

are in place, and show a satisfactory record of past performance under Federal Government grants and contracts.

Grants are also awarded to Land-Grant Colleges including Tuskegee Institute, Indian tribal community colleges and Alaska native cooperative colleges, Hispanic-serving post-secondary educational institutions, and other post-secondary educational institutions with demonstrated experience in providing agricultural education or other agriculturally related services to small, limited resource, economically/socially disadvantaged farmers and ranchers in their region.

When a grant has been awarded, a cooperative agreement is executed. The potential grant period is 5 years. At the conclusion of each year, a decision is made by USDA program staff based on information submitted regarding project performance and management whether to extend the cooperative agreement for another year.

The Agriculture, Rural Development, Food and Drug Administration, and Related Agencies Appropriation Act, 1999, provided \$3 million for the continuation of the programs for fiscal year 1999.

Estimate of Burden: Public reporting burden for this collection of information is estimated to average 4.0606 hours per response.

Respondents: Educational Institutions, Community-Based Organizations, State, Local or Tribal Governments and producers.

Estimated Number of Respondents: 150

Estimated Number of Responses per Respondent: 1

Estimated Total Annual Burden on Respondents: 5,888 hours

Copies of this information collection and related instructions can be obtained without charge from Geraldine Herring at the above address.

Comments are invited on: (1) whether the proposed collection of information is necessary for the proper performance of the functions of the agency, including whether the information will have practical utility; (2) the accuracy of the agency's estimate of the burden of the proposed collection of information including the validity of the methodology and assumptions used; (3) ways to enhance the quality, utility, and clarity of the information to be collected; and (4) ways to minimize the burden of the collection of information on those who are to respond, including the use of appropriate automated, electronic, mechanical or other technological collection techniques or other forms of information technology.

Comments should be sent to the Desk Officer for Agriculture, Office of Information and Regulatory Affairs, Office of Management and Budget (OMB), Washington, D.C. 20503 and to Samuel E. Thornton, Director, USDA, Office of Outreach, Room 542-A, STOP 6201, 1400 Independence Avenue, SW, Washington, D.C. 20250-6201.

All responses to this notice will be summarized and included in the request for OMB approval. All comments will become a matter of public record.

Signed at Washington, D.C., on January 20, 1999.

Samuel E. Thornton,

Director, Office of Outreach.

James W. Schroeder,

Acting Under Secretary for Farm and Foreign Agricultural Services.

[FR Doc. 99-3626 Filed 2-12-99; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 3410-05-M

DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Forest Service

Monroe Mountain Ecosystem Restoration Project; Fishlake National Forest, Sevier and Piute Counties, UT

AGENCY: Forest Service, USDA.

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

SUMMARY: Notice is hereby given that the Forest Service, USDA, will prepare an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) to implement proposed actions to maintain or restore the long-term health and productivity of lands within the Monroe Mountain Ecosystem Restoration Project area, on the Richfield Ranger District, Fishlake National Forest. The purpose of these proposals is to initiate actions that would: (1) Reduce the loss of aspen through succession to mixed conifer and sagebrush; (2) restore watershed values that favor increases in water yield to restore riparian conditions; (3) reduce the risk of large intense wildfires and the potential of epidemic level spruce beetle outbreaks and other diseases; (4) recover the value of merchantable trees while performing ecosystem restoration; (5) contribute to the restoration of aspen and grass/forb communities to improve habitat for wildlife and livestock. The proposals include: (1) commercial and noncommercial regeneration treatment of aspen and mixed conifer/aspen forests, and associated road construction, maintenance and closures; (2) commercial salvage, sanitation and density management timber harvest in spruce forests, and associated road construction, maintenance and closures;

(3) treatment of aspen and mixed conifer/aspen forests using ignited prescribed fire; (4) treatment of dense sagebrush vegetative types of ignited prescribed fire, disking, or Dixie harrowing. Multiple decisions may be issued upon completion of the analysis; however, the cumulative effects of all the proposed actions will be disclosed in the EIS. The proposed actions would be completed within a five-year period. The project is located approximately twelve miles southeast of Richfield, Utah. The project would be implemented in accordance with direction of the Land and Resource Management Plan (LRMP, 1986) for the Fishlake National Forest.

The agency gives notice that the environmental analysis process is underway. During the analysis process, an issue surfaced that warranted disclosure of effects under an EIS. This issue is the high degree of interest associated with the potential to alter the undeveloped character of portions of the project area due to proposed vegetative treatments within inventoried roadless areas. Public scoping and issue development identified issues involving: biological diversity; land stability; soil erosion and productivity; water and water resources; vegetative vigor and health; fire and fuel loading; wildlife and fisheries; transportation system; range; visual landscape; economics; recreation; cultural resources; and air quality.

DATES: Written comments to be considered in the preparation of the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) should be submitted by March 18, 1999, which is at least 30 days following the publication of this Notice in the **Federal Register**. The DEIS is expected to be available for review by April, 1999. The Record of Decision and Final Environmental Impact Statement are expected to be available by June, 1999.

