

U.S.C. App., the United States Department of Agriculture announces a Western Regional Listening Session of the National Agricultural Research, Extension, Education, and Economics Advisory Board.

**SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:** The National Agricultural Research, Extension, Education, and Economics Advisory Board, which represents 30 constituent categories, as specified in section 1408 of the National Agricultural Research, Extension, and Teaching Policy Act of 1977 as amended by section 802 of the Federal Agriculture Improvement and Reform Act of 1996 (Pub. L. No. 104-127), will send representatives of its membership (5 members, the Executive Director, and a USDA administrative support person) to the Western Region Joint Summer Meeting to hold a Western Regional Listening Session, 8:00 a.m. until noon on July 8, 1998.

The Western Regional Listening Session will engage western regional stakeholders (small farmers, producers/ranchers, academia including 1890 and 1994 institutions, the private sector, and other stakeholder groups) in panel sessions to present statements to Advisory Board members on agricultural research and education priorities and other issues of significant concern to the Western Region. Findings of this Listening Session will be presented to the full Advisory Board for consideration in its ongoing effort to advise USDA on future agricultural research and education priorities. Time will be allowed at the end of Listening Session panels for open discussion and audience participation.

**DATES:** Western Regional Listening Session, July 8, 1998, 8:00 a.m. until noon.

**PLACE:** Yarrow Hotel, Park City, Utah.

**TYPE OF MEETING:** Open to the public.

**COMMENTS:** The public may file written comments before or within 2 weeks after the meeting with the contact person. All statements will become a part of the official records of the National Agricultural Research, Extension, Education, and Economics Advisory Board and will be kept on file for public review in the Office of the Advisory Board; Research, Education, and Economics; U.S. Department of Agriculture; Washington, D.C. 20250-2255.

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:** Deborah Hanfman, Executive Director, National Agricultural Research, Extension, Education, and Economics Advisory Board, Research, Education, and Economics Advisory Board Office, Room 3918 South Building, U.S.

Department of Agriculture, STOP: 2255, 1400 Independence Avenue, SW, Washington, DC 20250-2255. Telephone: 202-720-3684. Fax: 202-720-6199, or e-mail: lshea@reeusda.gov.

Done at Washington, D.C. this 26th day of May 1998.

**I. Miley Gonzalez,**

*Under Secretary, Research, Education, and Economics.*

[FR Doc. 98-14343 Filed 5-29-98; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 3410-22-P

## DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

### Agricultural Marketing Service

[Docket No. TB-97-17]

#### Tobacco Inspection; Growers' Referendum Results

**AGENCY:** Agricultural Marketing Service, USDA.

**ACTION:** Notice of referendum results.

**SUMMARY:** This document announces the results of the referendum on the merger of Tabor City-Whiteville, North Carolina, and Loris, South Carolina, flue-cured tobacco markets. A mail referendum was conducted during the period of April 27-May 1, 1998, among tobacco growers who sold tobacco on these markets in 1997. A required two-thirds majority of voters did not favor merging these markets into a single consolidated market.

**EFFECTIVE DATE:** June 2, 1998.

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:** William O. Coats, Associate Deputy Administrator, Tobacco Programs, Agricultural Marketing Service, United States Department of Agriculture, PO Box 96456, Washington, DC 20090-6456; telephone number (202) 205-0508.

**SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:** A notice was published in the April 20, 1998, issue of the **Federal Register** (63 FR 19414) announcing that a referendum would be conducted among active flue-cured producers who sold tobacco on either Tabor City-Whiteville or Loris during the 1997 season to ascertain if such producers favored the consolidation.

The notice of referendum announced the determination by the Secretary that the consolidated market of Tabor City-Whiteville, North Carolina, and Loris, South Carolina, would be designated as a flue-cured tobacco auction market and receive mandatory Federal grading of tobacco sold at auction for the 1998 and succeeding seasons, subject to the results of the referendum. The determination was based on the

evidence and arguments presented at a public hearing held in Tabor City, North Carolina, on November 5, 1997, pursuant to applicable provisions of the regulations issued under the Tobacco Inspection Act, as amended. The referendum was held in accordance with the provisions of the Tobacco Inspection Act, as amended (7 U.S.C. 511d) and the regulations set forth in 7 CFR 29.74.

