

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: On July 25, 1996, FSIS published a final rule, "Pathogen Reduction: Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Point (HACCP) Systems," (61 FR 38806). The rule established a HACCP implementation schedule for establishments based on their size. Large plants began implementing HACCP on January 26, 1998. Small plants have a scheduled implementation date of January 25, 1999, and very small plants are required to implement HACCP by January 25, 2000.

After publication of its final HACCP rule, FSIS has been holding a series of public meetings to facilitate implementation of HACCP plans, especially by small and very small plants. The Agency also has provided extensive information and technical assistance that would be helpful to plant managers in development of HACCP plans. FSIS also has developed and distributed generic HACCP models and guidance materials specifically to aid small plant managers.

The upcoming meetings will discuss small plant initiatives, including contacts and a coordinators assistance network, small plant demonstration projects, plant sponsorship, and land grant university workshops. A panel will address the key elements of implementation, and there will be an opportunity to ask questions and seek additional information.

Times and locations of additional small plant implementation meetings scheduled for October through December 1998 will be announced in a future **Federal Register** notice.

Done in Washington, DC, on: September 2, 1998.

Thomas J. Billy,
Administrator.

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DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Forest Service

Blue Mountains Natural Resources Institute, Board of Directors, Pacific Northwest Research Station, Oregon

AGENCY: Forest Service, USDA.
ACTION: Notice of meeting.

SUMMARY: The Blue Mountains Natural Resources Institute (BMNRI) Board of Directors will meet on September 25, 1998, at Agriculture Service Center Conference Room, 10507 N. McAlister Road, La Grande, Oregon. The meeting will begin at 9:00 a.m. and continue until 3:30 p.m. Agenda items to be

covered will include: (1) Program status; (2) research results of specific projects; (3) outreach activities; (4) report on Initiatives; (5) presentations by guest speakers; (6) forum for issues discussion; (7) public comments. All BMNRI Board Meetings are open to the public. Interested citizens are encouraged to attend. Members of the public who wish to make a brief oral presentation at the meeting should contact Larry Hartmann, BMNRI, 1401 Gekeler Lane, La Grande, Oregon 97850, 541-962-6537, no later than 5:00 p.m. September 22, 1998, to have time reserved on the agenda.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Direct questions regarding this meeting to Larry Hartmann, Manager, BMNRI, 1401 Gekeler Lane La Grande, Oregon 97850, 541-962-6537.

Dated: September 1, 1998.

Lawrence A. Hartmann,

Manager.

[FR Doc. 98-24175 Filed 9-8-98; 8:45 am]

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DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Forest Service

RIN 0596-AB65

Categorical Exclusion for Certain Ski Area Permit Actions

AGENCY: Forest Service, USDA.

ACTION: Notice; adoption of interim directive.

SUMMARY: The Forest Service is issuing an interim directive to guide its employees in complying with the National Environmental Policy Act when issuance of a ski area permit is a purely ministerial action and no changes are proposed in permitted activities or facilities. The interim directive implements a provision of the Omnibus Parks and Public Lands Management Act of 1996, which states that reissuance of a ski area permit for activities similar in nature and amount to the activities authorized under the previous permit shall not constitute a major Federal action. Public comment on the proposed interim directive published in the **Federal Register** on October 27, 1997 (62 FR 55571) was considered in development of this interim directive.

EFFECTIVE DATE: The interim directive is effective September 24, 1998.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Questions about this action should be addressed to Alice Carlton, Recreation, Heritage, and Wilderness Resources Staff, (MAIL STOP 1125), Forest

Service, USDA, PO Box 96090, Washington, DC 20090-6090, (202)-205-1399.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: To reduce administrative costs, section 701(i) of the Omnibus Parks and Public Lands Management Act of 1996 (16 U.S.C. 497c) states that the reissuance of a ski area permit for activities similar in nature and amount to the activities provided under the previous permit shall not constitute a major Federal action for the purposes of the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (NEPA) (42 U.S.C. 4331 *et seq.*). Agency direction regarding this provision is needed to guide Forest Service employees in complying with NEPA and the Omnibus Parks and Public Lands Management Act of 1996 when ski area permits are issued.

Section 701(i) of the 1996 act applies to issuance of permits for up to the maximum tenure allowable under the National Forest Ski Area Permit Act of 1986 (the Ski Area Permit Act) (16 U.S.C. 497b) for existing ski areas when permit issuance involves only administrative changes, such as issuance of a permit when no changes to the Master Development Plan and no new facilities or activities are authorized, to the following: (1) To a new owner of the ski area improvements; (2) to the existing owner upon expiration of the current permit; or (3) to a holder of a permit issued under the Term Permit and Organic Acts converting to a permit under the Ski Area Permit Act. The effect of section 701(i) is that an environmental impact statement is not required for issuance of permits under these circumstances.

The Forest Service currently authorizes ski areas on National Forest System lands through permit issuance under the Ski Area Permit Act. The permit provides the legal framework for the use and occupancy of National Forest System lands, including terms for renewal; conditions for issuance of a new permit in the event of sale of the ski area improvements to another owner; permit tenure; fee schedules and payment methods; accountability and reporting requirements; liability and bonding requirements; and any other customized terms and conditions needed to ensure consistency with applicable forest land and resource management plans or to meet the requirements of other applicable laws.

The Ski Area Permit Act, its implementing regulations at 36 CFR 251.56, and existing policy in Forest Service Manual (FSM) section 2721.61e provide that under ordinary