

The U.S. Forest Service (USFS) will be a cooperating agency in the preparation of the EIS because the surface of some of the lands included in the tract is owned by the Federal government and administered by the USFS as part of the Thunder Basin National Grasslands. The OSM will also be a cooperating agency in the preparation of the EIS, because it is the Federal agency that administers surface coal mining operations under the Surface Mining Control and Reclamation Act of 1977.

The major issues, identified to date, revolve around air quality, hydrology, reclamation, and socio-economics as they relate to facilities and rail construction, and the start-up of a full-scale mining operation. If other issues or concerns are known, please address them in writing to the above individuals, or verbally at the public scoping meeting scheduled on December 5 in Gillette, Wyoming. Written comments will be accepted by the BLM at the address shown above from the date of publication of this Notice in the Federal Register, through December 31, 1995.

Pamela J. Lewis,

Chief, Leasable Minerals Section.

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[D-930-1020-01]

Notice of Intent To Simultaneously Modify all Idaho Management Framework Plans (MFPs) and Resource Management Plans (RMPs) and To Prepare an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) To Adopt Standards for Rangeland Health and Guidelines for Grazing Management in Idaho and To Include Ecosystem-Based Management Strategies From the Upper Columbia River Basin (UCRB) EIS

AGENCY: Bureau of Land Management, Interior.

ACTION: Notice of intent to modify land use plans and to prepare an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) to adopt standards for rangeland health and guidelines for grazing management in Idaho and to adopt ecosystem-based management strategies from the Upper Columbia River Basin (UCRB) EIS.

The Challis proposed RMP/Draft EIS currently in progress will be published in the winter of 1995 and the Bennett Hills, and Owyhee Proposed RMPs currently in progress are scheduled for draft EIS publication in the spring of 1996. Notice is given that Standards for

Rangeland Health and Guidelines for Grazing Management will be included in these respective plans.

SUMMARY: The Bureau of Land Management (BLM) in Idaho intends to modify all existing MFPs and RMPs in the State and to prepare an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for adoption of Standards Rangeland Health (terrestrial and riparian) and Guidelines for Grazing Management as provided in the BLM's new grazing regulations (43 CFR Part 4100). In addition, all Land Use Plans would be amended to include ecosystem-based management strategy from the Upper Columbia River Basin (UCRB) EIS and the Interior Columbia Basin Ecosystem Assessment. This strategy will include standards, specific objectives, and management guidelines focusing on restoring the health of forest, range, aquatic, and riparian ecosystems. Public comment is sought on the issues and alternatives to be considered, and on proposed standards and guidelines.

DATES: Comments concerning the scope of the analysis should be received in writing within 30 days following the date of the last scoping meeting to receive full consideration in the development of alternatives. Dates of those meetings will be published in local and regional newspapers.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:

J. David Brunner, Bureau of Land Management, 3380 Americana Terrace, Boise, Idaho 83706; Phone 208-384-3056.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: The BLM's new grazing administration regulations (43 CFR part 4100 59FR) which became effective August 21, 1995, require the development of Standards for Rangeland Health and Guidelines for Grazing Administration. In Idaho, BLM intends to develop these standards and guidelines through a public process and incorporate them into MFPs/RMPs. Incorporating standards and guidelines into existing plans will require some form of plan modification, ranging from simple plan maintenance to plan amendment.

Management Framework Plans (MFPs) to be modified are as follows: Kuna, Bruneau, Owyhee, Twin Falls, Malad, Big Lost, Little Lost Birch Creek, Big Desert, Ellis-Pahsimeroi, Challis, Mackay, Sun Valley, Bennett Hills, Timmerman, Magic, Emerald Empire and Chief Joseph (Bennett Hills, Challis and Owyhee are scheduled to be replaced by RMPs which are currently under development). Resource Management Plans (RMPs) to be modified are as follows: Cascade,

Jarbridge, Cassia, Medicine Lodge, Pocatello, Lemhi and Monument.

At this point, it uncertain what level of plan modification will be needed; plan maintenance or plan amendment.

This notice invites Public comment on the proposal to develop standards and guidelines and issues to be addressed and alternatives to be considered in the EIS or other NEPA analysis.

Issues preliminarily identified include: the effect that adoption of the standards will have on uses of public land, the effect that adoption of the proposed guidelines will have on grazing management and livestock operations, and riparian and aquatic ecosystems and the need for flexibility in standards and guidelines. Additional issues have been identified in the UCRB EIS. It is expected that the ecosystem management strategy being analyzed in the UCRB EIS will provide a broad framework within which Healthy Reangelands Standards and Guides will be developed.

The NEPA analysis will be conducted using an interdisciplinary team that includes persons trained in archaeology, economics, plant ecology, forestry, hydrology, soil science, range management, recreation and fish and wildlife management.

Three preliminary alternatives have been identified: the continuation of current management (no action alternative) as provided for in existing land use plans, application of the fall back standards and guidelines contained in the regulations, and the adoption of standards and guidelines developed locally and in consultation with Idaho BLM's three Resource Advisory Councils.

Dated: November 13, 1995.

J. David Brunner,

Deputy State Director for Resource Services.

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[ID-030-1030-00]

Intent to Prepare Forest Plan Amendments to the Deep Creek Management Framework Plan and the Pocatello Resource Management Plan, Idaho

AGENCY: Bureau of Land Management, Interior.

ACTION: Notice of Intent to Prepare Forest Plan Amendments to the Deep Creek Management Framework Plan and The Pocatello Resource Management Plan.