

the final decision. The public is encouraged to take part in the process and is encouraged to visit with Forest Service officials at any time during the analysis and prior to the decision. The Forest Service will be seeking information, comments, and assistance from Federal, State, local agencies, and other individuals or organizations that may be interested in, or affected by the proposal. This input will be used in preparation of the Draft EIS. The scoping process includes:

1. Identifying potential issues.
2. Identifying major issues to be analyzed in depth.
3. Identifying issues which have been covered by a relevant previous environmental analysis.
4. Considering additional alternatives based on themes which will be derived from issues recognized during scoping activities.
5. Identifying potential environmental effects of this project and alternatives (i.e. direct, indirect, and cumulative effects and connected actions).

The Draft EIS is expected to be filed with the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and to be available to the public for review by April, 2000. At that time, the EPA will publish a Notice of Availability of the Draft EIS in the **Federal Register**. The comment period on the Draft EIS will be 45 days from the date the EPA publishes the Notice of Availability in the **Federal Register**. It is important that those interested in the management of the Umatilla National Forest participate at that time.

The Final EIS is scheduled to be completed by June, 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 a decision regarding the proposal.

The Forest Service believes it is important to give reviewers notice, at this early stage, 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 the 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 environmental impact statement stage but that are not raised until completion of the final environmental impact statement 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 and respond to them in the final environmental impact statement.

To assist the Forest Service in identifying and considering issues and concerns on the proposed action, comments on the draft environmental impact statement 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 environmental impact statement or 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).

The Forest Service is the lead agency. Craig Smith-Dixon, District Ranger, is the Responsible Official. As the Responsible Official, he will decide which, if any, of the proposed projects will be implemented. He will document the decision and reasons for the decision in the Record of Decision. That decision will be subject to Forest Service Appeal Regulations (36 CFR part 215).

Dated: February 1, 2000.

**Craig Smith-Dixon,**

*District Ranger.*

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## DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

### Forest Service

#### **North Rich Allotment Management Plan, Wasatch-Cache National Forest, Logan Ranger District, Cache and Rich Counties, Utah**

**AGENCY:** Forest Service, USDA.

**ACTION:** Notice of Intent to prepare an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS).

**SUMMARY:** The Logan Ranger District, of the Wasatch-Cache National Forest, will prepare an EIS on a proposal to authorize grazing on the North Rich Allotment at a level and in a manner consistent with direction set forth in the Forest Plan, the Rangeland Health EIS, and other applicable laws.

**DATES:** Comments concerning the scope of the analysis should be received in writing by March 10, 2000.

**ADDRESSES:** Send written comments to Brian Ferebee, District Ranger, 1500 East Highway 89, Logan, Utah 84321.

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:** Evelyn Sibbernson, Environmental Coordinator, Logan Ranger District, (435) 755-3620.

**SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:** The Logan Ranger District proposes to authorize grazing on the North Rich Allotment at a level and in a manner consistent with direction set forth in the Forest Plan, the Wasatch-Cache Rangeland Health EIS, and other applicable laws and guidelines. In conjunction, the District proposes to revise the Allotment Management Plan (AMP) and adjust the resource management of lands within the North Rich Allotment to reflect information developed since the Forest Plan (approved in 1985) and to improve resource conditions as needed in several areas.

In an effort to continue moving present rangeland conditions toward desired conditions, select improvement and restoration projects are being proposed. Livestock grazing would be managed under a rotation system, to provide for the longterm health and sustainability of rangeland and riparian ecosystems.

Environmental analysis on the proposal began in the fall of 1998. Preliminary analysis indicated an Environmental Impact Statement would not be required. A scoping letter was mailed to more than 70 individuals, organizations, and local and state government agencies in January, 1999. An open house was held in January and a field trip was held in July, 1999. Data collection and analysis continued through the fall of 1999. In January of 2000, the responsible official and the Forest Service interdisciplinary team decided that an Environmental Impact Statement should be prepared because there may be significant environmental effects associated with the proposal.

Preliminary issues identified by the interdisciplinary team include the effects of grazing on riparian conditions, watershed health, threatened, endangered, and sensitive species, and the effects on dispersed recreation in the area.

A range of alternatives for the allotment will be considered. One of these, no action from the current situation, will be to authorize grazing under the current regime (number and type of livestock, grazing system, and maintenance of improvements). Another alternative will consider no grazing on

this allotment (current permits would be terminated as they expire). Other alternatives will consider grazing under other combinations of number and type of livestock, grazing systems (including a rotation system), season and timing of use, and associated improvements, mitigation, and monitoring.

A decision will be made on whether or not to continue authorizing grazing on the North Rich Allotment, and if so, under what management system and with what improvements. If the decision is made to continue authorizing grazing, term grazing permits, issued by the Logan Ranger District, would authorize this use.

