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DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Food and Nutrition Service

Agency Information Collection Activities: Extension of Proposed Collection; Comment Request—Food Stamp Program State Agency Options

AGENCY: Food and Nutrition Service, USDA.

ACTION: Notice.

SUMMARY: In accordance with the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995, this notice invites the general public and other public agencies to comment on the proposed extension of this collection relating to State agency calculations of household expenses for Food Stamp Program purposes. The information collection requirement described in this notice is OMB Number 0584-0496: State Agency Options.

DATES: Written comments must be received on or before June 25, 2007.

ADDRESSES: Comments are invited on:
(a) Whether the proposed collection of information is necessary for the proper performance of the functions of the agency, including whether the information shall have practical utility;
(b) the accuracy of the agency's estimate of the burden of the proposed collection of information including the validity of the methodology and assumptions used;
(c) ways to enhance the quality, utility, and clarity of the information to be collected;
(d) ways to minimize the burden of the collection of information on those who respond, including through the use of appropriate automated, electronic, mechanical, or other technological collection techniques or other forms of information technology. Comments may be sent to Patrick Waldron, Branch Chief, Certification Policy Branch, Program Development Division, Food and Nutrition Service, U.S. Department of Agriculture, 3101 Park Center Drive, Alexandria, VA 22302. Comments may

also be faxed to the attention of Mr. Waldron at (703) 305-2486. The Internet address is:

patrick.waldron@FNS.USDA.GOV. All written responses will be open for public inspection at the office of the Food and Nutrition Service during regular business hours (8:30 a.m. to 5 p.m., Monday through Friday) at 3101 Park Center Drive, Alexandria, Virginia 22302, Room 800.

All responses to this notice will be summarized and included in the request for OMB approval. All comments will be a matter of public record.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Requests for additional information should be directed to Mr. Waldron at (703) 305-2495.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

Title: Food Stamp Program: State Agency Options.

OMB Number: 0584-0496.

Form Number: None.

Expiration Date: 7/31/07.

Type of Request: Extension of a currently approved information collection.

Abstract: Title 7, Part 273 of the Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) sets forth the Food Stamp Program requirements for the application, certification and continued eligibility for food stamp benefits. This notice extends the collection burden to account for changes required by the Farm Security and Rural Investment Act of 2002 (FSRIA), pending the issuance of a final rule.

Establishing and reviewing standard utility allowances. The regulations at 7 CFR 273.9(d)(6)(iii)(B) allow State agencies to establish standard utility allowances (SUA) and once established requires State agencies to review and adjust SUAs annually to reflect changes in the cost of utilities. Many State agencies already have one or more approved standards, which they update annually. State agencies may use information already available from case files, quality control reviews or other sources and from utility companies. State agencies may make adjustments based on cost-of-living increases. The information will be used to establish standards to be used in place of actual utility costs in the computation of the excess shelter deduction. State agencies are required to submit the amounts of these standards and methodologies used in developing and updating the

standards to FNS when they are developed or changed.

Estimates of burden: Currently 52 State agencies have a standard that includes heating or cooling costs and 41 have a standard for utility costs other than heating or cooling. In addition, 51 State agencies have a telephone allowance standard. State agencies are required to review the standards yearly to determine if increases are needed due to the cost of living. We estimate a minimum of 2.5 hours annually to make this review and adjustment (2.5 hours × 52 State agencies = 130 hours). Total burden for this provision is estimated to be 130 hours per year.

Self-employment costs. The regulations at 7 CFR 273.11(b) allow self-employment gross income to be reduced by the cost of producing such income. The regulations allow the State agencies, with approval from FNS, to establish the methodology for offsetting the costs of producing self-employment income, as long as the procedure does not increase Program costs. State agencies may submit a request to FNS to use a method of producing a reasonable estimate of the costs of producing self-employment income in lieu of calculating the actual costs for each household with such income. Different methods may be proposed for different types of self-employment. The proposal shall include a description of the proposed method, the number and type of households and percent of the caseload affected, and documentation indicating that the proposed procedure will not increase program costs. State agencies may collect this data from household case records or other sources that may be available.

Estimates of burden: We estimate that 10 State agencies will submit a request of this type each year for the next three years. It is estimated that these States will incur a one-time burden of at least 10 working hours gathering and analyzing data, developing the methodology, determining the cost implication, and submitting a request to FNS for a total burden of 100 hours annually. State agencies are not required to periodically review their approved methodologies. We do not anticipate that State agencies will voluntarily review their methodologies for change on a regular basis, thus burden is not being assessed for this purpose at this time.

Record keeping burden only: Each State agency would be required to keep a record of the information gathered and submitted to FNS. We estimate this to be 7 minutes per year for the 53 State agencies to equal a total of 6 burden hours annually. (53 × 7 minutes/60 minutes per hour = 6 hours annual burden).

Summary of burden hours:

Affected Public: State agencies and local governments administering the Food Stamp Program.

Estimated Number of Respondents: 53.

Estimated Number of Responses Per Respondent: 2.16.

