

Program managers will evaluate the collected information to determine whether Cooperative Fire program funds provided to the State and local fire fighting agencies by the Forest Service have been used to improve their fire suppression capabilities. The Forest Service will share the results of the data with Congress when requesting annual funding for the Program. The collected information also will enable the Forest Service to share with the public the importance and value of the State and Private Forestry Cooperative Fire Program.

Forest Service employees will not collect the information directly, but will request the information from State Foresters, who will collect the information from their own State fire fighting agencies, and from local fire fighting agencies, such as volunteer fire departments. The information collected for the Annual Wildfire Summary Report will include the number of acres protected; the number of fires to which the State or local fire fighting agencies responded within the fiscal year; the sizes of the fires in acres; and the causes of the fires, such as lightning, campfire, or arson. Data gathered in this information collection are not available from other sources.

Estimate of Annual Burden: 30 minutes.

Type of Respondents: State Foresters.
Estimated Annual Number of Respondents: 50.

Estimated Annual Number of Responses per Respondent: 1.

Estimated Total Annual Burden on Respondents: 25 hours.

Comment Is Invited

Comment is invited on: (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 and will be available for public inspection and copying. Comments will be summarized and included in the request for Office of Management and Budget approval.

Dated: February 4, 2004.

Robin L. Thompson,

Acting Deputy Chief, State and Private Forestry.

[FR Doc. 04-2843 Filed 2-9-04; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 3410-11-P

DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Forest Service

Whitetail-Pipestone Travel Management Project, Beaverhead-Deerlodge National Forest, Jefferson and Silver Bow Counties, MT

AGENCY: Forest Service, USDA.

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

SUMMARY: The Forest Service will prepare an environmental impact statement to document the analysis and disclose the environmental impacts of a proposed action to develop a travel and access management plan for the Whitetail-Pipestone area. The project area is located on National Forest System lands east of Interstate 15 from Butte to Boulder, southwest of Highway 69 to Hadley Park road, west and north of the Hadley Park Road over the Bull Mountain range to the Whitetail Road, west of the Whitetail Road to Whitehall, and north of Montana Highway 2 from Whitehall to Butte.

The decision to be made is to define the appropriate road and trail systems and the type of uses on them.

DATES: Initial comments concerning the scope of the analysis should be received in writing no later than March 15, 2004.

ADDRESSES: The responsible official is Forest Supervisor Thomas K. Reilly, Beaverhead-Deerlodge National Forest, Dillon, Montana. Please send comments to Eric Tolf, 3 Whitetail Road, Whitehall, MT 59759. Comments may be electronically submitted to comments-northern-beaverhead-deerlodge-jefferson@fs.fed.us.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Eric Tolf, project leader, 3 Whitetail Road, Whitehall, MT 59759, or phone (406) 287-3223, or by email to etolf@fs.fed.us.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: The purpose of this action is to define a transportation system (roads and trails) to provide a variety of motorized and non-motorized recreation opportunities. A condition of this transportation system is that it can be properly maintained.

The project area is located in T. 2 N.—T. 5 N., R 7 W.—R. 4 W. The scope of this proposal is limited to access and travel management actions to accomplish the purpose and need.

Public participation is important to this analysis. Part of the goal of public involvement is to identify additional issues and to refine the general, tentative issues. A scoping notice describing the proposal will be mailed to those who request information on these types of activities on the Beaverhead-Deerlodge National Forests. Preliminary issues identified by the Forest Service include:

(1) Motorized and non-motorized recreation—the existing transportation system does not provide for a mix of quality recreational experiences for both motorized and non-motorized users.

(2) Road and trail safety—safety concerns exist along roads utilized by both full-sized vehicles and off-highway vehicles, and hazards on low standard roads and trails.

The analysis will consider all reasonably foreseeable activities. The interdisciplinary team has not yet developed alternatives to the proposed action. Alternatives will be developed based on the key issues identified through scoping.

People may visit with Forest Service officials at any time during the analysis and prior to the decision. Two periods are specifically designated for comments on the analysis: (1) During the scoping process, and (2) during the draft EIS period.

During the scoping process, the Forest Service seeks additional information and comments from individuals or organizations that may be interested in or affected by the proposed action, and Federal, State and local agencies. The Forest Service invites written comments and suggestions on this action, particularly in terms of identification of issues and alternative development.

The draft EIS is anticipated to be available for review in May 2004. The final EIS is planned for completion in December 2004.

