

and mechanical control as well as prevention and education. Noxious weeds generally possess one or more of the following characteristics: aggressive and difficult to manage, poisonous, toxic, parasitic, a carrier or host of serious insects or disease, and generally non-native. They also have a probability of causing economic or environmental damage. Specific areas of ground application will vary depending on weed locations. Potential areas of aerial applications have been identified and involve approximately 29,000 acres.

Range of Alternatives: The Forest Service will consider a range of alternatives. One of these will be the "no action" alternative in which none of the proposed activities would be implemented. Additional alternatives will examine ground and aerial herbicide application as well as respond to the issues and other resource values.

Public Involvement and Scoping: Public participation will be especially important at several points during the analysis. The first point is during the scoping process (40 CFR 1501.7). The Forest Service will be seeking information, comments, and assistance from Federal, State, and local agencies and other individuals or organizations that may be interested in, or affected by, the proposed action. This input will be used in preparation of the DEIS. 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); and
6. Determining potential cooperating agencies and task assignments.

Estimated Dates for Filing: The DEIS is expected to be filed with the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and to be available for public review by June 2005. At that time EPA will publish a notice of availability (NOA) of the DEIS in the **Federal Register**. The comment period on the DEIS will be 45 days from the date the EPA's NOA appears in the **Federal Register**. It is very important that those interested in the management of invasive plants on the Kootenai National Forest participate at the time.

Reviewer's Obligations: Federal court decisions have established that reviewers of DEIS's must structure their participation in the environmental

review of the proposal so it is meaningful and alerts the 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 have been raised at the draft stage may be waived if not raised until after completion of the FEIS (*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 these court rulings, it is very important that those interested in this proposed action participate by the close of the Draft EIS 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 FEIS.

To be most helpful, comments on the DEIS should be as specific as possible and may address the adequacy of the statement or the merits of the alternatives discussed (*see* the Council on Environmental Quality Regulations for implementing the procedural provisions of the National Environmental Policy Act at 40 CFR 1503.3). It is also helpful if comments refer to specific pages or chapters of the draft document.

After the comment period ends on the DEIS, the comments will be analyzed and considered by the Forest Service in preparing FEIS. The FEIS completion date is scheduled for August 2005. The Forest Service is required to respond, in the FEIS, to the comments received (40 CFR 1503.4). The responsible official will consider the comments, responses, disclosures of environmental consequences and applicable laws, regulations, and policies in making a decision regarding this proposal. The responsible official will document the decision and rationale in a Record of Decision. That decision will be subject to appeal under 36 CFR 215.

Responsible Official: Bob Castaneda, Forest Supervisor of the Kootenai National Forest, is the Responsible Official (Decision Maker). As the Decision Maker he will decide if the proposed project will be implemented and will document the decision and reasons for the decision in the Record of Decision. That decision will be subject to Forest Service Appeal Regulations.

Dated: June 7, 2004.

Frank Votapka,

Acting Forest Supervisor, Kootenai National Forest.

[FR Doc. 04-13530 Filed 6-15-04; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 3410-11-M

DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

Economic Development Administration

[Docket No. 0405426162-4162-01]

Trade Adjustment Assistance for Firms Program

AGENCY: Economic Development Administration (EDA); Department of Commerce (DOC).

ACTION: Notice and request for proposals.

SUMMARY: The mission of EDA is to lead the Federal economic development agenda by promoting innovation and competitiveness, which will prepare American regions for growth and success in the worldwide economy. EDA administers the Trade Adjustment Assistance (TAA) for Firms Program (the "Program") to assist manufacturing and production firms, which have lost domestic sales and employment due to increased imports of similar or competitive goods (a "trade-impacted firm"), become more competitive in the global economy. EDA administers the Program through a national network of Trade Adjustment Assistance Centers (TAACs).

