

DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Forest Service

Amendment of Land and Resource Management Plans in the Southwestern Region

AGENCY: Forest Service, USDA.

ACTION: Revised notice of intent to prepare an environmental impact statement.

SUMMARY: The Southwestern Region of the Forest Service is preparing an environmental impact statement on a proposal to amend National Forest land and resource management plans to incorporate standards and guidelines for management of habitat for American peregrine falcon, Little Colorado River spinedace, loach minnow, spikedace, Apache trout, Chihuahua chub, Gila trout, Gila top minnow, razorback sucker, southwest willow flycatcher, cactus ferruginous pygmy owl, Sonora tiger salamander, New Mexico ridgenose rattlesnake, and Pima pineapple cactus. The amendment would add new standards and guidelines that are intended to strengthen and clarify existing direction for the protection of these species. The amendment would apply to all subsequent project-level resource management decisions that involve site-specific environmental analysis and appropriate public involvement. The Notice of Intent to Prepare an Environmental Impact Statement was published in the **Federal Register** on Monday, June 1, 1998 (63 FR 29692-29695). The Notice announced that a draft environmental impact statement would be available for review in August 1998, and a final environmental impact statement would be available for review in December 1998. The draft environmental impact statement is now expected to be available in December 1999 and a final environmental impact statement should be available by March 2000.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Director of Ecosystem Analysis and Planning, 517 Gold Ave. SW, Albuquerque, New Mexico 87102, (505) 842-3251.

Dated: September 21, 1999.

James T. Gladen,

Acting Regional Forester.

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DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Forest Service

Revised Land and Resource Management Plan, Wasatch-Cache National Forest, UT

AGENCY: Forest Service.

ACTION: Notice of intent to prepare an environmental impact statement in conjunction with revision of the Land and Resource Management Plan for the Wasatch-Cache National Forest located in Box Elder, Cache, Davis, Duchesne, Morgan, Rich, Salt Lake, Summit, Tooele, Wasatch, and Weber counties, Utah; and Uinta County, Wyoming.

SUMMARY: the Department of Agriculture, Forest Service will prepare an Environmental Impact Statement in conjunction with a revision of the Land and Resource Management Plan (hereinafter referred to as Forest Plan) for the Wasatch-Cache National Forest.

This notice describes the needs for change identified to this point in the current Forest Plan to be revised, estimated dates for filing the Environmental Impact Statement, information concerning public participation, and the names and addresses of the agency officials who can provide additional information. The purpose of the notice is to begin the scoping phase of public involvement in the revision process.

DATES: Comments concerning the intent to prepare a revised Forest Plan should be received in writing by November 1, 1999. The agency expects to file a Draft Environmental Impact Statement in June of 2000 and a Final Environmental Impact Statement in the December of 2000.

ADDRESSES: Send written comments to: Bernie Weingardt, Forest Supervisor, Wasatch-Cache National Forest, 8236 Federal Building, 125 South State Street, Salt Lake City, Utah, 84138.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Melissa Blackwell, Planning Team Leader, Wasatch-Cache National Forest (801) 524-3907.

Responsible official: Jack Blackwell, Intermountain Regional Forester, at 324 25th Street, Ogden, UT 84401.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: Pursuant to part 36 Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) 219.10 (f) and (g), the Regional Forester for the Intermountain Region gives notice of the agency's intent to prepare an Environmental Impact Statement for the revision of the Wasatch-Cache National Forest Land and Resource Management Plan. According to 36 CFR 219.10(g), Land and Resource Management Plans shall

ordinarily be revised on a 10- to 15-year cycle. The existing Forest Plan for the Wasatch-Cache National Forest was approved on September 4, 1985.

The Regional Forester gives notice that the Wasatch-Cache National Forest is beginning an environmental analysis and decision-making process for the proposed programmatic action to revise the Wasatch-Cache Forest Plan. Opportunities will be provided to discuss the Forest Plan revision with the public. The public is invited to help identify issues that will be considered in defining the range of alternatives in the Environmental Impact Statement.

Forest plans describe the long-term direction for managing National Forests. Agency decisions in these plans do the following:

- Establish multiple-use goals and objectives (36 CFR 219.11);
- Establish forest-wide management requirements (standards and guidelines);
- Establish management areas and management area direction through the application of management prescriptions;
- Identify lands not suited for timber production (36 CFR 219.3);
- Establish monitoring and evaluation requirements; and
- Recommend areas for official designation of wilderness.

The authorization of project-level activities on the Forest occurs through project, or site-specific, decision-making. Project level decisions must comply with National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) procedures and must include a determination that the project is consistent with the Forest Plan.

Need for Change in the Current Forest Plan

The Forest completed a monitoring report in 1992. The results of the monitoring report, in addition to public input and Forest Plan implementation experience, indicated that there is a need for change in some management direction in the Forest Plan. Several sources were used in determining the needed changes in the current Forest Plan. These sources include:

- Comments received from employees who have been implementing the Plan.
- Findings from the Forest Plan monitoring report;
- Comparison of regulatory, manual, and handbook requirements with current Plan direction;
- National direction, policy and initiatives;
- New information from research, and
- Public comments received regarding the findings in the