

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

Office of the Secretary

Notice of the National Agricultural Research, Extension, Education, and Economics Advisory Board Executive Committee Conference Call Meeting

AGENCY: Research, Education, and Economics, USDA.

ACTION: Notice of conference call meeting.

SUMMARY: In accordance with the Federal Advisory Committee Act, 5 U.S.C. App., the United States Department of Agriculture announces a Conference Call Meeting of the Executive Committee 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 1408 of the National Agricultural Research, Extension, and Teaching Policy Act of 1977, as amended by section 802 of the Federal Agriculture Improvement and Reform Act of 1996 (Pub. L. 104-127), will have a conference call meeting of the Advisory Board's Executive Committee on January 14, 1999. Several agenda items will be discussed, which will include forming initial recommendations on the USDA merit review procedures for education and extension competitive grants for subsequent transmission to the Secretary of Agriculture, as required under the new Agricultural Research, Extension, and Education Reform Act of 1998. This conference call will be open for full Advisory Board participation.

Dates: January 14, 1999, at 10:00-11:00 a.m., e.s.t.

Place: USDA, Research, Education, and Economics Advisory Board Office, Room

3918, South Building, 1400 Independence Avenue, SW., Washington, DC 20250-2255.

Type of Meeting: Open to the public. To assure space and available access to phone lines, the public must request to join the conference call by contacting the phone number below by January 12, 1999.

Comments: The public may also file written comments before or within 2 weeks after the meeting with the Research, Education, and Economics (REE) Advisory Board Office. All statements will become a part of the official records of the National Agricultural Research, Extension, Education, and Economics Advisory Board and will be kept on file for public review in the Office of the Advisory Board; Research, Education, and Economics; U.S. Department of Agriculture; Washington, DC 20250-2255.

For Further Information Contact: Deborah Hanfman, Executive Director, National Agricultural Research, Extension, Education, and Economics Advisory Board Office, Room 3918 South Building, U.S. Department of Agriculture, STOP: 2255, 1400 Independence Avenue, SW, Washington, DC 20250-2255. Telephone: 202-720-3684, Fax: 202-720-6199, or E-mail: lshea@reeusda.gov.

Done at Washington, D.C. this 31st day of December, 1998.

I. Miley Gonzalez,

Under Secretary, Research, Education, and Economics.

[FR Doc. 99-534 Filed 1-8-99; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 3410-22-P

DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Office of the Secretary

Onondaga County Priority Watersheds Agricultural Environmental Management Program; (AEMP) Determination of Primary Purpose of Program payments for consideration as Excludable From Income Under Section 126 of the Internal Revenue Code of 1954

AGENCY: Office of the Secretary, USDA.
ACTION: Notice of determination.

SUMMARY: The Secretary of Agriculture has determined that all County cost share payments made to individuals as a part of an Agriculture Environmental Management Plan are made primarily for the purpose of conserving water and protecting or restoring the environment in the priority watersheds of Onondaga County. This determination is made in accordance with section 126 of the Internal Revenue Code of 1954, as amended (26 U.S.C. 126). The

determination permits recipients of these cost-share payments to exclude them from gross income to the extent allowed by the Internal Revenue Service.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Walter G. Neuhauser, Executive Director of the Onondaga County Soil & Water Conservation District, 25.

Walter G. Neuhauser, Executive Director, Onondaga County SWCD, 2571 US Rt. 11, Suite #1, Lafayette, NY 13084-9641

or
Director, Conservation Operations Division, USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service, PO Box 2890, Washington, DC 20013

SUPPLEMENTAL INFORMATION: Section 126 of the Internal Revenue Code of 1954, as amended (26 U.S.C. 126), provides that certain payments made to persons under state conservation programs may be excluded from the recipient's gross income for Federal income tax purposes, if the Secretary of Agriculture determines that payments are made "primarily for the purpose of conserving soil and water resources, protecting or restoring the environment, improving forests, or providing a habitat for wildlife." The Secretary of Agriculture evaluates these conservation programs on the basis of criteria set forth in 7 CFR part 14, and makes a "primary purpose" determination for the payments made under each program. Before there may be an exclusion, the Secretary of the Treasury must determine that payments made under these conservation programs do not substantially increase the annual income derived from the property benefited by the payments.

Procedural Matters

The authorizing legislation, regulations and operating procedures regarding the Onondaga County Priority Watersheds Agricultural Environmental Management Program have been examined using the criteria set forth in 7 CFR part 14. The U.S. Department of Agriculture has concluded that the cost-share payments made for implementation of best management practices under this program are made to provide financial assistance to eligible persons primarily for the purpose of conserving water resources and protecting or restoring the environment in the priority watersheds of Onondaga County.

A "Record of Decision, Onondaga County Priority Watersheds Agricultural Environmental Management Program, Primary Purpose Determination for Federal Tax Purposes" has been prepared and is available upon request from, Walter G. Neuhauser, Executive Director, Onondaga County Soil and Water Conservation District, 2571 U.S. Rt. 11, Suite #1, Lafayette, NY 13084-9641 or from the Director, Conservation Operations Division, USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service, PO Box 2890, Washington DC 20013.

