

National Forest System lands, for recreation or educational purposes; special interest groups; local residents; and individuals conducting business with the Forest Service including, but—not limited to, grazing permittees, minerals, oil and gas permittees, land lessees, timber customers, other forest products customers, research scientists, special-use customers, educators, librarians, historians, writers, media contacts, moviemakers, law enforcement officers, fire fighters, representatives of other Federal, State, county, or local Government agencies, and foreign governments.

Estimated Number of Respondents: 20,500.

Estimated Number of Responses per Respondent: 1.

Estimated Total Annual Burden on Respondents: 1,708 hours per year.

Comment Is Invited

The agency invites comments on the following: (a) Whether the proposed collection of information is necessary for the proper performance of the functions of the agency, including whether the information will have practical 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 Comment

All comments, including name and address 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: October 22, 1998.

Sandra H. Key,

Acting Associate Chief.

[FR Doc. 98-28822 Filed 10-27-98; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 3410-11-P

DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Forest Service

Intergovernmental Advisory Committee Subcommittee Meeting

AGENCY: Forest Service, USDA.

ACTION: Notice of meeting.

SUMMARY: The Intergovernment Advisory Committee will meet on November 5, 1998, at the Embassy Suites Portland Downtown, 319 SW Pine Street, Portland, Oregon 97204-2726. The purpose of the meeting is to continue discussions on the implementation of the Northwest Forest Plan. The meeting will begin at 9:15 a.m. and continue until 3:00 p.m. Agenda items to be discussed include, but are not limited to: continued discussion of future agenda topics; review ongoing and potential activities for the coming year; and progress reports on effectiveness monitoring and information issues. The IAC meeting will be open to the public and is fully accessible for people with disabilities. Interpreters are available upon request in advance. Written comments may be submitted for the record at the meeting. Time will also be scheduled for oral public comments. Interested persons are encouraged to attend.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:

Questions regarding this meeting may be directed to Don Knowles, Executive Director, Regional Ecosystem Office, 333 SW 1st Avenue, P.O. Box 3623, Portland, OR 97208 (Phone 503-808-2180).

Dated: October 21, 1998.

Donald R. Knowles,

Designated Federal Official.

[FR Doc. 98-28819 Filed 10-27-98; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 3410-11-M

DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Forest Service

Southwest Oregon Province Interagency Executive Committee (PIEC) Advisory Committee

AGENCY: Forest Service, USDA.

ACTION: Notice of meeting.

SUMMARY: The Southwest Oregon PIEC Advisory Committee will meet on November 17, 1998 in Roseburg, Oregon at the Umpqua National Forest Supervisor's Office. The meeting will begin at 9:00 a.m. and continue until 5:00 p.m. Agenda items to be covered include: (1) local issues presentation by management representatives of the Roseburg Bureau of Land Management and Umpqua National Forest; (2) Public comment; (3) Applegate Adaptive Management Area Guide; (4) Mining and riparian area conflicts; (5) Possibly a representative from the Regional Ecosystem Office will discuss Advisory Committee questions. All Province Advisory Committee meetings are open to the public.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:

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

Dated: October 21, 1998.

Charles J. Anderson,

Acting Designated Federal Official.

[FR Doc. 98-28864 Filed 10-27-98; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 3410-11-M

DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Natural Resources Conservation Service

Notice of Proposed Change to the Natural Resources Conservation Service's National Handbook of Conservation Practices

AGENCY: Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), U.S. Department of Agriculture.

ACTION: Notice of availability of proposed changes in the NRCS National Handbook of Conservation Practice for review and comment.

SUMMARY: Notice is hereby given of the intention of NRCS to issue a series of new or revised conservation practice standards in its National Handbook of Conservation Practices. These standards include "Contour Buffer Strips", "Cross Wind Trap Strips", "Dry Hydrant", "Field Border", "Filter Strip", "Irrigation Water Management", "Residue Management, Mulch Till", "Residue Management, No Till and Strip Till", "Waste Utilization". NRCS State Conservationist's who choose to adopt these practices for use within their state will incorporate them into Section IV of their Field Office Technical Guide (FOTG). These practices may be used in conservation systems that treat highly erodible land or on land determined to be wetland.

DATES: Comments will be received for a 60-day period commencing with this date of publication. This series of new or revised conservation practice standards will be adopted after the close of the 60 day period.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:

Single copies of these standards are available from NRCS-CED in Washington, DC. Submit individual inquiries in writing to William Hughey, National Agricultural Engineer, Natural Resources Conservation Service, P.O. Box 2890, Room 6139-S, Washington, DC 20013-2890.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: Section 343 of the Federal Agriculture

Improvement and Reform Act of 1996 requires the NRCS to make available for public review and comment proposed revisions to conservation practice standards used to carry out the highly erodible land and wetland provisions of the law. For the next 60 days, the NRCS will receive comments relative to the proposed changes. Following that period a determination will be made by the NRCS regarding disposition of those comments and a final determination of change will be made.

Pearlie S. Reed,

Chief, Natural Resources Conservation Service, Washington D.C.

