

does not provide sufficient opportunity to test a candidate's knowledge of the relevant pension law. In addition, the pension mathematics segment of the basic actuarial examination does not cover sufficient material to test a candidate's ability to apply sound actuarial techniques to the increasingly complex regulatory environment in which defined benefit pension plans operate.

As a result of discussions held at a public meeting on June 30, 1998, and in other public forums, the Joint Board and the examination co-sponsors, the Society of Actuaries and the American Society of Pension Actuaries, propose to restructure the examination program.

The major topics for the restructured basic actuarial examination would be (1) compound interest, and (2) life contingencies. These topics are now covered in the first segment of the basic actuarial examination (EA-1A). The restructured examination covering these topics would be 2½ hours long, the same length as the current EA-1A examination.

The restructured pension law examination would be offered in two segments. The first would cover basic pension mathematics, including the law and regulations that relate to funding qualified defined benefit pension plans that are neither overfunded nor seriously underfunded. The second segment would cover the remaining relevant law and regulations. This would include treatment of overfunded plans, deficit reduction contributions, qualification standards, etc. A minimum standard of competence would be established for each segment. Each segment of the restructured pension law examination would be 4 hours long.

It is the Joint Board's intention to offer each examination once a year. The basic actuarial examination and the second segment of the pension law examination would be offered in the spring. The first segment of the pension law examination would be offered in the fall. It is anticipated that the restructured program will take effect in the spring of 2001 when the basic actuarial examination and the second segment of the pension law examination will be offered.

Appropriate transition credits would be accorded to persons who have successfully completed portions of the enrollment examination before 2001. The Joint Board is considering the following system of transition credits:

(1) A person who has successfully completed the first segment of the current basic actuarial examination before 2001 will receive credit for the restructured basic actuarial examination and will satisfy the

examination requirement of the Joint Board's regulations only if he or she passes *both* segments of the restructured pension law examination.

(2) A person who has successfully completed *both* segments of the current basic actuarial examination before 2001 will receive credit for the restructured basic actuarial examination and will satisfy the examination requirement of the Joint Board's regulations only if he or she passes *both* segments of the restructured pension law examination.

(3) A person who has successfully completed the first segment of the current basic actuarial examination *and* the current pension law examination before 2001 will receive credit for the restructured basic actuarial examination *and* for the second segment of the restructured pension law examination and will satisfy the examination requirement of the Joint Board's regulations only if he or she passes the first segment of the restructured pension law examination.

(4) A person who has successfully completed the second segment of the current basic actuarial examination *and* the current pension law examination before 2001 will receive credit for *both* segments of the restructured pension law examination and will satisfy the examination requirement of the Joint Board's regulations only if he or she passes the restructured basic actuarial examination.

(5) A person who has successfully completed the current pension law examination before 2001 will receive credit for the second segment of the restructured pension law examination and will satisfy the examination requirement of the Joint Board's regulations only if he or she passes the restructured basic actuarial examination *and* the first segment of the restructured pension law examination.

(6) A person who does not meet the requirements of one of the preceding five paragraphs before 2001 will receive no credit for any examinations passed under the current examination program and will satisfy the examination requirement of the Joint Board's regulations only if he or she passes the restructured basic actuarial examination *and both* segments of the restructured pension law examination.

The above restructuring is subject to approval by the respective co-sponsors of the examination. This proposal is intended to reflect the views expressed at the public meetings held by the Joint Board and by the co-sponsoring organizations up to the present time. However, the Joint Board welcomes further public comments on the restructuring. Persons desiring to submit comments should submit them in writing on or before April 26, 1999, to the address given above.

Examination candidates will be furnished with more details on the restructuring after it has been approved.

Paulette Tino,

Chair, Joint Board for the Enrollment of Actuaries.

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DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Forest Service

Proposed West Fork Weiser Watershed Projects, Payette National Forest, Idaho

AGENCY: Forest Service, USDA.

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

SUMMARY: The Forest Service will prepare an environmental impact statement (EIS) for the proposed West Fork Weiser Watershed Projects, New Meadows Ranger District, Payette National Forest, Idaho. The proposed action would harvest timber, obliterate roads to reduce sediment, close other roads to reduce wildlife vulnerability, control noxious weeds, and construct a developed campground near Lost Valley Reservoir. A range of alternatives, including the no action alternative, will be developed as appropriate to address issues.

The agency invites comments and suggestions on the scope of the analysis to be included in the draft environmental impact statement (DEIS). In addition, the agency gives notice of the full environmental analysis and decision making process that is beginning on the proposal so that interested and affected people know how they may participate and contribute to the final decision.

DATE: Comments on the scope of the analysis must be received by April 10, 1999.

