

of Decision (ROD) will explain the Responsible Official's decision regarding whether or not to implement some level of timber harvest and other proposed activities on all, part, or none of the area analyzed, given the consideration of multiple-use goals and objectives.

Scoping Process

This notice of intent initiates the scoping process, which guides the development of the environmental impact statement. The Forest invites public comment and participation in this project by publication of this notice. Comments are also invited by: publication in the quarterly Schedule of Proposed Actions (SOPA); public notice regarding this project in the newspaper of record, the Valley Courier; and letters to potentially interested individuals, tribal governments, elected officials, and State and other Federal Agencies. Information will also be posted on the Rio Grande National Forest project Web site as this project progresses. Comments received during these and other scoping efforts will be considered in this EIS. No scoping meetings are planned at this time.

Comments received in response to this solicitation, including names and addresses of those who comment, will be part of the public record for this proposed action. Comments submitted anonymously will be accepted and considered; however anonymous comments will not provide the Agency with the ability to provide the respondent with subsequent environmental documents.

Preliminary Issues

The effect of proposed activities on the habitat structural needs of the local population of Canada Lynx, a Threatened species, and their primary prey, the snowshoe hare.

Comment Requested

The comment period on the draft environmental impact statement will be 45 days from the date the Environmental Protection Agency publishes the notice of availability in the **Federal Register**.

The Forest Service believes, at this early state, 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 positions 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 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 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 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 1503.3 in addressing these points.

Dated: February 24, 2016.

Andrea Jones,
District Ranger.

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DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Grain Inspection, Packers and Stockyards Administration

Designation for the Casa Grande, AZ; Jamestown, ND; Lincoln, NE; Memphis, TN; and Sioux City, IA Areas

AGENCY: Grain Inspection, Packers and Stockyards Administration, USDA.

ACTION: Notice.

SUMMARY: GIPSA is announcing the designation of Farwell Commodity Grain Services, Inc. (Farwell Southwest); Grain Inspection, Inc. (Jamestown); Lincoln Inspection Service, Inc. (Lincoln); Midsouth Grain Inspection Service (Midsouth); and Sioux City Grain Inspection and Weighing Service, Inc. (Sioux City) to provide official services under the

United States Grain Standards Act (USGSA), as amended.

DATES: *Effective:* April 1, 2015

ADDRESSES: Eric J. Jabs, Deputy Director, USDA, GIPSA, FGIS, QACD, 10383 North Ambassador Drive, Kansas City, MO 64153

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Eric J. Jabs, 816-659-8408 or *Eric.J.Jabs@usda.gov*.

Read Applications: All applications and comments are available for public inspection at the office above during regular business hours (7 CFR 1.27(c)).

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: In the October 14, 2014, **Federal Register** (79 FR 61596), GIPSA requested applications for designation to provide official services in the geographic areas presently serviced by Farwell Southwest, Jamestown, Lincoln, Midsouth, and Sioux City. Applications were due by November 13, 2014.

The current official agencies- Farwell Southwest, Jamestown, Lincoln, Midsouth, and Sioux City were the only applicants for designation to provide official services in these areas. As a result, GIPSA did not ask for additional comments. On January 2, 2015, subsequently, Sioux City purchased Central Iowa Grain Inspection Corporation (Central Iowa) and Sioux City asked GIPSA to amend their designation to include Central Iowa's geographic area. GIPSA reviewed the proposed amendment and determined that Sioux City met all of the requirements specified in 7 CFR 800.196(f)(2) to amend their geographical area.

GIPSA evaluated the designation criteria in section 79(f) of the USGSA (7 U.S.C. 79(f)) and determined that Farwell Southwest, Jamestown, Lincoln, and Midsouth are qualified to provide official services in the geographic area specified in the **Federal Register** on October 14, 2014. This designation to provide official services in the specified areas for Jamestown, Lincoln, and Midsouth is effective April 1, 2015, to March 31, 2018. This designation action to provide official services in the specified areas for Farwell Southwest is effective April 1, 2015, to March 31, 2017.

Sioux City's designation is amended to include the additional geographic area previously designated to Central Iowa. Sioux City's designation for the following amended geographical area is effective April 1, 2015, to March 31, 2017.

Sioux City

Pursuant to Section 79(f)(2) of the United States Grain Standards Act, the

following geographic area, in the States of Iowa, Minnesota, Nebraska, and South Dakota, is assigned to this official agency.

In Iowa

Bounded on the North by the northern Iowa State line from the Big Sioux River east to U.S. Route 169.

Bounded on the East by U.S. Route 169 south to State Route 9; State Route 9 west to U.S. Route 169; U.S. Route 169 south to the northern Humboldt County line; the Humboldt County line east to State Route 17; State Route 17 south to C54; C54 east to U.S. route 69; U.S. Route 69 south to the northern Hamilton County line; northern Hamilton County line east to Interstate 35; Interstate 35 northeast to C55; C55 east to S41; S41 north to State Route 3; State Route 3 to east U.S. Route 65; U.S. Route 65 north to C25; C25 east to S56; S56 north to C23; C23 east to T47; T47 south to C33; C33 east to T64; T64 north to B60; B60 east to U.S. Route 218; U.S. Route 218 north to Chickasaw County; the western Chickasaw County line; and the western and northern Howard County lines.