ADDRESSES: Send written comments to District Ranger, Richfield Ranger District, 115 East 900 North, Richfield, Utah 84701.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION: Direct questions about the proposed action and EIS by mail to Don Okerlund, Acting District Ranger, 115 East 900 North, Richfield, Utah 84701; or by phone at (435) 896-9233; or FAX: (435) 896-9347.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: The proposed projects are located in an analysis area of about 50,000 acres, including 41,400 acres of National Forest System lands 8,400 acres of private land, and 200 acres of State of Utah land. It is centered within Monroe

Mountain, extending from Magleby Pass southerly about fifteen miles to Langdon Mountain. The project area is located in Townships 25, 26, 27 and 28 South, Ranges 1, 2, and 3 West, Salt Lake Base and Meridian.

The proposed need for action is based upon scientific evidence that vegetation is in an unhealthy condition over much of the project area. Within the project area the size and number of aspen stands have decreased. There are significantly fewer areas occupied by aspen now that 150 years ago. As older aspen trees have died, insufficient regeneration has resulted to maintain the stands. It is believed that lack of fire has contributed to the loss of aspen stands. Conifer and sagebrush are encroaching into the aspen stands. Research has shown that such encroachment causes a significant decrease in the area's water yield, the variety and number of wildlife and vegetative species present, and the forage available for wildlife and livestock. Local timber mills have created a market for merchantable aspen that has benefited the local economy.

In addition, increased numbers of Engelmann spruce are being killed by spruce beetles, which are at epidemic levels. Spruce provides products that benefit local economies and supplies wood needed for a multitude of products. Spruce stands also provide habitat for wildlife and soil protection. One purpose of the project is to salvage the dead and dying Engelmann spruce/subalpine fir to recover wood products that would otherwise be lost, while still meeting the desired future condition. Also, spruce dominated stands that are at risk to spruce beetle infestation would be treated by commercial and noncommercial sanitation treatments to alter the forest conditions that contribute to this risk. Reducing the risk in these stands would provide the best opportunity to maintain a green, forested condition as well as maintain important resource values.

The proposed actions would occur within eight treatment areas totalling 17,325 acres within the 50,000 acre analysis area. The eight treatment areas contain approximately 1,200 acres of Engelmann spruce/fir; 12,500 acres of aspen and aspen/mixed conifer; and 3,600 acres of sagebrush. The proposed action involves recovery of approximately 20–25 million board feet of timber (aspen, spruce and other conifer species) from approximately 5,000 to 6,000 acres. Ignited prescribed fire would be a treatment for aspen regeneration on approximately 3,000 to 4,000 acres. About 14 miles of specified road construction would be required to

access treatment areas to recover the wood products. In the spruce treatment areas, the roads would be closed by gates to allow future entry for timber stand improvement activities. Roads needed in the aspen/mixed conifer treatment areas would be rehabilitated and permanently closed at completion of the activity. Approximately 2,000 acres of sagebrush would be treated by ignited prescribed fire, disking, or Dixie harrowing.

The proposed actions would implement management direction, contribute to meeting the goals and objectives identified in the Fishlake National Forest LRMP, and move the analysis area toward the desired future condition.

Tentative alternatives to the proposed action include: (1) No action, meaning the project would not take place, but current management and natural succession would continue; (2) apply the proposed actions to acres external to inventoried roadless areas; (3) apply the proposed actions to acres external to inventoried roadless areas and selected acres within inventoried roadless areas. No road construction would occur within the inventoried roadless areas.

The analysis area includes both National Forest System lands, State of Utah lands and private lands. Proposed treatments would occur only on National Forest System lands. No federal or local permits, licenses or entitlements would be needed.

As the lead agency, the Forest Service would analyze and document direct, indirect, and cumulative environmental effects for a range of alternatives. Each alternative would include mitigations measures and monitoring requirements.

Rob Mrowka, Forest Supervisor, Fishlake National Forest, is the responsible official. He can be reached by mail at 115 East 900 North, Richfield, Utah 84701.

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 Plant 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.

Dated: February 9, 1999.

Rob Mrowka,

Forest Supervisor, Fishlake National Forest.

[FR Doc. 99–3609 Filed 2–12–99; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 3410–11–M

COMMISSION ON CIVIL RIGHTS

Agenda and Notice of Public Meeting of the Mississippi Advisory Committee

Notice is hereby given, pursuant to the provisions of the rules and regulations of the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights, that a meeting of the Mississippi Advisory Committee to the Commission will convene at 5:00 p.m. and adjourn at 7:30 p.m. on March 3, 1999, at the Old Supreme Court Chamber, State Capitol, 400 High Street, Room 216, Jackson, Mississippi 39201. The purpose of the meeting is to receive information on whether there is a need for statewide civil rights legislation.

Persons desiring additional information, or planning a presentation to the Committee, should contact Melvin L. Jenkins, Director of the Central Regional Office, 913–551–1400 (TDD 913–551–1414). Hearing-impaired persons who will attend the meeting