

environment and describes impacts anticipated from the final flood damage reduction alternatives considered, including the no action alternative.

**DATES:** Comments should be submitted by September 30, 2003.

**ADDRESSES:** Submit comments by letter to: Mr. S. Michael Worley, Chief, Planning Branch, Planning Programs and Project Management Division, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Huntington District, 502 Eighth Street, Huntington, WV 25701-2070; FAX: 304-529-5136; or e-mail: [Michaelw@Lrh.usace.army.mil](mailto:Michaelw@Lrh.usace.army.mil).

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:** For additional information about the proposed project, contact Mr. Louis Aspey, Project Manager, PM-P, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Huntington District, 502 Eighth Street, Huntington, WV, 25701-2070, telephone: 304-528-7446, or e-mail:

[Louisa@Lrh.usace.army.mil](mailto:Louisa@Lrh.usace.army.mil).

**SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:**

**1. Background**

Under authority of the Watershed Protection and Flood Prevention Act (Pub. L. 83-566), the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), formerly Soil Conservation Service, began an investigation of land and water resource problems, including flooding, in the Lower Mud River watershed in 1972. This early investigation culminated with completion of the Lower Mud River Watershed Plan and Environmental Impact Statement in May 1993, in which a channel modification project of the Mud River in the vicinity of Milton was recommended. Section 580 of WRDA 1996 and Section 340 of WRDA 2000 provided the USACE authority to re-evaluate that study and construct a project.

A notice of intent to prepare a SEIS was published in the **Federal Register** on August 14, 2002 (67 FR 52959). The USACE invited full public participation to promote open communication and better decision-making. Persons and organizations interested in the Mud River flooding problems as they affect the community of Milton, WV and the affected environment were urged to participate in this public environmental analysis process. To keep the Milton community informed throughout the study process, a citizen's action group consisting of community members in the vicinity of Milton was formed and the first meeting held in November 2002, with the USACE as an invited guest. They have continued meeting on the fourth Thursday of each month at 9:30 a.m. in the Milton City Hall. Members include the City Council, West

Virginia Conservation Agency, Cabell County Floodplain Coordinator, and concerned citizens. Meetings are informal and open to the public. Assistance will continue to be provided upon request to anyone having difficulty with learning how to participate.

As stated in the notice of intent, public comments are welcomed anytime throughout the NEPA process. Formal opportunities for public participation include: (1) Public meetings held near the community of Milton; (2) Anytime during the NEPA process via mail, telephone or e-mail; (3) During review and comment on the draft LRR/SEIS—approximately August 11 through September 30, 2003; and (4) Review of the final LRR/SEIS—winter 2003–2004. Schedules and locations for public meetings will be announced in local news media. Interested parties may also request to be included on the mailing list for public distribution of meeting announcements and documents.

To ensure that all issues related to the proposed project are addressed, the USACE has conducted an open process to define the scope of the LRR/SEIS. Recommendations from interested agencies, local and regional stakeholders and the general public were encouraged to provide input in identifying areas of concern, issues and impacts to be addressed in the LRR/SEIS, and the alternatives that would be analyzed.

**2. Alternatives Considered**

Detailed project studies have included consideration of a number of local flood damage reduction alternatives including tributary impoundments, floodwall/levee combinations, channel modification and various nonstructural measures. As part of the study, various alternatives considered were found effective for protecting Milton from flooding, including a floodwall, levees, floodproofing, and floodplain evacuation options. More detailed evaluations determined that none of the alternatives were economically feasible except a protective levee on the north bank of the Mud River (Plan B) and a protective levee with relocation of a segment of the Mud River channel (Plan D). These two alternatives along with the No Action alternative have been evaluated in detail and the results documented in the LRR/SEIS.

The primary planning objective was to develop the most economically feasible plan and the most environmentally acceptable plan to reduce flood damages at Milton. Plan B provides a high level of protection, but includes modification to the Mud River

channel. Plan B has the greatest net benefits and is the National Economic Development (NED) plan. Plan D provides a lower level of protection, to approximately that of the 1997 flood; however, the project first cost is about 30 percent less than Plan B. Although Plan D affects several businesses and residences, the impacts on the natural environment are minor; therefore it is the environmentally preferred plan. Because Plan B provides the highest level of flood protection, has the greatest net benefits, and all significant environmental impacts can be mitigated by special project features, Plan B is the selected plan.

**3. Availability of the Draft LRR/SEIS**

USACE has distributed copies of the draft LRR/SEIS to appropriate Members of Congress, State and local government official in West Virginia, Federal agencies, and other interested parties. Copies of the document may be obtained by contacting USACE Huntington District Office of the Corps of Engineers at 304-529-5712. Comments pertaining to the documents should be sent to the address above. Copies of the draft LRR/SEIS are also available for inspection at the locations identified below:

(1) Cabell County Library, 455 Ninth Street Plaza, Huntington, WV 25701.

(2) Milton Public Library, 11401 Smith Street, Milton, WV 25541.

(3) Barboursville Public Library, 728 Main Street, Barboursville, WV 25504.

(4) <http://www.lrh.usace.army.mil/>.

After the public comment period ends (see **DATES**), USACE will consider all comments received, revise the draft SEIS as appropriate, and issue a final LRR/SEIS.

