

time that livestock is held in connection with slaughter.

Through a systematic approach, establishments that do not conduct ritual slaughter will best ensure that their stunning methods render all livestock insensible to pain by a single blow. In addition, FSIS is recommending the systematic approach discussed above because it ensures that establishments take into account any new conditions in the establishment that warrant changes to facilities or existing handling or slaughter procedures.

FSIS has included a list of references that may assist establishments in considering means of assessing or improving their handling and slaughter procedures.

Additional Public Notification

Public awareness of all segments of rulemaking and policy development is important. Consequently, in an effort to ensure that the public and in particular minorities, women, and persons with disabilities, are aware of this notice, FSIS will announce it on-line through the FSIS web page located at <http://www.fsis.usda.gov>.

FSIS also will make copies of this **Federal Register** publication available through the FSIS Constituent Update, which is used to provide information regarding FSIS policies, procedures, regulations, **Federal Register** notices, FSIS public meetings, recalls, and other types of information that could affect or would be of interest to our constituents and stakeholders. The update is communicated via Listserv, a free e-mail subscription service consisting of industry, trade, and farm groups, consumer interest groups, allied health professionals, scientific professionals, and other individuals who have requested to be included. The update also is available on the FSIS web page. Through Listserv and the web page, FSIS is able to provide information to a much broader, more diverse audience.

References

The following sources are available for review in the FSIS Docket Room, Cotton Annex, 300 12th Street, SW., Room 102, Washington, DC 20250 between 8:30 a.m. and 4 p.m., Monday through Friday.

Baker, L. (2004). *Humane slaughter systems*. Unpublished research paper, Virginia-Maryland Regional College of Veterinary Medicine, Blacksburg, Virginia.

D'Souza, D.N., Warner, R.D., Dunshea, F.R. & Leury, B.J. (1998). Effect of on-farm and pre-slaughter handling of pigs on meat quality. *Australian Journal of Agricultural Research*, 49, 1021-1025.

Grandin, T. (2003). *AMI Meat Institute Foundation: Good management practices for*

animal handling and stunning at <http://www.grandin.com/ami.audit.guidelines.html>.

Grandin, T. (1996). *Animal welfare in slaughter plants*. Research paper presented at the 29th Annual Conference of American Association of Bovine Practitioners. Proceedings, pages 22-26.

Grandin, Temple Web Page. Available at: <http://www.grandin.com>.

Done at Washington, DC on September 3, 2004.

Barbara J. Masters,

Acting Administrator.

[FR Doc. 04-20431 Filed 9-8-04; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 3410-DM-P

DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Forest Service

Centennial Salvage Timber Sale; Caribou-Targhee National Forest, Fremont and Clark Counties, ID

AGENCY: Forest Service, USDA.

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

SUMMARY: The Forest Supervisor of the Caribou-Targhee National Forest gives notice of the agency's intent to prepare an environmental impact statement for the Centennial Salvage Timber Sale. The project area is located in the Centennial Mountains twenty-eight miles north of Ashton, Idaho. Information gathered from forest health specialist assessments, field and remote sensing reconnaissance, and the 1997 Targhee National Forest Revised Forest Plan, identified several concerns within the Douglas-fir, aspen, and whitebark pine forest community types within the Centennial Salvage Timber Sale project area. These concerns include: A large amount of forest stands moderately to highly susceptible to the Douglas-fir beetle and western spruce budworm; large areas of tree mortality due to the Douglas-fir beetle; and the decline of aspen and whitebark pine forest communities. The Ashton/Island Park Ranger District proposes to use intermediate commercial treatments on approximately 5,210 acres on forest stands that are moderately to highly susceptible to Douglas-fir beetle and western spruce budworm and prescribed fire on 718 acres of high elevation forest where whitebark pine is present. Intermediate commercial treatments include the following silvicultural methods: Commercial thinning, sanitation, salvage, and improvement cutting treatments. Commercial thinning, sanitation, salvage, and improvement cuttings would be used separately or in combination with each other, to reduce

