

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

Submission for OMB Review; Comment Request

December 9, 2008.

The Department of Agriculture has submitted the following information collection requirement(s) to OMB for review and clearance under the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995, Public Law 104-13. Comments regarding (a) whether the collection of information is necessary for the proper performance of the functions of the agency, including whether the information will have practical utility; (b) the accuracy of the agency's estimate of burden including the validity of the methodology and assumptions used; (c) ways to enhance the quality, utility and clarity of the information to be collected; (d) ways to minimize the burden of the collection of information on those who are to respond, including through the use of appropriate automated, electronic, mechanical, or other technological collection techniques or other forms of information technology should be addressed to: Desk Officer for Agriculture, Office of Information and Regulatory Affairs, Office of Management and Budget (OMB), OIRA_Submission@OMB.EOP.GOV or fax (202) 395-5806 and to Departmental Clearance Office, USDA, OCIO, Mail Stop 7602, Washington, DC 20250-7602. Comments regarding these information collections are best assured of having their full effect if received within 30 days of this notification. Copies of the submission(s) may be obtained by calling (202) 720-8958.

An agency may not conduct or sponsor a collection of information unless the collection of information displays a currently valid OMB control number and the agency informs potential persons who are to respond to the collection of information that such persons are not required to respond to

the collection of information unless it displays a currently valid OMB control number.

Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service

Title: Health Certificate for the Export of Live Crustaceans, Finfish, Mollusks, and Related Products.

OMB Control Number: 0579-0278.

Summary of Collection: The export of agricultural commodities, including animals and animal products, is a major business in the United States and contributes to a favorable balance of trade. The Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) maintains information regarding the import health requirements of other countries for animals and animal products exported from the United States. The regulations governing the export of animals and products from the United States are contained in 9 CFR parts 91, subchapter D. "Exportation and Importation of Animals (including Poultry) and Animal Products," and apply to farm-raised aquatic animals and products, as well as other livestock and products. These regulations are authorized by the Animal Health Protection Act (7 U.S.C. 8301-8317). The National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS), National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), U.S. Department of Commerce, and the Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS), U.S. Department of Interior, as well as APHIS, have legal authorities and responsibilities related to aquatic animal health in the United States. All three agencies have therefore entered into a Memorandum of Understanding delineating their respective responsibilities in the issuance of the health certificate for the export of live aquatic animals and animal products.

Need and Use of the Information: The health certificate will require the names of the species being exported from the U.S., their age and weights, and whether they are cultured stock or wild stock; their place of origin, their country of destination and the date and method of transport. The certificate will be completed by an accredited inspector with assistance from the producer and must be signed by both the accredited inspector as well as the appropriate Federal official from APHIS, NOAA, or FWS who certifies the health status of the shipment being exported. The use of the certificate will lend consistency to a

public service delivered by three separate agencies, and should make the aquatic export certification process less confusing for those who require this important service. Failing to use this form could result in less efficient service to the exporting public.

Description of Respondents: Farms; Individuals or households.

Number of Respondents: 40.

Frequency of Responses: Reporting: On occasion.

Total Burden Hours: 100.

Ruth Brown,

*Departmental Information Collection
Clearance Officer.*

[FR Doc. E8-29457 Filed 12-11-08; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 3410-34-P

DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

DEPARTMENT OF HOMELAND SECURITY

Science and Technology Directorate; Notice of Availability of the Final Environmental Impact Statement for the Proposed National Bio and Agro- Defense Facility

AGENCY: Science and Technology Directorate (Office of National Laboratories within the Office of Research), DHS; Department of Agriculture (USDA).

ACTION: Notice of availability.

