

# Nez Perce-Clearwater National Forests NEWS RELEASE

## Nez Perce National Forest

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## Clearwater National Forest

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Date: January 26, 2012

### **Analysis indicates Kamiah is most advantageous site for Forest Headquarters**

*Kamiah, ID*—An analysis of potential Forest headquarters locations for the Nez Perce-Clearwater National Forests has concluded that locating the future Forest Supervisor’s Office in Kamiah is the “most advantageous alternative” to pursue.

The alternative recommends renovating and/or expanding existing facilities at the current location of the Kamiah Work Center to provide the necessary office space.

The Nez Perce and Clearwater National Forests have been preparing a proposal to administratively combine the two National Forests as a way to save money on duplicative leadership structures with the intent of generating savings of over \$2 million per year in salary that can be used for on-the-ground-management and public service. The recommendation regarding office location is the last piece of analysis necessary to move the combination proposal forward to the Regional and Washington Offices for approval.

Nez Perce-Clearwater National Forests Supervisor Rick Brazell said he has talked to elected officials and understands their concerns regarding the location of the future Forest Supervisor’s Office. “This is a tough call because both communities that currently host Supervisor’s Offices are special, and both have struggling economies.”

The Nez Perce National Forest currently leases Supervisor’s Office space in Grangeville while the Clearwater National Forest leases space for its Supervisor’s Office in Orofino. Those leases cost the Forests approximately \$1 million per year.

Brazell said it is necessary to bring employees from both offices together into a single, centrally located Supervisor’s Office so they can begin to function as a cohesive team that provides consistent management and service across the two National Forests.

In an effort to obtain an objective evaluation of the situation Brazell invited an out-of-area team of experts in a “value analysis” process to identify the best location for the office.

The value analysis process is used by the Forest Service to make objective decisions that achieve the most advantageous result—in this case location of a combined Forest Supervisor’s Office which is efficient and cost effective.

The team identified six potential locations—Grangeville, Kamiah, Orofino, Kooskia, Fenn Ranger Station and Nezperce. After analyzing factors such cost, community services, employee safety, and proximity to the sprawling four-million-acre combined Forest, the team concluded renovating existing facilities at Kamiah was the most advantageous alternative.

The team highlighted that Kamiah is centrally located and the existing Forest Service facilities are located adjacent to U.S. Highway 12 and highly visible and accessible to the public. The report estimated that renovating and/or expanding existing facilities on a Forest Service compound will save taxpayers an estimated \$10-\$14 million over a twenty year timeframe when compared to the current office leases.

“This savings is huge given the predicted decline in agency budgets,” Brazell stated.

Brazell said the Forests are currently studying the value analysis report looking for any omissions or errors that would potentially affect the conclusion. If none are found, an implementation plan will be developed.

Transitioning to a Kamiah office will take time, Brazell explained. When the move is complete, 73 employees are expected to work at the renovated Kamiah facility.

In the meantime, employees continue to work at Orofino, where the current building is leased through April 2014, and Grangeville where the lease expires in October 2022.

Additionally, Brazell committed to maintain Forest Service offices and employees in the communities of Orofino and Grangeville. He said 27 employees, most with the North Fork Ranger District, will remain in Orofino. Another 45 employees, most of whom are associated with the Smokejumper Base and Interagency Dispatch Center, will remain in Grangeville.

He acknowledged the shift in location of the Supervisor’s Office has the potential to affect where future employees will choose to live, but doubts few current employees would choose to relocate from their current residences.

The value analysis study has been posted at [www.fs.usda.gov/nezperce](http://www.fs.usda.gov/nezperce) under the heading “Features.”

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