

DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE**Forest Service****Coeur d'Alene River Ranger District
Small Sales EIS, Idaho Panhandle
National Forests, Kootenai and
Shoshone Counties, ID****AGENCY:** Forest Service, USDA.**ACTION:** Notice; intent to prepare environmental impact statement.

SUMMARY: The Forest Service will prepare an environmental impact statement (EIS) to analyze and disclose the environmental effects of expanding the Lookout Pass Ski & Recreation Area. The proposal would implement revised portions of the Lookout Pass Master Development Plan approved by the Idaho Panhandle National Forest (IPNF) on June 10, 1997. A Special Use Permit would be required for the proposed action, which would authorize additional development, construction, and operation of ski area facilities on National Forest System lands.

DATES: Comments concerning the scope of the analysis should be received in writing by May 22, 2000.

ADDRESSES: Send written comment to Barry Dutton, Land & Water Consulting Inc., P.O. Box 8254, Missoula, MT 59807.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Barry Dutton or Nancy Winslow at Land and Water Consulting Inc., (406) 721-0354, or Glenn Truscott at the Coeur d'Alene River Ranger District, (208) 644-2318.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: The proposed activities are located adjacent to the existing ski area, approximately 6 miles east of Mullan, Idaho, and adjacent to Interstate 90 at the Idaho/Montana border. The new project area is on the north and south flanks of Runt Mountain at the upper ends of the St. Regis and Coeur d'Alene Rivers. The existing ski area is on the east side of Runt Mountain, which is also in the headwaters of the St. Regis and Coeur d'Alene Rivers.

Lookout Pass Ski Area currently covers approximately 202 acres on Runt Mountain. The ski area and proposed expansion project straddle the Montana-Idaho border and the boundary between the Lolo and Idaho Panhandle National Forests. The Idaho Panhandle National Forests have been designated the lead regulatory agency for the project. The proposed action would increase the ski area by 364 acres, to a total of approximately 566 acres.

The proposed expansion would include 11 new ski runs (covering

approximately 145 acres), 6,800 feet of new chair lifts, one primitive road between ski runs (for tree removal, chair lift construction, and possibly skier use), and 1 acre of new parking. The existing lodge would be expanded by 4,000 square feet. A 6,400 square-foot guest services building would be added to provide meeting rooms, a U.S. Forest Service interpretive center, child care facilities, caretaker's quarters, and overnight lodging. The rental show would be enlarged by 1,100 square feet and 960 feet would be added to the maintenance building. The existing fueling station would be upgraded, and 20 recreational vehicle (RV) hook-ups would be added to the existing parking lot. Approximately 1 acre of the of the rope tow and beginner areas would be regraded and revegetated. The septic system that serves the lodge, guest services building, and rental shop would be expanded. Water would be supplied by an existing well near the base area.

The proposed action would add approximately 920 vertical feet of skiing on the south side of Runt Mountain in the Lolo National Forest. In addition, 1,240 vertical feet of skiing would be added on the north side of Runt Mountain in the Idaho Panhandle National Forests. New ski runs would be classified as expert and advanced-intermediate. Two new chair lifts would serve the new ski runs: one on the north side of Runt Mountain and one on the south side of Runt Mountain. The power line to the ski area has sufficient capacity to meet the anticipated needs of the proposed expansion.

All of the proposed buildings, RV hookups, new parking, and septic systems would be located in the existing base area adjacent to Interstate 90. Disturbed soil areas outside the base area would include primitive trails between runs (for timber harvest, construction, and possibly skier use), lift tower foundations, lift stations, buried water lines, and buried power lines. Limited soil disturbance would occur during stump removal on ski runs.

There would be no private land development associated with the proposed expansion. All of the proposed development would occur entirely within National Forest System lands. No inventoried roadless areas would be affected by the proposed expansion.

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. 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 on the draft EIS 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 specified 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: April 11, 2000.

Susan Jeheber-Matthews,

District Ranger.

[FR Doc. 00-10065 Filed 4-21-00; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 3410-11-M

DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE**Rural Utilities Service****Pleasant Valley Station Plant, Notice of
Finding of No Significant Impact****AGENCY:** Rural Utilities Service, USDA.**ACTION:** Notice of Finding of No Significant Impact.

SUMMARY: Notice is hereby given that the Rural Utilities Service (RUS), pursuant to the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969, as amended, the

Council on Environmental Quality regulations (40 CFR parts 1500–1508), and RUS Environmental Policies and Procedures (7 CFR part 1794), has made a Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) with respect to a project proposed by Great River Energy (GRE) of Elk River, Minnesota. The proposed project will have a total of three combustion turbine units, two 155 MW and one 124 MW unit, including a new 345/161 kV substation and other associated transmission facilities. The proposed plant will be constructed in the Pleasant Valley Township in Mower County, Minnesota. The construction site is located in the northwest quarter of Section 19, Pleasant Valley Township, Mower County, Minnesota. The primary purpose of the facility is to meet GRE's peak electrical load. The facility will require approximately 24 acres of land. However, GRE wants to purchase up to 160 acres in order to provide sufficient construction lay-down area and to maintain an appropriate distance between the facility and its neighbors. The primary fuel for the facility will be natural gas via the Northern Natural Gas (NNG) pipeline. Presently the NNG pipeline is located approximately two miles north from the plant site. The power generated from the facility will be distributed through a new substation, which will be built on the plant site; a short tap line, approximately 500 feet in length, to an existing 345-kV transmission line. In addition, a 161-kV transmission line will be built to an existing substation located in north Austin. Between five and seven miles of the 161-kV line will need a new rights-of-way; much of the remainder of the transmission line, approximately 17 miles long, will follow an existing 69-kV transmission line.

