

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

Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service

[Docket No. 04-039-1]

Mile-a-Minute Weed; Availability of an Environmental Assessment

AGENCY: Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service, USDA.

ACTION: Notice of availability and request for comments.

SUMMARY: We are advising the public that the Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service has prepared an environmental assessment relative to the control of mile-a-minute weed (*Polygonum perfoliatum*). The environmental assessment considers the effects of, and alternatives to, the release of a nonindigenous weevil, *Rhinoncomimus latipes*, into the environment to reduce the severity and extent of mile-a-minute weed infestations in the continental United States. We are making the environmental assessment available to the public for review and comment.

DATES: We will consider all comments that we receive on or before July 1, 2004.

ADDRESSES: You may submit comments by any of the following methods:

- Postal Mail/Commercial Delivery: Please send four copies of your comment (an original and three copies) to Docket No. 04-039-1, Regulatory Analysis and Development, PPD, APHIS, Station 3C71, 4700 River Road Unit 118, Riverdale, MD 20737-1238. Please state that your comment refers to Docket No. 04-039-1.

- E-mail: Address your comment to regulations@aphis.usda.gov. Your comment must be contained in the body of your message; do not send attached files. Please include your name and address in your message and "Docket No. 04-039-1" on the subject line.

- Agency Web site: Go to <http://www.aphis.usda.gov/ppd/rad/cominst.html> for a form you can use to submit an e-mail comment through the APHIS Web site.

Reading Room: You may read any comments that we receive on this docket in our reading room. The reading room is located in room 1141 of the USDA South Building, 14th Street and Independence Avenue, SW., Washington, DC. Normal reading room hours are 8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., Monday through Friday, except holidays. To be sure someone is there to help you, please call (202) 690-2817 before coming.

Other Information: You may view APHIS documents published in the **Federal Register** and related information, including the names of groups and individuals who have commented on APHIS dockets, on the Internet at <http://www.aphis.usda.gov/ppd/rad/webrepor.html>.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Dr. Robert Flanders, Branch Chief, Biological and Technical Services, Pest Permit Evaluations, Plant Protection and Quarantine, APHIS, 4700 River Road Unit 133, Riverdale, MD 20737-1236; (301) 734-5930.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

Background

Mile-a-minute weed (*Polygonum perfoliatum* L. [Polygonaceae]) is an annual vine that is indigenous to Asia. Since it was accidentally introduced into Pennsylvania via imported nursery stock in the 1930s, it has become established throughout the northeastern United States. The weed grows rapidly, with stems that can extend up to 6 meters. Its stems, petioles, and leaf veins are covered with downward-curving barbs that aid the plant in climbing and supporting itself on other plants.

Large, dense patches of mile-a-minute weed develop during the summer. As the vines climb over and cover other plants, they block available sunlight, which can reduce the population of native plant species in affected areas. Mile-a-minute weed can also interfere with Christmas tree farms, pine plantations, and reforestation projects by smothering tree seedlings. Nursery and horticultural crops that are not regularly tilled can also be affected by mile-a-minute weed. The Animal and

Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) and several States list mile-a-minute weed as a noxious weed.

A pest risk assessment that APHIS conducted in 1994 rated the risk potential of mile-a-minute weed as "high," based on its high ratings for probability of spread and environmental impact potential and its medium rating for economic consequences of establishment. That risk assessment also noted that eradication of mile-a-minute weed is no longer feasible, because it is distributed in at least seven States and its seeds are spread by birds and water. The risk assessment recommended that efforts to control mile-a-minute weed utilize classical biocontrol, if feasible.

Pursuant to this recommendation, researchers have identified a nonindigenous weevil, *Rhinoncomimus latipes* (Coleoptera: Curculionidae), as a biological control agent capable of reducing the severity and extent of mile-a-minute weed infestation.

R. latipes is a small (approximately 2 millimeters long) black weevil, first collected in China, that lays its eggs on leaves and stems of mile-a-minute weed. Newly hatched *R. latipes* larvae bore into the weed's stem and spend their entire larval period feeding internally in the stem. Feeding in the stem of mile-a-minute weed by a single *R. latipes* larva kills the stem terminal, preventing development of seeds on that terminal.

After about 3 weeks, the larvae leave the stem, drop to the soil, and pupate. Adults emerge about 1 week later. Adult *R. latipes* feed on mile-a-minute weed foliage, ingesting about 0.1 square centimeter of foliage per weevil per day. Adults also lay about three eggs a day. Adults can survive for up to a year in the laboratory.

Simulated damage studies suggest that larval feeding by this weevil has the potential to kill small mile-a-minute weed plants and stunt and reduce seed production by larger plants. Observations in China indicate that *R. latipes* is host-specific and has caused considerable damage to mile-a-minute plants in its native range, especially through larval feeding.

Therefore, APHIS is considering issuing a permit for the release of *R. latipes* into the continental United States in order to reduce the severity and extent of mile-a-minute weed infestation. APHIS' review and analysis of the proposed action and its

alternatives are documented in detail in an environmental assessment (EA) entitled, "Field Release of *Rhinocomimus latipes* (Coleoptera: Curculionidae), a Weevil for Biological Control of Mile-A-Minute Weed (*Polygonum perfoliatum*), in the Continental United States" (April 2004). We are making the EA available to the public for review and comment. We will consider all comments that we receive on or before the date listed under the heading **DATES** at the beginning of this notice.

