

Proposed Action

The Forest Service proposes to authorize grazing of up to 396 Animal Units on National Forest Systems lands on five cattle allotments within the North Fork Eel River watershed and prepare Allotment Management Plans to incorporate the elements included within the resulting decision. Grazing practices and construction or restoration of range improvements would be prescribed to protect and maintain water quality, anadromous fish habitat, and heritage sites, as well as improve livestock distribution to enhance rangeland health.

Responsible Official

S.E. "Lou" Woltering, Forest Supervisor, Six Rivers National Forest, USDA Forest Service, 1330 Bayshore Way, Eureka, CA 95501-3834, is the Responsible Official for any decision to authorize grazing and manage rangelands in the five cattle allotments within the North Fork Eel River watershed on National Forest system lands. He will document his decisions and rationale in a Record of Decision.

Nature of Decision To Be Made

The Forest Supervisor will make the following decision: whether or not to authorize cattle grazing in allotments within the North Fork Eel River watershed, and if so, the terms and conditions required for the term grazing permits and AMPs.

Scoping Process

The public is encouraged to take part in the scoping process and is encouraged to visit with Forest Service officials at any time during the analysis and prior to the decision. The Forest Service will be seeking information, comments and assistance from Federal, State and local agencies and other individuals or organizations who may be interested in, or affected by, the proposed action. While public participation in this analysis is welcome at any time, comments received within 30 days of the publication of this notice will be especially useful in the preparation of the Draft EIS. A public meeting will be held to provide information on the proposal as well as on how to provide input to this analysis. The meeting will be held in Mad River, California at the Mad River Community Hall on December 3, 2002 from 6 to 8 p.m. Information from the meeting will be used in the preparation of the draft and final EIS.

Early Notice of Importance of Public Participation in Subsequent Environmental Review

A draft environmental impact statement will be prepared for comment. 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, at this early stage, it is important to give reviewers notice 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, 553 (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. *City of Angoon v. Hodel*, 803 F.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 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.

Comments received, including the names and addresses of those who comment, will be considered part of the public record on this proposal and will be available for public inspection.

(Authority: 40 CFR 1501.7 and 1508.22; Forest Service Handbook 1909.15, Section 21)

Dated: November 18, 2002.

Jerry Boberg,

Acting Forest Supervisor, Six Rivers National Forest.

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DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Forest Service

Eastern Arizona Counties Resource Advisory Committee

AGENCY: Forest Service, USDA.

ACTION: Notice of meeting.

SUMMARY: The Eastern Arizona Counties Resource Advisory Committee will meet in Globe, Arizona. The purpose of the meeting is to review possible projects for funding and approve operating guidelines including the next meeting date.

DATES: The meeting will be held December 6, 2002, at 1 p.m.

ADDRESSES: The meeting will be held at the Gila County Courthouse in the Board of Supervisors hearing room, 1400 East Ash, Globe, Arizona 85501. Send written comments to Robert Dyson, Eastern Arizona Counties Resource Advisory Committee, c/o Forest Service, USDA, PO Box 640, Springerville, Arizona 85938 or electronically to rdyson@fs.fed.us.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Robert Dyson, Public Affairs Officer, Apache-Sitgreaves National Forests, (928) 333-4301.

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 Public Law 106-393 related matters to the attention of the Committee may file written statements with the Committee staff before or after the meeting. Opportunity for public input will be provided.

Dated: November 18, 2002.

John C. Bedell,

Forest Supervisor, Apache-Sitgreaves National Forests.

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