

provides program goals, objectives and standards and guidelines for conducting management activities in this area. All activities associated with the proposal will be designed to maintain or enhance the resource objectives identified in the Forest Plan and further refined in the Blackfoot Landscape Analysis.

The Forest Service is seeking information and comments from Federal, State, local agencies and other organizations or individuals who may be interested in or affected by the proposed action. The Forest Service invites written comments and suggestions on the issues for the proposal and the area being analyzed. Information received will be used in preparation of the Draft EIS. Preparation of the EIS will include the following steps:

1. Identification of potential issues.
2. Identification of issues to be analyzed in depth.
3. Elimination of insignificant issues or those that have been covered by a relevant previous environmental analysis.
4. Identification of additional reasonable alternatives.
5. Identification of potential environmental effects of the alternatives.

Prescribed harvest treatments in this proposal include evenaged management techniques of clearcutting, with reserves, seed tree with reserves and shelterwood with reserves. Intermediate treatments such as commercial thinning will also be considered. Prescribed burning will be used to treat nonforested and forested vegetation. Alternatives to this proposal will include the "no action" alternative, in which none of the proposed treatments would be implemented. Other alternatives will examine variations in the location, amount and method of vegetative management.

The preliminary issues identified are:

1. The effects on forest health and sustaining ecosystems.
2. The effects on recreation and visual resources.
3. The effects on wildlife.
4. The effects on the roadless and wilderness character of the Crater Mountain and Nevada Mountain Roadless Areas.
5. The effects on fish, water quality, and riparian areas.
6. The effects on project area economics.

The Forest Service will analyze and disclose in the DEIS and FEIS the environmental effects of the proposed action and a reasonable range of alternatives. The DEIS and FEIS will disclose the direct, indirect and

cumulative environmental effects of each alternative and its associated site specific mitigation measures.

Public participation is especially important at several points of the analysis. Interested parties may visit with the Forest Service officials at any time during the analysis. However, two periods of time are specifically identified for the receipt of comments. The first comment period is during the scoping process when the public is invited to give written comments to the Forest Service. The Forest Service will also conduct public open houses in Helena on March 27, 1996 at the Helena National Forest Supervisors Office, 2880 Skyway Drive, and in Lincoln on March 28, 1996 at the Lincoln Community Center. Open houses will be between 6 and 8 p.m. The scoping period ends on April 8, 1996. The second review period is during the 45 day review of the DEIS when the public is invited to comment on the DEIS.

The DEIS is expected to be filed with the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and available for public review in September 1996. At that time, the EPA will publish a notice of availability of the DEIS in the Federal Register.

The comment period on the DEIS will be 45 days from the date the notice of availability is published in the Federal Register.

At this early stage in the scoping process, the Forest Service believes it is important to give reviewers notice of several court rulings related to public participation in the environmental review process. First, reviews of DEIS 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). Secondly, environmental objections that could be raised at the draft environmental impact statement stage, but that are not raised until after completion of the FEIS 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. 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 FEIS.

To assist the Forest Service in identifying and considering issues and concerns on the proposed action, comments on the DEIS 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 DEIS or the merits of the alternatives formulated and discussed in the statement. (Reviewers may wish to refer to the Council on Environmental Quality Regulations for implementing the procedural provisions of the National Environmental Policy Act at 40 CFR 1503.3 in addressing these points.)

After the comment period ends on the DEIS, the comments will be analyzed and considered by the Forest Service in preparing the FEIS. The FEIS is expected to be filed in February 1997.

Dated: March 6, 1996.

Thomas J. Clifford,

Forest Supervisor, Helena National Forest.

[FR Doc. 96-6165 Filed 3-14-96; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 3410-11-M

Rural Utilities Service

Information Collection Activities; Comment Request

AGENCY: Rural Utilities Service, USDA.

ACTION: Notice and request for comments.

SUMMARY: In accordance with the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995 (44 U.S.C. Chapter 35, as amended), the Rural Utilities Service (RUS) invites comments on certain information collections for which RUS intends to request approval from the Office of Management and Budget (OMB).

DATES: Interested persons are invited to submit comments on or before May 14, 1996.

ADDRESSES: Please address written comments to: F. Lamont Heppe, Jr., Deputy Director, Program Support Staff, Rural Utilities Service, U.S. Department of Agriculture, 14th & Independence Ave., SW., AG Box 1522, Washington, DC 20250-1522. Telephone: (202) 720-0736. Comments may also be faxed to (202) 720-4120. Comments should identify the OMB control number.

Requests for copies of an information collection should be directed to Dawn Wolfgang, Program Support Staff, Rural Utilities Service, U.S. Department of Agriculture, 14th & Independence Ave., SW., AG Box 1522, Washington, DC 20250-1522. Telephone: (202) 720-0812. Fax: (202) 720-4120.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:

Dawn D. Wolfgang, Management Analyst, Program Support Staff, Rural Utilities Service, U.S. Department of Agriculture, 14th & Independence Ave.,

SW., AG Box 1522, Washington, DC 20250-1522. Telephone: (202) 720-0812.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: The Office of Management and Budget's (OMB) regulation (5 CFR 1320) implementing provisions of the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995 (Pub. L. 104-13) require that interested members of the public and affected agencies have an opportunity to comment on information collection and recordkeeping activities (see 5 CFR 1320.8(d)). This notice identifies information collection that RUS is submitting to OMB for extension and/or revision to currently approved information collections, as appropriate.

