

Mammoth Community Water District (District). Under the California Environmental Quality Act, the District must conduct its own environmental assessment, and has determined that an Environmental Impact Report (EIR) is required. In accordance with Federal and State regulations, a joint EIR/RIS will be prepared. The agency gives notice of the environmental analysis and decision making processes that will occur on the proposal so that interested and affected people are aware of how they may participate and contribute to the final decision.

**DATES:** Comments regarding the scope of the analysis must be received by April 30, 1997.

**ADDRESSES:** Submit written comments and suggestions concerning the proposed action to the responsible official, Dennis Martin, Forest Supervisor, Inyo National Forest, 873 North Main Street, Bishop, California 93154, Attn. MCWD EIR/EIS.

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:**

Direct questions about this environmental impact statement to Thom Heller, Special Use Permit Administrator, Inyo National Forest, P.O. Box 148, Mammoth Lakes, California 93546, or telephone (619) 924-5513.

**SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:** The proposed action consists of two specific components: 1) a change in the minimum streamflow requirements for Mammoth Creek and the point of measurement, and 2) a change in the District's authorized Place of Use (POU) for Mammoth Creek water. The change in minimum streamflow requirements and point of measurement result in both state and federal actions that require CEQA and NEPA documentation. Although addressed in the joint EIR/EIS, the change in the POU is a state action only, and not subject to NEPA. Three alternatives are currently being considered: changing the minimum streamflow requirements to the schedule shown on Table 2 (Proposed action); changing the minimum streamflow requirements to an alternative, three-flow schedule; and not changing the minimum streamflow requirements (no action).

Public participation will be specially important at several points during the analysis. The first point is the scoping process (40 CFR 1501.7). The Forest Service has and is seeking information, comments, and assistance from Federal, State, and local agencies and other individuals or organizations who may be interested in or affected by the proposed action. This input will be used

in preparation of the draft EIR/EIS. The scoping process includes:

1. Identifying potential issues.
2. Identifying issues to be analyzed in depth
3. Eliminating insignificant issues or those which have been covered by a relevant previous environmental analysis.
4. Exploring additional alternatives.
5. Identifying potential environmental effects of the proposed action and alternatives (e.g., direct, indirect, and cumulative effects and connected actions).

6. Determining potential cooperating agencies and task assignments.

Mailings to individuals and agencies that participate in the above planning efforts will provide them with information about the proposed project. Public meetings, if held, will be announced locally. Federal, State, and local agencies, user groups and other organizations who would be interested in the study will be invited to participate in scoping the issues that should be considered.

The draft EIR/EIS is scheduled to be completed by September, 1997. The comment period on this draft EIR/EIS will be 45 days from the date the Environmental Protection Agency's notice of availability appears in the **Federal Register**. It is very important that those interested in the proposed action 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 proposed action 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 (1978). Also, environmental objections that could be raised at the draft EIR/EIS stage but that are not raised until after completion of the final EIR/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 them and respond to them in the final EIR/EIS.

To assist the Forest Service in identifying and considering issues and concerns on the proposed action, comments on the draft EIR/EIS should be as specific as possible. It is also helpful if comments refer to specific pages or chapters of the draft document. Comments may also address the adequacy of the draft EIR/EIS or the merits of the alternatives formulated and discussed in the document. 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 draft EIR/EIS, the comments will be analyzed and considered by the Forest Service in preparing the final EIR/EIS, which is expected to be completed by December, 1997. The Forest Service is required to respond in the final EIS to the comments received (40 CFR 1503.4). The responsible official will consider the comments, responses, and environmental consequences discussed in the final EIS and applicable laws, regulations, and policies in making his decision on the proposal.

The decision will either be approval of the proposed action as submitted, approval of the proposed action as modified, or denial of the proposed action (No. Action). If the proposal is approved, the existing Memorandum of Agreement would be modified and the revised minimum flow requirements for Mammoth Creek would be approved. The responsible official will document the decision and rationale in the Record of Decision. The decision will be subject to appeal under 36 CFR 215 or regulations applicable at the time of the decision.

Dated: March 21, 1997.

**Dennis W. Martin,**  
Forest Supervisor.

[FR Doc. 97-7773 Filed 3-26-97; 8:45 am]

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### **Southwest Oregon Provincial Interagency Executive Committee (PIEC), Advisory Committee**

**AGENCY:** Forest Service, USDA.

**ACTION:** Notice of meeting.

**SUMMARY:** The Southwest Oregon PIEC Advisory Committee will meet on April 17, 1997 at the J. Herbert Stone Nursery, 2606 Old Stage Road, Central Point, Oregon. The meeting will begin at 9:00 a.m. and continue until 4:30 p.m. Agenda items to be covered include: (1) Update on coarse woody material standard implementation; (2) COHO

Salmon management status by State of Oregon; (3) South Cascades Late Successional Reserve Assessment presentation; (4) Advisory Committee critique evaluation and recommendations, and (5) Public comments. All Province Advisory committee meetings are open to the public. Interested citizens are encouraged to attend.

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:**

Direct questions regarding this meeting to Chuck Anderson, Province Advisory Committee Staff, USDA, Forest Service, Rogue River National Forest, 333 W. 8th Street, Medford, Oregon 97501, phone 541-858-2322.

