

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.

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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

whether the information will have practical utility; (b) the accuracy of RHS's estimate of the burden of the proposed collection of information including the validity of the methodology and assumptions used; (c) ways to enhance the quality, utility and clarity of the information to be collected; and (d) ways to minimize the burden of the collection of information on those who are to respond, including through the use of appropriate automated, electronic, mechanical, or other technological collection techniques or other forms of information technology. Comments may be sent to Brenda Frost, Regulations and Paperwork Management Branch, U.S. Department of Agriculture, Rural Development, STOP 0743, 1400 Independence Ave., SW, Washington, DC 20250-0743. All responses to this notice will be summarized and included in the request for OMB approval. All comments will also become a matter of public record.

Dated: May 10, 2000.

Obediah G. Baker, Jr.,

Acting Administrator, Rural Housing Service.

[FR Doc. 00-13237 Filed 5-25-00; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 3410-XV-P

DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Rural Utilities Service

Jackson County Lake Project

AGENCY: Rural Utilities Service, USDA.

ACTION: Notice of Availability of Draft Environmental Impact Statement and Notice of Public Meeting.

SUMMARY: Notice is hereby given that the Rural Utilities Service (RUS) is issuing a Draft Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for the Jackson County Lake Project. The Draft EIS was prepared pursuant to the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (NEPA) (U.S.C. 4231 *et seq.*) in accordance with the Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ) regulations for implementing the procedural provisions of NEPA (40 CFR parts 1500-1508) and RUS regulations (7 CFR part 1940, Subpart G). RUS invites comments on the Draft EIS.

The purpose of the EIS is to evaluate the potential environmental impacts of and alternatives to the Jackson County Empowerment Zone (EZ) Community, Incorporated and Jackson County Water Association's (JCWA) applications for financial assistance to provide water supply for the residents of Jackson County and parts of surrounding counties. The project, known as the

Jackson County Lake Project, proposes to construct a roller-compacted concrete dam to create a reservoir within Jackson County, Kentucky, and to construct a raw water transmission main from the proposed reservoir to the JCWA Treatment Plant. A 300-foot buffer zone surrounding the reservoir horizontally from the normal pool level has been proposed to protect the water quality of the reservoir by restricting development and certain land uses in this area. Also included in the proposal is the construction of a water intake structure and a pump house to pump water out of the reservoir. Proposed recreational development around the reservoir may include a boat ramp, boat dock, public beach, hiking trails, picnic areas, and a primitive campground.

DATES: Written comments on this Draft EIS will be accepted on or before July 10, 2000. A public meeting will be held on June 27, 2000. The public meeting will be held in two sessions, one beginning at 10 a.m. and one beginning at 7 p.m.

ADDRESSES: To send comments or for more information, contact: Mark S. Plank, USDA, Rural Utilities Service, Engineering and Environmental Staff, 1400 Independence Avenue, Mail Stop 1571, Washington DC 20250, telephone (202) 720-1649, fax (202) 720-0820, or email: mplank@rus.usda.gov. Further information can also be obtained from: Thomas G. Fern, State Director, USDA, Rural Development State Office, 771 Corporate Drive, Suite 200, Lexington, KY 40503, telephone (606) 224-7300, or fax (606) 224-7340. The public meeting will be held in the gymnasium of Jackson County High School, located on U.S. 421.

A copy of the Draft EIS can be obtained or viewed online at <http://www.usda.gov/rus/water/ees/deis-jc.htm>. The files are in a portable document format (pdf); in order to review or print the document, users need to obtain a free copy of Acrobat Reader. The Acrobat Reader can be obtained from <http://www.adobe.com/prodindex/acrobat/readstep.html>.

Copies of the Draft EIS will be available for public review during normal business hours at the following locations:

Jackson County Public Library,
Courthouse Square, PO Box 160,
McKee, KY 40447, (606) 287-8113
Natural Resources Conservation Service,
U.S. Highway 421 South, McKee, KY
40447, (606) 287-8311
Jackson County Extension Service, 263
U.S. Highway 421 South, PO Box 188,
McKee, KY 40447, (606) 287-7693

Kentucky Highlands Investment Corporation, 362 Old Whitley Road, London, KY 40741, (606) 864-5175
Jackson County EZ Community, Incorporated, McCammon Ridge Road, PO Box 280, McKee, KY 40447, (606) 287-8395
USDA Rural Development, 771 Corporate Drive, Suite 200, Lexington, KY 40503, (606) 224-7300.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: Pursuant to Subchapter C, Part 1 (Empowerment Zones, Enterprise Communities and Rural Development Investment Areas) of Title XIII of the Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act of 1993, Jackson County, Kentucky is located in an area designated as an Empowerment Zone/Enterprise Community (EZ/EC) (see **Federal Register** Vol. 60, No. 24, February 6, 1995). The purpose of the EZ/EC initiative is to empower rural communities and their residents to create opportunities for economic development as part of a Federal-State-local and private sector partnership. The proposed action is an integral component of the EZ/EC initiative as identified in the Kentucky Highland Empowerment Zone's Strategic Plan. The proposed action will improve the area's water supply necessary for promoting economic development in the area.

The Jackson County EZ Community, Inc. and the JCWA have applied for financial assistance for the Jackson County Lake Project from the following: RUS; Appalachian Regional Commission; U.S. Department of Commerce, Economic Development Administration; Department of Housing and Urban Development; Kentucky Highlands Empowerment Zone; and Kentucky Tobacco Settlement money. In accordance with 40 CFR 1501.5, Lead Agencies, the RUS is the lead Agency for the EIS and the U.S. Forest Service is the Cooperating Agency.

A number of alternatives were evaluated in the EIS and were determined to be unreasonable or inefficient due to environmental or economic reasons or due to an insufficient yield to meet the projected water needs of Jackson County. These alternatives included eleven reservoir sites throughout Jackson County, groundwater development, the expansion of existing surface water storage facilities within Jackson County, water conservation, and importing water from existing surface water resources in surrounding counties to the JCWA Treatment Plant.

Three alternative sites for the dam and reservoir were determined to be reasonable for further consideration,