the risk and susceptibility to Douglas-fir beetle and western spruce budworm, recover economic value of dead and dying trees, and maintain and enhance aspen. Yarding systems for commercial harvest would use ground based logging equipment (tractors, rubber tired skidders, etc.). Prescribed fire would be used to remove encroaching shade tolerant conifers and stimulate natural regeneration of whitebark pine and aspen. Approximately 19.7 miles of existing Forest Service system roads and 38 miles of temporary roads would be used for timber harvest activities. The majority of temporary roads would be constructed using existing forest nonsystem road prisms. All temporary roads would be obliterated after timber harvest use. All timber harvest related activities would occur from December 15th to April 1st to remove overwintering Douglas-fir beetle and minimize disturbance to grizzly bears.

DATES: Comments concerning the scope of the analysis must be received by September 30, 2004. The draft environmental impact statement is expected February 2005 and the final environmental impact statement is expected June 2005.

ADDRESSES: Send written comments to Centennial Salvage Timber Sale, c/o Tom Silvey, Ashton/Island Park Ranger District, P.O. Box 858, Ashton, Idaho 83420. Comments can also be electronically mailed (in Microsoft Word or .rtf format) to: comment-intermtn-caribou-targhee-ashton-islandpark@fs.fed.us.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Tom Silvey, Interdisciplinary Team Leader, Ashton/Island Park Ranger District, P.O. Box 858, Ashton, Idaho 83420. Telephone: (208) 652-7442.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: Using information gathered from forest health specialists assessments, field and remote sensing reconnaissance, and the Revised Forest Plan for the Targhee National Forest, Forest Service personnel found several concerns with the Douglas-fir, aspen, and whitebark pine forest community types. These included:

- Approximately 42% (12,659 acres) of the forested acres in the project area are moderately to highly susceptible to the Douglas-fir beetle. Currently, within and around the project area, there is a Douglas-fir beetle and western spruce budworm epidemic. An examination of aerial flight and high resolution satellite imagery taken in 2003, identified approximately 2,200 acres of high mortality in the large mature Douglas-fir due to the Douglas-fir beetle. There is a high risk of losing substantial amounts

of mature Douglas-fir stand and degrade them beyond the point of resiliency and sustainability within the project area.

- Aspen within the project area is declining due to the encroachment of conifers and lack of disturbances such as fire. This change reduces both plant and animal diversity.

- Whitebark pine is in decline within the project area. It has been identified as a community type at risk due to the devastating effects of white pine blister rust, mountain pine beetle, and competition from shade tolerant species such as subalpine fir and Engelmann spruce. The seeds of the whitebark pine are an important food source for the grizzly bear which is a primary concern within the project area.

The Targhee Revised Forest Plan management prescriptions for the Centennial Salvage Timber Sale are: Management prescription 5.3.5 Grizzly Bear Habitat, which emphasizes a high degree of security and resource conditions which contribute toward the recovery of the grizzly bear, and benefits to other wildlife; Management prescription 3.1.2 Nonmotorized; and Management prescription 3.2(g) Semi-Primitive Motorized.

Purpose and Need for Action

The purpose of the Centennial Salvage Timber Sale is to: Reduce the susceptibility and risk of forested vegetation to insects and disease, maintain and enhance aspen and whitebark pine forest communities, capture economic value from dead and dying trees, and provide a sustained yield of forest products from commercial forest lands.

Proposed Action

The Ashton/Island Park Ranger District, Caribou-Targhee National Forest proposes to treat forested vegetation using timber harvest and prescribed fire to meet the purpose and need of the project. The proposed action includes:

- Use intermediate commercial treatments on approximately 5,210 acres on forest stands that are primarily moderately to highly susceptible to the Douglas-fir beetle and western spruce budworm. Intermediate commercial treatments include the following silvicultural methods: commercial thinning, sanitation, salvage, and improvement cutting treatments. Majority of all commercial timber harvest activities would occur from December 15th to April 1st facilitate the removal of over-wintering Douglas-fir beetle and minimize disturbance to grizzly bear. Timber harvest would be accomplished by using ground based

logging equipment (tractors, rubber tired skidders, low ground pressure equipment, etc.). No timber harvest activities are proposed in management prescriptions 3.1.2 and 3.2.(g) and Inventoried Roadless Areas.