[FR Doc. 98-28787 Filed 10-27-98; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 3410-16-P

DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Natural Resources Conservation Service

Mining Specifications for Prime Farmland

AGENCY: Natural Resources Conservation Service, USDA.

ACTION: Notice of proposed specifications with request for comments.

SUMMARY: The Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) of the Department of Agriculture (USDA) is issuing proposed specifications for soil handling in relation to mining activities on prime farmland, as provided for in the Surface Mining Control and Reclamation Act of 1977 (SMCRA). SMCRA requires the Secretary of Agriculture to establish specifications for the removal, storage, replacement, and reconstruction of prime farmland soils. The Soil Conservation Service, now called the Natural Resources Conservation Service, first proposed these specifications on February 19, 1988 (53 FR 4989). NRCS has made revisions to the proposed specifications and now seeks additional public comment prior to issuance of final specifications.

DATES: Comments must be received by November 27, 1998.

ADDRESSES: Mail written comments to Gary Nordstrom, Director, Conservation Operations Division, Natural Resources Conservation Service, P.O. Box 2890, Washington, D.C. 20013. Submit electronic comments to gary.nordstrom@usda.gov

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Gary Nordstrom, Director, Conservation Operations Division, Natural Resources Conservation Service, 202-720-1845.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

General Background on Proposed Specifications

Section 515(b)(7) of the Surface Mining Control and Reclamation Act of 1977 (SMCRA), Public Law 95-87, 30 U.S.C., 1265(b)(7), authorizes the Secretary of Agriculture to establish specifications for soil removal, storage, replacement, and reconstruction for all prime farmlands, as identified in Section 507(b)(16) of the Act, 30 U.S.C. 1257(b)(16), to be mined and reclaimed. This authority is delegated to NRCS in 7 CFR 2.61(a)(22).

NRCS determined that national specifications for soil handling must allow for consideration of the wide diversity of soils, geology, climate, mining equipment, and crops in coal mining areas across the nation. These differences are recognized in the permanent program regulations published by the Office of Surface Mining Reclamation and Enforcement, U.S. Department of the Interior, specifically in 30 CFR 823.4(a), which states that "NRCS within each State shall establish specifications for prime farmland soil removal, storage, replacement, and reconstruction."

Accordingly, NRCS developed the specifications set forth in this proposed notice to ensure that local and site-specific factors are considered. Within the individual States, each NRCS State Conservationist will maintain and make available a local version of these specifications that incorporates the general criteria set forth in these specifications and any modifications made for the respective State. To the fullest extent possible, the basic specifications and the applicable modifications for individual States reflect the latest scientific information and experience regarding reclamation techniques.

During the development of the proposed specifications, NRCS national office provided certain general guidelines to assist the NRCS State staffs in developing specifications at the local level. These guidelines were set out in the advance notice of the proposed rule published on August 26, 1985 (50 FR 34490). The first version of these proposed specifications was published on February 19, 1988 (53 FR 4989). The specifications in this notice reflect comments received as a result of the 1988 publication and includes technical revisions based on research results and improvements in technology which have occurred since the 1988 publication.

Although NRCS had originally intended to publish these specifications as a codified regulation under 7 CFR

part 652, it has been determined that the guidance included within this notice is advisory in nature, not regulatory. Therefore, these specifications will not appear in the Code of Federal Regulations as a rule.

Discussion of the Proposed Specifications

The Soil Removal section provides guidance on the identification of prime farmland soils where a published survey is not available and outlines how a soil scientist should proceed with identifying and sampling the soils to be removed for later replacement and reconstruction. This section identifies needed documentation of field conditions, including rooting zones; surface relief; pre-mining drainage conditions (including subsurface); flood frequency; physical, chemical, and morphological soil properties of the soils to be removed; and the equipment and procedures to be used in soil removal. The soil removal specifications address the handling of the various soil horizons encountered on prime farmland and the procedures to be followed if substitute materials are to be used. NRCS recognizes that compaction of prime farmland soils during removal and reconstruction is a significant factor in prime farmland reclamation and, therefore, the specifications include guidance to avoid compaction problems.

In the Soil Stockpiling section, NRCS recognizes that stockpiling of soil horizons, while not the preferred procedure for reclamation, is often necessary because of weather conditions, limitations or availability of equipment, or the reclamation method utilized. These specifications provide guidance to ensure that if stockpiling is utilized, the soil resources will be protected until reconstruction begins. This section provides criteria for stockpile site selection, protection against contamination and loss, and temporary distribution if long-term stockpiling is required.

In the Soil Reconstruction section, NRCS incorporates the principle of SMCRA that the reclamation of prime farmland requires the re-establishment of the pre-mining productivity of the disturbed soils. The soil reconstruction specifications provide a framework which, if followed and the required conditions are achieved, should maximize the probability that the reconstructed soil will achieve the required productivity.

Many factors contribute to the pre-mining productivity of prime farmland, including the chemical and physical characteristics of the soil horizons, the soil depth, the soil slope, and the