RUS has concluded that the impacts from the proposed project would not be significant and that the proposed action is not a major federal action significantly affecting the quality of the human environment. Therefore, an Environmental Impact Statement will not be prepared.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Nurul Islam, Environmental Protection Specialist, Rural Utilities Service, Engineering and Environmental Staff, Stop 1571, 1400 Independence Avenue, SW, Washington, DC 20250-1571, telephone: (202) 720-1414. His e-mail address is nislam@rus.usda.gov. Information is also available from Mr. Tim Seck, Environmental Project Leader, GRE, 17845 East Highway 10, PO Box 800, Elk River, Minnesota

55330-0880, telephone (612) 241-2278, or E-mail tseck@grenergy.com.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: RUS, in accordance with its environmental policies and procedures, required that GRE prepare an Environmental Analysis (EVAL) to evaluate the potential impacts of the proposed project. The EVAL, which includes input from federal, state, and local agencies, has been reviewed and accepted as RUS's Environmental Assessment (EA) for the project in accordance with 7 CFR 1794.41. RUS and GRE published notices of the availability of the EA and solicited public comments per 7 CFR 1794.42. Two federal agencies, Bureau of Indian Affairs and Federal Aviation Administration, have responded but no objections were raised. No comments were received from the public. Based on the EA, RUS has concluded that the proposed action will not have a significant effect to various resources, including important farmland, floodplains, wetlands, cultural resources, threatened and endangered species and their critical habitat, air and water quality, and noise. RUS has also determined that there would be no disproportionately high and adverse human health or environmental effects on minority populations and low-income populations as a result of the construction of the project.

Copies of the EA and FONSI can be reviewed at the headquarters of GRE and the RUS, at the addresses provided above in this notice.

Dated: April 18, 2000.

Blaine D. Stockton, Jr.,

Assistant Administrator-Electric, Electric Program, Rural Utilities Service.

[FR Doc. 00-10141 Filed 4-21-00; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 3410-15-P

COMMISSION ON CIVIL RIGHTS

Agenda and Notice of Public Meeting of the Florida Advisory Committee

Notice is hereby given, pursuant to the provisions of the rules and regulations of the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights, that a meeting of the Florida Advisory Committee to the Commission will convene at 1 p.m. and YBrickell, Miami, Florida 33131. The purpose of the meeting is to provide new member orientation, discuss affirmative action in Florida, and the Governor's "One Florida Plan."

Persons desiring additional information, or planning a presentation to the Committee, should contact Bobby D. Doctor, Director of the Southern Regional Office, 404-562-7000 (TDD

404-562-7004). Hearing-impaired persons who will attend the meeting and require the services of a sign language interpreter should contact the Regional Office at least ten (10) working days before the scheduled date of the meeting.

The meeting will be conducted pursuant to the provisions of the rules and regulations of the Commission.

Dated at Washington, DC, April 17, 2000.

Lisa M. Kelly,

Special Assistant to the Staff Director.

[FR Doc. 00-10044 Filed 4-21-00; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 6335-01-P

COMMISSION ON CIVIL RIGHTS

Agenda and Notice of Public Meeting of the Maine Advisory Committee

Notice is hereby given, pursuant to the provisions of the rules and regulations of the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights, that a meeting of the Maine Advisory Committee to the Commission will convene at 2 p.m. and adjourn at 6:30 p.m. on Thursday, May 11, 2000, at the Holiday Inn By The Bay, 88 Spring Street, Portland, Maine 04101. The Committee will plan the press release of its report, Limited English Proficient Students in Maine: An Assessment of Equal Educational Opportunities, and discuss future program activities. In addition, the Committee will be briefed by invited civil rights advocates on the status of civil rights issues in Maine.

Persons desiring additional information, or planning a presentation to the Committee, should contact Committee Chairperson Gerald Talbot, 207-287-5984, or Ki-Taek Chun, Director of the Eastern Regional Office, 202-376-7533 (TDD 202-376-8116). Hearing-impaired persons who will attend the meeting and require the services of a sign language interpreter should contact the Regional Office at least ten (10) working days before the scheduled date of the meeting.

The meeting will be conducted pursuant to the provisions of the rules and regulations of the Commission.

Dated at Washington, DC, April 17, 2000.

Lisa M. Kelly,

Special Assistant to the Staff Director.

[FR Doc. 00-10046 Filed 4-21-00; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 6335-01-P