

and other hazards. FSIS is committed to fostering such innovation.

In the past few years, innovative technologies and procedures have been developed by the meat and poultry industry and allied enterprises to enhance industry productivity and profitability. FSIS believes that industry innovation should also be directed to improving food safety. FSIS intends as part of its comprehensive long-term food safety strategy to increase the incentives for such innovation by establishing public health-driven targets, guidelines, and standards that establishments will be held accountable for meeting. Also, FSIS is redoubling its efforts to facilitate experimentation in the meat and poultry industries.

Specifically, FSIS is encouraging in-plant experimentation, which both aids in the development of new production and processing techniques and provides the requisite confirmation that new technologies and procedures are efficacious, practical, and manageable in commercial plant environments. FSIS has reviewed its policies and procedures governing review and approval of in-plant experimentation with the intention of simplifying them to the maximum extent possible, while ensuring that important safety and efficacy issues are considered. As a result, on April 11, 1995, FSIS issued Directive 10,700.1, "Guidelines for Preparing and Submitting Experimental Protocols for In-Plant Trials of New Technologies and Procedures."

Directive 10,700.1 explains that a written proposal and protocol must be submitted to FSIS, reviewed, and approved prior to any in-plant research or demonstration of technologies and procedures that could affect product safety, worker safety, environmental safety, or inspection procedures. The written proposal and protocol must contain a statement of purpose, a scientific literature review, including data from laboratory studies supporting further in-plant trials, a detailed description of the research methodology to be used, and other administrative information. Also, proposals for research on technologies or procedures that could alter inspection procedures, affect food safety, or are to be approved for general use must include a detailed study design and a commitment to submit final research results. Applicants must submit proposals and protocols at least 60 days before any experiments begin, so that FSIS may have adequate time to both review the proposal and notify, if necessary, the local FSIS inspection staff who would observe the approved experiment.

FSIS will not approve any proposal or protocol for in-plant experimentation that could result in an increased risk for the public and accordingly has placed certain restrictions on experiments involving the artificial contamination of food products. For example, in experiments where researchers artificially contaminate carcasses with fecal material that may contain human pathogens, any products from these carcasses must be removed from commercial channels or reconditioned to be wholesome and fit for sale. Also, in tests where researchers artificially contaminate carcasses with surrogate organisms that approximate the growth or spread of human pathogens, trimming of treated areas followed by an antimicrobial wash is required before product can be moved into commerce. Furthermore, while FSIS will not approve experiments that unreasonably interfere with our inspection responsibilities, requests for modest changes in inspection during an experiment will be considered on a case-by-case basis.

FSIS requires that certain proposal and protocol submissions include approvals from other agencies. If any chemical reagents or other such materials are to be used in an experiment, those materials must have been approved by Food and Drug Administration. Also, certain proposals for experiments that may affect worker safety must be accompanied by appropriate regulatory citations or by written approval from the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and/or the Occupational Safety and Health Administration. And, some proposals for experiments that may impact environmental safety must be accompanied by approvals from EPA.

During approved in-plant experimentation, FSIS reserves the right to have on-site observers present and to review interim data. Should unexpected safety concerns arise at any time, for example, if food products affected by the experiment are in violation of food safety statutes or present an increased risk to the public, FSIS will require termination of the experiment. FSIS also reserves the right to have an approved proposal, as well as experimental results, reviewed by outside parties, as long as proprietary rights are safeguarded. Further, FSIS reserves the right to request the "raw" data initially collected from the experiment when evaluating the results of in-plant experiments.

FSIS has established a new unit, the Technology Assessment and Research Coordination Division (TARCD), which will function as the single point of entry

for in-plant research protocols and experimental results. TARCD will perform the initial review of proposals for acceptability and completeness and then forward the proposals to teams within FSIS for technical review. TARCD also will be responsible for conveying results from FSIS technical reviews to the researchers requesting approval for in-plant experiments. TARCD will similarly coordinate the review of results and facilitate the policy decision process.

Proposals and protocols that are unapproved or in the approval process will be unavailable to the public. Approved proposals and protocols will be available and on file in the FSIS Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) reading room. FSIS will ensure FOIA protection for proprietary information contained in proposals and protocols available to the public.

