

DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE**Forest Service****Revised Land and Resource Management Plan, Caribou National Forest, ID**

AGENCY: Forest Service.

ACTION: Notice of intent to prepare an environmental impact statement in conjunction with revision of the Land and Resource Management Plan for the Caribou National Forest, located in Bannock, Bear Lake, Bingham, Bonneville, Caribou, Franklin, Oneida, and Power counties, Idaho; Box Elder and Cache counties, Utah; and Lincoln County, Wyoming.

SUMMARY: The Department of Agriculture, Forest Service will prepare an Environmental Impact Statement in conjunction with a revision of the Land and Resource Management Plan (hereinafter referred to as Forest Plan) for the Caribou National Forest.

This notice describes the needs "for change" identified to date in the current Forest Plan to be revised, environmental issues considered, estimated dates for filing the Environmental Impact Statement, information concerning public participation, and the names and addresses of the agency officials who can provide additional information. The purpose of the notice is to begin the scoping phase of public involvement in the revision process.

DATES: Comments concerning the intent to prepare a revised Forest Plan should be received in writing by October 2, 1999. The agency expects to file a Draft Environmental Impact Statement in the Spring of 2000 and a Final Environmental Impact Statement in the Spring of 2001.

ADDRESSES: Send written comments to: Jerry Reese, Forest Supervisor, Caribou National Forest, 250 South 4th Avenue, Pocatello, Idaho 83201.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Paul Oakes, Planning Team Leader, Caribou National Forest (208) 236-7500.

Responsible official: Jack Blackwell, Intermountain Regional Forester, at 324 25th Street, Ogden, UT 84401.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: Pursuant to part 36 Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) 219.10(f) and (g), the Regional Forester for the Intermountain Region gives notice of the agency's intent to prepare an Environmental Impact Statement for the revision of the Caribou National Forest Land and Resource Management Plan. According to 36 CFR 219.10(g), Land and Resource Management Plans shall ordinarily be revised on a 10- to 15-year cycle. The

existing Forest Plan for the Caribou National Forest was approved on September 27, 1985.

The Regional Forester gives notice that the Caribou National Forest is beginning an environmental analysis and decision-making process for the proposed programmatic action to revise the Caribou Forest Plan. Opportunities will be provided to discuss the Forest Plan revision with the public. The public is invited to help identify issues that will be considered in defining the range of alternatives in the Environmental Impact Statement.

Forest plans describe the long-term direction for managing National Forests. Agency decisions in these plans do the following:

- Establish multiple-use goals and objectives (36 CFR 219.11);
- Establish forest-wide management requirements (standards and guidelines);
- Establish management areas and management area direction through the application of management prescriptions;
- Identify lands not suited for timber production (36 CFR 219.3);
- Establish monitoring and evaluation requirements; and
- Recommend areas for official designation of wilderness.

The authorization of project-level activities on the Forest occurs through project, or site-specific, decision-making. Project-level decisions must comply with National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) procedures and must include a determination that the project is consistent with the Forest Plan.

Linkage to the Interior Columbia Basin Ecosystem Management Project

The northern portion of the Caribou National Forest is within the area of land covered by the Interior Columbia Basin Ecosystem Management Project (ICBEMP). Two sources of information from the ICBEMP will influence the development of the Forest Plan: (1) The integrated science assessment and (2) the Interior Columbia Basin Ecosystem Management Project Final Environmental Impact Statement (ICBEMP FEIS) and Record of Decision.

The integrated science assessments contain information that provide context at a broad, multiple-state area scale. The information on forestlands, rangelands, aquatic and hydrologic integrity, ecosystem pathways and disturbance patterns, and the current and projected conditions of fish, wildlife and plant species were used to help identify need for change topics. This information will continue to be used in defining the extent of the need

for change and in the development and evaluation of alternatives for the Revised Forest Plan.

The other primary document that will influence this revision is the ICBEMP FEIS. The Draft EIS was issued for public comments in June 1997, and a final document is expected in Spring 2000. This document, which incorporates the results of the science assessments, will amend portions of the Forest Plan when the Record of Decision is issued. This amendment will establish new goals, desired range of future conditions, objectives and standards for management for that portion of the Forest within the ICBEMP assessment area. This amendment will simplify the scope of the planning effort, but will not replace the need for the revision of these reasons.

- The ICBEMP effort is at a much broader scale. The application of the information and decisions will need to be refined for the Forest-level scale.
- The ICBEMP will provide some standards that are only to be used until such time as better local standards are developed. The planning effort will refine these standards to local conditions.

• The ICBEMP FEIS will not provide all of the analysis or decisions required by the National Forest Management Act regulations. The planning effort will need to evaluate land allocations, timber suitability, wilderness recommendations and other factors that the ICBEMP did not address.

- The Ecosystem Management Goals from ICBEMP will provide a framework for Forest planning that merges science and ecosystem capability with societal values to help make choices about dynamic systems on the Forest. These overarching forest-wide goals will be the ecological centerpiece for Plan revision.

