agency's estimate of burden including the validity of the methodology and assumptions used; (3) ways to enhance the quality, utility and clarity of the information to be collected; or (4) ways to minimize the burden of collection on those who are to respond, including the use of appropriate automated, electronic, mechanical, or other technological collection techniques or other forms of informational technology. Comments regarding this information collection requirement should be directed to the Office of Information and Regulatory Affairs, Office of Management and Budget, Attention: Desk Officer for Agriculture, Washington, DC 20503, and to Diane Sharp, Director, Production, Emergencies, and Compliance Division, Farm Service Agency, United States Department of Agriculture, STOP 0517, Room 4754-South Building, 1400 Independence Avenue, SW, Washington, DC 20250–0517.

All responses to this notice will be summarized and included in the request for OMB approval. All comments also will become a matter of public record.

Signed at Washington, D.C., on March 24, 1999.

Parks Shackelford,

Acting Administrator, Farm Service Agency, and Acting Executive Vice President, Commodity Credit Corporation.

[FR Doc. 99–7873 Filed 3–31–99; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 3410–05–P

DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Forest Service

Significant Amendment of the Land and Resource Management Plan of the Ouachita National Forest for Managing Approximately 111,580 Acres of Acquired Lands in McCurtain County, OK

AGENCY: Forest Service, USDA.

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

SUMMARY: Pursuant to 16 U.S.C. 1604(f)(4), the Forest Service will prepare an environmental impact statement (EIS) for the decision to amend the Land and Resource Management Plan (Forest Plan) for the Ouachita National Forest. Comments should focus specifically on the preliminary proposal described below and on possible alternatives.

The current Forest Plan, which provides programmatic guidance for management of the Ouachita National Forest, was implemented in 1986 and subsequently has been amended 30 times (including a significant amendment in 1990 that resulted in the publication of a new Forest Plan.) As many as six primary decisions may be made in the amendment described in this notice: (a) Modification of forest-wide goals, objectives, standards, and/or guidelines (if needed); (b) allocation of lands and waters to management areas; (c) identification of lands suitable for timber production; (d) re-determination of forest-wide allowable sale quantity (ASQ) (if needed); (e) identification of lands suitable and potentially available for cattle grazing; and (f) determination of the eligibility and suitability of the Glover and Mountain Fork Rivers for possible Congressional designation under the National Wild and Scenic River System (NWSRS).

Significant amendments to Forest Plans follow the same procedures required for the development and approval of forest plans (36 CFR part 219.10(f)), including completion of an EIS. The Forest Service determined that the amendment discussed in this notice will be significant because (a) it will establish goals, objectives, management areas, standards, and guidelines for a block of approximately 111,580 acres of acquired lands newly added to the National Forest System (the ''Broken Bow unit'') and (b) as a result of allocating these lands to management areas, this amendment may change the overall desired future condition of the Ouachita National Forest. An EIS is also needed because the analysis conducted during the amendment process may result in a recommendation to Congress concerning possible additions to the NWSRS.

As part of the overall effort to ensure that treaty rights are honored and responsibilities to American Indian Tribes are met, the Forest Service will consult and exchange information routinely with affected and interested Tribes on a government-to-government basis throughout this amendment process. The Forest Service will also work closely with local governments, State and Federal agencies, and elected officials.

The environmental analysis and decision-making process will include the following opportunities for public participation and comment:

Estimated date	Step	Public involvement
Late March 1999	Publish formal Notice of Intent (with preliminary proposal).	30-day formal comment period; Newsletter; press releases, Web site.
Mid-May 1999	Summarize issues in response to the proposal and amendment.	Workshop Newsletter, Web page update.
By mid-June 1999	Develop alternatives	Mailing, Web page update; Workshop and informal meetings, if needed.
July 1999	Issue draft EIS	Invite public comment; 90-day formal review; Workshop and informal meetings; Newsletter, press releases, Web site update.
December 1999	Issue amendment and EIS	Newsletter, press releases, Web site update.