The Environmental Protection Agency will publish the Notice of Availability of the draft Environmental Impact Statement in the Federal Register. The Forest will also publish a Legal Notice of its availability in the Montana Standard Newspaper, Butte, Montana, A 45-day comment period on the draft environmental impact statement will begin the day following the date of publication of 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 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. *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 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 specific 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.

The responsible official will make the decision on this proposal after considering comments and responses, environmental consequences discussed in the final EIS, applicable laws, regulations, and policies. The decision and reasons for the decision will be documented in the Record of Decision.

Dated: February 3, 2004.

Thomas K. Reilly,

Forest Supervisor.

[FR Doc. 04-2775 Filed 2-9-04; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 3410-11-M

DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Forest Service

National Tree-Marking Paint Committee Meeting

AGENCY: Forest Service, USDA.

ACTION: Notice of meeting.

SUMMARY: The National Tree-Marking Paint Committee will meet in Hot Springs, Arkansas on May 11-13, 2004. The purpose of the meeting is to discuss activities related to improvements in, concerns about, and the handling and use of tree-marking paint by personnel of the Forest Service and the Department of the Interior's Bureau of Land Management.

DATES: The meeting will be held May 11-13, 2004, from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m.

ADDRESSES: The meeting will be held at the Clarion Resort, 4813 Central Avenue, Hot Springs, Arkansas. Persons who wish to file written comments before or after the meeting must send written comments to Bob Monk, Chairman, National Tree-Marking Paint Committee, San Dimas Technology and Development Center, Forest Service, USDA, 444 East Bonita Avenue, San Dimas, California 91773, or electronically to rmonk@fs.fed.us.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Bob Monk, Project Leader, San Dimas Technology and Development Center, Forest Service, USDA, (909) 599-1267, extension 267, or via e-mail to rmonk@fs.fed.us.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: The National Tree-Marking Paint Committee comprises representatives from the Forest Service national headquarters, each of the nine Forest Service Regions, the Forest Products Laboratory, the Forest Service San Dimas Technology and Development Center, and the Bureau of Land Management. The General Services Administration and the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health are ad hoc members and provide technical advice to the committee.

A field trip will be held on May 11 and is designed to supplement information related to tree-marking paint. This trip is open to any member of the public participating in the public meeting on May 12-13. However, transportation is provided only for committee members.

The main session of the meeting, which is open to public attendance, will be held on May 12-13.

Closed Sessions

While certain segments of this meeting are open to the public, there

will be two closed sessions during the meeting. The first closed session is planned for approximately 9 to 11 a.m. on May 12. This session is reserved for individual paint manufacturers to present products and information about tree-marking paint for consideration in future testing and use by the agency. Paint manufacturers also may provide comments on tree-marking paint specifications or other requirements. This portion of the meeting is open only to paint manufacturers, the Committee, and committee staff to ensure that trade secrets will not be disclosed to other paint manufacturers or to the public. Paint manufacturers wishing to make presentations to the Tree-Marking Paint Committee during the closed session should contact the Chairman at the telephone number listed under the **FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT** section of this notice. The second closed session is planned for approximately 2 to 4 p.m. on May 13. This session is reserved for Federal Government employees only.

Any person with special access needs should contact the Chairman to make those accommodations. Space for individuals who are not members of the National Tree-Marking Paint Committee is limited and will be available to the public on a first-come, first-served basis.

Dated: February 3, 2004.

Abigail R. Kimbell,

Associate Deputy Chief, National Forest System.

[FR Doc. 04-2771 Filed 2-9-04; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 3410-11-P

DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Forest Service

Notice of Meeting; Southwest Oregon Province Advisory Committee

SUMMARY: The Southwest Oregon Province Advisory Committee will meet on Wednesday, March 17, 2004. The meeting begins at 9 a.m. and ends at 5 p.m.; the open public forum begins at 11:30 a.m. It will be held at the J. Herbert Stone Nursery, 2606 Old Stage Road, Central Point, Oregon in the Employee Center. The tentative agenda include: (1) Biscuit Fire Recovery Project Draft Environmental Impact Statement update; (2) Port-Orford-cedar Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement update; and (3) Province Advisory Committee 2004 Work Plan development.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Rogue River-Siskiyou National Forest Public Affairs Officer Mary T. Marrs at (541) 858-2211, e-mail mmarrs@fs.fed.us, or USDA Forest