

maintain a source of large wood that will decay, helping contribute to soil productivity. Treatment of pre-commercial stands to remove fuels and re-establish seedlings is needed to return those stands to the productive forests that they were prior to the fire.

The proposed action timber sale related activities include: Salvage harvest on approximately 1,226 acres (retaining between 6 and 12 trees per acre for shade and large wood recruitment); reforestation and seedling protection (with species native to the site) on about 1,095 acres; slash treatment on about 1,171 acres (including grapple piling, underburning, hand pile burning, and yarding of tops attached); road work (culvert replacement and road stabilization of two sites) along Forest Service Road 4714 and construction and reconstruction (about 1.1 miles) of temporary spur roads; construct and reconstruct up to 39 landings; and use 2 existing rock pits and establish 6 stockpile sites along existing roads to store rock and excavated material. Connected actions that would be accomplished include: Felling of snags on salvage units; site preparation and reforestation; and road reconstruction and decommissioning work.

The acreage proposed for harvest is estimated to yield up to 50 million board feet of timber, which may result in 5 to 6 separate timber sales. This volume and acreage estimates are likely to decrease as a result of finalizing riparian reserves and unsuitable or unstable soils boundaries, and as the smaller diameter wood begins to decay. The areas prescribed for harvest will require a combination of helicopter, skyline and ground-based harvesting equipment. Alternatives may reflect different harvest equipment combinations. Alternatives to be considered include the No Action Alternative, the proposed action, and alternatives to the proposed action.

Preliminary issues, as identified by the Forest and by scoping that has been conducted to date, include the following related to the proposed action: The economic efficiency and viability; the potential affect on the late successional habitat and species within the Panther Creek Watershed; and the potential affect on water quality and aquatic conditions for aquatic and riparian dependent species.

The scoping effort is intended to identify issues, which may lead to the development of alternatives to the proposed action. One of the purposes of this notice of intent is to solicit input from the public as part of the overall scoping effort. In addition to this notice,

the public will be notified of the EIS through the Umpqua National Forest's April 2003 quarterly publication "Schedule of Proposed Actions".

Comments received in response to this notice and through scoping, including names and addresses of those who comment, will be considered part of the public record on this proposed action and will be available for public inspection. Comments submitted anonymously will be accepted and considered; however, those who submit anonymous comments will not have standing to appeal the subsequent decision under 36 CFR parts 215 or 217. Additionally, pursuant to 7 CFR 1.27(d), any person may request the agency to withhold a submission from the public record by showing how the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) permits such confidentiality. Persons requesting such confidentiality should be aware that, under the FOIA, confidentiality may be granted in only very limited circumstances, such as to protect trade secrets. The Forest Service will inform the requester of the agency's decision regarding the request for confidentiality, and where the request is denied, the agency will return the submission and notify the requester that the comments may be resubmitted with or without name and address within a specified number of days.

Public comments are appreciated throughout the analysis process. The draft EIS is expected to be filed with the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and be available for public review by July 2003. The comment period on the draft EIS will be 45 days from the date the EPA publishes the notice of availability in the **Federal Register**. The final EIS is scheduled to be available October 2003.

The Forest Service believes it is important to give reviewers notice of this early stage of public participation and of several court rulings related to public participation in the environmental review process. First, reviewers of a draft EIS 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 Corp. v. NRDC*, 435 U.S. 519, 553 (1978). Also, environmental objections that could have been raised at the draft stage may be waived or dismissed by the court if not raised until after completion of the final EIS. *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 substantive comments and objections are made available to the Forest Service at a time when it can meaningfully consider and respond to them in the final EIS.

To assist the Forest Service in identifying and considering issues and concerns on the proposed action, comments on the draft EIS 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 EIS 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 of 40 CFR 1503.3 in addressing these points.)

In the final EIS, the Forest Service is required to respond to substantive comments and responses received during the comment period that pertain to the environmental consequences discussed in the draft EIS and applicable laws, regulations, and policies considered in making a decision regarding the proposal. The Responsible Official is Carol Cushing, District Ranger of the North Umpqua Ranger District, Umpqua National Forest. The Responsible Official will document the decision and rationale for the decision in a Record of Decision. The decision will be subject to review under Forest Service Appeal Regulations (36 CFR part 215).

Dated: March 7, 2003.

James A. Caplan,

Forest Supervisor.

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DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Forest Service

Intergovernmental Advisory Committee Meeting

AGENCY: Forest Service, USDA.

ACTION: Notice of meeting.

SUMMARY: The Intergovernmental Advisory Committee (IAC) will meet on April 1, 2003, at the Lloyd Center Double Tree Hotel, located at 1000 NE., Multnomah Street in Portland, Oregon, subject to the advance approval of the committee's Federal Advisory Committee Act charter by the Department of Agriculture. The meeting is scheduled to begin at 10 a.m. and