

Preliminary issues identified will include effects on threatened, endangered, and proposed species; and exchanging federal lands which contain late and old structure stands (LOS).

One of the purposes of this notice of intent is to solicit input and encourage members of the public, interested organizations, federal, state and county agencies, and local tribal governments to take part in planning this project. Public participation will be especially important at several points during the analysis, beginning with this scoping process. Scoping will include listing this EIS in the Malheur National Forest's Schedule of Proposed Activities; letters to agencies, organizations, and individuals who have already indicated their interest in land exchanges; and news releases in the Blue Mountain Eagle, Baker City Herald, and Eastern Oregonian. Information received will be used in preparation of the draft EIS. The scoping process will include: (1) Identifying additional potential issues; (2) identifying issues to be analyzed in depth; (3) eliminating non-significant issues or those which have been covered by a previous environmental analysis; (4) exploring additional alternatives; and (5) identifying potential environmental effects of the proposed action and alternatives (*i.e.* direct, indirect, and cumulative effects and connected actions).

No public meetings are contemplated; however, an open house in John Day, Oregon, is anticipated to occur following issuance of the draft EIS. This open house will be announced in the Malheur National Forest's newspaper of record, the Blue Mountain Eagle; the Umatilla National Forest's newspaper of record, the Eastern Oregonian; and the Wallowa-Whitman National Forest's newspaper of record, the Baker City Herald.

A full range of alternatives will be considered, including a no action alternative. The no action alternative will serve as a baseline for comparison of alternatives. This alternative will be no change from the current management of the Forests and will be fully analyzed. The proposed action will be considered and additional alternatives developed around the proposed action to address significant issues identified during the scoping and public involvement process. Issues gathered may vary action alternatives in the number, location, and which parcels to exchange.

Comments received in response to this notice, including the names and addresses of those who comment, will be considered part of the public record

on this proposal and will be available to public inspection. Comments submitted anonymously will be accepted and considered; however, those who submit anonymous comments will not have standing to appeal the subsequent decision under 36 CFR 215 and 251. 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, however, they should be aware that, under FOIA, confidentiality may be granted in only 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 within a specified number of days.

The Forest Service is seeking information and comments from other Federal, State, and Local agencies; tribes, organizations; and individuals who may be interested in or affected by the proposed action. This input will be used in the preparation of the draft EIS.

The draft EIS will be filed with the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and is anticipated to be available for public review by March 2000. The comment period on the draft EIS will be 45 days from the date of EPA's Notice of Availability in the **Federal Register**. At that time, copies of the draft EIS will be distributed to interested and affected agencies, organizations, tribes, and members of the public for their review and comments. It is important that those interested in the management of the Malheur, Umatilla, and Wallowa-Whitman National Forests participate at that time.

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 EISs 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 EIS stag, but that are not raised until completion of the final EIS, may be waived or dismissed by the courts. *City of Angoon v. Hodel*, 803 F. 2d 1016, 1002 (9th Cir. 1986), and *Wisconsin Heritages, Inc. v. Harris*, 490 F. Supp. 1335, 1338 (E.D. Wis. 1980). Because of these court rulings, it is

important that those interested in this proposed action participate by the close of the 45 day comment period so 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 EIS.

To assist the Forest Service in identifying and considering issues and concerns on the proposed action, comments on the draft EIS should be as specific as possible. It is helpful if comments refer to specific page or chapters of the draft EIS. Comments may also address the adequacy of the draft EIS 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).

After the 45 days comment period ends on the draft EIS, the comments will be analyzed and considered by the Forest Service in preparing the final EIS. The final EIS is scheduled to be completed by September 2000. In the final EIS, the Forest Service is required to respond to substantive comments received during the public comment period. The Responsible Official is the Forest Supervisor for the Malheur National Forest. She will consider the comments, responses, environmental consequences discussed in the EIS and applicable laws, regulations, and policies in making a decision regarding this land exchange. The Responsible Official will document the Triangle Land Exchange EIS decision and rationale for the decision in a Record of Decision. That decision will be subject to Forest Service Appeal Regulations (36 CFR part 215).

Dated: September 17, 1999.

Bonnie J. Wood,

Acting Forest Supervisor, Malheur National Forest.

