

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

Forest Service

Information Collection; Request for Comments; Youth Conservation Corps Employment

AGENCY: Forest Service, USDA.

ACTION: Notice.

SUMMARY: In accordance with the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995, the Forest Service announces its intention to reinstate a previously approved information collection. The collected information will help the Forest Service evaluate the employment eligibility of youth 15 to 18 years old through the Youth Conservation Corps Program. Under this Program, the Forest Service cooperates with other Federal agencies to provide seasonal employment for youth.

DATES: Comments must be received in writing on or before April 10, 2000.

ADDRESSES: All comments should be addressed to Director, Youth Conservation Corps, Senior, Youth and Volunteer Programs, (Mail Stop 1136), Forest Service, USDA, P.O. Box 96090, Washington, DC 20090-6090.

Comments also may be submitted via facsimile to (703) 605-5115 or by e-mail to syvp/wo@fs.fed.us.

The public may inspect comments at the Office of the Director, Senior, Youth and Volunteer Programs, Forest Service, USDA, Room 1010, 1621 North Kent Street, Arlington, Virginia 22209. Visitors are asked to call ahead to facilitate entrance into the office.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Ransom Hughes, Youth Conservation Corps, Senior, Youth and Volunteer Programs at (703) 605-4854.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

Background

Under the Youth Conservation Corps Act of August 13, 1970, as amended

(U.S.C. 18701-1706), the Forest Service, U.S. Department of Agriculture and the Fish and Wildlife Service and National Park Service, U.S. Department of Interior cooperate to provide seasonal employment for eligible youth 15 to 18 years old.

These youth, who seek training and employment with the Forest Service through the Youth Conservation Corps, must complete the following forms: FS-1800-18, Youth Conservation Corps Application, and FS-1800-3, Youth Conservation Corps Medical History. Forest Service employees use the information to evaluate the eligibility of each applicant.

The Youth Conservation Corps stresses three important objectives:

- Accomplish needed conservation work on public lands;
- Provide gainful employment for 15 to 18 year old males and females from all social, economic, ethnic, and racial backgrounds; and
- Foster, on the part of the 15 to 18 year old youth, an understanding and appreciation of the Nation's natural resources and heritage.

Description of Information Collection

The following describes the information collection to be reinstated:

Title: FS-1800-18, Youth Conservation Corps (YCC) Application.
OMB Number: 0596-0084.

Expiration Date of Approval: October 31, 1997.

Type of Request: Reinstatement of an information collection previously approved by the Office of Management and Budget.

Abstract: Employees of the Forest Service, U.S. Department of Agriculture and the Fish and Wildlife Service and National Park Service, U.S. Department of Interior will evaluate the data and determine the eligibility of each youth for employment with the Youth Conservation Corps. To be considered for employment with the Corps, each youth must complete FS-1800-18, Youth Conservation Corps Application Form. Applicants are asked to answer questions that include their name, social security number, date of birth, mailing address, and telephone number. The applicant's parent or guardian must sign the form.

Data gathered in this information collection are not available from other sources.

Estimate of Annual Burden: 6 minutes.

Type of Respondents: Youth 15 to 18 years old.

Estimated Annual Number of Respondents: 18,000.

Estimated Annual Number of Responses per Respondent: 1.

Estimated Total Annual Burden on Respondents: 1800 hours.

Description of Information Collection

The following describes the information collection to be reinstated:
Title: FS-1800-3, Youth Conservation Corps Medical History.

OMB Number: 0596-0084.

Expiration Date of Approval: October 31, 1997.

Type of Request: Reinstatement of an information collection previously approved by the Office of Management and Budget.

Abstract: To be considered for employment through the Youth Conservation Corps Program, all youth must complete FS-1800-3, Youth Conservation Corps Medical History Form. Applicants are asked to answer questions regarding their personal health. The purpose of FS-1800-3 is to certify the youth's physical fitness to work in the seasonal employment Program. The applicant's parent or guardian must sign the form.

Data gathered in this information collection are not available from other sources.

Estimate of Annual Burden: 14 minutes.

Type of Respondents: Youth 15 to 18 years old.

Estimated Annual Number of Respondents: 18,000.

Estimated Annual Number of Responses per Respondent: 1.

Estimated Total Annual Burden on Respondents: 4200 hours.

Comment is Invited

The agency invites comments on the following: (a) Whether the proposed collection of information is necessary for the stated purposes and the proper performance of the functions of the agency, including whether the information will have practical or scientific utility; (b) the accuracy of the agency's estimate of the burden of the proposed collection of information, including the validity of the methodology and assumptions used; (c) ways to enhance the quality, utility, and

clarity of the information to be collected; and (d) ways to minimize the burden of the collection of information on respondents, including the use of automated, electronic, mechanical, or other technological collection techniques or other forms of information technology.

Use of Comments

All comments received in response to this notice, including names and addresses when provided, will become a matter of public record. Comments will be summarized and included in the request for Office of Management and Budget.

Dated: February 3, 2000.

Gloria Manning,

Associate Deputy Chief, for Business Operations.

