

393) the Nez Perce and Clearwater National Forests' North Central Idaho Resource Advisory Committee will meet Friday, May 17, 2002 in Lapwai, Idaho for a business meeting. The meeting is open to the public.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: The business meeting on May 17, begins at 10:00 AM, at Richard A. Halfmoon Tribal Council Chambers, Main Street and Beavers Grade, Lapwai, Idaho. Agenda topics will include review of proposed projects and project selections. A public forum will begin at 2:30 PM (PST).

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Ihor Mereszczak, Staff Officer and Designated Federal Officer, at (208) 983-1950.

Dated: April 23, 2002.

Ihor Mereszczak,

Acting Forest Supervisor

[FR Doc. 02-10521 Filed 4-29-02; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 3410-11-M

DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Natural Resources Conservation Service

Notice of Availability of a Finding of No Significant Impact for the Sandstone Creek Watershed in Roger Mills County, OK

AGENCY: Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) in Oklahoma, U.S. Department of Agriculture.

ACTION: Notice of 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 Sandstone Creek Watershed, Roger Mills County, Oklahoma.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: M. Darrel Dominick, State Conservationist, Natural Resources Conservation Service, 100 USDA, Suite 206, Stillwater, Oklahoma 74074, (405) 742-1206.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: The environmental assessment of this federally assisted action indicates that the project will not cause significant local, regional, or national impacts on the environment. As a result of these findings, M. Darrel Dominick, State

Conservationist, has determined that the preparation and review of an environmental impact statement is not needed for this project.

The project purposes are flood control and watershed protection. The planned works of improvement include the rehabilitation of two aging floodwater retarding structures and associated land treatment for sediment control.

The Notice of a Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) has been forwarded to the Environmental Protection Agency and to various Federal, State, and local agencies and interested parties. A limited number of copies of the FONSI are available to fill single copy requests at the above address. Basic data developed during the environmental assessment are on file and may be reviewed by contacting M. Darrel Dominick.

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

Dated: April 10, 2002.

M. Darrel Dominick,

State Conservationist, Oklahoma.

[FR Doc. 02-10536 Filed 4-29-02; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 3410-16-P

DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Natural Resources Conservation Service

Notice of Availability of a Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI)

AGENCY: Natural Resources Conservation Service, USDA.

ACTION: Notice of availability of a Finding of No Significant Impact for a project on the South Slough Estuarine Research Reserve for review and comment.

SUMMARY: The NRCS has issued a Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) for a stream restoration project on the South Slough National Estuarine Research Reserve. A copy of the FONSI and the final Environmental Assessment (EA) is available for public review at the following locations:

- NRCS Office, 382 North Central, Coquille, OR 97423
- Coquille Public Library, Coquille, OR 97423
- Coos County Courthouse, 250 North Baxter, Coquille, OR 97423
- South Slough National Estuarine Research Reserve, Estuarine and Coastal Science Laboratory, Post Office Box 5417, Charleston, Oregon 97420.
- Coos Bay public library, 525 Anderson, Coos Bay, OR 97420

- North Bend public library, 1800 Sherman, North Bend, OR 97459
- Additional copies may be obtained by contacting Tom Purvis, NRCS, 541-396-2841.

DATES: Comments will be received for a 30-day period commencing with this date of publication.

ADDRESSES: Address all requests and comments to Tom Purvis, District Conservationist, Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), 382 North Central, Coquille, OR 97423; (541) 396-5106 (FAX).

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Tom Purvis, (541) 396-2841.

Dated: April 18, 2002.

C. R. Vigil, Jr.,

Acting State Conservationist, Portland, OR.

[FR Doc. 02-10535 Filed 4-29-02; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 3410-16-P

DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Rural Telephone Bank

Sunshine Act; Meeting

AGENCY: Rural Telephone Bank, USDA.

ACTION: Privatization Committee Meeting.

TIME AND DATE: 8:30 a.m., Tuesday, May 7, 2002.

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

STATUS: Open.

MATTERS TO BE DISCUSSED: The business advisor will present reports on projects completed to date and discuss the proposed outreach program, operational blueprint, and legislative review requirements.

ACTION: Staff Briefing for the Board of Directors.

TIME AND DATE: 2 p.m., Tuesday, May 7, 2002.

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

STATUS: Open.

MATTERS TO BE DISCUSSED:

1. Progress report on privatization study.
2. Office of the Inspector General's audit report on fiscal year 2001 financial statements.
3. Current telecommunications industry issues.
4. Administrative issues.

ACTION: Board of Directors Meeting.

TIME AND DATE: 9 a.m., Wednesday, May 8, 2002.

PLACE: Conference Room 104-A, Jamie L. Whitten Federal Building, U.S. 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 12, 2002, board meeting.
3. Secretary's Report on loans approved.
4. Treasurer's Report.
5. Privatization Committee Report.
6. Governor's Remarks.
7. Adjournment.

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

Dated: April 25, 2002.

Hilda Gay Legg,

Governor, Rural Telephone Bank.

