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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

Genesis Placer Claim, Suction Dredging Nez Perce National Forest, Idaho County, ID

AGENCY: Forest Service, USDA.

ACTION: Notice; intent to prepare environmental impact statement.

SUMMARY: The Forest Service will prepare an environmental impact statement (EIS) to analyze and disclose the environmental effects of dredging on the Genesis placer claim on Red River. The claimant has proposed using one eight-inch suction dredge and one five-inch suction dredge to remove possible gold deposits from the gravel and at bedrock in Red River. The operation is proposed for five years, to be operated when water and weather conditions allow. The Genesis placer claim is located in Section 6, T28N, R9E, BPM. **DATES:** Written comments and suggestions should be received on or before November 9, 1998 to receive timely consideration in the preparation of the draft EIS.

ADDRESSES: Send written comments and suggestions on the proposed action or requests for a map of the proposed action or to be placed on the project mailing list to Michael R. McGee, Acting District Ranger, Red River Ranger District, P.O. Box 416, Elk City, Idaho 83525.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Jo Ellis, District Geologist, Red River Ranger District, P.O. Box 416, Elk City, Idaho 83525, phone (208) 842-2245.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: The proposed action is proposed pursuant to the 1872 Mining Law, the Organic Administration Act of 1897 and Forest Service mining regulations, Title 36 Code of Federal Regulation (CFR), Part 228, Subpart A. The United States mining laws at 30 U.S.C. 21-54 confer a statutory right to enter upon the public

land to search for and remove certain minerals. The Forest Service has the responsibility to make sure that the activities are conducted so as to minimize adverse environmental impacts to National Forest System lands, 36 CFR, Part 228, Subpart A.

The proposal involves processing 5,517 cubic yards of river gravel over a 1,590 length of Red River. A 25-foot wide section of the river, approximately three feet deep, would be worked. This work would take place over five years or more whenever water and weather conditions allow operations. The process involves utilizing high pressure water pumps driven by gasoline-powered motors which create suction in a flexible intake pipe. A mixture of streambed sediment and water is vacuumed into the intake pipe and passed over a sluice box mounted on a floating barge. Dense particles (including gold) are trapped in the sluice box. The remainder of the entrained material is discharged into the stream as tailings or spoils. A hole is created in the gravel so bedrock is exposed. Cracks in the bedrock are then cleaned with the suction. Large boulders or rootwads are moved by cables attached to a winch.

The Forest Service will consider a range of alternatives to the proposed action. One of these will be the "no action" alternative, in which the Plan of Operations would not be approved. Additional alternatives will examine varying intensity and duration of the proposed activities, including restrictions on the size of equipment and length of seasonal operation, as well as respond to the issues and other resource values.

Public participation is an important part of the project, commencing with the initial scoping process (40 CFR 1501.7), which starts with publication of this notice and continues for the next 30 days. In addition, the public is encouraged to visit with 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, the Nez Perce Tribe, and other individuals or organizations who may be interested in or affected by the proposed action.

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

the draft EIS. The scoping process will be used to:

1. Identify potential issues;
2. Identify major issues to be analyzed in depth;
3. Eliminate minor issues or those which have been covered by a relevant previous environmental analysis, such as the Nez Perce National Forest Plan EIS;
4. Identify alternatives to the proposed action;
5. Identify potential environmental effects of the proposed action and alternatives (i.e., direct, indirect, and cumulative effects).

While public participation in this analysis is welcome at any time, comments received within 30 days of this notice will be especially useful in the preparation of the draft EIS, which is expected to be filed with the Environmental Protection Agency and available for public review in January 1999. A 45-day comment period will follow publication of a Notice of Availability of the draft EIS in the **Federal Register**. The comments received will be analyzed and considered in preparation of a final EIS, which is expected to be filed in June 1999. A Record of Decision will be issued not less than 30 days after publication of a Notice of Availability of the final EIS in the **Federal Register**.

The Forest Service believes it is important at this early stage to give reviewers notice of several court rulings related to public participation in the environmental review process. First, reviewers of draft EISs must structure their participation in the environmental review of the proposal in such a way 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, 513 (1978). Also, environmental objections that could be raised at the draft EIS stage but that are not raised until after completion of the final EIS 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 45-day comment period in order that substantive comments and objections are available to the Forest Service at a

time when it can meaningfully consider them and respond to them in the final EIS. To assist the Forest Service in identifying and considering issues and concerns on the proposed action, comments should be as specific 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.

Michael R. McGee is the responsible official for this environmental impact statement.

