how participants' experiences with the Partnership Program have influenced career and educational choices; current activities of participants (e.g., courses of study, jobs); benefits and costs of program participation to the program participants, mentors, and liaisons; and suggestions for improving the Program. This information will provide concrete evidence for continued funding of the Program.

Two separate surveys are proposed. The first survey will collect baseline information from participants as they enter the program. The baseline survey will explore participants' expectations and goals on entering the program, their current career and/or educational plans, and reasons for choosing to participate. The second survey will gather Follow up and tracking information of past participants and will be administered annually. This survey will ask about current contact information, current career and/or educational activities, satisfaction with the program, and whether expectations were met.

Potential respondents of either survey will be asked to participate in a telephone survey that should take less than 30 minutes to complete. Respondents who cannot schedule 30 minutes of time or have communications disorders which make telephone conversations difficult will be given the opportunity to respond by alternate means such as fax and e-mail. All participants from the inception of the program will be included in this evaluation process. Participants for 1999 have not yet been chosen, but it is anticipated that the total number of participants since 1994 will not exceed 70.

Dated: May 4, 1999.

David Kerr,

Executive Officer, National Institutes on Deafness and Other Communication Disorders.

[FR Doc. 99–11840 Filed 5–10–99; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 4140–01–M

DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES

National Institutes of Health

National Institute of Arthritis and Musculoskeletal and Skin Diseases; Notice of Closed Meeting

Pursuant to section 10(d) of the Federal Advisory Committee Act, as amended (5 U.S.C. Appendix 2), notice is hereby given of the following meeting.

The meeting will be closed to the public in accordance with the provisions set forth in sections 552b(c)(4) and 552b(c)(6), Title 5 U.S.C., as amended. The grant applications and the discussions could disclose confidential trade secrets or commercial property such as patentable material, and personal information concerning individuals associated with the grant applications, the disclosure of which would constitute a clearly unwarranted invasion of personal privacy.

Name of Committee: National Institute of Arthritis and Musculoskeletal and Skin Diseases Special Emphasis Panel.

Date: May 7, 1999.

Time: 11 AM to 12:30 PM.

Agenda: To review and evaluate grant applications.

Place: 45 Natcher Bldg, Rm 5As.25u, Bethesda, MD 20892, (Telephone Conference Call).

Contact Person: Tommy L. Broadwater, PHD, Chief, Grants Review Branch, National Institutes of Health NIAMS, Natcher Bldg., Room 5As25U, Bethesda, MD 20892, 301–594–4952.

This notice is being published less than 15 days prior to the meeting due to the timing limitations imposed by the review and funding cycle.

(Catalogue of Federal Domestic Assistance Program Nos. 93.846, Arthritis, Musculoskeletal and Skin Diseases Research, National Institutes of Health, HHS)

Dated: May 5, 1999.

LaVerne Y. Stringfield,

Director, Office of Federal Advisory Committee Policy.

[FR Doc. 99–11838 Filed 5–10–99; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 4140–01–M

DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES

National Institutes of Health

Office of Recombinant DNA Activities; Recombinant DNA Research: Action Under the Guidelines

AGENCY: National Institutes of Health (NIH), PHS, DHHS.

ACTION: Notice of action under the NIH Guidelines for Research Involving Recombinant DNA Molecules (NIH Guidelines).

SUMMARY: This notice sets forth an action to be taken by the Director, National Institutes of Health (NIH), under the NIH Guidelines for Research Involving Recombinant DNA Molecules (59 FR 34496, amended 59 FR 40170, 60 FR 20762, 61 FR 1482, 61 FR 10004, 62 FR 4782, 62 FR 53335, 62 FR 56196, 62 FR 59032, 63 FR 8052, 63 FR 26018).

