

## Forest Service

### Extension of Currently Approved Information Collection for Senior Community Service Employment Program (SCSEP) Application

**AGENCY:** Forest Service, USDA.

**ACTION:** Notice of intent; request for comments.

**SUMMARY:** In accordance with the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995, the Forest Service announces its intent to request an extension of a currently approved information collection. Under the Older Americans Act of 1965 (42 U.S.C. 3056 *et seq.*) the Forest Service cooperates with the Department of Labor to provide part-time training and employment opportunities, for economically disadvantaged persons aged 55 or older, through the Department of Labor Senior Community Service Employment Program (SCSEP). As part of this effort, the Forest Service collects information from applicants in order to evaluate their eligibility for employment with the agency through the Program.

**DATES:** Comments must be received in writing on or before May 27, 1997.

**ADDRESSES:** All comments should be addressed to: Director, Human Resource Programs (MAIL STOP 1136), Forest Service, USDA, P.O. Box 96090, Washington, D.C. 20090-6090.

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:** Priscella McCray, Human Resource Programs Staff, at (703) 235-8860.

#### SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

#### Description of Information Collection

The following describes the information collection to be extended:  
*Title:* FS-1800-21b Application for the Senior Community Service Employment Program.

*OMB Number:* 0596-0099.

*Expiration Date of Approval:* June 30, 1997.

*Type of Request:* Extension of a previously approved information collection.

*Abstract:* Under the Older Americans Act of 1965 (42 U.S.C. 3056 *et seq.*) the Forest Service cooperates with the Department of Labor to provide part-time training and employment opportunities, for economically disadvantaged persons aged 55 or older, through the Department of Labor Senior Community Service Employment Program (SCSEP). The Department of Labor is the grantor for the Senior Community Service Employment Program and provides the guidelines for the program's operation, which runs July 1 through June 30.

Applicants seeking training and employment with the Forest Service through this program use the FS-1800-21b Application for the Senior Community Service Employment Program Form. The applicants respond to questions requesting their name, age, annual income, State of residence, gender, education level, ethnic group, veteran's status, disability status, and English-speaking status. The Form becomes part of the applicant's official personnel folder.

The Forest Service uses the information to determine the applicant's eligibility for the program, to re-certify their eligibility on an annual basis, and to prepare quarterly progress reports, which highlight the agency's program accomplishments and demographic efforts. The Forest Service submits the reports to the Department of Labor on a quarterly basis.

Data gathered in this information collection is not available from other sources.

*Estimate of Burden:* 10 minutes.

*Type of Respondents:* Economically disadvantaged individuals, including legal aliens, over age 55.

*Estimated Number of Respondents:* 6,500.

*Estimated Number of Responses per Respondent:* 1.

*Estimated Total Annual Burden on Respondents:* 1,083 hours.

The agency invites comments on the following: (a) Whether the proposed collection of information is necessary for the proper performance of the functions of the agency, including whether the information will have practical utility; (b) the accuracy of the agency's estimate of the burden of the proposed collection of information; (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 respondents, including the use of automated, electronic, mechanical, or other technological collection techniques or other forms of information technology.

#### Use of Comments

All comments received in response to this notice will be summarized and included in the request for Office of Management and Budget approval. All comments also will become a matter of public record.

Dated: March 21, 1997.

**Barbara C. Weber,**

*Acting Chief.*

[FR Doc. 97-7956 Filed 3-27-97; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 3410-11-P

### Liberty Forest Health Improvement Project, Tahoe National Forest, Sierra County, CA

**AGENCY:** Forest Service, USDA.

**ACTION:** Notice; intent to prepare an environmental impact statement.

**SUMMARY:** The U.S. Department of Agriculture, Forest Service, Tahoe National Forest will prepare an environmental impact statement (EIS) for a proposed forest health improvement project within the boundaries of the Liberty Analysis Area. This area is identified by watershed boundaries that encompass about 12,769 total acres. The analysis area is located on the Sierraville Ranger District and is about eight miles south and east of Sierraville, California. It is located within all or portions of T18N and T19N, R14E and R15E, MDB&M.

The primary objectives of the project are to improve the forest health and to reduce the risk of stand-destroying fires by treating about 3,100 acres within the analysis area. The project proposal focuses on reducing stocking levels of existing weakened and overcrowded stands that are mixed with dead and dying trees. The trees to be removed are relatively small second-growth, evenaged timber, averaging 10 inches to 18 inches in diameter, 50 to 90 feet tall, and 80 to 110 years old.

The agency invites comments and suggestions on the scope of the analysis. In addition, the agency gives notice of the full environmental analysis and decision-making process that will occur on the proposal so that interested and affected people are aware of how they may participate and contribute to the final decision.

**DATES:** Comments should be made in writing and received by April 23, 1997.

**ADDRESSES:** Written comments concerning the project should be directed to Sam Wilbanks, District Ranger, Sierraville Ranger District, P.O. Box 95, Sierraville, CA 96126.

