

3. The number of real estate agents and property managers has increased by approximately 22%.

4. The number of property owners and lessors has increased by approximately 16%.

The estimated startup costs in the revised ICR are no longer annualized over 3 years, resulting in a substantial decrease in burden. In addition, the agencies expect the total burden presented above to be reduced further prior to submission to OMB, to reflect the portion of the estimate that represents the burden associated with the compliance activities of Federal entities. As indicated Unit IV. of this document, the agencies are not required to include this burden under the PRA.

EPA and HUD are particularly interested in receiving comments on the changes related to the burden estimates for this relatively new program.

VI. What Is The Next Step In The Process For This ICR?

EPA and HUD will consider the comments received and amend the ICR as appropriate. The final ICR package will then be submitted to OMB for review and approval pursuant to 5 CFR 1320.10. EPA and HUD will issue another **Federal Register** notice pursuant to 5 CFR 1320.5(a)(1)(iv) to announce the submission of the ICR to OMB and the opportunity to submit additional comments to OMB. If you have any questions about this ICR or the approval process, please contact the person listed in the "FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT" section.

List of Subjects

Environmental protection, Health and safety, Lead, Reporting and recordkeeping requirements.

Dated: April 15, 1999.

Susan H. Wayland,

Acting Assistant Administrator for Prevention, Pesticides and Toxic Substances, EPA.

Dated: April 12, 1999.

David S. Cristy,

Director, IRM Policy and Management, HUD.

[FR Doc. 99-10238 Filed 4-20-99; 1:21 pm]

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ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY

[FRL-6321-9]

Hackensack Meadowlands Special Area Management Plan

AGENCY: White House Council on Environmental Quality, Department of Defense (U.S. Army Corps of Engineers), Environmental Protection Agency, Department of Commerce (National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration), and the Department of the Interior (U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service), the Hackensack Meadowlands Development Commission, and the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection.

ACTION: Notice of proposed changes.

SUMMARY: The Federal and State agencies that have been partners in the development of the proposed Special Area Management Plan (SAMP) for the Hackensack Meadowlands are providing this notice of their intention to complete the SAMP by September 15, 1999, and to make modifications to the proposed SAMP to reflect: developments subsequent to publication of the July 21, 1995 Notice of Availability of the draft Environmental Impact Statement (EIS); the agencies' further review of the pertinent scientific issues; and input from meetings with interested members of the public.

The changes focus primarily on reductions in the fill of wetlands acreage proposed previously, to more effectively preserve the integrity of the Hackensack Meadowlands ecosystem as a whole, while providing greater regulatory certainty for development projects likely to proceed. This will be achieved through three major changes to the proposed SAMP: (1) A significant reduction in overall acreage of fill, with reductions focused on the largest wetlands fill proposal; (2) more extensive measures to protect remaining acreage from development; and (3) modifications in methodologies and regulatory products to conform to these proposed changes.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:

Robert W. Hargrove, Chief, Strategic Planning & Multi-Media Programs Branch, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency—Region 2, 290 Broadway, New York, New York 10007, (212) 637-3504, E-Mail: hargrove.robert@epamail.epa.gov.

Joseph J. Seebode, Chief, Regulatory Branch, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers—New York District, Jacob K. Javits Federal Building, New York, New York 10278-0090, (212) 264-3996, E-Mail: Joseph.J.Seebode@usace.army.mil.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

Background:

The Hackensack Meadowlands District (District) is a 32-square mile area that includes portions of 14 municipalities in two counties in Northeastern New Jersey. The District, which once contained approximately 17,000 acres of wetlands, has lost nearly half of these wetlands as a result of hydrologic and environmental alterations, primarily filling and draining for development. The remaining undeveloped areas within the District are mostly wetlands (approximately 8,500 acres including open water) and are under substantial development pressure.

