proportion of the genome of a virus in a plant raise the likelihood of a new virus appearing?

(3) Most scientific discussions of the risks associated with the use of transgenes focus on transgenes derived from RNA viruses. Are there any additional concerns with use of transgenes derived from single stranded DNA plant viruses, e.g., geminiviruses?

APHIS has invited a group of scientists with recognized expertise in viral recombination to explore these subject areas. The public is invited to attend and to participate in the discussions. We expect to provide a summary of the discussions, which will be made available on the APHIS World Wide web site, or by contacting the individual listed under **FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT.**

We request that interested persons submit registrations, which should include name, address, and telephone number, by July 22, 1997, to the person listed under **FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT.**

Done in Washington, DC, this 2nd day of July 1997.

Terry L. Medley,

Administrator, Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service.

[FR Doc. 97–18144 Filed 7–10–97; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 3410–34–P

DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Forest Service

[3410–11]

Ramshorn Forest Vegetation Management, Shoshone National Forest, Fremont County, Wyoming

AGENCY: Forest Service, USDA.

ACTION: Notice of intent to prepare environmental impact statement.

SUMMARY: The Forest will prepare an environmental impact statement on a proposal to manage forest vegetation in the upper Brent Creek and Tappen Creek drainages located on the Wind River District of the Shoshone National Forest within Fremont County, Wyoming. The area adopted for analysis in the EIS corresponds to the Ramshorn Analysis Area delineated in the 1986 Forest Land and Resource Management Plan.

The proposal includes the use of prescribed fire, timber harvest, fuelwood sales, aspen stand enhancement measures, and other practices designed to improve the long term health and diversity of forest vegetation throughout the analysis area. Optimum use would be made of small timber sales for the benefit of local businesses and operators. About 700 acres would be treated in the forest's suited timber base to partially meet the forest health and diversity objective. About 300 acres would be treated in the forested area outside the suited base to assist in meeting the vegetation health and diversity goal. High priority for treatment would include areas where aspen stands are in danger of being lost, where there is a high degree of wildfire risk, where there is increased mortality due to insect and disease infestation and in large stands lacking in species and structural diversity.

Approximately two miles of new road construction and three miles of road reconstruction would be necessary to access the suited base portion of the analysis area. The proposal includes closing all new roads and existing closed roads opened for the purpose of this project following completion of the project.

The scope of this analysis offers the possibility of a number of alternatives that vary the mix of treatment measures for improving forest vegetation health and diversity within a discrete area.

The primary underlying purpose for this proposal is to improve the health and diversity of forest vegetation within the Ramshorn analysis area. The need for doing this is indicated by the imbalance of current forest conditions and trends with respect to diversity standards in the forest plan, and by the risks associated with extensive fuel buildups and insect and disease infestations. THe purpose and need focuses on the forest plan goal of: Improving tree age class and species diversity to benefit forest health, recreation experiences, visual quality, and wildlife habitat (Forest Plan page III–8). Forest vegetation diversity standards to be exercised in meeting this goal are found in Forest Plan direction on pages III–19 through 21.

In meeting the primary goal, a number of secondary goals are addressed. These include: (1) Managing vegetation types to provide multiple benefits commensurate with land capability and resource demand (Forest Plan page III–6); (2) Improve the health and vigor of vegetation types outside wilderness and selected types in wilderness where necessary (Forest Plan page III–6; (3) Integrate vegetation management with resource management in functional areas (Plan page III–7); (4) Adopt visual quality objectives that will maintain or enhance the characteristic landscapes of the Forest (Plan page III–7); (5) Improve habitats where vegetation conditions are significantly below biological potential (Plan page III–8); (6) Maintain or improve habitat for threatened or endangered species (Plan page III–8); (7) Rehabilitate lands in declining and unsatisfactory watershed condition (Plan page III–9); (8) Reduce the accumulation of natural fuels (Plan page III–8); (9) Reduce damages by insect, disease, and other Forest pests to acceptable levels through integrated management of vegetation (Plan page III–10); (10) Provide timber sales of sufficient quantity and quality to attract investment by the timber industry to accomplish desired vegetation management (Plan page III–8).

In order to achieve the primary goal in the Ramshorn area, identified impacts will need to be addressed through mitigation and application of forest plan standards and guidelines. This includes attention to cumulative impacts, including roads, and the need to meet forest plan direction for ''no net increase'' in roads (Forest Plan Allowable Sale Quantity Record of Decision, pages 5–6, and Amendment No. 94–001). The area analysis being implemented through this action is supported by direction to take an ''ecosystem'' or ''landscape'' approach to management (Forest Plan Allowable Sale Quantity Record of Decision, page 5).