[FR Doc. 99-24891 Filed 9-23-99; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 3410-11-M

DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Forest Service

Upper North Fork 25 Fire Restoration, Wenatchee National Forest, Chelan County, WA

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 analyze and disclose the environmental impacts of a site specific proposal for the Upper North 25 Fire Restoration. The proposed action is approximately 20 miles northwest of the town of Chelan, Washington on approximately 800 acres of National Forest System Land in the North Fork 25 Mile Creek drainage on the Chelan Ranger District of the Wenatchee National Forest. It includes part of an area identified in Appendix C of the 1990 Wenatchee National Forest Land and Resource Management Plan as the Stormy Mountain Inventoried Roadless Area. It excludes the portion of that area allocated by the plan to roadless recreation. The purpose of the EIS will be to develop and evaluate a range of alternatives for ecosystem restoration activities within the area of upper North Fork 25 Mile Creek that was burned by the 1998 North 25 Fire. The objectives include: (1) Protecting/restoring existing late-successional habitat; (2) creating heterogeneity in the distribution of woody fuel and snags; (3) salvaging fire killed/injured trees; (4) maintaining site productivity; and (5) promoting recovery of riparian areas. To achieve these objectives, the alternatives may include the following actions: Snag/tree removal, snag falling, and prescribed fire.

The alternatives will include a no action alternative and at least one alternative that proposes no action within the Stormy Mountain Inventoried Roadless Area. The proposed project will be consistent with direction given in the Wenatchee National Forest Land and Resource Management Plan, as amended by the April 1994 Record of Decision for Amendments to the Forest Service and Bureau of Land Management Planning Documents Within the Range of the Northern Spotted Owl. This Forest Service proposal is scheduled for implementation between the years 2000 and 2005. The agency invites written comments on the scope of this project. In addition, the agency gives notice of this analysis so that interested and affected people are aware of how they may participate and contribute to the final decision.

DATES: Comments concerning the scope and analysis of this proposal must be post-marked by October 22, 1999.

ADDRESSES: Submit written comments and suggestions concerning the scope of the analysis to Al Murphy, District Ranger, Chelan Ranger District, 428 West Woodin Avenue, Chelan, Washington 98816.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Questions and comments about this EIS

should be directed to Matt Dahlgreen, Interdisciplinary Team Leader, Entiat Ranger District, PO Box 476, Entiat, Washington 98822; phone 509-784-1511, extension 524.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: This analysis was prompted by the North 25 Fire Restoration Environmental Analysis which was conducted in response to the North 25 Fire of 1998. During that analysis, vegetation treatments within the Stormy Mountain Inventoried Roadless Area and adjacent unroaded areas were dropped in response to public concern about roadless area issues. The Upper North 25 Fire EIS analysis will re-evaluate the effects of alternative treatments, designed to meet the objectives summarized above, within these unroaded areas.

The proposed action is to treat approximately 855 acres within the upper watershed of the North Fork 25 Mile Creek. The area proposed for treatment within the Inventoried Roadless Area was allocated to Late Successional Reserves by the amended Wenatchee National Forest Land and Resource Management Plan. The objective of this allocation is to maintain and enhance late-successional forest ecosystems and protect them from loss due to large-scale fire, insect and disease epidemics, and major human impacts. Treatments would include replanting of a portion of the burned area and commercial or noncommercial salvage of trees killed directly by the fire or indirectly by Douglas-fir bark beetles using both helicopter and skyline logging methods. No new roads would be constructed.

To date, the following key issues have been identified: ecosystem sustainability and biodiversity; roadless character; and scenic quality.

The decision to be made through this analysis is whether restoration treatments should be implemented within the Upper 25 Mile Fire Analysis Area, and if so, where, how, and to what extent.

A range of alternatives will be considered, including a no action alternative, and at least one alternative that proposes no action within the Stormy Mountain Inventoried Roadless Area. Other alternatives will be developed in response to relevant issues received during scoping. All alternatives will need to respond to specific conditions in the Upper North Fork 25 Mile Creek Analysis Area.

Public participation will be especially important at several points during the analysis. The Forest Service will be seeking information, comments, and

assistance from Federal, State, tribes, and local agencies, as well as individuals or organizations who may be interested in or affected by the proposed actions. This information will be used in preparation of the draft EIS. The scoping process includes:

1. Identifying potential issues.
2. Identifying issues to be analyzed in depth.
3. Eliminating non-significant issues or those which have been covered by a relevant previous environmental process.
4. Exploring additional alternatives.
5. Identifying potential environmental effects of the proposed action and alternatives (*i.e.*, direct, indirect, and cumulative effects and connected actions).

6. Determining potential cooperating agencies and task assignments.

Comments received in response to this notice, 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; however, those who submit anonymous comments will not have standing to appeal the subsequent decision under 36 CFR parts 215 or 217. 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 within a specified number of days.

The draft EIS is expected to be filed with the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and to be available for public review in December 1999. The comment period on the draft EIS will be 45 days from the date the EPA's Notice of Availability appears in the **Federal Register**. Copies of the draft EIS will be distributed to interested and affected agencies, organizations, tribes and members of the public for their review and comment. It is very important that those interested in the management of the Wenatchee National Forest participate at that time.