Development and dissemination of these guidelines, as well as the establishment within FSIS of a single office for receiving proposed protocols for in-plant research, is intended to encourage the technological and procedural innovation necessary to enhance food safety within the meat and poultry industries.

Done at Washington, DC on May 19, 1995.

Michael R. Taylor,

Acting Under Secretary for Food Safety.

[FR Doc. 95-12883 Filed 5-24-95; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 3410-DM-P

Forest Service

Notice of Intent

AGENCY: Forest Service, USDA.

ACTION: Revision of notice of intent to prepare an Environmental Impact Statement.

SUMMARY: On May 13, 1992, the Forest Service filed a notice of intent in the **Federal Register** to prepare an environmental impact statement (EIS) to analyze revision of management guidelines for the Desolation Wilderness on the Pacific and Placerville Ranger Districts of the Eldorado National Forest and the Lake Tahoe Basin Management Unit, El Dorado County, California. A subsequent notice was filed on May 2, 1994, because the draft EIS was delayed more than 6 months. This notice is being filed because the EIS has been delayed more than 6 months and because the responsible official has been changed.

ADDRESSES: John Phipps, Forest Supervisor, Eldorado National Forest, ATTN: Desolation Wilderness EIS, 100

Forni Rd. Placerville, CA 95667, phone 916-622-5061.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Direct questions about the proposed action and EIS to Karen Leyse, Interdisciplinary Team Leader, Eldorado National Forest, 100 Forni Rd. Placerville, CA 95667, phone 916-622-5061.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: The *Eldorado National Forest Land and Resource Management Plan* (1989), the *Lake Tahoe Basin Management Unit Land and Resource Management Plan* (1988), and the 1964 Wilderness Act have provided general management direction for Desolation Wilderness. The current Desolation Wilderness Management Plan was completed in 1978; both Forest Plans indicate the need to review the existing Desolation Wilderness Plan and to revise it as needed. The decision may result in amendment to the Forest Plans.

A great deal of scoping has been completed since the original notice of intent was filed. Through scoping, the following issues have been identified:

1. **Fire.** Fire suppression has affected the development and maintenance of natural plant communities and the resulting ecosystems. Current fire management policy and suppression techniques are not consistent with maintaining natural processes and wilderness characteristics.

2. **Fisheries.** Stocking of fish in wilderness lakes provides recreational opportunities for the public, but this practice affects naturally occurring biodiversity and ecosystems, which are protected by wilderness designation.

3. **Range.** Current grazing practices may impact water quality, vegetation, meadow and riparian areas, wildlife, and archaeological sites. Grazing is a historical use; however, the presence of cattle disturbs some visitors.

4. **Water quality.** Current use and management practices may be creating unacceptable water quality conditions in the wilderness.

5. **Wood fires.** Many wilderness users value campfires as part of the wilderness experience; however, collection of firewood and presence of firerings, ashes, and other campfire debris degrades campsites and eliminates down, woody debris, an important part of the ecosystem.

6. **Visitor impacts.** Some areas of the wilderness, especially lakeshores and easily accessed sites, are being damaged by visitor use. Users, including recreational stock users, may impact the vegetation, soils, wildlife, and cultural sites.

7. **Quotas and group size.** The number and distribution of users and the size of

groups (including stock) affect the values and character of the wilderness and the quality of the wilderness experience.

8. **Aircraft overflights.** Overflights are common and intrude on the wilderness experience.

9. **Dogs.** The presence of dogs disturbs some visitors, adds to sanitation problems, and may harass wildlife.

10. **Recreational shooting.** Some visitors feel that the responsible use of guns should be allowed. Others are disturbed by the noise and the harassment of wildlife and have expressed concern for their own safety.

11. **Trails.** Management and development of trailheads and trails may affect the amounts and patterns of use and the quality of the wilderness experience.

In preparing the EIS, the Forest Service will be considering a range of alternatives for future management of the wilderness. The Forest Service is in the process of developing these alternatives, which range from maximum recreational use of the wilderness to maximum wilderness protection. These preliminary alternatives may be revised before the draft EIS is issued as new information is developed or new comments are received:

Maximum Opportunity. This alternative would increase the use of the wilderness by expanding the trail system and signing, maintaining all trails, and upgrading unimproved trails. Camping would be allowed in all zones. Fisheries opportunities would be increased. Campfires would be permitted in designated firings, back country toilets would be installed, group sizes of 25 would be permitted, and quotas for overnight camping would be raised. There would be no limits on recreational shooting. There would be no group size limits for recreational stock. No fees would be charged.

