

- Tree species compositions are outside the historic range of variability.
- A reduction in Late and Old Structured forest (LOS); especially single-strata LOS.
- A reduction in open-canopy stands accompanied by an increase in stand densities and multi-storied stands.
- An increased risk of large-scale loss of forest to wildfire.
- An increased risk of insect infestation and/or disease that can impact forested stands.
- A decline in riparian/aquatic conditions and hardwood communities.

Based upon direction from the Ochoco Forest Plan and an evaluation of the project area existing condition, the Paulina Ranger District has determined that within the Black Mountain project area:

1. There is a need to manage vegetation towards the historic range of variability and provide a range of forest conditions and habitats that would support historic disturbance processes, native wildlife, and plant species; this includes maintaining and increasing Late Old Structure (LOS), especially single-strata LOS.
2. There is a need to reduce forest density and fuel loadings in order to reduce the risk that disturbance events such as insect, disease, and wildfire will lead to a loss of desired forest conditions.
3. There is a need to maintain existing old trees, especially early-seral and fire tolerant species, *i.e.* ponderosa pine, and western larch.
4. There is a need to improve riparian and aquatics condition along with associated vegetation within Riparian Habitat Conservation Areas (RHCAs) and maintain and enhance hardwood communities.
5. There is a need to contribute to the local and regional economies through restoration activities including providing timber and other wood products now and in the future.

Proposed Action

The proposed action includes a variety of management strategies and activities, including commercial thinning with follow-up noncommercial thinning and/or slashes treatment (5,364 acres), noncommercial treatment with slash treatment (1,040 acres), underburning (3,234 acres) and hardwood enhancement (151 acres). Implementation of the proposed action would require some connected actions; these include use of temporary roads on existing disturbance (25.4 miles), use of new temporary roads (.86 mile), stream restoration (7 miles), and material source expansion (1 location, 5 acres).

Implementation of the proposed action would require the following mitigation to reduce or eliminate unwanted effects; these include road closure (1 mile) and road decommission (1.86 miles).

Responsible Official

The responsible official will be Stacey Forson, Forest Supervisor, Ochoco National Forest, 3160 NE Third Street, Prineville, Oregon 97754

Nature of Decision To Be Made

Given the purpose and need, the deciding official will review the proposed action, the other alternatives, and the environmental consequences in order to determine whether and under what circumstances vegetation and fuels management will be implemented in the Black Mountain project area.

Preliminary Issues

The project's interdisciplinary team has developed a list of preliminary issues that will be used during the analysis of effects. Other issues may arise as a result of public comment and further analysis. Preliminary issues include:

- *Invasive Plant Species (Noxious Weeds)*. Several populations of noxious weeds are known to exist within the project area. There is a risk that management activities may exacerbate the weed situation by spreading existing populations or introducing new ones.
- *Peck's Mariposa Lily*. Management activities can improve habitat for this sensitive species, but there is also risk of impacting individual plants and/or habitat where it occurs in the project area.
- *Soil Productivity*. Maintenance of soil productivity is an important objective for management of National Forest Lands. When mechanized equipment is used in the Forest, soil can become displaced and compacted, which can impact productivity.
- *Water Quality*. The main streams in the project area, Peterson, Porter and Allen Creeks, are listed on Oregon DEQ's 303(d) list due to high summer temperatures. Management activities can result in reduced shade on streams, as well as contribute sediment into the streams, which impacts water quality and decreases habitat quality for fish and other riparian fauna.
- *Wildlife Habitat*. Activities intended to improve forest health and resiliency may reduce habitat effectiveness for some wildlife species, including forest raptors and big game.

Scoping Process

The notice of intent initiates the scoping process, which guides the

development of the environmental impact statement. It is important that reviewers provide their comments at such times and in such a manner that they are useful to the agency's preparation of the environmental impact statement. Therefore, comments should be provided prior to the close of the comments period and should clearly articulate the reviewer's concerns and contentions. Comments received in response to this solicitation including names and addresses of those who comment, will be part of the public record for this proposed action. Comments submitted anonymously will be accepted and considered.

Dated: January 9, 2015.

Sandra Henning,

District Ranger.

[FR Doc. 2015-00537 Filed 1-14-15; 8:45 am]

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DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Forest Service

Forestry Research Advisory Council

AGENCY: Forest Service, USDA.

ACTION: Notice of meeting.

SUMMARY: The Forestry Research Advisory Council (FRAC) will meet in Washington, DC. The Council is required by Section 1441 of the Agriculture and Food Act of 1981 to provide advice to the Secretary of Agriculture on accomplishing efficiently the purposes of the Act of October 10, 1962 (16 U.S.C. 582a, *et seq.*), commonly known as the McIntire-Stennis Act of 1962. The Council also provides advice relative to the Forest Service research program, authorized by the Forest and Rangeland Renewable Resources Research Act of 1978 (Pub. L. 95-307, 92 Stat. 353, as amended; 16 U.S.C. 1600 (note)). The meeting is open to the public.

DATES: The meeting will be held February 18 and 19, 2015, from 8:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.

