

more than one research element may range up to \$450,000. Annual budgets for interdisciplinary field research projects at the FRC are expected to range from \$300,000 to \$1,000,000 for total costs. Costs for drilling at the FRC should not be included in the applicant's budget. All applications should include letters of agreement to collaborate from potential collaborators; these letters should specify the contributions the collaborators intend to make if the application is accepted and funded. DOE may encourage collaboration among prospective investigators to promote joint applications or joint research projects by using information obtained through the preliminary applications or through other forms of communication. DOE is under no obligation to pay for any costs associated with the preparation or submission of applications if an award is not made.

Merit Review

Applications will be subjected to formal merit review (peer review) and will be evaluated against the following evaluation criteria which are listed in descending order of importance codified at 10 CFR 605.10(d):

1. Scientific and/or Technical Merit of the Project;
2. Appropriateness of the Proposed Method or Approach;
3. Competency of Applicant's Personnel and Adequacy of Proposed Resources;
4. Reasonableness and Appropriateness of the Proposed Budget.

For renewals, progress on previous NABIR funded research will be an important criterion for evaluation. As part of the evaluation, program policy factors also become a selection priority. Note, external peer reviewers are selected with regard to both their scientific expertise and the absence of conflict-of-interest issues. Federal and non-federal reviewers will be used, and submission of an application constitutes agreement that this is acceptable to the investigator(s) and the submitting institution.

Submission Information

Information about the development, submission of applications, eligibility, limitations, evaluation, the selection process, and other policies and procedures may be found in 10 CFR part 605, and in the Application Guide for the Office of Science Financial Assistance Program. Electronic access to SC's Financial Assistance Application Guide is possible via the World Wide

Web at: <http://www.sc.doe.gov/production/grants/grants.html>.

In addition, for this notice, the research description must be 20 pages or less, exclusive of attachments, and must contain an abstract or summary of the proposed research (to include the hypotheses being tested, the proposed experimental design, and the names of all investigators and their affiliations). *Applicants who have had prior NABIR support must include a Progress Section with a brief description of results and a list of publications derived from that funding.* Attachments should include short (2 pages) curriculum vitae, a listing of all current and pending federal support and letters of intent when collaborations are part of the proposed research. Curriculum vitae should be submitted in a form similar to that of the National Institutes of Health (NIH) or the National Science Foundation (NSF) (two to three pages).

The Office of Science, as part of its grant regulations, requires at 10 CFR 605.11(b) that a recipient receiving a grant and performing research involving recombinant DNA molecules and/or organisms and viruses containing recombinant DNA molecules shall comply with the NIH "Guidelines for Research Involving Recombinant DNA Molecules," which is available via the World Wide Web at: <http://www.niehs.nih.gov/odhsb/biosafe/nih/rdna-apr98.pdf>, (59 FR 34496, July 5, 1994), or such later revision of those guidelines as may be published in the **Federal Register**.

Grantees must also comply with other federal and state laws and regulations as appropriate; for example, the Toxic Substances Control Act (TSCA) as it applies to genetically modified organisms. Although compliance with NEPA is the responsibility of DOE, grantees proposing to conduct field research are expected to provide information necessary for the DOE to complete the NEPA review and documentation.

Additional information on the NABIR program is available at the following Web site: <http://www.lbl.gov/NABIR/>. For researchers who do not have access to the World Wide Web, please contact Karen Carlson; Environmental Sciences Division; SC-74, Germantown Building; U.S. Department of Energy; 1000 Independence Avenue, SW.; Washington, DC 20585-1290; phone: (301) 903-3338; fax: (301) 903-8519; E-mail: karen.carlson@science.doe.gov; for hard copies of background material mentioned in this solicitation.

The Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance number for this program is 81.049, and the solicitation control number is ERFAP 10 CFR part 605.

Issued in Washington, DC on December 12, 2003.

John Rodney Clark,

Associate Director of Science for Resource Management.

