

2007. Appropriate activities will occur once the Draft EIS is available for review, which is expected to occur in the late summer of 2007.

Preliminary Issues: Because the conveyance of land will not significantly change the expected land use of the transferred lands, no significant issues have been identified. Reconstruction of FR 416v has the potential to affect known cultural resource sites located within the existing roadway. Because the sites and road occupy land between a canyon wall and steep ground, options to avoid these sites are limited, and so data recovery is the likely method for mitigating impacts. No threatened or endangered species—or Region 3 sensitive species—of animal or plant are known in the project area. Likewise, no Region 3 sensitive species are known. Because the National Forest System lands would be closed to the general public once conveyed to the Pueblos, a change in recreational use patterns is likely. A closed pumice mine exists on the land to be conveyed to the San Ildefonso Pueblo, with reclamation underway. Any unfinished reclamation will pass to the Secretary of the Interior pursuant to the Act, Section 7(f).

Comment Requested: This notice of intent initiates the scoping process that guides the development of the environmental impact statement. The Forest Service invites written comments and suggestions on the proposed action, including any issues to consider, as well as any concerns relevant to the analysis.

Early Notice of Importance of Public Participation in Subsequent Environmental Review: A draft environmental impact statement will be prepared for comment. 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 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 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 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.

(Authority: 40 CFR 1501.7 and 1508.22; Forest Service Handbook 1909.15, Section 21)

Dated: June 13, 2007.

Daniel J. Jiron,

Forest Supervisor, Santa Fe National Forest.

[FR Doc. 07-3058 Filed 6-21-07; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 3410-11-M

DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Forest Service

Deschutes Provincial Advisory Committee (DPAC)

AGENCY: Forest Service, USDA.

ACTION: Notice of meeting.

SUMMARY: The Deschutes Provincial Advisory Committee will meet on July 11, 2007, starting at 8 a.m. at the Deschutes National Forest Supervisor's Office at 1001 SW. Emkay Drive, Bend, Oregon, for a field trip to the Bend-Ft. Rock and Crescent Ranger Districts. The purpose of the trip is to monitor the Dilman and Five Buttes Projects to obtain feedback from members. The trip is scheduled to end at 5 p.m. in Bend. All Deschutes Province Advisory Committee Meetings are open to the public and an open public forum is scheduled from 3 to 3:30 p.m.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Mollie Chaudet, Province Liaison, Deschutes NF, 1001 SW. Emkay Drive,

Bend, Oregon, 97702, Phone (541) 383-5517.

Leslie A.C. Weldon,

Deschutes National Forest Supervisor.

[FR Doc. 07-3061 Filed 6-21-07; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 3410-11-M

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 June 26, 2007 in Crescent City, California. The purpose of the meeting is to discuss the project submission and selection process for Title II proposals submitted 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 July 2, 2006, 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, Crescent City, California.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Julie Ranieri, Committee Coordinator, USDA, Six Rivers National Forest, 1330 Bayshore Way, Eureka, CA 95501. Phone: (707) 441-3673.

e-mail: jranier@fs.fed.us.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

Individuals, community-based organization, tribes and government agencies will present the Title II project proposals submitted to the RAC. The meeting is open to the public. Public input opportunity will be provided and individuals will have the opportunity to address the committee at that time.

Dated: June 18, 2007.

William D. Metz,

Deputy Forest Supervisor.

[FR Doc. 07-3062 Filed 6-21-07; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 3410-11-M

DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Forest Service

RIN 0596-AC68

USDA Forest Service Open Space Conservation Strategy

AGENCY: Forest Service, USDA.

ACTION: Notice of request for public input.

SUMMARY: The Forest Service is inviting all interested members of the public to provide comments on the Draft Forest Service Open Space Conservation Strategy, which will help shape the Agency's strategic role in its national effort to conserve open space. The Forest Service is interested in addressing the effects of the loss of open space on private forests; on the National Forests and Grasslands and surrounding landscape; and on forests in cities, suburbs, and towns. The Draft Strategy provides a framework to focus existing and new Forest Service actions for open space conservation. Accordingly, comments on the Draft Strategy should focus broadly on the strategic objectives and actions described in the document. See **SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION** section for more background on the loss of open space and the Strategy.

DATES: Comments must be received, in writing, on or before July 23, 2007.