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Background documentation and additional information can be obtained from the Office of Recombinant DNA Activities (ORDA), National Institutes of Health, MSC 7010, 6000 Executive Boulevard, Suite 302, Bethesda, Maryland 20892–7010, Phone 301–496–9838, FAX 301–496–9839. The ORDA web site is located at http://www.nih.gov/od/orda/ for further information about the office.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: Today's action is being promulgated under the NIH Guidelines for Research Involving Recombinant DNA Molecules (NIH Guidelines). The proposed action was published for comment in the **Federal Register** on February 17, 1999 (64 FR 7964), and reviewed by the NIH Recombinant DNA Advisory Committee (RAC) at its meeting on March 11, 1999.

I. Amendment to Appendix B–I, Risk Group 1 (RG1) Agents

I–A. Background Information and Decisions on Action Under the NIH Guidelines

On December 11, 1998, ORDA received a facsimile from Dr. Margarita C. Curras-Collazo, University of California at Riverside, Riverside, California, requesting to lower the containment level (from Biosafety Level (BL) 2 to 1) for recombinant adeno-associated virus (AAV) vectors produced in the absence of helper viruses. Subsequent to this request, ORDA received a telephone call from Ms. Brenda Wong, Biological Safety Officer, University of California at San Diego, La Jolla, California, asking that this request be reconsidered due to the potential of insertional mutagenesis.

In response to this request, ORDA solicited the opinion of three AAV experts and the RAC Chair. All three AAV experts and the RAC Chair concurred that the BL1 level of physical containment is appropriate for recombinant AAV vectors produced in the absence of helper viruses. The rationale for this recommendation was based on the fact that experiments involving certain recombinant retroviral vectors, which insert randomly into the genome and could potentially cause insertional mutagenesis, are designated as BL1 agents.

Appendix B–I, Risk Group 1 (RG1) Agents, currently reads:

''RG1 agents are not associated with disease in healthy adult humans. Examples of RG1 agents include asporogenic Bacillus subtilis or Bacillus licheniformis (see Appendix C–IV–A, Bacillus subtilis or Bacillus licheniformis Host-Vector Systems, Exceptions), Escherichia coli-K12 (see Appendix C–II–A, Escherichia coli K–12 Host Vector Systems, Exceptions), and

adeno-associated virus types 1 through 4.

''Those agents not listed in Risk Groups (RGs) 2, 3 and 4 are not automatically or implicitly classified in RG1; a risk assessment must be conducted based on the known and potential properties of the agents and their relationship to agents that are listed.''

Appendix B–1, *Risk Group 1 (RGI) Agents,* is proposed to read:

''RGI agents are not associated with disease in healthy adult humans. Examples of RG1 agents include asporogenic *Bacillus subtilis* or *Bacillus licheniformis* (see Appendix C–IV–A, *Bacillus subtilis* or *Bacillus licheniformis* Host-Vector Systems, Exceptions), *Escherichia coli* K–12 (see Appendix C–II–A, *Escherichia coli* K–12 Host Vector Systems, Exceptions), adeno-associated virus types 1 through 4, and recombinant AAV constructs, in which the transgene does no encode either a tumor suppressor or a toxin molecule and are produced in the absence of a helper virus.

''Those agents not listed in Risk Groups (RGs) 2, 3 and 4 are not automatically or implicitly classified in RG1; a risk assessment must be conducted based on the known and potential properties of the agents and their relationship to agents that are listed.''

The proposed action was published in the **Federal Register** on February 17, 1999 (64 FR 7964) for public comment.

On March 11, 1999, the RAC discussed the proposed action to Appendix B–I with the opinions of AAV experts and the RAC Chair. A motion was made to accept the proposed action that the BL1 physical containment is appropriate for recombinant AAV vectors produced in the absence of helper viruses with a minor change. In the last sentence of the first paragraph delete ''tumor suppressor'' and insert ''potentially tumorigenic gene product.'' The motion passed by a vote of 11 in favor, 0 opposed, and no abstentions.

The action is detailed in Section I–B—Summary of Action. I accept the RAC recommendation, and the *NIH Guidelines* will be amended accordingly.

