

Delta National Forest

January 18, 2000 from 3 pm to 8 pm at the Community Center in Rolling Fork, MS

January 25, 2000 from 3 pm to 8 pm at the Greenville Library in Greenville, MS

January 31, 2000 from 3 pm to 8 pm at the Vicksburg Library in Vicksburg, MS

DeSoto Ranger District

January 20, 2000 from 3 pm to 8 pm at the Library of Hattiesburg, 329 Hardy Street, in Hattiesburg, MS (Co-Hosted by the Chickasawhay Ranger District)

January 21, 2000 from 3 pm to 8 pm at the Orange Grove Community Center on Highway 49, North in Gulfport, MS

January 25, 2000 from 3 pm to 8 pm at the DeSoto Ranger District Office, 654 W. Frontage Road, in Wiggins, MS

Holly Springs National Forest

January 10, 2000 from 3 pm to 8 pm at the Holly Springs District Office, 1000 Front Street, Oxford, MS

January 18, 2000 from 3 pm to 8 pm at the Marshall County Industrial Development Authority, 520 Access Road, Holly Springs, MS

January 24, 2000 from 3 pm to 8 pm at the Corps of Engineers Building, Scenic Route 333, Grenada Dam Road, Grenada, MS

Homochitto National Forest

January 20, 2000 from 3 pm to 8 pm at the Agriculture Building, at Alcorn State University, in Lorman, MS

January 25, 2000 from 3 pm to 8 pm at the Homochitto District Office in Gloster, MS

January 27, 2000 from 3 pm to 8 pm at the Meadville Public Library in Meadville, MS

Tombigbee National Forest

January 11, 2000 from 3 pm to 8 pm Tombigbee District Office in Ackerman, MS

January 12, 2000 from 3 pm to 8 pm at the Thompson Hall on the campus of Mississippi State University, Mississippi State, MS

January 18, 2000 from 3 pm to 8 pm at the Fire Department in Houston, MS

January 25, 2000 from 3 pm to 8 pm at the Lake Tiak O'Kata in Louisville, MS

National Forests in Mississippi (Forest-wide emphasis)

January 11, 2000 from 10 am to 8 pm at the McCoy Federal Building, 100 West Capitol Street, Jackson, MS

Additional public meetings will be scheduled throughout the plan revision process. Their location and frequency of

occurrence will vary depending upon specific objectives. The primary objective for the initial meetings listed above are for information sharing and initial identification of additional public issues and concerns. Subsequent public meetings may focus on specific key issues to seek clarification and understanding prior to development of alternatives and evaluation of effects. Public notice will be provided through publication in the newspaper, the Clariton-Ledger, published daily in Jackson, Mississippi. Notice will also be served through direct mailings to interested and affected parties identified during the plan revision process. The Forest Service will seek to identify other methods to effectively accomplish outreach and invite and encourage broad public involvement throughout the Forest Plan revision process.

The DEIS is expected to be filed with the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and to be available for public review by September, 2001. At that time, EPA will publish a notice of availability of the draft supplement in the **Federal Register**. The comment period for the DEIS will be 3 months from the date the EPA's notice of availability appears in the **Federal Register**.

After the comment period ends on the DEIS, the comments will be analyzed, considered, and responded to by the Forest Service in preparing the FEIS. The Forest Service will continue to open decision making (collaborative efforts) during the evaluation of comments received on the DEIS. The FEIS is scheduled to be completed by September, 2001. The responsible official will consider the comments, responses, environmental consequences discussed in the final environmental impact statement, and applicable laws, regulations, and policies in making a decision regarding this proposal. The responsible official will document the decision and reasons for the decision in a Record of Decision. The decision will be subject to appeal in accordance with 36 CFR part 217.

The responsible official is Elizabeth Estill, Regional Forester, Southern Region, 1720 Peachtree Road, NW, Atlanta, Georgia 30367.

Dated: December 8, 1999.

David G. Holland,

Deputy Regional Forester for Natural Resources.

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DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE**Forest Service****Mill Creek Timber Sales and Related Activities, Rogue River National Forest Jackson County, OR**

AGENCY: Forest Service, USDA.

ACTION: Notice of intent to prepare an environmental impact statement.

