

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

Commission on 21st Century Production Agriculture

ACTION: Notice of meeting.

SUMMARY: The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) has established the Commission on 21st Century Production Agriculture. In accordance with Section 10(a)(2) of the Federal Advisory Committee Act (FACA), notice is hereby given of a meeting in November of the Commission on 21st Century Production Agriculture. The purpose of this meeting will be to discuss the future role of the Federal Government in support of production agriculture. The meeting is open to the public.

PLACE, DATE, AND TIME OF MEETING: This meeting will be held January 27–28, 2000, in Room 221–A Jamie L. Whitten Federal Building, U.S. Department of Agriculture, 1400 Independence Avenue, SW, Washington, DC 20250, from 9:00 a.m. est until 5:00 p.m. est.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Timothy M. Peters (202–720–4860), Assistant Director, Commission on 21st Century Production Agriculture, Room 3702 South Building, 1400 Independence Avenue, SW, Washington, DC 20250–0524.

Dated: January 3, 2000.

Keith J. Collins,
Chief Economist.

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DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Forest Service

Threemile Stewardship Project; Custer National Forest, Ashland Ranger District; Powder River and Rosebud Counties, Montana

AGENCY: Forests Service, USDA.

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

SUMMARY: The Forest Service will prepare an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) to disclose the environmental effects of the Threemile Stewardship Project. This project will focus on moving ecosystems toward their desired conditions through management activities that would maintain or improve the diversity of ponderosa pine, woody draw and grassland vegetative communities. The project was selected for Stewardship Contracting. The Forest Service is the lead agency for the preparation of this document.

DATES: Comments concerning the scope of the analysis should be received in writing by February 29, 2000.

ADDRESSES: Send written comments to Elizabeth A. McFarland, District Ranger, Ashland Ranger District, P.O. Box 168, Ashland, Montana 59003. Or send electronic mail comments to rhecker/rl_custer@fs.fed.us.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Ronald E. Hecker, Project Coordinator, (406) 784–2344 or rhecker/rl_custer@fs.fed.us.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: The Threemile Stewardship Project is one of nine stewardship “end” result contract demonstration projects in the northern Region of the Forest Service that is authorized under Section 347 of the 1999 Appropriations Bill.

The focus of this project is moving ecosystems toward their desired condition through management activities that would maintain or improve the diversity of the ponderosa pine, woody draw and grassland vegetative communities. This project is designed to achieve vegetation management of these plant communities through the use of partnerships and collaboration as defined through Stewardship Contracting (Section 347, 1999 Appropriations Bill).

The objective of this project is the performance of services to achieve land

management goals on the National Forest System lands that meet local and rural community needs (improve conditions on the land while providing for local jobs). Land management goals may include, but are not limited to:

- Commercial and non-commercial cutting or removal of trees to promote healthy forest stands, woody draws, and grasslands and/or to reduce fire hazard;
- Prescribed burning to improve the composition, structure, condition and health of forests stands, woody draws and grasslands;
- Road maintenance and reclamation of un-needed roads;
- Control of noxious weeds; and
- Restoration and maintenance of wildlife habitat.

The Stewardship proposal would look at the over-all needs of the 32,200 acres within the project area, which is located between Ten Mile Creek and US Highway 212 on the southeast portion of the Ashland Ranger District. The focus is “outcomes” and not “outputs”. The value of forest products removed would be used as an offset against the cost of services received (exchange of goods for services on a value for value basis). An example might be trading saw logs for treatment of noxious weeds or road rehabilitation.

Along with the issuance of a project-scoping letter, later this month, an information meeting is scheduled for February 10, 2000, at the Ashland Ranger District, to provide the public with additional information about the project and process. Written or oral responses will be accepted until February 29, 2000.

The Responsible Official for this EIS for decision is Nancy T. Curriden, Forest Supervisor, 1310 Main Street, P.O. Box 50760, Billings, Montana 49105.

The comment period on the draft environment impact statement will be 45 days from the date the Environmental Protection Agency publishes the notice of availability in the **Federal Register**.

A Draft EIS is schedules for release to the public for comment in August 2000, and the Final EIS is scheduled for completion in December 2000.

The Forest Service believes it is important to give reviewers notice at this early stage of several court rulings related to public participation in the environmental review process. First,