ADDRESS: Submit written comments and suggestions concerning the scope of the analysis to Chris Hescock, West Fork Weiser Watershed Projects Team Leader, New Meadows Ranger District, Payette National Forest, Drawer J, New Meadows, Idaho 83654.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Questions about the proposed action should be directed to Chris Hescock, phone (208) 634-0608.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: The Payette National Forest Plan (1988) provides Forest-wide direction for management of the resources of the Payette National Forest, including timber. The environmental impact

statement for the Forest Plan (1988) analyzed a range of alternatives for management of the West Fork Weiser watershed. The Plan allocated this area to general forest, including timber management, and assigned it to Management Area #4. The area has had previous entries for timber harvest.

As well as Forest-wide direction, the plan gives specific direction for this management area. It requires integrated protection of multiple resources including fish, wildlife, range, soil and water, timber, and fire/fuels.

Public participation will be especially important at several points during the analysis, particularly during scoping of issues and review of the DEIS. The first opportunity in the process is scoping, which includes:

1. Identifying potential issues.
2. Identifying issues to be analyzed in detail.
3. Eliminating insignificant issues or those covered by a relevant previous environmental analysis.

4. Determining potential cooperating agencies and responsibilities.

The Forest Service will consult with the National Marine Fisheries Service, Department of Commerce, and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Department of Interior, or potential impacts to threatened and endangered species.

Preliminary issues include effects on fisheries, wildlife, recreation, water quality, and economics.

The second major opportunity for public input is with the DEIS. The DEIS will analyze a range of alternatives to the proposed action, including the no-action alternative. The DEIS is expected to be filed with the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and to be available for public review in September, 1999. EPA will then publish a notice of availability of the DEIS in the **Federal Register**. Public comments are invited at that time.

The comment period on the DEIS will be 45 days from the date the EPA publishes the notice of availability in the **Federal Register**.

The Forest Service believes, at this early stage, it is important to give reviewers notice of several court rulings related to public participation in the environmental review process. First, reviewers of DEISs must structure their participation in the environmental review of the proposal so that it is meaningful and alerts the agency to the reviewers 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 DEIS stage but that are not raised until after completion of the final

environmental impact statement (FEIS) may be waived or dismissed by the courts. *City of Angoon 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 45 day 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 the FEIS.

To assist the Forest Service in identifying and considering issues and concerns on the proposed action, comments on the DEIS 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 DEIS 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.

In the FEIS the Forest Service is required to respond to comments received (40 CFR 1503.4). The responsible official will consider the comments, responses, environmental consequences discussed in the FEIS, and applicable laws, regulations, and policies in making the final decision regarding this proposal. The responsible official will document the decision and reasons for it in the Record of Decision. That decision will be subject to appeal under 36 CFR 215.

David F. Alexander, Forest Supervisor of the Payette National Forest, McCall, Idaho, is the responsible official for this EIS.

Dated: March 5, 1999.

David F. Alexander,

Forest Supervisor.

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DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Forest Service

Proposed Brown Creek Timber Sale, Payette National Forest, Idaho

AGENCY: Forest Service, USDA.

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

SUMMARY: The Forest Service will prepare an environmental impact

statement (EIS) for the proposed Brown Creek Timber Sale, New Meadows Ranger District, Payette National Forest, Idaho. The proposed action would harvest timber, obliterate roads to reduce sediment, and close other roads to reduce wildlife vulnerability. The Forest prepared an environmental assessment (EA) for this project and issued a decision notice in September 1998. The Forest withdrew the decision in December 1998 so that an updated analysis of roadless and old growth could be made and will prepare an EIS. The EA analyzed three alternatives, including a no action alternative. The proposed action would harvest within the Patrick Butte Roadless Area; however, no new roads would be constructed. All actions will follow the Chief's interim rule on road building. The alternatives considered in the EA, which would be analyzed in the draft EIS (DEIS), would harvest up to 4.3 million board feet of timber. Other alternatives will be developed depending on new issues raised.

The agency gives notice of the full environmental analysis and decision making process that is continuing on the proposal so that interested and affected people know how they may participate and contribute to the final decision. The Forest conducted public scoping and addressed subsequent issues in the EA. The Forest now invites comments on the scope of the analysis and the issues to be addressed.

DATES: Comments on the scope of the analysis must be received by April 10, 1999.

ADDRESSES: Submit written comments and suggestions to Jack Irish, Brown Creek Team Leader, New Meadows Ranger District, Payette National Forest, PO Box J, New Meadows, Idaho 83654.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Questions about the project should be directed to Jack Irish, phone (208) 347-0300.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: The Payette National Forest Plan (1988) provides Forest-wide direction for management of the resources of the Payette National Forest, including timber. The environmental impact statement for the Forest Plan (1988) analyzed a range of alternatives for management of the Brown Creek watershed. The Plan allocated this area to general forest, including timber management, and assigned it to Management Area #11. The area has had previous entries for timber harvest.

As well as Forest-wide direction, the plan gives specific direction for this management area. It requires integrated protection of multiple resources