With funding from EDA, TAACs assist trade-impacted firms by (i) preparing and submitting petitions to EDA for certification of eligibility necessary to apply for assistance under the Program (a "certified firm"), (ii) assisting certified firms in developing and submitting for EDA approval adjustment proposals and (iii) sharing in the cost of implementing (primarily through private sector consultants) the technical assistance tasks as set forth in approved adjustment proposals. 13 CFR 315(8)(c). The Program also benefits certain organizations assisting or representing trade-impacted manufacturing or production firms. Firms (or organizations representing firms) other than manufacturing or production firms (*e.g.*, service industries) are not eligible for benefits under the Program.

Through this competitive solicitation, EDA is seeking proposals from organizations to administer the Program for the State of New Jersey. The applicant selected will operate a TAAC to serve the State of New Jersey for a twelve-month period encompassing the remainder of FY 2004 and a portion of FY 2005.

DATES: Proposals must be received by the EDA Office of Strategic Initiatives at the below address by July 15, 2004 at 4 p.m. (EDT). Proposals received after 4 p.m. (EDT) on July 15, 2004 will not be considered for funding. By August 15, 2004, EDA will notify applicants as to

whether they will receive funding under this competition solicitation. It is anticipated that the successful applicant will be funded no later than September 30, 2004; however, there is no guarantee that the successful applicant will receive funding. Proposals that were not recommended for funding will be retained by EDA for one year, at which time such proposals will be destroyed.

ADDRESSES: Applications submitted under this competition solicitation may be mailed to the address below or hand-delivered to Room 1874 at the address below:

Anthony Meyer, U.S. Department of Commerce, Economic Development Administration, Office of Strategic Initiatives, Room 7812, 14th Street & Constitution Avenue, NW., Washington, DC 20230, Telephone: (202) 482-2127 (not a toll free call).

Facsimile or electronic submissions will not be accepted.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: The full Federal Funding Opportunity announcement for this competitive solicitation is available through EDA's Web site, <http://www.eda.gov>, and at <http://www.grants.gov> or you may contact the EDA Program Officer listed above. Note that EDA intends to transfer administrative responsibility for the Program to its regional offices during FY 2004. When the transfers occur, administrative responsibility for the New Jersey TAAC will be transferred to EDA's Philadelphia regional office.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

Electronic Access: EDA is not currently able to accept electronic submissions of proposal packages. The full FFO announcement for the FY 2004 Trade Adjustment for Firms Program competition is available through EDA's Web site, <http://www.eda.gov>, and at <http://www.grants.gov>.

Funding Availability: For FY 2004, EDA has a total of \$11,874,000 in appropriations available for the Program. EDA expects to allocate \$738,395 to the TAAC serving the State of New Jersey. EDA typically awards funding to a TAAC for a twelve-month period, although EDA may extend such awards. See 13 CFR 315.5, .7(a)(i). Due to the close relationship between EDA and the New Jersey TAAC, EDA will fund the New Jersey TAAC under a cooperative agreement.

Statutory Authority: Chapters 3 and 5 of Title II of the Trade Act of 1974, as amended (Pub. L. 93-618, 19 U.S.C. 2341 *et seq.*), and as further amended by 97-35, 98-120, 98-369, 99-272, 99-514, 100-418, 103-66, 105-277 and 107-210.

CFDA: 11.313, Economic Development—Trade Adjustment Assistance.

Eligibility: A university affiliate, State or local government affiliate, or a nonprofit organization is an eligible TAAC applicant and may submit a proposal pursuant to this competitive solicitation. 13 CFR 315.4(a).

Cost Sharing Requirements: Under the Program, a matching share is not required for certification assistance provided by TAACs to certified firms or for administrative expenses of the TAAC. Note that certain income will likely be generated by the TAAC as a certified firm must, to the extent practicable, pay the TAAC at least 25 percent of the costs of preparing the certified firm's adjustment proposal. 13 CFR 315.7(b)(1), (2). The TAAC will retain such funds and use them to support its Program activities.

