

# 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

### Forest Service

#### Acceptance of 90-acre Donation and Extension of Indian Peaks Wilderness Area, Roosevelt NF, Colorado

**AGENCY:** Forest Service, USDA.

**ACTION:** Notice of land donation acceptance and boundary extension.

**SUMMARY:** The Secretary of Agriculture has accepted a 90-acre donation from The Nature Conservancy of Boulder, Colorado, and extended the Indian Peaks Wilderness Area to include this 90-acre parcel.

**EFFECTIVE DATE:** The acceptance of this donation and the extension of Indian Peaks Wilderness Area were effective November 28, 1996.

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:** Eleanor S. Towns, Director, Lands, USDA, Forest Service, PO Box 96090, Washington, DC 20090-6090, (202) 453-8248 or M. M. Underwood, Forest Supervisor, 240 W. Prospect, Fort Collins, Colorado 80526-2098, (970) 498-1100.

**SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:** In accordance with the provisions of section 6(a) of the Wilderness Act of September 3, 1964 (78 Stat. 890), the Secretary of Agriculture has accepted a 90-acre donation adjacent to the Indian Peaks Wilderness Area, Roosevelt National Forest, Colorado. Notification to the President of the Senate and the Speaker of the House of Representatives was provided on September 26, 1996. Land accepted by the Secretary of Agriculture under Section 6(a) becomes part of the wilderness area involved. A copy of the Secretary's acceptance which includes the legal description of the lands which were donated and which are now a part of the Indian Peaks Wilderness Area appears at the end of this notice.

Dated: January 21, 1997.

Tom L. Thompson,

Deputy Regional Forester.

Acceptance of 90-acre Donation and Extension of Indian Peaks Wilderness Area

Pursuant to the authority granted to the Secretary of Agriculture by Section 6(a) of the Wilderness Act of September 3, 1964 (Pub. L. 88-577, 78 Stat. 890; 16 U.S.C. 1131), a donation of 90 acres of land is accepted and will become part of the Indian Peaks Wilderness Area (Pub. L. 95-450, 92 Stat. 1095; 16 U.S.C. 1132), Roosevelt National Forest, Colorado.

The Bunker Bill Placer Mining Claim, Survey No. 15619, Grand Island Mining District, County of Boulder, State of Colorado.

This acceptance shall be effective 60 days after notice has been given to the President of the Senate and Speaker of the House of Representatives as required by section 6(a) of the Wilderness Act of September 3, 1964.

Dated: September 26, 1996.

Brian Eliot Burke,

Deputy Under Secretary, Natural Resources and Environment.

[FR Doc. 97-2348 Filed 1-30-97; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 3410-11-M

#### Sandpoint Ranger District Noxious Weed Control Project, Idaho Panhandle National Forests, Bonner County, Idaho

**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) to disclose the potential environmental effects of noxious weed treatment of the Sandpoint Ranger District. Treatment sites would be at various locations across the district and are within the Pend Oreille Ecosystem, Sandpoint Ranger District, Idaho Panhandle National Forests, Bonner County, Idaho. Most treatment sites are located near or along forest roads, trails, powerline corridors, recreation sites and wildlife forage habits (i.e. dry sites).

The proposed action to control populations of noxious and undesirable weeds on certain travel corridors and areas is designed to prevent the spread of these weeds and promote the retention and health of native and/or desirable plants within this ecosystem. The proposed action would use an integrated pest management approach to control weeds. This approach includes

mechanical, biological, cultural, and chemical control.

At least 16 species of noxious or undesirable weed will be considered for control. The major species considered for control include spotted knapweed (*Centaurea maculosa*), orange hawkweed (*Hieracium aurantiacum*), meadow hawkweed (*Hieracium pratense*), dalmatian toadflax (*Linaria dalmatica*), Canada thistle (*Cirsium arvense*), common St. Johnswort (*Hypericum perforatum*), hound's tongue (*Cynoglossum officinale*) and common tansy (*Tanacetum vulgare*). Other species may include diffuse knapweed (*Centaurea diffusa*), purple loosestrife (*Lythrum salicaria*), ox-eye daisy (*Chrysanthemum leucanthemum*), rush skeltonweed (*Chondrilla juncea*), sulphur cinquefoil (*Potentilla recta*), yellow starthistle (*Centaurea solstitialis*), musk thistle (*Carduus nutans*), and bull thistle (*Cirsium vulgare*).

This project level EIS will tier to the Idaho Panhandle National Forests Weed Pest Management EIS, October 1989; the Idaho Panhandle National Forest Land and Resource Management Plan (Forest Plan), September 1987; the Final EIS Noxious Weed Management Project, Bonners Ferry Ranger District, September 1995, and the Priest Lake Noxious Weed Control Final EIS.

