

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

Notice of Resource Advisory Committee Meeting

AGENCY: Lassen Resource Advisory Committee, Susanville, California, USDA Forest Service.

ACTION: Notice of meeting.

SUMMARY: Pursuant to the authorities in the Federal Advisory Committees Act (Pub. L. 92-463) and under the Secure Rural Schools and Community Self-Determination Act of 2000 (Pub. L. 106-393) the Lassen National Forest's Lassen County Resource Advisory Committee will meet Thursday, January 9, 2003, Susanville, California for a business meeting. The meetings are open to the public.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: The business meeting January 9, 2003 begins at 9 a.m., at the Lassen National Forest Headquarters Office, Caribou Conference Room, 2550 Riverside Drive, Susanville, CA 96130. Agenda topics will include: Review previous meeting minutes and approve, RAC member/subcommittee reports, Proxy votes and absent voting members/Quorum, Overhead Discussion and Decision, Review Sierra RAC Rating Method, and Funding Multiple Year Projects. Time will also be set aside for public comments at the end of the meeting.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Robert Andrews, Eagle Lake District Ranger and Designated Federal Officer, at (530) 257-4188; or RAC Coordinator, Heidi Perry, at (530) 252-6604.

Heidi L. Perry,

Acting Forest Supervisor.

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DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Forest Service

RIN 0596-AB88

National Environmental Policy Act Documentation Needed for Limited Timber Harvest

AGENCY: Forest Service, USDA.

ACTION: Notice of proposed interim directive; request for comment.

SUMMARY: The Forest Service gives notice of and requests comment on proposed revisions to its directives for implementing the National Environmental Policy Act and Council on Environmental Quality regulations contained in Forest Service Handbook 1909.15, Chapter 30, which addresses categorical exclusions from requirements to prepare environmental disclosure documents. The proposal would add three categorical exclusions to Section 31.2 that are applicable to small timber harvesting projects. These categorical exclusions will not apply where there are extraordinary circumstances, such as adverse effects on threatened and endangered species or their designated critical habitat, wilderness areas, inventoried roadless areas, wetlands, and archeological or historic sites. The intended effect is to facilitate the implementation of limited timber harvest projects that do not have significant effects on the human environment. Public comment is invited and will be considered in development of the final directive.

DATES: Comments must be received in writing by March 10, 2003.

ADDRESSES: Send written comments via the U.S. Postal Service to: Limited Timber Harvest, Forest Service—CAT, USDA, P.O. Box 221090, Salt Lake City, Utah 84122.

Comments also may be submitted via facsimile to (801) 517-1014 or by e-mail to limitedtimber@fs.fed.us. If comments are sent via facsimile or e-mail, the public is requested not to send duplicate written comments via regular mail.

All comments, including names and addresses when provided, are placed in the record and are available for public inspection and copying.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Dave Sire, Ecosystem Management Coordination Staff, (202) 205-0895, or

Darci Birmingham, Forest and Rangeland Management Staff, (202) 205-1759. Individuals who use telecommunication devices for the deaf (TDD) may call the Federal Information Relay Service (FIRS) at 1-800-877-8339 between 8 a.m. and 4 p.m., Eastern Standard Time, Monday through Friday.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

Need for the Proposed Direction

The Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ) regulations at 40 CFR 1507.3 provide that agencies may, after notice and comment, adopt categories of actions that do not have significant impacts on the human environment and, consequently, do not require preparation of an environmental impact assessment or an environmental impact statement. The agency's first timber harvest related categorical exclusion, published in 1981, broadly identified actions of limited size or magnitude. Since 1981, the agency's categorical exclusion concerning small timber harvest activities has been revised several times to better define the category and to add size or volume limits. The agency's most recent revision to the timber harvest-related category occurred in 1992, when the category's limits of 100,000 board feet or 10 acres, were expanded to allow harvest of green timber up to 250,000 board feet and salvage harvest of up to 1 million board feet (57 FR 43180; September 18, 1992). This 1992 revision also allowed up to one mile of low-standard road construction.

Current Forest Service procedures for complying with and implementing the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) are set out in Forest Service Handbook (FSH) 1909.15. Chapter 30 of FSH 1909.15 establishes two types of categorical exclusions. The first, set out at section 31.1, consists of categories of actions that are so routine and limited that a record is not required. The second type, set out at section 31.2, consists of categories of routine actions that require documentation in a Decision Memo of the rationale for not preparing an environmental assessment or an environmental impact statement. The agency is proposing three new categorical exclusions that would fall within this second type of categorical exclusion that requires a Decision Memo.