

Proposed Action

Alternative 3 proposes to treat 35 units totalling 14,281 acres through thinning (1,757 acres) and prescribed burning (12,524 acres). Thinning would favor large tree retention using the general priority order of whitebark and limber pine, aspen, Douglas-fir, lodgepole pine, Engelmann spruce, and subalpine fir. Thinning would leave 70 to 200 trees per acre in the non-commercial units, and 60 to 140 trees per acre in the commercial units. Conifers in and around aspen clones would be thinned to release suppressed aspen. Residual branches, logs, and other resulting debris would be hand- or machine-piled and burned in the units or on the landings, or scattered to further reduce fuel concentrations in the project area. Ladder fuels would be pruned in some units. Snags would be removed as needed for firefighter safety in portions of 27 units located in close proximity to residential areas. Road reconstruction would occur on 1.3 miles of National Forest roads and a total of 1 mile of temporary road would be constructed and then obliterated after use. Routine maintenance would occur on 11.7 miles of roads. Approximately 27 landings would be used.

Prescribed fire would reduce fire potential while creating a mosaic of burned and unburned areas. Ground and aerial ignition techniques would adhere to site-specific burn plans that identify parameters for weather, air quality, contingency resources, other resource concerns, equipment needs, and responses for potential escapes. Fire managers would use, and subsequently rehabilitate, up to seven miles of low-impact fire control lines if needed to contain prescribed fire. Natural barriers to fire spread would be used where possible.

Alternative 3 includes extensive project design features and best practices to avoid or reduce impacts to cultural resources, water resources, range, recreation, scenery, sensitive plants, air quality, soils, special areas, and wildlife.

Possible Alternatives

At this time it is planned that the EIS will examine Alternative 1 (No Action), Alternative 2 (Proposed Action originally scoped in December 2010 and modified after further analysis), and Alternative 3—Reduce Potential Impacts to Special Areas and Wildlife Habitat (developed to address public concerns after original scoping period).

Preliminary Issues

Key issues identified during the original public scoping include effects

to the WSA, IRAs, and wildlife habitat. Additional public concerns addressed in the analysis include potential effects related to unauthorized motorized use, standing trees, spread of noxious weeds, road use, smoke, heavy equipment, and biodiversity.

In March 2012, the Palisades WSA map used by the Forest Service for analysis of the Teton to Snake Fuels Management Project was questioned. In July 2012, Jackson District Ranger Dale Deiter put the project on hold until more clarity was obtained regarding the WSA boundary. Since then extensive record searches have occurred uncovering many valuable maps and memos. In addition, two public meetings were held with people interested in the boundary issue. Based on the best information available at this time, the Forest Service is proceeding with the RARE II map from 1977 (Roadless Area and Review Evaluation process). The map package is expected to be assembled in March 2013 and will be submitted to the Regional and Washington Offices of the Forest Service for review and approval. Upon approval, a certified boundary and legal description will be prepared by the Forest Service lands office with final approval from the Regional Forester. A decision on the Teton to Snake Fuels Management Project would only be made after the Palisades WSA boundary is approved.

Responsible Official

Dale Deiter, District Ranger, Jackson Ranger District, Bridger-Teton National Forest

Nature of Decision To Be Made

The District Ranger will decide whether to implement one of the alternatives designed to meet the purpose and need for the project, or take no action.

Permits or Licenses Required

A permit would be required from the State of Wyoming prior to any prescribed burning. The appropriate regulatory agencies will be consulted regarding national or state required permits associated with roads used in project implementation, and required permits obtained prior to implementation.

Scoping Process

This notice of intent initiates the scoping process, which guides the development of the environmental impact statement. As noted above, comments submitted during the scoping period beginning in 2010 will be brought forward in the EIS so there is no

need to re-submit them. New information and concerns describing site-specific unwanted effects related to Alternative 3 would be useful.

It is important that reviewers provide their comments at such times and in such manner that they are useful to the agency's preparation of the environmental impact statement. Therefore, comments should be provided prior to the close of the comment period and should clearly articulate the reviewer's concerns and contentions.

