

proposals for funding, and to monitor performance after grants have been awarded. Failure to collect this information could result in the improper use of Federal funds.

Description of Respondents: Not-for-profit institutions; State, Local, or Tribal Government.

Number of Respondents: 12.

Frequency of Responses:

Recordkeeping; Reporting: Quarterly; Annually.

Total Burden Hours: 7,878.

Agency is requesting emergency approval by May 12, 2000.

Rural Housing Service

Title: 7 CFR 1944–E, Rural Rental and Cooperative Housing Loan Policies, Procedures, and Authorizations.

OMB Control Number: 0575–0047.

Summary of Collection: The Rural Housing Agency (RHS), an agency of the U.S. Department of Agriculture is authorized to make loans to finance rural rental and cooperative housing projects and related facilities under Section 515 and 521 of Title V of the Housing Act of 1949, as amended. The intent of the program is to provide affordable rental housing for elderly or handicapped person or families, or other persons and families of low or moderate income in rural areas. RHS will collect information using forms RD 1944–7, 30, 31, 33, 34, 35, and 38.

Need and Use of the Information: RHS will collect information to evaluate the cost, benefits, feasibility and financial performance of the proposed project, as well as the eligibility of the applicant. Failure to collect this information would result in unauthorized federal assistance being granted.

Description of Respondents: Business or other for-profit; Individuals or households; Not-for-profit institutions; State, Local, or Tribal Government.

Number of Respondents: 425.

Frequency of Responses: Reporting: On occasion.

Total Burden Hours: 28,246.

William McAndrew,

Departmental Clearance Officer.

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DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Forest Service

Fanshaw Project Environmental Impact Statement; Notice of Intent

AGENCY: Forest Service, USDA.

ACTION: Revision of Notice of Intent (NOI).

SUMMARY: This document revises the Notice of Intent to prepare and Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for the Port Houghton/Cape Fanshaw timber harvest as originally published in the **Federal Register** on September 12, 1994 (**Federal Register** Vol. 59, No. 175, pp. 46819–46820). A revised NOI was published on August 14, 1995 (**Federal Register** Vol. 60, No. 156, p. 41862) stating that two decisions-makers will sign the Record of Decision. A NOI to prepare a Revised Draft EIS was published on September 23, 1997 (**Federal Register** Vol. 62, No. 184, pp. 49665–49666). This revision to the NOI is necessary because a new Record of Decision (ROD) for the Tongass Land and Resource Management Plan was signed by Under-Secretary of Agriculture Jim Lyons in April 1999, which changed some of the existing Forest Plan Land Use Designations (LUD) within the project area. Most of the Forest Plan LUDs within the Port Houghton/Cape Fanshaw EIS were changed to Non-Development LUDs. This NOI revision includes changes in the proposed action, the size of the project area, the name of the project as well as changes in the project schedule to reflect the changes in the new Forest Plan ROD.

The Department of Agriculture, Forest Service, will prepare an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) to provide a supply of timber for the Tongass National Forest timber sale program, to identify recreational opportunities and potential watershed project needs and to develop a road management plan for the project area. The Record of Decision will disclose where, if any, the Forest Service has decided to provide timber harvest units, roads, associated timber harvesting facilities, identify dispersed recreation opportunities, and potential watershed projects. The proposed action is to harvest timber on a estimated 2100 acres and to provide multiple timber sale opportunities for the total of approximately 41 million board feet (mmbf) of timber. Timber harvest will be accomplished using a variety of silvicultural prescriptions and harvest methods that meet the standards and guidelines of the Tongass Forest Plan. This project would include the construction of up to 33 miles of road and one new log transfer facility (LTF) within the project area. This project may also include an analysis and decision for a nonsignificant amendment to the Forest Plan to revise the location of small Old Growth Reserve(s) within the study area. Recreational opportunities for enhancement may include dispersed sites for camping, and improved access

for hunting and subsistence users. Potential watershed projects may include existing land slide restoration and fish enhancement. A range of alternatives responsive to significant issues will be developed and will include a no-action alternative. The Fanshaw project area is approximately 92,000 acres in size and is located on parts of Value Comparison Units 820, 830, 840, 850, 860, 870, 880, 890, and 900 on the mainland on the Petersburg and Juneau Ranger Districts of the Tongass National Forest. Part of this project area is within Inventoried Roadless Areas Fanshaw #201, Windham—Port Houghton #308 and Spires #202 as identified by the Tongass Land and Resource Management Plan.

DATES: Comments concerning the scope of this project should be received by June 15, 2000.

