environmental objections that could be raised at the draft environmental impact statement stage but 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* v. *Harris*, 490 F. Supp. 1334, 1338 (E.D. Wis. 1980). Because of these court rulings, it is very important those interested in this proposed action participate by the close of the 45-day comment period so 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.

I am the responsible official for this environmental impact statement. My address is Lolo National Forest, Building 24, Fort Missoula, Missoula MT 59804.

Dated: June 18, 1998.

Charles C. Wildes,

Forest Supervisor.

[FR Doc. 98–17665 Filed 7–1–98; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 3410–11–M

DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Forest Service

Clearwater Ecosystem Management and Timber Sale Projects; Seeley Lake Ranger District, Lolo National Forest, Missoula County, Montana

AGENCY: Forest Service, USDA.

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

SUMMARY: The USDA, Forest Service, will prepare an environmental impact statement (EIS) to disclose the environmental effects of timber harvest, reforestation, temporary road construction, road access changes including closures, and prescribed and ecosystem management burning in a 7,000 acre project area approximately 12 miles northeast of Seeley Lake, Montana.

DATE: Written comments and suggestions should be received on or before August 3, 1998.

ADDRESSES: Submit written comments and suggestions on the proposed management activities or a request to be placed on the project mailing list to Timothy G. Love, Ranger District, Lolo National Forest, HC 31, Box 3200, Seeley Lake, MT 59868.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Sharon Klinkhammer, EIS Team Leader, District Silviculturist, Lolo National Forest, Phone (406) 677–3925.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: The responsible official who will make decisions based on this EIS is Charles Wildes, Forest Supervisor, Lolo National Forest, Building 24, Fort Missoula, Missoula, MT, 59804. He will decide on this proposal after considering comments and responses, environmental consequences, applicable laws, regulations, and policies. The decision and rationale for the decision will be documented in a Record of Decision.

The Forest Service proposes to harvest 3 million board feet of timber from 550 acres. Approximately 300 acres will be in openings ranging from 5–100 acres. Openings will retain approximately one-third of the trees growing on the site. Trees in these openings will then be burned to create fire-killed dead and the areas regenerated. To accomplish this, approximately 2 miles of temporary road will be built. An estimated 6.5 miles of road will be obliterated after harvest and additional road closures put into effect. In addition, ecosystem management burning on approximately 250 acres to improve wildlife Habitat is planned. Area affected is within the Upper and East For Clearwater River Drainages approximately 12 miles northeast of Seeley Lake, MT.

The purpose of this proposal is to carry out the goals and direction stated in the Lolo National Forest Plan using ecosystem management principles. The objectives are to:

- Reduce road densities in order to meet inter-agency access standards for grizzly bear.
- Reduce the risk of mature lodgepole stands to mountain pine beetle mortality, to maintain the health and vigor of seral species stands, and to contribute to the forest plan expectations for timber production through harvesting.
- Reduce existing sources of sediment to water and fisheries resources caused by existing roads.
- Reintroduce and simulate low and moderate intensity fires in fire-dependent ecosystems in order to create fire-killed dead trees on the landscape and improve wildlife habitat.
- Treat noxious weeds.
- Create vistas of Swan mountains along the Clearwater Loop Road
- Precommercially thin young stands to achieve desired species composition and density.

Public scoping was conducted on most elements of this proposal during June, 1997. Since then the proposal has been reduced in scale and modified. Issues and comments identified during this earlier scoping process will be carried forward and addressed in this analysis.

The following key issues were identified and will be used to develop alternatives and assess environmental consequences:

1. The project area has high value grizzly bear habitat, important bull trout spawning habitat, sensitive soils, and high value water quality. The current density of roads is high enough to result in adverse effects on those resources. The density of open and closed roads exceeds the inter-agency standard for grizzly bears. Culverts and drainage features on many of the roads in the project area are inadequate for the high volume run-off typical to the area. To meet current resource standards, roads in the project area need: (1) an overall reduction in density; (2) removal or upgrade of roads or culverts most at risk of failing during high run-off events; and (3) an upgrade of drainage features to reduce sediment during run-off events.

2. Management of the project area is subject to a number of laws, standards, interim regulations, and special allocations. The area is within occupied, essential grizzly bear habitat (USDI, 1993). Road densities exceed the standard for grizzly bear habitat. While the Clearwater River is not a ''Water Quality Limited'' segment as determined by Montana State in the current 305(b) Report, Seeley Lake, approximately 12 miles down-stream is identified as Water Quality Limited. The USDI Fish, Wildlife Service made a decision to list bulltrout as a threatened species within the Columbia River Basin in early June, 1998. Current road densities and past management activities have resulted in a decrease in large woody debris and an increase in sediment within streams of the analysis area.

