

Notices

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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.

DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Forest Service

Interior Columbia Basin Ecosystem Management Project, Northern, Intermountain, and Pacific Northwest Regions

DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

Bureau of Land Management

[ID918-1610-00-UCRB]

Interior Columbia Basin Ecosystem Management Project, States of Oregon, Washington, Idaho, Montana, Wyoming, Utah, and Nevada

AGENCIES: Forest Service, USDA; Bureau of Land Management, USDI.

ACTION: Notice of extension of comment period for draft environmental impact statements (EISs).

SUMMARY: On June 12, 1997, the Forest Service and the Bureau of Land Management published a notice of availability of two draft EISs in the *Federal Register* (62 FR 32076). That notice stated that a 120-day comment period was provided for the Eastside Draft EIS and for the Upper Columbia River Basin Draft EIS. This notice is to inform interested parties that the comment period has been extended.

DATES: Comments on the two draft EISs must now be submitted or postmarked no later than February 6, 1998.

ADDRESSES: Copies of the Eastside Draft EIS may be obtained from ICBEMP, 112 E. Poplar Street, Walla Walla, WA 99362 or by calling (509) 522-4030. Copies of the Upper Columbia River Basin Draft EIS may be obtained from ICBEMP, 304 N. 8th Street, Room 250, Boise, ID 83702 or by calling (208) 334-1770, ext. 120. The Draft EISs are also available via the internet (<http://www.icbemp.gov>).

Comments on the Eastside draft EIS should be submitted in writing to ICBEMP, 112 East Poplar Street, P.O.

Box 2076, Walla Walla, WA 99362. Comments on the Upper Columbia River Basin draft EIS should be submitted in writing to ICBEMP, 304 N. 8th Street, Room 250, Boise, ID 83702. If your comments are in regard to both draft EISs, they may be sent to either office. Comments may also be made electronically by accessing the Project home page (<http://www.icbemp.gov>), where a comment form is available.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: EIS Team Leader Jeff Walter, 304 N. 8th Street, Room 250, Boise, ID 83702, telephone (208) 334-1770 or EIS Deputy Team Leader Cathy Humphrey, 112 East Poplar Street, P.O. Box 2076, Walla Walla, WA 99362, telephone (509) 522-4030.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: The Bureau of Land Management's planning regulations require that a 90-day public comment period be provided for a draft plan and draft environmental impact statement (43 CFR 1610.2(e)). The Forest Service's planning regulations provide that the draft environmental impact statement be available for public comment for at least three months (36 CFR 219.10(b)). In recognition of the complexity of the draft EISs for the Interior Columbia Basin Ecosystem Management Project (ICBEMP), the Bureau of Land Management and Forest Service set a comment period of 120 days—30 days longer than required.

During the first two months of the comment period, we received several requests for extension of the 120-day comment period. The requestors cite the length and complexity of the two draft EISs and point out that many who have particular interest in the management of the public lands have little time to spare during the summer and early fall months, since these are critical periods for making a living and recreating. They also point out that the science information was not all published by the time the draft EISs were made available. It has been suggested that the comment period be extended for as little as two months and as much as one year.

Managers of the ICBEMP sincerely want to provide adequate opportunity for the public to read, comprehend, and comment on one or both of the two draft EISs so that the EIS team can include needed changes in the final EIS. The extension granted carries the comment period past the critical work and recreation months of summer and early

fall. A much longer extension would result in higher costs of the Project without commensurate increase in the opportunity for meaningful public participation.

We find that a four-month extension to February 6, 1998, balances the desire expressed by interested and affected members of the public to comment meaningfully, and the desire of the agencies reasonably to expedite the process to conclusion.

Dated: August 28, 1997.

Martha Hahn,

State Director, Bureau of Land Management.

Dated: August 28, 1997.

Robert W. Williams,

Regional Forester, U.S. Forest Service.

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DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Forest Service

USDA-Forest Service/Crown Pacific Limited Partnership Land Exchange, Deschutes, Fremont and Winema National Forests, Deschutes, Jefferson, Klamath and Lake Counties, OR

AGENCY: Forest Service, USDA.

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

SUMMARY: The USDA Forest Service will prepare an environmental impact statement (EIS) on a proposal to exchange lands in Central and Southern Oregon. The exchange would result in the transfer of approximately 33,000 acres of National Forest System (NFS) lands for approximately 38,800 acres of Crown Pacific lands in Deschutes, Jefferson, Klamath and Lake Counties in the State of Oregon. Transfer of these lands will result in consolidation of NFS land ownership.

The EIS will be consistent with the Deschutes, Fremont and Winema National Forests Land and Resource Management Plans (LRMPs) (as amended), which provide overall guidance of all land management activities on the Deschutes, Fremont and Winema National Forests.

The Forest Service invites written comments and suggestions on the issues and management opportunities for the area being analyzed.