No Action. The current situation would continue unchanged. There would continue to be unlimited day use with quotas on overnight use in the 3-month summer period. Camping would be permitted in all zones. Maintenance and reconstruction of existing trails would continue. Fish stocking of lakes and operation of stream flow management dams would continue. Wood fires would continue to be prohibited. All fires, including lightning caused fires, would be suppressed. Sanitation recommendations would continue to include a 100-foot setback from water. There would be no limits on recreational shooting or recreational stock. The forests would continue to

pursue charging a permit reservation fee.

Enhanced Wilderness Experience. The quality of the wilderness experience would be improved by restricting the number of day users in heavily used areas and by slightly reducing the number of overnight users permitted over a 5-month summer period. Group sizes would be reduced in remote areas. The number of stock permitted per group would be limited, and recreational shooting would be limited during the heavy use season. There would be a leash requirement for dogs. Fish stocking would continue at reduced levels. Overnight wilderness permits would be issued by zone or by destination, with no camping in heaviest use areas. "No trace" wood fires would be allowed in designated areas. Several trails could be removed. Other trails would be made more primitive. Directional signing would be found only at major trail intersections. Prescribed natural fire would be allowed in areas of the wilderness where fire hazard is low.

Physical Restoration. The number of day and overnight users would be further reduced from the Enhanced Wilderness Experience alternative during a 5-month summer quota period. Group sizes for users and stock would be reduced. Grazing would be permitted only where appropriate based on wilderness resource conditions. Recreational shooting would be prohibited. Camping and outfitter/guide use would be regulated by zone. Dogs would be required to be on a leash. Fish stocking would be reduced, and riparian areas would be revegetated. Some trails could be removed and others would be re-routed in sensitive areas. Planned and natural prescribed fire would be used to return areas of the wilderness to pre-historical conditions. Reservation and permit fees (if legal) would be collected.

Enhanced Ecosystem. Group sizes for users and stock would be further reduced from the other alternatives, and the numbers of overall visitors would be reduced. Grazing would be permitted only where appropriate based on wilderness resources conditions. Stocking of non-indigenous fish species would be allowed only if the fish populations were adversely influenced by humans. Dogs would be required to be on a leash. Recreational shooting and campfires would be prohibited. The number of signs, stream maintenance dams, and trails would be reduced. Trails would be re-routed away from sensitive areas; stream crossings would be repaired; riparian areas would be revegetated. Planned and natural

prescribed fire would be used throughout the wilderness. Reservation and permit fees (if legal) would be collected.

Maximum Wilderness Preservation. The wilderness would be managed for very primitive to pristine conditions. Stock and human use levels would be reduced. Dogs, shooting, and campfires would be prohibited. Signing, streamflow maintenance dams, some campsites, and many trails would be removed. Fish stocking would cease. Reservation and permit fees (if legal) would be collected.

John Phipps, Forest Supervisor, Eldorado National Forest, and Robert E. Harris, Forest Supervisor, Lake Tahoe Basin Management Unit, are the responsible officials.

The draft EIS is expected to be filed with the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and to be available for public review by August 1995. At that time the 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 EPA's notice of availability appears in the **Federal Register**. It is very important that reviewers participate at that time. To be the most helpful, comments on the draft EIS should be as specific as possible and may address the adequacy of the statement or the merits of the alternatives discussed (see The Council on Environmental Quality Regulations for implementing the procedural provisions of the National Environmental Policy Act at 40 CFR 1503.3). In addition, Federal court decisions have established that reviewers of draft EIS's must structure their participation in the environmental review of the proposal so that it is meaningful and alerts an agency to the reviewers' position and contentions, *Vermont Yankee Nuclear Power Corp. v. NRDC*, 435 U.S. 519, 553 (1978), and that environmental objections that could have been raised at the draft stage may be waived if not raised until after completion of the final EIS. *Wisconsin Heritages, Inc. v. Harris*, 490 F. Supp. 1334, 1338 (E.D. Wis. 1980). The reason for this is to ensure that substantive comments and objectives are made available to the Forest Service at a time when it can meaningfully consider them and respond to them in the final EIS.