- Use prescribed fire on approximately 718 acres to remove encroaching shade tolerant conifers and stimulate natural regeneration of whitebark pine and aspen. Majority of prescribed fire would take place in management prescriptions 3.1.2 and 3.2(g) with a minor amount of area in management prescription 5.3.5.

- Approximately 19.7 miles of existing Forest Service system roads and 38 miles of temporary roads would be used for timber harvest activities. The majority of temporary roads would be constructed using existing forest nonsystem road prisms. Timber harvest activity road use would occur from December 15th to April 1st. All temporary roads would be effectively closed to all motorized use from April 2nd to December 14th. To effectively close roads, earthen berms, woody debris, and rocks would be used. All temporary roads would be obliterated after timber harvest use. Obliteration activities would include using earthen berms, ripping and seeding, and waterbars. Obliteration activities would occur during summer and fall seasons. All temporary road construction and system road use for timber harvest activities would occur in management prescription 5.3.5. No net increase in motorized travel miles is proposed. No temporary roads are proposed in Inventories Roadless Areas.

Responsible Official

The responsible official is Jerry B. Reese, Forest Supervisor, Caribou-Targhee National Forest, 1405 Hollipark Dr., Idaho Falls, Idaho 83401.

Nature of Decision To Be Made

The criteria for the decision to be made will be framed around the degree to which alternative selected best addresses the purpose and need. The decision will address: How to treat this proposed project area including: The location, project design, scheduling of the proposed activities, vegetation treatments, road use, and mitigation measures and monitoring requirements.

Scoping Process

Initial public involvement will include mailing a project description and maps to interested parties to solicit comments on the proposal. No scoping meetings are planned at this time.

Comment Requested

This notice of intent initiates the scoping process which guides the development of the environmental impact statement. The Forest Service is seeking information and comments from Federal, State, and local agencies, as well as individuals and organizations that may be interested in, or affected by, the proposed action. The Forest Service invites written comments and suggestions on the issues related to the proposal and the area being analyzed.

Early Notice of Importance of Public Participation in Subsequent Environmental Review

A draft environmental impact statement will be prepared for comment. The comment period on the draft environmental impact statement 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 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.

Comments received, including the names and addresses of those who comments, will be considered part of the public record on this proposal and will be available for public inspection.

(Authority: 40 CFR 1501.7 and 1508.22; Forest Service Handbook 1909.15, Section 21)

Dated: August 31, 2004.

Jerry B. Reese,

Forest Supervisor.

[FR Doc. 04-20367 Filed 9-8-04; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 3410-11-M

DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Grain Inspection, Packers and Stockyards Administration

Notice of Request for New Information Collection

AGENCY: Grain Inspection, Packers and Stockyards Administration, USDA.

ACTION: Notice and request for comments.

SUMMARY: This notice announces our intention to request approval from the Office of Management and Budget for two new information collection activities to support a large livestock and meat marketing study. There will be two types of information collection activities. First, transactions data on procurement and sales will be collected from meat packers, meat processors, food wholesalers, food retailers, food service operations, and meat exporters. Second, a survey will be conducted regarding the use of alternative marketing arrangements for cattle, hog, and lamb and their meat products among producers, feeders, dealers, meat packers, meat processors, food wholesalers, food retailers, food service operations, and meat exporters.

DATES: We will consider comments that we receive by November 8, 2004.

ADDRESSES: We invite you to submit comments on this notice. You may submit comments by any of the following methods:

- *E-Mail:* Send comments via electronic mail to

comments.gipsa@usda.gov.