The Forest Service will meet with interested groups, organizations, and individuals to discuss the proposed amendment. The agency will also host at least one workshop in McCurtain County, Oklahoma, to present and clarify the preliminary proposal, describe ways the public can participate in the process, and accept comments from the public on the proposal for amending the Forest Plan. The Forest Service will also consider comments received at any time during the amendment process.

Following the publication of this Notice of Intent (NOI), a draft EIS will be prepared and published. The draft EIS will include a preferred alternative with specific language to amendment the Forest Plan. This preferred alternative will be developed based on issues that are raised in response to the preliminary proposal presented in this NOI. The Forest Service will then again actively seek information, comments, and assistance from Federal, State and local agencies and from individuals and organizations that may be interested in or affected by the preferred alternative in the draft EIS. It is very important that

those interested in this proposal participate at that time.

DATES: Comments responding to this Notice of Intent (NOI) should be received in writing (electronic mail acceptable) by April 30, 1999. The draft EIS should be available for public review in July 1999. The comment period for the draft EIS will commence on the day the Environmental Protection Agency publishes the Notice of Availability in the **Federal Register.** After a comment period of 90 days, the Final EIS and Forest Plan Amendment should be completed by December 1999.

ADDRESSES: Send written comments concerning this Notice to: Plan Amendment, Ouachita National Forest, P.O. Box 1270, Hot Springs, AR 71902, for send electronic mail to: <mcit/r8__ouachita@fs.fed.us>

All comments received about the Forest Plan amendment, including the names and addresses of those who comment, will be considered part of the public record concerning this proposed action and will be available for public inspection. Comments submitted anonymously will be accepted and considered; however, those who submit anonymous comments will not have standing to appeal the subsequent decision under 36 CFR part 217.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: John Cleeves, Forest Planner, Ouachita National Forest, (501) 321–5251; or Bill Pell, Acting Team Leader for Planning and Recreation, (501) 321–5320; TDD (501) 321–5307.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

Purpose and Need To Amend the Forest Plan (Why Is the Forest Service Proposing To Amend the Ouachita National Forest Plan?

In November 1996, approximately 111,300 acres were added to the Ouachita National Forest in the north-central portion of McCurtain County, Oklahoma, as a result of a major land exchange. Approximately 28,093 acres of land in the southeastern corner of the county were subtracted from the National Forest System at the same time. As part of this land exchange, the Forest Service also acquired lands in Le Flore County, Oklahoma and several Arkansas counties and disposed of additional National Forest System lands in Arkansas. Lands added to the Ouachita National Forest in these counties were addressed in Amendment 30 to the Forest Plan. The amendment described in this NOI deals only with lands acquired in McCurtain County. (In addition to lands acquired through the exchange, the Ouachita National Forest purchased approximately 280 acres that are now included in the Broken Bow unit.)

The Federal legislation that authorized the land exchange (Omnibus Parks and Public Lands Management Act of 1996) specified that the Forest Service would manage these acquired lands and waters (here and in other counties) under the forestwide standards and guidelines in the existing Forest Plan until the acquired lands were incorporated in the Plan through a formal amendment process. The legislation further stipulated that the Forest Service would initiate the process to incorporate these lands and waters in the Forest Plan within 12 months after the exchange was completed. (An interdisciplinary team was formed and work began within the prescribed 12-month period.) The purpose of this amendment, then, is to establish the goals, objectives, management areas, standards, and guidelines under which the acquired lands in question will be managed.

Topics To Be Addressed (What Topics Will Be Addressed in the Forest Plan Amendment and How Were They Determined?)

Forest Plans provide programmatic frameworks for decision-making on each National Forest. Each Plan sets forth goals, objectives, advisable courses of action, and limitations to actions. These advisable courses and limitations to actions are called standards and guidelines. Some standards and guidelines apply forestwide. Others apply only to specific subdivisions of the National Forest called Management Areas. The National Forest Management Act and associated agency regulations (36 CFR part 219.10(f)) provide direction for amendment Forest Plans.