[FR Doc. 00-3011 Filed 2-9-00; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 3410-11-P

DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Forest Service

Meadow Tolan Vegetation Management Project; Bitterroot National Forest, Ravalli County, MT

AGENCY: Forest Service, USDA.

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

SUMMARY: The USDA Forest Service will prepare an environmental impact statement (EIS) to disclose the environmental effects of management activities proposed in the Meadow-Tolan area on the Sula Ranger District of the Bitterroot National Forest. Proposed management activities include management ignited prescribed fire, timber harvest, reforestation, pre-commercial thinning, aspen restoration, and road reconstruction. The Meadow-Tolan area is located in Ravalli County, Montana, approximately 40 miles southeast of Hamilton. The Meadow-Tolan area includes the Meadow and Tolan Creek drainages and several other tributary drainages between them.

A variety of management activities proposed in the project are being considered together because they represent either connected or cumulative actions as defined by the Council on Environmental Quality (40 CFR 1508.25). The purposes of the project are (1) To restore fire and its associated ecological benefits, (2) to harvest merchantable timber, (3) to reduce fuel accumulations, especially in an area adjacent to a rural subdivision, (4) to modify forest stand structure and species composition in order to

maintain or restore ecosystem diversity, (5) to reduce motorized travel to comply with Forest Plan standard, (6) to amend the Forest Plan motorized access standards in an area where other resource benefits outweigh the benefits of restricting travel, (7) to thin young stands that are overstocked, and (8) to restore aspen clones that show signs of deterioration. This project level EIS will tier to the Bitterroot National Forest Land and Resource Management Plan (Forest Plan) and Final EIS (September 1987), which provides overall guidance for all land management activities on the Bitterroot National Forest.

DATES: Written comments and suggestions should be received by March 24, 2000.

ADDRESSES: The Responsible Official is Rodd Richardson, Forest Supervisor, Bitterroot National Forest, 1801 North First, Hamilton MT 59840.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:

Written comments and suggestions concerning the scope of the analysis or a request to be included on the project mailing list should be sent to John Ormiston, Acting Resource Team Leader, Sula Ranger District, Bitterroot National Forest, Phone (406) 821-3201.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: The project area encompasses approximately 45,000 acres of land in west-central Montana on the Bitterroot National Forest. The Meadow-Tolan area includes the Meadow and Tolan Creek drainages and several other tributary drainages of the East Fort Bitterroot River, including Vapor Creek, Swift Creek, Bugle Creek, Kerlee Creek, Springer Creek, Mink Creek, and Bruce Creek. A map and legal descriptions are available on request.

An analysis of the Meadow-Tolan area reveals changes in how the forest vegetation currently looks and functions compared to the past. Natural patterns and stand structures have changed, largely due to the absence of fire during the 1900's in this fire dependent ecosystem. The result is notable changes in plant species composition and density, stand structures, fuels, seral species regeneration, and the health and vigor of forest stands. The primary purposes of prescribed fire and timber harvest in the Meadow-Tolan area is to maintain or restore ecosystem diversity, function, and health. There is also an opportunity to address ecological trends and at the same time utilize surplus biomass for forest products. Maintaining plant community diversity will promote the range of habitats that native plants and animals evolved in. Management prescriptions to promote diversity include low to moderate intensity

management ignited prescribed fire; and on some sites prescribed fire in combination with silvicultural treatments. Silvicultural treatments proposed include pre-commercial thinning, timber harvest, and reforestation.

Managing fuels using fire and silvicultural practices would decrease the risk of uncharacteristically intense fires and associated undesirable effects. These activities could also increase the ability of the Forest Service to allow more naturally occurring fires to burn in the adjoining Anaconda-Pintler Wilderness Area by reducing fuels near private property at lower elevations. This would to some degree reduce the risks to private property from natural fires allowed to burn in the wilderness.

Vegetation treatments with commercial timber harvest and management ignited prescribed fire are proposed on approximately 2530 acres and 1430 acres, respectively. Proposed management ignited fire and harvest activities focus primarily on low- to mid-elevations and dry aspects; those considered at ecological risk due to fire absence.

The prescribed fire would focus on the ponderosa pine/Douglas-fir community, which have been most altered due to fire absence. Most of these treated acres will also include slashing of undesired and unmerchantable trees.

Big game forage, including some winter range areas, would be improved in the areas to be understory burned. Intermediate harvests will also be prescribed on about 1100 acres in the ponderosa pine/Douglas-fir communities to open forest canopies, reduce Douglas-fir encroachment, improve overall productivity and health. Following harvest, all areas would be treated with understory burning in order to reduce fuels, prepare sites for regeneration, rejuvenate the shrub component, and maintain fire as an ecosystem process.

Pre-commercial thinning is also needed on about 320 acres of densely stocked submerchantable trees in order to enhance tree growth and vigor. One area of approximately 20 acres will be treated with hand thinning and piling for the purpose of fuel reduction.

Approximately 1210 acres in the moist Douglas-fir forest community would be treated using intermediate harvests to reduce stand densities, increase health and vigor of the residual stand, salvage dead and dying trees from Douglas-fir bark beetle caused mortality or root rot, and increase resilience to other insects and diseases. Approximately 160 acres would be