

fire regime, thereby reducing the impacts of fires on the future forest and contributing to the restoration of old forest habitats. Without treatment to begin to restore the fire area, significant additional impacts to soil, water quality, cultural resources, and wildlife habitat are likely over the short and long term. This Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) addresses treating the dead and dying tree component of the landscape and improving roads to reduce sediment delivery to streams. The process of removing dead trees would reduce soil erosion by immediately increasing effective ground cover (limbs, twigs, and small holes) and maintain soil productivity for tree growth. The proposed action would remove dead trees using ground based, skyline, and helicopter logging methods. Trees posing a safety hazard to the public and forest workers would be removed along maintenance level 3, 4, and 5 roads. Roads would be reconstructed and improved to facilitate tree removal and improve watershed condition. Slash and small dead trees would be treated to provide ground cover and reduce short term fuel loading. Protection would be applied to sensitive plants, wildlife species, and cultural resources.

The proposed action is consistent with the 1989 Eldorado National Forest Land and Resource Management Plan as amended by the Sierra Nevada Forest Plan Amendment Record of Decision (2004).

The decision to be made is whether to adopt and implement the proposed action, an alternative to the proposed action, or take no action to remove fire killed and damaged trees in the project area and undertake road improvements and fuel treatments.

Other alternatives will be developed based on significant issues identified during the scoping process for the environmental impact statement. All alternatives will need to respond to the specific condition of providing benefits equal to or better than the current condition. Alternatives being considered at this time include: (1) no Action and (2) the Proposed Action.

Public participation will be especially important at several points during the analysis. The Forest Service will be seeking information, comments, and assistance from the Federal, State, and local agencies and other individuals or organizations who may be interested in or affected by the proposed action. To facilitate public participation information about the proposed action will be mailed to all who express interest in the proposed action and notification of the public scoping period

will be published in the Mountain Democrat, Placerville, CA.

Comments submitted during the scoping process should be in writing and should be specific to the proposed action. The comments should describe as clearly and completely as possible any issues the commenter has with the proposal. The scoping process includes:

- (a) Identifying potential issues;
- (b) Identifying issues to be analyzed in depth.
- (c) Eliminating nonsignificant issues or those previously covered by a relevant previous environmental analysis;
- (d) Exploring additional alternatives;
- (e) Identifying potential environmental effects of the proposed action and alternatives.

The draft EIS is expected to be filed with the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and to be available for public review by March 2005. 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 notice appears in the **Federal Register**. At that time, copies of the draft EIS will be distributed to interested and affected agencies, organizations, and members of the public for their review and comment. It is very important that those interested in the management of the Eldorado National Forest participate at that time.

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 a 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). Also, environmental objections that could be raised at the draft EIS stage, but that are not raised until after completion of the final EIS may be waived or dismissed by the courts. *City of Angoon v. Hodel*, 803f. 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 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 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 adequacy of the draft EIS 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).

The final EIS is scheduled to be completed in June 2005. In the final EIS, The Forest Service is required to respond to substantive comments 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 this proposal.

John D. Berry, Forest Supervisor, Eldorado National Forest is the responsible official. As the responsible official 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: December 15, 2004.

John D. Berry,

Forest Supervisor.

[FR Doc. 04-27952 Filed 12-21-04; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 3410-11-M

DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Public Meeting of the Black Hills National Forest Advisory Board Date Change

AGENCY: Forest Service, USDA.

ACTION: Notice of meeting date change.

SUMMARY: The Black Hills National Forest Advisory Board (NFAB) has changed its January meeting date to Monday, January 10, 2005 to ensure a quorum is present. The agenda includes member consideration of the Black Hills National Forest 1997 Land and Resource Management Plan (LRMP) Phase II Amendment Draft Environmental Impact Statement so as to make recommendations to the forest supervisor. The meeting is open, and the public may attend any part of the meeting.

ADDRESSES: SDSU West River Ag Center, 1905 Plaza Boulevard, Rapid City, SD.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Frank Carroll, Black Hills National Forest, 25041 North Highway 16, Custer, SD 57730, (605) 673-9200.

Dated: December 13, 2004.

Brad Exton,

Acting Forest Supervisor.

[FR Doc. 04-27925 Filed 12-21-04; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 3410-11-M

DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

[I.D. 121504E]

Caribbean Fishery Management Council; Public Meeting

AGENCY: National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS), National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), Commerce.

ACTION: Notice of public meetings.

SUMMARY: The Caribbean Fishery Management Council (Council) and its Administrative Committee will hold public meetings in January 2005. The agenda topics for these meetings can be found under the **SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION** section of this notice.