Comments are invited on: (a) Whether this proposed collection of information is necessary for the proper performance of the functions of the agency, including whether the information will have practical utility; (b) the accuracy of the agency's estimate of burden of the proposed collection of information; (c) ways to enhance the quality, utility, and clarity of the information to be collected; and (d) ways to minimize the burden of the collection of information on respondents, including through the use of automated collection techniques or other forms of information technology.

The following information is provided for each information collection: (1) Title of the information collection; (2) OMB control number; (3) expiration date; (4) type of request; (5) abstract of the information collection activity; (6) respondents; and (7) estimate of burden:

Title: Report of Progress of Construction and Engineering Services and Engineer's Monthly Report of Substation Progress.

OMB Control Number: 0572-0014.

Expiration Date: April 30, 1996.

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

Abstract: The Rural Utilities Service (RUS) manages programs in accordance with the Rural Electrification Act (RE Act) of 1936, 7 U.S.C. 901 *et seq.*, as amended, and as prescribed by OMB Circular A-129, Policies for Federal Credit Programs and Non-Tax Receivables.

The Act authorizes RUS to lend funds for construction of various facilities under terms and conditions which will safeguard the security of the loans. One method of safeguarding loan security is to see that the facilities for which funds are loaned are actually constructed.

RUS therefore requires borrowers to submit RUS Form 178, Report of Progress of Construction and Engineering Services, and RUS Form

457, Engineer's Monthly Report of Substation Progress. These forms keep RUS abreast of progress on these construction projects on a month-by-month basis. The frequency of the report allows RUS to detect any potential problems before they reach a critical stage and to make the necessary adjustments to place construction back on schedule.

Respondents: Small business or organizations.

Annual Reporting Burden:

RUS Form 178:

Estimated Number of Respondents: 60.

Estimated Number of Responses per Respondent: 10.

Estimated Total Annual Burden on Respondents: 300 hours.

RUS Form 457:

Estimated Number of Respondents: 50.

Estimated Number of Responses per Respondent: 10.

Estimated Total Annual Burden on Respondents: 500 hours.

Estimated Total Annual Burden on Respondents: 800 hours.

Title: Lien Accommodations and Subordinations.

OMB Control Number: 0572-0100.

Expiration Date: May 31, 1996.

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

Abstract: The RE Act of 1936, as amended, authorized and empowers the Administrator of the Rural Utilities Service to make loans in the several States and Territories of the United States for rural electrification and the furnishing of electric energy to persons in rural areas who are not receiving central station service. The RE Act also authorizes and empowers the Administrator of RUS to provide financial assistance to borrowers for purposes provided in the RE Act by accommodating or subordinating loans made by the National Rural Utilities Cooperative Finance Corporation, the Federal Financing Bank, and other lending agencies.

Title 7 Part 1717, subparts R and S, sets forth policy and procedure to facilitate and support borrowers' efforts to obtain private sector financing of their capital needs, to allow borrowers greater flexibility in the management of their business affairs without compromising RUS loan security, and to reduce the cost to borrowers, in terms of time, expense and paperwork, of obtaining lien accommodations and subordinations.

Respondents: Small business or organizations.

Annual Reporting Burden:

Estimated Number of Respondents: 30.

Estimated Total Burden on Respondents: 100 hours.

Estimated Number of Responses per Respondent: There are a number of components associated with this information collection. Not all apply to every respondent.

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

Dated: March 8, 1996.

Wally Beyer,

Administrator, Rural Utilities Service.

[FR Doc. 96-6182 Filed 3-14-96; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 3410-15-P

Municipal Interest Rates for the Second Quarter of 1996

AGENCY: Rural Utilities Service, USDA.

ACTION: Notice of municipal interest rates on advances from insured electric loans for the second quarter of 1996.

SUMMARY: The Rural Utilities Service hereby announces the interest rates for advances on municipal rate loans with interest rate terms beginning during the second calendar quarter of 1996.

DATES: These interest rates are effective for interest rate terms that commence during the period beginning April 1, 1996, and ending June 30, 1996.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Carolyn Dotson, Loan Funds Control Assistant, U.S. Department of Agriculture, Rural Utilities Service, room 2230-s, 14th Street & Independence Avenue, SW. AgBox 1522, Washington, DC 20250-1522. Telephone: 202-720-1928. FAX: 202-720-4120. E-mail: CDotson@rus.usda.gov.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: The Rural Utilities Service (RUS) hereby announces the interest rates on advances made during the second calendar quarter of 1996 for municipal rate electric loans. Pursuant to RUS regulations at 7 CFR 1714.4, each advance of funds on a municipal rate loan shall bear interest at a single rate for each interest rate term. Pursuant to 7 CFR 1714.5, the interest rates on these advances are based on indexes published in the "Bond Buyer" for the four weeks prior to the first Friday of the last month before the beginning of the quarter.

In accordance with 7 CFR 1714.5, the interest rates are published as shown in the following table for all interest rate terms that begin at any time during the second calendar quarter of 1996.