

June 13, and June 15, from 9 a.m.–1 p.m. to discuss the proposal and visit some selected areas that may be treated.

The Talladega National Forest, Talladega and Shoal Creek Ranger Districts, is seeking additional information, comments, and assistance from Federal, State, and local agencies and other individuals or organizations that may be interested in or affected by the proposed action. This input will be used in preparation of the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS). The scoping process includes:

1. Identifying potential issues.
2. Identify issues to be analyzed in depth.
3. Eliminating insignificant issues or those, which have been covered by a relevant previous environmental analysis.
4. Exploring additional alternatives.
5. Identifying potential environmental effects of the proposed action and alternatives.

#### **E. Preliminary Issues Identified to Date Include**

1. Protection of soil and water resources.
2. Impacts of the proposed treatments on Federally listed species of plants and wildlife, which are defined by the Endangered Species Act of 1973 as amended, Forest Service Regional Forester's Sensitive Species list, and upon locally rare species.
3. Protection of cultural resources.
4. Potential effects to management indicator species.

#### **F. Possible Alternatives Identified to Date Include**

1. *No Action*: This alternative will serve as a baseline for comparison of alternatives. Present management activities will continue but the proposed project will not be done. This alternative will be fully developed and analyzed.

2. *Proposed Action*: Intermediate thinning of approximately 6,534 acres of 20–45 year old loblolly pine stands will be an initial step to improving forest health, reducing short-term SPB infestation risks, and restoring these areas to a longleaf pine ecosystem. Thinning will take place in stands that are over crowded, and it is proposed to allow the remaining trees more room to grow and increase tree vigor and health. It is anticipated that approximately 70 square feet of basal area per acre will remain in thinned areas.

This proposal also includes thinning of 3,047 acres to enhance and/or create existing or potential RCW habitat. Current areas providing RCW habitat are overstocked. Thinning these areas will

create optimal conditions for RCW recruitment/replacement stands and foraging habitat.

The restoration treatments in the proposed action will encompass 9,136 acres. The types of tree removal, site preparation, and regeneration will vary according to site conditions and whether longleaf is present to provide a seed source. Restoration cuts will include complete removal of off-site species (excluding longleaf and favored hardwoods such as oaks and hickories), and thinning of existing off-site species. Site preparation methods associated with these treatments will range from or include a combination of prescribed burning, mechanical, and chemical treatment of competing vegetation. Chemical treatment of restoration stands will include directed foliar spray of a 3% solution of Garlon 4, ½% Arsonal, and ½% Sidekick. For injection, a 50% solution of Garlon 3 will be used. Regeneration of longleaf pine will depend on residual longleaf in the areas to be restored. Planted containerized longleaf, natural regeneration, or a combination of both will be the options for the restoration proposal.

3. *Modified Proposed Action*: This alternative would include a five-year program of thinning and restoration cuts. Site preparation would be done using mechanized equipment. Release of seedlings would be with hand tools. No herbicides would be used.

#### **G. Special Permit Needs**

There are no special permits required from any State or Federal agencies in order to implement this project.

#### **H. Lead Agency**

The USDA Forest Service is the lead agency for this project.

The Talladega and Shoal Creek Ranger Districts requests that comments be as specific as possible for this proposal and be sent to: EIS Team Leader Jeff Seefeldt, USDA Forest Service, 101 North Street, Talladega, AL 35160.

It is estimated that the draft EIS (DEIS) will be available for public comment by July 31, 2003. It is very important that those interested in this proposed action participate at this time.

To be helpful, comments on the DEIS should be as specific as possible and may address the adequacy of the statement of the merits of the alternative discussed (see the Council on Environmental Quality Regulations for implementing the procedural provisions of the National Environmental Policy Act at 4 CFR 1503.3).

