

DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE**Forest Service****Timberline Express Chairlift, Mt. Hood National Forest, Clackamas County, OR**

AGENCY: Forest Service, USDA.

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

SUMMARY: The Forest Service, USDA, will prepare an environmental impact statement (EIS) on a proposal submitted by RLK and Company, concessionaire for the Timberline Lodge and Ski Area, to construct a new chairlift and develop a new ski trail system. The construction of the chairlift and ski trails would affect approximately 55 acres within the Zigzag River and Salmon River watersheds on the Zigzag Ranger District and includes a 25-acre expansion of the special use permit boundary. Implementation of this project is scheduled for fiscal year 2004. The Proposed Action would be in compliance with the 1990 Mt. Hood National Forest Land and Resource Management Plan as amended by the Northwest Forest Plan, which provides the overall guidance for management of this area. The Mt. Hood National Forest invites written comments and suggestions on the scope of the analysis. The agency will give notice of the full environmental analysis and decision-making process so interested and affected people may be able to participate and contribute in the final decision.

DATES: Comments concerning the scope of the analysis should be postmarked by September 1, 2002.

ADDRESSES: Send written comments and suggestions concerning the Proposed Action to Paul Koehler, Project Coordinator, Zigzag Ranger District, 70220 E Hwy 26, Zigzag OR, 97049, (phone: 503-622-3191 x614). Comments may also be sent by e-mail to pdkoehler@fs.fed.us. Include your name and mailing address with your comments so documents pertaining to this project may be mailed to you.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Questions about the Proposed Action and EIS should be directed to Paul Koehler (address and phone number listed above), or to Mike Redmond, Environmental Coordinator, 16400 Champion Way, Sandy, Oregon, 97055-7248, (phone: 503-668-1776).

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: The project area is located at Timberline Ski Area, approximately 2 miles north of

Government Camp, in Section 7 and 18, T.3S., R.9E., Willamette Meridian, Clackamas County, Oregon. This analysis will evaluate a range of alternatives for implementation of the project activities including a no-action alternative. The project area does not include any designated wilderness, classified roadless areas, wild and scenic rivers, or late successional reserves.

Some of the preliminary issues that have been identified include: Impacts to riparian areas from lift line and ski trail construction; Impacts to mature forests from ski trail and lift line clearing, and; Impacts to heritage resources from the construction of the lift terminals.

The scoping process will include the following: Identify and clarify issues; identify key issues to be analyzed in depth; explore alternatives based on issues recognized during scoping activities; and identify potential environmental effects of the Proposed Action and alternatives.

The draft EIS is planned to be filed with the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and available for public review by January 2003. The EPA will publish a Notice of Availability (NOA) of the draft EIS in the **Federal Register**. The comment period on the draft EIS will be 45 days from the date the NOA appears in the **Federal Register**. Copies of the draft EIS will be distributed to interested and affected agencies, organizations, Indian Tribes, and members of the public for their review and comment. It is important that those interested in this proposal on the Mt. Hood National Forest participate at that time.

Comments received in response to this Proposed Action, 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 parts 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. Persons requesting such confidentiality should be aware that, under the FOIA, confidentiality may be granted in only very limited circumstances, such as to protect trade secrets. The Forest Service will inform the requestor 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 requestor that the comments may be resubmitted with or without names and addresses within thirty days.

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 EIS 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 EIS stage but are not raised until after completion of the final EIS 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 objects are made available to the Forest Service at a time when it can meaningfully consider them and respond to them in the final EIS.

To assist the Forest Service in identifying and considering issues and concerns on the proposed action, comments on the draft EIS should be as specific as possible. It is also helpful if comments refer to specific pages or chapters of the draft EIS. Comments may also address the adequacy of the draft EIS 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.

The final EIS is scheduled to be available by June 2003. In the final EIS, the Forest Service is required to respond to substantive comments received during the comment period for the draft EIS. The responsible official is Gary Larsen, Mt. Hood National Forest Supervisor. The responsible official will decide which, if any, of the alternatives will be implemented. The Timberline Express Chairlift and Ski Trail System Construction decision and rationale will be documented in a Record of Decision, which will be subject to Forest Service Appeal Regulations (36 CFR part 215).

Dated: July 25, 2002.

Kathryn J. Silverman,

Deputy Forest Supervisor, Mt. Hood National Forest.

