

includes authorizing livestock grazing on allotments within the Thunder Basin Analysis Area of the Thunder Basin National Grasslands, that will meet or move toward desired resource conditions.

- Define an allotment specific starting point in which management is believed to be capable of meeting or moving toward desired conditions in a timely manner.
- Monitor to evaluate both implementation and effectiveness of management actions.

In all cases, management will use vegetation management tools that will meet LRMP Objectives, Standards and Guidelines, and maintain or move existing resource conditions toward Geographic Area desired conditions. If monitoring indicates that practices are being properly implemented and that resource trends are moving toward meeting desired conditions in a timely manner, management may continue. If monitoring indicates that there is a need to modify management practices, adaptive options as analyzed in the EIS will be selected and implemented.

Possible Alternatives

- (1) No action.
- (2) Continued current management.

Responsible Official

Robert M. Sprentall, District Ranger, Douglas Ranger District, 2250 East Richards Street, Douglas, Wyoming 82633, is the official responsible for making the decision on this action. He will document his decision and rationale in a Record of Decision.

Nature of Decision To Be Made

The Responsible Official will consider the results of the analysis and its findings and then document the final decision in a Record of Decision (ROD). The decision will determine whether or not to authorize livestock grazing on all, part, or none of the allotments within the Thunder Basin analysis Area, and if so, what adaptive management design criteria, adaptive options, and monitoring will be implemented so as to meet or move toward the desired conditions in the defined timeframe.

Scoping Process

The Forest Service has publicly scoped the proposed action in August 2006 as the Thunder Basin Analysis Area Vegetation Management Environmental Assessment. Individuals who submitted comments on this scoping will still have standing. These comments have been reviewed and are being considered as the analysis continues.

Preliminary Issues

The Forest Service has identified the following preliminary issues: (1) Current impacts to soil resources from the continuing drought, and livestock and wildlife grazing/browsing; (2) Potential impacts to livestock grazing permits on National Grasslands.

Comment Requested

This notice of intent initiates the scoping process which guides the development of the draft environmental impact statement.

Early Notice of Importance of Public Participation in Subsequent Environmental Review: A draft EIS will be prepared for comment. The comment period on the draft environmental statement will be 45 days from the date the Environmental Protection Agency publishes the notice of availability in the **Federal Register**. While public participation is strictly optional at this stage, the Forest Service believes that it is important to give reviewers notice of several court rulings related to public participation in the subsequent environmental review process. First, reviewers of draft 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 Corp. 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 draft environmental impact statement comment period so that 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 also may address the adequacy of the draft environmental impact statement or the merits of the alternatives formulated and discussed in

the statement. In addressing these points, reviewers may wish to refer to the Council on Environmental Quality regulations which implement the procedural provisions of the National Environmental Policy Act of 40 CFR 1503.3.

Dated: February 21, 2007.

Misty A. Hays,

Deputy District Ranger.

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DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Forest Service

Intergovernmental Advisory Committee Meeting, Northwest Forest Plan

AGENCY: Forest Service, USDA.

ACTION: Notice of meeting.

SUMMARY: The Intergovernmental Advisory Committee (IAC), Northwest Forest Plan (NWFP), has scheduled a meeting on March 20, 2007 from 8 a.m. to 12 noon, at the DoubleTree Hotel & Executive Meeting Center, 1000 NE Multnomah, Portland, Oregon 97232, (503) 281-6111, in the Multnomah Conference room. We will provide participants with updates on several ongoing projects of interest including monitoring, agency plan revisions, research activities, etc.

The meeting is open to the public and fully accessible for people with disabilities. A 10-minute time slot is reserved for public comments at 8:10 a.m. Interpreters are available upon request at least 10 days prior to the meeting. Written comments may be submitted for the meeting record. Interested persons are encouraged to attend.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:

Questions regarding this meeting may be directed to Kath Collier, Management Analyst, Regional Ecosystem Office, 333 SW. First Avenue, P.O. Box 3623, Portland, OR 97208 (telephone: 503-808-2165).

Dated: February 20, 2007.

Anne Badgley,

Designated Federal Official.

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