

the FSA-675, Application for FSA County Office Employment, is for the purpose of identifying applicants for vacant positions in FSA county offices. These employees, who are not Federal Civil Service employees within the meaning of 5 U.S.C. 2105 staff approximately 2,400 county FSA offices throughout the nation. Total employment figures equal about 12,444. Part 7, Sections 7.1 through 7.40 of the Secretary's Regulations provides for this system and sets some specific requirements for the type of information that must be considered prior to employment.

Estimate of Burden: Public reporting burden for this information collection is difficult to determine because it is directly related to the number of vacancies that exist and the level of interest candidates may show for any particular vacancy. However, past records indicate approximately 9,000 responses per year. The average time per response would be in the area of 1 hour per applicant.

Respondents: Applicants for Employment.

Estimated Number of Respondents: 9,000.

Estimated Number of Responses per Respondent: 1.

Estimated Total Annual Burden on Respondents: 9,000 hours.

Topics for comment include, but are not limited to the following: (a) Whether the 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 burden, including the validity of the methodology and assumptions used; (c) ways to enhance the quality, utility and clarity of the information to be collected; or (d) ways to minimize the burden of the collection of information on those who are to respond. Comments should be sent to the Desk Officer for Agriculture, Office of Information and Regulatory Affairs, Office of Management and Budget, Washington, D.C. 20503, and to Don Samuels, Personnel Management Specialist, Human Resources Division, Farm Service Agency, USDA, STOP 0592, 1400 Independence Avenue, SW, Washington, D.C. 20250-0592; telephone (202) 418-8988. Copies of the information collection may be obtained from Don Samuels at the above address.

All responses to this notice will be summarized and included in the request for OMB approval. All comments will also become a matter of public record.

Signed at Washington, D.C., on December 2, 1999.

Keith Kelly,

Administrator, Farm Service Agency.

[FR Doc. 99-31871 Filed 12-8-99; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 3410-05-P

DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Forest Service

Lake Tahoe Basin Federal Advisory Committee

AGENCY: Forest Service, USDA.

ACTION: Notice and request for nominations.

SUMMARY: The Secretary of Agriculture has established an advisory committee, chartered under the Federal Advisory Committee Act, to provide advice to the Secretary of Agriculture on implementing the terms of the Federal Interagency Partnership for the Lake Tahoe Region. Nominations of persons to serve as the local government representative or as the Tahoe Regional Planning Agency representative of the Committee are invited.

DATES: Nominations for membership on the Committee must be received in writing by December 27, 1999.

ADDRESSES: Send nominations with telephone numbers for membership on the Committee to: FACA Nominations, Lake Tahoe Basin Management Unit, 870 Emerald Bay Road, South Lake Tahoe, CA 96150.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Jeannie Stafford, Lake Tahoe Basin Management Unit, (530) 573-2641.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: Pursuant to the Federal Advisory Committee Act (5 U.S.C. App.), notice is hereby given that the Secretary of Agriculture has established the Lake Tahoe Federal Advisory Committee on July 13, 1998 and will be selected nominations for two vacant positions. The purpose of the Committee is to provide advice to the Secretary of Agriculture on implementing the terms of the Federal Interagency Partnership on the Lake Tahoe Basin and other matters raised by the Secretary.

The Secretary has determined that the work of the Committee is in the public interest and relevant to the duties of the Department of Agriculture.

The Committee will meet on a quarterly basis, conducting public meetings to discuss management strategies, gather information and review federal agency accomplishments, and prepare a progress report every six months for submission to regional federal executives.

The Committee will consist of no more than 20 members representing a broad array of interests in the Lake Tahoe Region. Representatives have been selected from the following sectors: (1) Gaming; (2) environmental; (3) natural resources; (4) ski resorts; (5) North Shore economic and recreation interests; (6) South Shore economic and recreation interests; (7) resort associations; (8) education; (9) property rights advocates; (10) member-at-large; (11) member-at-large; (12) science and research; (13) local government (vacant); (14) Washoe Tribe; (15) State of California; (16) State of Nevada; (17) Tahoe Regional Planning Agency (vacant); (18) Union/labor interests; (19) transportation; and (20) member-at-large.

Nominations representing local government or Tahoe Regional Planning Agency should describe and document the proposed member's qualifications for membership on the Lake Tahoe Basin Advisory Committee.

Vacancies on the Committee will be filled in the manner in which the original appointment was made.

Appointments to the Committee will be made by the Secretary of Agriculture. Equal opportunity practices, in line with USDA policies, will be followed in all appointments to the committee. To ensure that the recommendations of the Committee have taken into account the needs of the diverse groups served by the Department, membership should include to the extent practicable individuals with demonstrated ability to represent minorities, women, persons with disabilities, and senior citizens.

