

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.

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## DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

### National Agricultural Research, Extension, Education, and Economics Advisory Board

**AGENCY:** Research, Education, and Economics, USDA.

**ACTION:** Notice of Solicitation of Advisory Board Recommendations.

**SUMMARY:** In accordance with the Federal Advisory Committee Act (Pub. L. 92-463), the United States Department of Agriculture announces a solicitation of the National Agricultural Research, Extension, Education, and Economics Advisory Board members for recommendations on the reauthorization of the Title VIII—Research, Extension, and Education of the Federal Agriculture Improvement and Reform Act of 1996 (FAIR Act).

**DATE:** Deadline for Advisory Board Comments, February 27, 1997.

*Comments:* The public may file written comments before or after the **DATE** above with the contact person listed below.

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:** Deborah Hanfman, Executive Director, National Agricultural Research, Extension, Education, and Economics Advisory Board, REE Office of the Advisory Board, Room 3918 South, U.S. Department of Agriculture, STOP: 2255, 1400 Independence Avenue, SW, Washington, DC 20250-2255. Telephone: 202-720-3684; Fax: 202-720-6199.

**SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:** The National Agricultural Research, Extension, Education, and Economics Advisory Board has been asked by USDA to give general comments on some or all of the issues provided below regarding reauthorization of the

Research, Extension, and Education Title.

#### Recurring Questions

(1) What is the appropriate mix of funding among intramural funds, formula funds, competitive grants, and special grants?

(2) Is stakeholder input into research and extension priority setting working?

(3) What is the role of the university system in terms of ARS agenda?

(4) What is the role of the Federal Government?

(5) What are the priorities for the Extension Service?

(6) What is the appropriate role for Special Grants?

#### Context for Research Title Reauthorization

Many changes have taken place in the agricultural sector. The FAIR Act of 1996 provides the following changes:

(1) Contract payment provisions in lieu of traditional support programs,

(2) A deregulated domestic economy—U.S. ratification of GATT means producers now compete in a deregulated global economy as well, and

(3) Significant policy decisions affecting natural resources & the environment.

#### Principles Guiding USDA's Approach to Research Title Reauthorization

(1) Use existing legislative & administrative authorities whenever possible.

(2) Improve efficiency throughout the research system—and re-invest in REE research, education, and extension programs.

(3) Encourage multi-functional, multi-regional, and multi-institutional activities to achieve maximum leverage of federal, state, and local dollars.

(4) Support a range of funding mechanisms and the current structure of intramural and extramural research. Must maintain long-term high-risk research as well as shorter term investigator-initiated research.

(5) Support the use of formula funds for research and extension activities at the land-grant universities, while providing greater accountability.

(6) Support merit review with peer evaluation in all research programs with

competitively-awarded programs, as appropriate. We will improve merit review and peer evaluation in the intramural programs.

(7) Value an active federal-state-local partnership in setting priorities, conducting the work, and evaluating the results, as is consistent with Administration's position on states' roles. USDA will work in partnership with state and local entities where we have concurrent jurisdiction and build better accountability.

(8) Strengthen public sector/private sector partnerships.

(9) Be responsive to national and regional needs as the first guideline in priority setting.

(10) Improve communication with the public.

(11) Overarching Principle: Work to maintain world leadership in agricultural science and education.

Comments on the above issues will be consolidated by the Office of the Advisory Board at the direction of the Executive Committee and used in a statement of recommendations to the Secretary of Agriculture on Title VIII reauthorization.

Done at Washington, DC this 21st day of February, 1997.

Bob Robinson,

*Administrator, Cooperative State Research, Education, and Extension Service.*

[FR Doc. 97-4823 Filed 2-25-97; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 3410-22-M

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## Forest Service

### Revised Land and Resource Management Plans for Some National Forest System Lands in Nebraska, North Dakota, South Dakota, and Wyoming

**AGENCY:** Forest Service, USDA.

**ACTION:** Notice of intent to prepare an Environmental Impact Statement in conjunction with the revision of land and resource management plans for several National Grasslands (NG) and Forests (NF) on the Northern Great Plains.