To set the stage for this amendment, the Forest Service developed a preliminary list of topics likely to be relevant to the decision-making process. This list was based on a review of legal requirements; current conditions in the Broken Bow unit, including social, cultural, economic, and environmental factors; and public interest. The interdisciplinary team also considered the results of monitoring and evaluation activities, Forest Plan and project level appeal issues and decisions, lawsuit issues and decisions, new scientific information, changing public demands, and Forest Service direction concerning ecosystem management and the Natural Resource Agenda. This amendment will address the following broad topics, among others: Recreation; Off-Road Vehicles; Threatened, Endangered, and Sensitive Species; Transportation System; Roadless Areas; Timber Suitability and Allowable Sale Quantity; Wild and Scenic Rivers; Range (cattle grazing) and Vegetation Patterns.

The Forest Service has prepared a brief discussion paper for each amendment topic. These papers (available at www.fs.fed.us/oonf/mccurtain/papers2.htm) define topics in the context of related Forest Plan decisions to be made, the existing situation on the Broken bow unit, and current Forest Plan direction. The proposal described later in this Notice is an attempt to integrate the concerns and opportunities presented by each of the broad topics summarized below.

Recreation: Public interest in enhancing recreation and tourism opportunities in southeastern Oklahoma was a strong factor in local and State support for the land exchange. Among the prominent features of the Broken Bow unit are 10 miles of the Mountain Fork River, more than 14 miles of the Glover River, proximity to the 14,000-acre Broken Bow lake, steep forested ridges, large areas of pine plantations, and an extensive road network. Rugged topography, natural stands of oak and pine, and lack of road access on the northwest, north, and east sides of the lake contrast with less severe topography, extensive pine plantations, and many miles of low standard roads on the west. These lands and waters offer a great variety of recreational opportunities.

Places of high visual sensitivity include those within the view of heavily traveled roads and trails, recreation areas, and other scenic vistas in the area. The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers manages Broken Bow Lake and much of its shoreline. The Oklahoma Tourism and Recreation Department and the Oklahoma Department of Wildlife Conservation manage other parts of the shoreline (some under lease arrangement with the Corps) and portions of the uplands around the lake, including McCurtain County Wilderness Area, which is nearly surrounded by National Forest land.

The general area already receives considerable recreation use from local residents and many people who travel from Texas, elsewhere in Oklahoma, and other states. Dallas/Ft. Worth, Tulsa, and Oklahoma City are within a half-day's drive of these lands. People are attracted to the area for its natural settings on both public and timber industry lands and for the various recreation facilities currently available. Beaver's Bend-Hochatown State Park, located on the west shore of the lake, is one of the most popular parks in Oklahoma; a Corps recreation area (managed by the State of Oklahoma) on

the lower Mountain Fork River provides an additional draw. Facilities at these State and Federal recreation areas include 8 campgrounds with nearly 400 campsites, the 40-room Lakeview Lodge, a nature/education center, 47 cabins, picnic and swimming areas, a marina, numerous boat launching ramps, a system of hiking trails, and a golf course.

Broken Bow Lake is a major attraction for fishing and boating enthusiasts. The lower part of the Mountain Fork is a stocked trout fishery, and the Glover River is considered the finest smallmouth bass fishery in Oklahoma. Both the Glover and Mountain Fork Rivers receive considerable use by anglers and floaters.

Off-road Vehicles: ORV use is a popular activity on the acquired lands, which have a high density of low standard roads that provide access to thousands of acres of pine plantations. These roads have traditionally been open to ORV riding (when they were in private ownership). However, current Oklahoma State law prohibits ORV riding on public roads, including National Forest roads. Because of the rugged terrain north and east of the lake and low road density, ORV use there is probably restricted to the road system and lake access points. Little is known about the extent or nature of any resource damage due to ORV use in the area. Some members of the public support allowing continued ORV use in the area; others would like to see some restrictions, such as limiting cross-country travel to that necessary to transport game.

