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Dated: October 14, 1998.

Reba Pittman Evans,

Acting Assistant Secretary, Administration.

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DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Office of the Secretary

Provincial Interagency Executive Committees Advisory Committees

AGENCY: Office of the Secretary, USDA.

ACTION: Notice of intent to reestablish a Federal Advisory Committee.

SUMMARY: In response to the continued need of the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) and the United States Department of the Interior (DOI) for advice on coordination and implementation of the Record of Decision (ROD) of April 13, 1994, of Management of Habitat for Late-Successional and Old-Growth Forest-Related Species Within the Range of the Northern Spotted Owl, the Departments have agreed to reestablish the Advisory Committees for 12 provinces. The purpose of the Advisory Committees is to provide advice on coordinating the implementation of the ROD. The Advisory Committees will provide advice and recommendations to promote integration and coordination of forest management activities among Federal and non-Federal entities.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Susan Yonts-Shepard, Staff Assistant for National Forest System Operations, Forest Service, USDA, (202) 205-1519.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: Pursuant to the Federal Advisory Committee Act (FACA) (5 U.S.C. App.), notice is hereby given that USDA in consultation with DOI intends to reestablish Provincial Advisory Committees (PACs), which will advise the Provincial Interagency Executive Committees (PIECs). The purpose of the PIECs is to facilitate the coordinated implementation of the ROD of April 13, 1994. The PIECs consist of representatives of some of the following Federal agencies: Forest Service (FS), Bureau of Land Management (BLM), Fish and Wildlife Service, National Marine Fisheries Service, National Park Service, Bureau of Indian Affairs, and Environmental Protection Agency. The purpose of the PACs is to advise the

PIECs on coordinating the implementation of the ROD. Each PAC will provide advice regarding implementation of a comprehensive ecosystem management strategy for Federal land within a province (provinces are defined in the ROD at E-19). The PACs will provide advice and recommendations to promote integration and coordination of forest management activities among Federal and non-Federal entities.

The PACs are in the public interest in connection with the duties and responsibilities of USDA and of DOI. The ROD provides direction to the FS and the BLM for developing an ecosystem management approach that is consistent with statutory authority for land use planning. Ecosystem management at the province level requires improved coordination among governmental entities responsible for land management decisions and the public they serve.

The Chair of each PAC will alternate annually between the FS and the BLM representative in provinces where both agencies administer land. When the BLM is not represented in the PIECs, the FS representative will serve as Chair. The Chair, or a designated agency employee, will serve as the Designated Federal Official under sections 10 (e) and (f) of the FACA.

The action of reestablishing the Advisory Committees does not require amendment of BLM or FS planning documents because it does not affect the standards and guidelines or land allocations, which require an amendment process to change. The BLM and FS will provide further notices, as needed, for additional actions or adjustments when implementing interagency coordination, public involvement, and other aspects of the ROD.

Equal opportunity practices will be followed in all appointments to the Advisory Committees. To ensure that the recommendations of the Advisory Committees have taken into account the needs of diverse groups served by the Departments, membership should include, to the extent practicable, individuals with demonstrated ability to represent minorities, women, and persons with disabilities.

Dated: October 14, 1998.

Reba Pittman Evans,

Acting Assistant Secretary.

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DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Agricultural Research Service

Research, Education, and Economics; Notice of the National Agricultural Research, Extension, Education, and Economics Advisory Board Meeting

AGENCY: Research, Education, and Economics, USDA.

ACTION: Notice of meeting.

SUMMARY: In accordance with the Federal Advisory Committee Act, 5 U.S.C. App., the United States Department of Agriculture announces a meeting of the National Agricultural Research, Extension, Education, and Economics Advisory Board.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: The National Agricultural Research, Extension, Education, and Economics Advisory Board, which represents 30 constituent categories, as specified in section 802 of the Federal Agriculture Improvement and Reform Act of 1996 (Pub. L. 104-127), has scheduled a National Agricultural Research, Extension, Education, and Economics Advisory Board Meeting, October 26-28, 1998.

The Advisory Board Chair, Vice Chair, and Executive Director will conduct an orientation of new members from 9 a.m. until 11 a.m. on Monday, October 26, 1998. The general Advisory Board meeting will begin at 1 p.m. on Monday, October 26 and continue until approximately noon on Wednesday, October 28. During this time, the Advisory Board will elect the new officers and Executive Committee members for fiscal year 1999.

The agenda for the Advisory Board general meeting will focus discussion on the Board's advisory role with regard to the recently enacted Agricultural Research, Extension, and Education Reform Act of 1998, and on human capacity development. Agenda items will include, but not be limited to: (1) briefing by the Cooperative State Research, Education, and Extension Service and Agricultural Research Service on the scientific peer and merit review process; (2) Board advice to USDA on merit review procedures for education and extension cooperative grants; (3) USDA and Board discussion on the new Research, Education, and Economics initiative; (4) stakeholder input to USDA on legislative provisions; (5) initial discussion on the annual review of programs and projects with regard to relevance to research priorities and the adequacy of funding; (6) progress reports on Advisory Board working group activities and the