

proposed by the local community. The no-action alternative will serve as a baseline for comparison of alternatives.

Comments received in response to this notice, including names and addresses of those who comment, will be part of the project record and available for public review.

The Forest Service is seeking information and comments from other Federal, State, and local agencies; Tribal governments; organizations; and individuals who may be interested in or affected by the proposed action. This input will be used in preparation of the EIS.

Comments will be appreciated throughout the analysis process. The draft EIS will be filed with the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and is anticipated to be available for public review by autumn 2004. The comment period on the draft EIS will be 45 days. It is important that those interested in the management of the Payette National Forest participate at that time.

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, 1002 (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 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 raised by 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.

After the 45-day comment period ends on the draft EIS, the Forest Service will analyze comments received and address them in the final EIS. The final EIS is scheduled to be completed in spring 2005. The Responsible Official is the Payette National Forest Supervisor. The decision will be documented, including the rationale for the decision, in a Record of Decision (ROD). The final environmental impact statement will be subject to review under the Forest Service Predecisional Review for Proposed Hazardous Fuel Reduction Projects at 36 CFR 218, Subpart A.

Dated: March 12, 2004.

Robert S. Giles,

Acting Forest Supervisor.

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DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Forest Service

Notice of Resource Advisory Committee Meeting

AGENCY: North Central Idaho Resource Advisory Committee, Kamiah, Idaho, USDA, Forest Service.

ACTION: Notice of meeting.

SUMMARY: Pursuant to the authorities in the Federal Advisory Committee Act (Pub. L. 92-463) and under the Secure Rural Schools and Community Self-Determination Act of 2000 (Pub. L. 106-393) the Nez Perce and Clearwater National Forests' North Central Idaho Resource Advisory Committee will meet Tuesday, April 13, 2004 in Lewiston, Idaho for a business meeting. The meeting is open to the public.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Ihor Mereszczak, Staff Officer and Designated Federal Officer, at (208) 935-2513.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: The business meeting on April 13, at the Sacajawea Center, 1824 Main Street, Lewiston, ID, begins at 10 a.m. (P.S.T.). Agenda topics will include discussion of potential projects. A public forum will begin at 2:30 p.m. (P.S.T.).

Dated: March 8, 2004.

Ihor Mereszczak,

Acting Forest Supervisor.

[FR Doc. 04-6164 Filed 3-18-04; 8:45 am]

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DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Forest Service

Southwest Washington Provincial Advisory Committee Meeting Notice

AGENCY: Forest Service, USDA.

ACTION: Notice of meeting.

SUMMARY: The Southwest Washington Provincial Advisory Committee will meet on Wednesday, March 31, 2004, at the Gifford Pinchot National Forest Headquarters, located in Vancouver, Washington, at 10600 NE. 51st Circle, Vancouver, WA 98682. The meeting will begin at 9 a.m., and continue until 4 p.m.

The purpose of the meeting is to: Receive advice on the Forest's unmanaged recreation program; to receive advice on the Forest's Memorandum of Agreement with the Washington State Department of Ecology; to discuss a proposed expansion of the White Pass Ski Area, and to share information among members.

All Southwest Washington Province 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 to occur at 1 p.m. 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 Knappenbeger, 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 15, 2004.

Claire Lavendel,

Forest Supervisor.

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