DATES: The Council will convene on Wednesday, January 26, 2005, from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m., and will reconvene on Thursday, January 27, 2005, from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m., approximately.

ADDRESSES: The meetings will be held at the Best Western San Juan Airport Hotel located at the Luis Muñoz Marín International Airport in Carolina, Puerto Rico.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Caribbean Fishery Management Council, 268 Muñoz Rivera Avenue, Suite 1108, San Juan, Puerto Rico 00918-1920, telephone: (787) 766-5926.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: The Council will hold its 117th regular public meeting to discuss the items contained in the following agenda:

January 26, 2005, 9 a.m. to 5 p.m.

- Call to Order
- Adoption of Agenda
- Consideration of 116th Council Meeting Verbatim Minutes
 - Executive Director's Report
 - Sustainable Fisheries Act (SFA) Document

January 27, 2005, 9 a.m. to 5 p.m.

- Continuation of Discussion on SFA Document
 - Other Business
 - Next Council Meeting

The meetings are open to the public, and will be conducted in English, however simultaneous translation (English to Spanish) will be provided. Fishers and other interested persons are

invited to attend and participate with oral or written statements regarding agenda issues.

Although non-emergency issues not contained in this agenda may come before this group for discussion, those issues may not be the subject of formal action during this meeting. Action will be restricted to those issues specifically identified in this notice and any issues arising after publication of this notice that require emergency action under section 305(c) of the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act, provided the public has been notified of the Council's intent to take final action to address the emergency.

Special Accommodations

These meetings are physically accessible to people with disabilities. For more information or to request sign language interpretation and/or other auxiliary aids, please contact Miguel A. Rolón at the Caribbean Fishery Management Council (see **ADDRESSES**) at least five days prior to the meeting date.

Dated: December 17, 2004.

Alan D. Risenhoover,

Acting Director, Office of Sustainable Fisheries, National Marine Fisheries Service.

[FR Doc. E4-3764 Filed 12-21-04; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 3510-22-S

DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

[I.D. 121504D]

Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council; Public Meeting

AGENCY: National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS), National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), Commerce.

ACTION: Notice of public meeting.

SUMMARY: The Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council will convene a public meeting of the Shrimp Advisory Panel (AP). The AP will receive reports on the status and health of the shrimp stocks as well as a report on the biological and economic aspects of the 2004 Cooperative Shrimp Closure with the state of Texas. The AP will also review Draft Amendment 13 to the Shrimp Fishery Management Plan (FMP) addressing maximum sustainable yield (MSY), optimum yield (OY), minimum stock size threshold (MSST), and maximum fishing mortality threshold (MFMT) for shrimp stocks, as well as improved effort alternatives and standardized bycatch reporting

methodologies and alternatives for a shrimp permit moratorium.

DATES: The meeting is scheduled to begin at 8:30 a.m. on Thursday, January 6, 2005.

ADDRESSES: The meeting will be held at the New Orleans Airport Ramada Inn & Suites, 110 James Drive East, St. Rose, LA; telephone: (504) 466-1355. Copies of the meeting agenda can be obtained by calling (813) 228-2815.

Council address: Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council, 3018 U.S. Highway 301 North, Suite 1000, Tampa, FL 33619.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Richard Leard, Senior Fishery Biologist, Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council, 3018 U.S. Highway 301 North, Suite 1000, Tampa, FL 33619; telephone: (813) 228-2815.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: The Shrimp AP will receive reports from NMFS on the status and health of the shrimp stocks as well as a report on the biological and economic aspects of the 2004 Cooperative Shrimp Closure with the state of Texas. The Shrimp AP may make recommendations for a cooperative closure with Texas for 2005. The Shrimp AP will also review Draft Amendment 13 to the FMP addressing MSY, OY, MSST, and MFMT for shrimp stocks, as well as improved effort alternatives and standardized bycatch reporting methodologies and alternatives for a shrimp permit moratorium.

The Shrimp AP consists principally of commercial shrimp fishermen, dealers, and association representatives.

Although other non-emergency issues not on the agenda may come before the AP for discussion, in accordance with the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act (Magnuson-Stevens Act), those issues may not be the subject of formal action during these meetings. Actions of the AP will be restricted to those issues specifically identified in the agenda and any issues arising after publication of this notice that require emergency action under Section 305(c) of the Magnuson-Stevens Act, provided the public has been notified of the Council's intent to take action to address the emergency.

Special Accommodations

This meeting is physically accessible to people with disabilities. Requests for sign language interpretation or other auxiliary aids should be directed to Dawn Aring at the Council (see **ADDRESSES**) by December 29, 2004.