statement will be subject to review under the Forest Service Predecisional Review for Proposed Hazardous Fuel Reduction Projects at 36 CFR 218, Subpart A.

Dated: March 12, 2004.

Robert S. Giles,

Acting Forest Supervisor.

[FR Doc. 04-6197 Filed 3-18-04; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 3410-11-M

DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Forest Service

Notice of Resource Advisory Committee Meeting

AGENCY: North Central Idaho Resource Advisory Committee, Kamiah, Idaho, USDA, Forest Service.

ACTION: Notice of meeting.

SUMMARY: Pursuant to the authorities in the Federal Advisory Committee Act (Pub. L. 92-463) and under the Secure Rural Schools and Community Self-Determination Act of 2000 (Pub. L. 106-393) the Nez Perce and Clearwater National Forests' North Central Idaho Resource Advisory Committee will meet Tuesday, April 13, 2004 in Lewiston, Idaho for a business meeting. The meeting is open to the public.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Ihor Mereszczak, Staff Officer and Designated Federal Officer, at (208) 935-2513.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: The business meeting on April 13, at the Sacajawea Center, 1824 Main Street, Lewiston, ID, begins at 10 a.m. (P.S.T.). Agenda topics will include discussion of potential projects. A public forum will begin at 2:30 p.m. (P.S.T.).

Dated: March 8, 2004.

Ihor Mereszczak,

Acting Forest Supervisor.

[FR Doc. 04-6164 Filed 3-18-04; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 3410-11-M

DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Forest Service

Southwest Washington Provincial Advisory Committee Meeting Notice

AGENCY: Forest Service, USDA.

ACTION: Notice of meeting.

SUMMARY: The Southwest Washington Provincial Advisory Committee will meet on Wednesday, March 31, 2004, at the Gifford Pinchot National Forest Headquarters, located in Vancouver, Washington, at 10600 NE. 51st Circle, Vancouver, WA 98682. The meeting will begin at 9 a.m., and continue until 4 p.m.

The purpose of the meeting is to: Receive advice on the Forest's unmanaged recreation program; to receive advice on the Forest's Memorandum of Agreement with the Washington State Department of Ecology; to discuss a proposed expansion of the White Pass Ski Area, and to share information among members.

All Southwest Washington Province Advisory Committee meetings are open to the public. Interested citizens are encouraged to attend. The "open forum" provides opportunity for the public to bring issues, concerns, and discussion topics to the Advisory Committee. The "open forum" is scheduled to occur at 1 p.m. Interested speakers will need to register prior to the open forum period. The committee welcomes the public's written comments on committee business at any time.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:

Direct questions regarding this meeting to Tom Knappenbeger, Public Affairs Officer, at (360) 891-5005, or write Forest Headquarters Office, Gifford Pinchot National Forest, 10600 NE. 51st Circle, Vancouver, WA 98682.

Dated: March 15, 2004.

Claire Lavendel,

Forest Supervisor.

[FR Doc. 04-6173 Filed 3-18-04; 8:45 am]

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