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

Agricultural Marketing Service

[FV–97–328N]

United States Standards for Grades of Canned Sweetpotatoes

AGENCY: Agricultural Marketing Service, USDA.

ACTION: Notice.

SUMMARY: The Agricultural Marketing Service (AMS) of the Department of Agriculture (USDA)is revising the United States Standards for Grades of Canned Sweetpotatoes. Specifically, AMS is lowering the recommended minimum drained weight averages of canned sweetpotatoes packed in retail size cans by two percent.

EFFECTIVE DATE: August 31, 1998.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Karen L. Kaufman, Processed Products Branch, Fruit and Vegetable Programs, Agricultural Marketing Service, U.S. Department of Agriculture, STOP 0247, P.O. Box 96456, Washington, D.C. 20090–6456; telephone (202) 720–5021; fax (202) 690–1087; or e-mail Karen__L__Kaufman@usda.gov.

The current United States Standards for Grades of Canned Sweetpotatoes, along with the changes, are available through the above addresses or by accessing the Internet at the following site: www.ams.usda.gov/standards/vegcan.htm.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: Section 203(c) of the Agricultural Marketing Act of 1946, as amended, directs and authorizes the Secretary of Agriculture ''to develop and improve standards of quality, condition, grade, and packaging and recommend and demonstrate such standards in order to encourage uniformity and consistency in commercial practices . . .'' The Agricultural Marketing Service (AMS) is committed to carrying out this authority in a manner that facilitates the marketing of agricultural commodities. The United States Standards for Grades of Canned Sweetpotatoes do not appear in the Code of Federal Regulations but are maintained by the U.S. Department of Agriculture. Copies of official standards are available upon request.

AMS proposed to change the United States Standards for Grades of Canned Sweetpotatoes using the procedures it published in the August 13, 1997, **Federal Register** and that appear in Part 36 of Title 7 of the Code of Federal Regulations (7 CFR Part 36). Specifically, AMS proposed to lower the recommended drained weight for sweetpotatoes packed in retail size cans, including No. 10 size cans, by two percent. The drained weight criteria for the No. 300 can, a size pack which has been increasingly utilized in the industry, will also be added. These changes would allow a more equitable marketing environment for domestic sweetpotato processors.

AMS received petitions from the Sweet Potato Council of the United States, and the North Carolina Sweet Potato Commission and three processors requesting the revision of the United States Standards for Grades of Canned Sweetpotatoes.

Changes in the varietal types of sweetpotatoes and the growing conditions in the growing regions have changed significantly since the current Recommended Minimum Drained Weight Averages (RMDWA's) were first proposed 21 years ago. The petitioners contended that a unilateral reduction in drained weight requirements in the grade standard was indicated due to the varietal characteristics of sweetpotatoes currently available for processing. Data supporting their petition was reviewed by AMS.

AMS published a Notice in the January 15, 1998, **Federal Register** (63 FR 2357). AMS received nine comments, all in favor of the proposed changes to the standard. Three of these comments requested additional changes to be made to the standard that are unrelated to the proposed change. These will be addressed at a later date after receiving more information from the requestors.

Accordingly, based on all the information we have reviewed, AMS is lowering the recommended minimum drained weight for sweetpotatoes packed in retail size cans, including No. 10 size cans, by two percent, and has added the recommended drained weight criteria for the No. 300 can in the grade standards. The No. 300 size can is being added because of the increased usage of this can size. As the canning industry has been replacing production of the No. 303 container size with the No. 300 can, it is appropriate to include the RMDWA for No. 300 cans along with the other drained weight changes in the standard.

This change will become effective 30 days after date of publication of this notice in the **Federal Register**.

Authority: 7 U.S.C. 1621–1627.

Dated: July 23, 1998.

Robert C. Keeney,

Deputy Administrator, Fruit and Vegetable Programs.

[FR Doc. 98–20322 Filed 7–29–98; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 3410–02–P

DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Forest Service

Lolo National Forest Big Game Winter Range Restoration Project

AGENCY: Forest Service, USDA.

ACTION: Notice of intent to prepare environmental impact statement.

SUMMARY: The Forest Service has identified 21 big game winter ranges on the Lolo National Forest that are in a downward trend due to the invasion of noxious weeds and encroaching conifers. The Forest Service will evaluate these winter ranges and analyze various management activities to reduce the spread and density of noxious weeds and allow native and desirable vegetation to reestablish itself and regain vigor. The purpose and need for this project is for the Forest Service to restore the condition of certain high value winter ranges across the Lolo National Forest over the next five to ten years. The proposed actions being considered to achieve the purpose and need include a combination of: burning, cutting small trees and leaving them on site, biological week management, other physical weed controls, and applying herbicides by ground equipment and helicopter. Due to the steep topography on the majority of these sites, we are considering the aerial application of herbicides using a helicopter. The total

area under consideration encompasses approximately 19,300 acres.

