

Early Notice of Importance of Public Participation in Subsequent Environmental Review

A draft environmental impact statement will be prepared for comment. The comment period on the draft environmental impact statement will be 45 days from the date the Environmental Protection Agency publishes the notice of availability in the **Federal Register**.

The Forest Service believes, at this early stage, that it is important to give reviewers notice of several court rulings related to public participation in the environmental review process. First, reviewers of draft environmental impact statement must structure their participation in the environmental review of the proposal so that it is meaningful and alerts an agency to the reviewer's position and contentions. *Vermont Yankee Nuclear Power Corp. v. NRDC*, 435 U.S. 519, 553 (1978). Also, environmental objections that could be raised at the draft environmental impact statement stage but that are not raised until after completion of the final environmental impact statement may be waived or dismissed by the courts. [*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)] Because of these court rulings, it is very important that those interested in this proposed action participate by the close of the 45-day comment period so 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 final environmental impact statement.

To assist the Forest Service in identifying and considering issues and concerns on the proposed action, comments on the draft environmental impact statement should be as specific as possible. It is also helpful if comments refer to specific pages or chapters of the draft statement. Comments may also address the adequacy of the draft environmental impact statement or the merits of the alternatives formulated and discussed in the statement. Reviewers may wish to refer to the Council on Environmental Policy Act at 40 CFR 1503.3 in addressing these points.

Comments received, including the name and addresses of those who comment, will be considered part of the public record on this proposal and will be available for public inspection.

(**Authority:** 40 CFR 1501.7 and 1508.22; Forest Service Handbook 1909.15, section 21)

Dated: December 2, 2003.
Huston A. Nicholas,
Forest Supervisor.
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BILLING CODE CMTL-08-M

DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Forest Service

Lake County Resource Advisory Committee

AGENCY: Forest Service, USDA.
ACTION: Notice of meeting.

SUMMARY: The Lake County Resource Advisory Committee (RAC) will hold a meeting.

DATES: The meeting will be held on January 15, 2004, from 3:30 p.m. to 5 p.m.

ADDRESSES: The meeting will be held at the Lake County Board of Supervisor's Chambers at 255 North Forbes Street, Lakeport, CA.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Debbie McIntosh, Committee Coordinator, USDA, Mendocino National Forest, Upper Lake Ranger District, 10025 Elk Mountain Road, Upper Lake, CA 95485. (707) 275-2361; E-mail dmcintosh@fs.fed.us.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: Agenda items to be covered include: (1) Roll Call/Establish Quorum; (2) Overview of November Sacramento RAC Meeting; (3) Finalize business for 2003; (4) Title II funds available for Projects for 2004; (5) Discuss Project Cost Accounting USFS/County of Lake; (6) Set Next Meeting Date; (7) Public Comment Period; Public input opportunity will be provided and individuals will have the opportunity to address the Committee at that time.

Dated: December 2, 2003.
Blaine P. Baker,
Designated Federal Officer.
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DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Rural Housing Service

Notice of Request for Extension of a Currently Approved Information Collection

AGENCY: Rural Housing Service (RHS), Department of Agriculture (USDA).
ACTION: Proposed collection; comments requested.

SUMMARY: In accordance with the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995, this notice announces the Rural Housing

Service's intention to request an extension for a currently approved information collection in support of the Rural Community Development Initiative (RCDI) grant program.

DATES: Comments on this notice must be received by February 9, 2004 to be assured of consideration.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Beth Jones, Senior Loan Specialist, Community Programs Direct Loan and Grant Processing and Servicing Branch, RHS, USDA, 1400 Independence Ave., SW., Mail Stop 0787, Washington, DC 20250-0787, Telephone (202) 720-1498, E-mail beth.jones@usda.gov.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

Title: Notice of Funds Availability (NOFA) Inviting Applications for the Rural Community Development Initiative.

OMB Number: 0575-0180.
Expiration Date of Approval: May 31, 2004.

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

Abstract: RHS, an Agency within the USDA Rural Development mission area, will administer the RCDI grant program through their Community Facilities Division. The intent of the RCDI grant program is to develop the capacity and ability of rural area recipients to undertake projects through a program of financial and technical assistance provided by qualified intermediary organizations. The eligible recipients are nonprofit organizations, low-income rural communities, or Federally recognized tribes. The intermediary may be a qualified private, nonprofit, or public (including tribal) organization. The intermediary is the applicant. The intermediary must have been organized a minimum of 3 years at the time of application. The intermediary will be required to provide matching funds, in the form of cash or committed funding, in an amount at least equal to the RCDI grant.

Estimate of Burden: Public reporting burden for this collection of information is estimated to average 1.72 hours per response.

Respondents: Intermediaries and recipients.

Estimated Number of Respondents: 146.

Estimated Number of Responses per Respondent: 2.48.

Estimated Number of Responses: 8.

Estimated Total Annual Burden on Respondents: 2,026.

Copies of this information collection can be obtained from Brigitte Sumter, Regulations and Paperwork Management Branch, at (202) 692-0042.