Include the following information with your comments: Your name, address, email (optional), and telephone number; the project name: Teton to Snake Fuels Management Project; and site-specific comments, along with supporting information you believe will help identify issues, develop alternatives, or predict environmental effects of this proposal. The most useful comments provide new information or describe unwanted environmental effects potentially caused by the proposed action. If you reference scientific literature in your comments, you must provide a copy of the entire reference you have cited and include the predicted site-specific effects supported by the literature.

Comments received in response to this solicitation, including names and addresses of those who comment, will be part of the public record for this proposed action. Comments submitted anonymously will be accepted and considered; however anonymous comments will not provide the agency with the ability to provide you with project updates.

Dated: February 21, 2013.

Dale Deiter

Jackson District Ranger.

[FR Doc. 2013-04498 Filed 2-26-13; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 3410-11-P

DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Forest Service

RIN 0596-AD06

National Forest System Land Management Planning Directives

AGENCY: Forest Service, USDA.

ACTION: Notice of issuance of agency proposed directives; request for comment.

SUMMARY: The Forest Service has issued proposed directives to Forest Service Handbook (FSH 1909.12) and Manual (FSM 1920) establishing procedures and responsibilities for implementing the

National Forest System (NFS) land management planning regulation. Issuance of these proposed directives will provide consistent overall guidance to Forest Service Line Officers and Agency employees in developing, amending, or revising land management plans for units of the NFS. Public comment is invited and will be considered in developing the final directives.

DATES: Comments must be received in writing by April 29, 2013.

ADDRESSES: Submit comments concerning the proposed directives through one of the following methods:

1. *Public participation portal:* <https://cara.ecosystem-management.org/Public/CommentInput?Project=30641>.

Comments may also be provided through the Federal rulemaking portal: <http://www.regulations.gov>.

2. *Facsimile:* Fax to: 503.224.1851. Please identify your comments by

including "RIN 0596-AD06" or "planning directives" on the cover sheet or the first page.

3. *U.S. Postal Service:* The mailing address is: USDA Forest Service Planning Directives Comments, P.O. Box 40088, Portland, OR 97240.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Annie Eberhart Goode, Planning Specialist, Ecosystem Management Coordination Staff, 202-205-1056 or 703-605-4478.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: The Forest Service has issued proposed directives to Forest Service Handbook (FSH) 1909.12) and Manual (FSM 1920) establishing procedures and responsibilities for implementing the National Forest System (NFS) land management planning regulation set out at 36 CFR part 219. This promulgated rule was published in the **Federal Register** on April 9, 2012 (77 FR 21161).

Public Participation

Please note that the Forest Service will not be able to receive hand-delivered comments. In addition, please note that all comments, including names and addresses when provided, will be placed in the record and available for public inspection and copying. The Agency cannot confirm receipt of comments. Individuals wishing to inspect comments should call Jody Sutton at 801-517-1020 to schedule an appointment.

These proposed directives are a revision of Forest Service Handbook (FSH) 1919.12 and Forest Service Manual (FSM) 1920. Copies of the proposed directives are available on the World Wide Web/Internet at <http://www.fs.usda.gov/goto/planningrule/directives>. Copies may be obtained by contacting one of the following Regional Offices:

Region	Phone No.	Address
Northern Region—R1	406-329-3511	<i>Street Address:</i> 200 E. Broadway, Missoula, MT 59802. <i>Mailing address:</i> P.O. Box 7669, Missoula, MT 59807-7669.
Rocky Mountain Region—R2	303-275-5350	<i>Street Address:</i> 740 Simms St., Golden, CO 80401. <i>Mailing address:</i> P.O. Box 25127, Lakewood, CO 80225-0127.
Southwestern Region—R3	505-842-3292	333 Broadway SE., Albuquerque, NM 87102.
Intermountain Region—R4	801-625-5605	324 25th Street, Ogden, UT 84401.
Pacific Southwest Region—R5	707-562-8737	1323 Club Drive, Vallejo, CA 94592.
Pacific Northwest Region—R6	503-808-2468	<i>Street Address:</i> 333 SW. First Avenue, Portland, Oregon 97204. <i>Mailing address:</i> P.O. Box 3623, Portland, OR 97208-3623.
Southern Region—R8	404-347-4095	1720 Peachtree Rd. NW., Atlanta, GA 30309.
Eastern Region—R9	414-297-3600	626 East Wisconsin Ave. Milwaukee, WI 53202.
Alaska Region—R10	907-586-8806	P.O. Box 21628, Juneau, AK 99802-1628.