The EA may be viewed on the Internet at <http://www.aphis.usda.gov/ppq/>. In the middle of that page, click on "Document/Forms Retrieval System." At the next screen, click on the triangle beside "Permits—Environmental Assessments." A list of documents will appear; the EA for mile-a-minute weed is document number 0037. You may request paper copies of the EA by calling or writing to the person listed under **FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT**. Please refer to the title of the EA when requesting copies. The EA is also available for review in our reading room (information on the location and hours of the reading room is listed under the heading **ADDRESSES** at the beginning of this notice).

The EA has been prepared in accordance with: (1) The National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (NEPA), as amended (42 U.S.C. 4321 *et seq.*), (2) regulations of the Council on Environmental Quality for implementing the procedural provisions of NEPA (40 CFR parts 1500–1508), (3) USDA regulations implementing NEPA (7 CFR part 1), and (4) APHIS' NEPA Implementing Procedures (7 CFR part 372).

Done in Washington, DC, this 25th day of May 2004.

W. Ron DeHaven,

Administrator, Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service.

[FR Doc. 04–12267 Filed 5–28–04; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 3410–34–P

DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Forest Service

Winema and Fremont Resource Advisory Committee

AGENCY: Forest Service, USDA.

ACTION: Notice of meeting.

SUMMARY: The Fremont and Winema Resource Advisory Committee will meet in Lakeview, Oregon, for the purpose of evaluating and recommending resource management projects for funding in

2004, under the provisions of Title II of the Secure Rural Schools and Community Self-Determination Act of 2000.

DATES: The meeting will be held on June 10 and 11, 2004.

ADDRESSES: The meeting will be held in the conference room of the Fremont-Winema National Forests' Klamath Falls Office, 2819 Dahlia Street, Klamath Falls. Send written comments to Fremont and Winema Resource Advisory Committee, c/o USDA Forest Service, P.O. Box 67, Paisley, OR 97636, or electronically to waney@fs.fed.us.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: W.C. (Bill) Aney, Designated Federal Official, Paisley Ranger District, Fremont-Winema National Forests, P.O. Box 67, Paisley, OR 97636, telephone (541) 943–4401.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: The agenda will include a review of 2002–2004 projects recommended by the RAC, consideration of Title II project proposals for 2005 submitted by the Forest Service, the public, and other agencies, presentations by project proponents, and final recommendations for funding of fiscal year 2005 projects. All Fremont and Winema Resource Advisory Committee Meetings are open to the public. There will be a time for public input and comment. Interested citizens are encouraged to attend.

Dated: May 21, 2004.

Karen Shimamoto,

Forest Supervisor.

[FR Doc. 04–12194 Filed 5–28–04; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 3410–11–M

DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Forest Service

Tehama County Resource Advisory Committee

AGENCY: Forest Service, USDA.

ACTION: Notice of meeting.

SUMMARY: The Tehama County Resource Advisory Committee (RAC) will meet in Red Bluff, California. Agenda items to be covered include: (1) Introductions, (2) Approval of Minutes, (3) Public Comment, (4) Chairman Report, (5) Reports from Committee's, (6) Approving Project Proposals, (7) Review New Member Applications, (8) General Discussion, (9) Next Agenda.

DATES: The meeting will be held on June 10, 2004, from 9 a.m. and end at approximately 12 p.m.

ADDRESSES: The meeting will be held at the Lincoln Street School, Conference Room A, 1135 Lincoln Street, Red Bluff,

CA. Individuals wishing to speak or propose agenda items must send their names and proposals to Jim Giachino, DFO, 825 N. Humboldt Ave., Willows, CA 95988.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:

Bobbin Gaddini, Committee Coordinator, USDA, Medocino National Forest, Grindstone Ranger District, P.O. Box 164, Elk Creek, CA 95939. (530) 968–5329; e-mail ggaddini@fs.fed.us.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: The meeting is open to the public.

Committee discussion is limited to Forest Service staff and Committee members. However, persons who wish to bring matters to the attention of the Committee may file written statements with the Committee staff before or after the meeting. Public input sessions will be provided and individuals who made written requests by June 8, 2004, will have the opportunity to address the committee at those sessions.

Dated: May 24, 2004.

James F. Giachino,

Designated Federal Official.

[FR Doc. 04–12211 Filed 5–28–04; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 3410–11–M

DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Forest Service

Siuslaw Resource Advisory Committee

AGENCY: Forest Service, USDA.

ACTION: Notice of meeting.

SUMMARY: The Siuslaw Resource Advisory Committee will meet in Florence, OR. The purpose of the meeting is to review RAC FY05 Business, Public Forum and 2005 Project Review/Recommendations.

DATES: The meeting will be held June 14, 2004 beginning at 9 a.m.

ADDRESSES: The meeting will be held at the Siuslaw Valley Fire and Rescue Station, 2625 Hwy 101, Florence, OR 97439.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:

Linda Stanley, Community Development Specialist, Siuslaw National Forest, (541) 928–7085 or write to Forest Supervisor, Siuslaw National Forest, PO Box 1148, Corvallis, OR 97339.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: A public input period will begin at 10 a.m. The meeting is expected to adjourn at 4 p.m.

Dated: May 25, 2004.

Mary Zuschlag,

Acting Forest Supervisor.

[FR Doc. 04–12216 Filed 5–28–04; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 3410–11–M