Threatened, Endangered, Sensitive Species: Another selling point for the land exchange was that it would offer enhanced opportunities for conservation of threatened, endangered, and sensitive species on public lands, particularly in McCurtain County, Oklahoma. For starters, the sections of the Mountain Fork and Glover Rivers and their tributaries within the Broken Bow unit contain some of the richest aquatic faunas in Oklahoma, including populations of the threatened leopard darter (*Percina pantherina*), several species the Forest Service lists as ''sensitive'' or as candidates for listing as sensitive, and important sport fishes. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service has designated portions of the two rivers as Critical Habitat for the leopard darter.

The red-cockaded woodpecker (*Picoides borealis*) occurs in the McCurtain County Wilderness Area, which is owned by the state of Oklahoma and managed by the Oklahoma Department of Wildlife Conservation. This endangered species has been observed foraging on adjacent National Forest land but is not known to nest there. The Nature Conservancy found four sites showing evidence of occupation or offering prime habitat for red-cockaded woodpeckers during a 1995 ecological assessment of what are now national forest lands: Locust Mountain, Hee Mountain, Little White Oak Mountain, and Five Mile Hollow.

The endangered peregrine falcon (*Falco peregrinus anatum*) has been observed near Brokem Bow Lake as a transient during migration. There is a high probability that this species roosts on National Forest land near the lake. The threatened bald eagle (*Haliaeetus leucocephalus*) uses habitat along the Mountain Fork River in the vicinity of Broken Bow Lake in the winter, roosting on the National Forest. Based on recent summer observations, biologists suspect that bald eagles may also nest in the vicinity.

Another federally listed species that may occur in the Broken Bow unit is the endangered American burying beetle (*Nicrophorus americanus*). Due to the similarity of habitat types present on these lands to occupied habitats elsewhere on the National Forest, there is potential for this species to occur in the Broken Bow unit. Several other sensitive species occur within the unit. See the topic paper concerning Terrestrial Threatened, Endangered, and Sensitive Species for further information.

Transportation System: The acquired lands include an extensive road network that was developed by Weyerhaeuser Company for intensive timber management. The roads and associated drainage structures vary considerably in width, design standards, and general condition. An inventory of the existing roads on the Broken Bow unit identified about 566 miles on National Forest land (a road density of 3.26 miles per square mile).

Roadless Areas: The Forest Service maintains inventories of land areas that have few or no permanent roads. During Forest Plan revision, the agency conducts a public review of options for all ''roadless areas,'' and one or more of these areas could eventually be recommended to Congress for wilderness designation. It is important to note that no wilderness determination will be made during the Forest Plan amendment process.

Areas of National Forest land that appear to fit current Forest Service criteria for roadless character are the 7,356-acre Ashford Peak area on the east side of Broken Bow Lake and the 7,285-acre Bee Mountain area on the west side of the lake. Weyerhaeuser reserved oil and gas rights until the year 2041 on the Ashford Peak area and on a small portion of the Bee Mountain area; all minerals are outstanding on the bulk of Bee Mountain. Reserved or outstanding mineral rights do not necessarily disqualify an area from being ''roadless,'' especially if mineral rights are obtainable and/or there is no surface occupancy or development. Currently no development exists in either area. The State-owned McCurtain County Wilderness Area lies in the northern part of the block of National Forest lands under consideration here.

Vegetation Patterns: Based on analysis of satellite imagery from May 1998, the team estimated that there are about 61,600 acres where pines predominate the forest canopy and at lest 46,000 where hardwoods predominate. Roads and other nonforested conditions occupy about 4,000 acres. More than half of the pine-dominated acreage consists of loblolly pine plantations less than 30 years old; the remainder consists of more natural forest cover in which shortleaf pines predominate. The pine plantations average 110 acres in size, but several exceed 200 acres. As more detailed, ground-based forest inventories are completed, these estimates will be refined. The team recognizes that many members of the public are concerned about conserving hardwood trees and conserving or restoring older forests and woodlands of all kinds.