Readers are encouraged to obtain a copy of the proposed directives to formulate their comments and provide input for the development of the final planning directives.

Background

On April 9, 2012, the U. S. Department of Agriculture (Department or USDA) adopted final planning regulations for the NFS at 36 CFR part 219 (77 FR 21161). These regulations, known collectively as the 2012 Planning Rule, provide broad programmatic direction in developing and carrying out land management planning. The rule explicitly directs the Chief of the Forest Service to establish planning procedures in the Forest Service Directives System (36 CFR 219.1(c)).

The Forest Service is implementing the 2012 Planning Rule. Those responsible officials that are implementing the 2012 Planning Rule must follow the regulations at 36 CFR 219 and applicable existing Forest Service Directives until they are superseded.

The Forest Service Directives System consist of the Forest Service Manual (FSM) and the Forest Service Handbook (FSH), which contain the Agency's policies, practices, and procedures, and serves as the primary basis for the internal management and control of programs and administrative direction to Forest Service employees. The directives for all Agency programs are set out on the World Wide Web/Internet at <http://www.fs.fed.us/im/directives>.

Specifically, the FSM contains legal authorities, objectives, policies, responsibilities, instructions, and guidance needed on a continuing basis by Forest Service Line Officers and primary staff to plan and execute programs and activities. The FSH is the principal source of specialized guidance and instruction for carrying out the policies, objectives, and responsibilities contained in the FSM.

For these proposed directives, both the FSM and the FSH provide policy direction, objectives, instructions, and guidance for Forest Service Line Officers and primary staff to plan and

execute the process of developing, revising, amending, and making administrative changes to plans.

Content of Proposed Directives

The following is an overview of the contents of the proposed directives.

FSM 1920—Land Management Planning Manual

This Forest Service Manual describes a process for developing, revising, amending, and making administrative changes to land management plans for the National Forest System (NFS). It includes authorities and responsibilities. It should be used in conjunction with the FSH.

FSH 1909.12—Land Management Planning Handbook

This FSH provides policy direction, objectives, instructions and guidance for the process of developing, revising, amending, and making administrative changes to plans for the NFS. It includes authorities and responsibilities.

Zero Code

The section known as the zero code contains authorities, responsibilities, and select definitions applicable to subsequent chapters.

Chapter 10—The Assessment

This chapter describes the procedures for writing an assessment for development, amendment, or revision of land management plans.

Chapter 20—Land Management Plan

This chapter describes the land management plan under the 2012 Planning Rule and explains the procedures for developing, amending, and revising land management plans.

Chapter 30—Monitoring

This chapter describes the plan monitoring program, broader-scale monitoring strategy, and biennial evaluation of the monitoring information for land management planning.

Chapter 40—Key Processes Supporting Land Management Planning

This chapter describes the adaptive management framework, use of best available scientific information, public participation and the role of collaboration, and tribal consultation as it relates to land management plans.

Chapter 50—Objection Process

This chapter describes the process for the public to seek administrative review of plans, plan revisions, and plan amendments before their approval. This process is referred to as the objection process.

Chapter 60—Forest Vegetation Resource Planning

This chapter provides procedures for developing plan components and other plan content to meet National Forest Management Act (NFMA) and planning rule requirements for identifying lands that are not suitable for timber production, plan components for timber harvest for timber production or other purposes, limitations on timber harvest, and display of the planned timber sale program.

Chapter 70—Wilderness Evaluation

This chapter describes the process for identifying and evaluating lands that may be suitable for inclusion in the National Wilderness Preservation System and determining whether to recommend any such lands for wilderness designation.

Chapter 80—Wild and Scenic River Evaluation

This chapter describes the process for identifying and evaluating potential additions to the National Wild and Scenic Rivers System. This chapter also addresses interim management of river segments determined to be eligible and suitable, documentation of study results, as well as the process for notifying Congress of agency wild and scenic river recommendations.