**DATES:** Written comments and suggestions should be received no later than March 3, 1997.

**ADDRESSES:** Submit written comments and suggestions on the proposed management activities or requests to be placed on the project mailing list to Betsy Hammet, Project Leader, Sandpoint Ranger District, 1500 Hwy 2, Suite 110, Sandpoint, ID 83864.

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:** Betsy Hammet, EIS Team Leader, Sandpoint Ranger District, phone number (208 263-5111).

**SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:** Weed control is proposed on 46 sites that have been identified on the Sandpoint Ranger District. These sites range in size from single plants to approximately 300 acres and total approximately 1,270 gross acres. These sites represent less than 1% of the 315,420 acres in the Sandpoint Ranger District.

The primary purposes for weed control are as follows:

(1) Protect the natural condition and biodiversity of the Pend Oreille

Ecosystem by preventing or limiting the spread of aggressive, non-native plant species that displace native vegetation.

(2) Eliminate new invaders before they become established.

(3) Prevent or limit the spread of established weeds into areas containing little or no infestation.

(4) Reduce weed seed sources on trail heads and dispersed campsites, along main roads and trails, within powerline corridors, and in wildlife forage habitat (i.e. dry sites).

(5) Protect sensitive and unique habitats including research natural areas, wetlands, and sensitive plant populations.

The treatment sites are in scattered locations across the district. Small infestations that are discovered in addition to the 46 sites would be treated within the scope of the Final EIS and Record of Decision. The Idaho Panhandle National Forests Land and Resource Management Plan provides guidance for management activities within the potentially affected area through its goals, objectives, standards and guidelines, and management area direction. The Forest Plan directs that forest pests be managed by an integrated pest management approach.

The decision to be made is what actions, if any, should be taken to control weeds in the Pend Oreille Ecosystem, where treatment should be applied, and what types of treatment should be used.

The Forest Service will consider a range of alternatives. One of these will be the "no action" alternative in which none of the proposed treatment activities would be implemented. Additional alternatives will represent the range of control methods currently available for treatment of weeds, including non-chemical methods.

Public participation is an important part of the analysis and will play an important role in developing the alternatives. The initial scoping process (40 CFR 1501.7) will occur during February, March, and April, 1997. The mailing list for public scoping will be developed from responses to this NOI, and to a Scoping Notice sent out to interested individuals, organizations and agencies. In addition, the public is encouraged to visit with Forest Service officials during the analysis and prior to the decision. The Forest Service will also be 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 actions.

Comments from the public and other agencies will be used in preparation of

the Draft EIS. The scoping process will be used to:

1. Identify potential issues.

2. Identify major issues to be analyzed in depth.

3. Eliminate minor issues or those which have been covered by a relevant previous environmental analysis.

4. Identify alternatives to the proposed action.

5. Identify potential environmental effects of the proposed action and alternatives (i.e., cumulative effects).

Some public concerns have already been identified from initial interdisciplinary review of the weed control proposal. The following significant issues have been identified so far:

1. Current and potential impacts of the spread of noxious weeds on the physical, biological, and ecological environment within the Sandpoint Ranger District.

2. Potential effectiveness, economics and impacts on natural resources of various weed control methods.

3. Potential effects on human health from the application of herbicides.

This list will be verified, expanded, or modified based on public scoping and interdisciplinary review of this proposal.

The draft environmental impact statement is expected to be filed with the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and available for public review in June, 1997. At that time, the EPA will publish a Notice of Availability of the draft environmental impact statement in the Federal Register. The comment period on the draft environmental impact statement will be 45 days from the date the Environmental Protection Agency publishes the notice of availability in the Federal Register.

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 statement stage but that are not raised until after completion of the final environmental statement 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 scoping 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 and concerns regarding 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.

I am the responsible official for this environmental impact statement. My address is Sandpoint Ranger District, 1500 Hwy 2, Suite 110, Sandpoint, ID 83864.

Dated: January 21, 1997.

David S. Dillard,  
District Ranger.

[FR Doc. 97-2306 Filed 1-30-97; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 3410-11-M

#### **Deschutes Provincial Interagency Executive Committee (PIEC), Advisory Committee**

**AGENCY:** Forest Service, USDA.

**ACTION:** Notice of meeting.

**SUMMARY:** The Deschutes PIEC Advisory Committee will meet on February 13, 1997 at Rock Springs Conference Center, 7 miles north of Bend, OR on Highway 20. The meeting will start at 9:30 am., and finish at 5:00 pm. Agenda items include: (1) Introduction of new members, (2) Review of scientific documents for the Eastside Ecosystem project, (3) Reports from subcommittees, and (4) Open public forum. All Deschutes Province Advisory Committee meetings are open to the public.

#### **FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:**

Harry Hoogesteger, Province Liaison, USDA, Fort Rock Ranger District, 1230 N. E. 3rd, Bend, Oregon 97701, 541-383-4704.