

Notices

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This section of the FEDERAL REGISTER contains documents other than rules or proposed rules that are applicable to the public. Notices of hearings and investigations, committee meetings, agency decisions and rulings, delegations of authority, filing of petitions and applications and agency statements of organization and functions are examples of documents appearing in this section.

DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Research, Education, and Economics

Notice of the National Agricultural Research, Extension, Education, and Economics Advisory Board Meeting

AGENCY: Research, Education, and Economics, USDA.

ACTION: Notice of meeting.

SUMMARY: In accordance with the Federal Advisory Committee Act, 5 U.S.C. App., the United States Department of Agriculture announces a meeting of the National Agricultural Research, Extension, Education, and Economics Advisory Board.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: The National Agricultural Research, Extension, Education, and Economics Advisory Board, which represents 30 constituent categories, as specified in section 802 of the Federal Agriculture Improvement and Reform Act of 1996 (Pub. L. No. 104-127), has scheduled a meeting on November 5-6, 1997, in Washington, D.C. The meeting agenda will focus on two key areas: (1) food and agriculture priorities for Research, Education, and Economics (REE) and its FY 2000 budget, and (2) the Fund for Rural America relevance review of Standard Project Grants and future activities of the Fund. Other agenda items include: Board recommendations on improving public understanding and appreciation of agriculture; an update on the REE Strategic Planning Task Force on agricultural facilities; and an update on the activities of the USDA Civil Rights Action Team. The Advisory Board will also discuss legislative activities related to agricultural research, extension, education, and economics and hear progress reports from Working Groups. A short orientation session will be held for newly appointed Board members on Tuesday, November 4, 1997.

DATES: Orientation of New Members: November 4, 1997, 5:00 to 7:00 p.m.; General Meeting: November 5-6, 1997, 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.

PLACE: Holiday Inn-National Airport (Crystal City), 1489 Jefferson Davis Highway, Arlington, VA 22202, Grand Ball Room.

TYPE OF MEETING: Open to the public.

COMMENTS: The public may file written comments before or after the meeting with the contact person listed below.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Deborah Hanfman, Executive Director, National Agricultural Research, Extension, Education, and Economics Advisory Board, Research, Education, and Economics Advisory Board Office, Room 3918 South, U.S. Department of Agriculture, STOP: 2255, 1400 Independence Avenue, SW, Washington, DC 20250-2255. Telephone: 202-720-3684. Fax: 202-720-6199, or e-mail: lshea@reeusda.gov.

Done at Washington, D.C. this 29 day of September 1997.

I. Miley Gonzalez,

Under Secretary, Research, Education, and Economics.

[FR Doc. 97-27004 Filed 10-9-97; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 3410-MP-P

DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Forest Service

Nicholson Land Exchange, Boise National Forest, Boise and Elmore Counties, ID

AGENCY: Forest Service, USDA.

ACTION: Notice of intent to prepare Environmental Impact Statement.

SUMMARY: The Boise National Forest will prepare an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) to document the analysis and disclose the environmental impacts of a proposed land exchange with Thomas T. and Diana R. Nicholson.

In this exchange, the Boise National Forest would trade parcels totaling approximately 5,890 acres to the Nicholsons in exchange for parcels totaling approximately 573 acres. In order for the exchange to take place, the appraised values of the lands exchanged must be equal. Because of the different character, location, and potential uses of the different parcels, it is possible for

appraised values to be equal even when acreage figures are not. Any or all of the acres proposed for exchange may be exchanged provided the values are equal. In the event the values are not equal, either party may equalize the value by payment in cash, provided the cash equalization does not exceed 25 percent of the appraised value of the Federal lands to be conveyed in the exchange.

DATES: Written comments concerning the scope of the analysis described in this Notice should be received by November 14, 1997, to ensure timely consideration. No scoping meetings are planned at this time.

ADDRESSES: Send written comments to Sharon Paris, Project Coordinator, Boise National Forest, 1249 South Vinnell Way, Boise, ID 83709.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Questions concerning the proposed action and EIS should be directed to Sharon Paris at (208) 373-4157.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: In September 1995, the Boise National Forest completed an Environmental Assessment (EA) titled "Nicholson #3 Land Exchange Project." This EA was distributed to the public as a predecisional EA.

