

then conduct in-country consultations regarding pest status.

12. Potato Technical Advisory Group

This ad-hoc panel will prepare the minituber production guidelines for North America for country consultations.

13. Standards Panel

This panel is responsible for the following: Providing updates on standards for the NAPPO newsletter; coordinating the review of new and amended NAPPO standards and ensuring that comments received during the country consultation phase are incorporated as appropriate; organizing conference calls and preparing NAPPO discussion documents for possible use at the IPPC; and promoting implementation of recently adopted IPPC standards. The panel will finalize a NAPPO standard for implementing the recently adopted IPPC standard "Notification of Interceptions and Non-Compliance" and will finalize a standard for developing bilateral workplans.

The PPQ Deputy Administrator, as the official U.S. delegate to NAPPO, intends to participate in the adoption of those regional plant health standards, including the work described above, once they are completed and ready for such consideration.

The information in this notice includes all the information available to us on NAPPO standards currently under development or consideration. For updates on meeting times and for information on the working panels that may become available following publication of this notice, check the NAPPO Web page on the Internet at <http://www.nappo.org> or contact Mr. Narcy Klag (see **FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT** above). Information on official U.S. participation in NAPPO activities, including U.S. positions on standards being considered, may also be obtained from Mr. Klag. Those wishing to provide comments on any of the topics being addressed by any of the NAPPO panels may do so at any time by responding to this notice (see **ADDRESSES** above) or by transmitting comments through Mr. Klag.

Done in Washington, DC, this 19th day of August, 2002.

Peter Fernandez,

Acting Administrator, Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service.

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DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Forest Service

Rocky Mountain Ranger District Access and Travel Management Plan EIS, Lewis and Clark National Forest; Glacier, Pondera, Teton, and Lewis & Clark Counties, MT

AGENCY: Forest Service, USDA.

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

SUMMARY: The Forest Service will prepare an environmental impact statement on a proposal to develop a travel management plan to regulate motorized and non-motorized travel on roads and trails on lands administered by the Rocky Mountain Ranger District, also known as the Rocky Mountain Division of the Lewis and Clark National Forest. Approximately 392,000 acres of National Forest System lands are contained within the analysis area. Designated wilderness areas that are part of the Rocky Mountain Ranger District will *not* be included in this effort. The purpose of the project is to evaluate the impacts of motorized and non-motorized travel within the planning area, and to identify and select an action alternative that allows recreational use and enjoyment of the National Forest System lands, minimizes resource damage, reduces adverse effects to terrestrial and aquatic species, and mitigates or reduces conflicts between types of uses. Needs for securing additional legal public access routes to reach National Forest System lands will be identified and discussed, but no decision will be made on acquiring specific routes.

DATES: Comments concerning the scope of the analysis should be received on or before 45 days after publication of this notice in the **Federal Register**.

ADDRESSES: Send written comments to Rick Prausa, Forest Supervisor, Lewis and Clark National Forest, 1101 15th Street, North, Box 869, Great Falls, MT 59401. People sending comments electronically can do so by putting "Rocky Mountain Front Travel Plan" on the subject line of their e-mail to r1lewisclark_comments@fs.fed.us.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Dick Schwecke, EIS Team Leader (406) 791-7700.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: This project addresses travel management planning on one of the seven mountain ranges managed partly or entirely by the Lewis and Clark National Forest. The Rocky Mountain Ranger District project includes approximately 392,000 acres, which is about 21% of the Lewis and

Clark National Forest. Approximately 385,900 acres of designated wilderness areas that are part of the Rocky Mountain Ranger District will not be included in this effort. The purpose of this project is to evaluate the impacts of motorized and non-motorized travel on existing roads and trails within the planning area. The Forest Service intends to identify action alternatives that provide for public access, use, and enjoyment of the Lewis and Clark National Forest, while also minimizing resource damage, reducing adverse effects to terrestrial and aquatic species, and mitigating or reducing conflicts between types of uses. The project is intended to focus on identifying the types of use and season of use that would be appropriate on roads, trails, and specific areas within the mountain range to be analyzed.

Public Involvement. 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. Comments received will be included in the documentation for the EIS. The public is encouraged to take part in the process and is encouraged to visit with Forest Service officials at any time during the analysis and prior to the decision. While public participation in this analysis is welcome at any time, comments received within 45 days of the publication of this notice will be especially useful in the preparation of the Draft EIS. The scoping process will include identifying: potential issues, significant issues to be analyzed in depth, alternatives to the proposed action, and potential environmental effects of the proposal and alternatives.

