

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.

Comments received in response to this solicitation, including names and addresses of those who comment, will be considered part of the public record on this Proposed Action and will be available for public inspection and may be released under FOIA. Comments submitted anonymously will be accepted and considered; however, those who submit anonymous comments will not have standing to appeal the subsequent decision (36 CFR Parts 215 or 217).

Responsible Official: Fred Salinas, Assistant Forest Supervisor, Tongass National Forest, 204 Siginaka Way, Sitka, Alaska 99835-7316, is the responsible official. In making the decision, the responsible official will consider the comments, responses, disclosure of environmental consequences, and applicable laws, regulations, and policies. The responsible official will state the rationale for the chosen alternative and the Record of Decision.

Dated: January 4, 2000.

Fred S. Salinas,

Assistant Forest Supervisor.

[FR DOC. 00-1108 Filed 1-14-00; 8:45am]

[BILLING CODE 3410-11-M]

DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Forest Service

Woodpecker Project Area Environmental Impact Statement

AGENCY: Forest Service, USDA.

ACTION: Notice of intent to prepare an Environmental Impact Statement.

SUMMARY: The Department of Agriculture, Forest Service, will prepare an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) to provide timber for the Tongass National Forest timber sale program, to enhance recreational opportunities, to develop a road management plan for the project area, and to perform watershed restoration work. The Record of Decision will disclose where, if any, the Forest Service has decided to provide timber harvest units, roads, associated timber harvesting facilities, dispersed recreation sites, and watershed improvements. The proposed action for timber harvest is to provide multiple timber sale opportunities for a total of approximately 13 million board feet (mmbf) of timber. Timber harvest will be accomplished using a variety of

silvicultural prescriptions to meet the standards and guidelines of the Forest Plan. Recreation opportunity enhancement includes dispersed sites for camping and picnicking, and improved turnouts for parking. Watershed improvements includes cordoning exposed roadside banks and decommissioning roads where drainage problems exist. A range of alternatives responsive to significant issues will be developed and will include a no-action alternative. These activities were first identified during the public involvement and analysis for the Mitkof Landscape Design. The proposed 33,000 acre project area is located on parts of Value Comparison Units 447, 448, and 452 on Mitkof Island, Alaska on the Petersburg Ranger District of the Tongass National Forest. Part of this project area is within an Inventoried Roadless Area (Crystal #224 as identified by the Tongass Land and Resource Management Plan).

DATES: Comments concerning the scope of this project should be received by February 7, 2000.

ADDRESSES: Please send written comments to the Petersburg Ranger District, Tongass National Forest, Attn: Woodpecker Project Area EIS, PO Box 1328, Petersburg, AK 99833. The FAX number is (907) 772-5995.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:

Questions about the proposal and EIS should be directed to Patricia Grantham, District Ranger, Petersburg Ranger District, Tongass National Forest, PO Box 1328, Petersburg, AK 99833; telephone (907) 772-3871 or Cynthia Sever, Interdisciplinary Team Leader, Petersburg Ranger District, PO Box 1328, Petersburg, AK 99833; telephone (907) 772-3871.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: Public participation has been an integral component of the study process and will be especially important at several points during the analysis. The proposed activities were first identified during the Mitkof Landscape Design in 1995, which incorporated aspects of collaborative stewardship. During the last year, the Forest Service has been seeking information, comments, and assistance from Federal, State, and local agencies, Federally-recognized Indian tribes, and individuals and organizations that may be interested in, or affected by, the proposed activities. Written scoping comments have been solicited through an informal scoping package that was sent to the project mailing list and available at open houses in Petersburg, AK, and Kake, AK. The scoping process will include: (1) Identification of potential issues; (2)

identification of issues to be analyzed in depth; and, (3) elimination of insignificant issues or those which have been covered by a previous environmental review. For the Forest Service to best use the scoping input, comments should be received by February 7, 2000.

Based on results of scoping and the resource capabilities within the project area, alternatives including a "no action" alternative will be developed for the Draft Environmental Impact Statement. The Draft Environmental Impact Statement is projected to be filed with the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) in March 2000. Subsistence hearings, as provided for in Title VIII, Section 810 of the Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation Act (ANILCA), will be provided, if necessary, during the comment period on the Draft Environmental Impact Statement. The Final Environmental Impact Statement and Record of Decision are anticipated to be published in July 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**.

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 Draft Environmental Impact Statements must structure their participation in the environmental review of the proposed 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. 519, 553, (1978). Environmental objections that could have been raised at the Draft Environmental Impact Statement stage 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 Final Environmental Impact Statement.