Timber Suitability and Allowable Sale Quantity (ASQ): Timber management on the Ouachita National Forest is designed to perpetuate native forests, sustain habitat for viable populations of native plants and animals (including sensitive species), protect water quality and aesthetic values, yield valuable timber products, and support local economic activity. National Forest lands ''suitable'' for timber production (as one element of their management) are those that are physically and legally capable of supporting timber harvests and timber regeneration activities on a regulated and sustained basis. The ASQ is the volume of timber that may be sold annually from the ''suitable'' lands covered by the Forest Plan. Prior to the exchange, the suitable land base was approximately 994,000 acres, and the ASQ was 29.2 million cubic feet (144 million board feet).

The Broken Bow unit includes a mix of cutover lands, loblolly pine plantations, and mixed pine-hardwood stands of varying densities and age classes, while the portions of the Tiak tract traded to Weyerhaeuser consisted mainly of well-stocked sawtimber stands on highly productive coastal

plain sites. These changes in the National Forest land base may result in a change of lands suitable for timber harvest and the corresponding ASQ.

Wild and Scenic Rivers: River eligibility studies are carried out in accordance with the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act and the Final Revised Guidelines for Eligibility, Classification, and Management of River Areas (Federal Register 9/7/82) of the U.S. Department of the Interior and the U.S. Department of Agriculture. To be eligible for inclusion in the National Wild and Scenic Rivers System, a river must be free flowing and have one or more outstanding remarkable scenic, recreational, geological, fish and wildlife, archeological/historical, or other features. The planning team has conducted eligibility studies for portions of the Glover and Mountain Fork Rivers.

Range (cattle grazing): Cattle grazing is a traditional use of the acquired lands that developed over many years when the lands were in private ownership. This activity and land use is a source of income for some local cattle owners. Cattle grazing has long been recognized as one of the important multiple uses of National Forest land when managed in a way that ensures protection of ecological values.

Curently 19 individuals have temporary permits to use portions of the acquired lands to graze about 1,000 head of cattle. (These permittees had grazing permits with Weyerhaeuser for these lands prior to the exchange.) Many of these are ''on/off'' permits, with the cattle grazing freely between private lands and National Forest lands. The majority of National Forest lands are included in the permit areas, but most of the grazing occurs on roadsides and in young plantations that have not reached crown closure. There are few fences on the property lines.

While some of the following additional topics will be discussed in the draft EIS, no specific decisions concerning them will be made in this amendment:

1. Location of grazing allotments, identification of individual grazing permittees, or specific conditions for grazing (such as number of animals allowed, permitted use periods, range improvements).
2. Project-level decisions such as construction of recreation facilities (e.g., trails or campgrounds) and identification of individual timber sales or road closures.
3. Level of funding the county will receive in any given year from ''25 percent returns.'' (The Forest Service annually returns 25 percent of all gross revenues to counties with National Forest lands; the EIS will discuss the possible effects of the Forest Plan decisions on 25 percent returns.)
4. Ecological restoration of native forests in loblolly pine plantations. (Restoration will be the subject of another Forest Plan amendment.)
5. Relationships with neighboring landowners (including road easements and property lines).
6. Community development. (The Forest Service supports community development activities and recognizes that Forest Plan decisions may influence development opportunities and quality of life in local communities. The draft EIS will examine possible economic and social impacts to local communities and at a broader regional level.)

Preliminary Proposal

The Forest Service has prepared a preliminary proposal to address the six primary decisions and now seeks comments on this proposal. Comments received will be used to develop alternatives to the preliminary proposal.

(1) Modification of forest-wide goals, objectives, standards, and/or guidelines (if needed): The Forest Service does not believe that such modifications are warranted at this time. In other words, the preliminary proposal is to manage the acquired lands in the Broken Bow unit under the current forest-wide goals and objectives of the Forest Plan.

(2) Allocation of lands and waters to management areas: Allocate the approximately 111,580 acres of the Broken Bow unit as described below. (Unless noted otherwise, Management Area numbers refer to those in the current Forest Plan.). All acreage estimates are subject to change on the basis of future site-specific analysis and planning. Items (a) through (d) describe the Management Area allocations that can be readily displayed at the scale of a Forest map. Items (e) through (j) describe those Management Areas that cannot be displayed on a Forest map scale. A map displaying the four allocations (Management Areas 20, 22, and 23 and ''General Forest'') is available for public review at 100 Reserve Street, Federal Building, Second Floor, Hot Springs, Arkansas and on the Internet at: *www.fs.fed.us/oonf/mccurtain/*.

