

News Release

*USDA Forest Service Southern Region
1720 Peachtree Street N.W.
Atlanta, Ga. 30367
(404) 347-7226*

For Immediate Release

**Contact: Jack Holcomb (404) 347-5058
Or Bruce Kinzel (404) 347-7240**

March 8, 2000

ATLANTA PLAYS HOST TO NATIONAL WATERSHED PUBLIC FOURM

ATLANTA – The third of four nationwide public meetings on proposed federal policies governing watershed management will be held here Tuesday at 6 p.m. at the Cobb Galleria Center.

The Unified Federal Policy to Ensure a Watershed Approach to Federal Land and Resource Management (UFP) is designed to pool the resources and expertise of seven federal agencies to protect water quality on federal lands. The USDA Forest Service and the Bureau of Land Management are leading the joint effort.

“A key to the success of this proposal is to seek public input from local, state and tribal governments, citizen groups and others with a stake in a clean, healthy watershed,” said Elizabeth Estill, Regional Forester for the agency’s Southern Region based in Atlanta. “The proposed policy is a key initiative in the President’s Clear Water Action Plan.”

The Forest Service and Bureau of Land Management are joined in effort by the Department of Commerce (DOC), Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), Department of

--more--

Energy (DOE), Department of Defense (DOC), and the Tennessee Valley Authority (TVA). In addition to the Atlanta meeting, public meetings are being held in Milwaukee, Denver and Portland.

The proposed policy, which was published Feb. 22 in the *Federal Register*, is designed to:

- Manage lands and resources entrusted to the federal government on a watershed basis and improve stewardship of federally-managed watersheds.
- Provide better coordination among federal agencies, states, tribes and interested stakeholders.
- Make it easier for states, tribes, local governments and others to work with federal agencies on a watershed basis.
- Help focus and leverage the resources of various federal agencies to solve problems on priority watersheds.

Representatives from the respective federal agencies will be on hand Tuesday to answer questions and solicit comments from the public. A 60-day period for public comment on the draft policy expires April 24. It is expected that a final policy will be reached later this year.

Copies of the proposed policy can be obtained on-line at www.cleanwater.gov/ufp or by contacting the Forest Service's Content Analysis Enterprise Team at (800) 517-1037.

#####