Chapter 90—References

This chapter contains exhibits or references not easily found electronically.

Regulatory Certifications*Regulatory Impact*

This notice has been reviewed under USDA procedures and Executive Order (E.O.) 12866, Regulatory Planning and Review. The Office of Management and Budget (OMB) has reviewed this notice and has determined that it is a significant action. The proposed directives would not have an annual effect of \$100 million or more on the economy nor adversely affect productivity, competition, jobs, the environment, public health or safety, nor State or local governments. The proposed directives would not interfere with an action taken or planned by another agency nor raise new legal or policy issues. Finally, the proposed directives would not alter the budgetary impact of entitlements, grants, user fees, or loan programs or the rights and obligations of recipients of such programs.

Moreover, the proposed directives have been considered in light of E.O. 13272 regarding proper consideration of small entities and the Small Business Regulatory Enforcement Fairness Act of 1996 (SBREFA), which amended the Regulatory Flexibility Act (5 U.S.C. 601 *et seq.*). No direct or indirect financial impact on small businesses or other entities has been identified. Therefore, it is hereby certified that these proposed directives will not have a significant economic impact on a substantial number of small entities as defined by the act.

Environmental Impact

These proposed directives provide the detailed direction to agency employees necessary to carry out the provisions of the final 2012 Planning Rule adopted at 36 CFR part 219 governing land management planning. Forest Service Handbook 1909.15, section 31.12 (57 FR 43208; September 18, 1992) excludes from documentation in an

environmental assessment or impact statement “rules, regulations, or policies to establish Service-wide administrative procedures, program processes, or instructions.” The Agency’s conclusion is that these proposed directives fall within this category of actions and that no extraordinary circumstances exist as currently defined that require preparation of an environmental assessment or an environmental impact statement.

No Takings Implications

These proposed directives have been analyzed in accordance with the principles and criteria contained in E.O. 12360, Governmental Actions and Interference with Constitutionally Protected Property Rights, and it has been determined that they would not pose the risk of a taking of private property as they are limited to the establishment of administrative procedures.

Energy Effects

These proposed directives have been analyzed under E.O. 13211, Actions Concerning Regulations That Significantly Affect Energy Supply, Distribution, or Use. It has been determined that they do not constitute a significant energy action as defined in the Executive Order.

Civil Justice Reform

These proposed directives have been reviewed under E.O. 12988, Civil Justice Reform. These proposed directives will direct the work of Forest Service employees and are not intended to preempt any State and local laws and regulations that might be in conflict or that would impede full implementation of these directives. The directives would not retroactively affect existing permits, contracts, or other instruments authorizing the occupancy and use of NFS lands and would not require the institution of administrative proceedings before parties may file suit in court challenging their provisions

Unfunded Mandates

Pursuant to Title II of the Unfunded Mandates Reform Act of 1995 (2 U.S.C. 1531–1538), which the President signed into law on March 22, 1995, the effects of these proposed directives on State, local, and Tribal governments, and on the private sector have been assessed and do not compel the expenditure of \$100 million or more by any State, local, or Tribal government, or anyone in the private sector. Therefore, a statement under section 202 of the act is not required.

Federalism

The Agency has considered these proposed directives under the requirements of E.O. 13132, Federalism. The Agency has made a preliminary assessment that they conform with the federalism principles set out in this Executive Order; would not impose any significant compliance costs on the States; and would not have substantial direct effects on the States, on the relationship between the national government and the States, or on the distribution of power and responsibilities among the various levels of government. Moreover, these proposed directives address the land management planning process on National Forests, Grasslands or other units of the NFS, which do not directly affect the States. Based on comments received on these proposed directives, the Agency will consider if any additional consultation will be needed with State and local governments prior to adopting final directives.

Consultation and Coordination With Indian Tribal Governments

The Forest Service will conduct government-to-government consultation on the planning directives. The Forest Service considers tribal consultation as an ongoing, iterative process that encompasses development of the proposed directives through the issuance of final directives. During development of the 2012 Planning Rule, between September 23, 2010, and publication of the final rule on April 9, 2012, the Agency held 16 consultation meetings across the Country. In addition, Forest Service leaders held one-on-one meetings, as requested, with tribal leaders throughout the time period of development of the rule.