Estimated Dates for Filing. The Draft EIS for the Rocky Mountain Ranger District Access and Travel Management Plan is expected to be available for public review by March 2003. The comment period on the draft EIS will be 45 days. It is very important that those interested in the management of this area participate at that time. The final EIS is scheduled to be completed by October 2003. In the final EIS, the Forest Service is required to respond to 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 a decision regarding the proposal.

The Reviewers Obligation to Comment. 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 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 review'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. (*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 actions participate by the close of the 45-day comment period so that substantive comments and objects 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 statements.

To assist the Forest Service in identifying and considering issues and concerns on the proposed actions, comments on the draft environmental impact statements should be as specific as possible. It is also helpful if comments refer to specific pages or chapters of the draft statements. Comments may also address the adequacy of the draft environmental impact statements or the merits of the alternatives formulated and discussed in the statements. 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 on the draft EIS should be directed to the responsible official: Rick Prausa, Forest Supervisor, Lewis and Clark National Forest, 1101 15th Street North, Great Falls, MT 59401.

Dated: August 19, 2002.

Rick Prausa,

Forest Supervisor.

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DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Forest Service

Notice of Sanders County Resource Advisory Committee Meeting

AGENCY: Forest Service, USDA.

ACTION: Notice of meeting.

SUMMARY: Pursuant to the authorities in the Federal Advisory Committee Act (Public Law 92-463) and under the Secure Rural Schools and Community Self-Determination Act of 2000 (Public Law 106-393) the Lolo and Kootenai National Forests' Sanders County Resource Advisory Committee will meet on August 27 at 6 p.m. in Thompson Falls, Montana for a business meeting. The meeting is open to the public.

DATES: August 27, 2002.

ADDRESSES: The meeting will be held at the Thompson Falls Courthouse, 1111 Main Street, Thompson Falls, MT 59873.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Lisa Krueger, Designated Forest Official (DFO), District Ranger Plains/Thompson Falls District, Lolo National Forest at (406) 826-4321, or Brian Avery, District Ranger, Cabinet Ranger District, Kootenai National Forest at (406) 827-3533.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: If the meeting location is changed, notice will be posted in the local newspapers, including the Clark Fork Valley Press, the Sanders County Ledger, Daily Interlake and the Missoulian.

Dated: August 16, 2002.

Brian Avery,

Committee Coordinator, District Ranger, Cabinet Ranger District.

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DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Forest Service

RIN 0596-AB94

Clarification of Extraordinary Circumstances for Categories of Actions Excluded From Documentation in an Environmental Assessment or an Environmental Impact Statement

AGENCY: Forest Service, USDA.

ACTION: Notice; adoption of final interim directive.

SUMMARY: The Forest Service is adopting an Interim Directive to guide employees in complying with the National Environmental Policy Act and the Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ) regulations for certain actions which can be categorically excluded from documentation in an environmental assessment or an environmental impact statement. The Interim Directive clarifies the consideration of extraordinary circumstances as they apply to categorical exclusions. The intent of this

Interim Directive is to facilitate employees' consistent interpretation and application of CEQ regulations and related agency policy.

EFFECTIVE DATE: This Interim Directive No. 1909.15-2002-2 is effective August 23, 2002.

ADDRESSES: This Interim Directive is available electronically from the Forest Service via the World Wide Web/Internet at <http://www.fs.fed.us/im/directives>. Single paper copies of this Interim Directive also are available by contacting Dave Sire, Forest Service, USDA, Ecosystem Management Coordination Staff (Mail Stop 1104), 1400 Independence Avenue, SW., Washington, DC 20250-1104.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Dave Sire, Ecosystem Management Coordination Staff, 202-205-2935, or Julia Riber, Ecosystem Management Coordination Staff, 406-329-3678.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: On September 20, 2001, the Forest Service published a proposed Interim Directive to Forest Service Handbook (FSH) 1909.15, Chapter 30, which would partially revise the agency's direction on the use of categorical exclusions (66 FR 48412). The intent of this proposed Interim Directive was to assist employees in interpreting and complying with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and the Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ) regulations for certain actions which can be categorically excluded from documentation in an environmental assessment (EA) or an environmental impact statement (EIS). The proposed Interim Directive would have added three new categories for special use authorizations involving administrative changes when no changes are proposed in the authorized activities or facilities. The proposal also included a modification of handbook text to clarify agency policy concerning extraordinary circumstances.

Nearly 26,000 responses in the form of letters, postcards, and e-mail messages were received during the 60-day comment period. These comments came from private citizens, elected officials, and from groups and individuals representing businesses, private organizations, and Federal agencies. Responses consisted of over 800 original letters and over 25,000 form letters.

Public comment on the Interim Directive addressed a wide range of topics, many of which were directed at general Forest Service management direction, particularly the management of roadless areas. Most comments revealed a significant split in opinion on