In addition, Federal court decisions have established that reviewers of

DEIS's must structure their participation in the environmental review of the proposal so that it is meaningful and alerts the agency to the reviewers' position and contentions: *Vermont Yankee Nuclear Power Corp. v. NROC*, 435 U.S. 519, 553 (1978). Environmental objections that could have been raised at the draft stage may be waived if not raised until after completion of the final environmental impact statement (FEIS). *City of Angoon v. Hodel*, 803 F.2d 1016, 1022 (9th Cir. 1986) and *Wisconsin Heritages, Inc. v. Harris*, 490 F. Supp. 1334, 1338 (E.D. Wis. 1980). The reason for this is to ensure that substantive comments and objections are made available to the Forest Service at a time when it can meaningfully consider them and respond to them in the FEIS.

#### **I. Estimated Date for FEIS**

After the comment period ends on the DEIS, the comments will be analyzed, considered, and responded to by the Forest Service in preparing the final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS). The FEIS is scheduled to be completed by November 17, 2003. The responsible officials will consider the comments, responses, environmental consequences discussed in the final supplement, applicable laws, regulations, and policies in making a decision regarding this proposal. The responsible officials will document the decision and reasons for the decision in the Record of Decision. That decision will be subject to appeal under 3 CFR, part 215.

The responsible officials for this project will be Tony Tooke, District Ranger for the Talladega Ranger District, National Forests in Alabama at: 1001 North Street, Talladega, AL 35160 and Earl Stewart, District Ranger, Shoal Creek Ranger District, National Forests in Alabama at: 2390 Hwy. 46, Heflin, AL 36264.

Dated: May 28, 2002.

**Tony Tooke,**  
District Ranger.

Dated: May 30, 2002.

**Earl Stewart,**  
District Ranger.

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BILLING CODE 3410–11–M

## **DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE**

### **Rural Utilities Service**

### **Southern Illinois Power Cooperative; Notice of Finding of No Significant Impact**

**AGENCY:** Rural Utilities Service, USDA.

**ACTION:** Notice of finding of no significant impact.

**SUMMARY:** Notice is hereby given that the Rural Utilities Service (RUS) has made a finding of no significant impact (FONSI) with respect to a project proposed by Southern Illinois Power Cooperative (SIPC) of Marion, Illinois. SIPC is proposing the addition of two simple-cycle combustion turbine units, each with a generating capacity of 83 MW, to be located in Williamson County at their existing Marion Station.

**FOR FUTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:** Nurul Islam, Environmental Protection Specialist, Rural Utilities Service, Engineering and Environmental Staff, Stop 1571, 1400 Independence Avenue, SW, Washington, DC 20250-1571, telephone: (202) 720-1414, e-mail: [nislam@rus.usda.gov](mailto:nislam@rus.usda.gov). Information is also available from Mr. Dick Myott, Environmental & Planning Department Manager, SIPC, 11543 Lake of Egypt Road, Marion, Illinois 62959, telephone (618) 964-1448 Ext. 268, e-mail [rmyott@sipower.org](mailto:rmyott@sipower.org).

**SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:** RUS, in accordance with its environmental policies and procedures, required that SIPC prepare an Environmental Analysis reflecting the potential impacts of the proposed facilities. The Environmental Analysis, which includes input from federal, state, and local agencies, has been reviewed and accepted as RUS' Environmental Assessment (EA) for the project in accordance with 7 CFR 1794.41. The proposed project will be located in Williamson County, eight miles south of Marion, Illinois. The total amount of farmland that would be converted to non-agricultural use is estimated to be about 30 acres. Approximately 18 acres will be required for the units including the combustion turbines and support facilities. The proposed units will be constructed immediately west of the existing plant site on land owned by SIPC. The land was previously used for farming activities and is contained within sections 26, 27, and 35, Township 15 South, Range 2 East. The nearest airport, Williamson County Airport, is located approximately 8 miles north of the proposed site. The CT project will require two new stacks, each stack will be less than 60 feet tall. The height of the stacks is significantly lower than the height of nearby existing plant structures (stacks height varies between 200-400 ft.). No FAA permit will be required for the facility. We have determined that the proposed facility will not pose any hazards to air navigation.

