

additional 17 miles of road no longer needed for resource management, at this time, would be decommissioned by various methods, such as removal of culverts, recontouring, ripping and seeding, and installing barriers. The method of decommissioning would be selected for each road or portions of road on a site-specific basis. An estimated 2 miles of existing road would be restricted seasonally with 12 miles of existing road restricted year-round to reduce the potential loss of snags in old growth habitat, improve habitat security for wildlife, and reduce sediment delivery to live streams. An estimated 11 miles of existing road would be restricted to reduce open road densities within and adjacent to designated old growth stands. More specifically management activities in this proposal include:

Regeneration Harvest: This harvest would leave approximately 20 large trees per acre, where feasible, to provide future snags and down woody material for wildlife habitat. A total of approximately 734 acres would be harvested through this method.

Intermediate Harvest: The following types of intermediate harvest are proposed: (1) Commercial thinning of dominate and subordinate trees while retaining a stocked stand of overstory trees on approximately 1522 acres; (2) harvest of post and pole sized lodgepole pine from approximately 71 acres; (3) salvage harvest on 31 acres would remove merchantable dead lodgepole pine while protecting desirable live trees in the stand.

Underburning: Underburning is proposed on approximately 179 acres outside harvest units to reduce fuel loads and reduce fire risk.

Roadside Fuel Reduction: Fuel reduction through slashing, hand piling and burning while maintaining the integrity of the stand is proposed within the first 100 feet of timber adjacent to open roads, on approximately 65 acres.

Burning of Natural Fuels and Slash: Burning of natural fuels and slash resulting from timber harvest is proposed on approximately 2358 acres.

Watershed/Fish Habitat Improvement: Watershed improvement projects include controlling cattle access to creeks, removing failed culverts, and applying best management practices on approximately 104 miles of existing road.

Range of Alternatives: The Forest Service will consider a range of alternatives. One of these will be the "no action" alternative in which none of the proposed activities would be implemented. Additional alternatives will examine varying levels and

locations for the proposed activities to achieve the proposal's purposes, as well as to respond to the issues and other resource values.

Public Involvement and Scoping: In July 1999 preliminary efforts were made to involve the public in considering management opportunities within the Fortine Decision Area. Comments received prior to this notice will be included in the documentation for the EIS. This proposal includes openings greater than 40 acres, ranging from 46 to 60 acres. A 60 day public review period, and approval by the Regional Forester for exceeding the 40 acre limitation for regeneration harvest will occur prior to the signing of the Record of Decision. This 60 day period is initiated with this notice of intent.

Estimated Dates for Filing: The Draft EIS is expected to be filed with the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and available for public review by September 2003. At that time, EPA will publish a notice of availability of the Draft EIS in the **Federal Register**. The comment period on the Draft EIS will be a minimum of 45 days from the date the EPA publishes the notice of availability in the **Federal Register**. It is very important that those interested in the management of this area participate at that time.

The Final EIS is scheduled to be complete by December 2003. In the Final EIS, the Forest Service will respond to 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.

Reviewer's Obligations: The Forest Service believes it is important to give reviewers notice of several court rulings related to public participation in the environmental review process. First, reviewers of Draft EIS's 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 be raised at the Draft EIS stage 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 Draft EIS 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 and respond to them in the Final EIS.

To be most helpful, comments on the Draft EIS should be as specific as possible and may address the adequacy of the statement or the merit of the alternatives discussed. 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.

Responsible Official: Edward C. Monnig, District Ranger, Fortine Ranger District, Kootenai National Forest, P.O. Box 116, Fortine, Montana 59918, is the Responsible Official. As the Responsible Official, he will decide if the proposed project will be implemented and will document the decision and reasons for the decision in the Record of Decision. That decision will be subject to Forest Service Appeal Regulations.

Dated: January 9, 2003.

Greg Kujawa,

Acting Forest Supervisor, Kootenai National Forest.

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DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Forest Service

Del Norte County Resource Advisory Committee

AGENCY: Forest Service, USDA.

ACTION: Notice of meeting.

SUMMARY: The Del Norte County Resource Advisory Committee (RAC) will meet on February 4, 2003 in Crescent City, California. The purpose of the meeting is to discuss the selection of Title II projects under Public Law 106-393, H.R. 2389, the Secure Rural Schools and Community Self-Determination Act of 2000, also called the "Payments to States" Act.

DATES: The meeting will be held on February 4, 2003 from 6 to 8:30 p.m.

ADDRESSES: The meeting will be held at the Del Norte County Unified School District Board Room, 301 West Washington Boulevard, Crescent City, California.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:

Laura Chapman, Committee Coordinator, USDA, Six Rivers National Forest, 1330 Bayshore Way, Eureka, CA 95501. Phone (707) 441-3549. E-mail: 1chapman@fs.fed.us.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: The committee will discuss and prioritize