SUMMARY: The USDA, Forest Service (USFS), will prepare an environmental impact statement (EIS). The purpose of the EIS is to analyze and disclose the environmental impacts of a site specific proposal to commercially harvest and regenerate trees, construct, reconstruct, and decommission roads, implement vegetation density management activities, implement wildlife projects, and conduct prescribed burns. The activities are proposed in the Upper Rogue River watershed located on lands administered by the Rogue River National Forest, on the Prospect Ranger District, within Jackson County, Oregon. The Proposed Action will tier to and be designed under the Rogue River National Forest Land and Resource Management Plan (1990), as amended by the Record of Decision for the Northwest Forest Plan (1994), which provides guidance for land management activities. This proposal is scheduled for implementation during fiscal Years 2000-2003. The Prospect Ranger District invites written comments concerning the scope of the analysis in addition to those comments that will be solicited as a result of local public participation activities. The Forest Service will also give notice of the full environmental analysis and decision making process so that interested and affected people are made aware as to how they may participate and contribute to the final decision.

DATES: Issues and comments concerning the scope, implementation, and analysis of the Proposed Action must be received by January 5, 2000.

ADDRESSES: Submit written comments regarding the Proposed Action to Joel King, District Ranger, Prospect Ranger District, 47201 Highway 62, Prospect, Oregon, 97536.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Direct questions about the Proposed Action and EIS to Don Boucher, Interdisciplinary Team Leader, Prospect Ranger District, 47201 Highway 62, Prospect, Oregon, 97536, phone: 541-560-3400, FAX: 541-560-3444, e-mail: dboucher/r6pnw_rogueiver@fs.ded.us.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: The Mill Creek Timber Sales and Related

Activities Project will take place within the following sub-watersheds within the Upper Rogue River watershed: Barr Creek, Ginkgo Creek, Union Creek, Upper and Lower Mill Creek, and Castle Creek. Only Forest Service managed lands would be treated. The project area is approximately 45 air miles north of Medford, Oregon. It is bounded on the north by Castle Creek, on the west by State Highway 62, on the south by Red Blanket Creek, and on the east by Crater Lake National Park.

The Forest Service is proposing to implement activities which include, in part, one or more timber sales involving approximately 7,500 acres of harvest units. Silvicultural prescriptions include: density management of overstocked stands of trees (approximately 3,800 acres); treating mature stands with small group selections or even-aged management (approximately 2,000 acres); and, density management of small, younger stands for forest health and stand development (approximately 1,700 acres). Other projects include road decommissioning (approximately 22 miles), prescribed fire for wildlife habitat improvement and fuels reduction (approximately 500 acres), density management of stands of young trees less than six inches in diameter (approximately 2,000 acres), and other wildlife improvement projects. Minor amounts of new road construction or reconstruction may be necessary to access harvest units. These activities are proposed on Matrix lands in the Northwest Forest Plan. Incidental treatments, not including timber harvest, are proposed within Riparian Reserves.

The Purpose and Need for the Proposed Action is to plan timber sales and associated road and vegetation management activities to implement management direction from the Rogue River National Forest Land and Resource Management Plan and the Northwest Forest Plan and to manage for ecosystem needs.

The Forest Service will consider issues with the Proposed Action, and develop additional alternatives to the Proposed Action that respond to the significant issues. The no-action alternative will also be considered.

Public participation will be important during the analysis. Reviewers may refer to the Council on Environmental Quality Regulations for implementing the procedural provisions of the national Environmental Policy Act at 40 CFR 1501.7. The Forest Service will seek written concerns and comments regarding the Proposed Action from Federal, State, and local agencies, any

affected Indian tribes, and other individuals who may be interested in or affected by the Proposed Action. This input will be used to develop additional alternatives.

The Draft EIS is expected to be filled with the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and be available for review by April 2000. The comment period for the Draft EIS will be 45 days from the date that the EPA publishes the Notice of Availability in the **Federal Register**.

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 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 part 215. 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 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 maybe resubmitted with or without name and address within a specified number of days.

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, a reviewer of a Draft EIS must structure their participation in the environmental review process of the proposal so that it is specific, meaningful, and alerts an agency to the reviewer's position and contentions. *Vermont Yankee Power Corp. v. NRDC*, 435 U.S. 519, 533 (1978). also, environmental objections that could be raised at the Draft EIS stage, but that are not raised until after the 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*, 409 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 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 inadequacy of the Draft EIS or the merits of the alternatives formulated and discussed in the 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.

After the 45 day comment period ends on the Draft EIS, comments will be considered and analyzed by the Agency in preparing the Final EIS. The Final EIS is scheduled for release by August 2000. In the Final EIS, the Forest Service is required to respond to the 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.

The Forest Service is the lead agency. The Responsible Official is Joel King, Prospect District Ranger. The Responsible Official will consider the 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 in making a decision regarding the Mill Creek Timber Sales and Related Activities. The Responsible Official will document the decision and rationale in the Record of Decision. The decision will be subject to appeal by the general public under Forest Service appeal regulations (36 CFR part 215).

Dated: November 22, 1999.

Joel T. King,

Prospect District Ranger.

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