(a) General Forest (typically a combination of Management Areas 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, and 18, but may also include others): approximately 29,885 acres. Management Area 14 (Lands Suitable for Timber Production, Ouachita Mountains) usually is the most prominent in this mix of Management Areas. This area includes lands of moderate to low productivity (e.g., site indices are at least 50 for shortleaf pine and 60 for hardwoods) that have not been assigned to more restrictive Management Areas. Much of the timber produced on the Ouachita National Forest comes from Management Area 14, but these lands also help meet vital wildlife habitat, watershed protection, and recreation needs.

(b) Management Area 20—Wild and Scenic River Corridors: approximately 6,735 acres (all unsuitable for timber production). Management Area 20 consists of corridors of rivers eligible or potentially eligible for inclusion in the National Wild and Scenic Rivers System. Within the Broken Bow unit, segments of the Mountain Fork and Glover Rivers would be included in this Management Area.

(c) Management Area 22-Shortleaf Pine-Bluestem Renewal and Red-Cockaded Woodpecker Habitat Management Area: approximately 51,110 acres (including lands suitable and unsuitable for timber production). Management Area 22 includes National Forest lands that historically provided or currently provide nesting and/or foraging habitat for the red-cockaded woodpecker and that are dedicated to renewal of the shortleaf pine-bluestem grass ecosystem. Forest management activities include periodic thinning, prescribed fire, and regeneration by the two-aged shelterwood method. No actions would be taken that would diminish the roadless characteristics of inventoried roadless areas within this Management Area.

(d) Management Area 23 (new to the Forest Plan)—Broken Bow Lake (area): approximately 23,850 acres (including lands suitable and unsuitable for timber production). Management Area 23 would include lands that can be seen from the main part of the lake and most other National Forest lands east of Highway 259 and south of the proposed boundary of Management Area 22. The emphasis would be on conserving and enhancing the area's unique combination of recreational,

aesthetic, wildlife habitat, and water quality values and benefits.

The following Management Areas cannot be displayed at the fairly coarse scale of a Forest map. Some of the ones likely to be applied to the Broken Bow Unit by the Forest Plan amendment include:

(e) Management Area 9—Water and Riparian Areas (ponds, lakes, streamside zones, and riparian areas; streamside zones have minimum widths of 100 feet to both sides of perennial streams and 30 feet both sides of all other streams), all considered unsuitable for timber production: approximately 12,600 acres plus approximately 11,550 acres of equivalent streamside management zones in Management Area 22 for a total of approximately 24,150 acres in streamside management zones.

(f) Management Area 10—Nonforest (consists of roads, rights-of-ways, and special uses located within other Management Areas): estimated acres will be supplied in the draft EIS.

(g) Management Area 11—Not Appropriate for Timber Production (lands of low productivity, i.e., 20 to 49 cubic feet of tree growth per acre per year; site index for hardwood generally less than 60 and for pine, less than 50): estimated acres will be supplied in the draft EIS.

(h) Management Area 12—Nonproductive (areas of rock outcrops or shallow soils on which tree growth is less than 20 cubic feet per year): estimated acres will be supplied in the draft EIS.

(i) Management Area 13—Unsuitable Lands Based on Other Resource Coordination (lands unsuitable for timber production that are not included in other Management Areas): estimated acres will be supplied in the draft EIS.

(j) Management Area 18—Visually Sensitive Foreground Areas, Roads and Trails (foreground area along sensitivity level 1 and 2 roads, e.g., major highways and major forest roads, and trails): estimated acres will be supplied in the draft EIS.

