

place, Congress established automatic eligibility for children receiving benefits under the State program funded under part A of title IV of the Social Security Act (generally known as Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF)), provided that the eligibility criteria for the state's TANF program are comparable to or more restrictive than the standards for the AFDC program it replaced. Because States have latitude in the way they administer TANF, the Secretary is requesting State agencies, in cooperation with the agency administering TANF, to make comparison and inform the Secretary of their determination.

Need and Use of the Information: The Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) is requiring each State agency to notify the appropriate FNS regional office, in writing, whether the TANF program in their State is comparable to or more restrictive than their AFDC program, and indicate the information used to make the comparison. This information is required in order to facilitate the delivery of Federal benefits to eligible beneficiaries.

Description of Respondents: Individuals or households; Not-for-profit institutions; State, Local or Tribal Government.

Number of Respondents: 4,260,648.

Frequency of Responses: Recordkeeping; Reporting: Biennially; Annually; Other (Triennially).

Total Burden Hours: 1,028,149.

Risk Management Agency

Title: Multiple Peril Crop Insurance.

OMB Control Number: 0563-0053.

Summary of Collection: The Federal Crop Insurance Corporation (FCIC) provides for a nationwide crop insurance program. The Federal Crop Insurance Act, as amended in 1994 and 1996, established the crop insurance program to be the principal tool for risk management by producers of farm products. The current regulations and insurance provisions require the collection of a wide range of information through various forms that are categorized as either sales documents or notices of damage and claim. The information collected is used in part to establish insurance coverage, premiums, payments, indemnities and allow for other program and administrative operations. The Risk Management Agency (RMA) on behalf of FCIC is proposing to modify regulations implementing the Grape Crop Insurance Provisions. The proposed changes will (1) allow grape producers in Idaho, Oregon, and Washington to select one price election and one coverage level for each varietal group specified in the

Special Provisions; and (2) provide year-round coverage in California, Idaho, Mississippi, Oregon, Texas and Washington for insureds with no break in coverage from the prior crop year. No changes are proposed to the existing forms and no additional burden is anticipated due to these proposed changes.

Need and Use of the Information: The current regulations and insurance provisions require the collection of a wide range of information that is used to in part to establish insurance coverage, premiums, payments, indemnities and allow for other program and administrative operations. This information is also used to create an information data base to support continued development and improvements in crop insurance products available to producers and to strengthen the insurance program overall.

Description of Respondents: Farms; Business or other for-profit.

Number of Respondents: 4,514.

Frequency of Responses: Recordkeeping; Reporting: Annually.

Total Burden Hours: 1,092,849.

Risk Management Agency

Title: Multiple Peril Crop Insurance.

OMB Control Number: 0563-0053.

Summary of Collection: The Federal Crop Insurance Corporation (FCIC) provides for a nationwide crop insurance program. The Federal Crop Insurance Act, as amended in 1994 and 1996, established the crop insurance program to be the principal tool for risk management by producers of farm products. The current regulations and insurance provisions require the collection of a wide range of information through various forms that are categorized as either sales documents or notices of damage and claim. The information collected is used in part to establish insurance coverage, premiums, payments, indemnities and allow for other program and administrative operations. The Risk Management Agency (RMA) on behalf of FCIC is proposing to modify regulations implementing the Cotton and ELS Cotton Crop Insurance Provisions. The proposed changes will (1) provide a replant payment; (2) revise the provision used to determine the amount of production to count for cotton and ELS cotton that is eligible for quality adjustments; and (3) provide a prevented planting coverage level of 50 percent for cotton and ELS cotton for the 1999 and subsequent crop years. The burden associated with this collection will decrease due to fewer insured and respondents.

Need and Use of the Information: The current regulations and insurance provisions require the collection of a wide range of information that is used to in part to establish insurance coverage, premiums, payments, indemnities and allow for other program and administrative operations. This information is also used to create an information data base to support continued development and improvements in crop insurance products available to producers and to strengthen the insurance program overall.

Description of Respondents: Farms; Business or other for-profit.

Number of Respondents: 1,599,244.

Frequency of Responses: Recordkeeping; reporting: Annually.

Total Burden Hours: 1,126,103.

Nancy Sternberg,

Departmental Information Clearance Officer.

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DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Forest Service

Cool Bear Vegetative Management, Road Management, and Watershed Rehabilitation. Lolo National Forest, Sanders County, Montana

AGENCY: Forest Service, USDA.

ACTION: Notice; intent to prepare environmental impact statement.

SUMMARY: The USDA, Forest Service, will prepare an environmental impact statement (EIS) to disclose the environmental effects of timber harvest, reforestation, precommercial thinning, prescribed burning, road management and watershed rehabilitation; and to correct management area mapping errors in the Lolo National Forest Land and Resource Management Plan (Forest Plan) in the Fishtrap Creek drainage (herein referred to as the Cool Bear Project). The project area encompasses 18,000 acres north of Thompson Falls, Montana.