The "planning area" includes these National Forest System lands:

| Administrative unit         | National grassland/forest   | State | Counties  |
|-----------------------------|-----------------------------|-------|---|
| Cluster NF .....            | Little Missouri NG .....    | ND    | Billings, Dunn, Golden, Valley, McHenry, McKenzie, Slope. |
|                             | Cedar River NG .....        | ND    | Grant, Sioux.   |
|                             | Sheyenne NG .....           | ND    | Ransom, Richland.   |
|                             | Grand River NG .....        | SD    | Corson, Perkins.  |
| Nebraska NF .....           | Oglala NG .....             | NE    | Dawes, Sioux.   |
|                             | Nebraska NF .....           | NE    | Blaine, Dawes, Sioux, Thomas.                             |
|                             | Samuel R. McKelvie NF ..... | NE    | Cherry.   |
|                             | Buffalo Gap NG .....        | SD    | Custer, Fall River, Jackson, Pennington.                  |
|                             | Fort Pierre NG .....        | SD    | Jones, Lyman, Stanley.                                    |
| Medicine Bow-Routt NF ..... | Thunder Basin NG .....      | WY    | Campbell, Converse, Crook, Niobrara, Weston.              |

**SUMMARY:** This planning effort is called the "Northern Great Plains Management Plans Revisions." Land and Resource Management Plans (hereafter referred to as Management Plan or Plans) will be prepared for each participating administrative unit, while one environmental impact statement for all affected units will be issued.

This notice describes the specific portions of the current Management Plans to be revised, environmental issues considered in the revisions, estimated dates for filing the environmental impact statement, information concerning public participation, and the names and addresses of the agency officials who can provide additional information.

**DATES:** Comments concerning the scope of the analysis should be received in writing by July 31, 1997. The agency expects to file a draft environmental impact statement with the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and make it available for public comment in June 1998. The agency expects to file the final environmental impact statement in May 1999.

**ADDRESS:** Send written comments to: Dave Cawrse, Team Leader, Northern Great Plains Planning Team, USDA Forest Service, 125 North Main Street, Chadron, NE 69337.

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:** Dave Cawrse, Planning Team Leader, (308) 432-0300.

**RESPONSIBLE OFFICIALS:** Hal Salwasser, Northern Regional Forester at 200 East Broadway, Missoula, MT 59807; and Elizabeth Estill, Rocky Mountain Regional Forester at P.O. Box 25127, Lakewood, CO 80225-0127.

**SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:** Pursuant to Part 36 Code of Federal Regulation (CFR) 219.10 (g), the Regional Foresters for the Northern and Rocky Mountain Regions give notice of the agency's intent to prepare an environmental impact statement for the revision effort described above. According to 36 CFR 219.10 (g), land and resource management plans are ordinarily

revised on a 10- to 15-year cycle. The existing Management Plans were approved as follows:

Custer National Forest—June 10, 1987;  
Medicine Bow-Routt National Forest—November 20, 1985;

Nebraska National Forest—December 14, 1984.

The Regional Foresters give notice that they are beginning an environmental analysis and decision-making process for this proposed action so that interested or affected people can participate in the analyses and contribute to the final decisions. One environmental impact statement will be prepared. Separate decisions, documented in Records of Decision, will be issued for each administrative unit. The combined revision effort makes sense because of common issues and concerns, and similar ecological landscapes. This effort will enable the administrative units to share assessments, plan-related analyses, and resource expertise, and will reduce costs.

Opportunities will be provided to discuss openly with the public the alternatives to be developed, which can potentially replace the existing Management Plans. The public is invited to discuss and help define the range of alternatives to be considered in the environmental impact statement. Forest Service officials will lead these discussions, helping to describe the preliminary alternatives brought forward by the agency. These officials will also explain the environmental analysis process and the disclosures of that analysis, which will be available for public review. Written comments concerning the range of alternatives will be encouraged.

