

searching existing data sources, gathering and maintaining the data needed, and completing and reviewing the collection of information.

Respondents: Business and other for profit.

Respondents: 60.

Estimated Number of Annual

Responses per Respondent: 24.

Estimated Total Annual Burden on Respondents: 720 hours.

Proposed topics for comment include:

(a) whether the 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 burden including the validity of the methodology and assumptions used; ways to enhance the quality, utility and clarity of the information collected; or (d) ways to minimize the burden of the collection of the 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 regarding this information collection requirement may be directed to the Office of Information and Regulatory Affairs of OMB, Attention: Desk Officer for USDA, Washington, DC 20503, and to Donna Ryles, Chief Planning and Analysis Division, Kansas City Commodity Office, 9200 Ward Parkway, Kansas City, Missouri 64114, telephone (816) 926-1505, fax (816) 926-6767.

Signed at Washington, D.C., on February 13, 1997.

Alan King,

Acting Executive Vice President, Commodity Credit Corporation.

[FR Doc. 97-4414 Filed 2-21-97; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 3410-05-P

Forest Service, Eastern Region

Waterville Valley Ski Area Ltd. Snowmaking Ponds; Notice of Availability for Review of Draft Environmental Impact Statement

SUMMARY: The Department of Agriculture, Forest Service has prepared a Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) issued on February 28, 1997 for the Waterville Valley Ski Area Snowmaking Pond Impoundments Project (Waterville Valley Impoundments Project), on the Pemigewasset Ranger District, White Mountain National Forest, Grafton County, New Hampshire. The New Hampshire Department of Environmental Services participated as a cooperating agency. The U.S. Corps of

Engineers the Fish and Wildlife Service, Department of Interior and the Town of Waterville Valley provided assistance in the preparation of the document.

The DEIS is for the proposed action of the construction of five water impoundments (ponds) for the storage of approximately 130 million gallons of water for snowmaking purposes. In addition, the project would result in the change of the February Median Flow (FMF) from the presently approved 0.50 csm to 0.75 csm (recommended by the Fish and Wildlife FMF) for the Mad River. The project would be phased in over a five to ten year period. The DEIS describes alternatives to and environmental effects of the proposal on National Forest System lands where the ponds would be constructed.

The project area is located in the town of Waterville Valley, NH. Waterville Valley Ski Area operates under a Special Use Permit issued by the USDA Forest Service. Currently, Waterville Valley Ski Area withdraws water from the Mad River for the purposes of snowmaking on the mountain. They are allowed to withdraw water from the Mad River down to 0.50 csm, as identified in the White Mountain Land and Resource Management Plan. Given the small size of the watershed and periodic droughts that result in the availability of no water, the Mad River is an unreliable water source for snowmaking at Waterville Valley Ski Area. In addition, to utilizing the Mad River the ski area also uses Cochranes Pond, located in the town of Waterville Valley as a supplemental source of water. Cochranes pond only holds approximately 5 million gallons of water. This combination results in Waterville Valley only being able to provide adequate snowmaking coverage 68% of the time over the ski season. Water Valley would like to be able to provide adequate snowmaking so to be able to provide 100% coverage in 95% of the years.

In April 1996 the USDA Forest Service issued a Notice of Intent (NOI) to prepare a Environmental Impact Statement. At the same time a scoping letter was mailed to the public that requested if there were concerns to the proposed action that they submit their concerns to the Forest Supervisor of the White Mountain National Forest. During the 45-day comment period (April 26 to June 10, 1996) fifteen letters were received that brought forth issues/concerns to the proposal. The four main issues identified through scoping were; (1) Changes in Water Withdrawal from the Mad River, (2) Increase in Water Withdrawal Rates and Total Water Withdrawal Needed, and (3) Impacts to

Wetlands. Additional issues were identified that were important in the overall analysis and development of the alternatives, but were not the "driving issues" for the purposes of alternative development.

DISCUSSION ON PREFERRED ALTERNATIVE:

The agency gives notice that a complete DEIS is available for public review and requests input from the public to the Preferred Alternative. The analysis was completed by a third party contractor, Sno.Engineering (Sno.e) of Littleton, NH, and overseen by the USDA Forest Service. The Forest Supervisor has identified Alternative 2 (Proposed Action) as the "Preferred Alternative." Alternative 2 (Proposed Action) includes the construction of four ponds (Pond Sites 2, 3a, 3b and 5). This Alternative would allow for the storage of 130 million gallons (mg) of water, which would achieve coverage of 100% of the mountain, 91% of the time.

Alternative 2 is preferred because it would allow for the necessary storage and upgrade of facilities needed to provide for improved alpine skiing opportunities at Waterville Valley Ski Area. This alternative should allow Waterville Valley Ski Area to become more competitive with other New England ski areas that offer the same facilities to skiers. Aquatic resources should be improved by having a stepped increase of the February median flow over the 5 to 10 year implementation period. Loss of wetlands in the project area would be mitigated through the improvement, creation and preservation of wetlands outlined in Option 2 (described in Chapter IV Effects to Wetlands section).

