Statement (Draft EIS). The Draft EIS is projected to be filed with the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) in May 1999. Subsistence hearings, as provided for in Title VIII, Section 810 of the Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation Act (ANILCA), are planned during the comment period on the Draft EIS. The Final EIS is anticipated by April 2000.

The comment period on the draft environmental impact statement 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 environmental impact statements 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 environmental impact statement stage 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 environmental impact statement.

To assist the Forest Service in identifying and considering issues and concerns of the proposed action, comments during scoping and 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 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. 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 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. Requesters should be aware that, under 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 7 days.

Permits: permits required for implementation include the following:

1. U.S. Army Corp of Engineers
   —Approval of discharge of dredged or fill material into the waters of the United States under Section 404 of the Clean Water Act;
   —Approval of the construction of structures or work in navigable waters of the United States under Section 10 of the Rivers and Harbors Act of 1899;
2. Environmental Protection Agency
   —National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (402) Permit;
   —Review Spill Prevention Control and Countermeasure Plan;
3. State of Alaska, Department of Natural Resources
   —Tideland Permit and Lease or Easement;
4. State of Alaska, Department of Environmental Conservation
   —Solid Waste Disposal Permit;
   —Certification of Compliance with Alaska Water Quality Standard (401 Certification)

Responsible Official

Bradley E. Powell, Forest Supervisor, Ketchikan Area, Tongass National Forest, Federal Building, Ketchikan, Alaska 99901, is the responsible official. The responsible official will consider the comments, response, disclosure of environmental consequences, and applicable laws, regulations, and policies in making the decision and stating the rationale in the Record of Decision.

Dated: June 9, 1998.

Bradley E. Powell,

Forest Supervisor.

[FR Doc. 98–16222 Filed 6–17–98; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 3410–11–M

DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Forest Service

Hells Canyon National Recreation Area Comprehensive Management Plan, Wallowa-Whitman, Nez Perce, and Payette National Forests, Baker and Wallowa Counties in Oregon and Nez Perce, Idaho, and Adams Counties in Idaho

AGENCY: Forest Service, USDA.

ACTION: Notice of Intent to prepare a Revised Environmental Impact Statement.

SUMMARY: Notice is hereby given that the USDA, Forest Service will prepare a revised draft environmental impact statement for the Hells Canyon National Recreation Area Comprehensive Management Plan. The decision to revise the draft environmental impact statement is based on two factors: (1) Over two years have passed since the release of the draft environmental impact statement and new information has been released from the Interior Columbia Basin Ecosystem Management Project that may affect the project area, thus warranting a review. This new information will be evaluated in the context of the affected environment to determine if proposed management direction should be modified; and (2) an additional alternative should be analyzed in detail that was submitted by interest groups in 1995 and was never fully analyzed in the February 1996 draft environmental impact statement. This alternative proposes management direction to manage the Hells Canyon National Recreation Area to thrive as a healthy native ecosystem that is an integral component of a larger bioregion. The proposed action is unchanged from that described in the November 16, 1994 issue of **Federal Register** (59 FR 59203).

DATES: Comments concerning the scope of the analysis should be received in writing, no later than June 30, 1998.

ADDRESSES: Send written comments to Wallowa-Whitman National Forest, P.O. Box 907, Baker City, Oregon 97814.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Direct questions regarding this notice of intent and its modification to Kurt Wiedenmann, Ecosystem Planning Staff Officer at 541–523–1296 or e-mail at: kwiedenmann/r6pnw__wallowawhitman@fs.fed.us.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: The Wallowa-Whitman National Forest proposes to amend the Forest Land and Resource Management Plan (Forest Plan) to modify management direction for the Hells Canyon National Recreation Area (HCNRA) and affirm continuation of other existing management direction. The planning process will be guided by the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) with implementation scheduled for January 2000.

This modified or affirmed direction will provide programmatic management direction for the next 10 to 15 years. The changes will reflect the intent of the HCNRA Act (Pub. L. 94–199), public and private land use regulations (36 CFR Part 292), Forest Service directives, changing social values, agency emphasis on ecosystem sustainability, new information and research findings, and results from the monitoring and evaluation process.

The proposed action would integrate management direction from the HCNRA within the framework of Forest Plan decisions and would establish: management goals; management objectives; standards and guidelines; management area direction; and monitoring and evaluation. Management goals, objectives, standards, and guidelines will be developed for the following resource areas: recreation; access and facilities; wild and scenic rivers; wilderness; heritage resources; scientific; vegetation; biologically unique habitat; soil; air; fire; fish habitat; wildlife habitat; heritage resources/pre-historic sites; heritage resources/historic sites; minerals; landownership; and tribal trust responsibilities.

The HCNRA consists of an estimated 652,488 acres. The HCNRA is comprised of the following management areas: wilderness, wild and scenic rivers, dispersed recreation/native vegetation, forage, dispersed recreation/timber management, research natural areas, and developed recreation and administrative facilities.

The analysis will consider a range of alternatives, including no-action.

Public participation will be especially important at several points during the analysis, beginning with the scoping process (40 CFR 1501.7). The Forest Service will be seeking information, comments, and assistance from Federal, State, local agencies and other individuals, organizations, or governments who may be interested in or affected by the proposed project. 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. Exploring 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).
6. Determining potential cooperating agencies and task assignments.
7. Notifying interested publics of opportunities to participate through meetings, personal contacts, or written comment. Keeping the public informed through the media and/or written material (i.e., newsletters, correspondence, etc.).

The draft EIS will be filed with the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and is expected to be available for public review by January 1999. 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**. The final EIS is expected to be available for public review by June 1999.

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 environmental impact statements 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 have been raised at the draft stage may be waived or dismissed by the court if not raised until after completion of the final EIS. *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 the proposed action participate by the close of the 30-day comment period so that substantive comments and objections are made available to the Forest Service at a time when it can meaningfully be considered and responded to in the final EIS.

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 merit of the alternatives discussed. 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.

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 the proposal. Karyn L. Wood, Forest Supervisor, is the Responsible Official. As the Responsible Official, she will decide whether to implement the proposal or a different alternative. The Responsible Official 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 217).

Dated: June 18, 1998.

William R. Gast, Jr.,

Deputy Forest Supervisor.

[FR Doc. 98–16199 Filed 6–17–98; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 3410–11–M

DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Rural Utilities Service

Municipal Interest Rates for the Third Quarter of 1998

AGENCY: Rural Utilities Service, USDA.

ACTION: Notice of municipal interest rates on advances from insured electric loans for the third quarter of 1998.

SUMMARY: The Rural Utilities Service hereby announces the interest rates for advances on municipal rate loans with interest rate terms beginning during the third calendar quarter of 1998.

DATES: These interest rates are effective for interest rate terms that commence during the period beginning July 1, 1998, and ending September 30, 1998.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Carolyn Dotson, Loan Funds Control Assistant, U.S. Department of Agriculture, Rural Utilities Service, Room 0227–S, Stop 1524, 1400 Independence Avenue, SW, Washington, DC 20250–1500. Telephone: 202–720–1928. FAX: 202–690–2268. E-mail: CDotson@rus.usda.gov.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: The Rural Utilities Service (RUS) hereby announces the interest rates on advances made during the third calendar quarter of 1998 for municipal rate electric loans. RUS regulations at 7 CFR 1714.4 state that each advance of funds on a municipal rate loan shall