3. As a result of past management activities, including fire suppression, there has been a shift in fire regime, forest structure, species composition and patch size across the landscape. Of particular concern is the extent of mature lodgepole pine stands at risk to mountain pine beetle mortality. Some level of vegetative treatment could stabilize stands, reduce risks to insect and disease mortality, and maintain vigor. Reintroduction of fire to simulate natural processes and patterns is desirable to improve wildlife habitat.

4. Recreational values and demand are high and need to be considered. At present the Clearwater area abounds with recreation opportunities such as driving the Clearwater Loop Road, hunting, fishing, snowmobiling, cross-country skiing, berry-picking and hiking. Unique and outstanding opportunities include scenic drives and canoeing on pristine Clearwater Lake. Management actions should not detract from the existing opportunities.

5. The area east of Clearwater Loop Road is in RARE II area 01485. The boundary of the RARE II area 01485 coincides with portions of Road 4370. Portions were precommercially thinned and roaded about 30 years ago. The roads are currently over-grown with brush and undrivable. Past wilderness proposals included areas above 5800 feet but did not include this area. Any treatments proposed within the RARE II area will be analyzed to determine impacts on roadless character and will be consistent with agency regulations and policies.

In addition to these key issues, secondary issues include: treatment of noxious weeds to curtail spread, the effects of treatments on old growth stands and the species that use them, effects of treatments on management indicator species or sensitive plan and wildlife species, biodiversity, fragmentation and corridors, cultural resources and precommercial thinning of young stands.

The Forest Service will consider a range of alternatives. Other alternatives will examine varying levels and locations for activities in response to issues and other resource values. In addition to the proposed action, one of these will be the ''no action'' alternative—in which none of the proposed activities would be implemented. Another alternative, in addition to the treatments in the proposed action, will address the impacts of commercial thinning from existing open roads. This concept is further broadened in an alternative that adds areas that can only be accessed from existing road and must be logged during the winter using snow roads.

Public participation is an important part of the analysis, commencing with the initial scoping process (40 CFR 1501.7) which will occur during July, 1998. In addition to this initial scoping, the public may visit Forest Service officials at any time during the analysis and prior to the decision. The Forest Service will be seeking information, comments, and assistance from Federal, State, and local agencies and other individuals or organizations who may be interested in, or affected by, the proposed action. Consultation with the USDI Fish, Wildlife Service on grizzly bear and bulltrout will occur. No public meetings are scheduled at this time.

The Draft EIS is expected to be filed with the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and available for public review in January, 1999. 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 the EPA's notice of availability appears in the **Federal Register**. It is very important that those interested in management of the Clearwater project area participant at that time. The Final EIS is scheduled to be completed by April, 1999.

The Forest Service believes, at this early stage, it is important to give reviewers notice of several count 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 statements stage buts that are not raised until after completion of the final environmental impact statement may be waived or dismissed by the courts. *City of Agoon* 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 30-day scoping 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 developing issues and alternatives. To assist the Forest Service in identifying and considering issues, comments should be as specific to this proposal as possible. 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.

Dated: June 23, 1998.

Charles C. Wildes,

Forest Supervisor.

[FR Doc. 98–17666 Filed 7–1–98; 8:45 am]

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DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Grain Inspection, Packers and Stockyards Administration

Proposed Posting of Stockyards

The Grain Inspection, Packers and Stockyards Administration, United States Department of Agriculture, has information that the livestock markets named below are stockyards as defined in section 302 of the Packers and Stockyards Act (7 U.S.C. 202) and should be made subject to the provisions of the Packers and Stockyards Act, 1921, as amended (7 U.S.C. 181 *et seq.*).

MS–171—Varner Horse Company, Edwards, Mississippi

NM–123—Southwest Livestock Auction, Los Lunas, New Mexico

Pursuant to the authority under section 302 of the Packers and Stockyards Act, notice is hereby given that it is proposed to designate the stockyards named above as posted stockyards subject to the provisions of said Act.

Any person who wishes to submit written data, views or arguments concerning the proposed designation may do so by filing them with the Director, Office of Policy/Litigation Support, Packers and Stockyards Programs, Grain Inspection, Packers and Stockyards Administration, U.S. Department of Agriculture, 1400 Independence Avenue, SW, Stop 3646, Room 3418–S, Washington, D.C. 20250, by July 17, 1998.

All written submissions made pursuant to this notice will be made available for public inspection in the office of the Director of the Office of Policy/Litigation Support during normal business hours.

Done at Washington, DC, this 23rd day of June 1998.

Daniel L. Van Ackeren,

Director, Office of Policy/Litigation Support, Packers and Stockyards Programs.

[FR Doc. 98–17440 Filed 7–1–98; 8:45 am]

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