The Agency will contact all federally recognized Tribes and Alaska Native Corporations by mail to formally initiate consultation on the proposed directives and seek comments within 120 days.

Controlling Paperwork Burdens on the Public

These proposed directives do not contain any record keeping or reporting requirements or other information collection requirements as defined in 5 CFR part 1320 and, therefore, impose no paperwork burden on the public. Accordingly, the review provisions of the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995 (44 U.S.C. 3501 et seq.) and implementing regulations at 5 CFR part 1320 do not apply.

Chapter 50 of these proposed directives contains information collection requirements as defined in 5

CFR part 1320. The information collection requirements have been approved by the Office of Management and Budget and assigned control number 0596-0158.

Conclusion

The Forest Service has developed these planning directives to set forth the legal authorities, objectives, policy, responsibilities, direction, and overall guidance for Forest Service Line Officers, agency employees, and others to use the 2012 Planning Rule. The proposed directives provide consistent interpretation of the 2012 Planning Rule for Line and Staff Officers, and interdisciplinary teams.

The 2012 Planning Rule and the proposed FSM and FSH sections together provide requirements and guidance for the Agency to adaptively manage the NFS to maintain and restore NFS land and water ecosystems and protect species while providing for ecosystem services and multiple uses. The proposed directives are intended to guide the development, revision, and amendment of land management plans to provide for the sustainability of ecosystems and resources; meet the need for forest restoration and conservation, watershed protection, and species diversity and conservation; and assist the Agency in providing a sustainable flow of benefits, services, and uses of NFS lands that provide jobs and contribute to the economic and social sustainability of communities.

By seeking public notice and comment on these proposed directives, the Agency is continuing its commitment to improve public involvement and transparency in decisionmaking associated with developing, amending, or revising a land management plan.

When the Agency offers the opportunity for public notice and comment on a proposed revision of a Forest Service Manual or Handbook revision, the Agency publishes a notice of a proposed revision with a minimum 60-day comment period. The Agency then considers the comments, makes any changes, drafts, and publishes a final **Federal Register** notice explaining the final directive and the rationale for any changes made from the propose. At a minimum, this process takes 6 months but normally takes 9–12 months.

The Forest Service is committed to providing adequate opportunities for the public to comment on administrative directives that are of substantial public interest or controversy, as provided in the regulations at 36 CFR part 216. All comments on these proposed directives will be considered in the development

of the final directives. The full text of these proposed directives are available on the World Wide Web/Internet at <http://www.fs.usda.gov/goto/planningrule/directives>. Single paper copies are available upon request from the address and phone numbers listed earlier in this notice as well as from the nearest Regional Office, the locations of which are also available on the Washington Office headquarters homepage on the World Wide Web/Internet: www.fs.fed.us/.

Dated: February 21, 2013.

Thomas L. Tidwell,
Chief.

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BILLING CODE 3410-11-P

DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

National Institute of Food and Agriculture

Notice of Intent To Request an Extension of a Currently Approved Information Collection

AGENCY: National Institute of Food and Agriculture, USDA.

ACTION: Notice and request for comments.

SUMMARY: In accordance with the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995 and Office of Management and Budget (OMB) regulations (5 CFR part 1320) which implement the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995 (44 U.S.C. Chapter 35), this notice announces the intention of the National Institute of Food and Agriculture (NIFA) to request an extension for a currently approved information collection (OMB No. 0524-0026) for Form NIFA-666, "Organizational Information."

DATES: Submit comments on or before April 29, 2013.

ADDRESSES: You may submit comments, identified by NIFA-2013-0008, by any of the following methods:

Federal eRulemaking Portal: <http://www.regulations.gov>. Follow the instructions for submitting comments.

Email: rmartin@NIFA.usda.gov. Include NIFA-2013-0008 in the subject line of the message.

Fax: 202-720-0857.

Mail: Written comments concerning this notice and requests for copies of the information collection may be submitted to Robert Martin, Records Officer, Information Policy, Planning and Training; Mail: NIFA/USDA; Mail Stop 2216; 1400 Independence Avenue SW.; Washington, DC 20250-2299; Hand Delivery/Courier: 800 9th Street