In accordance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers' (USACE) regulations for implementing NEPA; the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) procedures for the voluntary preparation of EISs on significant regulatory actions, and the 1980 Amendments to the Coastal Zone Management Act, a draft EIS was issued in June 1995 on a proposed SAMP for the District. The SAMP is a comprehensive plan providing for natural resource protection, remediation of pollution, and reasonable economic growth in the District. It presents a comprehensive statement of policies and criteria to guide future land use and environmental management in the District, including preservation, restoration and enhancement of the District's environmental resources, and meeting economic and social needs. The public comment period on the draft EIS closed on December 1, 1995.

Update:

During the comment period, we received over 1000 comments, most of which were highly critical of the preferred alternative presented in the draft EIS. A number of constituent groups, ranging from environmental organizations to prospective permit applicants, raised concerns and were offered an opportunity to expand upon their comments in meetings with the relevant agencies. In addition to concerns expressed by many environmental stakeholders, the Department of the Interior (DOI) identified the Hackensack Meadowlands SAMP as a candidate for referral to the Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ) if its concerns could not be resolved. Although there was a great deal of overlap in the concerns raised, they highlighted the need to make some substantial revisions to the SAMP prior to the release of the final EIS. The

concerns raised most frequently include:

- Growth Needs;
- Out of District Alternatives;
- Hybrid elements and process;
- Environmental Improvement Program funding mechanisms;
- 404 Issues vs. SAMP Goals;
- Environmental Improvement Program linkage to SAMP;
- Regulatory Products/General Permit;
- Community Facilities/Cost of Public Services;
- Transportation Components;
- Wetland Impacts/AVID vs. IVA; and
- Fisheries Impacts.

Since the close of the comment period, the involved agencies have been evaluating the comments received and have been working to address these comments. In some subject areas, additional field work, re-evaluation, and re-analysis have been necessary.

Since late June 1997, CEQ, the federal SAMP partners (EPA, USACE and NOAA), the DOI, and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) have been meeting with a view towards resolving public concerns about the SAMP. These meetings have been closely coordinated with the Hackensack Meadowlands Development Commission (HMDC) and the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection (NJDEP). Moreover, CEQ has also held meetings with the involved federal and state agencies, representatives from environmental groups and representatives from the business community.

These consultations have resulted in a series of proposed changes to the proposed SAMP to address concerns about the following issues: the Projected Development Needs; the amount and distribution of the projected acres of wetlands fill; the Environmental Improvement Program (EIP); the Wetland Indicator Value Assessment (IVA) Methodology; the Alternatives Analysis; and Regulatory Products. Our progress in discussing and resolving the issues surrounding these topics is outlined below.

Needs Analysis

The Needs Analysis for the District is an economic development projection for the next 20 years. In response to comments received on the draft SAMP/EIS, the HMDC has proposed substantial reductions to its projected development needs for the next 20 years. Most significantly, HMDC has proposed to reduce its projected housing and primary office space needs by close to 80 percent and 40 percent, respectively.

In an effort to ensure that the methodology used in projecting the

development needs is appropriate, the federal agencies sent HMDC a comprehensive list of concerns about the Needs Analysis and its supporting documentation. The federal concerns were identified through the deliberations of the EIS Subcommittee and subsequent meetings. The federal agencies met with HMDC and its consultants to discuss their preliminary responses to our concerns. We have reviewed HMDC's written response to many of the questions asked and received a revised Needs Analysis. While the need for various kinds of development has been established by HMDC, the parties to this notice have agreed that all the development needs, and particularly the need for housing units, may not be fulfilled. HMDC has agreed to remove the majority of the zoning for housing units that was proposed in the draft EIS. It is assumed that the municipalities will meet their low and moderate income housing requirements through the Council on Affordable Housing.

