

statement for the Forest Plan (1988) analyzed a range of alternatives for management of the West Fork Weiser watershed. The Plan allocated this area to general forest, including timber management, and assigned it to Management Area #4. The area has had previous entries for timber harvest.

As well as Forest-wide direction, the plan gives specific direction for this management area. It requires integrated protection of multiple resources including fish, wildlife, range, soil and water, timber, and fire/fuels.

Public participation will be especially important at several points during the analysis, particularly during scoping of issues and review of the DEIS. The first opportunity in the process is scoping, which includes:

1. Identifying potential issues.
2. Identifying issues to be analyzed in detail.
3. Eliminating insignificant issues or those covered by a relevant previous environmental analysis.

4. Determining potential cooperating agencies and responsibilities.

The Forest Service will consult with the National Marine Fisheries Service, Department of Commerce, and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Department of Interior, or potential impacts to threatened and endangered species.

Preliminary issues include effects on fisheries, wildlife, recreation, water quality, and economics.

The second major opportunity for public input is with the DEIS. The DEIS will analyze a range of alternatives to the proposed action, including the no-action alternative. The DEIS is expected to be filed with the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and to be available for public review in September, 1999. EPA will then publish a notice of availability of the DEIS in the **Federal Register**. Public comments are invited at that time.

The comment period on the DEIS will be 45 days from the date the EPA 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 DEISs must structure their participation in the environmental review of the proposal so that it is meaningful and alerts the agency to the reviewers 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 DEIS stage but that are not raised until after completion of the final

environmental impact statement (FEIS) 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 FEIS.

To assist the Forest Service in identifying and considering issues and concerns on the proposed action, comments on the DEIS 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 DEIS 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.

In the FEIS the Forest Service is required to respond to comments received (40 CFR 1503.4). The responsible official will consider the comments, responses, environmental consequences discussed in the FEIS, and applicable laws, regulations, and policies in making the final decision regarding this proposal. The responsible official will document the decision and reasons for it in the Record of Decision. That decision will be subject to appeal under 36 CFR 215.

David F. Alexander, Forest Supervisor of the Payette National Forest, McCall, Idaho, is the responsible official for this EIS.

Dated: March 5, 1999.

David F. Alexander,
Forest Supervisor.

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DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Forest Service

Proposed Brown Creek Timber Sale, Payette National Forest, Idaho

AGENCY: Forest Service, USDA.

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

SUMMARY: The Forest Service will prepare an environmental impact

statement (EIS) for the proposed Brown Creek Timber Sale, New Meadows Ranger District, Payette National Forest, Idaho. The proposed action would harvest timber, obliterate roads to reduce sediment, and close other roads to reduce wildlife vulnerability. The Forest prepared an environmental assessment (EA) for this project and issued a decision notice in September 1998. The Forest withdrew the decision in December 1998 so that an updated analysis of roadless and old growth could be made and will prepare an EIS. The EA analyzed three alternatives, including a no action alternative. The proposed action would harvest within the Patrick Butte Roadless Area; however, no new roads would be constructed. All actions will follow the Chief's interim rule on road building. The alternatives considered in the EA, which would be analyzed in the draft EIS (DEIS), would harvest up to 4.3 million board feet of timber. Other alternatives will be developed depending on new issues raised.

The agency gives notice of the full environmental analysis and decision making process that is continuing on the proposal so that interested and affected people know how they may participate and contribute to the final decision. The Forest conducted public scoping and addressed subsequent issues in the EA. The Forest now invites comments on the scope of the analysis and the issues to be addressed.

DATES: Comments on the scope of the analysis must be received by April 10, 1999.

ADDRESSES: Submit written comments and suggestions to Jack Irish, Brown Creek Team Leader, New Meadows Ranger District, Payette National Forest, PO Box J, New Meadows, Idaho 83654.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Questions about the project should be directed to Jack Irish, phone (208) 347-0300.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: The Payette National Forest Plan (1988) provides Forest-wide direction for management of the resources of the Payette National Forest, including timber. The environmental impact statement for the Forest Plan (1988) analyzed a range of alternatives for management of the Brown Creek watershed. The Plan allocated this area to general forest, including timber management, and assigned it to Management Area #11. The area has had previous entries for timber harvest.

As well as Forest-wide direction, the plan gives specific direction for this management area. It requires integrated protection of multiple resources

including fish, wildlife, range, soil and water, timber, and fire/fuels.