It is EDA's policy that certified firms pay part of the costs of consultants hired to assist in implementing the technical assistance tasks set forth in the certified firm's approved adjustment proposals. If the total amount of technical assistance requested is \$30,000 or less, the certified firm is generally required to pay at least 25 percent of the consultant costs. If the total amount of technical assistance requested is above \$30,000, the certified firm is generally required to pay at least 50 percent of the consultant costs. The TAAC's total share of consultant costs for technical assistance is generally limited to \$75,000 for any one certified firm.

Intergovernmental Review:

Applications submitted under this program are not subject to Executive Order 12372, "Intergovernmental Review of Federal Programs."

Evaluation and Selection Procedures:

The Office of Strategic Initiatives will conduct an initial administrative review of each proposal package to determine its completeness and compliance with the requirements set forth in this competition solicitation. Incomplete proposals or proposals received after July 15, 2004 filing deadline will not be considered. The Office of Strategic Initiatives will then conduct a technical review of each proposal meeting the requirements of this competition solicitation. The technical review will be conducted by a minimum of three full-time EDA staff members using the criteria provided under the section entitled Evaluation Criteria. The review panel will evaluate each proposal and make its recommendation to the Selecting Official. The Chief of Staff, Economic Development Administration, Department of Commerce, is the Selecting Official. Upon receiving the

review panel's recommendation, the Selecting Official may (i) choose not to make any selection, (ii) follow the recommendation of the review panel, or (iii) substitute one of the lower ranking proposals. The Selecting Official may select a lower ranking proposal for several reasons, including the priorities set forth in the "Program Priorities" section below, the investment policy guidelines set forth in the "Evaluation Criteria" section below and the applicant's performance under previous awards.

Evaluation Criteria: Applications for the proposed TAAC will be competitively evaluated on their ability to meet or exceed the following investment policy guidelines (each criterion will be given roughly equivalent weight):

(1) *Be market-based and results driven.* A successful TAAC proposal will capitalize on the organization's strengths and will bolster the competitiveness of trade-impacted firms, resulting in tangible and quantifiable improvements in the firm's economic health, such as retained or increased numbers of jobs, increased sales, or increased private sector investment.

(2) *Have strong organizational leadership.* A successful TAAC proposal will demonstrate strong leadership, relevant project management experience, and a significant commitment of human resources talent to ensure a high-performing TAAC. EDA will specifically evaluate (a) the extent to which the proposed TAAC will maximize coordination with other relevant organizations (e.g., the Manufacturing Extension Partnerships and private industry groups) to foster collaboration and to avoid duplication of services offered by other organizations, and (b) the sponsoring organization's degree of support and commitment to the proposed TAAC's mission.

(3) *Advance productivity, innovation and entrepreneurship.* A successful TAAC proposal will embrace the principles of entrepreneurship and focus on improving the stability of trade-impacted firms through productivity improvements and innovative solutions to the challenges facing their industries.

(4) *Look beyond the immediate economic horizon and anticipate economic changes.* A successful TAAC proposal will describe and set forth a comprehensive strategy for assisting trade-impacted firms in identifying and addressing both current and probable future problems.

Program Priorities: EDA encourages the submission of proposals that will significantly benefit trade-impacted manufacturing and production firms. EDA expects to proposals to demonstrate familiarity or an ability to quickly become familiar with the core TAAC objectives and activities outlined in the **SUMMARY** section above and in the FFO for this competitive solicitation.

Announcement and Award Dates: By August 15, 2004, EDA will notify applicants as to whether they will receive funding under this competition solicitation. It is anticipated that the successful applicant will be funded no later than September 30, 2004; however, there is no guarantee that the successful applicant will receive funding. Proposals that were not recommended for funding will be retained by EDA for one year, at which time such proposals will be destroyed.

The Department of Commerce Award Notification Requirements for Grants and Cooperative Agreements

Administrative and national policy requirements for all Department of Commerce awards are contained in the Department of Commerce Pre-Award Notification Requirements for Grants and Cooperative Agreements, published in the **Federal Register** on October 1, 2001 (66 FR 49917), as amended by the **Federal Register** notice published on October 30, 2002 (67 FR 66109). These notices may be accessed by entering the **Federal Register** volumes and page numbers noted in the previous sentence at the following GPO Web site <http://www.gpoaccess.gov/fr/retrieve.html>.