[FR Doc. 02-18104 Filed 7-17-02; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 3410-11-M

DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Forest Service

North Gifford Pinchot National Forest Resource Advisory Committee Meeting Notice

AGENCY: Forest Service, USDA.

ACTION: Notice of meeting.

SUMMARY: The North Gifford Pinchot National Forest Resource Advisory Committee will meet on Monday, July 29, 2002 at the City of Morton Community Center, 700 West Main, Morton, Washington. The meeting will begin at 9 a.m. and continue until 5 p.m. The purpose of the meeting is to:

(1) Review and recommend for funding Title II projects for fiscal year 2003.

(2) Provide for a Public Open Forum.

All North Gifford Pinchot National Forest Resource Advisory Committee meetings are open to the public. Interested citizens are encouraged to attend. The "open forum" provides an 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: July 12, 2002.

Claire Lavendel,

Forest Supervisor.

[FR Doc. 02-18106 Filed 7-17-02; 8:45 am]

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DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Rural Utilities Service

Great River Energy; 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) 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 project consists of a short reroute of an existing GRE 230 kV transmission line to facilitate access to coal reserves of the Falkirk Mining Company, and a short segment of additional 230 kV line to provide for separation of the circuits on an existing double-circuited transmission line. The project is located approximately 4.5 miles south and 4 miles west of Underwood in McLean County, North Dakota. RUS may provide financial assistance to GRE for this project.

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; Fax: (202) 720-0820 e-mail: nislam@rus.usda.gov. Information is also available from Ms. Carole Schmidt, Environmental Scientist, Great River Energy, 17845 E. Highway 10, P.O. Box 800, Elk River, MN 55330-0800, telephone: (763) 241-2272; e-mail: cschmidt@GREnergy.com.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: GRE currently owns a 230 kV transmission line that runs between two of its generating facilities—Coal Creek Station (Coal Creek) and Stanton Station (Stanton). A 4.5-mile portion of this line is double-circuited. The purpose of this project is two fold: (1) To reroute a portion of this transmission line to allow access to coal reserves in the area of the line, and (2) to separate the two circuits onto separate transmission structures to allow for additional transmission capacity in the Coal Creek-Stanton area. The relocation will maintain transmission capabilities between Coal Creek and the Stanton area. GRE also intends to place an optical ground wire (fiber optic cable) between Coal Creek and Stanton area to provide a high-speed telecommunications link between the two sites. Portions of the fiber optic cable will be installed in underground conduit. The conduit will be installed by trenching at a depth of approximately 36 inches. A right-of-way of 120 feet will be needed for the line. A combination of single-pole and H-frame structures will be used for the transmission line. The proposed rerouted portion of the line and

separation of the line onto separate transmission structures of the double-circuited portion of the 230 kV line will allow for additional transmission capacity in the Coal Creek-Stanton area. This will facilitate increased coal-fired generation in the area.

RUS, in accordance with its environmental policies and procedures, requires that GRE prepare an environmental report reflecting the potential impacts of the proposed facilities. The environmental report that includes input from federal, state, and local agencies has been reviewed and accepted as RUS' Environmental Analysis (EA) for the project in accordance with 7 CFR 1794.41. GRE published notices of the availability of the EA and solicited public comments per 7 CFR 1794.42. The 30-day comment period on the EA for the proposed project ended May 20, 2002. No comments were received on the EA. GRE, however, received comments on the environmental report from federal, state, and local agencies. GRE has agreed to follow Federal, State, and local agency recommendations and secure all permits prior to constructing and during operation of the proposed facilities.

Based on the EA and the GRE's commitments to follow all agency recommendations, RUS has concluded that the proposed action will not have a significant effect to various resources, including important farmland, floodplains, wetlands, cultural and historic properties, threatened and endangered species and their critical habitat, and water quality. RUS has also determined that there would be no negative impacts of the proposed project on minority communities and low-income communities as a result of construction of the project. RUS believes that there are no significant potential environmental conflicts related to this project.

Dated: July 12, 2002.

Alfred Rodgers,

Acting Assistant Administrator, Electric Program, Rural Utilities Service.

[FR Doc. 02-18044 Filed 7-17-02; 8:45 am]

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COMMISSION ON CIVIL RIGHTS

Agenda and Notice of Public Meeting of the Mississippi 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 Mississippi Advisory Committee to the Commission will convene at 6 p.m. and