SUMMARY: The U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS) announces the availability of its *National Bio and Agro-Defense Facility Final Environmental Impact Statement* (NBAF Final EIS). This announcement is pursuant to the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (NEPA), as amended, and its implementing regulations at 40 CFR parts 1500-1508. The Proposed Action to site, construct, and operate the National Bio and Agro-Defense Facility (NBAF) would allow researchers to develop tests to detect foreign animal diseases and zoonotic diseases (transmitted from animals to humans) and develop vaccines (or other countermeasures such as antiviral therapies) to protect agriculture and food systems in the United States. The NBAF would enhance U.S. biodefense capabilities with modern and integrated high-security (biosafety levels 3 and 4) facilities that would ensure U.S.

vulnerabilities and risks from agro-terrorism are safely addressed. DHS anticipates that the proposed NBAF would focus biosafety level 3 agricultural (BSL-3Ag) research on African swine fever, classical swine fever, contagious bovine pleuropneumonia, foot and mouth disease, Japanese encephalitis, and Rift Valley fever; BSL-4 research would address Hendra and Nipah viruses.

DATES: DHS will consider comments on the NBAF Final EIS, received by January 12, 2009, to determine whether they identify new information relevant to environmental concerns bearing upon the Preferred Alternative.

ADDRESSES: The NBAF Final EIS, which includes the Executive Summary and the Comment Response Document, is available online at <http://www.dhs.gov/nbaf> and in designated reading rooms (see **SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION**).

Compact disks and paper copies are available upon written request via e-mail or U.S. mail. Submit written comments on the NBAF Final EIS to nbafprogrammanager@dhs.gov or via mail: NBAF Program Manager; P.O. Box 2188; Germantown, MD 20875-2188. Individual names and addresses (including e-mail addresses) received as part of comment documents on the NBAF Final EIS will be part of the public record and subject to disclosure. Any person wishing to have his/her name, address, or other identifying information withheld from public release must state this request in the comment document. DHS will consider all comments received before the Record of Decision is signed.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Questions regarding the NBAF Final EIS should be directed to James V. Johnson DHS; Science and Technology Directorate; Mail Stop #2100; 245 Murray Lane, SW.; Building 410; Washington, DC 20528-0300 or e-mail to nbafprogrammanager@dhs.gov.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: DHS is responsible for detecting, preventing, protecting against, and responding to terrorist attacks within the United States. These responsibilities, as applied to the defense of animal agriculture, are shared with the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA). In developing a coordinated strategy to adequately protect the nation against biological threats to animal agriculture, DHS and USDA identified a gap that must be filled by an integrated research, development, test, and evaluation infrastructure for combating threats to U.S. agriculture. To bridge this gap and comply with Homeland Security Presidential Directive 9, Defense of

United States Agriculture and Food, DHS proposed to build the integrated research, development, test, and evaluation facility called the National Bio and Agro-Defense Facility (NBAF).

In June 2008, DHS published the NBAF Draft EIS, which analyzed the environmental impacts of the Proposed Action on six site alternatives, as well as the No Action Alternative. The site alternatives include: (1) South Milledge Avenue Site, Athens, Georgia; (2) Manhattan Campus Site, Manhattan, Kansas; (3) Flora Industrial Park Site, Flora, Mississippi; (4) Plum Island Site, Plum Island, New York; (5) Umstead Research Farm Site, Butner, North Carolina; and (6) Texas Research Park Site, San Antonio, Texas. Under the No Action Alternative, the NBAF would not be constructed and DHS would continue to use the Plum Island Animal Disease Center with necessary investments in facility upgrades, replacements, and repairs so that it could continue to operate at its current capability level.

The EPA published the Notice of Availability of the NBAF Draft EIS on June 27, 2008 (73 FR 36540). During the 60-day public comment period, which concluded on August 25, 2008, DHS held 13 public meetings in the vicinity of the site alternatives and in Washington, DC to facilitate information exchange and to solicit comments on the NBAF Draft EIS.

DHS gave equal consideration to the approximately 5,400 identified comments collected via e-mail, mail, public meetings, and toll-free fax and telephone numbers during the public comment period. DHS's responses to comments are presented in Appendix H of the Final EIS. The NBAF Final EIS reflects changes based on the comments received, availability of new data, and correction of errors and omissions.

DHS anticipates distributing approximately 2,600 copies of the NBAF Final EIS and/or the Executive Summary to congressional members and committees; federal, state, and local agency and governmental representatives and elected officials; Native American representatives; special interest groups and non-governmental organizations; and individuals.