Management plans describe the intended management of National Grasslands and Forests. Agency decisions in these plans will do the following things:

\* Establish multiple-use goals and objectives (36 CFR 219.11);

\* Establish grassland and forestwide management requirements (standards and guidelines) to fulfill the requirements of 16 U.S.C. 1604 applying to future activities (resource integration requirements, 36 CFR 219.13 to 219.27);

\* Establish management areas and management area direction (management area prescriptions) applying to future activities in that management area (resource integration and minimum specific management requirements) 36 CFR 219.11 (c);

\* Establish monitoring and evaluation requirements (36 CFR 219.11 (d));

\* Determine suitability and potential capability of lands for producing forage for grazing animals and for providing habitat for management indicator species (36 CFR 219.20), designate lands not suited for timber production, and, where applicable, establish allowable timber sale quantity (36 CFR 219.14, 219.15, and 219.21);

\* Where applicable, designate those lands administratively available for oil and gas leasing, and when appropriate, authorize the Bureau of Land Management to offer specific lands for leasing (36 CFR 228.102 (d) and (e));

\* Where applicable, recommend Wild and Scenic River designations in accordance with 16 U.S.C. 1274; and

\* Where applicable, recommend non-Wilderness allocations or Wilderness recommendations for roadless areas (36 CFR 219.17).

The authorization of project level activities within the planning area occurs through project decision-making, the second stage of forest and grassland planning. Project level decisions must comply with National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) procedures and must include a determination that the project is consistent with the Management Plan.

Need for Changes in the Current Management Plans

Nearly a decade or more has lapsed since the current Management Plans were approved. Experience has shown the need for changes in management

direction for some resources or programs. Several sources have highlighted needed changes in the current Management Plans. In brief, these sources include:

- \* New issues and changing public values identified through public interaction;

- \* New information and knowledge gained through scientific research and effectiveness monitoring;

- \* Management concerns derived through implementation experience and insight into relationships between prairie and forest vegetation and other resources and better ways of accomplishing desired conditions.

In addition to changing public views about how these lands should be managed, a significant change in the information and scientific understanding of these ecosystems has occurred. Some new information is a product of research, while other information has resulted from changes in technology.

#### Major Revision Topics

Based on the information sources identified earlier, the combined effect of the needed changes demand attention through plan revision. The major revision topics described below influenced the decision to revise the plans.

#### *Rangeland and Forest Health*

##### Planning Questions

- \* What management goals, direction, and prescriptions will best attain desired conditions for rangeland and forest health?

*Background.* Issues and concerns over rangeland health frequently relate to the current productivity of these lands and the resulting capacity to provide livestock forage and wildlife food and cover. The quality and quantity of grass and other vegetation produced on these lands are influenced by soil type, weather, land use, disturbances such as fire and drought, and many other factors. Livestock grazing can help maintain, enhance or decrease rangeland productivity, depending on management. This planning effort will provide an opportunity to assess how livestock grazing can be used to best attain desired rangeland productivity. The issue of rangeland productivity is also relevant to addressing the role of National Grasslands in “\* \* \* administering sound and progressive principles of land conservation and multiple use, and to promote development of grassland agriculture and sustained-yield management of the forage, fish and wildlife, timber, water

and recreation resources \* \* \*” (36 CFR 213.1). This role for the National Grasslands is established by regulation and pertains to those lands administered by the Forest Service under Title III of the Bankhead-Jones Farm Tenant Act.

Forest health issues on these lands are closely tied to the ability of riparian and other prairie woodlands to regenerate and sustain themselves. Fire suppression, and insect and disease damage in coniferous forests are other issues related to forest health.

Biological diversity is another aspect of rangeland and forest health. Numerous individuals and groups have expressed concerns about land-use effects on the diversity, abundance and distribution of native plants and animals. These concerns extend to terrestrial and aquatic plants and animals, rare species, declining grassland bird species, game species and other wildlife. For example, interest in black-tailed prairie dog colonies as habitat for threatened and endangered species and other wildlife on National Grasslands is high. Others suggest that more focus be placed on returning bison to their native habitats. Habitat for numerous threatened, endangered and sensitive species occurs on these areas, and the likelihood of other species being proposed for protection under the Endangered Species Act supports the need to revise current management plans. State fish and wildlife agencies and others have also expressed considerable interest in management and fish and wildlife habitats on these lands and have expertise to provide for conservation of these species and their habitats. The Council on Environmental Quality recommends incorporating biodiversity conservation in environmental analyses.