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:** Sam Wilbanks, District Ranger, Sierraville Ranger District, Sierraville, CA 96126, telephone (916) 994-3401, or Phil Horning, Project Team Leader, at (916) 478-6210.

**SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:** The Liberty analysis area is mixed ownership with about 8,262 acres of National Forest System lands and 4,507 acres of lands of other ownerships that are located in the upper reaches of the Little Truckee River watershed, a tributary to the Truckee River. Most of the area is accessible by either National Forest or County roads; however, about

1.8 miles of new road construction and 4.5 miles of temporary construction are proposed. The 3,100 acres of proposed activities are located in the eastern two-thirds of the analysis area, primarily west of State Highway 89 and south of Fiberboard road.

In preparing the environmental impact statement, the Forest Service will identify and analyze a range of alternatives that address the issues developed for this area. One of the alternatives will be no treatment. Other alternatives will consider differing levels of implementation of commercial timber stand thinning treatments, fuels reduction, pre-commercial thinning in plantations, watershed restoration, road obliteration, wildlife habitat improvement, and new road construction and reconstruction. An ecological approach will be used to achieve multiple-use management of the Liberty Analysis area. It also means that the needs of people and environmental values will be blended in a such way that this area's desired condition would represent a diverse, healthy, productive, and sustainable ecosystem.

Public participation will be important during the analysis, especially during the review of the draft environmental impact statement. The Forest Service is seeking information, comments, and assistance from Federal, State, and local agencies and other individuals or organizations who may be interested in or affected by the proposed action. This input will be used in preparation of the draft environmental impact statement. The scoping process includes:

1. Identifying potential issues.
2. Identifying issues to be analyzed in depth.
3. Eliminating insignificant issues or those which have been covered by a relevant previous environmental analysis.
4. Exploring additional alternatives.
5. Identifying potential environmental effects of the proposed action and alternatives (i.e., direct, indirect, and cumulative effects and connected actions).
6. Determining potential cooperating agencies and task assignments.

The following list of issues has been identified through initial scoping:

- (1) To what extent can the potential for future large, catastrophic wildfires be reduced within the project area?
- (2) To what extent can the forest health be restored within the project area?
- (3) What level of timber commodities could be removed economically from the forest health restoration projects?

(4) To what extent will long-term soil productivity be affected by equipment compaction by the proposed activities.

(5) To what extent will water quality in the Truckee River watershed be affected by proposed activities? To what extent will cumulative watershed effects, e.g., channel erosion, stream sedimentation, occur and what opportunities exist to reduce or mitigate these potential effects?

Comments from other Federal, State and local agencies, organizations, and individuals who may be interested in, or affected by the decision, are encouraged to identify other significant issues. Public participation will be solicited through mailing letters to potentially interested or affected mining claim owners, private land owners, and special use permittees on the Sierraville Ranger District; posting information in local towns; and mailing letters to local timber industries, politicians, school boards, county supervisors, and environmental groups. Continued participation will be emphasized through individual contacts. Public meetings, depending on interest, will be used as a method of public involvement during preparation and review of the draft environmental impact statement and will be announced in newspapers of general circulation in the geographic area well in advance of scheduled dates.

The draft EIS is expected to be filed with the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and to be available for public review by June, 1997. 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**.

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 EIS stage but that are not raised until after completion of the final EIS may be waived on 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 the 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 EIS.

To assist the Forest Service in identifying and considering issues and concerns on the proposed action, comments on the draft EIS should be as specific as possible. It is also helpful if comments refer to specific pages or chapters of the draft EIS. Comments may also address the adequacy of the draft EIS 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.

The final EIS is expected to be available by August, 1997. The responsible official is John H. Skinner, Forest Supervisor, Tahoe National Forest.

Dated: March 21, 1997.

**John H. Skinner,**

*Forest Supervisor.*

[FR Doc. 97-7893 Filed 3-27-97; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 3410-11-M

#### **Willamette Provincial Interagency Executive Committee (PIEC), Advisory Committee**

**AGENCY:** Forest Service, USDA.

**ACTION:** Notice of Meeting.

**SUMMARY:** The Willamette PIEC Advisory Committee will meet on Thursday, April 17, 1997. The meeting will be held at the Mt. Hood National Forest Supervisor's Office; 16400 Champion Way; Sandy, Oregon 97055; phone (503) 688-1700. The meeting is scheduled to begin at 9:00 a.m. and conclude at approximately 12:30 p.m. Topics tentatively scheduled on the agenda include: (1) A panel addressing recreation, tourism issues related to the Northwest Forest Plan; (2) A PAC discussion of recreation related issues; (3) Brief updates on the status of proposals from the February PAC meeting (Monitoring and Little Sandy Watershed Subcommittees); and (4) Roundtable Information Sharing.

The meeting is open to the public and opportunity will be available to address the Advisory Committee during the public forum. The public forum is tentatively scheduled for 10:30 a.m. Time allotted for individual presentations to the committee will be limited to 3-5 minutes each. Written comments are encouraged and can be submitted prior to the meeting.

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:**