Dated: December 2, 1999.

Edmund Gee,

Acting Forest Supervisor, Lake Tahoe Basin Management Unit.

[FR Doc. 99-31880 Filed 12-8-99; 8:45 am]

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DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Forest Service

Silvies Canyon Watershed Restoration Project, Malheur National Forest, Grant and Harney Counties, Oregon

AGENCY: Forest Service, USDA.

ACTION: Notice of intent to prepare environmental impact statement.

SUMMARY: The USDA, Forest Service, will prepare an environmental impact statement (EIS) on a proposal to improve the ecosystem health within a portion of the 81,000 acre Silvies Canyon Watershed. The proposed restoration activities will be in compliance with the

1990 Malheur National Forest Land and Management Plan (Forest Plan), as amended, which provides overall guidance for management of this area. Proposed restoration activities are located on the Burns and Bear Valley Ranger Districts within the Silvies Canyon Watershed. The watershed is located about 20 air miles north of Burns, OR. Implementation of proposed restoration activities are scheduled to begin in late fiscal year 2000. The Malheur National Forest invites written comments and suggestions on the scope of the analysis. The agency will give notice of the full environmental analysis and decision making process on the proposal so interested and affected members of the public may participate and contribute in the final decision.

DATES: Comments concerning the scope of the analysis should be received in writing by January 3, 2000.

ADDRESSES: Send written comments and suggestions concerning the management of this area to James M. Keniston, Burns District Ranger, HC 74, Box 12870, Hines, OR 97738.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:

Questions about the proposed project and scope of analysis should be directed to Joan Suther, NEPA Coordinator, Burns Ranger District, HC 74, Box 12870, Hines, OR 97738; phone 541-573-4300.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: The Silvies Canyon Watershed is comprised of about 81,000 acres within seven subwatersheds, of which about 65,000 acres are within the Malheur National Forest Boundary. Of this acreage, about 1,962 acres are privately owned and about 1,069 acres are administered by the USDI, Bureau of Land Management. About 31,527 acres (51%) are in Management Area 1—General Forest; about 15,022 acres (24%) are in Management Area 4—Big Game Winter Range Maintenance; about 8,111 acres (13%) are in Management Area 10—Semi-Primitive Non-Motorized; about 809 acres (1+) are in Management Area 13—Old Growth; about 1,702 acres (3%) are within Management Area 14—Visual Corridors; and about 4,938 acres (8%) are within RHCAs. The 8,000+ acres in Management Area 10—Semi-Primitive Non-Motorized are associated with the Myrtle-Silvies Roadless Area. This roadless area contains elk winter range, perennial streams, hiking and equestrian trails, a jeep trail along the Silvies River, and is included in cattle grazing allotments. The southern 1/3 of the planning area is dominated by shrublands, juniper, and ponderosa pine; the middle portion is ponderosa pine and mixed conifer; and the

northern section is dominated by mixed conifer and lodgepole pine.

The purpose and need for activities is to:

- Improve the health, vigor, and resiliency of vegetation to insects, disease, wildfire, and other disturbances, to move closely resemble historical conditions;
- Reduce road related impacts, specifically negative impacts to water quality, fish habitat, and wildlife habitat; and
- Improve riparian conditions in reaches of streams that do not presently meet riparian management objectives (RMOs).

The proposed action includes a variety of activities to meet the three purpose and need statements.

(1) Proposed restoration activities that would improve vegetation so it is more resilient to insects, disease, wildfire, and other disturbances include:

- Harvesting commercial timber to control tree stocking and manage species composition to favor trees most suited for specific sites on about 12,500 acres within 35 units. This would include about 7,500 acres of commercial thinning, primarily in ponderosa pine stands; and about 5,000 acres of intermediate commercial treatment, focused on understory thinning of mixed conifer sites; no clearcuts are proposed, and no trees over 21" dbh would be harvested;

- Landscape scale burning (about 42,000 acres within 9 burning areas) in all vegetation types to reduce excess fuel accumulations and stocking levels to reduce potential severity of future wildfires;

- Reducing fuels and stocking through other methods including firewood and post and pole cutting, juniper felling (cut and leave on site), piling, and pre-commercial thinning on about 11,300 acres within 35 units; and

- Managing existing noxious weed sites through manual, mechanical, and chemical methods, and reducing the potential for additional sites becoming established.

(2) Specific actions to reduce road related impacts to water quality, fish habitat and wildlife habitat would include:

- Closing or decommissioning an estimated 120 miles of 280 roads no longer necessary for resource management, especially roads within sensitive areas such as riparian habitat conservation areas (RHCAs);

- Seasonal closures of an estimated 80 miles of 100 roads if needed for future resource management and not causing unacceptable impacts to watershed health when open; and

- Implementing such instream activities as installing or replacing existing culverts with culverts designed for fish passage.