Other issues and concerns about rangeland and forest health include soil stability, water quality, noxious weeds, exotic plants and animals, and wetlands management.

#### *Community and Lifestyle Relationships*

##### Planning Questions

- \* How may communities, people and their lifestyles be affected by decisions made in the revision effort?

- \* How do communities and people and their lifestyles affect uses and management of these public lands?

- \* How do management decisions affect the interdependent relationship of resources, people, lifestyles, and economies?

*Background.* Commodity and amenity benefits from public lands within the planning area have contributed to the

social systems and economic base of many neighboring communities. The human environment includes natural and physical environment and the interdependent relationship of people to that environment.

Management decisions determine public land uses and resource availability from those lands. In resource-based economies, these decisions can perpetuate or disrupt relationships between public land management, communities, and lifestyles. Communities with more diverse economies may be better able to adopt to changes, even though some economic sectors may be strained as change occurs. The capacity to handle change without major hardships or disruptions to social groups or institutions is an important component of community and lifestyle relationships.

Economic effects can include changes in local employment and income, payments to state and local government, and can also have possible implications to local government services and community infrastructure.

#### *Livestock Grazing*

##### Planning Questions

- \* How will management of vegetation affect availability of forage for permitted livestock?

- \* What are the desired vegetation conditions and how can livestock grazing be used to help achieve them?

*Background.* Livestock grazing occurs on most of these lands under a permit system and is a major economic activity in these rural areas. Livestock grazing levels and strategies need to provide for sustained stewardship of the land, resources and rural communities. However, appropriate grazing levels and strategies continue to be debated. Researcher, scientist and resource management specialists at various universities, agencies and institutions are currently gathering information that will be valuable in assessing issues related to livestock grazing.

The Forest Service is required by regulation (36 CFR 219.20) to determine suitability and potential capability of National Grasslands and Forest to produce forage for livestock. This regulation prescribes that the grazing systems and facilities (such as fencing and water developments) to support livestock grazing also be evaluated and considered during the planning process. The amount of facilities and structural developments on these lands to support livestock grazings is an issue. Some individuals want to see more

developments on public lands while others want to see less or current levels.

Another issue related to livestock grazing is drought. Droughts can substantially reduce available livestock forage and, if prolonged, can result in long-lasting changes in plant species composition and rangeland productivity. Livestock grazing strategies during and after drought can affect range recovery so grazing guidelines for drought period may be proposed for some areas.

#### *Oil and Gas Leasing*

##### Planning Questions

\* Which National Forests System lands (or portions) are administratively available for oil and gas leasing?

\* What specific lease stipulations will apply to those lands determined to be administratively available for leasing?

\* Are existing lease decisions and stipulations consistent with management goals and objectives?

*Background.* In 1987, Congress passed the Federal Onshore Oil and Gas Leasing Reform Act, which expanded the Secretary of Agriculture's role in the leasing decision process. Within the National Forest System, the Secretary of Agriculture is authorized to identify lands where leases can be sold and to determine appropriate stipulations to protect surface resources. Regulations to implement this Act were developed by the Secretary and became effective April 20, 1990 (36 CFR, Part 228, 100 et. seq.).

Leasing analyses in accordance with the requirements of 36 CFR 228.102(c) have been completed for about 1.7 million acres of the planning area, including the Little Missouri, Cedar River, and Thunder Basin National Grasslands and the western half of Fall River County on the Buffalo Gap National Grassland. Existing leasing decisions will be reviewed in light of new information generated as a result of Northern Great Plains Assessments and other sources since the leasing decisions were made (e.g., newly listed threatened and endangered species, rare ecosystem elements or habitats). This new information may result in changes to previous leasing availability decisions or to leasing requirements, or both. Existing leases will not be affected by these changes.

The remaining 1.2 million acres of the planning area (Sheyenne, Grand River, Fort Pierre, Oglala National Grasslands, the remainder of the Buffalo Gap National Grassland, and Nebraska and Samuel R. McKelvie National Forests) will be examined for oil and gas

potential and, based on the potential, may have a leasing analysis completed.