To assist the Forest Service in identifying and considering issues and concerns of the proposed action, comments during scoping and 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 Environmental Impact 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. Comments received in response to this solicitation, including names and addresses of those who comment, will be considered part of the public record on this proposed action and will be available for public inspection. Comments submitted anonymously will be accepted and considered; however, those who submit anonymous comments will not have standing to appeal the subsequent decision under 36 CFR Part 215 or 217. Additionally, pursuant to 7 CFR 1.27(d), any person may request the agency to withhold a submission from the public record by showing how the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) permits such confidentiality. Requesters should be aware that, under FOIA, confidentiality may be granted in only very limited circumstances, such as to protect trade secrets. The Forest Service will inform the requester of the agency's decision regarding the request for confidentiality, and where the request is denied, the agency will return the submission and notify the requester that the comments may be resubmitted with or without name and address within 7 days.

Permits required for implementation include the following:

1. U.S. Army Corps of Engineers

- Approval of discharge of dredged or fill material into the waters of the United States under Section 404 of the Clean Water Act; and
- Approval of the construction of structures or work in navigable waters of the United States under Section 10 of the Rivers and Harbors Act of 1899.

2. Environmental Protection Agency

- National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (402) Permit; and
- Review Spill Prevention Control and Countermeasure Plan.

3. State of Alaska, Department of Natural Resources

- Tideland Permit and Lease or Easement.

4. State of Alaska, Department of Environmental Conservation

- Solid Waste Disposal Permit; and
- Certification of Compliance with Alaska Water Quality Standards (401 Certification).

RESPONSIBLE OFFICIAL: Carol Jorgensen, Assistant Forest Supervisor, Tongass National Forest, P.O. Box 309, Alaska 99833, is the responsible official. The responsible official will consider the comments, response, disclosure of environmental consequences, and applicable laws, regulations, and policies in making the decision and stating the rationale in the Record of Decision.

Dated: December 29, 1999.

Carol J. Jorgensen,
Assistant Forest Supervisor.

[FR Doc. 00-1109 Filed 1-14-00; 8:45 am]
BILLING CODE 3410-11-M

DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Forest Service

California Coast Provincial Advisory Committee (PAC)

AGENCY: Forest Service, USDA.

ACTION: Notice of Meeting.

SUMMARY: The California Coast Provincial Advisory Committee (PAC) will meet on February 2 and 3, 2000, at the Six Rivers National Forest Supervisor's Office in Eureka, California. The meeting will be held from 8:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. both days. The Forest Supervisor's Office is located at 1330 Bayshore Way in Eureka. Agenda items to be covered include: (1) Survey and Manage Draft Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement Presentation and Work on the Ground Subcommittee Recommendations; (2) Regional Ecosystem Office (REO) update; (3) Aquatic Conservation Subcommittee recommendations; (4) Megan Fire update; (5) Presentation on EPA's Draft Clean Water Action Plan; (6) Presentation on Natural Resources Conservation Service Erosion Control Plans; (7) Northern spotted owl baseline study final results and recommendations; and (8) Open public comment. All California Coast Provincial Advisory Committee meetings are open to the public. Interested citizens are encouraged to attend.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:

Direct questions regarding this meeting to Daniel Chisholm, Forest Supervisor, or Phebe Brown, Province Coordinator, USDA, Mendocino National Forest, 825

N. Humboldt Avenue, Willows, CA 95988, (530) 934-3316.

Dated: January 10, 2000.

Daniel K. Chisholm,
Forest Supervisor.

[FR Doc. 00-996 Filed 1-14-00; 8:45 am]
BILLING CODE 3410-11-M

DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Natural Resources Conservation Service

Buffalo Rapids Watershed, Montana

AGENCY: Natural Resources Conservation Service, USDA.

ACTION: Notice of Finding Of No Significant Impact.

SUMMARY: Pursuant to Section 102(2)(C) of the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969; the Council on Environmental Quality Guidelines (40 CFR Part 1500); and the Natural Resources Conservation Service Guidelines (7 CFR Part 650); the Natural Resources Conservation Service, U.S. Department of Agriculture, gives notice that an environmental impact statement is not being prepared for the Buffalo Rapids Watershed, Custer, Dawson, and Prairie Counties, Montana.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:

Shirley Gammon, State Conservationist, Natural Resources Conservation Service, 10 East Babcock, Room 443, Bozeman, Montana, 59715, telephone (406) 587-6813.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: The environmental assessment of this federally assisted action indicates that the project will not cause significant local, regional, or national impacts on the environment. As a result of these findings, Shirley Gammon, State Conservationist, has determined that the preparation and review of an environmental impact statement are not needed for this project.

The project concerns a plan for agricultural water management and watershed protection. The planned works of improvement include 19,000 acres of irrigation water management, nutrient management and conservation crop rotation; 2,100 acres of pest management; 500 acres of prescribed grazing; 65 miles of gated pipe; 30 miles of on-farm pipelines; 1,900 acres of center pivots; 1,900 acres of land leveling; 73 miles of lateral pipelines; improvements to 12 feedlots; and 8,000 acres of polyacrylamide application.

The Notice of a Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) has been forwarded to the Environmental