ADDRESSES: Please send written comments to the Petersburg Ranger District; Tongass National Forest; Attn: Tom Parker; Fanshaw Project EIS; PO Box 1328; Petersburg, AK 99833.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Questions about the proposal and EIS should be directed to Patricia Grantham, District Ranger, Petersburg Ranger District, Tongass National Forest, PO Box 1328, Petersburg, AK 99833; telephone (907) 772–3871 or Tom Parker, Interdisciplinary Team Leader, Petersburg Ranger District, PO Box 1328, Petersburg, AK 99833; telephone (907) 772–3871.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: Public participation has been an integral component of the study process and will be especially important at several points during the analysis. The proposed activities were first identified during the Port Houghton/Cape Fanshaw EIS, which incorporated aspects of collaborative stewardship. During the last year, the Forest Service has been seeking information, comments, and assistance from Federal, State, and local agencies, Federally-recognized Indian tribes, and individuals and organizations that may be interested in, or affected by, the proposed activities. Written scoping comments have been solicited through a scoping package that was sent to the project mailing list and available at open houses in Petersburg, Juneau and Kake, Alaska. The scoping process includes: (1) identification of potential issues; (2) identification of issues to be analyzed in depth; and, (3) elimination of insignificant issues or those which have been covered by a previous environmental review. For the Forest Service to best use the scoping input, comments should be received by June

15, 2000 (30 days from expected publication).

Based on results of scoping and the resource capabilities within the project area, alternatives, including a "no action" alternatives, will be developed for the Draft Environmental Impact Statement. The Draft Environmental Impact Statement is projected to be filed with the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) in the summer 2000. Subsistence hearings, as provided for in Title VIII, Section 810 of the Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation Act (ANILCA), will occur, if necessary, during the comment period on the Draft Environmental Impact Statement. The Final Environmental Impact Statement and Record of Decision are anticipated to be published in February 2001.

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, 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). Environmental objections that could have been 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 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 of the proposed action, comments during scoping and 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 Environmental Impact Statement. Comments may also address the adequacy of the Draft Environmental Statement 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. 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 standing to appeal the subsequent decision under 36 CFR Parts 215 or 217. Additionally, pursuant to 7 CFR 1.27(d), any person may request the agency to withhold a submission from the public record by showing how the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) permits such confidentiality. Requesters 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 where the request is denied, the agency will return the submission and notify the requester that the comments may be resubmitted with or without name and address within 7 days.

Permits which may be required for implementation of the project include the following:

1. U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
 - Approval of discharge of dredged or fill material into the waters of the United States under Section 404 of the Clean Water Act;
 - Approval of the construction of structures or work in navigable waters of the United States under Section 10 of the Rivers and Harbors Act of 1899;
2. Environmental Protection Agency
 - National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (402) Permit;
 - Review Spill Prevention Control and Countermeasure Plan;
3. State of Alaska, Department of Natural Resources
 - Tideland Permit and Lease or Easement;
4. State of Alaska, Department of Environmental Conservation
 - Solid Waste Disposal Permit;
 - Certification of Compliance with Alaska Water Quality Standards (401 Certification)

Responsible Official

Carol Jorgensen, Assistant Forest Supervisor, Tongass National Forest, PO BOX 309, Petersburg, Alaska 99833, is the responsible official. The responsible

official will consider the comments, response, disclosure of environmental consequences, and applicable laws, regulations, and policies in making the decision and stating the rationale in the Record of Decision.

Dated: April 10, 2000.

Carol J. Jorgensen,
Assistant Forest Supervisor.

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DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Rural Telephone Bank

Staff Briefing for the Board of Directors

ACTION: Board of Directors Meeting.

TIME AND DATE: 2:00 p.m., Thursday, May 11, 2000.

PLACE: Room 5030, South Building, Department of Agriculture, 1400 Independence Avenue, SW, Washington, DC.

STATUS: Open.

MATTERS TO BE DISCUSSED: 1. Current telecommunications industry issues.

2. Status of PBO planning and recommendations to accelerate privatization of the Bank.

3. President's proposed budget for FY 2001.

4. Office of the Inspector General's audit report on FY 1999 financial statements.

5. FY 1999 annual report of the Board.

6. Administrative issues.

TIME AND DATE: 9:00 a.m., Friday, May 12, 2000.

PLACE: Room 104-A, The Williamsburg Room, Department of Agriculture, 12th & Jefferson Drive, SW, Washington, DC.

STATUS: Open.

MATTERS TO BE CONSIDERED: The following matters have been placed on the agenda for the Board of Directors meeting:

1. Call to order.

2. Action on Minutes of the February 11, 2000, board meeting.

3. Report on loans approved in the second quarter of FY 2000.

4. Report on second quarter financial activity for FY 2000.

5. Privatization Committee report.

6. Action on the Bank's annual report for FY 1999.

7. Adjournment.

CONTACT PERSON FOR MORE INFORMATION: Roberta D. Purcell, Assistant Governor, Rural Telephone Bank, (202) 720-9554.