To assist the Forest Service in identifying and considering issues and concerns on the proposed action, 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 EIS. Comments may also address the adequacy of the draft EIS 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.)

At this early stage, 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 a 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 draft EIS stage but that are not raised until after completion of the 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 objections are made available to the Forest Service at a time when it can meaningfully consider them and respond to them in the final EIS.

The final EIS is scheduled to be completed in March 2000. In the final EIS, the Forest Service is required to respond to comments and responses received during the comment period that pertain to the environmental consequences discussed in the draft EIS and applicable laws, regulations, and policies considered in making the decision regarding this proposal. The Forest Service is the lead agency for this environmental analysis. The responsible official is the Chelan District Ranger. The responsible official will document the Upper North Fork 25 Fire Restoration decision and reasons for the decision in a Record of Decision. That decision will be subject to Forest Service Appeal Regulations (36 CFR part 215).

Dated: September 14, 1999.

Al Murphy,

Chelan District Ranger.

[FR Doc. 99-24890 Filed 9-23-99; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 3410-11-M

DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Forest Service

Notice of Transfer of Jurisdiction

AGENCY: USDA—Forest Service.

ACTION: Transfer of jurisdiction of the Townsite of Dutch John, Utah, to the Bureau of Reclamation, Department of the Interior.

SUMMARY: On June 24, 1999, Jeanne A. Evenden, Director of Lands, Regional Office, Intermountain Region, signed a Transfer Order transferring jurisdiction of 2,432.73 acres of land within the Townsite of Dutch John, Utah, Ashley National Forest, to the USDI Bureau of Reclamation.

This action is in compliance with Section 6 of the Dutch John Federal Property Disposition and Assistance Act of 1998 (Pub. L. 105-326).

Copies of the Transfer Order are available for public inspection at the Chief's Office, Forest Service, U.S. Department of Agriculture, Auditors Building, 210 14th Street, SW at Independence Ave., SW, Washington, DC 20250, or the Ashley National Forest, 355 North Vernal Avenue, Vernal, UT 84078.

Dated: September 10, 1999.

Jack A. Blackwell,

Regional Forester, Intermountain Region, USDA Forest Service, 324 25th Street, Ogden, UT 84401, (801) 625-5605.

[FR Doc. 99-24878 Filed 9-23-99; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 3410-11-M

DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Forest Service

Olympic Provincial Interagency Executive Committee (PIEC), Advisory Committee

AGENCY: Forest Service, USDA.

ACTION: Notice of field trip and meeting.

SUMMARY: The Olympic PIEC Advisory Committee will meet on October 20 & 21, 1999. The meeting will begin at 11:00 AM on Wednesday, October 20 which will be spent in the field visiting Special Forest Product's facilities and sites. The committee will assemble at the Forest's Headquarters office in Olympia before traveling to the field. The field trip will conclude

approximately 4:00 PM. On Thursday the 21st, the meeting will be held in the Olympic National Forest Headquarter's office at 1835 Black Lake Blvd. SW, Olympia, Washington. The meeting will be in the Willaby Conference room and will begin at 8:00 AM and end at approximately 2:30 PM. Agenda topics are: (1) Update on Survey & Manage; (2) Bull trout listing; (3) Regional Ecosystems Office update; (4) Topics for future committee discussion; (5) Open forum; and (8) Public comments.

All Olympic Province Advisory Committee Meetings are open to the public. Interested citizens are encouraged to attend.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:

Direct questions regarding this meeting to Ken Eldredge, Province Liaison, USDA, Olympic National Forest Headquarters, 1835 Black Lake Blvd. Olympia, WA 98512-5623, (360) 956-2323 or Dale Hom, Forest Supervisor, at (360) 956-2301.

Dated: September 17, 1999.

Dale Hom,

Forest Supervisor, Olympic National Forest.

[FR Doc. 99-24874 Filed 9-23-99; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 3410-11-M

DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Grain Inspection, Packers and Stockyards Administration

Notice of Request for New Information Collection

AGENCY: Grain Inspection, Packers and Stockyards Administration, USDA.

ACTION: Notice and request for comments.

SUMMARY: In accordance with the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995 (44 U.S.C. Chapter 35), this notice announces the Grain Inspection, Packers and Stockyards Administration's (GIPSA) intent to request approval for a new information collection related to the delivery of services conducted under the official inspection, grading, and weighing programs authorized under the United States Grain Standards Act and the Agricultural Marketing Act of 1946. This voluntary survey would give customers of the official inspection, grading, and weighing programs, who are primarily in the grain, oilseed, rice, lentil, dry pea, edible bean, and related agricultural commodity markets, an opportunity to provide feedback on the quality of services they receive and will provide information on new services that they would like to receive. This feedback would assist GIPSA's Federal Grain Inspection Service (FGIS) to