Projected Acres of Wetlands Fill

One of the most significant and widely shared concerns raised during the draft EIS comment period was the amount of wetlands fill projected for the preferred development plan for the District. In addition to concern about the amount of wetlands fill, several parties, including DOI, expressed concern that the distribution of wetlands fill would have significant detrimental impacts on the overall habitat quality of the District because of fragmentation, regardless of the quality of the wetlands on the property. Specifically, concern was expressed that because the District represents one of the last remaining large open space parcels in the New York metropolitan area, the loss of the wetlands and open space projected in the draft EIS could have significant adverse effects on wildlife's ability to effectively use the landscape. Accordingly, the parties to this notice agreed to explore opportunities to further reduce the amount of wetlands fill associated with the development proposed under the SAMP.

The plan proposed in the draft EIS called for 842 acres of wetlands fill (for development and transportation projects) and approximately 3,400 acres of compensatory mitigation. As a result of the HMDC's proposed modifications to its projected development needs, strict application of the HMDC's open space policies and sound land use planning principles, expected fill reductions through the Section 404 permit review process, and the

recognition that some projects have already been approved, the wetlands fill associated with the SAMP was reduced following the close of the draft EIS comment period. Despite these efforts to reduce the wetlands fill associated with the SAMP, however, the parties to this notice believe that the importance of the Meadowlands as one of the last major wetlands ecosystems in the region, the compelling water quality and habitat concerns affecting the Hackensack River watershed, and the deleterious effects of further fragmentation of wetlands parcels that would result from wetlands fill, militate for further steps to reduce permissible wetlands fill in the District—even where the wetlands may be degraded in their current state.

The parties to this notice have undertaken a further review of the scale and distribution of further acreage reductions that would be appropriate for a comprehensive plan for the Meadowlands resource base, primarily to avoid excessive disruption of an integral wetlands landscape at the center of the District where the Empire tract is located. In evaluating the scale and distribution of further acreage reductions, the SAMP process evaluates the functions and values of the aquatic ecosystem on a comprehensive basis. This approach may identify proposals for development that are different from those that would result from case-by-case permit decisions by the USACE or zoning decisions by other agencies in the absence of a final SAMP. Within this context of planning, proposed development under the SAMP approach, the parties to this notice have identified the need to substantially reduce the acreage proposed in prior SAMP drafts for the Empire Tract. Based on consultation to date, the parties to this notice are proposing a limit in the range of approximately 80 to 90 acres of fill (net buildable area after minimization) for the Empire Tract; mitigation requirements would be scaled accordingly. (This limit assumes that a further four to seven acres of fill may be appropriate for passive water control infrastructure to protect waters of the United States from polluted runoff.) This proposal would focus development on areas of the property, in proximity to existing industrial and commercial development, where wetland values have been significantly diminished.

This proposed reduction would not otherwise affect the fill acreage for development proposed for other tracts, nor would it affect the fill associated with transportation projects anticipated as part of the final SAMP. The following

table presents the current projections for wetlands fill under the SAMP.

SAMP PROJECTED WETLANDS FILL

	Acres
Empire, Ltd. (Site 4)	90.5
Berry's Creek Center (Site 7)	23.1
U.O.P. Site (Site i)	15.0
Murray Hill Circle (Site w)	28.4
Bellemeade (Site x)	29.8
North Bergen (Site v)	17.5
Rutherford Landfill (Site bd)	35.6
Guarini Tract (Site be)	34.8
F.D. & P. Site (Site as)	53.5
SK Services, Inc. (Site bh)	17.9
General Permit Sites (approx. 25 sites)	67.7
Transportation Projects	51.9
Total	465.7

As shown in the above table, the total amount of wetlands fill associated with development and transportation projects under the SAMP has been greatly reduced. In recognition of this reduction, the parties to this notice propose to establish a cap of 465 acres on the wetlands fill associated with development and transportation projects under the SAMP. Except for the Empire, Ltd. and F.D. & P. Projects, further reductions of wetlands fill may be realized through site-specific minimization. It must be noted, however, that some activities outlined in the EIP (e.g., closure of orphaned landfills, remediation of hazardous waste sites, and some habitat enhancement measures, which could require the construction of uplands in existing wetlands) may impact (e.g., through fill and/or material extraction) minor wetlands areas. Exact wetlands impacts of these activities will be evaluated in the final EIS. Moreover, these activities, while fully supported by the SAMP, will have to obtain all state and federal regulatory approvals. We are specifically inviting public comment on this aspect of the proposal prior to completion of the SAMP.

