

• **Mitigation.** Can negative environmental impacts of the action be reasonably mitigated, and what is the likelihood that mitigation measures will be successfully implemented? CEQ regulations (40 CFR 1508.20) indicate that mitigation to be considered in the scope of a NEPA document can include actions or decisions that avoid, minimize, reduce, rectify, or compensate for the adverse impacts identified. The EIS will consider the stewardship plan outlined in section VII. E. of the petition, which is designed to minimize inadvertent gene flow as well as to monitor and mitigate the potential development of glyphosate-resistant weeds. The EIS will also consider other actions, *e.g.*, deployment (release) strategies or management practices, including those that may be outside APHIS' jurisdiction, that might mitigate any adverse impacts identified, so as to alert those who may be in a position to implement them.

Comments that provide information relevant to the scope identified above or that identify other potentially significant environmental issues or alternatives that should be examined in the context of the EIS process would be especially helpful. All comments that we received in response to the January 2004 notice will be included as part of this scoping process; there is no need to resubmit those comments. We will fully consider all the comments received in response to the January 2004 notice and this current notice in developing a final scope of study and in preparing the draft EIS. When the draft EIS is completed, we will publish a notice in the **Federal Register** announcing its availability and inviting the public to comment on it. Following our consideration of the comments received, APHIS will prepare a final EIS; its availability will also be announced in the **Federal Register** along with a 30-day public comment period, after which the Record of Decision will be issued.

Done in Washington, DC, this 21st day of September 2004.

W. Ron DeHaven,

Administrator, Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service.

[FR Doc. E4-2372 Filed 9-23-04; 8:45 am]

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DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Natural Resources Conservation Service

Stemple Creek Watershed Project, Marin and Sonoma Counties, CA

AGENCY: Natural Resources Conservation Service.

ACTION: Notice of a Finding of No Significant Impact.

SUMMARY: Pursuant to Section 102(2)(c) of the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969, the Council on Environmental Quality regulations (40 CFR Part 1500) and the Natural Resources Conservation Service regulations (7 CFR Part 650), the Natural Resources Conservation Service, U.S. Department of Agriculture, gives notice that an environmental impact statement is not being prepared for the Stemple Creek Watershed Project, Marin and Sonoma Counties, California.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Luana E. Kiger, Special Assistant to the State Conservationist, Natural Resources Conservation Service, 430 G Street, Davis, California, 95616-4164, telephone (530) 792-5661.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: The environmental assessment of this federally assisted action indicates that the modifications to the project will not cause significant local, regional, or national impacts on the environment. As a result of these findings, Charles W. Bell, State Conservationist, has determined that the preparation and review of an environmental impact statement are not needed for this action.

The project purpose is watershed protection for water quality improvement. The planned project includes improved waste management systems on about 16 dairies, approximately 29 miles of riparian stream habitat restoration, and land treatment on about 11,000 acres of rangeland. The work will be installed through long-term contracts with individual land users. Participation by land users is voluntary.

The Finding of No Significant Impact has been forwarded to the Environmental Protection Agency and to various Federal, State, and local agencies and interested parties. Basic data developed during the environmental assessment is on file and its review may be arranged by contacting Luana E. Kiger, Special Assistant to the State Conservationist.

No administrative action on implementation of the proposal will be taken until 30 days after the date of this publication in the **Federal Register**.

(This activity is listed in the Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance under No. 10.904, Watershed Protection and Flood Prevention, and is subject to the provisions of Executive Order 12372, which requires intergovernmental consultation with State and local officials)

Dated: September 13, 2004.

Charles W. Bell,

State Conservationist.

[FR Doc. 04-21421 Filed 9-23-04; 8:45 am]

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DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Rural Utilities Service

Southern Montana Electric Cooperative, Inc.; Notice of Intent To Hold a Public Scoping Meeting and Prepare an Environmental Impact Statement

AGENCY: Rural Utilities Service, USDA.

ACTION: Notice of intent to hold a public scoping meeting and prepare an environmental impact statement.

SUMMARY: The Rural Utilities Service (RUS) intends to hold a public scoping meeting and prepare an environmental impact statement (EIS) in connection with possible impacts related to a project being proposed by Southern Montana Electric Cooperative, Inc. (SME), of Billings, Montana. The proposal consists of the construction and operation of a coal-fired electric generation facility, consisting of a single 250 Megawatt (MW) unit, at a site near Great Falls, Montana.

DATES: RUS will conduct the public scoping meetings in an open-house format on October 13, 2004, from 3 p.m. to 7 p.m., at the Civic Center in Great Falls, Montana.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Nurul Islam, Environmental Protection Specialist, RUS, Engineering and Environmental Staff, 1400 Independence Avenue, SW., Stop 1571, Washington, DC 20250-1571, telephone: (202) 720-1414 or email: nurul.islam@usda.gov, or Tim R. Gregori, General Manager, Southern Montana Electric Cooperative, Inc., 3521 Gabel Road, Suite 5, Billings, MT 59102, telephone: (406) 294-9527, or email: gregori@mcn.net.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: SME proposes to construct and operate a 250 MW coal-fired electric generation facility at one of two sites near Great Falls, Montana. The Salem Industrial site is located east of Highway 87 in the Great Falls Industrial Park. The Salem site is located near the intersection of Salem Road and the abandon