I–B. Summary of Action

I–B–1. Amendment of Appendix B–1, Risk Group 1 (RG1) Agents

Appendix B–1 is to be amended to read:

''RG1 agents are not associated with disease in healthy adult humans. Examples of RG1 agents include asporogenic *Bacillus subtilis* or *Bacillus licheniformis* (see Appendix C–IV–A, *Bacillus subtilis* or *Bacillus licheniformis* Host-Vector Systems, Exceptions), *Escherichia coli* K–12 (see Appendix C–II–A, *Escherichia coli* K–12 Host Vector Systems, Exceptions), adeno-associated virus (AAV) types 1 through 4, and recombinant AAV constructs, in which the transgene does not encode either a potentially tumorigenic gene product or a toxin molecule and are produced in the absence of a helper virus.

''Those agents not listed in Risk Groups (RGs) 2, 3 and 4 are not automatically or implicitly classified in RG1; a risk assessment must be conducted based on the known and potential properties of the agents and their relationship to agents that are listed.''

OMB's ''Mandatory Information Requirements for Federal Assistance Program Announcements'' (45 FR 39592) requires a statement concerning the official government programs contained in the Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance. Normally, NIH lists in its announcements the number and title of affected individual programs for the guidance of the public. Because the guidance in this notice covers virtually every NIH and Federal research program in which recombinant DNA techniques could be used, it has been determined not to be cost effective or in the public interest to attempt to list these programs. Such a list would likely require several additional pages. In addition, NIH could not be certain that every Federal program would be included as many Federal agencies, as well as private organizations, both national and international, have elected to follow the *NIH Guidelines.* In lieu of the individual program listing, NIH invites readers to direct questions to the information address above about whether individual programs listed in the Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance are affected.

Dated: April 29, 1999.

Harold Varmus,

Director, National Institutes of Health.

[FR Doc. 99–11839 Filed 5–10–99; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 4140–01–M

DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

Fish and Wildlife Service

Notice To Extend the Public Comment Period for the Draft Recovery Plan for Gabbro Soil Plants of the Central Sierra Nevada Foothills, CA

AGENCY: Fish and Wildlife Service, Interior.

ACTION: Notice of extension of public comment period.

SUMMARY: The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service gives notice that the comment period announced in the March 8, 1999, notice of availability of the Draft Recovery Plan for Gabbro Soil Plants of the Central Sierra Nevada Foothills, California, will be extended an additional 30 days until July 7, 1999. Substantial public interest in the draft plan led the Service to distribute additional copies and to provide additional opportunities for the public to comment on the plan. This recovery plan includes six plant species, of which five are federally listed as endangered or threatened. The draft plan includes recovery criteria and measures for the plants—Stebbin's morning-glory (*Calystegia stebbinsii*), Pine Hill ceanothus (*Ceanothus roderickii*), Pine Hill flannelbush (*Fremontodendron californicum ssp. decumbens*), El Dorado bedstraw (*Galium californicum ssp. sierrae*), and Layne's butterweed (*Senecio layneae*), and an additional species, El Dorado mule-ears (*Wyethia reticulata*), that is considered to be a species of concern. The Service extends the current 90-day comment period and solicits review and comment from the public on this draft plan.

DATES: Comments on the draft recovery plan received by July 7, 1999, will be considered by the Service.

ADDRESSES: Copies of the draft recovery plan are available for inspection, by appointment, during normal business hours at the following location: U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Sacramento Fish and Wildlife Office, 3310 El Camino Avenue, Suite 130, Sacramento, California (telephone (916) 979–2710); and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Regional Office, Ecological Services, 911 NE 11th Ave., Eastside Federal Complex, Portland Oregon 97232–4181 (telephone (503) 231–6131). Requests for copies of the draft recovery plan and written comments and materials regarding this plan should be addressed to Wayne S. White, Field Supervisor, Ecological Services, at the above Sacramento address.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Diane Elam, Fish and Wildlife Biologist, at the above Sacramento address.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

Background

Restoring endangered or threatened animals and plants to the point where they are again secure, self-sustaining members of their ecosystems is a primary goal of the Service's