DATES: Comments concerning the scope of the analysis should be received in writing on or before September 14, 1998.

ADDRESSES: Send written comments to Forest Supervisor, Lolo National Forest, Building 24A, Fort Missoula, MT 59804.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Andy Kulla, Resource Assistant, Missoula Ranger District, (406) 329–3962.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: These management activities would be administered by the Lolo National Forest in Missoula, Mineral, Sanders, and Granite Counties, Montana. This EIS will comply with the Forest Plan (April 1986) which provides the overall guidance to achieve the desired future condition for winter ranges and the Final Environmental Impact Statement for Noxious Weed Management (March, 1991) amendment to the Lolo Forest Plan.

The process used in preparing the Draft EIS will include: (1) Identification of potential issues; (2) identification of issues to be analyzed in depth; (3) elimination of insignificant issues or those which have been covered by a relevant previous environmental analysis; (4) identification of reasonable alternatives; (5) identification of potential environmental effects of the alternatives; and (6) determination of potential cooperating agencies and task assignments.

To date we have identified the following issues:

(1) On these weed infested winter ranges, what is the existing compared to the potential condition?

(2) How can we coordinate our activities with neighboring land owners?

(3) How will herbicide applications affect noxious weed communities, non-target native plants, winter range forage, wildlife, fish populations, and human health?

(4) What measures will be needed to prevent the reinvasion of weeds if these sites are treated?

The winter ranges we plan to look at in this analysis are:

Ranger district	Project area	Maximum treatment acres([1])	Township, range
Missoula	O'Brien Creek	1,648	T13N, R20W & T13N, R21W.
	Northside 1	649	T14 N, R20W & T15N, R20W.
	Kitchen Gulch	541	T11N, R16W & T11N, R17W.
	Babcock Complex	3,313	T10N, R16W & T11N, R16W.
	Schwartz/Greenough	2,988	T12N, R17W & T12N, R18W.
	Pattee Blue	1,059	T12N, R19W & T13N, R20W.
Ninemile	Madison Gulch	390	T14N, R22W & T14N, R23W.
	Eddy Creek	125	T15N, R22W.
	French Gulch	347	T14N, R22W & T15N, R22W.
Plains	Prospect	1,480	T21N, R30W.
	Wee Teepee	268	T21N, R27W.
	Cougar Silcox	1,404	T21&22N, R29W.
	Cutoff	930	T18N, R26W.
	Knowles Creek	677	T19N, R24W.
	Henry Creek	222	T20N, R25W.
Seeley Lake	Salmon Lake	641	T15N, R14W.
Superior	Bald Hill	638	T17n, R27W.
	Mayo Gulch	266	T18N, R28W.
	Murphy Creek	450	T17N, R27W.
	Blacktail	1,184	T17N, R26W.
	Little Baldy	66	T17N, R26W.
Totals	21 Project areas	19,286	

[1] These are the maximum treatment acres. Actual treatment acres may be less.

The agency invites written comments and suggestions on the issues and management opportunities in the area being analyzed. To be most helpful, comments should be sent to the agency within 45 days from the date of this publication in the **Federal Register**.

The Forest Plan provides the overall guidance for management activities in the potentially affected area through its Goals, Objectives, Standards and Guidelines, and Management Area direction. The potential affected area is within the following Management Areas:

Management Area 6: Research Natural Areas.

Management Area 9: Consists of lands that receive concentrated public use. Goals for these lands are to provide a wide variety of dispersed recreation opportunities and provide for the management of other resources in a manner consistent with the recreation objectives.

Management Area 11: Consists of large, roadless blocks of land distinguished primarily by their natural environmental character. Goals for these lands are to provide a wide variety of dispersed recreation activities and to provide for old-growth dependent species.

Management Area 16: Goals for these lands are to provide for healthy stands of timber and provide for dispersed recreation opportunities, wildlife habitat, and livestock use.

Management Area 17: This MA is similar to 16 except that slopes are generally over 60% and are best managed from an economic perspective with a low road density.

Management Area 18: Consists of lands designated as important deer, elk, and bighorn sheep winter range that will be managed to attain a proper balance of cover and forage for big game through regulated timber harvest. Goals for these lands are to optimize forage production and to maintain healthy stands of timber while considering the needs of big game.