In considering this proposal for the SAMP, the public should note that because the USACE has an individual permit application for the Empire tract under evaluation, the USACE must proceed with its permit review process concurrent with continued development of the SAMP. Pending regulatory decisions, approvals, and related actions by parties to this notice also will proceed concurrently, until the SAMP is finalized. The USACE's evaluation process, and that of other agencies, will consider all information and alternatives developed during the SAMP process.

Enhancing Conservation

There are a series of measures put forth in the draft EIS to ensure that the fill proposed in the SAMP document constitutes full build-out for the District, including: deed restrictions, zoning, conservation easements, and the use of a conservancy. Since the draft EIS was issued, the HMDC has taken positive steps to implement some of these mechanisms. Most significantly, the HMDC has acquired over 1000 acres of wetlands over the past three years, and is currently exploring the possibility of acquiring an additional 600 acres. A Hackensack Meadowlands Conservancy has been approved by the New Jersey State Legislature, and was signed into law by Governor Whitman on March 2, 1999. Furthermore, in light of the particular development pressures in the Meadowlands District, the parties to this notice agree that wetlands preservation of otherwise developable properties may be an appropriate part of mitigation strategies, where that approach is consistent with national policy and appropriate to support further reductions in wetlands fill. Similarly, the agencies will assign priority to encourage acquisition as an element of Supplemental Environmental Projects developed in the context of enforcement actions. To ensure full realization of the SAMP's wetlands preservation goals, including that development activities will not result in unacceptable adverse effects to aquatic resources, EPA will consider the use of its veto authority under Section 404(c) of the Clean Water Act.

Furthermore, the Federal agencies will work with the State of New Jersey and local government agencies to pursue other tools and resources to ensure permanent preservation of wetland acreage not identified for development as part of the SAMP. In particular, the DOI will work with the State of New Jersey on a joint proposal for acquisition of wetland acreage through the North American Wetlands Conservation Act for submission in August 1999. Moreover, the FWS is reviewing a request that it consider the establishment of a National Urban Wildlife Refuge that would encompass portions of the District.

In addition, President Clinton's budget for Fiscal Year 2000 includes two new tools to support collaborative work by Federal, state, and local agencies to preserve wetlands in the Meadowlands. The first is a \$1 billion Lands Legacy Initiative—the largest one-year investment ever in the protection of America's land resources. This FY 2000 budget proposal—a 125 percent increase

over FY 1999—expands federal efforts to save America's natural treasures, and provides significant new resources to states and communities to protect local green spaces like the Meadowlands. Second, the budget includes a total of \$700 million over five years for tax credits to finance Better America Bonds. This funding will support federal tax credits enabling state, local and tribal governments to issue \$9.5 billion in bonds over 5 years to preserve open space. Federal agencies will provide assistance to State and local government agencies in New Jersey in developing proposals to qualify for this new funding, once approved by Congress.

Governor Whitman's Open Space Program, which was approved by New Jersey voters in November 1998, is an additional tool which will be pursued in attempting to preserve wetlands in the Meadowlands. This program constitutionally dedicates approximately \$1 billion over the next ten years from state sales tax revenue for the purpose of acquiring and preserving 1 million acres of open space in New Jersey.

Environmental Improvement Program (EIP)

The HMDC's EIP provides a comprehensive, multi-media set of programs designed to remediate existing pollution and to prevent future pollution. The federal agencies have identified five concerns about the EIP: (1) the relationship of the EIP to the land use development alternatives; (2) the identification of essential and non-essential EIP projects; (3) the prioritization of projects within the EIP; (4) the security and stability of future EIP funding; and, (5) the measurement of EIP success.