Need for Change in the Current Forest Plan

The Forest completed two monitoring reports, one in 1992 and a second in 1997. The results for the monitoring reports, in addition to public input and Forest Plan implementation experience, indicated that there is a need for change in some management direction in the Forest Plan. Several sources were used in determining the need changes in the current Forest Plan. These sources include:

- Public comments concerning implementation of current direction;
- Findings from the two Forest Plan monitoring reports;
- Regulatory, manual, and handbook requirements;
- Forest Service Natural Resource Agenda, 1998;

- Draft 1995 Resources Planning Act (RPA) Program;

- New Information, such as the Interior Columbia Basin Ecosystem Management Project scientific assessment and other research, and
- Public comments received regarding the findings in the Initial Analysis of the Management Situation.

Initial Analysis of the Management Situation

In April, 1999, the Caribou National Forest published an Initial Analysis of the Management Situation (Initial AMS). The Initial AMS summarized the current management and resource conditions of the Forest, proposed a desired range of future conditions for forest resources, and disclosed significant "needs for change" forest managers and resource specialists identified. The Initial AMS was mailed to more than 500 interested individuals, non-government organizations, city, county, state and other federal agencies. Public comments were encouraged regarding the findings disclosed in the Initial AMS. As a result of the analysis of the comments received, the Forest Supervisor has determined the public has identified additional "needs for change" that will be included in the revision of the Forest Plan. The "needs for change" topics, along with preliminary proposed programmatic actions, include:

1. Timberland Suitability and Wilderness Recommendations

- A reassessment of timberland suitability will be conducted.
- All inventoried roadless areas on the Forest will be reevaluated for possible wilderness recommendation.

2. Aquatic and Riparian Resources

- Develop goals, objectives, standards and guidelines and monitoring strategies for the management of riparian and aquatic ecosystems.

3. Economic and Social Concerns

- Changes in Forest management may have social and economic effects. During the analysis, effects on local, regional and national entities, agencies and Tribes will be assessed, considered and disclosed.

4. Fire Management

- Develop goals, objectives, standards, guidelines and monitoring requirements for the use of prescribed fire and wildfire for resource benefit to improve ecosystem health and reduce the risk of uncharacteristically large or intense fires.

5. Minerals Development

- Incorporate new best management practices or other new information as they are developed or become available to address selenium releases into the environment.
- Develop improved goals, objectives, standards and guidelines to address reclamation of land disturbed by mineral development.

6. Noxious Weeds

- Develop improved multi-program goals, objectives, standards, guides and monitoring strategies for prevention, containment and control of noxious weeds.

7. Rangeland Resources

- Evaluate rangeland capability and reassess areas suitable for livestock grazing through the application of management prescriptions.
- Develop standards and guidelines, including forage utilization standards for native range and seeded areas. Monitoring protocols that will promote adaptive management will also be included.

8. Recreation/Travel Management

- Establish open road and motorized trail density levels and determine which areas will be designated open to off road motorized use.

9. Special Management Areas

- Develop management direction to protect the outstandingly remarkable values of St. Charles Creek and Elk Valley Marsh, areas previously determined to be eligible for study under the Wild and Scenic Rives Act. A suitability study will not be completed as a part of this effort.
- Develop direction to provide for consistent management of all eight RNAs on the Forest. Include direction for the use of prescribed fire and wildfire for resource benefit as appropriate to meet the objectives for which the RNA was established.

10. Vegetation (Forestlands and Rangelands)

- Develop improve management direction for desired vegetation structure, composition, disturbance and patterns for each cover type which could include restoring historic fire regimes through prescribed fire or allowing wildfires to burn under appropriate conditions, harvest or thinning of dense stands to reduce ladder fuels.

11. Wildlife Habitat

- Develop management direction to conserve or restore key wildlife, fish

and rare habitats including those species federally listed under the Endangered Species Act, those identified as sensitive by the Regional Forester, and those identified as rare or scarce species. This will also include monitoring for habitat trends.

More detailed information on the "need for change" topics is available upon request at the address displayed above.

Framework for Alternatives To Be Considered

Through a range of alternatives economic and social community stability will be considered in revising the Forest Plan. The alternatives will address different options to resolve the issues identified in the revision topics listed above. Alternatives must meet the purpose and need for revision to be considered valid. One of the alternatives to be examined is the "no-action alternative." This is a required alternative that represents continuation of management under the 1985 Forest Plan, as amended. Alternatives are developed in response to public issues, management concerns, and resource opportunities identified during the scoping process. In describing alternatives, desired vegetation and resource conditions will be defined.

Involving the Public

The Forest Service is seeking information, comments and assistance from individuals, organizations and federal, state, and local agencies who may be interested in or affected by the proposed action (36 CFR 219.6) The Forest Service is also looking for collaborative approaches with members of the public who are interested in forest management.