[FR Doc. 02-10722 Filed 4-26-02; 12:14 pm]

BILLING CODE 3410-FR-P

DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Rural Utilities Service

Launching Our Communities' Access to Local Television Act of 2000

AGENCY: Rural Utilities Service, USDA.

ACTION: Notice of inquiry.

SUMMARY: In light of the rapid changes occurring in the communications and telecommunications industries, the Rural Utilities Service (RUS) is seeking additional information from the public in its efforts to implement the provisions of "Launching Our Communities' Access to Local Television Act of 2000," Public Law 106-553, 47 U.S.C. 1101-1109 (the "Act"). The Act provides for a guaranteed loan program intended to facilitate access, on a technologically neutral basis, to signals of local television stations for households located in nonserved areas and underserved areas. The Act also requires the Administrator of RUS to prescribe regulations to implement the Act. RUS is issuing this notice of inquiry to assess the current interest of eligible entities in pursuing applications for funding under the Act, taking into account the following:

(1) Recent commercial and regulatory developments, including pending industry mergers;

(2) The impacts of new technology capable of providing local TV signals;

(3) The effects of the Satellite Home Viewer Improvement Act, Public Law 106-113, *Eg.* 47 U.S.C. 325, 338-9 ("SHVIA"), and

(4) The ability to accomplish the Act objectives utilizing current appropriations.

RUS believes it is beneficial to consider as many options as possible before prescribing regulations and this notice of inquiry will provide RUS with the most current industry information to consider in the drafting of those regulations.

DATES: Interested parties must submit written comments by May 30, 2002.

ADDRESSES: Submit written comments to Roberta D. Purcell, Assistant Administrator, Telecommunications Program, Rural Utilities Service, United States Department of Agriculture, 1400 Independence Ave., SW., stop 1590, room 4056-S, Washington, DC 20250-1590. RUS requires, in hard copy, a signed original and 3 copies of all comments (7 CFR 1700.4). Comments will be available for public inspection during normal business hours (7 CFR part 1).

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:

Roberta D. Purcell, Assistant Administrator, Telecommunications Program, Rural Utilities Service, United States Department of Agriculture, 1400 Independence Avenue, SW., stop 1590, room 4056-S, Washington, DC 20250-1590. Phone: 202-720-9554. Fax: 202-720-0810. E-mail: bpurcell@rus.usda.gov.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

Background

On December 21, 2000, the "Launching Our Communities' Access to Local Television Act of 2000," was signed into law as Public Law 106-553. The Act provides for the establishment of the Local Television Loan Guarantee Board (the "Board"), which consists of the Secretaries of Agriculture, Treasury, and Commerce, and the Chair of the Board of Governors of the Federal Reserve System, or their designees. The Board may approve loan guarantees up to 80 percent of \$1.25 billion in loans, to facilitate access, on a technologically neutral basis, to signals of local television stations for households located in nonserved areas and underserved areas. The Act stipulates that, among other provisions, the Administrator of RUS shall prescribe regulations to implement the Act and shall issue and otherwise administer loan guarantees approved by the Board. No funds were appropriated for the Act for fiscal year (FY) 2001; hence, RUS was not authorized to draft and

implement regulations until program funds were appropriated. The Agriculture FY 2002 Appropriations bill, signed into law on November 28, 2001, included \$20,000,000 for the cost of guaranteed loans and \$2,000,000 for salaries and administrative expenses to implement the Act. Under the provisions of the Appropriations Act, \$258 million in loan guarantee authority is available for FY 2002.

As noted above, regulations must be prescribed on a "technologically neutral" basis. However, the \$258 million appropriated for loan guarantees may limit the type of technology that can be financed. As the Act also contains several specialized technical and business provisions, RUS encourages interested parties to review the Act in its entirety on the RUS website at: <http://www.usda.gov/rus/telecom/initiatives/initiatives.htm>.

Request for Comment

RUS is requesting comment and discussion on the following topics:

(1) RUS seeks comment on recent changes in the industry that could affect the delivery of local TV signals to households located in nonserved areas and underserved areas. These changes include, among others, the mergers and acquisitions of cable, telephony, and Internet service providers. One developing factor that may have a significant impact on the provision of local TV signals to markets is the recently proposed merger of the two major direct broadcast satellite (DBS) providers. The Act could be noticeably affected, and its goal virtually fulfilled, if certain requirements are imposed on the survivor. In a February 26, 2002, joint press release, the companies involved in the merger proposed to offer every consumer in the continental United States, Alaska, and Hawaii access to satellite-delivered local television signals, thus covering all designated market areas in the United States.

(2) RUS is aware that new technologies have emerged and continue to develop that could provide local TV signals. RUS is seeking additional information on those technologies and, specifically, technologies that would be the most cost effective method of delivering local TV signals to the largest number of nonserved and underserved rural residences not located in the top 40 designated market areas (as that term is defined in 17 U.S.C. 1226(j)).

(3) In addition to the information solicited by the preceding question, RUS also seeks comments regarding what kinds of technology, if not the