(3) Actions that would improve riparian conditions in areas not meeting RMOs include:

- Planting riparian vegetation and protecting it from livestock and wildlife foraging;
- Adding large wood to stream reaches deficient in cover or pool habitat (possibly using helicopters and other equipment);
- Restoring flood plain function where flow regime is degraded by past activities;
- Reintroducing fire to RHCAs to meet RMOs;
- Managing forest vegetation through commercial or pre-commercial thinning within RHCAs to meet RMOs;
- Treating aspen stands to stimulate regeneration; and
- Fencing riparian areas that cannot be managed or enhanced by other methods.

The Silvies Canyon Watershed Restoration Project will focus vegetative restoration activities in the following subwatersheds: Myrtle Park, Sage Hen Creek, Stancliffe Creek, and Burnt Mountain, with fewer activities anticipated in Boulder Creek/Fawn Creek, Myrtle Creek, and Red Hill.

Preliminary issues identified include effects to threatened, endangered, proposed, sensitive, and management indicator species; RHCAs; water quality; forest stand conditions (as related to stand composition and tree densities, increased insect populations, and fuel levels); roadless areas; road densities, decommissioning roads, and access; and forest wood (timber) products.

The scoping process will include: (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 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).

A full range of alternatives to the proposed action will be considered, including a no action alternative and an alternative focused on restoration without the use of commercial timber harvest. The no action alternative will serve as a baseline for comparison of alternatives. Additional alternatives will be developed to address significant issues identified during the scoping and public involvement process. Emerging issues may modify action alternatives in

number, location, and type of project activities.

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 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 parts 215 and 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. 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. 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.

Public meetings are anticipated to occur following issuance of the draft EIS. Public meetings will be announced in the Malheur National Forest's newspaper of record, the Blue Mountain Eagle, as well as the Burns Times Herald.

The Forest Service is seeking information and comments from other Federal, State, and Local agencies; tribes; organizations; and individuals interested in or affected by the proposed action. Comments will be appreciated throughout the analysis process. Input will be used in 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 in March 2000. 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**. Those interested in the management of Malheur National Forest should 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 stage, 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. 1334, 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 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 the addressing these points).

After the 45-day comment period ends on the draft EIS, comments will be analyzed and considered by the Forest Service in preparing the final EIS. The final EIS is scheduled to be completed in June 2000. In the final EIS, the Forest Service is required to respond to substantive comments received during the public comment period. The Forest Service is the lead agency. The Forest Supervisor is the responsible official. The responsible official will consider comments, responses to comments, and environmental consequences discussed in the EIS, and applicable laws, regulations, and policies in making a decision regarding this project. The responsible official will document the Silvies Canyon Watershed Restoration decision and rationale for that decision in the Record of Decision. That decision will be subject to review under Forest Service Appeal Regulations (36 CFR Part 215).

Dated: December 1, 1999.

Bonnie Wood,
Forest Supervisor.

[FR Doc. 99-31882 Filed 12-8-99; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 3410-11-M

DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Natural Resources Conservation Service

Notice of the Technical Guidance for Developing Comprehensive Nutrient Management Plans

AGENCY: Natural Resources Conservation Service, USDA.

ACTION: Notice and request for comments.

SUMMARY: The United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) is seeking comments on the draft Technical Guidance for Developing Comprehensive Nutrient Management Plans (CNMPs). USDA is asking for comments from individuals, the livestock industry, private consultants, State, Tribal, and local governments or subgroups thereof, universities, colleges, environmental groups, and other organizations. These comments will assist USDA in the development and implementation of the final Technical Guidance for Developing Comprehensive Nutrient Management Plans. This guidance document is intended for use for Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) and conservation partner State and local field staffs, private consultants, landowners/operators, and others that either will be developing or assisting in the development of CNMPs.

DATES: Comments will be received for a 90-day comment period commencing December 9, 1999.

ADDRESSES: Address all requests and comments to: Francine A. Gordon, Management Assistant, Natural Resources Conservation Service, ATTN: CNMP, 5601 Sunnyside Avenue, Stop Code 5473, Beltsville, Maryland 20705.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Obie Ashford, Natural Resources Conservation Service, 301-504-2197; fax 301-504-2264, e-mail obie.ashford@usda.gov

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: The Technical Guidance for Developing Comprehensive Nutrient Management Plans is a document intended for use by the Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS) and conservation partner State and local field staffs, private consultants, landowners/operators, and others that either will be developing or assisting in the development of CNMPs. The purpose of this document is to provide technical guidance for local, tribal, State, or Federal programs, not to establish regulatory requirements. This technical guidance is not intended as a sole source or reference for developing