Estimated Number of Responses: 115.

Estimated Hours Per Response: 2.05.

Estimated Total Annual Burden on Respondents: 236.

Dated: April 17, 2007.

Roberto Salazar,

Administrator, Food and Nutrition Service.

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DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Forest Service

Shasta-Trinity National Forest, California Mudflow Vegetation Management Project

AGENCY: Forest Service, USDA.

ACTION: Notice of intent to prepare an environmental impact statement.

SUMMARY: Shasta-Trinity National Forest proposes to harvest timber and remove accumulations of down wood (fuels) on approximately 2900 acres of National Forest System lands. Trees on about 80% of the area would be thinned by removing a portion of the trees from overcrowded forest stands. Trees removed would be those infected with disease or insects and those generally smaller in size than trees that will be retained. Most of the trees on approximately 15% of the area are infected by root disease and insects and would be removed. Young tree seedlings would be planted in the openings created in these areas. Encroaching conifers will be removed from the remaining 5% of the area to restore and maintain wet meadow characteristics in a condition that existed in the past. The majority of project area is within township T40N, R2W, MDM with minor inclusions in T39N, R2W and T40N, R3W, MDM. The project is located immediately north and east of the town of McCloud, California. The Forest Land and Resource Management Plan has allocated portions of the project area to

Late-Successional Reserves and Special Area Management (Research Natural Area) with the remainder designated as Matrix lands. About five percent of the area is zoned as Riparian Reserve (wetlands and areas adjacent to streams).

DATES: Comments concerning the scope of the analysis should be received no later than 30 days after the publication of this notice in the **Federal Register**. The draft environmental impact statement is expected in June 2007 and the final environmental impact statement is expected in September 2007.

ADDRESSES: Send written comments to District Ranger Michael Hupp, Shasta-McCloud Management Unit, 204 W. Alma Street, Mt. Shasta, California 96067.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:

Dusty Miller, McCloud Ranger Station, P.O. Box 1620, McCloud, California 96057, telephone (530) 964-3771 or via e-mail at dmiller@fs.fed.us.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

Purpose and Need for Action

A century of fire exclusion in the project area has resulted in overcrowded forest conditions and the loss of wet meadow habitat. Overcrowded conditions in forested areas have reduced tree vigor, reduced the proportion of hardwoods in forested areas and promoted the spread of root diseases. In the absence of fire, an understory of shrubs and small trees has developed which can act as a fuel ladder and carry fire into the forest canopy resulting in the loss of forest habitat. The lack of fire has resulted in accumulations of ground fuels which also increases the likelihood of flames reaching the canopy layer. The purpose of this project is to meet Forest Plan objectives by restoring forest ecosystem health within the project area through a variety of management activities.

There is a need to reduce tree density in areas where overcrowded forest conditions currently exist. Thinning will improve the health of these forest areas by making more water, nutrients and sunlight available for use by the remaining trees with a subsequent improvement in the ability of trees to withstand insects, pathogens and drought. Removing small trees from the understory will remove ladder fuels that may otherwise carry fire from the ground into the forest canopy if wildfire occurs. This is important because it will leave the treated stands in a more sustainable, healthy condition. There is a need to break the current cycle of re-

infection in areas heavily infected by root diseases. The removal of groups of diseased trees will remove the source of infection from affected areas. Re-planting with conifer species suited to the specific root disease problems identified at each site will reestablish live trees. This is important because it will reduce future tree mortality and slow or stop the spread of root diseases in the project area.

There is a need to reduce accumulations of ground fuels to levels where flames are not likely to reach the canopy layer in case of wildfire. Machine piling and burning will reduce fuel loads in treatment areas while still meeting other resource needs. This is important because it will reduce the probability of stand replacing wildfires. There is a need to restore the historic size, continuity, and function of wet meadow ecosystems in the project area. Encroaching conifers will be removed from areas that were historically meadows and where trees may not be sustainable due to mortality resulting from fluctuating water tables. The removal of competing conifers will promote the development of naturally occurring hardwoods and meadow vegetation. Restoration activities will return meadows to conditions that will allow the reintroduction of fire to maintain natural ecosystem function. This is important because meadows provide significant water storage and biodiversity.

There is a need to provide for the long-term sustainability of hardwoods in the landscape. In dense mixed conifer/hardwood forests, the abundance and vigor of hardwoods is declining as overtopping conifers block necessary sunlight. Treatments in such areas will emphasize the removal of some competing conifers to provide growing space and sunlight for overtopped hardwoods. In dense mature oak stands with little reproduction, oak trees will be thinned to promote growth and encourage stump sprouting. In areas where the surrounding conifer forest has encroached and replaced historic aspen stands, most conifer trees will be removed to allow residual aspen trees to reclaim the site. This is important because hardwoods provide valuable wildlife habitat and stand diversity and are important in Native American traditions.

Proposed Action

The project will include the following treatments:

1. Thinning treatments on approximately 2100 acres.

In all thinning treatments, trees will be thinned to a spacing that is