**Luz D. Ortiz,**

*Army Federal Register Liaison Officer.*

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**DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE**

**Department of the Army; Corps of Engineers**

**Federal Interagency Steering Committee on Multimedia Environmental Modeling**

**AGENCY:** Department of the Army, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, DoD.

**ACTION:** Notice of open meeting.

**SUMMARY:** The annual public meeting of the Federal Interagency Steering Committee on Multimedia Environmental Modeling (ISCMEM) will convene to review progress by the

working groups and to discuss initiatives for FY 2004.

*Date of Meeting:* September 24, 2003.

*Place:* U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission Headquarters Auditorium, 11545 Rockville Pike, Rockville, MD, 20852.

*Time:* 9:30 a.m. to 4 p.m.

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:**

Inquiries and notice of intent to attend the meeting may be addressed to Dr. Mark S. Dortch, ISCMEM Chair, Environmental Laboratory, U.S. Army Engineer Research and Development Center, 3909 Halls Ferry Road, Vicksburg, MS 39180-6199, or phone 601-634-3517.

**SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:**

*Background:* On July 5, 2001, six Federal agencies entered into a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) on research and development of multimedia environmental modeling (for a copy of the MOU with addendums, and details of the activities please see <http://www.ISCMEM.Org>). In 2002 and 2003, two additional Federal Agencies joined the interagency cooperative project. The MOU establishes a framework for facilitating cooperation and coordination among the following agencies (the specific research organization within the agency is in parenthesis): U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (Engineer Research and Development Center); U.S. Department of Agriculture (Agricultural Research Service); U.S. Department of Agriculture (Natural Resources Conservation Service); U.S. Department of Energy (Office of Research and Development); U.S. Geological Survey; U.S. National Oceanographic and Atmospheric Administration; and U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission (Office of Nuclear Regulatory Research). These agencies are cooperating and coordinating in research and development (R&D) of multimedia environmental models, software and related databases, including development, enhancements, applications and assessments of site-specific, generic, and process-oriented multimedia environmental models as they pertain to human and environmental health risk assessment. Specifically, the MOU supports collaboration and the exchange of technical information in support of multimedia environmental modeling focusing on environmental risk assessments, including development/enhancements of models and model frameworks or infrastructure and advancement of related technical activities, such as considering

uncertainty and model application procedures.

*Purpose of the Public Meeting:* The annual public meeting provides an opportunity for the scientific community, other Federal and State agencies, and the public to be briefed on the progress of the MOU working groups and their initiatives for the upcoming year, and to discuss technological advancements in multimedia environmental modeling.

*Proposed Agenda:* The ISCMEM Chair will report on new participating Federal agencies. The four MOU working groups, Software System Design and Implementation, Uncertainty and Parameter Estimation, Modeling Reactive Transport, and Watershed Modeling, will report on their progress during the year. A series of technical presentations will focus on: progress on the Geospatial Library for Environmental Modeling (GEOLEM) project as related to integration of modeling frameworks and GIS; results of the *International Workshop on Uncertainty, Sensitivity and Parameter*; and activities towards conceptualized model development for subsurface reactive transport modeling of inorganic contaminants, radionuclides, and nutrients. Participation with this MOU of similar coordinating groups and consortia outside the U.S. will be discussed. A detailed agenda with presentation titles and speakers will be posted on the MOU public Web site: <http://www.ISCMEM.Org>.

*Meeting Access:* The U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) Headquarters Auditorium is located in Two White Flint North Building at 11545 Rockville Pike, Rockville, Maryland. To access the NRC Auditorium, please use the Two White Flint North building entrance to proceed through security. The most convenient transportation to the meeting venue is via Metro. Please take Metro to the White Flint Metro stop on the Red Line. NRC is directly across the street from the White Flint Metro exit on Marinelli Road. Please inform the security personnel that you are attending the public meeting on multimedia environmental modeling in the NRC Auditorium.

**Mark S. Dortch,**

*Chair, Federal Interagency Steering Committee on Multimedia Environmental Modeling.*

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**DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION**

**Notice of Proposed Information Collection Requests**

**AGENCY:** Department of Education.

**SUMMARY:** The Leader, Regulatory Information Management Group, Office of the Chief Information Officer, invites comments on the proposed information collection requests as required by the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995.

**DATES:** Interested persons are invited to submit comments on or before October 14, 2003.

**SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:** Section 3506 of the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995 (44 U.S.C. Chapter 35) requires that the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) provide interested Federal agencies and the public an early opportunity to comment on information collection requests. OMB may amend or waive the requirement for public consultation to the extent that public participation in the approval process would defeat the purpose of the information collection, violate State or Federal law, or substantially interfere with any agency's ability to perform its statutory obligations. The Leader, Regulatory Information Management Group, Office of the Chief Information Officer, publishes that notice containing proposed information collection requests prior to submission of these requests to OMB. Each proposed information collection, grouped by office, contains the following: (1) Type of review requested, e.g. new, revision, extension, existing or reinstatement; (2) Title; (3) Summary of the collection; (4) Description of the need for, and proposed use of, the information; (5) Respondents and frequency of collection; and (6) Reporting and/or Recordkeeping burden. OMB invites public comment. The Department of Education is especially interested in public comment addressing the following issues: (1) Is this collection necessary to the proper functions of the Department; (2) will this information be processed and used in a timely manner; (3) is the estimate of burden accurate; (4) how might the Department enhance the quality, utility, and clarity of the information to be collected; and (5) how might the Department minimize the burden of this collection on the respondents, including through the use of information technology.

Dated: August 12, 2003.

**Angela C. Arrington,**

*Leader, Regulatory Information Management Group, Office of the Chief Information Officer.*

**Office of Postsecondary Education**

*Type of Review:* Revision.