

direction of and supervision of the Farm Service Agency (FSA) through its State and County Committees. The LMAAP is authorized by the Act of August 24, 1935, clause (3) of section 32, and are implemented by regulations at 7 CFR Part 748, which provide for the reestablishment of farmers' purchasing power by making payments in connection with the normal production of any agricultural commodity for domestic consumption. Recently the surge of low-priced, imported lamb-meat causes the threat of injury to U.S. producers in the sheep and lamb industry. The objective of the program is to make direct payments to producers of sheep and lamb operations to help them weather the current economic crisis, as well as, help improve their production efficiencies and the marketability of lamb meat during the 3 year period from July 21, 1999, through July 31, 2002. FSA will collect information using forms FSA-382 and 383.

Need and Use of the Information: FSA will collect the following information: (1) Sheep and lamb operation name; (2) each related producer's name; (3) ID number and shares; (4) the number of rams purchased for the intended purpose of breeding; (5) the number of eligible sheep enrolled in and eligible sheep improvement program; and/or (6) the type and cost of the facility improvement. The information is needed to verify commodity and producer eligibility and calculate payment amounts. Without the information from the producers, FSA would be unable to administer the program to provide direct payments to the sheep and lamb operations.

Description of Respondents: Farm; Individuals or households; Business or other-for-profit.

Number of Respondents: 60,000.

Frequency of Responses: Reporting: Annually.

Total Burden Hours: 25,000.

Agency is requesting and emergency approval by May 20, 2000.

William McAndrew,

Departmental Clearance Officer.

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DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Agricultural Marketing Service

[TB-00-09]

Flue-Cured Tobacco Advisory Committee—Notice of Committee Renewal

AGENCY: Agricultural Marketing Service, USDA.

ACTION: Notice of committee renewal.

SUMMARY: Notice is hereby given that the Secretary of Agriculture has renewed the Flue-Cured Tobacco Advisory Committee for an additional period of 2 years.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: John P. Duncan III, Deputy Administrator, Tobacco Programs, AMS, USDA, 300 12th Street, S.W., Stop 0280, Room 502 Annex Building, P.O. Box 96456, Washington, D.C. 20090-6456, (202) 205-0567.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: The Committee, which reports to the Secretary through the Under Secretary for Marketing and Regulatory Programs, recommends opening dates and selling schedules for the flue-cured marketing area which aid the Secretary in making an equitable apportionment and assignment of tobacco inspectors. The Committee consists of 39 members; 21 producer representatives, 10 warehouse representatives, and 8 buyer representatives, representing all segments of the flue-cured tobacco industry and meets at the call of the Secretary. The Secretary has determined that renewal of this Committee is in the public interest.

To ensure that recommendations of the Committee take into account the needs of diverse groups served by the Department, membership should include, to the extent practicable, persons with demonstrated ability to represent minorities, women, and persons with disabilities.

This notice is given in compliance with the Federal Advisory Committee Act (5 U.S.C. App.).

Dated: May 22, 2000.

Paul W. Fiddick,

Assistant Secretary for Administration.

[FR Doc. 00-13239 Filed 5-25-00; 8:45 am]

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DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Forest Service

Plantation Lakes Project; Ottawa National Forest, Houghton County, Michigan

AGENCY: Forest Service, USDA.

ACTION: Notice of intent to prepare an environmental impact statement.

SUMMARY: The USDA-Forest Service will prepare an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for the Plantation Lakes Project to disclose the effects of timber harvest, site preparation for natural and artificial regeneration, planting, road management including: road construction, reconstruction, temporary road construction, obliteration, and motorized vehicle closure; dispersed parking area installation and improvement, trail construction, maintenance of permanent openings for wildlife habitat, and classification of old growth, in the Frost Opportunity Area on the Ontonagon Ranger District, and the Connors, Kenton, Plantation Lakes, and Richard Lake Opportunity Areas on the Kenton Ranger District, located approximately 7 air miles northeast of Kenton, Michigan. The purpose and need for action is to: (1) Promote and maintain processes which would enhance natural species diversity, manage to reduce insect and disease potential below epidemic levels, and decrease fire hazard in the long term while providing a supply of wood products for regional and local needs to help support a stable economic base within the dependent geographical area. (2) Maintain and enhance habitat capable of sustaining long-term populations of a variety of wildlife species. (3) Maintain a road system that allows for management of National Forest lands and provides for public access while meeting other resource needs, and (4) Provide dispersed recreation opportunities to meet public needs.

The DEIS is expected to be filed with the EPA and available for public review by September, 2000.

DATES: Written comments and suggestions should be received on or before June 26, 2000.