After the comment period ends on the draft EIS, the comments will be analyzed and considered by the Forest Service in preparing the final EIS. The final EIS is scheduled to be completed by January 1996. The Forest Service is required to respond in the final EIS to the comments received (40 CFR 1503.4).

The responsible officials will consider the comments, responses, disclosure of environmental consequences, and applicable laws, regulations, and policies in making a decision regarding this proposal. The responsible officials will document the decision and rationale in the Record of Decision. That decision will be subject to appeal.

Dated: May 15, 1995.

Robert E. Harris,
Forest Supervisor, Lake Tahoe Basin
Management Unit.

Dated: May 15, 1995.

John Phipps,
Forest Supervisor, Eldorado National Forest.
[FR Doc. 95-12857 Filed 5-24-95; 8:45 am]
BILLING CODE 3410-11-M

Inland Native Fish Strategy; Environmental Assessment for Public Review

ACTION: Notice of publication of the Inland Native Fish Strategy Environmental Assessment for public review.

SUMMARY: In the March 14, 1995, **Federal Register** (Vol. 60, No. 49, pp. 13697-13698), notice was given that the Forest Service, in cooperation with the Bureau of Land Management and US Fish and Wildlife Service, is gathering information in order to prepare an Environmental Assessment (EA) for a proposal to protect habitat and populations of native inland fish.

This EA will address National Forest System lands on the Bitterroot, Boise, Caribou, Challis, Clearwater, Colville, Deerlodge, Deschutes, Flathead, Fremont, Helena, Humboldt, Idaho Panhandle, Kootenai, Lolo, Malheur, Ochoco, Payette, Sawtooth, Wallowa-Whitman, and Winema National Forests in the Northern, Intermountain, and Pacific Northwest Regions.

The public scoping period began March 14 and ended April 26, 1995. As of May 1, approximately 235 letters have been received from the public. Many people commented that they should have an opportunity to review the alternatives and effects analysis that will be documented in the Environmental Assessment. The agency agrees that the public should have this opportunity. The Environmental Assessment will be completed on or about May 31, and will be sent to the public for a 30-day review and comment period. These comments will be considered in reaching a decision.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Questions about the environmental assessment should be directed to David

Wright, Team Leader, USDA Forest Service, 3815 Schrieber Way, Coeur d'Alene, Idaho, 83814. Phone: (208) 765-7223.

The responsible officials for this Environmental Assessment are the Regional Foresters for the Intermountain, Northern, and Pacific Northwest Regions. They will make a decision regarding this proposal considering the comments and responses, environmental consequences discussed in the Environmental Assessment, and applicable laws, regulations, and policies. The decision and reasons for the decision will be documented in a Decision Notice. The Decision Notice is expected to be available in late July, 1995.

Dated: May 16, 1995.

David J. Wright,
Inland Native Fish Team Leader, USDA,
Forest Service.
[FR Doc. 95-12858 Filed 5-24-95; 8:45 am]
BILLING CODE 3410-11-M

Willamette Provincial Interagency Executive Committee (PIEC), Advisory Committee

AGENCY: Forest Service, USDA.

ACTION: Notice of meeting.

SUMMARY: The Willamette PIEC Advisory Committee will meet on Thursday, June 15, 1995, at the Salem District Bureau of Land Management (BLM) Office, 1717 Fabry Road SE, Salem, Oregon. The meeting will begin at 9:00 a.m. and continue until approximately 3:00 p.m. Agenda items to be covered include: (1) Followup on procedural issues, (2) Information on watershed analysis and schedule for FY 95-97, (3) Key issues, concerns, and opportunities of Federal Agencies for implementing the Northwest Forest Plan, (4) Identifying Advisory Committee tasks, (5) Open public forum. All Willamette PIEC meetings are open to the public, and interested citizens are encouraged to attend. Written comments concerning the Advisory Committee's affairs can be submitted at the meeting. Oral comment can also be made during the public forum. Length of oral comments will be limited to the time allotted on the agenda.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Direct questions regarding this meeting to Neal Forrester, Designated Federal Official, Willamette National Forest, 211 East Seventh Avenue, Eugene, Oregon; 503-465-6924.