#### *Plant and Animal Control*

##### Planning Questions

\* How and when should resource or property damage caused by noxious weeds, exotic plants, insects, disease, rodents and other animals be controlled or managed?

*Background.* Under certain conditions, some plant and animal species can cause unacceptable economic and/or environmental damage. Plant and animal damage control activities currently conducted or authorized by the Forest Service on National Grasslands and Forests are largely directed towards noxious weeds and prairie dogs. Biological controls and herbicides are currently being used to control noxious weeds such as leafy spurge and Canada thistle. These weeds can substantially reduce native plant species and forage production. Prairie dog reductions in selected colonies on the National Grasslands are primarily in response to concerns of neighboring private landowners who do not want prairie dogs moving onto their lands. Concerns expressed about these programs range from the economic losses from damage to potential effects of the control activities on wildlife and the environment. Human health and safety issues are also associated with the use of pesticides and herbicides.

Predators are occasionally removed from some of the National Grasslands and Forests to protect livestock, wildlife, and public health and safety. The Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) is the lead federal agency for predator control on these public lands and is conducting its own evaluation and planning for these activities. However, in South Dakota, predator control is conducted by the South Dakota Department of Game, Fish and Parks through an agreement with APHIS. Under this agreement, APHIS acts in an advisory capacity. APHIS also has the lead responsibility for evaluating, planning and initiating grasshopper control projects on the National Grasslands. Issues related to the responsibilities of APHIS will not be addressed in this planning effort.

#### *Recreation and Travel Management*

##### Planning Question

\* What recreation opportunities should be provided?

\* What travel opportunities should be provided?

*Background.* Demand for recreational opportunities on these public lands is increasing dramatically. Contributing

factors are: 1) Increasing number of hunters on public lands; 2) increasing appreciation for the beauty of the prairie; and 3) people taking shorter vacations on nearby public lands. The public is asking us to address recreational uses and values on these National Grasslands and Forests. During revision, scenery management objectives and recreational opportunities will be determined. Results from customer surveys will help determine public expectations for recreational opportunities.

Recreational uses and interests vary widely across the planning area. Some recreational activities, such as mountain biking and use of all-terrain vehicles, have increased in popularity since land and resource management plans were written. Current recreational use in some units exceeds levels anticipated in the existing plans. Increased recreational use highlights the importance and value of these National Forests and Grasslands in filling recreational, esthetic and spiritual needs.

Upland bird and big game hunting are major dispersed recreational activities on many of these public lands. Hunters are interested in how wildlife cover on these areas is managed. This concern is not fully addressed in existing land and resource management plans. Prairie dog shooting is another popular activity on the grasslands. Hunters have expressed concern over prairie dog management activities that might affect their recreational opportunities.

Travel management is often an important element in recreational experiences. Some users desire primitive recreational experiences with restricted motorized travel. Some recreationists rely on motorized access for their experiences, such as all-terrain vehicle users. Because recreational use on these public lands has increased over the last decade, the potential for conflicts has also increased. The appropriateness of motorized travel as it complements or conflicts with specific recreational settings and associated experiences will be examined and determined during the revision process.

#### *Special Area Designations*

##### Planning Questions

\* Which, if any, roadless areas should be recommended to Congress for Wilderness designation?

\* How should roadless areas not recommended for Wilderness designation be managed?

\* Which rivers on the planning units are eligible for inclusion in the National Wild and Scenic Rivers System?

\* Which, if any, eligible rivers are suitable and should be recommended for inclusion into the National Wild and Scenic River System?

\* How should eligible rivers not recommended for inclusion be managed?

\* What, if any, Research Natural Areas or Special Interest Areas may be needed for their contributions to furthering knowledge about natural systems or other objectives?

*Background.* The planning area includes many unique and outstanding combinations of physical and biological resources, and areas of social interest. These are collectively referred to as "special areas." Interest in protecting special areas has been shown by the public, other agencies, and Forest Service employees.

Special area designations may include Wilderness; Wild and Scenic Rivers; Research Natural Areas (RNAs); and special recreational areas with scenic, historical, geological, botanical, zoological, paleontological, archaeological or other special characteristics. These special areas may influence land allocation and management.

