

10.904—Watershed Protection and Flood Prevention—and is subject to the provisions of Executive Order 12372 which requires intergovernmental consultation with state and local officials.”)

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Forest Service

Snoqualmie Pass Adaptive Management Area Plan, Wenatchee National Forest, Kittitas County Washington and Mt. Baker-Snoqualmie National Forest, King County, Washington

AGENCY: Forest Service, USDA.

ACTION: Notice of intent to prepare an environmental impact statement.

SUMMARY: The USDA-Forest Service, will prepare an environmental impact statement (EIS) to develop and evaluate a range of alternatives for management of the 212,700 acres in the Snoqualmie Pass Adaptive Management Area (AMA), as directed by the April 13, 1994 Record of Decision (ROD) for Amendments to Forest Service and Bureau of Land Management Planning Documents Within the Range of the Northern Spotted Owl. This area is located within both the Cle Elum Ranger District of the Wenatchee National Forest in Kittitas County, and the North Bend Ranger District of the Mount Baker-Snoqualmie National Forest in King County.

The alternatives will be consistent with the emphasis direction as described in the ROD, which is the “Development and implementation, with the participation of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, of a scientifically credible, comprehensive plan for providing late-successional forest on the “checkerboard” lands”. This forest Service proposal is scheduled for completion no later than December 1995.

DATES: Comments concerning the scope and implementation of this proposal must be received by February 20, 1995.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Questions and comments about this EIS should be directed to Floyd J. Rogalski, Project Planner, Cle Elum Ranger District, 803 West Second Street, Cle Elum, Washington 98922; Phone 509-674-4411, ext. 315.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: The Forest Service is initiating this action in response to the Snoqualmie Pass AMA emphasis direction, on page D-16 of the ROD for Amendments to Forest Service and Bureau of Land Management

Planning Documents Within the Range of the Northern Spotted Owl.

The Snoqualmie Pass AMA is a 212,700 acre portion of the North Cascades east of North Bend and west Cle Elum, along Interstate 90. Most of the AMA is within the Wenatchee National Forest. The western portion is within the Mt. Baker-Snoqualmie National Forest. The vegetation in the area varies from cool, moist forest on the westside of the crest to drier, more fire prone forest on the eastside. The most defining characteristic of this AMA is its checkerboard ownership.

Approximately every other square mile is privately owned, even though it is within the National Forest boundary.

Issues that have been identified to date include: (1) Provision of late-successional forest and connectivity in an area where much of the land belongs to private companies; (2) the fact that the I-90 highway corridor acts as a barrier to the movement of plants and animals; (3) the need to create an environment where communities and agencies can work together to develop an innovative management approach.

The proposed action is to adopt the Standards and Guidelines for the Late-Successional Reserves and Riparian Reserves from the ROD for Amendments to Forest Service and Bureau of Land Management Planning Documents Within the Range of the Northern Spotted Owl.

The plan will focus on Late-successional characteristics and riparian guidelines, deferring to the Mt. Baker-Snoqualmie and Wenatchee Land and Resource Management Plans on other issues such as recreation and wilderness management. The decision to be made is what standards and guidelines, if any, to adopt for the management of late-successional and riparian habitat in the Snoqualmie Pass Adaptive Management Area.

Alternatives to the proposed action that we have identified at this time include: (1) No Action; and (2) Developing another scientifically credible plan(s) that meets the emphasis of the Snoqualmie Pass Adaptive Management Area. Other alternatives will be developed in response to issues identified during the scoping process for the EIS. All alternatives will need to respond to specific conditions in the Snoqualmie Pass area.

Public participation will be especially important at several points during the analysis. The Forest Service will be seeking information, comments, and assistance from Federal, State, and local agencies, and other individuals or organizations who may be interested in

or affected by the proposed action. The scoping process includes:

1. Identifying potential issues;
2. Identifying issues to be analyzed in depth;
3. Eliminating insignificant issues or those which have been covered by a relevant previous environmental process;
4. Exploring and identifying additional alternatives.
5. Identifying potential environmental effects of the proposed action and alternatives (i.e. direct, indirect, and cumulative effects and connected actions); and
6. Determining potential cooperating agencies and task assignments.

Public meetings will be held in both eastern and western Washington. Notice of meeting dates and locations will be published in the newspapers of record for the Wenatchee and Mt. Baker-Snoqualmie National Forests. These include the Seattle Post-intelligencer, Wenatchee World, and Yakima Herald Republic. The February 15th meeting will be a Scientist's Forum and will focus on scientific aspects of the AMA. The scoping meetings are planned to be held as follows.

January 31, 1995—7 to 9 p.m., North Bend Ranger Station, 42404 SE North Bend Way, North Bend, WA, Phone: 202-888-1421

February 9, 1995—7 to 9 p.m., Cle Elum Ranger Station, 803 West Second St., Cle Elum, WA, Phone: 509-674-4411

February 8, 1995—7 to 9 p.m., White River Ranger Station, 857 Roosevelt Ave. East, Enumclaw, WA, Phone: 206-825-6585

February 15, 1995—10 a.m. to 3 p.m., North Bend Ranger Station, 42404 SE North Bend Way, North Bend, WA, Phone: 206-888-1421.

The draft EIS is expected to be filed with the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and to be available for public review by October 1995. At that time, copies of the draft EIS will be distributed to interested and affected agencies, organizations, and members of the public for their review and comment. The comment period on the draft EIS will be 45 days from the date of the EPA Notice of Availability as published in the **Federal Register**. It is very important that those interested in the management of the Wenatchee and the Mt. Baker-Snoqualmie National Forests participate at that time.

To assist the Forest Service in identifying the considering issues and concerns on the proposed action, comments on the draft EIS should be as specified as possible. It is also helpful if comments refer to specific pages or