ADDRESSES: Written comments and suggestions concerning the scope of the analysis should be sent to Leanne Marten, District Ranger, Ontonagon District, 1209 Rockland Road, Ontonagon, MI 49953.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Contact Allen Nicholson, Interdisciplinary Team Leader, Iron

River Ranger District, Phone: (906) 265-5139.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: The project area contains approximately 17,700 acres within the Ottawa National Forest, Houghton County, Michigan. The legal location of the National Forest lands within the project area are: all or portions of Section 4-10, 15-22, 27-30, 33, T48N R36W; Sections 1, 12, 24, 25, T48N R37W; Sections 29-34, T49N R36W; Sections 22, 23, 26, 27, 34-36, T49N R37W, Michigan Meridian.

The Forest Service proposes to harvest approximately 111,000 hundred cubic feet (equivalent to approximately 60 million board feet, MMBF) of timber through a variety of harvest methods on approximately 7,080 acres of forest land. Silviculture systems include approximately 1830 acres of salvage-modified clearcut, 1070 acres of salvage-sanitation harvest, 3,250 acres of selection harvest, 200 acres of shelterwood preparation harvest, and 730 acres of commercial thinning. Connected actions include: approximately 2120 acres of mechanical site preparation for natural and artificial regeneration, and supplemental planting on approximately 140 acres. An estimated 2.5 miles of new system road construction, 8.0 miles of system road reconstruction, and 4.0 miles of temporary road construction would be needed to access timber harvest areas. Temporary roads would be evaluated based on the proposed national transportation policy and would be either obliterated following completion of sale activities or added to the classified road system in the Maintenance Level 1 closed category. The proposal also includes an estimated 3.5 miles of system road decommissioning, permanent closure or obliteration of approximately 16 miles of unclassified roads currently closed, and permanent closure or obliteration of approximately 7.5 miles of unclassified roads currently open. Approximately 0.5 additional miles of Forest Road 1338, currently open, would be managed as closed to highway vehicles. A dispersed parking/camping area would be provided at this new road closure. Approximately 400 feet of new trail and a canoe access at Echo Lake would be constructed, about 100 feet of trail would be resurfaced at Penegor Lake, and improvements made to small parking areas at Penegor and Echo Lakes.

The proposal also includes maintaining approximately 110 acres of permanent openings for wildlife habitat and the classification of approximately 1660 acres of old growth.

The Ottawa Forest Plan provides guidance for management activities within the potentially affected area through its goals, objectives, standards and guidelines, and management area direction. The proposed projects include activities in management areas (MAs) 1.1, 2.1, 3.1, and 4.1. This proposal includes 11 openings greater than 40 acres (size range is approximately 50 to 480 acres), to treat high-risk stands of jack pine (Regional Forester approval for exceeding the forty acre regeneration and salvage/sanitation harvest would be required prior to signing the Record of Decision).

Range of Alternatives

The Forest Service will consider a range of alternatives. One of these will be the "no action" alternative in which none of the proposed activities will be implemented. Additional alternatives will examine varying levels and locations for the proposed activities to achieve the proposal's purposes, as well as to respond to the issues and other resource values.

The EIS will analyze the direct, indirect, and cumulative environmental effects of the alternatives. Past, present, and projected activities on both private and National Forest lands will be considered. The EIS will disclose site-specific mitigation measures, if needed, and their effectiveness.

Preliminary Issues

Tentatively, several preliminary issues of concern have been identified. These issues are briefly described below:

Transportation System: Implementation of the proposed action would permanently close or obliterate roads not needed for the transportation system, and manage an additional segment of road as closed to some types of motorized use. This may affect the public's ability to use traditional access routes.

Vegetation: There are large areas of mature and declining jack pine that are at high risk of loss to insects, disease, or fire. When proposed harvest areas are added to adjacent recently harvested areas (10-15 years ago) several temporary open areas exceeding 40 acres will be created.

Canada Lynx: Effective April 24, 2000, the lynx was listed as a threatened species by the US Fish and Wildlife Service. The lynx will be addressed in the EIS.

Decisions To Be Made

The Ottawa Forest Supervisor will decide the following:

- Whether or not to harvest timber and, if so, identify the selection of, and site-specific location of, appropriate timber management practices (silvicultural prescription, fuels treatment, site preparation, and reforestation), road construction, reconstruction, and temporary road construction necessary to provide access to accomplish treatments, and appropriate mitigation measures.

- Whether or not to permanently close or obliterate roads and restrict motorized access, and if so, where and how.

- Whether or not to maintain permanent openings, and, if so, the location and size of openings to be maintained.

- What facilities, if any, should be constructed to enhance dispersed recreation opportunities.

- What, if any, specific project monitoring requirements would be needed to assure mitigation measures are implemented and effective.

Public Involvement and Scoping: In February 1996, initial scoping was done for the Trophy Barr timber sale, now one of the projects included in the Plantation Lakes analysis. Comments received regarding the Trophy Barr sale project proposal prior to this notice will be included in the documentation for the EIS. The public is encouraged to take part in the process by communicating or visiting with Forest Service officials at any time during the analysis and prior to the decision. The Forest Service will be seeking information, comments, and assistance from Federal, State, and local agencies, as well as other individuals or organizations who may be interested in, or affected by, the proposed action. This input will be used in preparation of the draft and final EIS. The scoping process will include:

- Identifying potential issues.
- Identifying major issues to be analyzed in depth.
- Identifying alternatives to the proposed action.
- Identifying potential environmental effects of this proposed action and the alternatives (i.e. direct, indirect, and cumulative effects and connected actions).