The DHS Preferred Alternative identified in the NBAF Final EIS is to build and operate the NBAF at the Manhattan Campus Site in Kansas.

The NBAF Final EIS analyzes the potential impacts of the Proposed Action on the physical, biological, and human environments at each of the six site alternatives, as well as the potential impacts of the No Action Alternative. This Final EIS is not a decision

document. DHS and USDA, a consulting agency on this EIS, will also consider information from associated support documentation including: Threat and Risk Assessment, Site Cost Analysis, Site Characterization Study, Plum Island Facility Closure and Transition Cost Study, as well as prior analysis of the site alternatives against DHS's site selection evaluation criteria.

DHS will announce its decision on the Proposed Action in the Record of Decision (ROD) that identifies the alternatives considered, the decisions made, the environmentally preferable alternative, and the factors balanced by the Department in making the decision. The NBAF ROD will include: (1) The decision whether or not to build the NBAF; (2) if the decision is made to build the NBAF, where it will be built; (3) the site alternatives considered in the EIS; (4) whether all practicable means to avoid or minimize environmental impacts from the alternative selected have been adopted and, if not, why; (5) any monitoring and enforcement that would be necessary to offset unavoidable environmental impacts; and (6) relevant comments on the NBAF Final EIS. DHS will issue a ROD on the proposed action no sooner than 30 days after the NOA of the NBAF Final EIS is published in the **Federal Register**.

The NBAF Final EIS is available for review at the following reading rooms:

Georgia

University of Georgia Main Library, 320 South Jackson Street, Athens, GA 30602;

Oconee County Library, 1080 Experiment Station Road, Watkinsville, GA 30677.

Kansas

Manhattan Public Library, 629 Poytnz Avenue, Manhattan, KS 66502;

Hale Library, Kansas State University, Manhattan, KS 66506.

Mississippi

City of Flora Library, 144 Clark Street, Flora, MS 39071.

New York Site

Acton Public Library, 60 Old Boston Post Road, Old Saybrook, CT 06475; Southold Free Library, 53705 Main Road, Southold, NY 11971.

North Carolina

Richard H. Thornton Library, 210 Main Street, Oxford, NC 27565-0339; South Branch Library, 1547 South Campus Drive, Creedmoor, NC 27522.

Texas

Central Library, 600 Soledad, San Antonio, TX 78205.

Authority: 42 U.S.C. 4321–4347 (National Environmental Policy Act).

Dated: December 3, 2008.

Bruce Knight,

Under Secretary, Marketing and Regulatory Programs, USDA.

Jay M. Cohen,

Under Secretary, Science & Technology, DHS.
[FR Doc. E8–29142 Filed 12–11–08; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 4410–10–P

DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE**Forest Service****Wallowa-Whitman National Forest, Baker County, OR; Snow Basin Vegetation Management Project**

AGENCY: Forest Service, USDA.

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

SUMMARY: The USDA Forest Service will prepare an environmental impact statement (EIS) to disclose environmental effects on a proposed action to manage fuels and vegetation and produce forest products in the Little Eagle Creek, and Eagle Creek Paddy subwatersheds. The Snow Basin Vegetation Management Project is located on the Wallowa-Whitman National Forest, Whitman Ranger District, Pine Office, Baker County, Oregon. The legal location is T.7S, R.44E, all sections, and T.8S, R44E, most sections. The project area encompasses two subwatersheds located north and northwest of Halfway and Richland, Oregon, consisting of approximately 27,680 acres of National Forest System (NFS) lands, 281 acres of Baker County inholdings, and 2,107 acres of private deeded inholdings. The proposed action would use commercial harvest of timber, noncommercial thinning, aspen restoration and prescribed fire on approximately 17,200 acres. No new permanent road construction would occur, but temporary roads would be constructed, existing permanent roads would be reconstructed as warranted, and one existing bridge would be reconstructed. No Inventoried Roadless Areas (IRAs) or potential wilderness areas are affected by this project. Additional details of the proposed action are noted below in the **SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION** Section.

DATES: Preliminary comments concerning the Snow Basin Vegetation Management Project would be most useful if received by January 30, 2009.

