

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

Office of the Secretary

Research, Education, and Economics; Notice of Strategic Planning Task Force Meeting

AGENCY: Research, Education, and Economics, USDA.

ACTION: Notice of Meeting.

SUMMARY: The United States Department of Agriculture announces a meeting of the Strategic Planning Task Force on Research Facilities.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: The Strategic Planning Task Force on Research Facilities, currently consisting of 14 members, is scheduled to meet for the sixth of eight planned meetings. The meeting is scheduled to be held at the National Agriculture Library, Beltsville, Maryland, beginning at 1 p.m. on December 1 and concluding at 3 p.m. on December 4. The meeting will be a review of the data collected by the Task Force and will begin discussion and plans for the development of the final report.

Times and dates: December 1, 1998, 1 p.m.–5 p.m.; December 2, 1998, 8 a.m.–5 p.m.; December 3, 1998, 8 a.m.–5 p.m.; and December 4, 1998, 8 a.m.–3 p.m.

Place: National Agricultural Library Conference Room, Beltsville, Maryland.

Type of meeting: Open to the public.

Comments: The public may file written comments before or after the meeting with the contact person listed below.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Mitch Geasler, Project Director, Strategic Planning Task Force on Research Facilities, Room 344–A Jamie L. Whitten Building, USDA, 1400 Independence Avenue SW., Washington, DC 20250–0113. Telephone 202–720–3803.

Done at Washington, DC, this 12th day of November, 1998.

I. Miley Gonzalez,

Under Secretary, Research, Education, and Economics.

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DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Forest Service

Rocky Mountain Region; Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement for Sheep Flats Diversity Unit Timber Sales, Grand Mesa, Uncompahgre and Gunnison National Forest, Mesa County, Colorado

AGENCY: Forest Service, USDA.

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

Responsible Official: The Responsible Official for this Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement is Mr. Robert Storch, Forest Supervisor of the Grand Mesa, Uncompahgre and Gunnison National Forests, 2250 Highway 50, Delta, Colorado 81416.

SUMMARY: The Forest Service prepared and issued a final environmental impact statement in June 1998 about four (4) proposed timber sales: Valley View, Sheep Flats, Grove Creek, and Leon. These sales are located on the Grand Mesa National Forest, Collbran Ranger District. The Forest Service will supplement this environmental impact statement by developing and presenting additional information concerning soils and watershed resources. Errors and inconsistencies in the June 1998 EIS will also be corrected.

DATES: Publication of Draft Supplemental EIS: December 1998. Publication of Final Supplemental EIS: March 1999. Publication of Record of Decision: April 1999.

ADDRESSES: Send written comments to Mr. Robert Storch, Forest Supervisor of the Grand Mesa, Uncompahgre and Gunnison National Forests, 2250 Highway 50, Delta, Colorado 81416. Send electronic mail comments to Pam Bode, Project Leader at pam.bode/r2_gmug@fs.fed.us.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: The Forest Supervisor will use this Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement to reconsider his decision concerning how to manage the timber resource within

Sheep Flats Diversity Unit. The Forest Service is proposing to harvest four timber sales on this National Forest System land. Even-aged and uneven-aged silvicultural systems are considered in Engelmann spruce, subalpine fir, and aspen stands. These sales are scheduled to be offered within a five to ten year period after this analysis.

Initial scoping of interested parties identified three preliminary issues. These are: (1) Constructing roads and harvesting timber within areas that were identified as Salt Creek Roadless Area and Priest Mountain Roadless Area during the 1979 RARE II inventory, (2) harvesting old growth timber, and (3) cumulative impacts on ecosystems from logging operations in and around the sale areas.

Five alternatives were studied in the June 1998 EIS. Alternative 1 is No Action. Alternatives 2 and 4 harvest suited timber but do not enter the Salt Creek or Priest Mountain Roadless Area. Alternatives 3 and 5 enter both the Salt Creek and Priest Mountain Roadless Areas. Alternatives 2 and 3 emphasize maintenance of current old growth attributes and wildlife habitat networks while moderately improving timber structural diversity. Alternatives 4 and 5 emphasize improvement of timber structural diversity and production of wood fiber for timber industry. The selected action in the June 1998 Record of Decision was a combination of Alternatives 3 and 5. This action will be reconsidered when the Final Supplemental EIS is complete and a new decision will be published.

News releases were issued, field tours have been conducted, and public meetings have occurred over the past six years. No additional scoping is planned for this project. News releases will be issued to inform the public that a Supplemental EIS will be prepared. These releases will outline the analysis schedule, and identify the period of opportunity for comment. The comment period on the Draft Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement will be 45 days from the date the Environmental Protection Agency publishes the Notice of Availability in the **Federal Register**. The parties that expressed interest previously have been informed individually by mail that this analysis is continuing.