The proposed actions of timber harvest, reforestation, precommercial thinning, prescribed burning, road management, and watershed rehabilitation are being considered together because they represent either connected or cumulative actions as defined by the Council on Environmental Quality (40 CFR 1508.25). This EIS will tier to the Lolo Forest Plan Final EIS (April, 1986).

DATES: Written comments and suggestions should be received by September 21, 1998.

ADDRESSES: Submit written comments and suggestions on the proposed management activities or a request to be placed on the project mailing list to Richard A. Smith, District Ranger, Plains/Thompson Falls Ranger District, Lolo National Forest, P.O. Box 429, Plains, Montana 59859.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:

Frank Yurczyk, EIS Team Leader, Plains/Thompson Falls Ranger District, Lolo National Forest, Phone (406) 826-4313.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: Timber harvest, is proposed on approximately 2170 acres of forested land removing an estimated 8.9 MMBF, in the Cool Bear project area, T. 24 N., R. 27 W.; T. 24 N., R. 28 W.; and T. 25 N., R. 28 W, PMM. This area has been designated as suitable for timber management by the Lolo Forest Plan. Prescribed burning on approximately 701 acres is proposed to facilitate reforestation, improve forest health, reduce fuel loading and enhance big game forage production. Approximately 1.9 miles of new road construction is proposed. Reconditioning of 12 miles and reconstructing 27 miles of existing road is proposed to improve drainage and reduce sediment delivery to Fishtrap Creek. Fishtrap Creek is identified as a water quality limited stream segment by the State of Montana. The project would also obliterate the entrances of secondary roads that are not needed in the future. There are 15 roads that are now closed with gates. The gates will be removed and the entrances obliterated to prevent all motor vehicle travel. These roadways will be reseeded to hasten recovery. The project will also propose correction of mapping errors in the Forest Plan Management Area allocation.

The Lolo Forest Plan provides the overall guidance for management activities in the potentially affected area through its goals, objectives, standards and guidelines, and management area direction. The purpose of these proposed actions is to alter current trends in the forest condition and to regulate, over time, changes in vegetative cover which could adversely affect timber commodity potential, wildlife habitat, fuel build up or watershed stability. Timber harvest will help support the economic structure of local communities while contributing to the regional and national timber supply. Proposed road closures and timing of harvest activities are intended to limit human disturbance within suitable grizzly bear habitat, improve long-term watershed conditions, while continuing

to provide non-motorized recreational uses.

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 varying levels and locations for the proposed activities in response to issues and other resource values.

The EIS will analyze the direct, indirect, and cumulative environmental effects of the alternatives. Past, present, and projected activities on both private and National Forest lands will be considered. The EIS will disclose the analysis of site-specific mitigation measures and their effectiveness.

Public participation is an important part of the analysis. The public may visit Forest Service officials at any time during the analysis and prior to the decision. The Forest Service will be 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. No public meetings are scheduled at this time. Comments previously received from the public on the Cool Bear project, will be utilized in the preparation of the EIS and do not need to be resubmitted.

Comments from the public and other agencies will be used in preparation of the Draft EIS.

The following principle issues have been identified so far:

1. The potential effect of proposed timber harvest and associated road development on forest health, old growth, fragmentation, vegetative cover types and patterns across the landscape and natural ecological processes.

2. The potential effect of proposed timber harvest and associated road development on grizzly bear recovery.

3. The potential for proposed harvest and associated road development to affect water quality and quantity, including all cumulative effects from adjacent previous and reasonable foreseeable future activities.

4. The potential for proposed harvest and associated road development to affect wildlife habitat including big game, snag dependent species, riparian dependent species, threatened, endangered, and sensitive species.

5. The potential for proposed harvest and associated road development to affect the net economic cost and benefit to the public.

6. The potential for proposed harvest and associated road development to affect the current patterns of public use for recreation, hunting, personal

firewood gathering and the natural appearance of the landscape.

7. The potential for proposed harvest and associated road development to affect fisheries, including bull char and their habitat.

Other issues commonly associated with timber harvesting and road construction include effects on cultural resources, soils, compaction, nutrients, and noxious weeds in the area. This list will be verified, expanded, or modified based on public scoping for this proposal.

The Draft EIS is expected to be filed with the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and available for public review in February 1999. At that time, the EPA will publish a Notice of Availability of the Draft EIS in the **Federal Register**. The comment period on the Draft EIS will be 45 days from the date the EPA's notice of availability appears in the **Federal Register**. It is very important that those interested in management of the Cool Bear project area participate at that time. The Final EIS is scheduled to be completed by April, 1999.

The Forest Service believes 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 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. *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 30-day scoping 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 developing issues and alternatives. To assist the Forest Service in identifying and considering issues, comments should be as specific to this proposal as possible. 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.

I am the responsible official for this environmental impact statement. My address is Lolo National Forest, Building 24—Fort Missoula, Missoula, MT 59804

Dated: August 13, 1998.

Dallas J. Emch,

Acting Forest Supervisor.