Estimated Dates for Filing. While public participation in this analysis is welcome at any time, comments received within 30 days of the publication of this notice will be especially useful in the preparation of the Draft EIS. The Draft EIS is expected to be filed with the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and to be available for public review by September, 2000. At that time EPA will

publish a Notice of Availability of the draft EIS in the **Federal Register**. The comment period on the draft EIS will be 45 days from the date the EPA publishes the Notice of Availability in the **Federal Register**. It is very important that those interested in the management of this area participate at that time.

The final EIS is scheduled to be completed by March, 2001. In the final EIS, the Forest Service is required to respond to comments and responses received during the comment period that pertain to the environmental consequences discussed in the draft EIS and applicable laws, regulations, and policies considered in making a decision regarding the proposal.

Reviewer's Obligations: The Forest Service believes, at this early stage, 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 statements 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 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 objectives are made available to the Forest Service at a time when it can meaningfully consider and respond to them in the final EIS.

To be most helpful, comments on the draft EIS should be as specific as possible and may address the adequacy of the statement or the merit of the alternatives discussed. 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.

Responsible Official: Phyllis A. Green, Forest Supervisor, Ottawa National Forest, E6248 U.S. 2, Ironwood, MI 49938, is the Responsible Official. As the Responsible Official she will decide if the proposed project will be implemented. She will document the decision and reasons for the decision in the Record of Decision. I have delegated the responsibility to prepare the EIS to

Leanne Marten, District Ranger, Ontonagon Ranger District.

Dated: May 17, 2000.

Phyllis A. Green,

Forest Supervisor, Ottawa National Forest.

[FR Doc. 00-13027 Filed 5-25-00; 8:45 am]

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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), USDA.

ACTION: Proposed collection: comments request.

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 program for Farm Labor Housing Loan and Grant Policies, Procedures and Authorizations for Multi-Family Housing.

DATES: Comments on this notice must be received by July 25, 2000 to be assured of consideration.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:

Mary Fox, Senior Loan Specialist, Multi-Family Housing Processing Division, RHS, United States Department of Agriculture, Stop 0781, 1400 Independence Ave., SW, Washington, DC 20250-0781, Telephone (202) 720-1624.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

Title: Farm Labor Housing Loan and Grant Policies, Procedures and Authorizations.

OMB Number: 0575-0045.

Expiration Date of Approval: June 30, 2000.

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

Abstract: The Rural Housing Service (RHS) is authorized under Section 514, 516, and 521 of Title V of the Housing Act of 1949, as amended, to make initial and subsequent loans and grants to provide housing and related facilities for domestic farm labor. A loan only can be made to a farmowner, family farm partnership, family farm corporation, or an association of farmers whose farming operations demonstrate a need for farm labor housing and that is engaged in agricultural or aquacultural farming operations and which will own the housing and operate it on a nonprofit

basis. A loan can also be made to any limited partnership in which the general partner is a nonprofit entity. A loan and/or grant can be made to public, private nonprofit organizations for domestic farm labor in areas where need exists. In some cases, rental assistance may be provided to eligible tenants.

RHS has the responsibility of assuring the public that funds for Farm Labor Housing projects are financed to build, buy, improve or repair farm labor housing and related facilities. The facilities financed are to have decent, safe and sanitary living conditions and are managed and operated as mandated by Congress. 7 CFR part 1944, subpart D was issued to set forth the policies and procedures and delegation of authority for making initial and subsequent insured loans under Section 514 and grants under Section 516 to provide housing and related facilities for domestic farm labor and to assure that applicable laws and authorities are carried out as intended.

With the provisions of this regulation, RHS will be able to provide the financial assistance and necessary guidance to applicants in the development of their project proposals. It provides the Agency the capacity to meaningfully evaluate the feasibility of the proposed projects. RHS will be able to assure Congress and the general public that all LH projects will be operated for purposes that are intended, and for the benefit of those they are mandated to serve.

The required information is collected on a project-by-project basis and is done so in accordance with the amended Housing Act of 1949, so that RHS can provide guidance and be assured of compliance with terms and conditions of loan, grant, and or subsidy agreements.

Estimate of Burden: Public reporting burden for this collection of information is estimated to average 10.93 hours per response.

Respondents: Farms, Not-for-profit Institutions, and State, Local or Tribal Government.

Estimated Number of Respondents: 95.

Estimated Number of Responses per Respondent: 8.21.

Estimated Total Annual Burden on Respondents: 8,524 hours.

Copies of this information collection can be obtained from Brenda Frost, Regulations and Paperwork Management Branch, Support Services Division, at (202) 692-0037.

Comments are invited on: (a) Whether the proposed collection of information is necessary for the proper performance of the functions of RHS, including