(3) Identification of lands suitable for timber production: Based upon an analysis of satellite imagery, slope and soils data, the preliminary assignment of lands and waters to four major Management Areas (described above), and estimates of streamside management zones, the interdisciplinary team estimates that approximately 54,000 acres of the Broken Bow unit may be suitable for timber production. Of these lands, at least 32,000 acres consist of loblolly pine plantations. The disposal of 28,093 acres of coastal plain lands (former portions of the Tiak Ranger District) and the addition of approximately 111,580 acres in the mountainous part of McCurtain County has resulted in an estimated net increase of about 25,750 acres of National Forest land suitable for timber production. Further analysis of timber suitability will be included in the draft EIS.

(4) Re-determination of forest-wide allowable sale quantity (ASQ) (if needed): The land base suitable for timber production for the Ouachita National Forest has increased as a result of the land exchange, but the average timber productivity of the acquired lands in Oklahoma is less than that of the former National Forest lands that are now in private ownership. The interdisciplinary team will conduct analyses to determine the net change, if any, in ASQ.

(5) Identification of lands suitable and potentially available for cattle grazing: Most of the acquired lands appear to be suitable for controlled grazing. The capability of these lands for producing forage for grazing animals will be analyzed and reported in the draft EIS.

(6) Determination of the eligibility and suitability of the Glover and Mountain Fork Rivers for possible congressional designation as Wild and Scenic Rivers: The interdisciplinary team has made a preliminary determination that the portion of the Glover River within National Forest boundaries should be recommended for inclusion in the National Wild and Scenic Rivers System; the team will not recommend the portions of the Mountain Fork River within National Forest boundaries for such inclusion at this time.

Glover River: **Segment I**—19.5 stream miles, beginning at the confluence of East and West Forks, T3S, R23E, Sec. 7, and extending south to the Forest proclamation boundary, T5S, R23E, Sec. 9 (about 0.8 mile downstream from the bridge on road 50000). This segment (and possibly lower portions of Cedar and Carter Creeks) is eligible because the stream is free flowing and has outstandingly remarkable scenic, recreational, fish and wildlife, geological and archaeological/historic values. It qualifies for classification as ''scenic'' because it is free of impoundments, has shorelines or watersheds still largely primitive and shorelines largely undeveloped, and has several access points and road crossings. The Forest Service will complete a report to determine if this segment of the Glover River is suitable for inclusion in the NWSR System. **Segment II**—12.5 stream miles, beginning at the southern limit of the Forest proclamation boundary south to the confluence with Little River. Because this segment of the Glover River is in private ownership and outside the National Forest proclamation boundary, the Forest Service will not conduct an eligibility and suitability study. Such a study would be more appropriately conducted by a State agency.

Mountain Fork River: **Segment I**—15.9 stream miles, including that part of the river from the Oklahoma-Arkansas State line, T1S, R27E, Sec. 3, downstream to the Forest proclamation boundary at the Oklahoma Highway 4 bridge, T1S, R25E, Sec. 24. This segment of the Mountain Fork is entirely in private ownership and outside the National Forest proclamation boundary. The Forest Service will not conduct an eligibility or suitability study of this stretch of river. Such a study would be more appropriately conducted by a State agency. **Segment II**—9.1 miles, including that part of the river from the Forest proclamation boundary at the Oklahoma Highway 4 bridge downstream to the upper end of Broken Bow Lake (600-foot elevation level). This segment is eligible for designation under the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act because it is free flowing and has outstandingly remarkable scenic, recreational, fish and wildlife, geological, and archaeological/historical values. It qualifies as ''scenic'' because it is free of impoundments, has shorelines or watersheds still largely primitive and shorelines largely undeveloped, and has several access points and road crossings. Because of limited National Forest ownership in this segment (2.3 miles), it would be more appropriate for a State agency to complete any further studies. **Segment III**—11.1 stream miles, beginning at the Broken Bow dam and extending downstream to the National Forest proclamation boundary at U.S. Highway 70, T6S,

R26E, Sec. 7. Although containing outstandingly remarkable scenic and recreational values, this segment of river is not considered free flowing and, therefore, is not eligible for inclusion in the NWSRS.

Possible Alternatives

The alternatives briefly summarized below have been discussed by the interdisciplinary team; others will be developed in response to public issues.