Bounded on the East by the Eastern Howard and Chickasaw County lines; the eastern and southern Bremer County lines; V49 south to State Route 297; State Route 297 south to D38; D38 west

to State Route 21; State Route 21 south to State Route 8; State Route 8 west to U.S. Route 63; U.S. Route 63 south to Interstate 80; Interstate 80 east to the Poweshiek County line; the eastern Poweshiek, Mahaska, Monroe, and Appanoose County lines;

Bounded on the South by the southern Appanoose, Wayne, Decatur, Ringgold, and Taylor County lines.

Bounded on the West by the western Taylor County line; the southern Montgomery County line west to State Route 48; State Route 48 north to M47; M47 north to the Montgomery County line; the northern Montgomery County line; The western Cass and Audubon County Lines; the northern Audubon County line east to U.S. Route 71; U.S. Route 71 north to the southern Sac and Ida County lines; the eastern Monona County line south to State Route 37; State Route 37 west to State Route 175; State Route 175 west to the Missouri River; and by the Missouri River north to the Big Sioux River; the Big Sioux River north to the northern Iowa State line.

In Minnesota

Yellow Medicine, Renville, Lincoln, Lyon, Redwood, Pipestone, Murray, Cottonwood, Rock, Nobles, Jackson, and Martin Counties.

In Nebraska

Cedar, Dakota, Dixon, Pierce (north of U.S. Route 20), and Thurston Counties.

In South Dakota

Bounded on the North by State Route 44 (U.S. 18) east to State Route 11; State Route 11 south to A54B; A54B east to the Big Sioux River.

Bounded on the East by the Big Sioux River.

Bounded on the South and West by the Missouri River.

The following grain elevators are part of this geographic area assignment. In D. R. Schaal Agency's area: Maxyield Coop, Algona, Kossuth County; Stateline Coop, Burt, Kossuth County; Gold-Eagle, Goldfield, Wright County; North Central Coop, Holmes, Wright County, Iowa; Advantage F.S., Chapin, Franklin County; and Five Star Coop, Rockwell, Cerro Gordo County, Iowa.

The following grain elevators are not part of this geographic area assignment and are assigned to Omaha Grain Inspection Service, Inc.: Scoular Elevator, Elliot, Montgomery County and two Scoular elevators, Griswold, Cass County, Iowa.

Interested persons may obtain official services by contacting these agencies at the following telephone numbers:

Official agency	Headquarters location and telephone	Designation start	Designation end
Farwell Southwest	Casa Grande, AZ—(520) 421-1027	4/1/2015	3/31/2017
Jamestown	Jamestown, ND—(701) 252-1290	4/1/2015	3/31/2018
Lincoln	Lincoln, NE—(402) 435-4386	4/1/2015	3/31/2018
Midsouth	Memphis, TN—(901) 942-3216	4/1/2015	3/31/2018
Sioux City	Sioux City, IA—(712) 255-8073	4/1/2015	3/31/2017

Section 79(f) of the USGSA authorizes the Secretary to designate a qualified applicant to provide official services in a specified area after determining that the applicant is better able than any other applicant to provide such official services (7 U.S.C. 79 (f)).

Under Section 79(g) of the USGSA, designations of official agencies are effective for no longer than three years unless terminated by the Secretary; however, designations may be renewed according to the criteria and procedures prescribed in Section 79(f) of the USGSA.

Authority: 7 U.S.C. 71-87k.

Larry Mitchell,

Administrator, Grain Inspection, Packers and Stockyards Administration.

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DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Rural Utilities Service

Telecommunications Program: Notice of Availability of a Programmatic Environmental Assessment

AGENCY: Rural Utilities Service, USDA.

ACTION: Notice of Availability of a Programmatic Environmental Assessment of USDA Rural Utilities Service's Financial Support for Deployment of the Telecommunications Programs to Rural America.

SUMMARY: The Rural Utilities Service (RUS, Agency), an agency of the United States Department of Agriculture, seeks public and federal agency comments regarding the preparation of a Programmatic Environmental Assessment (PEA) for the development of a more efficient and effective environmental review process for the

RUS Telecommunications Program—an environmental review process that is commensurate with the potential environmental impacts of both wired and wireless broadband projects financed by the Agency. RUS is seeking comment from interested stakeholders regarding compliance with relevant laws and regulations, including the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA), Endangered Species Act (ESA) and other environmental statutes, regulations, and Executive Orders applicable to the RUS Telecommunications Infrastructure Loan Program, Farm Bill Broadband Loan Program, Community Connect Grant Program, and Distance Learning and Telemedicine Program (collectively, the Telecommunications Program). The proposed review process supports the Agency's mission of facilitating the development of affordable and reliable