ADDRESSES: Written comments concerning this notice should be addressed to Claire Harper or Kathryn Conant, Forest Service, Cooperative Forestry, Mail Stop Code 1123, 1400 Independence Avenue, SW., Washington, DC 20250-1123. Comments may also be sent via e-mail to openspace@fs.fed.us; or via facsimile to 202-205-1271. The agency cannot confirm receipt of comments. All comments, including names and addresses when provided, are placed in the record and are available for public inspection. The public may inspect comments during regular business hours at the office of the Cooperative Forestry Staff, 4th Floor SE., Yates Building, 201 14th Street, SW., Washington, DC. Visitors are encouraged to call ahead to 202-205-1389 to facilitate entry into the building.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Electronic copies of the Draft Open Space Conservation Strategy document are available at <http://www.fs.fed.us/openspace> and hardcopies are available by contacting Claire Harper or Kathryn Conant, Forest Service, Cooperative Forestry by telephone at 202-205-1389 or by electronic mail at openspace@fs.fed.us. For general information about the Open Space Conservation Strategy and the loss of open space, visit the Forest Service's Open Space Web site: <http://www.fs.fed.us/openspace>.

Individuals who use telecommunication devices for the deaf (TDD) may call the Federal Information Relay Service (FIRS) at 1-800-877-8339 between 8 a.m. and 8 p.m., Eastern Standard Time, Monday through Friday.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

I. Background

In 2003, the Forest Service Chief identified the loss of open space as one of four great threats facing our Nation's forests and grasslands. Loss of open space is an issue that affects the sustainability of both the National Forests and Grasslands and private forests. Open space—including public and private land, wilderness and working land—provides a multitude of public benefits and ecosystem services we all need and enjoy. Three interrelated trends of conversion, fragmentation, and parcelization are jeopardizing the long-term health and function of forests, limiting management options, and reducing opportunities for public enjoyment and use. To address the loss of open space threat, the Forest Service has drafted a national strategy that outlines how the agency plans to focus its efforts on the issue. This strategy provides priority actions to conserve open space, with an emphasis on partnerships and collaborative approaches. The strategy builds upon existing Forest Service expertise, resources, and programs, as well as expands the agency's involvement, to help conserve open space across the landscape and maintain healthy, resilient ecosystems.

II. Progress to Date

The Forest Service published a **Federal Register** notice on November 13, 2006, inviting public input to provide ideas for innovative tools and partnerships in achieving open space conservation. We received approximately 9,500 comments with over 90 percent of the respondents in support of a greater Forest Service emphasis on open space conservation.

The Conservation Fund held three roundtable dialogue listening sessions on the Forest Service role in conserving open space. These sessions were held in Chapel Hill, North Carolina; Washington, DC; and Denver, Colorado in November and December 2006. In addition, we solicited internal comments from Forest Service employees. The Draft Strategy incorporates ideas and input from all the public comments and forums.

Many comments expressed strong support for current State and Private Forestry programs—including the Forest Legacy Program, Forest Stewardship Program, and the Urban & Community Forestry Program. Many respondents look to the Forest Service to lead in convening a range of stakeholders around landscape level planning, researching and promoting markets for ecosystem services, and prioritizing

critical lands for conservation. A small minority of comments questioned the Forest Service's role in State and Private Forestry in general and the Strategy in particular.

A complete review of comments can be found at http://www.fs.fed.us/openspace/summary_of_public_input.html

III. Open Space Conservation Strategy

The goal of the Open Space Conservation Strategy is to maintain the environmental, social, and economic benefits of forests and grasslands across the country by: Protecting the most ecologically and socially important lands; Conserving working lands as sustainable forests and grasslands; Expanding and connecting open spaces in cities, suburbs, and towns; and Reducing the ecological impacts and risks of development.

Four priorities will guide Forest Service action into the future:

- A. Convene partners to identify and protect priority open space;
 - B. Promote national policies and markets to help private landowners conserve open space;
 - C. Provide resources and tools to help communities expand and connect open spaces; and
 - D. Participate in community growth planning to reduce ecological impacts and wildfire risks.
- Within these four priorities, the Draft Strategy focuses on 12 actions for the Agency—all of which will be implemented in partnership and collaboration with others. The actions emphasize our roles as a policy advisor at the national level, a convenor at the regional level, and an information provider and stakeholder at the local level.

IV. Next Steps

After the 30-day comment period, the Forest Service will synthesize all comments received and revise the Strategy accordingly. We expect the final Open Space Conservation Strategy, including a response to comments received, will be announced and published in Fall 2007. The Open Space Conservation Web site will be updated to coincide with this announcement. After publication of the Strategy, the Forest Service will collaborate with stakeholders, states, and the public to implement the Strategy.

V. Public Comment

During the first round of public comment, many respondents requested the opportunity to review and comment on a Draft Strategy. This notice and call

for public comment is a direct result of those requests.