Finally, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (Corps) has jurisdiction over portions of the project under Section 404 of the Clean Water Act. A Corps permit is required under Section 404 for the placement of dredged or fill material, excavation, or mechanized land clearing in waters of the United States. Areas under Corps jurisdiction include wetlands associated with: the construction of the snowmaking ponds with wetlands (Pond Sites 2, 3a, 3b and 4), upgrade of the intake structure in the Mad River, upgrade of the piping form its present 10" diameter to 18", and the improvement, creation and preservation wetland projects as discussed in the environmental analysis.

DATES: The public comment period for the DEIS will end on April 14, 1997. If you would like to comment, please review the entire DEIS. You may receive a copy of the DEIS by writing to the Forest Service, 719 Main Street,

Loconia, NH 03246, or calling (603) 528-8721/TTY (603) 528-8722.

In addition, there will be two Open Houses held that will allow for the opportunity for the public to collect additional information on the project and comment on the DEIS. These forums will be held March 12, 1997 and March 19, 1997 at the Waterville Valley Conference Center, Waterville Valley, NH and at the Pease Public Library, Plymouth, NH, respectively. The Open Houses will be from 6 p.m. to 9 p.m. For those individuals who require sign language interpretation for these open houses please contact the Forest Service office in Laconia, NH through their TTY phone number—(603) 528-8721. Please call within three days of the meeting to allow us time to contact an interpreter for the meeting.

ADDRESSES: Submit written comments to Jerry Perez, Project Coordinator for WV DEIS, Green Mountain National Forest, Rochester, VT 05767.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Please direct questions about the proposed action and DEIS to Jerry Perez, Eastern Region Winter Sports Team Environmental Coordinator, Green Mountain National Forest, Rochester, VT 05767, (phone/TTY 802-767-4261).

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: The DEIS describes four alternatives to the proposed action. The alternatives were developed to respond to issues, concerns and opportunities identified during the analysis. Alternative 2 has been identified as the Preferred Alternative in the DEIS.

The Forest Service believes it is important to give reviewers notice at this early stage 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 but that are not raised until after completion of the final environmental impact statement may be waived or dismissed by the courts.

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 on the proposed action, comments on the DEIS should be as specific as possible. It is also helpful if comments refer to specific pages or chapters of the draft statement. Comments may also address the adequacy of the DEIS 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.)

After the comment period ends on the DEIS, the comments will be analyzed and considered by the agency in preparing the Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS).

The FEIS is scheduled to be completed and available to the public approximately 6 months following the close of the review period for the DEIS. The responsible Forest Service official will document the decision and the reasons supporting it in a Record of Decision. That decision will be subject to appeal pursuant to 36 CFR 215.

The Forest Service official responsible for approving the proposed action is Forest Supervisor Donna Hepp, 719 Main St., Laconia, NH 03245.

Dated: February 18, 1997.

Donna L. Hepp,

Forest Supervisor.

[FR Doc. 97-4455 Filed 2-21-97; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 3410-11-M

DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

Under Secretary for Technology; National Medal of Technology Nomination Evaluation Committee; Notice of Open Meeting

The National Medal of Technology Nomination Evaluation Committee has scheduled a meeting for March 7, 1997.

The Committee was established to assist the Department in executing its responsibilities under 15 U.S.C. 3711. Under this provision, the Secretary is responsible for recommending to the President prospective recipients of the National Medal of Technology. The Committee's recommendations are made after reviewing all nominations received in response to a public solicitation and based on criteria made available to the public through nomination application forms. From time to time the Committee

convenes to evaluate the criteria and nomination process to ensure continued relevance to the current environment for technological innovation. The Committee is chartered to have twelve members.

TIME AND PLACE: The meeting will begin at 10:30 a.m. and end at 2:00 p.m. on March 7, 1997. The meeting will be held in Room 1411 at the U.S. Department of Commerce, 14th Street and Constitution Avenue, NW., Washington, DC 20230.

Agenda

1. Review existing criteria, categories, and procedures for nominating candidates for the National Medal of Technology.

2. Make recommendations for revisions to the nomination criteria, categories and procedures for the National Medal of Technology to be forwarded to the Under Secretary of Technology.

Public Participation

The meeting will be open to public participation and the last thirty minutes will be set aside for oral comments or questions. Seats will be available on a first-come, first-served basis. Members of the public may submit written comments concerning the committee's affairs at any time before and after the meeting. A copy of the minutes will be available for public inspection and copying in the National Medal of Technology Program Office by April 4, 1997. Inquires should be addressed to the Director of the National Medal of Technology as indicated below.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Katie Wolf, Director, National Medal of Technology, U.S. Department of Technology, U.S. Department of Commerce, 14th and Constitution Avenue, NW., Herbert C. Hoover, Building, Room 4823, Washington, DC 20230, phone: 202/482-5572, email: kwolf@doc.gov.

Dated: February 14, 1997.

Graham R. Mitchell,

Assistant Secretary for Technology Policy.

[FR Doc. 97-4395 Filed 2-21-97; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 3510-18-M

Bureau of the Census

Quarterly Financial Report

ACTION: Proposed collection: comment request.

SUMMARY: The Department of Commerce, as part of its continuing effort to reduce paperwork and respondent burden, invites the general public and other Federal agencies to