Ballots for the April 27-May 1, 1998, referendum were mailed to 1,470 producers. Approval required votes in favor of the proposal by two-thirds of the eligible voters who cast valid ballots. The Department received a total of 375 responses: 89 eligible producers voted in favor of the consolidation; 189 eligible producers voted against the consolidation; and 97 ballots were determined to be invalid.

Dated: May 26, 1998.

**Enrique E. Figueroa,**

*Administrator, Agricultural Marketing Service.*

[FR Doc. 98-14424 Filed 5-29-98; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 3410-02-U

## DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

### Forest Service

#### Southwestern Region, Arizona, New Mexico, West Texas, and West Oklahoma

#### Amendment of Land and Resource Management Plans in the Southwestern Region

**AGENCY:** Forest Service, USDA.

**ACTION:** Notice of intent to prepare an environmental impact statement.

**SUMMARY:** The Southwestern Region of the Forest Service is planning to prepare an environmental impact statement on a proposal to amend National Forest land and resource management plans to incorporate standards and guidelines for management of habitat for American peregrine falcon, Little Colorado River spinedace, loach minnow, spikedace, Apache trout, Chihuahua chub, Gila trout, Gila top minnow, razorback sucker, southwest willow flycatcher, cactus ferruginous pygmy owl, Sonora tiger salamander, New Mexico ridgenose rattlesnake, and Pima pineapple cactus. The amendment would add new standards and guidelines which strengthen and clarify existing direction for the protection of federally listed threatened and endangered species. The amendment would apply to all subsequent project-level resource management decisions which will

involve site-specific environmental analysis and appropriate public involvement.

**DATES:** Comments in response to this Notice of Intent concerning the scope of the analysis should be received in writing by July 10, 1998.

**ADDRESSES:** Send written comments to USDA Forest Service, 517 Gold Ave. SW, Albuquerque, New Mexico 87102, ATTN: Director Ecosystem Analysis and Planning.

**RESPONSIBLE OFFICIAL:** The Regional Forester, Southwestern Region, will be the responsible official and will decide on amendments to land and resource management plans to incorporate standards and guidelines for the above mentioned threatened and endangered species.

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:** Director of Ecosystem Analysis and Planning, 517 Gold Ave. SW, Albuquerque, New Mexico 87102, (505) 842-3251.

**SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:** The Land and Resource Management Plans for the eleven national forests and national grasslands in the Forest Service's Southwestern Region were the subject of consultation with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) pursuant to Section 7 of the Endangered Species Act prior to their approval from 1985 through 1988. The FWS was consulted more recently concerning a 1996 region-wide amendment to land and resource management plans. This latest consultation considered species listed as threatened or endangered since the plans were first approved. During the course of consultation, additional direction for protection of certain listed species was identified.

The following describes the proposed amendment, by species and by forest:

#### **All Species**

##### *All Forests*

Activities that affect threatened or endangered species and their habitat should be designed and implemented to minimize impacts on individuals of the affected species. Base timing of implementation on the biology of the species and its vulnerability to the activity.

#### **American Peregrine Falcon**

##### *Apache-Sitgreaves National Forests*

Survey potential peregrine falcon nesting habitat that may be impacted by Forest activities. Surveys should take place as early as possible during project development so that projects can be designed to minimize any disturbance to peregrine falcons.

Conduct no activities that might disturb peregrine falcons during their breeding and nesting period within one-half mile of suitable nesting habitat, unless the area has been surveyed and found to be unoccupied. Exceptions may be made through consultation with the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service.

#### **Little Colorado River Spinedace, Loach Minnow, and Spikedace**

##### *Apache, Sitgreaves, Coconino, Gila, Prescott, and Tonto National Forests*

#### **Apache Trout**

##### *Apache-Sitgreaves, Coronado, and Kaibab National Forests*

#### **Chihuahua Chub and Gila Trout**

##### *Gila National Forest*

#### **Gila Top Minnow**

##### *Coronado and Tonto National Forests*

#### **Razorback Sucker**

##### *Apache-Sitgreaves, Coconino, Prescott, and Tonto National Forests*

The term "species habitat" encompasses all stream courses (bank to bank) which are occupied, unoccupied suitable, potential, or designated or proposed critical habitat for the listed fish species. Potential habitat is that which is expected to become suitable within 10 years. Suitable habitat is defined in the final rule for listing the species of concern and approved recovery plans.

