

Notices

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This section of the FEDERAL REGISTER contains documents other than rules or proposed rules that are applicable to the public. Notices of hearings and investigations, committee meetings, agency decisions and rulings, delegations of authority, filing of petitions and applications and agency statements of organization and functions are examples of documents appearing in this section.

JOINT BOARD FOR THE ENROLLMENT OF ACTUARIES

Meeting of the Advisory Committee

AGENCY: Joint Board for the Enrollment of Actuaries.

ACTION: Notice of Federal Advisory Committee meeting.

SUMMARY: The Executive Director of the Joint Board for the Enrollment of Actuaries gives notice of a meeting of the Advisory Committee on Actuarial Examinations (portions of which will be open to the public) in Washington, DC, at the Office of Professional Responsibility on January 8 and 9, 2004.

DATES: Thursday, January 8, 2004, from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m., and Friday, January 9, 2004, from 8:30 a.m. to 5 p.m.

ADDRESSES: The meeting will be held in Suite 4200E, Conference Room, Fourth Floor, East Tower, Franklin Court Building, 1099 14th Street, NW., Washington, DC.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Patrick W. McDonough, Executive Director of the Joint Board for the Enrollment of Actuaries, 202-694-1858.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: Notice is hereby given that the Advisory Committee on Actuarial Examinations will meet in Suite 4200E, Conference Room, Fourth Floor, East Tower, Franklin Court Building, 1099 14th Street, NW., Washington, DC, on Thursday, January 8, 2004, from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m., and Friday, January 9, 2004, from 8:30 a.m. to 5 p.m.

The purpose of the meeting is to discuss topics and questions which may be recommended for inclusion on future Joint Board examinations in actuarial mathematics and methodology referred to in 29 U.S.C. 1242(a)(1)(B) and to review the November 2003 Pension (EA-2A) Joint Board Examination in order to make recommendations relative thereto, including the minimum acceptable pass score. Topics for

inclusion on the syllabus for the Joint Board's examination program for the May 2004 Basic (EA-1) Examination and the May 2004 Pension (EA-2B) Examination will be discussed.

A determination has been made as required by section 10(d) of the Federal Advisory Committee Act, 5 U.S.C. App., that the portions of the meeting dealing with the discussion of questions which may appear on the Joint Board's examinations and review of the November 2003 Joint Board examination fall within the exceptions to the open meeting requirement set forth in 5 U.S.C. 552b(c)(9)(B), and that the public interest requires that such portions be closed to public participation.

The portion of the meeting dealing with the discussion of the other topics will commence at 1 p.m. on January 9 and will continue for as long as necessary to complete the discussion, but not beyond 3 p.m. Time permitting, after the close of this discussion by Committee members, interested persons may make statements germane to this subject. Persons wishing to make oral statements should notify the Executive Director in writing prior to the meeting in order to aid in scheduling the time available and must submit the written text, or at a minimum, an outline of comments they propose to make orally. Such comments will be limited to 10 minutes in length. All other persons planning to attend the public session must also notify the Executive Director in writing to obtain building entry. Notifications of intent to make an oral statement or to attend must be faxed, no later than December 31, 2003, to 202-694-1876, Attn: Executive Director. Any interested person also may file a written statement for consideration by the Joint Board and the Committee by sending it to the Executive Director: Joint Board for the Enrollment of Actuaries, c/o Internal Revenue Service, Attn: Executive Director SE:OPR, 1111 Constitution Avenue, NW., Washington, DC 20224.

Dated: December 2, 2003.

Patrick W. McDonough,
Executive Director, Joint Board for the Enrollment of Actuaries.

[FR Doc. 03-30523 Filed 12-8-03; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 4830-01-P

DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Forest Service

Shawnee National Forest, Illinois: Hiker/Equestrian Trails Designation Project (Phase 1)

AGENCY: Forest Service, USDA.

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

SUMMARY: The USDA Forest Service Shawnee National Forest intends to prepare an environmental impact statement to disclose the environmental consequences of designating additional miles of National Forest hiker/equestrian system trails within four watersheds on the Forest—Lusk Creek, Upper Bay Creek, Eagle Creek, and Big Grand Pierre Creek—and restricting equestrian use within these watersheds to the system trails.

DATES: Comments concerning the scope of the analysis must be received by January 30, 2004. The draft environmental impact statement is expected to be published in May, 2004 and the final environmental impact statement is expected in September, 2004.

ADDRESSES: Send written comments to Matt Lechner, NEPA Coordinator, Attention: Trails Designation, Shawnee National Forest, 50 Highway 145 South, Harrisburg, IL 62946. Send comments electronically to: mailroom_r9_shawnee@fs.fed.us; indicate "Trail Designation" on the subject line.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Tim Pohlman, Recreation Program Manager, or Richard Blume-Weaver, Planning Staff Officer, at (618) 253-7114, 1-800-MYWOODS, or e-mail tpohlman@fs.fed.us with a copy to rblume-weaver@fs.fed.us.

Maps of the trails proposed for designation are available for review at the Forest Supervisor's Office, 50 Highway 145 South, Harrisburg, Illinois; the Vienna-Elizabethtown Ranger District Station, 602 N. 1st St., Vienna, and the Elizabethtown Work Center, Elizabethtown, Illinois; the Jonesboro-Murphysboro Ranger District Station, 521 N. Main St., Jonesboro, and the Murphysboro Work Center, 2221 Walnut, Murphysboro, Illinois; the public libraries in Benton, Carbondale, Golconda, Harrisburg, Jonesboro,

Marion, Metropolis, Murphysboro, Shawneetown, and West Frankfort; and the Southern Illinois University Library, Carbondale. Maps and other information are also available for review on the Shawnee National Forest's Web site: <http://www.fs.fed.us/r9/shawnee>. Click on "Trail Designation Project" under "Current Management News."