Based on the information in the EA, the Boise National Forest concluded the proposal may have a significant effect on the roadless resource and decided to prepare an EIS. The proposal may result in the reduction of approximately 1,745 acres of the Mount Hienen Inventoried Roadless Area (IRA) from the National Forest System. The IRA is currently 12,390 acres. Proposals that may substantially alter the undeveloped character of an IRA require the preparation of an EIS.

The previous scoping and analysis identified that the proposed exchange would result in the reduction of approximately 1,745 acres of the Mount Heinen IRA from the National Forest System. Other potential issues may be identified during the current scoping period.

The Forest Service is seeking information and comments from Federal, State, and local agencies, as well as individuals and organizations who may be interested in, or affected by, the proposed action. The Forest Service invites written comments and suggestions on the issues related to the proposal and the area being analyzed.

Information received will be used in preparation of the draft EIS and final EIS. For the most effective use, comments should be submitted to the Forest Service within 30 days from the date of publication of this Notice in the **Federal Register**.

The Responsible Official is Robert W. Ross, Jr., Director of Recreation and Lands, Intermountain Region, Ogden, Utah. The decision to be made is whether to exchange National Forest System lands for private lands that would be of equal appraised value and of benefit to the public. The draft EIS is expected to be available for public review in February 1998, with a final EIS estimated to be completed in May 1998. The comment period on the draft EIS will be 45 days from the date the Environmental Protection Agency 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 draft EIS's 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 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 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 chapter 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 draft EIS. 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.

Comments received in response to this solicitation, 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 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 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 10 days.

Dated: October 3, 1997.

Jack A. Blackwell,

Deputy Regional Forester, Intermountain Region, USDA Forest Service.

[FR Doc. 97-26790 Filed 10-9-97; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 3410-11-M

DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Forest Service

Big Bend Road Access, Wenatchee National Forest, Kittitas County, Washington

AGENCY: Forest Service, USDA.

ACTION: Cancellation of an environmental impact statement.

SUMMARY: On May 19, 1994, a Notice of Intent (NOI) to prepare an environmental impact statement (EIS) for the Big Bend Road Access on the Cle Elum Ranger District of the Wenatchee National Forest was published in the **Federal Register** (59 FR 26205). Forest Service has combined this access with another environmental analysis process. There will be no EIS for this specific road access project. The NOI is hereby rescinded.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Direct questions regarding this cancellation to Susan Carter, Environmental Coordinator, Wenatchee National Forest, 215 Melody Lane, Wenatchee, Washington 98801 or telephone 509-662-4335.

Dated: October 3, 1997.

Sonny J. O'Neal,

Forest Supervisor.

[FR Doc. 97-26981 Filed 10-9-97; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 3410-11-M

DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Forest Service

Plum Creek Checkerboard Access Project, Wenatchee National Forest, Kittitas County, Washington

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 to issue easements and authorize construction of roads across National Forest System (NFS) lands located in the Yakima River Basin. The action is proposed in response to an application from Plum Creek Timber Company (PCTC) who seeks legal access to approximately 45 parcels of PCTC land within the Wenatchee National Forest boundary, on the Cle Elum and Naches Ranger Districts. The proposed access locations range from approximately 5 to 20 miles south and southeast, and 5 to 25 miles north and northeast of the town of Cle Elum, Washington, and both north and south of Interstate 90, east of Snoqualmie Pass.

The purpose of the EIS will be to develop and evaluate a range of alternatives including a No Action Alternative, to respond to issues identified during the scoping process. The proposed project will be in compliance with direction in the Wenatchee National Forest Land and Resource Management Plan (March 1990) as amended by the Northwest Forest Plan (April 1994), which provides the overall guidance for management of the area. The non-Federal lands involved are covered by PCTC's Cascade Habitat Conservation Plan (1996).

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 of this proposal must be received by November 5, 1997.

ADDRESSES: Submit written comments and suggestions to Sonny J. O'Neal, Forest Supervisor, Wenatchee National