The parties to this notice have met to discuss these issues and have resolved most of the issues. In particular, a new approach of conducting separate analyses for the EIP and the development alternatives, including the Section 404(b)(1) compliance analysis has been agreed to, and updated information on EIP projects and the proposed funding mechanisms has been requested from HMDC.

Wetlands Indicator Value Assessment (IVA) Methodology

The IVA methodology will be used to compare the wetland impacts of alternative development scenarios. The federal agencies have discussed the sufficiency of the IVA in its current form for comparing wetlands impacts at the programmatic level. Consensus was reached that the IVA is sufficient for addressing water quality improvement

and social significance functions. Consensus was also reached on a way to supplement the existing IVA wildlife habitat attribute to provide a greater level of detail.

The federal representatives on the IVA work group, in cooperation with biologists from the HMDC and the NJDEP, are working to supplement the existing general fish and wildlife attributes of the IVA method with attributes that are more precisely defined to represent species groups that the agencies agree are of management concern in the District. These groups include waterfowl, wading birds, migratory shorebirds, passerine birds, and juvenile anadromous and forage fish. The method has been revised to incorporate these modifications. The supplemental methodology is being reviewed by independent experts; we expect the independent expert review to be completed by April 1999.

To address the need to augment the IVA method with site-specific field data for individual Section 404 permit reviews, we are developing a protocol for field work requirements. This protocol will allow applicants to better anticipate the type and amount of field data that will be required for processing applications for USACE permits, and will also improve the quality of the information used in making permit decisions.

In addition, the federal agencies, in cooperation with the HMDC and the NJDEP, are developing a comprehensive wildlife management plan for the District. This plan will help guide future wildlife management decisions in the District and help in the establishment of goals and performance standards for wetland mitigation projects. Thus far, the agencies have reached consensus on the priority species groups of management concern in the District, which include the above-mentioned wetland dependent groups as well as grassland birds, raptors, and State-listed species. The FWS is currently preparing a revised draft of the wildlife management plan that identifies the specific management objectives for these species groups and identifies broader landscape level management objectives. The next step, to be completed by June 1, 1999, will be to identify specific management strategies to meet these objectives.

Alternatives

The federal agencies want to ensure that the full range of practical alternative land use scenarios for future growth and environmental preservation are evaluated and meet the requirements of Section 404 of the Clean Water Act

and NEPA, while being respective of property rights.

Based on our discussions, we intend to perform an alternatives analysis that evaluates the following scenarios: no action; uplands/redevelopment; the FWS's February 1997 proposal; the HMDC's preferred development configuration; and an out-of-District alternative. For the out-of-District alternative, we have agreed on a process to evaluate potential sites. We have agreed on a 25 acre parcel size and several criteria for the exclusion of sites from consideration (e.g., wetlands, active camp sites, parkland, and cemeteries). We will then be conducting a second level evaluation to look at land use compatibility, implementability/feasibility, and environmental impacts. The out-of-District analysis will be available for public review during the outreach efforts outlined in the project completion schedule at the end of this notice of proposed SAMP revisions, and will be included in the final EIS.

Regulatory Products

At the time of publication of the draft EIS, two major regulatory products were proposed to enhance efficiency, while providing needed environmental protection measures in the Hackensack Meadowlands. First, a General Permit (GP) authorized by section 404(e) of the Clean Water Act was proposed to allow authorization of: (a) development with less than 15 acres of wetland fill; (b) transportation projects with less than one acre of wetland fill; and (c) wetland mitigation projects and banks. The second regulatory product, aimed at addressing development projects entailing over 15 acres of wetland fill, and larger transportation projects, was an Abbreviated Processing Procedure (APP). The APP would streamline the permit review process for projects consistent with the SAMP.

