

In addition to the "No Action" alternative, five action alternatives have been identified for consideration:

- An alternative that would include both road removal and timber harvest, utilizing small harvest openings that would not result in any increase in water yields.
- An alternative that would include both road removal and timber harvest, creating harvest openings of at least 5 acres in the rain-on-snow zones, to minimize increases in water yields while creating openings large enough to re-establish seral species such as white pine and western larch.
- An alternative that would include both road removal and timber harvest, simulating historical disturbance patterns which involve patches larger than 5 acres. These larger harvest units would be more economically efficient in terms of harvest and reforestation costs.
- An alternative designed to resemble a "pulse" event such as a large fire, by harvesting at least 1,000 acres in one general area, leaving islands or structure similar to the mosaic found after a fire. This approach would start the trend toward more resilient timber stands with longer-lived seral species, and would result in less fragmentation of stands than would harvest utilizing smaller openings in greater number.
- An alternative that would accomplish watershed rehabilitation work, without timber harvest activities.

Comments from the public and other agencies will be used in preparation of the draft EIS. The scoping process will be used to:

- (1) Identify additional potential issues;
- (2) Eliminate minor issues or those issues which have been covered by a relevant previous environmental analysis;
- (3) Identify additional alternatives to the proposed action;
- (4) Identify potential environmental effects of the proposed action and alternatives (*i.e.*, direct, indirect and cumulative effects).

While public participation in this analysis is welcome at any time, comments received within 30 days of the publication of this notice will be especially useful in the preparation of the draft EIS, which is expected to be filed with the Environmental Protection Agency and available for public review in March 2000. The comment period on the draft environmental impact statement will be 45 days from the date the Environmental Protection Agency publishes the notice of availability in the **Federal Register**. In addition, the public is encouraged to visit with Forest Service officials at any time during the

analysis and prior to the decision. The Forest Service will be seeking information, comments, and assistance from federal, state, and local agencies, the Coeur d'Alene Tribe, and other individuals or organizations that may be interested in or affected by the proposed action.

The USDA Forest Service is the lead agency for this proposal. District Ranger Susan Jeheber-Matthews is the responsible official.

The Forest Service believes it is important at this early stage to give reviewers notice of several court rulings related to public participation in the environmental review process. First, reviewers of draft environmental impact statements must structure their participation in the environmental review of the proposal so that it is meaningful and alerts an agency to the reviewer's position and contentions. *Vermont Yankee Nuclear Power Corp. v. NRDC*, 435 U.S.C. 519, 553 (1978). Also, environmental objections that could be raised at the draft environmental impact statement stage but that are not raised until after completion of the final environmental impact statement may be waived or dismissed by the courts. *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 final environmental impact statement.

To assist the Forest Service in identifying and considering issues and concerns on the proposed action, comments on the draft environmental impact statement 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 draft environmental impact statement 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.

Dated: December 15, 1999.

Susan Jeheber-Matthews,
District Ranger.

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DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Forest Service

Oregon Coast Provincial Advisory Committee Meeting

AGENCY: Forest Service, USDA.

ACTION: Notice of meeting.

SUMMARY: The Oregon Coast Provincial Advisory Committee (PAC) will meet on January 20, 2000, at the Hatfield Marine Science Center (Meeting Room #9), 2030 S. Marine Science Drive, Newport, Oregon. The meeting will begin at 9:00 a.m. and continue until 4:00 p.m. Agenda items to be covered include: (1) Information sharing among PAC Members, (2) background will be provided on NW Forest Plan/aquatic strategies, and (3) will develop action plan for meetings in 2000. Two 15-minute open public forums are scheduled at 11:30 a.m. and 3:45 p.m. Interested citizens are encouraged to attend. The committee welcomes the public's written comments on committee business at any time.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Joni Quarnstrom, Public Affairs Specialist, Siuslaw National Forest (541-750-7075), or write to the Acting Forest Supervisor, Siuslaw National Forest, P.O. Box 1148, Corvallis, Oregon 97339.

Dated: December 21, 1999.

Jose L. Linares,

Acting Forest Supervisor.

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DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Natural Resources Conservation Service

Depatee Creek Watershed, Independence and Jackson Counties, Arkansas

AGENCY: Natural Resources Conservation Service.

ACTION: Notice of availability of record of decision.

SUMMARY: Kalven L. Trice, responsible Federal official for projects administered under the provisions of Public Law 83-566, 16 U.S.C. 1001-1008, in the State of Arkansas, is hereby providing notification that a Record of Decision to proceed with the installation of the Depatee Creek Watershed project is available. Single copies of the Record of Decision may be obtained from Kalven L. Trice at the address shown.

For further information contact Kalven L. Trice, State Conservationist,