The decision to be made involves the selection of an appropriate mix of treatment types where the primary goal is improving forest health and diversity, and where consideration is made within that context for meeting secondary goals through treatment type, timing, and design. The decision will also include other specific mitigation measures where needed to meet resource needs determined through the analysis of impacts. The area analysis could surface the necessity for making a nonsignificant amendment to the forest plan, and the decision would address whether or not to do so. A significant forest plan amendment is beyond the scope of this analysis.

The Forest Service invites comments and suggestions on the scope of the analysis to be included in the draft environmental impact statement (DEIS). In addition, the Forest Service gives notice that it is beginning a full environmental analysis and decision-making process for this proposal so that interested or affected people may know how they can participate in the environmental analysis and contribute to the final decision.

DATES: Comments concerning the scope of the analysis should be received in writing by August 8, 1997.

ADDRESSES: Send written comments to Bob Rossman, ID Team Leader, Wind

River Ranger District, P.O. Box 186, Dubois, Wyoming 82513.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Bob Rossman, Project Interdisciplinary Team Leader, (307) 455–2466.

Field trip: In response to requests received during earlier scoping, a field trip to the proposed project area was conducted for the public on June 24, 1997. Materials developed for participants are available upon request. Informal public meetings will be scheduled as needed throughout the analysis process.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: Over the last ten years there has been a significant amount of effort devoted to developing a consensus on conducting timber harvest in the Brent Creek area. Public comments were solicited in 1987 and 1991. Many comments were received from concerned citizens, environmental groups, and other governmental agencies as a result of these scoping efforts. Comments received in 1991 were refined into issues by a Forest Service Interdisciplinary Team, representatives of other agencies, and several individuals. An alternative formulation process was begun at this time, but was discontinued due to concern about violating the Federal Advisory Committee Act.

Scoping of a timber sale proposal was reinitiated in 1997. The period ended on May 5, 1997. An Interdisciplinary Team of Forest Service resource specialists reviewed comments raised during this period.

Based in part on these comments, on the history of difficult issues in the Brent Creek area, and on the controversiality of proposed timber sales, the district ranger reevaluated the purpose and need for action and concluded that an environmental impact statement should be prepared. Although scoping is reinitiated through this Notice of Intent, most comments received during earlier scoping efforts are considered applicable and will be retained. People who wish to update their earlier comments, based on the revised purpose and need, are encouraged to do so. The Forest Service particularly welcomes any assistance from commenters in identifying sources of impact on and off the Forest to include in its cumulative effects analysis.

The Deciding Official will be Bob Lee, Wind River District Ranger, 1403 West Ramshorn, PO Box 186, Dubois, Wyoming, 82513, unless the need for a nonsignificant forest plan amendment is indicated. In that event, the Forest Supervisor will be the Deciding Official.

The expected publication date of a draft environmental impact statement is during February of 1998. Following this, a 45 day period will be allowed for public comment on the draft. This comment period will commence on the day the Environmental Protection Agency publishes a ''Notice of Availability'' in the **Federal Register**. A completed final environmental impact statement is anticipated in July of 1998.

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 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.) Please note that comments you make on the draft environmental impact statement will be regarded as public information.

Note further that comments will be available for public inspection during the analysis process, and that in most cases the name of the commenter will not remain confidential. Those who submit anonymous comments will not have standing to appeal the subsequent decision under 36 CFR Parts 215 or 217. Persons requesting such confidentiality should be aware that under the FOIA, confidentiality may be granted in only very limited circumstances, such as to protect trade secrets.

Dated: July 1, 1997.

Rebecca Aus,

Forest Supervisor.

[FR Doc. 97–18129 Filed 7–10–97; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 3410–11–M

DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Forest Service

Committee of State Foresters

AGENCY: Forest Service, USDA.

ACTION: Notice of meeting.

SUMMARY: The Committee of State Foresters will meet in Washington, DC, on August 6, 1997, from 10 a.m. to 12 noon. The Committee is comprised of seven members of the Executive Committee of the National Association of State Foresters. The meeting provides an opportunity for Committee members to consult with the Secretary of Agriculture regarding the administration and application of agency programs, administered under Cooperative Forestry Assistance Act of 1978. The Under Secretary for Natural Resources and Environment will chair the meeting. The meeting is open to the public; however, participation is limited to Department of Agriculture personnel and Committee members. Members of the public who wish to attend must register in advance with the person listed under **FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT**. Persons who wish to bring cooperative forestry matters to the attention of the Committee may file written statements with the Executive Secretary of the Committee before or after the meeting.

DATES: The meeting will be held August 6, 1997.

ADDRESSES: The meeting will be held in the Williamsburg Room, 104–A Jamie L. Whitten Building, 14th and Independence Avenue, S.W., Washington, D.C. 20250.

Send written comments to Joan M. Comanor, Executive Secretary, Committee of State Foresters, c/o Forest Service, MAIL STOP 1109, USDA, P.O. Box 96090, Washington, DC 20090–6090.