A substantial number of comments were received in response to the draft EIS, opposing the proposed GP, and implementation of the APP. These comments must be considered, however, in light of the significant wetlands fill reductions that are proposed by this notice. Consistent with the acreage reduction goal, the USACE, in consultation with the parties to this notice, has proposed modifications to both regulatory products to address environmental concerns. The wetlands fill associated with development projects under the GP would be reduced to a 10 acre threshold, and require that all wetland impacts be fully mitigated.

The parties to this notice have decided to retain the APP for SAMP-consistent development projects

involving wetlands fill greater than 10 acres. The APP would streamline time frames normally required for evaluating an individual permit application by tiering off information made available through the SAMP process. The APP continues to require the full public interest and federal agency review process now employed, including development/implementation of appropriate value-for-value mitigation. Permit applications under the APP may utilize data developed in the SAMP towards documentation of compliance with the section 404(b)(1) Guidelines, analysis of out-of-district alternatives, and NEPA documentation. As such, no additional off-site analysis will be required. However, data/information developed to support the APP (e.g., the out-of-District alternatives analysis) will have to be updated every five years.

We expect that these regulatory enhancements will substantially reduce the processing time for section 404 permits for projects that are consistent with the SAMP. Specifically, assuming an applicant follows the process that will be outlined in the SAMP, projects subject to the GP would be authorized in less than six months; projects subject to the APP would be authorized in less than a year.

In addition to the aforementioned regulatory products, the parties to this notice have established a joint coordination framework to evaluate proposed wetlands mitigation, habitat restoration, and mitigation banks proposed for the District. The Meadowlands Interagency Mitigation Advisory Council (MIMAC) was established by written agreement in 1997, and has been meeting on a monthly basis since early 1998. The MIMAC Agreement established coordination procedures that will be implemented as part of the SAMP; however, it was recognized that those procedures would be immediately useful in coordinating the planning, implementation, and monitoring of compensatory mitigation projects in the District. To date, the MIMAC has provided comments to the USACE on numerous mitigation projects in the District, and two mitigation banks have been permitted and are under construction.

Under this proposal, any SAMP-consistent project that has HMDC General Plan approval would be exempt from the development moratorium that is intended to be imposed as part of the SAMP implementation process. The application review process could proceed immediately following publication of the Record of Decision for

the SAMP; project construction could begin upon receipt of required permits.

The regulatory products proposed for SAMP-consistent projects are intended to provide a high degree of certainty to the affected public concerning future regulatory decisions. As such, the parties to this notice acknowledge that, upon completion of the SAMP and in the absence of new information (i.e., information unavailable at the time of the final SAMP), there will be a heavy presumption against adverse agency comment and/or action (including but not limited to elevation or veto of section 404 permits pursuant to sections 404(q) or 404(c) of the Clean Water Act, respectively, or referral to CEQ under NEPA) for SAMP-consistent projects. This presumption will not limit the parties' to this notice right to comment (either through the MIMAC or as individual agencies) on site-specific minimization and/or mitigation aspects of individual section 404 authorizations.

Effect of this Notice: In this proposal, the parties to this notice have taken a more comprehensive approach in evaluating the scale and distribution of further acreage reductions, as is appropriate for a comprehensive plan for the Meadowlands resource base, and consequently their conclusions may differ from the conclusions that might be reached in the context of an individual regulatory decision, such as a decision on an individual permit application. Therefore, nothing in this **Federal Register** notice shall be construed to affect any agency's discretion to evaluate all reasonable alternatives and to render final regulatory decisions including, without limitation, the USACE decisions pursuant to section 404 of the Clean Water Act and section 10 of the River and Harbors Act if the SAMP is not timely completed. If the SAMP is not completed, the USACE and other agencies will continue to render final permit decisions based on applicable criteria. Those permit decisions may not comport with statements in this notice or prior drafts of the SAMP.

Coordination with Stakeholders: The federal agencies intend to hold meetings with stakeholders, including the Citizens Advisory Committee, to keep the stakeholders informed of the status of activities.