Manage dispersed and developed recreation sites or recreation improvements within species habitat to avoid adverse effects (as determined by a site specific biological assessment) on the species.

Exclude off-road vehicle use from within species habitat and adjacent riparian areas, in the absence of a site-specific analysis which determines appropriate levels of use.

Exclude livestock from species habitat.

Exclude livestock from riparian areas adjacent to species habitat until satisfactory riparian condition, as described in the forest plan, is achieved. Manage livestock grazing to maintain desired condition once it is achieved.

Allow no new water diversion for Forest Service uses from within or immediately above species habitat in order to avoid stream flow depletion. Exceptions can be made in situations benefiting threatened and endangered species or their habitats.

Leave large woody debris in species habitat to provide diversity where there are no threats to culverts and bridges.

As opportunities arise, obtain water rights or diversion scheduling

agreements to protect stream flows within species habitats.

Do not allow motorized mining, dredging, or material excavation for non-locatable, common variety minerals within, adjacent to, or immediately upstream of species habitat.

Only use chemical fire retardant adjacent to species habitat when no other fire suppression means is available to protect the habitat.

Treat fuel accumulations to abate fire risk adjacent to species habitat.

#### **Southwest Willow Flycatcher**

##### *All Forests (Except the Kaibab and the Lincoln)*

Allow no activities that slow or prevent progression of potential habitat (habitat within 10 years of becoming suitable) toward suitable conditions, or that reduce the suitability of occupied or unoccupied suitable habitat.

Identify potential habitat with the greatest potential for occupancy as highest priority for management, with the objective to move it toward suitable conditions.

Exclude livestock grazing throughout the year in occupied flycatcher habitat. Allow grazing in occupied southwestern willow flycatcher habitat outside of its breeding season only where southwestern willow flycatcher research is occurring under an approved research plan.

Implement actions such as area closures, road closures, interpretation, fencing, and special use permits, to minimize recreational impacts, when it is determined recreation is a problem to the flycatcher.

Implement measures such as provision of trash receptacles, regular trash pick-ups, area closures during the breeding season, and public information, where it is determined cowbirds and predator are a problem to the flycatcher.

Protect occupied, suitable, and potential habitat from high intensity wildfires and wildfire suppression activities.

#### **Cactus Ferruginous Pygmy Owl**

##### *Coronado and Tonto National Forests*

Projects in areas where it is determined that cactus ferruginous pygmy owls are occupying a site during the breeding period shall: (a) retain all nest trees and nest cacti; (b) avoid harassment of individual owls; and (c) restore and maintain habitat, as determined by a project-level biological assessment.

**Sonora Tiger Salamander***Coronado National Forest*

Inform all livestock permittees within the range of the Sonora tiger salamander that they are required to notify the Forest at least 30 days prior to initiating maintenance, dredging, or cleaning out of stock tanks.

Prior to any surface-disturbing activities at stock tanks within the range of the Sonora tiger salamander, the presence/absence of the salamander shall be determined by a qualified biologist (approved by the Forest Biologist). If salamanders are not encountered during seining of the pond, the salamander will be considered absent. If salamanders are observed in the water or can be captured with a dip net, seining is not necessary.

Individuals authorized by the Forest to maintain, dredge, or clean out stock tanks occupied by Sonora tiger salamanders shall be informed of the legal and sensitive status of the Sonora tiger salamander and shall have a copy of these standards and guidelines.

New surface disturbance and clearing of vegetation during work at stock tanks shall be minimized to the extent practicable.

Maintenance, dredging, and cleaning of occupied stock tanks shall not occur from January 1 through May 31.

Oil, fuel, and other equipment fluid shall be stored away from occupied stock tanks in secure containers. Any leaks shall be cleaned up and properly disposed of as soon as they occur.

If salamanders or larvae are present prior to dredging or cleaning out of stock tanks and a qualified biologist believes seining of salamanders and larvae out of the tank would reduce mortality and injury, then the tank shall be seined and animals held in suitable tanks, aquaria, or holding ponds and returned to the tank after maintenance is complete and, in the judgement of the qualified biologist, the tank contains enough water to support the salamanders.