The public is invited to submit comments or suggestions at the address above. Comments from the January 1999 scoping will be incorporated into the analysis and need not be resubmitted. The responsible official is Brian Ferebee, District Ranger. A Draft EIS is expected to be filed in April of 2000 and the final EIS is scheduled to be filed in September of 2000.

The comment period on the draft EIS will be 45 days from the date the Environmental Protection Agency's notice of availability appears in the **Federal Register**. It is very important that those interested in this proposed action participate during that time. To be most helpful, comments on the draft EIS should be as specific as possible and may address the adequacy of the statement or the merits of the alternatives discussed (see The Council on Environmental Quality Regulations for implementing the procedural provisions of the National Environmental Policy Act at 40 CFR 1503.3).

In addition, Federal court decisions have established that the 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). Environmental objections that could have been raised at the draft stage may be waived if not raised until after completion of the final EIS. *City of Angoon v. Hodel*, (9th Circuit, 1986), and *Wisconsin Heritages, Inc. v. Harris*, 490 F. Supp. 1334, 1338 (E.D. Wis. 1980). The reason for this is to ensure 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.

Dated: January 28, 2000.

**Brian Ferebee,**

*District Ranger.*

[FR Doc. 00-3100 Filed 2-9-00; 8:45 am]

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## DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

### Forest Service

#### Lake Tahoe Basin Federal Advisory Committee

**AGENCY:** Forest Service, USDA.

**ACTION:** Notice of meeting.

**SUMMARY:** The Lake Tahoe Basin Federal Advisory Committee will hold a meeting on March 7, 2000, at the Convention Center, Harrah's Lake Tahoe, Highway 50, Stateline, NV. This Committee, established by the Secretary of Agriculture on December 15, 1998, (64 FR 2876) is chartered to provide advice to the Secretary of Agriculture on December 15, 1998, (64 FR 2876) is chartered to provide advice to the Secretary on implementing the terms of the Federal Interagency Partnership on the Lake Tahoe Region and other matters raised by the Secretary.

**DATES:** The meeting will be held March 7, 2000, beginning at 9:00 a.m. and ending at 4:30 p.m.

**ADDRESSES:** The meeting will be held at the Convention Center, Harrah's Lake Tahoe, Highway 50, Stateline, NV.

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:** Ed Gee or Jeannie Stafford, Lake Tahoe Basin Management Unit, Forest Service, 870 Emerald Bay Road Suite 1, South Lake Tahoe, CA 96150, (530) 573-2642.

**SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:** The committee will meet jointly with the Lake Tahoe Basin Executives Committees. Items to be covered on the agenda include: (1) Budget Subcommittee, Communications Subcommittee & Watershed Assessment Subcommittee Reports; (2) California, Nevada and Federal Land Acquisition Processes; (3) Status of Renewing the Charter; (4) Washoe Lake Access; (5) Updating the Environmental Improvement Program (EIP); (6) Open Public Comment; (7) Vehicle Miles Traveled, US Postal Service Master Plan; (8) Status Report on the Lake Tahoe Science Advisory Team; (9) Lake Tahoe Watershed Assessment, Adaptive Management. All Lake Tahoe Basin Federal Advisory Committee meetings are open to the public. Interested citizens are encouraged to attend. Issues may be brought to the attention of the Committee during the open public comment period at the meeting or by filing written statements with the

secretary for the Committee before or after the meeting. Please refer any written comments to the Lake Tahoe Basin Management Unit at the contact address stated above.

Dated: February 4, 2000.

**Maribeth Gustafson,**

*Acting Deputy Forest Supervisor.*

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## DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

### Natural Resources Conservation Service

#### Notice of Proposed Changes to Section 4 of the Iowa State Technical Guide

**AGENCY:** Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), U.S. Department of Agriculture.

**ACTION:** Notice of availability of proposed changes in the Iowa NRCS State Technical Guide for review and comment.

**SUMMARY:** It has been determined by the NRCS State Conservationist for Iowa that changes must be made in the NRCS State Technical Guide specifically in Section 4, Practice Standards and Specifications #600, Terrace and #620, Underground Outlet to account for improved technology. These practices can be used in systems that treat highly erodible land.

**DATES:** Comments will be received on or before March 13, 2000.

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:** Leroy Brown, State Conservationist, Natural Resources Conservation Service, Federal Building, 210 Walnut Street, Suite 693, Des Moines, Iowa 50309; at 515/284-4260; fax 515/284-4394.

**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 next 30 days the NRCS will receive comments relative to the proposed changes. Following that period a determination will be made by the NRCS regarding disposition of those comments and a final determination of change will be made.

Dated: January 19, 2000.

**Leroy Brown,**

*State Conservationist.*

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