



News Release

US Forest Service

Allegheny National Forest
4 Farm Colony Drive
Warren, PA 16365

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February 27, 2009
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

NOTICE OF INTENT PUBLISHED FOR SUPPLEMENTAL ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT FOR 2007 FOREST PLAN FOR ALLEGHENY NATIONAL FOREST

Public Meetings Scheduled 3/9 and 3/11

Warren, Pa. - The Allegheny National Forest (NF) published in the Federal Register a Notice of Intent (NOI) on **Friday, February 27, 2009** to prepare a Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement (SEIS) for the 2007 Allegheny NF Land and Resource Management Plan (Forest Plan) that will:

1. Provide public notice and an opportunity for comment on application of the design criteria defined on pages 53 through 168 of the 2007 Forest Plan to reserved and outstanding oil and gas development;
2. Better describe the Forest's legal authority to determine the reasonable use of surface resources when reserved and outstanding oil and gas rights are exercised, and to incorporate clear language that defines the roles and responsibilities of the Forest Service, Commonwealth of Pennsylvania and private mineral owners in the SEIS, 2007 Forest Plan and Record of Decision; and
3. Evaluate and disclose potential cumulative effects from emissions of methane, hydrogen sulfide, and emissions from vehicles and equipment used in oil and gas development on the Forest and regional air quality.

This process will fulfill the instructions outlined by the Chief of the Forest Service in response to appeals of the 2007 Forest Plan. This NOI initiates the scoping process, which guides development of the SEIS. Other information used in determining the scope of actions, alternatives, and effects to be analyzed includes the public involvement process for the 2007 Forest Plan, appeal resolution processes related to the 2007 Forest Plan, and the decision of the Chief of the Forest Service on the appeals of the 2007 Forest Plan.

The NOI also includes the estimated timeline for the EIS, information about public participation, and information regarding how to comment on the NOI.

Comments received on this notice will be used to identify design criteria for surface management that are effective and appropriate. Comments that point to disagreements over the environmental effects of the proposed action will be used to further develop issues that will be analyzed in the SEIS.

Two public meetings are scheduled. The first one is at the Forest Supervisor's Office at 4 Farm Colony Drive on U.S. 62 north of Warren, Pa. on Monday, March 9, starting at 7:00 p.m. The second one is at the Clarion Holiday Inn at the junction of State Route 68 and Interstate-80 (exit 62) on Wednesday, March 11, starting at 7:00 p.m.

"We look forward to the public response to the NOI and to the continued engagement of the public throughout the SEIS process," said Allegheny NF Supervisor Leanne Marten.

Written comments may be sent to Allegheny NF, ATTN: Lois DeMarco, 4 Farm Colony Drive, Warren, Pa. 16365. Electronic comments may be sent via email to comments-eastern-allegheny@fs.fed.us, or via facsimile to 814-726-1465. Comments sent via email should use the subject line “Reserved and Outstanding Oil and Gas Design Criteria SEIS”

The NOI can be obtained several ways. Electronic copies can be downloaded directly from the Allegheny NF website, <http://www.fs.fed.us/r9/forests/allegheny>. A printed copy can be obtained by calling (814) 723-5150 and requesting a printed copy.

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