Schedule for Completion of SAMP/EIS

April/May 1999—Conduct public outreach on the SAMP/EIS, including Congressional briefings, constituent meetings, and public information sessions

July 15, 1999—Issue Final EIS

August 15, 1999—Close Final EIS comment period

September 15, 1999—Issue SAMP Record of Decision

July 1, 2000—HMDC completes revisions to Master Plan and zoning regulations; NJDEP submits these documents to NOAA for approval as a Coastal Management Plan revision

September 1, 2000—NOAA acts on New Jersey Coastal Management Plan revision

Dated: March 25, 1999.

Jeanne M. Fox,

Regional Administrator, EPA—Region 2.

William H. Pearce,

District Engineer, USACE—New York District.

Jane M. Kenny,

Chairperson, Hackensack Meadowlands Development Commission.

Robert C. Shinn, Jr.,

Commissioner, New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection.

Jon C. Ritters,

Acting Regional Administrator, National Marine Fisheries Service Northeast Region.

Ralph C. Pisapia,

Acting, Regional Director, USFWS—Region 5.

Bradley M. Campbell,

Associate Director for Toxic and Environmental Protection, White House Council on Environmental Quality.

[FR Doc. 99-10094 Filed 4-21-99; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 6560-50-P

ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY

[WH-FRL-6330-1]

Peer Review Workshop and Public Stakeholder Meetings on the Draft Water Quality Criteria Methodology Revisions: Human Health

AGENCY: Environmental Protection Agency (EPA).

ACTION: Notice of peer review workshop and public stakeholder meetings on revisions to the methodology for deriving ambient water quality criteria for the protection of human health.

SUMMARY: The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) is holding a peer review workshop and subsequent public stakeholder meeting between May 17 and May 20, 1999 for the purpose of conducting an external expert peer review of the Draft Methodology Revisions and a subsequent information exchange with stakeholders on issues related to the changes or additions in the Revisions.

DATES: The peer review workshop will start at 9:00 AM on May 17 and will

adjourn on May 19 at 12:00 PM. The public stakeholder meeting will start at 9:00 AM and adjourn at 5:30 PM on May 20, the day following the conclusion of the peer review workshop.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:

Denis Borum (4304), U.S. EPA, 401 M St. S.W., Washington, D.C. 20460 (Telephone: (202) 260-8996).

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: Both the peer review workshop and subsequent public stakeholder meeting will be held at the Hilton Springfield, 6550 Loisdale Road, Springfield, VA for the purpose of conducting an external expert peer review of the Draft Methodology Revisions and a subsequent information exchange with stakeholders on issues related to the changes or additions that, when finalized, will supersede the existing Guidelines and Methodology Used in the Preparation of Health Effect Assessment Chapters of the Consent Decree Water Criteria Documents ("1980 AWQC National Guidelines"), published by EPA in November 1980. The purpose of the peer review workshop is to have the methodology reviewed in its entirety, even though many components of it have been peer reviewed in separate efforts. This is intentionally being conducted in a public forum, so that interested persons will be able to watch and listen while the peer reviewers discuss the recommended methodology revisions and draft their peer review report. Observers at the workshop will have an opportunity during a 30-minute period set aside at the end of the first and second day to make brief statements of opinion. Observers will not be allowed to ask questions of the reviewers or engage in the discussion. Observers who wish to make any statements should provide an advance written request to Pat Wood, Versar, Inc. at (703) 750-3000. There will also be an opportunity to sign up at the Workshop (on the first day) to make comments at the end of the second day, as time allows.

The public stakeholder meeting is to provide an opportunity for interested persons to discuss the issues and process for developing criteria and implementing the methodology. The stakeholder meeting will be the opportunity for substantive input and dialogue with the primary authors of the Draft Methodology Revisions. As with the peer review workshop, participants for the stakeholders meeting who wish to make comments or ask questions are strongly encouraged to provide an advance written request due to potential time limitations. Requests to speak at the stakeholder meeting should be made to Robert Noecker, ICF, Inc. at (703)