Management Area 19: Consists of lands designated as important winter range for deer and elk. The management goal is to optimize this winter range and to provide for dispersed recreation.

Management Area 21: Consists of timber lands designated important for

old-growth species. Goals for these lands are to manage for viable populations of old-growth-dependent wildlife species.

Management Area 22: Consists of timbered lands below 5,000 feet on south-facing slopes with a high visual sensitivity. These lands are important winter ranges for deer, elk, and bighorn sheep. Goals for these lands are to provide for optimum cover:forage ratios for big game while achieving visual quality objectives.

Management Area 23: Consists of timber lands on south-facing slopes that are visible from major roads and other high use areas. These lands are important winter ranges. The management goals allow small changes to the visual character of the lands while providing optimal cover:forage ratios for big game and maintaining healthy stands of timber.

Management Area 24: Consists of lands of high visual sensitivity and which are available for timber management, dispersed recreation use, wildlife habitat, and livestock use.

Management Area 25: Consists of lands of visual sensitivity and which are available for timber management. The management goals allow for timber management while achieving visual quality objectives and providing for dispersed recreation opportunities, wildlife habitat, and livestock use.

A range of alternatives will be considered. One of these will be the ''no-action'' alternative, which would allow no vegetation manipulation or noxious weed treatment to occur under this analysis. Other alternatives will examine various combinations of weed treatment (including aerial application of herbicides) and vegetative manipulation (including cutting of smaller diameter trees on the site). The Forest Service will analyze and document the direct, indirect, and cumulative environmental effects of the alternatives. In addition, the EIS will include site specific mitigation measures and discussions about their effectiveness.

Public participation will be important during the analysis. People may visit with Forest Service officials at any time during the analysis and prior to the decision; however, two periods of time are identified for the receipt of comments on the analysis. The first of these periods occurs during the next 45 days and the second period is during the review of the Draft EIS.

During the scoping process, the Forest Service is seeking information and comments from Federal, State, and local agencies and other individuals or organizations who may be interested in or affected by the proposed action.

The draft environmental impact statement (DEIS) is expected to be available for public review by December of 1999. After a 45-day public comment period, the comments received will be analyzed and considered by the Forest Service in preparing the final environmental impact statement (FEIS). The FEIS is scheduled to be completed by June of 2000. The Forest Service will respond to the comments received in the FEIS. The Forest Supervisor, who is the responsible official for this EIS, will make a decision regarding this proposal considering the comments and responses, environmental consequences discussed in the FEIS, and applicable laws, regulations, and policies. The decision and reasons for the decision will be documented in a Record of Decision.

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 it is important to give reviewers notice at this early stage because 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, 533 (1978). Also, environmental objections that could be raised at the draft environmental impact statement stage but that are not raised until after completion of the final environmental impact statement may be waived or dismissed by the courts. *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 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 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.) (Authority: 40 CFR 1501.7)

I am the responsible official for the environmental impact statement. My address is: Lolo National Forest, Building 24A Fort Missoula, Missoula, MT 59804.

Dated: July 17, 1998.

Barbara K. Beckes,

Acting Forest Supervisor, Lolo National Forest.

[FR Doc. 98–20405 Filed 7–29–98; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 3410–11–M

DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Forest Service

Committee of Scientists Meetings

AGENCY: Forest Service, USDA.

ACTION: Notice.

SUMMARY: The Committee of Scientists will hold a public teleconference call on August 17, 1998. The teleconference call will begin at 11:00 a.m. and end at 2:00 p.m. (eastern daylight time). The purpose of the telephone conference call is for the Committee of Scientists to continue discussion of its report and recommendations to the Secretary of Agriculture and the Chief of the Forest Service. The public is invited to attend these teleconference calls and may be provided an opportunity to comment on the Committee of Scientists' deliberations during the teleconference, only at the request of the Committee.

DATES: The teleconference call will be held on Monday, August 17, 1998, from 11:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. (eastern daylight time).

ADDRESSES: The teleconference will be held at the USDA Forest Service headquarters, Auditor's Building, 201 14th Street, SW, Washington, DC in the Graves Conference Room (3rd Floor) and at all Regional Offices of the Forest Service, which are listed in the table under Supplementary Information.

Written comments on improving land and resource management planning may be sent to the Committee of Scientists, P.O. Box 2140, Corvallis, OR 97339. Also, the Committee may be accessed via the Internet at www.cof.orst.edu./org/scicomm/.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: For additional information concerning the