During maintenance activities, the amount of underwater objects (logs, rocks, etc.) for salamander cover and egg deposition shall be maintained or increased.

Vegetation cover at tanks occupied by salamanders shall be retained or increased through (but not limited to) the use of partial fencing, construction of water lots, double tanks, or alternative waters such as wells and pipelines. Continue current management if cover is satisfactory for the habitat needs.

Except as needed in emergency situations to abate immediate fire threat

of loss of life or property, no water shall be drafted from stock tanks known to be occupied by Sonora tiger salamanders. Other water sources, such as Parker Lake, wells, and water tenders shall be considered before drafting water from occupied stock tanks.

In non-emergency situations, water shall be drafted from stock tanks within the range of the salamander only if other sources of water are not available or reasonably accessible, and only if the tanks are not occupied by salamanders.

An objective of fire suppression activities shall be protection of occupied Sonora tiger salamander habitat, including the watersheds of those habitats.

All occupied tanks and apparently suitable tanks (free of nonnative predators) within the range of the Sonora tiger salamander shall be retained in public ownership.

If water is drafted from a stock tank within the range of the salamander, it shall not be refilled with water from another tank, Parker Lake, or other sources of water that may support fish, salamanders, or bullfrogs.

As opportunities arise, work with Arizona Game and Fish Department and the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service in the development of interpretive materials for users of the Forest that includes information about legal protection of the salamander and prohibitions on use of live baitfish, crayfish, and waterdogs, and transport of live bullfrogs in the San Rafael Valley.

**New Mexico Ridgenose Rattlesnake***Coronado National Forest*

Inform permittees and all field personnel who implement any portion of activities under the LRMP in New Mexico ridgenose rattlesnake habitat of regulations and protective measures for the New Mexico ridgenose rattlesnake. Inform all field personnel that intentional killing, disturbance, or harassment of threatened or endangered species is a violation of the Endangered Species Act and could result in prosecution. Inform all personnel that care should be exercised when operating vehicles in the project area to avoid killing or injuring snakes on roads.

Remove livestock from burned areas in New Mexico ridgenose rattlesnake habitat during at least two monsoon seasons (July 1–Oct. 15) following prescribed fire, to facilitate vegetation recovery.

**Pima Pineapple Cactus***Coronado National Forest*

Confine vehicle use to existing roadways in occupied habitat.

Manage fuel loads and vegetation density to protect occupied sites from the effects of high intensity wildfires.

Pre-plan suppression strategies in occupied habitat to minimize suppression impacts on the species.

Comments concerning the proposed action were solicited from approximately 2,200 potentially affected and interested people, agencies, and organizations in March and April 1998. Preliminary issues include effects on habitat and population viability, effects on vegetation structure and composition, effects on goods and services to be produced under land and resource management plans, and effects on jobs, income and rural community economics, and effects on statutory rights. These issues will be refined and developed in detail as the analysis proceeds. Comments on the issues and suggestions for additional issues are welcome in response to this Notice of Intent.

A draft environmental impact statement is expected to be available for public review and comment in August 1998, and a final environmental impact statement available in December 1998.

The comment period on the draft environmental impact statement will run for 45 days following the date the Environmental Protection Agency publishes the notice of availability in the **Federal Register**.

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, 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, 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 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 on 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.

Comments received in response to this solicitation, including names and addresses of those who comment, will be considered part of the public record on this proposed action and will be available for public inspection. Comments submitted anonymously will be accepted and considered. Additionally, pursuant to 7 CFR 1.27(d), any person may request the agency to withhold a submission from the public record by showing how the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) permits such confidentiality. Persons requesting such confidentiality should be aware that, under the FOIA, confidentiality may be granted in only very limited circumstances, such as to protect trade secrets.

The Forest Service will inform the requester of the agency's decision regarding the request for confidentiality, and where the request is denied, the agency will return the submission and notify the requester that the comments may be resubmitted with or without name and address.

Dated: May 26, 1998.