Maintaining grassland roadless areas and establishing grassland Wilderness areas have become important to some people. Within the last few years, various groups have offered proposals for grassland Wilderness in South Dakota and North Dakota. Likewise, interest for Research Natural Areas in grassland ecosystems has increased since the planning effort. Some would like to see the Forest Service preserve and study some areas of native prairie vegetation.

The Forest Service is required (36 CFR 219.17) to evaluate all roadless areas for potential Wilderness designation during the revision process. This process will produce an inventory of roadless areas meeting minimum criteria for Wilderness according to the 1964 Wilderness Act or 1975 Eastern Wilderness Act, as appropriate. Actual Wilderness designation is a Congressional responsibility; the Forest Service only makes recommendations.

The purpose and authority for study of Wild and Scenic Rivers are in the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act of October 1, 1968, as amended. All rivers and streams determined eligible for potential inclusion in the Wild and Scenic River System will be examined. The Custer National Forest Management Plan (1987) identified the Little Missouri River as an eligible river. A suitability study will be done as part of the revision process.

#### Topics Outside the Scope of Management Plan Decisions

Some topics are raised by the public that are outside the scope of this action. They include topics that require departmental or legislative actions or topics that come under the authority of other governmental agencies. Examples of topics that fit these categories are listed below:

Departmental and Legislative Topics—grazing fee levels; recreation user fees; sale or transfer of administration of National Grasslands; transfer of Cedar River and Grand River National Grasslands to the Standing Rock Sioux Tribe; and transfer of Buffalo Gap National Grassland to the Oglala Sioux Tribe.

Topics for Other Governmental Agencies—predator control; grasshopper control; and transfer of Shadehill Reservoir to another federal agency.

#### What To Do With This Information

This revision effort is being undertaken to develop management direction to:

- \* Provide goods and services to people;
  - \* Involve people and communities; and
  - \* Sustain ecosystem functions.
- "Collaborative stewardship," which is defined as caring for the land and serving the people by listening to all constituents and living within the limits of the land, will guide the revision effort.

#### Framework for Alternatives To Be Considered

A range of alternatives will be considered when revising the Management Plans. The alternatives will address different options to resolve concerns raised as revision topics listed above and to fulfill the purpose and need. Reasonable alternatives will be evaluated and reasons will be given for eliminating some alternatives from detailed study. A "no-action alternative" is required, meaning that management would continue under existing plans. Alternatives will provide different ways to address and respond to public issues, management concerns, and resource opportunities identified during the scoping process. In describing alternatives, desired vegetation and resource conditions will be defined. Resource outputs from Management Plans will be estimated based upon achieving desired conditions. Preliminary information is available to develop alternatives; however, additional public involvement

and collaboration will be done to complete this development.

#### Involving the Public

An atmosphere of openness is one of the objectives of the public involvement process, where all members of the public feel free to share information with the Forest Service and its employees on a regular basis. All parts of this process will be structured to maintain this openness.

The Forest Service is seeking information, comments, and assistance from individuals, organizations and federal, state, and local agencies who may be interested in or affected by the proposed action (36 CFR 219.6). The Forest Service is also looking for collaborative approaches among all landowners who desire health and productivity for the planning area. Many federal and state agencies and some private organizations have been cooperating in the development of assessments of current biological, physical, and economic conditions. This information will be used to prepare the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS). The range of alternatives to be considered in the DEIS will be based on public issues, management concerns, resource management opportunities, and specific decisions to be made.

Public participation will be solicited by notifying in person and/or by mail known interested and affected publics. News releases will be used to give the public general notice, and public scoping opportunities will be offered in numerous locations. Public participation activities will include (but are not limited to) requests for written comments, open houses, focus groups, field trips, and collaborative forums.

Public participation will be sought throughout the revision process and will be especially important at several points along the way. The first opportunity to comment is during the scoping process (40 CFR 1501.7). Scoping includes: (1) identifying potential issues, (2) from these, identifying significant issues or those that have been covered by prior environmental review, (3) exploring additional alternatives, and (4) identifying potential environmental effects of the proposed action and alternatives.

