

Notices

Federal Register

Vol. 63, No. 181

Friday, September 18, 1998

This section of the FEDERAL REGISTER contains documents other than rules or proposed rules that are applicable to the public. Notices of hearings and investigations, committee meetings, agency decisions and rulings, delegations of authority, filing of petitions and applications and agency statements of organization and functions are examples of documents appearing in this section.

DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Forest Service

National Survey on Recreation and the Environment

AGENCY: Forest Service, USDA.

ACTION: Notice of information collection: 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. This collection is necessary to ensure that the Forest Service and other land managing agencies meet the recreational needs of the public, understand the public's attitudes and preferences for management of public lands and the environment, and meet the Congressionally mandated reporting requirements for the Renewable Resources Planning Act and the Government Performance and Results Act. Respondents will be adults in the United States.

DATES: Comments must be received in writing on or before November 17, 1998.

ADDRESSES: All comments should be addressed to: H. Ken Cordell, Southern Research Station, Forest Service, USDA, 320 Green Street, Athens, GA 30602-2044 or faxed to (706) 559-4262. Comments also may be sent via e-mail to kcordell/srs_atthens@fs.fed.us.

The public may inspect comments at the offices of the Southern Research Station, Research Work Unit SRS-4901, Forest Service, USDA, 320 Green Street, Athens, Georgia.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: H. Ken Cordell, Southern Research Station, at (706) 559-4263 or e-mail kcordell/srs_atthens@fs.fed.us.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

Description of Information Collection

Title: National Survey on Recreation and the Environment: The Seventh National Recreation Survey.

OMB Number: 0596-0127.

Expiration Date of Approval: September 30, 1998.

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

Abstract: The collected information will be used to measure the demands the public makes on National Forests and other public lands and recreational sites; to identify the recreational preferences of visitors to public and private recreational sites; to identify the public's, especially persons with disabilities, perceptions of accessibility to recreational sites; to gain feedback from the public about management of National Forests and other recreational lands; to ask the public how they think public agencies could improve management of public land and recreational areas; and to keep abreast of shifts in recreational demands that might influence delivery of recreational services. The Forest Service also will use the collected information in developing the Renewable Resources Planning Act Assessment for the year 2000, which will look at emerging public recreational trends.

The first National Survey on Recreation and the Environment was conducted in 1960. Since then, the survey has been conducted every 5 years. The data collected in this series of information collections has enabled Federal and State agencies to keep up to date on changing public recreational trends that place demands on public recreational facilities and areas.

In 1987, the Forest Service coordinated the National Survey on Recreation and the Environment in collaboration with five other Federal agencies (the Bureau of Land Management, Corps of Engineers, Environmental Protection Agency, Economic Research Service, and National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration), three private sector interests (the Sporting Goods Manufacturers Association, Sports Fishing Institute, and Outdoor Recreation Coalition of America), and five universities (the University of Georgia, Indiana University, Georgia Southern University, Purdue University,

and the University of Tennessee). The Forest Service assumed the principle investigative role for the Survey and, in 1994, conducted the most recent survey in the continuing national series. As the lead agency, Forest Service personnel led the conceptualization, design, and execution of the 1994-95 National Survey on Recreation and the Environment.

The Forest Service will coordinate the next National Survey on Recreation and the Environment to be conducted from March, 1999, through February, 2000. It will be the seventh in this series of Federally-sponsored recreational surveys. To maintain the historical integrity of the data, this survey will incorporate many of the same interviewing protocols used since the beginning survey in 1960.

As with the 1994-95 National Survey on Recreation and the Environment, interviews will be conducted by telephone. The telephone numbers of respondents will be selected at random. Respondents will be interviewed by personnel trained in interviewing techniques and will be bilingual to overcome language barriers.

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

Estimate of Burden: 20 minutes.

Type of Respondents: Individuals 16 years or older with access to a telephone.

Estimated Number of Respondents: 50,000.

Estimated Number of Responses per Respondent: 1.

Estimated Total Annual Burden on Respondents: 16,667 hours.

Comment Is Invited

The agency invites comments on the following: (a) Whether the information proposed for collection is appropriate for the stated purposes and 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, including the validity of the methodology and assumptions used; (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, including name and address when provided, will become a matter of public record. Comments received in response to this notice will be summarized and included in the request for Office of Management and Budget approval.

Dated: September 14, 1998.

Robert C. Joslin,

Acting Associate Chief.