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

Purpose and Need for Action

The Shawnee National Forest's 1992 Amended Land and Resource Management Plan (Forest Plan) anticipated an increasing demand for trails on the Forest. In addition to identifying a potential trail-corridor system, the Forest Plan allowed equestrians the use of then-existing user-developed trails and the freedom to ride cross-country in most areas of the Forest. In the years since publication of the Forest Plan, public demand for trails has grown without any additions to the Forest's designated trail system. The existing designated trail system does not adequately meet the need for public access to many scenic attractions, nor does it provide equestrians a loop-trail experience. Numerous user-developed trails have been formed outside of the designated trail system; but agency policy prevents the Forest from managing these trails with trail-maintenance funds.

The Shawnee National Forest is ready at this time for a decision on the designation of additional system trails in order to provide recreational users a longer, well-marked, well-maintained trail system and to reduce resource damage from non-designated, unmanaged, user-developed trails. Since the majority of equestrian use occurs in four neighboring watersheds that contain many popular attractions—about 30 percent of the Forest—the first phase of trail designation is focused in these watersheds. The Forest Service intends to conduct further analyses in the remainder of the Forest following implementation of the decision that results from this environmental impact statement.

Proposed Action

The Shawnee National Forest proposes to: (1) Identify a number of miles of trail to add to the Forest's designated trail system within the watersheds of Lusk Creek, Upper Bay Creek, Big Grande Pierre Creek and Eagle Creek, with the additional miles drawn primarily from existing user-developed trails reconstructed and relocated as necessary to avoid resource impacts; (2) construct additional trailheads to provide access to the trail

system; (3) amend the Forest Plan to restrict equestrian use in these four watersheds to system trails and roads; and (4) amend as required the trail-density standards in the Forest Plan.

Possible Alternatives

Possible alternatives for evaluation in the environmental impact statement include taking no action, designating trails in the four watersheds within the constraints of the Forest Plan's trail-density standards, and designating all trail-routes identified during a series of public workshops on the trails master-planning process.

Responsible Official: Allen Nicholas, Forest Supervisor, Shawnee National Forest, 50 Highway 145 South, Harrisburg, IL 62946.

Nature of Decision To Be Made

The responsible official will decide whether or not to designate more trails on the Shawnee National Forest, whether or not to construct additional trailheads, whether or not to amend the Forest Plan to restrict equestrian use in the four watersheds to designated trails and roads, and whether or not to amend the trail-density standards specified in the Forest Plan.

Scoping Process

The Shawnee National Forest proposes to scope for information by contacting persons and organizations on the Forest's mailing list and publishing a notice in the newspaper of record. The Forest will accept comments at the above-stated addresses on the scope of the proposed action and alternatives until January 30, 2004.

Two informational public open houses will be held to answer questions regarding the proposed action and to receive scoping comments. The first will be 4 p.m. to 7 p.m. on Tuesday, January 20, 2004 in the Knights of Columbus Hall, 100 Columbus Drive, Marion, Illinois (next to the church on the west side of Russell Street, three blocks south of U.S. Highway 13), and the second will be 4 p.m. to 7 p.m. on Wednesday, January 21, 2004 in the Commons Area of the Vienna High School, 601 N. 1st Street, Vienna, Illinois (across the street from the Vienna Ranger Station).

Preliminary Issues

The Forest Service has identified from previous public comments several preliminary issues related to the proposed action: (1) Designation and construction and/or improvement of additional system trails may cause increased erosion and soil compaction and adversely affect water quality; (2) Increasing trail-density standards may

adversely affect wilderness and natural area attributes; (3) Use of additional trails may exceed the physical carrying-capacity of the affected watersheds; and (4) Designation of additional system trails may not provide quality recreational experiences.

Comments Requested

This notice of intent initiates the scoping process that guides the development of the environmental impact statement. In order to ensure adequate identification and discussion in the environmental impact statement of all relevant issues and alternatives, the Forest Service seeks comments related specifically to the proposed action and alternatives. We are especially interested in information that might identify a specific undesired result of implementing the proposed action. Comments received in response to this solicitation, including names and addresses of those who comment, will be considered part of the public record on this proposed action and will be available for public inspection. Comments submitted anonymously will be accepted and considered; however, those who submit anonymous comments will not have the right to appeal subsequent decisions under 36 CFR parts 215 and 217.

Those who comment during the scoping period will be listed to receive a copy of the draft environmental impact statement. In order to conserve resources, the Shawnee National Forest encourages all recipients to view and/or download the draft environmental impact statement from the Shawnee National Forest Web site or accept a copy of the document on a CD. If you are unable to utilize the Web site or a CD, please specify in your comment submittal that you prefer to receive a paper copy of the draft environmental impact statement.

Additionally, pursuant to 7 CFR 1.27(d), any persons may request the agency to withhold a submission from the public record by showing how the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) permits such confidentiality. Persons requesting such confidentiality should be aware that under FOIA confidentiality may be granted in only very limited circumstances, such as to protect trade secrets. The Forest Service will inform the requester of the agency's decision regarding the request for confidentiality and, should the request be denied, return the submission and notify the requester that the comments may be resubmitted with or without name and address within 90 days.

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.

[FR Doc. 03-30439 Filed 12-8-03; 8:45 am]

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.

[FR Doc. 03-30410 Filed 12-8-03; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 3410-11-M

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.