Determination

As required by section 126(b) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1954, as amended, I have examined the authorizing legislation, regulations and operating procedures regarding the Onondaga County Priority Watersheds Agricultural Environmental Management Program. In accordance with the criteria set out in 7 CFR Part 14, I have determined that all cost-share payments for implementation of best management practices made under this program as part of an Agricultural Environmental Management Plan are primarily for the purpose of conserving water resources, and protecting or restoring the environment, in the priority watersheds of Onondaga County. Subject to further determination by the Secretary of the Treasury, this determination permits payment recipients to exclude from gross income, for Federal income tax purposes, all or part of such cost-share payments made under said program.

Signed at Washington, DC, on December 8, 1998.

Dan Glickman,

Secretary, Department of Agriculture.

[FR Doc. 99-520 Filed 1-8-99; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 3410-16-U

DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Forest Service

Tower Fire Rehabilitation Projects, Umatilla National Forest, Grant & Umatilla Counties, Oregon

AGENCY: Forest Service, USDA.

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

SUMMARY: The Forest Service will prepare an environmental impact statement on a proposal to rehabilitate lands and resources burned in 1996 by the Tower Fire. The project area is located on the North Fork John Day Ranger District and lies approximately 12 miles southeast of Ukiah, Oregon,

within the North Fork John Day River Sub-basin.

Projects would be designed at the landscape level to replant forest and riparian vegetation (including the use of herbicides in some upland areas to control vegetation which would compete with new seedlings); stabilize slopes exposed by the fire; enhance wildlife habitat; reduce recreational disturbance of moderate and severely burned sites; reconstruct, repair, or decommission degraded roads and stream crossings; restore and protect stream habitat; reduce hazards along open roads, OHV trails, and a campground; restore forest stand structure and composition through precommercial or commercial thinning; reduce fuel loading to create conditions which would allow the use of prescribed fire; subsoil known areas of soil compaction; and salvage valuable timber that was damaged or killed by the fire. The proposed projects will be in compliance with the 1990 Umatilla National Forest Land and Resource Management Plan (Forest Plan), as amended, which provides the overall guidance for management of this area.

The agency invites written comments and suggestions on the scope of the analysis. In addition, the agency will give notice of the full environmental analysis once it nears completion so that interested and affected people may participate and contribute to a final decision.

DATES: Comments concerning the scope of the analysis should be received in writing by February 26, 1999.

ADDRESSES: Send written comments and suggestions concerning the management of this area to Craig Smith-Dixon, North Fork John Day District Ranger, PO Box 158, Ukiah, OR 97880.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:

Questions about the proposed project and scope of analysis should be directed to Tim Davis, Tower Projects Team Leader, North Fork John Day Ranger District. Phone: (541) 427-5341.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: The Tower Fire burned approximately 50,800 acres, 46,300 of which occur on the Umatilla National Forest. The decision area for the Tower Fire Rehabilitation Projects includes all 46,300 acres. It includes portions of the Cable Creek, Bridge/Pine North Fork John Day, Big, and Hidaway watersheds of the North Fork John Day River Sub-basin. The area also includes all of the South Fork-Tower Roadless Area (16,300 acres) and is bounded on the south by the North Fork John Day Wilderness.

Originally, five separate analyses were proposed for salvage and restoration projects with the Tower Fire area. These were: Hairy Hazard Tree CE, Tower Fire Salvage EA, Big Tower Salvage and Revegetation Project, EA, South Tower Fire Recovery Projects EA, and Cable Fire Recovery Project EA. In January 1998, the Big Tower Fire Recovery Projects Decision Notice and Environmental Assessment was challenged in court. The Federal District Court upheld the project decision and the three salvage sales associated with the Big Tower Salvage and Revegetation Project were sold and awarded. The court was petitioned for a stay of implementation but the stay was denied. The District Court's decision was then appealed and the Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals overturned the decision, instructing the Forest Service to conduct an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for any further projects within the entire Tower Fire. All activities on the three timber sales associated with the Big Tower Salvage and Revegetation Project as well as the Hairy Hazard Tree Sale (which was to remove hazard trees along open roads) were stopped. At the time of the halt order, 19 million board feet of the 26 million board feet of timber sold had been cut and removed from three of the four timber sales. This notice of intent initiates the analysis for the required EIS covering the remainder of the Big Tower Salvage and Revegetation projects and all other fire recovery projects proposed within the burn. Since the fall of 1996, many restoration activities have been initiated, including tree planting, erosion seeding, road stabilization, and salvage of fire-killed trees. Completion of the EIS and associated decisions will allow these and other watershed restoration projects to be implemented.

The purpose of the Forest Service proposal is to rehabilitate portions of the burn to facilitate reaching the desired future condition for the area and recover economic value of timber where such salvage is compatible with protection of damaged resources. Proposed projects would involve: Reforestation of areas which sustained high tree mortality (including ecologically important stands of western white pine); revegetation of burned riparian areas; reconstruction of roads open to the public and repair of roads closed to the public but still required for administrative use; decommissioning of degraded roads; repair or replacement of road culverts to improve fish passage; reconstruction of stream crossings which are considered at risk due to fire-