[FR Doc. 03-31331 Filed 12-18-03; 8:45 am]

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DEPARTMENT OF ENERGY

Environmental Management Site-Specific Advisory Board, Paducah

AGENCY: Department of Energy (DOE).

ACTION: Notice of open meeting.

SUMMARY: This notice announces a meeting of the Environmental Management Site-Specific Advisory Board (EM SSAB), Paducah. The Federal Advisory Committee Act (Pub. L. 92-463, 86 Stat. 770) requires that public notice of these meetings be announced in the **Federal Register**.

DATES: Thursday, January 15, 2004; 5:30 p.m.-9:30 p.m.

ADDRESSES: 111 Memorial Drive, Barkley Centre, Paducah, Kentucky.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: William E. Murphie, Deputy Designated Federal Officer (DDFO), Department of Energy Paducah Site Office, Post Office Box 1410, MS-103, Paducah, Kentucky 42001, (270) 210-2215.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

Purpose of the Board: The purpose of the Board is to make recommendations to DOE and its regulators in the areas of environmental restoration and waste management activities.

Tentative Agenda:

- 5:30 p.m. Informal Discussion
- 6:00 p.m. Call to Order; Introductions; Approve November Minutes; Review Agenda
- 6:05 p.m. DDFO's Comments
- 6:25 p.m. Ex-officio Comments
- 6:35 p.m. Federal Coordinator Comments
- 6:45 p.m. Public Comments and Questions
- 6:55 p.m. Break
- 7:05 p.m. Task Forces/Presentations
 - Waste Operations Task Force
 - Water Task Force
 - C-400 Proposed Plan (discussion only)
 - Long Range Strategy/Stewardship —DUF₆
- 8:05 p.m. Public Comments and Questions
- 8:15 p.m. Administrative Issues
 - Review of Work Plan
 - Review of Next Agenda

8:35 p.m. Review of Action Items
 8:50 p.m. Task Force and Subcommittee Reports
 • Community Concerns
 • Public Involvement/Membership
 • Executive Committee

9:15 p.m. Final Comments

9:30 p.m. Adjourn

Copies of the final agenda will be available at the meeting.

Public Participation: The meeting is open to the public. Written statements may be filed with the Committee either before or after the meeting. Individuals who wish to make oral statements pertaining to agenda items should contact David Dollins at the address listed below or by telephone at (270) 441-6819. Requests must be received five days prior to the meeting and reasonable provision will be made to include the presentation in the agenda. The Deputy Designated Federal Officer is empowered to conduct the meeting in a fashion that will facilitate the orderly conduct of business. Each individual wishing to make public comments will be provided a maximum of five minutes to present their comments as the first item of the meeting agenda.

Minutes: The minutes of this meeting will be available for public review and copying at the Freedom of Information Public Reading Room, 1E-190, Forrestal Building, 1000 Independence Avenue, SW., Washington, DC 20585 between 9 a.m. and 4 p.m., Monday-Friday, except Federal holidays. Minutes will also be available at the Department of Energy's Environmental Information Center and Reading Room at 115 Memorial Drive, Barkley Centre, Paducah, Kentucky between 8 a.m. and 5 p.m. on Monday thru Friday or by writing to David Dollins, Department of Energy Paducah Site Office, Post Office Box 1410, MS-103, Paducah, Kentucky 42001 or by calling him at (270) 441-6819.

Issued at Washington, DC on December 15, 2003.

Rachel M. Samuel,

Deputy Advisory Committee Management Officer.

[FR Doc. 03-31333 Filed 12-18-03; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 6450-01-P

Environmental Protection Agency

[ER-FRL-6646-7]

Environmental Impact Statements and Regulations; Availability of EPA Comments

Availability of EPA comments prepared pursuant to the Environmental Review Process (ERP), under section 309 of the Clean Air Act and section

102(2)(c) of the National Environmental Policy Act as amended. Requests for copies of EPA comments can be directed to the Office of Federal Activities at (202) 564-7167.

Draft EISs

ERP No. D-AFS-J65392-MT Rating EC2, Helena National Forest Noxious Weed Treatment Project, Implementation, Lewis and Clark, Powell, Jefferson, Broadwater and Meagher Counties, MT.