(1) Increase extent of Management Area 22. Increase Management Area 22 (renewal of the shortleaf pine-bluestem ecosystem) to encompass more acreage, including most of the land tentatively proposed for allocation to Management Areas 14 and 23.

(2) Establish a single Management Area 23 (Broken Bow Lake Management Area) east of Highway 259, divided into 23a (Habitat Management Area for Red-cockaded Woodpecker) and 23b [lower Lake area] instead of 22 and 23). This alternative would be developed to show a more integrated picture of management direction within the Broken Bow Lake/Mountain Fork River area. Standards and guidelines would change little.

(3) Increase the extent of Management Area 14. Allocate more land to the Management Area that yields most of the wood products from the Ouachita National Forest.

Further Information Concerning Public Comments on the Draft EIS

The Forest Service believes, at this early stage, that 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 comment period so that substantive 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 part 1503.3 in addressing these points.

Responsible Official: The Responsible Official is Elizabeth Estill, Regional Forester, Southern Region of the USDA Forest Service, located at 1720 Peachtree Road, NW, Atlanta, GA 30367.

Dated: March 24, 1999.

George Wayne Kelley,

Deputy Regional Forester.

[FR Doc. 99–8010 Filed 3–31–99; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 3410–11–M

DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Grain Inspection, Packers and Stockyards Administration

Designation for the Central Illinois (IL) Area

AGENCY: Grain Inspection, Packers and Stockyards Administration (GIPSA).

ACTION: Notice.

SUMMARY: GIPSA announces designation of Central Illinois Grain Inspection, Inc. (Central Illinois) to provide official services under the United States Grain Standards Act, as amended (Act).

EFFECTIVE DATE: June 1, 1999.

ADDRESSES: USDA, GIPSA, Janet M. Hart, Chief, Review Branch, Compliance Division, STOP 3604, Room 1647–S, 1400 Independence Avenue, SW, Washington, DC 20250–3604.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Janet M. Hart, at 202–720–8525.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: This action has been reviewed and determined not to be a rule or regulation as defined in Executive Order 12866 and Departmental Regulation 1512–1; therefore, the Executive Order and Departmental Regulation do not apply to this action.

In the October 1, 1998, **Federal Register** (63 FR 52678), GIPSA asked persons interested in providing official services in the geographic area assigned to Central Illinois to submit an application for designation. Applications were due by October 30, 1998. There were two applicants: Central Illinois and Turner Grain Services, Inc. (Turner). Central Illinois applied for designation to provide official services in the entire area currently assigned to them. Turner, currently operating an unofficial grain inspection business not designated by GIPSA under the authority of the Act, applied for designation to provide official services in a portion of the Central Illinois area. Turner applied for the area bounded on the North by Interstate 74; bounded on the East by Interstate 155; bounded on the South by Illinois Route 136; and bounded on the West by the western Tazewell County line, and the western Peoria County line north to Interstate 74.

The October 1, 1998, **Federal Register** also asked for comments on the services provided by Central Illinois. GIPSA did not receive any comments.

In the December 1, 1998, **Federal Register** (63 FR 66118), GIPSA asked for comments on the applicants for the Central Illinois area. GIPSA received two comments by the deadline: both were from grain companies that said they were familiar with the services provided by Central Illinois and Turner, and both supported designation of both organizations.

GIPSA evaluated all available information regarding the designation criteria in Section 7(f)(1)(A) of the Act and, according to Section 7(f)(1)(B), determined that Central Illinois is better able to provide official services in the geographic area for which they applied.

Effective June 1, 1999, and ending May 31, 2002, Central Illinois is designated to provide official services in the Central Illinois geographic area specified in the October 1, 1998, **Federal Register**.

Interested persons may obtain official services by contacting Central Illinois at 309–827–7121.

Authority: Pub. L. 94–582, 90 Stat. 2867, as amended (7 U.S.C. 71 *et seq.*).

Dated: March 17, 1999.

Neil E. Porter,

Director, Compliance Division.

[FR Doc. 99–7995 Filed 3–31–99; 8:45 am]

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