Paperwork Reduction Act

This document contains collection-of-information requirements subject to the Paperwork Reduction Act (PRA). The use of Forms ED-900P, SF-424A, SF-424-B and CD-346 have been approved by OMB under the control numbers 0610-0094, 0348-0044, 0348-0040 and 0605-0001, respectively. Notwithstanding any other provision of law, no person is required to respond to, nor shall any person be subject to a penalty for failure to comply with, a collection of information subject to the requirements of the PRA unless that collection of information displays a currently valid OMB control number.

Executive Order 12866

This notice has been determined to be not significant for purposes of Executive Order 12866.

Executive Order 13132 (Federalism)

It has been determined that this notice does not contain policies with

Federalism implications as that term is defined in Executive Order 13132.

Administrative Procedure Act/Regulatory Flexibility Act

Prior notice and an opportunity for public comments are not required by the Administrative Procedure Act or any other law for rules concerning grants, benefits and contracts (5 U.S.C. 553(a)(2)). Because notice and opportunity for comment are not required pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 553 or any other law, the analytical requirements of the Regulatory Flexibility Act (5 U.S.C. 601 *et seq.*) are inapplicable. Therefore, a regulatory flexibility analysis has not been prepared.

Dated: June 9, 2004.

Mary Pleffner,

Acting Assistant Secretary for Economic Development.

[FR Doc. 04-13547 Filed 6-15-04; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 3510-24-M

DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

[I.D. 061004A]

Proposed Information Collection; Comment Request; Application for Commercial Fisheries Authorization Under Section 118 of the Marine Mammal Protection Act

AGENCY: National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA).

ACTION: Notice.

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 take this opportunity to comment on proposed and/or continuing information collections, as required by the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995, Public Law 104-13 (44 U.S.C. 3506(c)(2)(A)).

DATES: Written comments must be submitted on or before August 16, 2004.

ADDRESSES: Direct all written comments to Diana Hynek, Departmental Paperwork Clearance Officer, Department of Commerce, Room 6625, 14th and Constitution Avenue, NW, Washington, DC 20230 (or via the Internet at dHynek@doc.gov).

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Requests for additional information or copies of the information collection instrument and instructions should be directed to Patricia Lawson, 301-713-2322, or at Patricia.Lawson@noaa.gov.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

I. Abstract

The Marine Mammal Protection Act requires any commercial fisher operating in Category I and II fisheries to register for a certificate of authorization that will allow the fisher to take marine mammals incidental to commercial fishing operations. Category I and II fisheries are those identified by NOAA as having either frequent or occasional takings of marine mammals.

Some states have integrated the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) registration process into the existing state fishery registration process and fishers in those fisheries do not need to file a separate federal registration. If applicable, vessel owners will be notified of this simplified registration process when they apply for their state or Federal permit or license.

II. Method of Collection

Fishers mail in an application for exemption made available to them in the NMFS regions and through fishery organizations, at fishing docks, on NMFS web page, etc. Renewal notifications are mailed to registered fishers and must be returned through the mail with the required registration fee.

III. Data

OMB Number: 0648-0293.

Form Number: None.

Type of Review: Regular submission.

Affected Public: Business or other for-profit organizations, Individuals or households.

Estimated Number of Respondents: 12,000.

Estimated Time Per Response: 15 minutes.

Estimated Total Annual Burden Hours: 2,800 hours.

Estimated Total Annual Cost to Public: \$304,550.

IV. Request for Comments

Comments are invited on: (a) whether the proposed collection of information is necessary for the proper performance of the functions of the agency, including whether the information shall have practical utility; (b) the accuracy of the agency's estimate of the burden (including hours and cost) 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 through the use of automated collection techniques or other forms of information technology.