- *Mail:* Send hardcopy written comments to Tess Butler, GIPSA, USDA, 1400 Independence Avenue, SW., Room 1647-S, Washington, DC 20250-3604.

- *Fax:* Send comments by facsimile transmission to: (202) 690-2755.

- *Hand Delivery or Courier:* Deliver comments to: Tess Butler, GIPSA, USDA, 1400 Independence Avenue, SW., Room 1647-S, Washington, DC 20250-3604.

Instructions: All comments should make reference to the date and page number of this issue of the **Federal Register**.

Background Documents: Information collection package and other documents relating to this action will be available for public inspection in the above office during regular business hours.

Read Comments: All comments will be available for public inspection in the above office during regular business hours (7 CFR 1.27(b)).

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:

Roger Schneider, Economist, USDA, GIPSA, (202) 720-4660, 1400 Independence Avenue, SW., Room 1642-S, Washington, DC 20250-3647, or via e-mail at Roger.E.Schneider@usda.gov.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: The Grain Inspection, Packers and Stockyards Administration (GIPSA) of the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) administers the Packers and Stockyards Act of 1921, as amended and supplemented (7 U.S.C. 181-229) (P&S Act). The P&S Act prohibits unfair, deceptive, and fraudulent practices by market agencies, dealers, stockyards, packers, swine contractors, and live poultry dealers in the livestock, meatpacking, and poultry industries. In fiscal year 2003, GIPSA received \$4.5 million in appropriations for a packer concentration study, which will be a broad study of marketing practices in the entire livestock and red meat industries (Pub. L. 108-7, 117 Stat. 22). The study will address many questions and concerns that have been raised about changes in the structure and business practices in the livestock and meat industries. We published a notice announcing the study and describing the approach that we planned for the study on May 30, 2003 (68 FR 32455-32458).¹

More specifically, the study will: (1) Identify and classify spot and alternative marketing arrangements; (2) describe terms, availability, and reasons for use of spot and alternative marketing arrangements and associated prices; (3) determine extent of use, analyze price

¹ Additional information about the study, including comments to the notice and the announcement of the contract to perform the study, is available on the GIPSA web site (http://www.usda.gov/gipsa/psp/issues/livemarketstudy/livestock_marketing_study.htm).

differences, and analyze short-run spot market price effects of alternative marketing arrangements; (4) measure and compare costs and benefits associated with spot and alternative marketing arrangements; and (5) analyze the implications of alternative marketing arrangements for the livestock and meat marketing system.

This notice announces and requests comments on two information collection packages that we are preparing to request approval from the Office of Management and Budget to collect information for the study. The first information collection package will cover transactions data on procurement and sales from meat packers, feeders, dealers, meat processors, food wholesalers, food retailers, food service operations, and meat exporters. The second information collection package will cover surveys about the use of alternative marketing arrangements among cattle, hog, and lamb producers, meat packers, meat processors, food wholesalers, food retailers, food service operations, and meat exporters.

Title: Livestock and Meat Marketing Study; Transactions Data and Survey of Alternative Marketing Arrangements.

OMB Number: New Collection.

Expiration Date of Approval: New Collection.

Type of Request: New.

Abstract: To conduct this study it is necessary to collect data on procurement and sales transactions from a sample of meat packers, meat processors, food wholesalers, food retailers, food service operations, and meat exporters. The establishments selected for the sample will be asked to provide the requested data in an electronic format, to the greatest extent practicable.

Response to this data collection which constitutes a special report, will be required for meat packers and meat processors (7 U.S.C. 222).² The establishments will be asked to provide daily transactions data for procurement and sales for a 2-year period. Additionally, meat packers will be asked to provide summaries of operations data (profit and loss statements).

Response to this data collection will be voluntary for food wholesalers food retailers, food service operations, and meat exporters. The establishments will be asked to provide transactions data for procurement and sales for a 2-year period in an aggregated format to reduce the burden.

² The recordkeeping requirements for the data covered by this information collection activity have been previously approved separately under OMB control number 0580-0015.