ADDRESSES: The meeting will be held at the Forest Service International Programs office located at 1 Thomas Circle, Suite 400, Washington, DC. Written comments may be submitted as described under **SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION**. All comments, including names and addresses, when provided, are placed in the record and available for public inspection and copying. The public may inspect comments received at the USDA Forest Service—Washington Office. Visitors are encouraged to call ahead at 202-205-

1665 to facilitate entry into the USDA Forest Service building.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:

Daina Dravnieks Apple, USDA Forest Service, Office of the Deputy Chief for Research and Development, by phone at 202–205–1665. Individuals who use telecommunication devices for the deaf (TDD) may call the Federal Information Relay Service (FIRS) at 1–800–877–8339 between 8:00 a.m. and 8:00 p.m., Eastern Standard Time, Monday through Friday.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: The purpose of the meeting is to:

- (1) Discuss current and emerging forestry and natural resource research issues;
- (2) provide a presentation and discussion on budget outlooks and program priorities of the US Forest Service Research and Development, and USDA National Institute of Food and Agriculture, including the McIntire-Stennis Cooperative Forestry Research Program, and
- (3) discuss anticipated matters that may include USDA engagement in natural resource-related STEM research and education, partnerships with other agencies, interdisciplinary research, research in urban forestry, wood products development, and landscape-scale forest management.

The discussion is limited to the Forest Service, National Institute of Food and Agriculture staff and Council members; however, persons who wish to bring forestry research matters to the attention of the Council may file written statements with the Designated Federal Officer before or after the meeting. Written comments concerning this meeting should be addressed to Daina Dravnieks Apple, Designated Federal Officer, Forestry Research Advisory Council, USDA Forest Service, Office of Research and Development, Mail Stop 1120, 1400 Independence Ave. SW., Washington DC 20250–1120, or via facsimile to 202–401–1189 by February 1, 2015. Additional information concerning the Council, including the meeting summary/minutes, can be provided by contacting Ms. Apple by email at dapple@fs.fed.us.

Meeting Accommodations: If you require sign language interpreting, assistive listening devices or other reasonable accommodation, please request this in advance of the meeting by contacting the person listed in the section titled **FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT**. All reasonable accommodations requests are managed on a case-by-case basis.

Dated: January 9, 2015.

Carlos Rodriguez-Franco,

Associate Deputy Chief, Research and Development.

[FR Doc. 2015–00547 Filed 1–14–15; 8:45 am]

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DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Forest Service

Final Record of Decisions for Kootenai and Idaho Panhandle National Forest Land Management Plans

AGENCY: Forest Service, USDA.

ACTION: Notice of plan approval for the Kootenai and Idaho Panhandle National Forests.

SUMMARY: Regional Forester Faye Krueger signed the final Record of Decisions (RODs) for the Kootenai and Idaho Panhandle National Forests revised Land Management Plans (Plans) on January 5, 2015. The Final RODs document the Regional Forester's decision and rationale for approving the revised Plans.

DATES: The effective date of the Plans is February 17, 2015. To view the final RODs, FEIS and revised Plans please visit the Kootenai National Forest Web site at <http://www.fs.usda.gov/main/kootenai> or Idaho Panhandle National Forest Web site at: <http://www.fs.usda.gov/main/ipnf>.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:

Further information about the Kootenai National Forest's revised Plan can be obtained from Chris Savage during normal office hours (weekdays, 8:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Mountain Time) at the Kootenai National Forest Supervisor's Office (Address: Kootenai National Forest, 31374 US Highway 2, Libby, MT 59923–3022); Phone/voicemail: (406) 293–6211.

Further information about the Idaho Panhandle National Forests' revised Plan can be obtained from Mary Farnsworth during normal office hours (weekdays, 8:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Pacific Time) at the Idaho Panhandle National Forests Supervisor's Office (Address: Idaho Panhandle National Forests, 3815 Schreiber Way, Coeur D'Alene, ID 83815); Phone/voicemail: (208) 765–7369.

Individuals who use telecommunication devices for the deaf (TDD) may call the Federal Information Relay Service (FIRS) at 1–800–877–8339 between 8:00 a.m. and 8:00 p.m., Eastern Standard Time, Monday through Friday.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: The revised Plans describe desired

conditions, include objectives, standards and guidelines, and identify lands suitable for various uses. The Plans will guide project and activity decision making and all resource management activities on the Forests for the next 15 years. They are part of the long-range resource planning framework established by the Forest and Rangeland Renewable Resources Planning of 1974 (RPA), the Government Performance and Results Act of 1993 (GPRA), and the 2012 Revision of the USDA Forest Service Strategic Plan.

The development of the revised Forest Plans spanned more than 13 years and was shaped by the best available science, current laws, public input from numerous public meetings and open houses, and more than 100 community-based work group sessions. These open meetings identified the core values of local communities regarding natural resource management and highlighted the many points of agreement that exist among diverse participants. Our national forests face many new challenges including increasing demands for multiple uses, increasing population pressures and development of neighboring lands. The revised Plans lay the foundation to address and balance the economic, ecological and social needs of forest stakeholders, while continuing the legacy of protecting water and restoring forest health. The Plans are designed to facilitate management that will: Supply clean water, provide economic opportunities for local communities, restore and maintain ecosystems, improve the resistance and resiliency of the forest vegetation to undesirable disturbances and potential climate change effects, offer a diversity of recreation opportunities including remote settings, and utilize best available science.

Dated: January 8, 2015.

Faye Krueger,

Regional Forester.

[FR Doc. 2015–00538 Filed 1–14–15; 8:45 am]

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DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Rural Business-Cooperative Service

Notice of Request for Extension of a Currently Approved Information Collection

AGENCY: Rural Business-Cooperative Service, USDA.

ACTION: Proposed collection; comments requested.