

day scoping 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 developing issues and alternatives.

To assist the Forest Service in identifying and considering issues, comments should be a specific to this proposal as possible. Reviewers may wish to refer to the Council on Environmental Quality Regulatory for implementing the procedural provisions of the National Environmental Policy Act at 40 CFR 1503.3 in addressing these points.

I am the responsible official for this environmental impact statement. My address is Gallatin National Forest, P.O. 130, Federal Building, Bozeman, MT 59771.

Dated: May 3, 2000.

**Richard Inman,**

*Acting Forest Supervisor.*

[FR Doc. 00-9221 Filed 4-13-00; 8:45 am]

**BILLING CODE 3410-11-M**

## DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

### Natural Resources Conservation Service

#### New Porter Bayou, Mississippi

**AGENCY:** Natural Resources Conservation Service, USDA.

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

**SUMMARY:** Pursuant to section 102(2)(C) of the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969; the Council on Environmental Quality Guidelines (40 CFR part 1500); and the Natural Resources Conservation Service Guidelines (7 CFR part 650); the Natural Resources Conservation Service, U.S. Department of Agriculture, gives notice that an environmental impact statement is being prepared for the New Porter Bayou Watershed, Bolivar and Sunflower Counties, Mississippi.

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:** Homer L. Wilkes, State Conservationist, Natural Resources Conservation Service, 1321 Federal Building, 100 West Capitol Street, Jackson, Mississippi 39269, telephone 601-965-5205.

**SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:** The environmental assessment of this federally assisted action indicates that the project may cause significant local, regional, or national impacts on the environment. As a result of these findings, Homer L. Wilkes, State Conservationist, has determined that the preparation and review of an

environmental impact statement are needed for this project.

The project concerns a plan for flood prevention and drainage. Alternatives under consideration to reach these objectives include systems for channel improvement.

A draft environmental impact statement will be prepared and circulated for review by agencies and the public. The Natural Resources Conservation Service invites participation and consultation of agencies and individuals that have special expertise, legal jurisdiction, or interest in the preparation of the draft environmental impact statement. Further information on the proposed action may be obtained from Homer L. Wilkes, State Conservationist, at the above address.

Dated: March 24, 2000.

**Homer L. Wilkes,**

*State Conservationist, USDA-NRCS, Jackson, MS.*

[FR Doc. 00-9364 Filed 4-13-00; 8:45 am]

**BILLING CODE 3410-16-P**

## DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

### Natural Resources Conservation Service

#### Notice of Availability of the "Natural Resources Conservation Service Conservation Programs Manual—Part 513: Resource Conservation and Development (RC&D) Program"

**AGENCY:** Natural Resources Conservation Service, Department of Agriculture.

**ACTION:** Notice and request for comments.

**SUMMARY:** The United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) seeks comments on the proposed revision of the "Natural Resources Conservation Service Conservation Programs Manual—Part 513: Resource Conservation and Development (RC&D) Program." USDA asks for comments from RC&D Council members and other individuals; tribal, State, and local governments and organizations involved in either natural resource conservation or community development groups. These comments will assist USDA in policy development and implementation of the RC&D program. This manual is intended for use by Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) and other USDA staff members, RC&D Council members, and others that either will develop RC&D applications or participate in the RC&D program.

**EFFECTIVE DATES:** Comments will be received beginning April 14, 2000. The comment period will end on June 22, 2000. All comments post-marked by June 22, 2000, will be accepted.

**ADDRESSES:** Address all requests and comments to: Terry D'Addio, National RC&D Program Manager, Natural Resources Conservation Service, Room 6013, South Building, 14th & Independence Avenue, SW, Washington, DC 20250.

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:**

Terry D'Addio, Natural Resources Conservation Service, (202) 720-0557; fax: (202) 690-0639; e-mail: terry.daddio@usda.gov

**SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:** The "Conservation Programs Manual: Part 513—RC&D Program" is a document intended for use by NRCS and other USDA staff members, RC&D Council members, and others that either will develop RC&D applications or participate in the RC&D program. The purpose of this document is to provide policy guidance for the RC&D program, not to establish regulatory requirements. The RC&D program was authorized to encourage and improve the capability of State and local units of government and local nonprofit organizations in rural areas to plan, develop, and implement programs for resource conservation and development. Through the establishment of RC&D areas, the program establishes or improves coordination systems in communities and builds community leadership skills to effectively use Federal, State, and local programs for the communities' benefit.

Current program objectives focus on improvements achieved through natural resources conservation and community development. Such activities lead to sustainable communities, prudent land use, and the sound management and conservation of natural resources.

Assistance is provided, as authorized by the Secretary of Agriculture, to designated RC&D areas through their organized RC&D Councils (comprised of local elected officials and civic leaders). RC&D Councils, in association with local, State, and Federal governments—and other non-profit organizations—initiate and lead the planning and implementation of their locally developed RC&D area plans. Councils also obtain assistance from other local, State, and Federal agencies; private organizations; and foundations.

USDA prohibits discrimination in its programs and activities on the basis of race, color, national origin, gender, religion, age, sexual orientation, or disability. Additionally, discrimination