The existing transmission facilities are adequate for the additional power generated by the new CT units and no additional transmission facilities are considered at present. The CT project will require the routing of natural gas pipeline to the site. The proposed gas pipeline is approximately 5.75 miles long. Generally the construction of the pipeline will require a right-of-way approximately 30 to 40 feet wide. The pipeline crossing of larger streams and wetlands will be accomplished with underground directional boring so that the stream channels, hydrology and vegetation will be least affected. The natural gas pipeline route will potentially affect only one parcel of jurisdictional wetland. The total area of crossing wetland due to natural gas pipeline is estimated to be about 5,750 square feet. Underground boring through the wetlands will minimize the impacts. All permanent streams will be crossed by underground borings while the shallow/intermittent streams will be cut and trenched. There are no floodplains or wetlands in the vicinity of the project location (at CT location); therefore, no impact is anticipated. Based on results of the wetland delineation it is unlikely that the proposed project will require an individual permit from the Corps of Engineers. The U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service and the Illinois Department of Natural Resources identified no significant impacts to fish and wildlife resources due to construction of the proposed project. Therefore, RUS has determined that no threatened or endangered species are likely to be impacted by the proposed construction.

The Illinois State Historic Preservation Officer (SHPO) has reviewed the project and determined that no historic properties will be impacted by the proposed facility. RUS believes the project will have no impact on cultural and historic properties due to construction of the proposed project. However, the project is approved contingent on the following condition: if archaeological remains are discovered during construction activities, the work shall be stopped and SIPC will notify the SHPO and RUS immediately.

SIPC published notices of the availability of the EA and solicited public comments per 7 CFR 1792.42. Notices of availability of EA were published in the Southern Illinoisan newspaper, a daily circular, on April 12 & 13, 2002. The 30-day comment period on the EA for the proposed facility ended on May 14, 2002. No comments were received on the EA.

SIPC committed to follow Federal and state agency recommendations, and

secure all necessary permits prior to constructing and operating the CT units. Based on the EA and SIPC's commitments to follow agency recommendations, RUS has concluded that the proposed action will not have a significant effect to various resources, including important farmland, floodplains, wetlands, cultural resources, threatened and endangered species and their critical habitat, air pollution, water quality, and noise. RUS has also determined that there would be no negative impacts of the proposed project on minority communities and low-income communities as a result of the construction of the project. RUS believes that there are no significant unresolved environmental conflicts related to this project.

Dated: May 30, 2002.

**Blaine D. Stockton,**

*Assistant Administrator, Electric Program, Rural Utilities Service.*

[FR Doc. 02-14033 Filed 6-4-02; 8:45 am]

**BILLING CODE 3410-15-P**

## DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

### Submission for OMB Review: Comment Request

DOC has submitted to the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) for clearance of the following proposal for collection of information under the provisions of the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995, Public Law 104-13.

*Bureau:* International Trade Administration.

*Title:* Information Services Order Form.

*Agency Form Number:* ITA-4096P.

*OMB Number:* 0625-0143.

*Type of Request:* Regular Submission.

*Burden:* 483 hours.

*Number of Respondents:* 2,675.

*Avg. Hours Per Response:* 20 minutes.

*Needs and Uses:* The Department of Commerce's U.S. & Foreign Commercial Service Export Assistance Centers offer their clients DOC programs, market research, and services to enable the client to begin exporting or to expand existing exporting efforts. The Information Services Order Form is used by US&FCS trade specialists in the Export Assistance Centers to collect information about clients in order to determine which programs or services would best help clients meet their export goals. This form is required for clients to order US&FCS programs and services. Certain programs are tailored for individual clients, e.g., the Agent Distributor Service, which identifies potential overseas agents or distributors