

representatives started in January of 2000 and has been ongoing. The Forest has conducted three field trips to the project area for the public and local Native American tribal representatives.

All comments received from the earlier scoping period will be considered in the EIS, unless respondent submits new comments indicating changes to prior submissions.

The draft EIS is expected to be filed with the Environmental Protection Agency and available for public review by May 2002. The comment period on the draft EIS 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 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 objection that could be raised at the draft environmental impact statement state but that are not raised until after completion of the final environmental impact statement stage may be waived or dismissed by the courts (*City of Angoon v. Hodel*, 803 F. 2nd 1016, 1022 (9th Cir. 1986) and *Wisconsin Heritages, Inc. v. Harris*, 490 F. Supp. 1334, 1338 (E.D. Wis. 1980)).

Because of the above 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 are made available to the Forest Service at a time when they can be meaningfully considered and responded to in the final environmental impact statement. Comments on the draft environmental impact statement should be as specific as possible. It is also helpful if comments refer to specific pages, sections, 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 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. After the comment period ends on the draft EIS, the comments received will be

analyzed and considered by the Forest Service in preparing the final EIS.

The final EIS is scheduled to be completed in September, 2002. In the final EIS, the Forest Service is required to respond to the comments received (40 CFR 1503.4). The responsible official will consider the comments, responses, environmental consequences discussed in the environmental impact statement, and applicable laws, regulations and policies in making a decision regarding this proposal. The responsible official will document the decision and reasons for the decision in a Record of Decision.

That decision will be subject to appeal under 36 CFR part 215.

The responsible official is Dan Chisholm, Forest Supervisor, Modoc National Forest, 800 W. 12th St., Alturas, CA 96101.

Dated: March 18, 2002.

Dan Chisholm,

Forest Supervisor.

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DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Forest Service

South Gifford Pinchot National Forest Resource Advisory Committee Meeting Notice

AGENCY: Forest Service, USDA.

ACTION: Notice of meeting.

SUMMARY: The South Gifford Pinchot National Forest Resource Advisory Committee will meet on Monday, April 8, 2002 at the Skamania County Public Works Department basement located in the Courthouse Annex, 170 N.W. Vancouver Avenue, Stevenson, Washington. The meeting will begin at 1 p.m. and continue until 4 p.m. The purpose of the meeting is to:

(1) Complete the recommendation for funding of Title II projects for fiscal year 2002 from the March 15 meeting.

(2) Provide for a Public Open Forum.

All South Gifford Pinchot National Forest Resource Advisory Committee meetings are open to the public. Interested citizens are encouraged to attend. The "open forum" provides opportunity for the public to bring issues, concerns, and discussion topics to the Advisory Committee. The "open forum" is scheduled as part of agenda item (2) for this meeting. Interested speakers will need to register prior to the open forum period. The committee welcomes the public's written comments on committee business at any time.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:

Direct questions regarding this meeting to Tom Knappenberger, Public Affairs Officer, at (360) 891-5005, or write Forest Headquarters Office, Gifford Pinchot National Forest, 10600 NE 51st Circle, Vancouver, WA 98682.

Dated: March 25, 2002.

Lynn Burditt,

Deputy Forest Supervisor.

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DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Natural Resources Conservation Service

Notice of Proposed Change to Section IV of the Field Office Technical Guide (FOTG) of the Natural Resources Conservation Service in Idaho

AGENCY: Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), Department of Agriculture.

ACTION: Notice of availability of proposed changes in the NRCS National Handbook of Conservation Practices for review and comment.

SUMMARY: It is the intention of the NRCS in Idaho to issue revised conservation practice standard: Agrichemical Mixing Facility (702), Alley Cropping (311), Composting Facility (317), Conservation Cover (327), Conservation Crop Rotation (328), Contour Farming (330), Contour Stripcropping (585), Cover Crop (340), Deep Tillage (324), Fish Passage (396), Grassed Waterway (412), Grazing Land Mechanical Treatment (548), Irrigation Water Conveyance, Ditch and Canal Lining Nonreinforced Concrete (428A), Irrigation Water Management (449), Land Smoothing (466), Nutrient Management (590), Pest Management (595), Pipeline (516), Prescribed Burning (338), Pumping Plant for Water Control (533), Residue Management, Mulch Till (329B), Riparian Forest Buffer (391), Spoil Spreading (572), Spring Development (574), Stream Habitat Improvement and Management (395), Surface Roughening (609), Underground Outlet (620), Use Exclusion (472), and Windbreak/Shelterbelt Establishment (380).

DATES: Comments will be received for a 30-day period commencing with this date of publication.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:

Inquire in writing to Richard W. Sims, State Conservationist, Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), 9173 W. Barnes Dr., Suite C, Boise, Idaho 83709. Copies of the practice standards will be made available upon written request.