Dated: September 28, 1998.

Michael R. McGee,

Acting District Ranger, Red River Ranger District, Nez Perce National Forest, P.O. Box 416, Elk City, ID 83525.

[FR Doc. 98-27009 Filed 10-7-98; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 3410-11-M

DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Rural Housing Service

Notice of Request for Extension of a Currently Approved Information Collection

AGENCY: Rural Housing Service (RHS), USDA.

ACTION: Proposed collection; Comments requested.

SUMMARY: In accordance with the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995, this notice announces the Rural Housing Service's intention to seek a regular three-year clearance from the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) of new reporting and recordkeeping requirements in support of the Guaranteed Rural Rental Housing Program Origination and Servicing Handbook. These requirements have been approved by emergency clearance by OMB under OMB control number 0575-0175.

DATES: Comments on this notice must be received by December 7, 1998 to be assured of consideration.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Carl Wagner, Senior Loan Specialist, Multi-Family Housing Processing Division, Rural Housing Service, USDA, Room 1243, Stop 0781, 1400 Independence Avenue, SW., Washington, DC 20250, telephone, (202) 720-1627.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

Title: Guaranteed Rural Rental Housing Program Origination and Servicing Handbook.

OMB Number: 0575-0175.

Expiration Date of Approval: February 28, 1999.

Type of Request: Extension of a Currently Approved Information Collection.

Abstract: On March 28, 1996, President Clinton signed the "Housing Opportunity Program Extension Act of 1996." One of the provisions of the Act was the authorization of the Section 538 Guaranteed Rural Rental Housing Loan Program, adding the program to the Housing Act of 1949. The program has been designed to increase the supply of affordable multifamily housing through partnerships between RHS and major lending sources, as well as State and local housing finance agencies and bond issuers. Qualified lenders will be authorized to originate, underwrite, and close loans for multifamily housing projects requiring new construction or acquisition with rehabilitation of at least \$15,000 per unit will be considered.

The housing must be available for occupancy only by low or moderate income families or persons, whose incomes at the time of initial occupancy do not exceed 115 percent of the median income of the area. After initial occupancy, a tenant's income may exceed these limits; however, rents, including utilities, are restricted to no more than 30 percent of the 115 percent of area Median Income for the term of the loan.

Units must be located in rural areas considered eligible as defined in 7 CFR 3550.10 (not just the designated areas as defined in 7 CFR 1944.228).

The purpose of this Guaranteed Rural Rental Housing Program Origination and Servicing Handbook is to provide lenders and Agency personnel with the "how-to" administrative guidance needed to aid them in the implementation of 7 CFR part 3565, Guaranteed Rural Rental Housing Program (GRRHP). Throughout the Handbook, the user will find reference to the applicable corresponding action in 7 CFR part 3565. The references will be in italicized brackets and a copy of this regulation is provided in Appendix 1 of the Handbook. In accordance with the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995, the reporting and recordkeeping requirements for 7 CFR part 3565 have been approved by emergency clearance by OMB under OMB control number 0575-0174.

Estimate of Burden: Public reporting burden for this collection of information is estimated to range from 5 minutes to 2 hours per response.

Respondents: Business or other for-profit entities and not-for-profit institutions.

Estimated Number of Respondents: 50.

Estimated Number of Responses per Respondent: 250.56.

Estimated Total Annual Burden on Respondents: 854.75.

A complete copy of the information collection package and Handbook can be obtained from Tracy Gillin, Regulations and Paperwork Management Branch, at (202) 692-0039.

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 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 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 may be sent via the U.S. Postal Service to Tracy Gillin, Regulations and Paperwork Management Branch, U.S. Department of Agriculture, Rural Development, STOP 0742, 1400 Independence Ave. SW., Washington, DC 20250-0742. Comments may also be sent via Federal Express to Tracy Gillin, Regulations and Paperwork Management Branch, USDA-Rural Development, 3rd Floor, 300 E. St., SW., Washington, DC 20546. All responses to this notice will be summarized and included in the request for OMB approval. All comments will also become a matter of public record. A comment is best assured of having its full effect if the Agency receives it within 30 days of publication of this notice.

Dated: September 22, 1998.

Jan E. Shadburn,

Administrator, Rural Housing Service.

[FR Doc. 98-27020 Filed 10-7-98; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 3410-XV-U

DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

Economics and Statistics Administration

Census Advisory Committees

AGENCY: Economics and Statistics Administration, Department of Commerce.

ACTION: Notice of public meeting.