**Paul Johnson,**

*Acting Regional Forester.*

[FR Doc. 98-14373 Filed 5-29-98; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 3410-11-P

## DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

### Grain Inspection, Packers and Stockyards Administration

#### Opportunity for Designation in the Amarillo (TX), Fostoria (OH), Schaal (IA), and Wisconsin Areas, and Request for Comments on the Amarillo, Fostoria, Schaal, and Wisconsin Agencies

**AGENCY:** Grain Inspection, Packers and Stockyards Administration (GIPSA).

**ACTION:** Notice.

**SUMMARY:** The United States Grain Standards Act, as amended (Act), provides that official agency designations will end not later than triennially and may be renewed. The designations of Amarillo Grain Exchange, Inc. (Amarillo), Fostoria Grain Inspection, Inc. (Fostoria), D.R. Schaal Agency, Inc. (Schaal), and the Wisconsin Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection (Wisconsin), will end November 30, 1998, according to the Act. GIPSA is asking persons interested in providing official services in the Amarillo, Fostoria, Schaal, and Wisconsin areas to submit an application for designation. GIPSA is also asking for comments on the services provided by Amarillo, Fostoria, Schaal, and Wisconsin.

**DATES:** Applications must be postmarked or sent by telecopier (FAX) on or before June 30, 1998. Comments are due by July 31, 1998.

**ADDRESSES:** Applications and comments must be submitted to USDA, GIPSA, Janet M. Hart, Chief, Review Branch, Compliance Division, STOP 3604, Room 1647-S, 1400 Independence Avenue, SW, Washington, DC 20250-3604. Applications and comments may be submitted by FAX on 202-690-2755. If an application is submitted by FAX, GIPSA reserves the right to request an original application. All applications and comments will be made available for public inspection at this address located at 1400 Independence Avenue, SW, during regular business hours.

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:** Janet M. Hart, at 202-720-8525.

**SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:** This Action has been reviewed and determined not to be a rule or regulation as defined in Executive Order 12866 and Departmental Regulation 1512-1; therefore, the Executive Order and Departmental Regulation do not apply to this Action.

Section 7(f)(1) of the Act authorizes GIPSA's Administrator to designate a qualified applicant to provide official services in a specified area after

determining that the applicant is better able than any other applicant to provide such official services. GIPSA designated Amarillo, main office located in Amarillo, Texas, Schaal, main office located in Belmond, Iowa, and Wisconsin, main office located in Madison, Wisconsin, to provide official inspection services under the Act on December 1, 1995. GIPSA designated Fostoria, main office located in Fostoria, Ohio, to provide official inspection services under the Act on December 1, 1997.

Section 7(g)(1) of the Act provides that designations of official agencies shall end not later than triennially and may be renewed according to the criteria and procedures prescribed in Section 7(f) of the Act. The designations of Amarillo, Fostoria, Schaal, and Wisconsin end on November 30, 1998, according to the Act.

Pursuant to Section 7(f)(2) of the Act, the following geographic area, in the States of Oklahoma and Texas, is assigned to Amarillo.

In Texas:

Bounded on the North by the Texas-Oklahoma State line to the eastern Clay County line;

Bounded on the East by the eastern Clay, Archer, Throckmorton, Shackelford, and Callahan County lines;

Bounded on the South by the southern Callahan, Taylor, and Nolan County lines;

Bounded on the West by the western Nolan, Fisher, Stonewall, King, and Cottle County lines; the western Childress County line north to U.S. Route 287; U.S. Route 287 northwest to Donley County; the southern Donley and Armstrong County lines west to Prairie Dog Town Fork of the Red River; Prairie Dog Town Fork of the Red River northwest to State Route 217; State Route 217 west to FM 1062; FM 1062 west to U.S. Route 385; U.S. Route 385 north to Oldham County; the southern Oldham County line; the western Oldham, Hartley, and Dallam County lines.

Beaver, Beckham, Cimarron, Ellis, Harper, Roger Mills, and Texas Counties, Oklahoma.

Pursuant to Section 7(f)(2) of the Act, the following geographic area, in the State of Ohio, is assigned to Fostoria.

Bounded on the North by the northern and eastern Fulton County lines; the eastern Henry County line; the northern and eastern Wood County lines; the northern Sandusky County line east to State Route 590;

Bounded on the East by State Route 590 south to Seneca County; the northern Seneca County line east to State Route 53; State Route 53 south to