

Dated: May 6, 1998.

Gloria Manning,

Associate Deputy Chief National Forest System.

Ouachita National Forest Boundary Extension

Pursuant to the Secretary of Agriculture's authority under Section 20(d), P.L. 100-499 (102 Stat. 2491), the Ouachita National boundary is hereby extended to include the following lands.

LeFlore County, Oklahoma, Indian Base Meridian

T3N, R26E,

Section 1: North Half of the Southeast Quarter.

Containing 80 acres, more or less.

As provided by P.L. 100-499, the lands described shall be administered by the Secretary of Agriculture in accordance with the Act of March 1, 1911 (36 Stat. 961) and in accordance with the laws, rules, and regulations generally applicable to units of the National Forest System.

Dated: April 17, 1998.

Brian Eliot Burke,

Deputy Under Secretary, Natural Resources and Environment.

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DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Forest Service

Box Canyon, Papoose, and Squaw Creek Timber Sales; Targhee National Forest, Bonneville County, ID

AGENCY: Forest Service, USDA.

ACTION: Notice of intent to prepare environmental impact statement.

SUMMARY: The Forest Supervisor of the Targhee National Forest gives notice of the agency's intent to prepare an environmental impact statement for the Box Canyon, Papoose, and Squaw Creek Timber Sales. The proposed actions would harvest 1.8 million board feet of timber from 600 acres. Three miles of temporary roads would be built. Easement across private property would be required to access the Papoose and Squaw Creek Sales. The Box Canyon timber sale is located three miles south of Irwan, Idaho and the Papoose and Squaw Creek sales are located three miles southwest of Swan Valley, Idaho. Alternatives will include the proposed action, no action, and any alternatives that respond to significant issues generated during the scoping process. A more detailed description is available from the Palisades Ranger District; see **ADDRESSES** below.

DATES: Send written comments and suggestions on the issues concerning the proposed action by June 12, 1998.

ADDRESSES: Send written comments to Richard D. Dickemore, District Ranger, Palisades Ranger District, 3659 East Ririe Highway, Idaho Falls, Idaho 83401.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Dee Sessions, Interdisciplinary Team Leader, phone (208) 624-3151.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: The Targhee National Forest Revised Land Management Plan was approved in 1997. One of the decisions in the revised Plan was to allow for the production and utilization of wood fiber from certain areas of the Forest. The geographic areas where the proposed actions would take place have primarily a prescription of timber management with emphasis on no clear cutting, urban interface fire management (5.1.3b) and elk summer range (5.4c). A prescription for other lands in the area is described below.

Elk and Deer Winter Range (2.7a)—Management emphasis is directed at providing quality elk and deer winter habitat. Habitats are managed for multiple land use benefits, to the extent these land uses are compatible with maintaining or improving elk and deer winter habitat.

Initial public involvement will include mailing maps and project descriptions to interested parties to solicit comments on the proposal. Preliminary issues include: Roadless area, threatened, endangered, and sensitive plant and animal species, recreational traffic, easement across private lands, big game habitat, water quality and aquatic influence zones.

Additional opportunity to comment on the projects will occur on the draft Environmental Impact Statement (draft EIS). The draft EIS is expected to be filed with the Environmental Protection Agency and available for public review in September 1998.

The comment period on the draft EIS will be 45 days from the date the Environmental Protection Agency's notice of availability appears in the **Federal Register**. At the same time, copies of the draft EIS will be distributed to interested and affected agencies, organizations, tribes, and members of the public for their review and comment. It is very important that those interested in the proposed action participate at that time.

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 reviewers' position and contentions. *Vermont Yankee Nuclear Power Corp. v. NRDC*, 435 U.S. 519,553 (1978). Also, environmental objections that could have been raised at the draft 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*, (9th Circuit, 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 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. 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.

The final EIS is scheduled to be completed in December 1998. In the final EIS, the Forest Service is required to respond to comments received during the comment period that pertain to the environmental consequences discussed in the draft EIS and applicable laws, regulations, and policies considered in making the decisions on this proposal.

Responsible Official

Jerry B. Reese, Forest Supervisor, is the responsible official. As responsible official, he will document the selected alternative for the Box Canyon, Papoose, and Squaw Creek Timber Sales EIS and his rationale in a Record of Decision.

The decision for the Box Canyon, Papoose, and Squaw Creek Timber Sales project will be subject to Forest Service Appeal Regulations (36 FR part 215).

Dated: May 6, 1998.

Jerry B. Reese,

Forest Supervisor.

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