

1. Identification of issues to be analyzed in depth.

2. Identification of additional reasonable alternatives.

3. Identification of potential environmental effects of the alternatives.

Alternatives to this proposal will include the "no action" alternative, and other alternatives will examine variations in the amount and method of weed treatment.

The preliminary issues identified are:

1. The potential impacts of noxious weed treatment on wildlife.

2. The potential impacts of noxious weed treatment on water quality and fisheries.

3. The potential impacts of noxious weed treatment on native grasses, forbs, shrubs and trees.

4. The potential effects on human health from herbicide use.

5. The potential effects of noxious weed treatment in Wilderness Areas on the quality of the wilderness experience.

The Forest Service will analyze and disclose in the DEIS and FEIS the environmental effects of the proposed action and a reasonable range of alternatives. The DEIS and FEIS will disclose the direct, indirect and cumulative environmental effects of each alternative and its associated site-specific mitigation measures.

Public participation is especially important at several points of the analysis. Interested parties may visit with the Forest Service officials at any time during the analysis. However, two periods of time are specifically identified for the receipt of comments. The first comment period is during the scoping process when the public is invited to give written comments to the Forest Service. The Helena National Forest would like to receive scoping comments by June 1, 2002. The second review period is during the 45 day review of the DEIS when the public is invited to comment on the DEIS.

The DEIS is expected to be filed with the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and available for public review in August, 2002. At that time, the EPA will publish a notice of availability of the DEIS in the **Federal Register**.

The comment period on the DEIS will be 45 days from the date the notice of availability is published in the **Federal Register**.

At this early stage in the scoping process, the Forest Service believes it is important to give reviewers notice of several court rulings related to public participation in the environmental review process. First, reviews of DEIS 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). Secondly, environmental objections that could be raised at the draft environmental impact statement stage, but that are not raised until after completion of the FEIS may be waived or dismissed by the courts. *City of Angoon v. Hodel*, 803 F. 2d 1016, 1022 (9th cir. 1986) and *Wisconsin Hermitages, Inc. v. Harris*, 490 F. Supp. 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 FEIS.

To assist the Forest Service in identifying and considered issues and concerns on the proposed action, comments on the DEIS 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 DEIS 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.)

After the comment period ends on the DEIS, the comments will be analyzed and considered by the Forest Service in preparing the FEIS. The FEIS is expected to be filed in January, 2003.

Dated: February 12, 2002.

Thomas J. Clifford,

Forest Supervisor, Helena National Forest.

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DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Forest Service

Deschutes and Ochoco National Forests Resource Advisory Committee; Meeting

AGENCY: Forest Service, USDA.

ACTION: Notice of meeting.

SUMMARY: The Deschutes and Ochoco National Forests Resource Advisory Committee will meet on Thursday, March 7, 2002 and Tuesday, March 19, 2002 at the Central Oregon Intergovernmental Council building, main conference room, 2363 SW Glacier

Place, Redmond, Oregon. The meeting will begin at 9 a.m. and continue until 5 p.m. Committee members will review projects proposed and make recommendations under Resource Advisory Committee consideration under Title II of the Secure Rural Schools and Community Self-Determination Act of 2000. All Deschutes and Ochoco National Forests Resource Advisory Committee meetings are open to the public. Interested citizens are welcome to attend.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:

Direct questions regarding this meeting to Leslie Weldon, Designated Federal Official, USDA, Deschutes National Forest, 1645 Highway 20 East, Bend, Oregon 97702, 541-383-5512.

Dated: February 13, 2002.

David Summer,

Acting Forest Supervisor, Deschutes National Forest.

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DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Forest Service

Hood/Willamette Resource Advisory Committee (RAC)

AGENCY: Forest Service, USDA.

ACTION: Notice of meeting.

SUMMARY: The Hood/Willamette Resource Advisory Committee (RAC) will meet on Friday, March 8, 2002. The meeting is scheduled to begin at 9 a.m. and will conclude at approximately 4 p.m. The meeting will be held at the Salem Office of the Bureau of Land Management Office; 1717 Fabry Road SE, Salem, Oregon; (503) 375-5646. The tentative agenda includes: (1) Reviewing and Recommending Projects; (2) Public Forum. The Public Forum is tentatively scheduled to begin at 1 p.m. Time allotted for individual presentations will be limited to 3-4 minutes. Written comments are encouraged, particularly if the material cannot be presented within the time limits for the Public Forum. Written comments may be submitted prior to the March 8 meeting by sending them to Designated Federal Official Donna Short at the address given below.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: For more information regarding this meeting, contact Designated Federal Official Donna Short; Sweet Home Ranger District; 3225 Highway 20, Sweet Home, Oregon 97386; (541) 367-9220.