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DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Rural Utilities Service

Information Collection Activity; Comment Request

AGENCY: Rural Utilities Service, USDA.

ACTION: Notice and request for comments.

SUMMARY: In accordance with the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995 (44 U.S.C. Chapter 35, as amended), the Rural Utilities Service's (RUS) invites comments on these information collections for which RUS intends to request approval from the Office of Management and Budget (OMB).

DATES: Comments on this notice must be received by October 20, 1998.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: F. Lamont Heppe, Jr., Director, Program Development & Regulatory Analysis, Rural Utilities Service, USDA, 1400 Independence Ave., SW., STOP 1522, Room 4034 South Building, Washington, D.C. 20250-1522. Telephone: (202) 720-0736. FAX: (202) 720-4120.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: The Office of Management and Budget's (OMB) regulation (5 CFR 1320) implementing provisions of the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995 (Pub. L. 104-13) require that interested members of the public and affected agencies have an opportunity to comment on information collection and recordkeeping activities (see 5 CFR 1320.8(d)).

Comments are invited on: (a) Whether this 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 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 through the use of automated collection techniques

or other forms of information technology. Comments may be sent to: F. Lamont Heppe, Jr., Director, Program Development and Regulatory Analysis, Rural Utilities Service, U.S. Department of Agriculture, Stop 1522, 1400 Independence Ave., SW., Washington, DC 20250-1522. FAX: (202) 720-4120.

Background

The Rural Electrification Act of 1936, as amended, 7 U.S.C. 901 *et seq.* (RE Act) authorizes RUS to make and guarantee loans for electric facilities to serve rural consumers. Most loans are fully amortized over a period of 35 years and are secured by a lien on the borrower's assets.

- **Title:** RUS Loan Prepayments and Related Reporting Burdens.

OMB Control Number: 0572-0088.

Type of Request: Extension of a previously approved information collection, with change.

Abstract: Title 7 CFR Part 1786 establishes policies and procedures mandated by legislation. This part deals with the prepayment of certain loans held by the Federal Financing Bank (FFB), a wholly-owned government instrumentality under the supervision of the Secretary of the Treasury, and guaranteed by RUS.

This regulation sets forth policy and procedures implementing section 306(A) of the RE Act which permits an RUS-financed electric or telephone system to prepay an FFB loan (or any loan advance thereunder) by paying the outstanding principal balance due on the loan (or advance).

Estimate of Burden: Public reporting burden for this collection of information is estimated to average 5 hours per response.

Respondents: Small business or organizations.

Estimated Number of Respondents: 25.

Estimated Number of Responses per Respondent: 4.

Estimated Total Annual Burden on Respondents: 90 hours.

- **Title:** Wholesale Contracts for the Purchase and Sale of Electric Power.

OMB Control Number: 0572-0089.

Type of Request: Reinstatement of a previously approved information collection, with change.

Abstract: Most RUS financed electric systems are cooperatives and are organized in a two-tiered structure. Retail customers are members of the distribution system that brings electricity to their homes and business. Distribution cooperatives, in turn, are members of power supply cooperatives, also known as generation and transmission cooperatives (G&T's) that

generate or purchase power and transmit the power to the distribution systems.

For a distribution system a lien on the borrower's assets generally represents adequate security. However, since most G&T revenues flow from its distribution members, RUS requires, as a condition of a loan or loan guarantee to a G&T that its distribution members enter into a long-term requirements wholesale power contract to purchase their power from the G&T at rates that cover all the G&T's expenses, including debt service and margins.

RUS Form 444 is the standard form of the wholesale power contract. Most borrowers adapt this form to meet their specific needs. The contract is prepared and executed by the G&T and each member and by RUS.

Estimate of Burden: Public reporting burden for this collection of information is estimated to average 6 hours per response.

Respondents: Small business or organizations.

Estimated Number of Respondents: 150

Estimated Number of Responses per Respondent: 1

Estimated Total Annual Burden on Respondents: 900 hours.

- **Title:** Electric System Construction Policies and Procedures.

OMB Control Number: 0572-0107.

Type of Request: Reinstatement of a previously approved information collection, with change.

Abstract: In order to facilitate the programmatic interest of the RE Act, and, in order to assure that loans made or guaranteed by RUS are adequately secured, RUS, as a secured lender, as established certain standards and specifications for materials, equipment, and the construction of electric systems. The use of standard forms, construction contracts, and procurement procedures helps assure RUS that appropriate standards and specifications are maintained, RUS' loan security is not adversely affected; and the loan and loan guarantee funds are used effectively and for the intended purposes. The following are RUS forms included in this package: 168b, 168c, 180, 181, 187, 198, 200, 201, 203, 213, 224, 231, 238, 251, 254, 257, 307, 764, 786, 790, 792, 792a-c, 830, and 831.

Estimate of Burden: Public reporting burden for this collection of information is estimated to average 10 hours per response.

Respondents: Small business or organizations.

Estimated Number of Respondents: 870.