#### Release and Review of the EIS

The DEIS is expected to be filed with the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and to be available for public comment by June 1998. At that time, the EPA will publish a notice of availability for the DEIS in the Federal Register. The comment period on the DEIS will be 90 days from the date the EPA

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 the 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). Also, environmental objections that could be raised at the DEIS stage but are not raised until after completion of the Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS) 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 three-month 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 considering issues and concerns on the proposed actions, 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 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.

After the comment period ends on the DEIS, comments will be analyzed, considered, and responded to by the Forest Service in preparing the Final EIS. The FEIS is scheduled to be completed in May 1999. The responsible officials will consider the comments, responses, environmental consequences discussed in the FEIS, and applicable laws, regulations, and policies in making decisions regarding these revisions. The responsible officials will document their decisions and reasons for their decisions in a separate Record of Decision for each Management Plan. Each decision will be subject to appeal in accordance with 36 CFR 217.

The responsible official for each of the Management Plans is the appropriate Regional Forester.

Dated: February 11, 1997.  
Kathleen McAllister,  
*Deputy Regional Forester, Northern Region.*

Dated: February 13, 1997.  
Elizabeth Estill,  
*Regional Forester, Rocky Mountain Region.*  
[FR Doc. 97-4681 Filed 2-25-97; 8:45 am]  
BILLING CODE 3410-11-M

**BARRY GOLDWATER SCHOLARSHIP AND EXCELLENCE IN EDUCATION FOUNDATION**

**Sunshine Act Meeting**

**TIME AND DATE:** 2:00 pm, Wednesday, March 12, 1997.

**PLACE:** SDC-59, Dirksen Senate Office Building, Washington, DC 20510.

**STATUS:** The meeting will be open to the public.

**MATTERS TO BE CONSIDERED:**

1. Report on financial status of the Foundation fund
  - A. Review of investment policy and current portfolio

2. Report on results of Scholarship Review Panel
  - A. Discussion and consideration of scholarship candidates
  - B. Selection of Goldwater Scholars

**CONTACT PERSON FOR MORE INFORMATION:**  
Gerald J. Smith, President, Telephone: (703) 756-6012.

Gerald J. Smith,  
*President.*  
[FR Doc. 97-4901 Filed 2-24-97; 12:41 pm]  
BILLING CODE 4738-91-M

**DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE**

**Bureau of the Census**

**Current Industrial Reports Surveys—WAVE I (Voluntary and Mandatory Submissions)**

**ACTION:** Proposed collection; comment request.

**SUMMARY:** The Department of Commerce, as part of its continuing effort to reduce paperwork and respondent burden, invites the general public and other Federal agencies to take this opportunity to comment on proposed and/or continuing information collections, as required by the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995, Public Law 104-13 (44 U.S.C. 3506(c)(2)(A)).

**DATES:** Written comments must be submitted on or before April 28, 1997.

**ADDRESSES:** Direct all written comments to Linda Engelmeier, Departmental Forms Clearance Officer, Department of Commerce, Room 5327, 14th Street and Constitution Avenue, NW, Washington, DC 20230.

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:** Requests for additional information or copies of the information collection instrument(s) and instructions should be directed to:

| Contact                | Industries                        | Telephone            | Address   |
|------------------------|-----------------------------------|----------------------|---|
| Michael Zampogna ..... | Manufactured nondurable products. | (301) 457-4810 ..... | Bureau of Census, Manufacturing & Construction Division, Room 2212, Building 4, Washington, DC 20233. |
| Kenneth Hansen .....   | Manufactured durable products.    | (301) 457-4755 ..... | Bureau of Census, Manufacturing & Construction Division, Room 2207, Building 4, Washington, DC 20233. |

**SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:**

**I. Abstract**

The Census Bureau conducts a series of monthly, quarterly, and annual surveys as part of the Current Industrial Reports (CIR) program. The CIR deal mainly with the quantity and value of

shipments of particular products and occasionally with data on production and inventories; unfilled orders, receipts, stocks and consumption; and comparative data on domestic production, exports, and imports of the products they cover. These surveys provide continuing and timely national

statistical data on manufacturing. The results of these surveys are used extensively by individual firms, trade associations, and market analysts in planning or recommending marketing and legislative strategies.

The CIR program includes both mandatory and voluntary surveys.