Public participation will be especially important at several points during the analysis, particularly during scoping of issues and during review of the DEIS.

The scoping process includes:

1. Identifying potential issues.
2. Identifying issues to be analyzed in detail.
3. Eliminating insignificant issues or those covered by a relevant previous environmental analysis.
4. Determining potential cooperating agencies and responsibilities.

Issues that were considered and analyzed in the EA were water quality and soils, wildlife habitat, vegetation, fire and fuels, roadless character and wilderness potential, air quality, biodiversity, economics and socio-economics, fish habitat, heritage resources, noxious weeds, range, recreation and visual quality, roads and access, threatened, endangered and sensitive plant species, and wetlands and floodplains. It is important to bring any new issues to the attention of the Forest now so that they may be considered in the EIS.

The National Marine Fisheries Service, Department of Commerce, and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Department of Interior, have been consulted on potential impacts to threatened and endangered species.

The second major opportunity for public input is with the DEIS. The DEIS will analyze a range of alternatives to the proposed action, including the no-action alternative. The DEIS is expected to be filed with the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and to be available for public review in May, 1999. EPA will then publish a notice of availability of the DEIS in the **Federal Register**. Public comments are invited.

The comment period on the DEIS will be 45 days from the date the EPA 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 DEIS's must structure their participation in the environmental review of the proposal so that it is meaningful and alerts the agency to the reviewers 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 DEIS stage but that are not raised until after completion of the final environmental impact statement (FEIS) 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 FEIS.

To assist the Forest Service in identifying and considering issues and concerns on the proposed action, comments on the DEIS 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 DEIS 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.

In the FEIS the Forest Service is required to respond to comments received (40 CFR 1503.4). The responsible official will consider the comments, responses, environmental consequences discussed in the FEIS, which is expected to be completed in August, 1999, and applicable laws, regulations, and policies in making the final decision regarding this proposal. The responsible official will document the decision and reasons for it in the Record of Decision. That decision will be subject to appeal under 36 CFR 215.

David F. Alexander, Forest Supervisor of the Payette National Forest, McCall, Idaho, is the responsible official for this EIS.

Dated: March 4, 1999.

David F. Alexander,

Forest Supervisor.

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DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Risk Management Agency

Risk Management Advisory Committee

AGENCY: Office of the Secretary, Risk Management Agency, USDA.

ACTION: Notice of intent to establish; request for nominations and comments.

SUMMARY: The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) proposes to establish the Risk Management

Advisory Committee. The purpose of the Committee is to provide the Secretary of Agriculture with advice concerning risk management issues and policies relating to agriculture (e.g., federal crop insurance and other risk management tools). This document seeks nominations of individuals to be considered for selection as Committee members. Comments are requested on categories of membership and duties of the Committee.

DATES: Written nominations must be received on or before April 12, 1999.

ADDRESSES: Nominations should be sent to Ms. Diana Moslak, Risk Management Agency, USDA, 1400 Independence Ave., SW, Room 3053-S, Ag. Box 0801, Washington, DC 20250.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Diana Moslak, (202) 720-2832.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: Pursuant to the Federal Advisory Committee Act (FACA) (5 U.S.C. App.), notice is hereby given that the Secretary of Agriculture intends to establish the Risk Management Advisory Committee, hereafter referred to as Committee. The purpose of the Committee is to provide the Secretary of Agriculture with advice concerning risk management issues and policies relating to agriculture (e.g., federal crop insurance and other risk management tools). The Committee shall develop recommendations for consideration by the Secretary of Agriculture with regard to strengthening the agricultural safety net for producers.

The Secretary of Agriculture has determined that the work of the Committee is in the public interest in view of the recognized need to strengthen the agricultural safety net.

The Secretary of Agriculture or a person designated by the Secretary of Agriculture shall serve as the Chairperson of the Committee. A senior official of the Risk Management Agency, shall be designated to serve as the Committee's Executive Secretary. Staff support essential to the execution of the Committee's responsibilities will be provided by the Risk Management Agency.

Committee members will be appointed by the Secretary of Agriculture to serve 2 years. The Committee will be comprised of twenty (20) members representing the balanced interests of the agricultural community, including but not limited to agricultural producers; the crop insurance industry; grower groups; commodity groups; associations affiliated with or comprised of users of, the agricultural safety net; Federal, state, and tribal officials; and other interested parties.