A Draft EIS (DEIS) would be completed after reviewing the preliminary scoping comments for significant issues and the potential development of alternatives to the proposed action. The DEIS is expected to be filed with the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and be available to the public for review by May 2009. The Final EIS is scheduled to be completed by October 2009. If approved, the project would begin to be implemented sometime in 2010.

ADDRESSES: Send written comments to: Ken Anderson, Whitman District Ranger P.O. Box 947, 3285 11th Street, Baker City, OR 97814. Send electronic comments to: *comments-pacificnorthwest-wallowa-whitman-whitmanunit@fs.fed.us*. Send FAX comments to 541–742–6705. Please reference the project name (Snow Basin Vegetation Management Project) on your submissions.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Joe Sciarrino, Project Manager, Whitman Ranger District, Pine Office, 38470 Pine Town Lane, Halfway, Oregon 97834, telephone 541–742–6714, TDD (541) 523–1405, e-mail *jsciarrino@fs.fed.us*. An additional contact is Lynne Smith, telephone 541–742–6715, e-mail *lksmith@fs.fed.us*. Additional information and large-scale color maps will be posted on the Forest Web site at: <http://www.fs.fed.us/r6/w-w/projects/>.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:**Background Information**

The project area is located north and northwest of Richland, Oregon, in Townships 6, 7 and 8 South, Ranges 43, 44, and 45 East. The project area includes 26,730 acres of NFS (National Forest System) lands and 2,107 acres of private deeded in-holdings. A small amount of Baker County owned lands (281 acres) also occur within the project area. Elevations within the project area range from approximately 4,400 feet on the southern boundary near Sparta Butte and Forshey Meadow up to approximately 6,500 feet at its northern boundary near the Eagle Cap Wilderness. The Eagle Creek Wild and Scenic River Corridor averages 3,200 feet in elevation and roughly divides the project area in half. Other major streams within the project area include Little Eagle, Twin Bridges, Conundrum, Spring, Paddy, Gold, Packsaddle, Holcomb, Empire Gulch, and Dempsey.

The project area is characterized by a mixture of forest and natural openings of various sizes. The forested stands range from high elevation subalpine fir/lodgepole pine to low elevation pure ponderosa pine. Coniferous tree species

are ponderosa pine, grand fir, Douglas-fir, western larch, Englemann spruce, subalpine fir, and lodgepole pine. Deciduous tree species include quaking aspen and black cottonwood. The majority of the forested stands have a dense multistory stand structure.

The project area has seen management activity in the past, with the most recent being connected to three large vegetation management projects: Little Eagle, EagleHolcomb and Eagle-Paddy projects. These past actions included timber harvest, noncommercial thinning and fuels treatments including hand and machine piling, aspen restoration and prescribed fire, and were completed in the late 1990s. While the focus of these most recent projects were stand prioritization based upon silvicultural need, including tree species composition, stand structure and stand density, earlier projects were much more focused on cutting larger, high value trees. The Snow Basin Vegetation Management Project would be focused on a landscape view with the analysis and treatments based on landscape ecological needs.

Purpose and Need for Action

The purpose and need for this proposal is to begin moving the project area landscape toward the historic range of variability for the various biophysical environments in the project area, and to substantially reduce the risk of uncharacteristic wildfire, and the wildfire threat to life and property; particularly in the vicinity of the deeded land in-holdings.

The NFS lands in the project area have been managed with timber harvest for many decades. The focus of historic treatments was to harvest the large, mature overstory trees, particularly those of high value like ponderosa pine. The focus of more recent projects was silvicultural needs, but the treatments were located in selected stands and scattered throughout the landscape. The assumption and expectation was that stands would be treated every 10 years, providing a management and maintenance regime supporting maximum tree growth. The 10-year follow-up treatments, however, were not initiated and stand conditions and landscape conditions have changed. In addition, the natural role of fire has been generally excluded from this landscape.

As a cumulative result, landscape conditions are now characterized by deviations from the historic range of variability for the various biophysical environments. More specifically, this has resulted in a large scale reduction in large diameter ponderosa pine trees, a