Summary: EPA supports integrated weed management to control noxious weeds. However, EPA expressed environmental concerns regarding adequate protection measures to reduce herbicide transport to surface and ground water and to protect public health. The final EIS should address those issues and include monitoring in selected watersheds.

ERP No. D-AFS-J65394-MT Rating EC2, Basin Creek and Blacktail Hazardous Watershed Fuels Reduction Project, Implementation, Highland Mountains, Butte Ranger District, Beaverhead-Deerlodge National Forest, Butte-Silver Bow County, MT.

Summary: EPA supports the need to reduce hazardous fuels and fire risk and protect the Basin Creek Municipal watershed for the City of Butte. However, EPA expressed environmental concerns with potential adverse impacts to threatened lynx.

ERP No. D-AFS-L65433-OR Rating EC2, North Fork Burnt River Mining Project, Proposal for Mineral Plans of Operation, Implementation, Wallowa-Whitman National Forest, Unity Ranger District, Whitman Unit, Blue Mountains, Town of Unity, Baker County, OR.

Summary: EPA expressed environmental concerns regarding impacts from the proposed action on water quality. Mining activities may contribute to increased temperature and sediment on 303(d) listed streams and may result in additional impaired water bodies. EPA recommends that the EIS explain how water quality will be protected and improved. Also, the Plan of Operation should be amended to include any future Total Maximum Daily Load requirements if applicable.

ERP No. D-AFS-L65439-OR Rating EC2, Monument Fire Recovery Project, Whitman Unit—Wallowa—Whitman National Forest (WWNF) Timber Harvest of Fire Killed/Dying Trees, Reforestation, Recovery of Herbaceous, Native Vegetation and Maintenance or Improvement of Water Quality, Implementation, Baker County, OR.

Summary: EPA expressed environmental concerns with potential

adverse impacts to water quality and suggests the Final EIS include mitigation measures and identify water quality limited waterbodies in the project area. EPA also expressed concerns with adverse impacts to habitat for primary cavity excavator bird species from harvest activities.

ERP No. D-BLM-L65422-00 Rating EO2, Upper Klamath River Management Plan, Resource Management Plan Amendments, Implementation, Upper Klamath River stretch between Lake Ewauna, OR, south to Irongate Dam in CA.

Summary: EPA expressed environmental objections with alternatives that will not meet water quality standards, and may adversely impact threatened and endangered species. The final EIS should fully disclose impacts to wetlands, provide additional information on consultation with Native American tribes and fully assess potential environmental justice impacts. EPA requested that the final evaluate an alternative that meets water quality standards.

ERP No. D-FHW-F40417-WI Rating EC2, WI-83 Highway Improvements, County NN in Mukwonago to WI-16 in Hartland, Funding and U.S. Army COE Section 404 Permit Issuance, Waukesha County, WI.

Summary: EPA has identified environmental concerns with the proposed project relating to impacts on trout habitat, Scuppernong Creek, Blanding's Turtle and air quality. EPA is also concerned about the adequacy of the information in the DEIS regarding wetlands.

ERP No. D-NOA-E91014-00 Rating EC2, Generic Essential Fish Habitat Amendment to the Fishery Management Plans of the Gulf of Mexico (GOM) for Shrimp, Red Drum, Reef Fish, Stone Crab, Coral and Coral Reef, Spiny Lobster Fisheries of the GOM and South Atlantic Coastal Migratory Pelagic Resources of the Gulf of Mexico and South Atlantic.

Summary: EPA expressed environmental concern that the preferred alternative did not protect regions which comprise the bulk of the EFH habitats within the 100 fathom isobath. EPA believes that the proposed action would be substantially improved if marine protected areas, habitat/reef creation and rotational strategies were considered as EFH management measures.

ERP No. D-USN-K11112-CA Rating EC2, Tertiary Treatment Plant and Associated Facilities Construction and Operation, Implementation, Marine Corps Base Camp Pendleton, San Diego County, CA.