

## Determination

As required by section 126(b) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1954, as amended, I have examined the authorizing legislation, regulations, and operating procedures regarding the Mill and Deer Creeks Water Exchange Projects. In accordance with the criteria set out in 7 CFR Part 14, I have determined that all program payments for implementation of these projects made under the Delta Pumps Fish Protection Agreement are primarily for the purposes of protecting or restoring the environment and providing a habitat for wildlife. Subject to further determination by the Secretary of the Treasury, this determination permits program payment recipients to exclude from gross income, for Federal income tax purposes, all part of such program payments made under said project.

Signed at Washington, D.C. on February 5, 1999.

**Dan Glickman,**

*Secretary, United States Department of Agriculture.*

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## DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

### Agricultural Marketing Service

[Docket #AMS-OA-99-1]

#### Notice of a Public Meeting of the USDA Research and Promotion (R&P) Task Force

**AGENCY:** Agricultural Marketing Service, USDA.

**ACTION:** Notice.

**SUMMARY:** Pursuant to the Secretary of Agriculture's formation of an interagency R&P Task Force in December 1998, the task force announces a forthcoming meeting with all R&P Boards, their staffs, primary contractors, and other interested parties.

**DATES:** March 8, 1999 at 8:15 a.m. to 4:15 p.m.; and March 9, 1999 at 8:30 a.m. to 4:00 p.m., Eastern Standard Time (EST), in Room 107A Whitten Bldg, USDA Headquarters, 14th and Independence Ave, Washington, D.C. 20250.

#### FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:

Barbara Robinson, Staff Director, Room 3069 South Bldg, U.S. Department of Agriculture, AMS, OA, Washington, D.C. 20250; telephone (202) 720-4276; fax (202) 690-3967; email: Barbara\_C\_Robinson@usda.gov.

**SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:** The agenda of the meeting will follow a structure that includes 45 minutes of

discussion with each board; a list of topics that the R&P task force would like to discuss with boards is included below. Boards are requested to call and schedule specific time on the agenda for discussion with the task force. Slotted times are available by contacting Dr. Barbara Robinson at the telephone listed above. Other interested parties are welcome to address these same topics in their oral statements, or in written statements sent to the above address. Media may attend, but may not request time for oral statements. Interested parties must call Dr. Robinson, in order to schedule oral statements not to exceed five (5) minutes before the task force on the afternoon of March 9, commencing at approximately 1 p.m. Oral statements will be accommodated on a "first come-first serve basis," and will not extend beyond the scheduled adjournment time of 4:00 p.m. on March 9, 1999. Any party may submit written statements within 30 days of publication of this notice in the **Federal Register**, to: Dr. Barbara Robinson/ AMS/ Room 3069 South Bldg/Washington, D.C. 20250 or, via electronic mail to: Barbara\_C\_Robinson@usda.gov.

#### Selected Topics To Discuss at March 8-9 Meeting

1. Nominations Procedures—methods to ensure that nominations are solicited from the broadest groups for board representation; reaching out to a diverse group of members, such as limited resource/small/minority producers, handlers, importers, public consumer representatives, minorities, etc.

2. Continuance Referendum Procedures—most programs require that calls for referenda must occur with some specified percentage of signatures. In some cases volume thresholds are also used. Are the procedures/thresholds adequate to ensure that programs have majority support? Some programs call for automatic referenda on a periodic basis (e.g., every two years)—should there be consistent procedures across all programs? What is the best way to ensure that there is continued support for programs?

3. Financial Management Issues: two areas of discussion here might be in: 1) the areas of financial controls, reviews, and audit procedures by Boards—are there consistent procedures used across the boards; relatedly, are there sufficient enforcement authorities to boards to ensure proper financial controls, or to ensure prompt payment of assessments; 2) the role of USDA in overseeing financial management by boards, and audits by USDA—can USDA be of better, more effective assistance in this

area, to minimize problems with boards' financial management? How?

4. Other Items \* \* \* e.g., evaluation of effectiveness—how do boards ensure that their paying members (as well as the public, in some cases) are knowledgeable about the use of funds, and the effectiveness of promotion and research activities carried out by boards? Can USDA be of more assistance here? E.g., do boards engage in publishing their accomplishments, plans, or use such means as focus groups to solicit input and demonstrate planned activities and intended accomplishments?

Dated: February 19, 1999.

**Kenneth C. Clayton,**

*Acting Administrator, Agricultural Marketing Service.*

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## DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

### Forest Service

#### Middle Fork John Day Range Planning on the Long Creek/Bear Valley and Prairie City Ranger Districts, Malheur National Forest, Grant County, Oregon

**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 update range management planning on 8 livestock (cattle and horse) grazing allotments and three (3) administrative use pastures which will result in the development of new Allotment Management Plans (AMPs). The allotments are called Austin, Bear Creek, Camp Creek, Lower Middle Fork, Elk, Blue Mountain, Upper Middle Fork on the Long Creek/Bear Valley Ranger District, and Sullens on the Prairie City Ranger District of the Malheur National Forest. The administrative use pastures are called Sunshine, Bear Creek and Blue Mountain. The range planning area is located approximately 20 to 25 air miles north and east of John Day, Oregon. The allotments, combined, are called the Middle Fork John Day Range Planning Area. Small portions of the Umatilla and Wallowa-Whitman National Forest System lands that are within the allotments, will also be considered in the proposal. Management actions are planned to be implemented beginning in the year 2000. The agency gives notice of the full environmental analysis and decision-making process that will occur on the proposal so that interested