The Draft Strategy provides a framework to focus existing and new Forest Service actions for open space conservation. Accordingly, comments on the Draft Strategy should focus broadly on the strategic objectives and actions described in the document. Input regarding the following three questions is most useful:

1. Are there major actions or concepts for conserving open space missing in the Draft Strategy;
2. Has the Draft Strategy outlined strategic priorities that will best leverage Forest Service expertise, resources, and partnerships to conserve open space; and
3. Are the proposed priority actions feasible and complementary to other conservation efforts?

By receiving input from people with diverse interests and perspectives, the Agency hopes to attain an array of viewpoints and ideas regarding the Open Space Conservation Strategy. Feedback from a range of interested individuals will assist the Agency in developing a well-informed, focused, and effective strategy to address the loss of open space threat.

Dated: June 14, 2007.

James Hubbard,

Deputy Chief, State and Private Forestry.

[FR Doc. E7-12149 Filed 6-21-07; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 3410-11-P

DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Natural Resources Conservation Service

Environmental Assessment; City of Wilber Flood Control, Lower Big Blue Watershed, Saline County, NE

AGENCY: Natural Resources Conservation Service, USDA.

ACTION: Notice of availability, finding of no significant impact.

SUMMARY: The Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) has prepared an Environmental Assessment in compliance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), as amended. Pursuant to the implementing regulations for NEPA (40 CFR parts 1500-1508); the USDA Departmental Policy for the NEPA (7 CFR part 1b); the Natural Resources Conservation Service Regulations (7 CFR part 650); and the Natural Resources Conservation Service policy (General Manual Title 190, Part 410); the Natural Resources Conservation Service gives notice that an environmental impact statement is

not being prepared for constructing a single floodwater retarding dam in the Lower Big Blue Watershed, Saline County, Nebraska. The Environmental Assessment was developed in coordination with the sponsoring local organization (Lower Big Blue Natural Resources District) for a proposed floodwater retarding dam in the Lower Big Blue Watershed to reduce flood damages downstream of the site, including the city of Wilber, Nebraska. Upon consideration of the affected environment, alternatives, environmental consequences, and comments and coordination with concerned public and agencies, the State Conservationist for NRCS, Nebraska found that based on the significance and context and intensity that the proposed action is not a major federal action significantly affecting the quality of the human environment. Thus, a Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) was made.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:

Stephen K. Chick, State Conservationist, U.S. Department of Agriculture, Natural Resources Conservation Service, Federal Building, Room 152, 100 Centennial Mall North, Lincoln, Nebraska 68508-3866; telephone (402) 437-5300.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: The sponsoring local organization concurs with this determination and supports the proposed project to construct a single floodwater retarding dam to current NRCS High Hazard Class requirements and for a design life expediency of 100 years. The following action is proposed to construct a floodwater retarding dam across an unnamed tributary approximately one-fourth mile upstream from the area of concern and Wilber city limit. Information regarding this finding may be obtained at the contact information listed above. No administrative action on implementation of the proposed funding action will be taken until 30 days after the date of this publication in the **Federal Register**.

Stephen K. Chick,

State Conservationist.

[FR Doc. E7-12154 Filed 6-21-07; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 3410-16-P

DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Natural Resources Conservation Service

Notice of Proposed Change to Section IV of the Virginia State Technical Guide

AGENCY: Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), U.S. Department of Agriculture.

ACTION: Notice of Availability of proposed changes in the Virginia NRCS State Technical Guide for review and comment.

SUMMARY: It has been determined by the NRCS State Conservationist for Virginia that changes must be made in the NRCS State Technical Guide specifically in practice standard: #382, Fence. This practice will be used to plan and install conservation practices on cropland, pastureland, woodland, and wildlife land.

DATES: Comments will be received for a 30-day period commencing with the date of this publication.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:

Inquire in writing to John A. Bricker, State Conservationist, Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), 1606 Santa Rosa Road, Suite 209, Richmond, Virginia 23229-5014; Telephone number (804) 287-1691; Fax number (804) 287-1737. Copies of the practice standards will be made available upon written request to the address shown above or on the Virginia NRCS Web site: <http://www.va.nrcs.usda.gov/technical/draftstandards.html>.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: Section 343 of the Federal Agriculture Improvement and Reform Act of 1996 states that revisions made after enactment of the law to NRCS State technical guides used to carry out highly erodible land and wetland provisions of the law shall be made available for public review and comment. For the next 30 days, the NRCS in Virginia will receive comments relative to the proposed changes. Following that period, a determination will be made by the NRCS in Virginia regarding disposition of those comments and a final determination of change will be made to the subject standards.

Dated: June 14, 2007.

John A. Bricker,

State Conservationist, Natural Resources Conservation Service, Richmond, Virginia.

[FR Doc. 07-3067 Filed 6-21-07; 8:45 am]

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