## **Notices**

## **Federal Register**

Vol. 60, No. 41

Thursday, March 2, 1995

This section of the FEDERAL REGISTER contains documents other than rules or proposed rules that are applicable to the public. Notices of hearings and investigations, committee meetings, agency decisions and rulings, delegations of authority, filing of petitions and applications and agency statements of organization and functions are examples of documents appearing in this section.

## **DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE**

**Forest Service** 

[4310-84]

## DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

**Bureau of Land Management** 

Interim Strategy for Managing Anadromous Fish-Producing Watersheds on Federal Lands in Eastern Oregon and Washington, Idaho, and Portions of California

**AGENCY:** Forest Service, USDA; Bureau of Land Management, Interior.

**ACTION:** Notice of decision and availability of environmental assessment and finding of no significant impact.

SUMMARY: On February 24, 1995, the Chief of the Forest Service and the Acting Director of the Bureau of Land Management signed a decision adopting an interim strategy for managing anadromous fish-producing watersheds on lands administered by the Forest Service and Bureau of Land Management in Eastern Oregon and Washington, Idaho, and portions of California. The decision amends Regional Guides and Forest land and resource management plans that guide the management of National Forest System lands and where compatible, provides management direction consistent with Bureau of Land Management land use plans and, thereby, establishes interim goals, objectives, and standards and guidelines for these anadromous fish-producing watersheds. The intended effect of this decision is to provide additional protective management to the watersheds in the affected areas so as to avoid limiting the choice of reasonable alternatives that may be developed in the geographically specific environmental analyses of long-term

management strategies are being conducted.

**EFFECTIVE DATE:** For the Forest Service, this decision is effective on March 9, 1995. For the Bureau of Land Management, this decision is effective on April 3, 1995.

ADDRESSES: The decision documents, Finding of No Significant Impact, and Environmental Assessment may be reviewed at the Office of the Wildlife, Fish, and Rare Plants Staff, Forest Service, USDA, Auditors Building, 14th and Independence Avenue, SW, Washington, DC. Single copies of these documents are available by request from this office as well as from Forest Service regional offices and national forests or Bureau of Land Management state offices in the affected areas.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Harv Forsgren (Forest Service) at (202) 205–1791, or Richard Hardt (BLM) at (202) 452–5074. To request a copy of the decision document, Finding of No Significant Impact, and Environmental Assessment by phone, call (202) 205–1791.

**SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:** The Forest Service and Bureau of Land Management have developed an ecosystem-based interim management strategy for Pacific anadromous fish (i.e., salmon, steelhead, and sea-run cutthroat trout) in response to large declines in anadromous fish populations and widespread degradation of habitat conditions. For the Forest Service the decision amends the Regional Guides for the Forest Service's Northern, Intermountain, Pacific Southwest, and Pacific Northwest Regions and 15 National Forest land and resource management plans (forest plans) to incorporate explicit goals and riparian objectives, and identify those areas where the new interim standards and guidelines will apply. For the Bureau of Land Management, the decision incorporates management direction consistent with seven Bureau of Land Management land use plans to arrest the degradation and begin restoration of anadromous fishproducing watersheds.

Alternative 4 was selected as the interim management direction from five alternatives analyzed in the March 1994 environmental assessment. Notice of the availability of the environmental assessment was published in the **Federal Register** on March 25, 1994 [58]

FR 14356]. Comments received from the general public as well as other Federal agencies and state and local government were considered in arriving at a final decision to adopt Alternative 4, which applies additional protective measures to all new activities and ongoing activities that are likely to adversely affect listed salmon or contribute to the need to list additional anadromous fish species under provisions of the Endangered Species Act. The direction is to be in place for an 18-month period while geographically-specific environmental analyses of long term management strategies are being conducted.

Forest Service and Bureau of Land Management biologists have prepared a biological evaluation and assessment, analyzing the potential effects of the alternatives on species listed under the **Endangered Species Act and those** species identified as sensitive by the agencies. The biologists determined the selected alternative "may effect" listed species and designated critical habitat within the anadromous fish-producing watersheds covered by the decision. Pursuant to that finding, the Forest Service and the Bureau of Land Management have consulted with the Department of Interior, Fish and Wildlife Service, and the U.S. Department of Commerce, National Marine Fisheries Service. The Fish and Wildlife Service, through a letter of concurrence, has indicated that the proposed decision would have a neutral or beneficial effect on listed species under their jurisdiction. The National Marine Fisheries Service, through a biological opinion, has determined that the proposed decision is not likely to jeopardize the continued existence of listed species under their jurisdiction or result in destruction or adverse modification of critical habitat.

Pursuant to section 102(2)(2) of the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 and the Council on Environmental Quality Guidelines (40 CFR 1508.27), the Forest Service and Bureau of Land Management hereby give notice that the actions allowed under Alternative 4 (as adopted) are not a major Federal action and will not significantly affect, either individually or cumulatively, the quality of the human environment. Therefore, an environmental impact statement is not being prepared.