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DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Cooperative State Research, Education, and Extension Service

Higher Education Challenge Grants Program for Fiscal Year 2000; Request for Proposals and Request for Input; Correction Notice

AGENCY: Cooperative State Research, Education, and Extension Service, USDA.

ACTION: Correction to notice of request for proposals and request for input.

SUMMARY: In notice document published in the issue of Friday, December 17, 1999, (64 FR 242) the date to receive hand delivered proposals is erroneous. The due date for Form CSREES-711, "Intent to Submit a Proposal," also is erroneous. This notice corrects the date to receive hand delivered proposals and the due date for Form CSREES-711, "Intent to Submit a Proposal," as follows:

On page 70687, in the third column, third paragraph, first sentence of the USDA notice, the date to receive hand delivered proposals was erroneous. The correction is February 14, 2000.

On page 70687, in the third column, fifth paragraph, first sentence of the USDA notice, the date to receive Form CSREES-771, "Intent to Submit a Proposal," is erroneous. The correction is January 17, 2000.

Done at Washington, D.C., this 22 day of December 1999.

Charles W. Laughlin,

Administrator, Cooperative State Research, Education, and Extension Service

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DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Forest Service

Steamboat Resource Area, Idaho Panhandle National Forests, Shoshone County, Idaho

AGENCY: Forest Service, USDA.

ACTION: Notice, intent to prepare environmental impact statement.

SUMMARY: The project area is approximately 27,000 acres in size, and is located in the Steamboat Creek basin (T50N, R2E, Sec. 1-6, 8-15; T50N, R3E, Sec. 5-8, 18; T51N, R1E, Sec. 24-26, 35-36; T51N, R23, Sec. 9-11, 13-36; T51N, R3E, Sec. 30-32; Boise Meridian). The Forest Service will prepare an environmental impact statement (EIS) to analyze and disclose the environmental effects of the project.

The purpose of this proposal is twofold: over the short term, the goal is to reduce the negative effects specific roads are having on streams in the watershed. The long-term goal is to trend the watershed toward a condition of increased resilience to withstand future disturbances (such as wildfire, disease, or insect infestations) by improving the overall health and stability of both the terrestrial and aquatic ecosystems.

DATES: Comments concerning the scope of the analysis should be received in writing by January 31, 2000.

ADDRESSES: Send written comments to Coeur d'Alene River Ranger District, 2502 East Sherman Avenue, Coeur d'Alene, Idaho, 83814-5899.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Sherri Lionberger, Project Team Leader, (208) 769-3065.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: The resource area has been modified by the effects of past harvest, road building, and historic natural disturbances. White pine blister rust continues to cause mortality in the white pine, and the species composition is changing to a less resilient type of forest. Streamside roads that infringe on flood plains, large areas of regeneration harvests, outdated skidding practices, and natural flood events have combined to increase sediment and destabilize stream channels, causing a loss of fisheries habitat locally as well as further downstream. This history has led to vegetative and watershed conditions in

need of rehabilitation to trend the resource area toward more naturally-resilient characteristics. The proposal will include the following possible actions: (1) Improving aquatic resource conditions by reducing the amount of sediment entering the stream from existing roads through repair or removal of specific road segments and/or road channel crossings; and (2) Increasing the stocking and size of rust-resistant white pine and other long-lived seral conifers through regeneration and stand-tending activities such as timber harvest, prescribed fire, tree planting, pruning and thinning. The scope of this analysis is limited to activities related to the purpose and need, and measures necessary to mitigate the effects these activities may have on the environment. The decision will identify if, when, how and where to schedule activities to meet these goals.

Similar activities were examined in this area under the Boston Brook Resource Area Environmental Assessment, published in September 1997. No decisions were implemented based on that document. Since that time, there have been changes in both resource conditions and Forest Service policies, which warrant another look at this area. A new name is being used for the current proposal to make it easier for the public to recognize the area to be analyzed and to avoid confusion with the earlier analysis.

The issues raised and alternatives developed as a result of the public participation for the Boston Brook Environmental Assessment will be brought forward for the EIS. Modifications may be made based on updated resource information, changes in Forest Service policy, and/or additional public comments.

Key issues that will drive alternative development have been preliminarily identified based on past scoping activities and known resource concerns. To date, these key issues include protection or improvement of aquatic resources (water quality and fisheries habitat), and protection or improvement of forest vegetation (timber stands and rare plants). There are other issues which may not drive alternative development but which will be analyzed to disclose environmental effects. For example, protection of key big-game habitat, and ensuring access for recreation activities.