Public participation will be solicited by notifying in person and/or by mail, known interested and affected publics. News releases will be used to give the public general notice, and public involvement opportunities will be offered at various locations. Public participation activities may include written comments, open houses, focus groups and collaborative forums.

Public participation will be sought throughout the revision process and will be especially important at several points along the way. The first formal opportunity to comment is during the scoping process (40 CFR 1501.7). Public meets will be arranged locally. Specific dates, times and locations of meetings will be identified at a later date. The public will be notified at that time.

Release and Review of the EIS

The Draft Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) is expected to be filed with the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and to be available for public comment in the Spring of 2000. At that time, the EPA will publish a notice of availability in the **Federal Register**. The comment period on the Draft EIS will be at least 90 days from the date the EPA publishes the notice of availability in the **Federal Register**, as required by the planning regulations.

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 the Draft EIS 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 DEIS stage but are not raised until after completion of the Final Environmental Impact Statement (Final 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 comment period so that substantive comments and objectives are made available to the Forest Service at a time when it can meaningfully consider them and respond to them in the Final EIS.

To assist the Forest Service in identifying and considering issues and concerns on the proposed programmatic actions, comments on the Draft EIS 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 EIS or the merits of the alternatives formulated and discussed in the statements. Reviewers may wish to refer to the Counsel 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 EIS, comments will be analyzed, considered, and responded to by the Forest Service in preparing the Final EIS. The Final EIS is scheduled to be completed in the Spring of 2001. The responsible official will consider the comments, responses, and

environmental consequences discussed in the Final EIS, and applicable laws, regulations, and policies in making decisions regarding the revision. The responsible official will document the decisions and reasons for the decisions in a Record of Decision for the revised plan. The decisions will be subject to appeal in accordance with 36 CFR part 217. Jack A. Blackwell, Intermountain Regional Forester, is the responsible official for this EIS.

Dated: August 3, 1999.

Jerry B. Reese,

Forest Supervisor, Caribou National Forest.

[FR Doc. 99-20378 Filed 8-6-99; 8:45 am]

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DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Natural Resources Conservation Service

Proposed Changes to Section IV of the Field Office Technical Guide (FOTG) of the Natural Resources Conservation Service in Indiana

AGENCY: Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS).

ACTION: Notice of availability of proposed changes in section IV of the FOTG of the NRCS in Indiana for review and comment.

SUMMARY: It is the intention of NRCS in Indiana to issue a revised conservation practice standard in Section IV of the FOTG. The revised standard is Residue Management, No Till/Strip Till (Code 329A). This practice may be used in conservation systems that treat highly erodible land.

DATES: Comments must be received on or before September 8, 1999.

ADDRESSES: Address all requests and comments to Robert L. Eddleman, State Conservationist, Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), 6013 Lakeside Blvd., Indianapolis, Indiana 46278. Copies of these standards will be made available upon written request. You may submit electronic requests and comments to joe.gasper@in.usda.gov.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Robert L. Eddleman, 317-290-3200.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: Section 343 of the Federal Agriculture Improvement and Reform Act of 1996 states that revisions made after enactment of the law, to NRCS state technical guides used to carry out highly erodible land and wetland provisions of the law, shall be made available for public review and comment. For the 2 next 30 days, the NRCS in Indiana will receive comments

relative to the proposed changes. Following that period, a determination will be made by the NRCS in Indiana regarding disposition of those comments and a final determination of changes will be made.

Dated: July 27, 1999.

Robert L. Eddleman,

State Conservationist, Indianapolis, Indiana.

[FR Doc. 99-20373 Filed 8-6-99; 8:45 am]

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DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

Bureau of Economic Analysis

Institutional Remittances to Foreign Countries—BE-40; Proposed Collection; Comment Request

AGENCY: Bureau of Economic Analysis, Department of Commerce.

SUMMARY: The Department of Commerce, as part of its continuing effort to reduce paperwork and respondent burden, invites the general public and other Federal agencies to take this opportunity to comment on proposed and/or continuing information collections, as required by the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995, Public Law 104-13 (44 U.S.C. 3506(c)(2)(A)).

DATES: Written comments must be submitted on or before October 8, 1999.

ADDRESSES: Direct all written comments to Linda Engelmeier, Departmental Forms Clearance Officer, Department of Commerce, Room 5033, 14th and Constitution Avenue, NW, Washington, DC 20230 (or via the Internet at LEngelme@doc.gov).

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Requests for additional information or copies of the information collection instrument and instructions should be directed to: Michael Mann, Chief, Current Account Services Branch, Room 8018, Bureau of Economic Analysis, U.S. Department of Commerce, Washington, DC 20230; phone: (202) 606-9573; and fax: (202) 606-5314.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

I. Abstract

The Bureau of Economic Analysis is responsible for the computation and publication of the U.S. balance of payments accounts. The information collected in this survey is an integral part of the "private remittances" portion of the U.S. balance of payments accounts. The balance of payments accounts, which are published quarterly in the Bureau's monthly publication, the *Survey of Current Business*, are one of the major statistical products of BEA.