Dated: March 19, 1997.

**James T. Gladen,**

*Forest Supervisor, Designated Federal Official.*

[FR Doc. 97-7739 Filed 3-26-97; 8:45 am]

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**Use of Certified Forage To Prevent the Spread of Noxious Weeds on National Forest System Lands in Montana**

**AGENCY:** Forest Service, USDA.

**ACTION:** Notice of proposed policy; request for public comment.

**SUMMARY:** The Regional Forester for the Northern Region of the Forest Service is proposing a requirement that would prohibit the use of hay, grain, straw, cubes or pelletized feed on National Forest System lands in Montana unless it is certified as free of noxious weeds or noxious weed seeds may be used. This requirement will affect such users as recreationists using pack and saddle stock, ranchers operating under Forest Service grazing permits, outfitters and guides operating under Forest Service permits, and contractors who use straw or hay for reseeding or erosion control purposes on National Forest System administered lands in Montana. This proposal has been developed in coordination with the State of Montana and Bureau of Land Management Montana State office, which is publishing a similar proposal in a separate notice in this same issue of today's **Federal Register**. The intended effect is to coordinate prevention of the spread of undesirable weeds on federal lands in Montana.

**DATES:** Comments must be received in writing by March 26, 1997.

**ADDRESSES:** Send written comments to Regional Forester, Forest Service, USDA, P.O. Box 7669, Missoula, MT 59807.

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:**

James Olivarez, Forest and Rangeland Staff, Northern Region, Forest Service, (406) 329-3621.

**SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:** Noxious weeds are a serious problem in the western United States. Species like Leafy Spurge, Spotted Knapweed, Musk Thistle, Purple Loosestrife, and others are alien to the United States and have no natural enemies to keep their populations in balance. Consequently, these undesirable weeds invade healthy ecosystems, displace native vegetation, reduce species diversity, and destroy wildlife habitat. Widespread infestations lead to soil erosion and stream sedimentation. Furthermore, noxious weed invasions weaken reforestation efforts, reduce forage for domestic and wild ungulates, occasionally irritate public land users by aggravating allergies and other ailments, and threaten federally protected plants and animals.

To curb the spread of noxious weeds, a growing number of Western states have jointly developed noxious weed-free forage certification standards and, in cooperation with various Federal, State and county agencies, have passed weed control laws. Because hay and other forage products containing noxious weed seed are part of the infestation problem, Montana has developed a hay inspection, certification, and identification process; participates in a regional inspection, certification, and identification process; and encourages forage producers to grow products free of noxious weed seeds.

Pursuant to 36 CFR § 261.50, the Regional Forester may issue orders to close or restrict uses on National Forest System lands. If adopted, this proposed requirement to close National Forest System lands to users who do not use a certified weed-free forage or similar product would result in a standard closure order applicable to all National Forest System lands in Montana. The Northern Regional Forester has been implementing a similar policy on a forest-by-forest-basis in Montana since 1989. As a result of cooperative efforts between the State, the Forest Service, and the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) Montana State Office, BLM is proposing a similar standard requirement for all public lands under its jurisdiction. The BLM proposal appears in a separate notice in this issue of today's **Federal Register**.

The Forest Service invites written comment and suggestions on this proposal, which will be considered prior to adoption of a final policy and issuance of a closure order. Notice of the

final decision will be published in the **Federal Register**.

Dated: March 11, 1997.

**Kathleen A. McAllister,**

*Deputy Regional Forester, R-1.*

[FR Doc. 97-7754 Filed 3-26-97; 8:45 am]

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**Grain Inspection, Packers and Stockyards Administration**

**Advisory Committee Meeting**

Pursuant to the provisions of section 10(a)(2) of the Federal Advisory Committee Act (Pub. L. 92-463), notice is hereby given of the following committee meeting:

*Name:* Grain Inspection Advisory Committee.

*Date:* April 16-17, 1997.

*Place:* Department of Agriculture, 1400 Independence Avenue, S.W., Room 107-A, Jamie L. Whitten Federal Building, Washington, D.C.

*Time:* 8:30 a.m. April 16-17.

*Purpose:* To provide advice to the Administrator of the Grain Inspection, Packers and Stockyards Administration (GIPSA) with respect to the implementation of the U.S. Grain Standards Act (7 U.S.C. 71 et seq.).

The agenda includes: (1) GIPSA Financial Status, (2) Overview of International Monitoring Staff, (3) Fee Schedule for Export Elevators, (4) Hedge to Arrive Contracts, (5) Equipment Approval Process, (6) Status of Electronic Data Entry Activities, (7) Grain Inspection Automation Policy, (8) Moisture Instrument Selection Update, and (9) Online Presentation of the GIPSA Homepage.

The meeting will be open to the public. Public participation will be limited to written statements, unless permission is received from the Committee Chairman to orally address the Committee. Persons, other than members, who wish to address the Committee or submit written statements before or after the meeting, should contact the Administrator, GIPSA, U.S. Department of Agriculture, 1400 Independence Avenue, SW, STOP 3601, Washington, D.C. 20250-3601, telephone (202) 720-0219 or FAX (202) 205-9237.

Dated: March 20, 1997.

**James R. Baker,**

*Administrator.*

[FR Doc. 97-7740 Filed 3-26-97; 8:45 am]

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