[FR Doc. 98-25053 Filed 9-17-98; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 3410-11-P

DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Forest Service

Rio Sabana Day Use Picnic Area, Caribbean National Forest, Naguabo, Puerto Rico

AGENCY: Forest Service, USDA.

ACTION: Notice of intent to prepare an environmental impact statement.

SUMMARY: The Forest Service, USDA will prepare an environmental impact statement (EIS) on a proposed action to develop the Rio Sabana Day Use Picnic Area in the municipality of Naguabo, reconstruct 2.5 miles of the Rio Sabana Trail and trailhead, reconstruct 0.8 miles of entrance road, and construct a cable trail bridge over Rio Sabana.

The Forest Service invites comments and suggestions that are within the scope of the proposed action and analysis. In addition, the agency gives notice of the 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: Following are the dead lines established for public comments: (a) Comments to be incorporated into the draft environmental impact statement should be received by September 30th, 1998; (b) Comments to be incorporated into the final environmental impact statement should be received within 45 days following publication of the Notice of Availability of the draft environmental impact statement.

ADDRESSES: Send written comments to: Abigail Rivera, Team Leader; Caribbean National Forest, P.O. Box 490, Palmer, Puerto Rico, 00721.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Abigail Rivera, Rio Sabana Picnic Area EIS Team Leader, 787 888-5643.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: The Caribbean National Forest is proposing:

(a) To develop a day use picnic area located in the vicinity of the Rio Sabana Bridge, on the southern end of Highway #191, at Km. 21.1, in the Cubuy Sector of the Municipality of Naguabo; (b) the rehabilitation of 2.5 miles of the Rio Sabana Trail #6 and trailhead; (c) repair and reconstruction of 0.8 miles of entrance road, on Hwy. #191, Km. 22.3, to project site, Km. 21.1; (d) and construction of a cable bridge over the Rio Sabana. Currently, the area has not been developed for recreation but receives heavy use. This use, coupled with a sensitive ecosystem in which it is located, gives rise to a potential conflict between the need to protect and conserve natural resources and the need to provide a well managed natural setting where our customers can enjoy a satisfying recreational experience.

Access to the proposed site is via Hwy #191, at Km. 22.3. On April 13, 1992, U.S. District Judge Guierbolini permanently enjoined and restrained the U.S. Forest Service and the Federal Highway Administration from proceeding with construction activities on the closed portion of Highway P.R. #191, from Km. 13.5 to Km. 20, until completion of an environmental impact statement. The proposed project is located on a segment of Hwy. #191 that is outside of the area under court order.

The proposed action would meet the objectives of: (a) Correcting the current managerial situation and social settings in relation to the physical setting and actual use; (b) protect the natural resources in the vicinity; (c) increase Forest Service presence on the southern end of the Forest, which currently is minimal.

The EIS will be prepared in accordance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), the National Forest Management Act (NFMA) and the Endangered Species Act (ESA). The U.S. Forest Service will be the lead agency and the Puerto Rico Department of Public Transportation (DTOP) will be a cooperating agency.

Public participation will be especially important at several points during analysis. The first point is when scoping officially begins (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 who may be interested in or affected by the proposed action. Comments must be received by *September 30, 1998*. This input will be used in preparation of the draft environmental impact statement (DEIS). The scoping process will include: (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 process; (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). Public participation will include notifying interested and affected publics of the proposed action in person and/or by mail. News releases will be used to provide general notice to the public.

The following preliminary issues have been identified through internal scoping: (1) Possible effects of development of picnic area and reconstruction of Rd. #191 on the threatened and endangered species identified in the project area; (2) Possible effects on natural resources due to an increase in visitors to picnic area and trail; (3) Reconstruction of the historic CCC Rio Sabana Trail, which connects with the Tradewinds/El Toro Trail, may generate greater use than is allowed in the proposed Wilderness Management Area; (4) Security issues in the area in relation to 24-hour presence of Forest Service hosts of volunteers; (5) Potential hazards to Forest users caused by a nearby water impoundment and transmission facility, located on private land.

A draft environmental impact statement is expected to be available for public review, for 45 days, in October 1998.

It is very important that those interested in this proposed action participate at that time. Upon release of the draft environmental impact statement, projected for *October 1998*, reviewers should 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.C. 519, (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). It is also helpful if comments refer to specific pages of chapters of the draft statement. Comments may also address the adequacy of the draft environmental impact statement 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