

prepare the Draft and Final EIS and to make the respective agency decisions. For most effective use, comments would be submitted to the Forest Service within 30 days from the date of publication of this notice in the **Federal Register**. Preparation of the EIS will include the following steps:

1. Define the proposed action and purpose and need for action.
2. Identify potential issues.
3. Eliminate issues of minor importance or those that have been covered by previous and relevant environmental analyses.
4. Select issues to be analyzed in depth.
5. Identify reasonable alternatives to the proposed action.
6. Describe the affected environment.
7. Identify the potential environmental effects of the alternatives.

Steps 2, 3, and 4 will be completed through the scoping process.

Step 5 will consider a range of alternatives developed from the key issues and management needs. At a minimum, the "No Action" and "Proposed Action" alternatives will be analyzed. Other alternatives could involve modified tract boundaries (additions) and/or reductions and different sets of lease stipulations for the protection of natural resources. Alternatives may also be developed to include analysis of mining and the existing adjacent lease area and additions to adjacent leases needed to prevent bypassing coal reserves.

Step 6 will describe the physical attributes of the area to be affected by this proposal, with special attention to the environmental factors that could be adversely affected.

Step 7 will analyze the environmental effects of each alternative. This analysis will be consistent with management direction outlined in the Forest Plan. The direct, indirect, and cumulative effects of each alternative will be analyzed and documented. In addition, the site-specific mitigation measures for each alternative will be identified and the effectiveness of these mitigation measures will be disclosed.

Agency representatives and other interested people are invited to visit with Forest Service and BLM officials at any time during the EIS process. Two specific time periods are identified for the receipt of formal comments on the analysis. The two comment period are, (1) during the scoping process, the next 30 days following publication of this Notice in the **Federal Register**, and (2) during the formal review period of the Draft EIS.

The Draft EIS is estimated to be filed with the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and available for public review in November, 2000. At that time the EPA will publish an availability notice in the **Federal Register**.

The comment period on the Draft EIS will be 45 days from the date that EPA's notice of availability appears in the **Federal Register**. It is very important that those interested in this proposed action participate at that time. To be the most helpful, comments on the Draft EIS should be as specific as possible and may address the adequacy of the statement or the merits of the alternatives discussed (See the Council of Environmental Quality Regulations for implementing the procedural provisions of the National Environmental Policy Act at 40 CFR 1503.3).

In addition, Federal court decisions have established that reviewers of draft environmental 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). Environmental objections that could have been raised at the draft stage may be waived if not raised until after completion of the final environmental impact statement. *City of Angoon v. Hodel*, (19th Circuit, 1986) and *Wisconsin Heritages, Inc. v. Harris*, 490 F. Supp. 1334, 1338, (E.D. Wis. 1980). The reason for this is to ensure that substantive comments and objections are made available to the Forest Service at the time when it can meaningfully consider them and respond to them in the final document.

To assist the Forest Service in identifying and considering issues and concerns related to the proposed action, comments on the Draft EIS should be specific as possible. Referring to specific pages or chapters of the Draft EIS is most helpful. Comments may also address the adequacy of the Draft EIS 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 the procedural provisions of the National Environmental Policy Act, 40 CFR 1503.3, in addressing these points. The Final EIS is expected to be released in March, 2001.

The Forest Supervisor of the Manti-La Sal National Forest and Utah State Director of the Bureau of Land Management, who are the responsible officials for the EIS, will then make their respective decisions regarding this

proposal, after considering the comments, Environmental Impact Statement, and applicable laws, regulations, and policies. The rationale for the respective agency decisions will be documented in the Records of Decision.

Authority: (Mineral Leasing Act of February 25, 1920 (P.L. 66-146, 41 Stat. 437, as amended; 30 U.S.C. 181-287))

Dated: March 7, 2000.

Jeff Walter,

Acting Forest Supervisor, Manti-La Sal National Forest.

Dated: March 8, 2000.

Richard L. Manus,

Field Office Manager, Bureau of Land Management, Price Field Office.

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DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Forest Service

Notice of Public Meeting on Proposed Withdrawal of Forest Service Lands, Arizona

AGENCY: Forest Service, USDA.

ACTION: Notice.

SUMMARY: This notice announces the time and place for a public meeting on the proposed Forest Service withdrawal application for the protection of cultural, recreational, and resource values on and around the San Francisco Peaks near Flagstaff, Arizona. This public meeting will provide the opportunity for public involvement in this proposed action as required by regulation. All comments will be considered when a final determination is made on whether this land should be withdrawn.

MEETING DATE AND TIME: The public meeting will be held on May 17, 2000 from 5 pm to 8 pm.

MEETING LOCATION: Flagstaff City Hall, Council Chambers and Conference Room, 211 West Aspen Avenue, Flagstaff, Arizona 86001.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Ken Jacobs or Alvin Brown, Peaks Ranger District, Coconino National Forest, 520-526-0866.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: A Notice of Proposed Withdrawal for the San Francisco Peaks/Mount Elden Area was published in the **Federal Register** issue of November 4, 1998, Vol 63, No. 213, page 59576. The notice contained a legal description of the proposed withdrawal area and stated that a public meeting would be held at a later date. Notice is hereby given that a public meeting will

be held at the location, date, and time shown above. The purpose of the meeting is to allow interested persons to ask questions and comment on the proposed withdrawal.

Dated: March 8, 2000.

James W. Golden,

Forest Supervisor, Coconino National Forest.

[FR Doc. 00-6581 Filed 3-16-00; 8:45 am]

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DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Rural Housing Service

Notice of Funds Availability (NOFA) Inviting Applications for the Rural Community Development Initiative (RCDI)

AGENCY: Rural Housing Service, USDA.

ACTION: Notice.

SUMMARY: This Notice announces the availability of \$6 million of grant funds for the RCDI program through the Rural Housing Service (RHS), herein referred to as the Agency, USDA. Applicants must provide matching funds from non-Federal sources in an amount at least equal to the Federal grant. These grants will be made to qualified intermediary organizations that will provide technical assistance to recipients to develop their capacity and ability to undertake projects to improve housing, community facilities, or community and economic development. This Notice lists the information needed to submit an application for these funds.

DATES: The deadline for receipt of an application is 4:00 p.m. EST on June 15, 2000. The application deadline is firm as to date and hour. The agency will not consider any application received after the deadline.

The comment period for information collection under the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995 continues through May 16, 2000. Comments on the paperwork burden must be received by this date to be assured of consideration.

ADDRESSES: Entities wishing to apply for assistance may download the application requirements from the RCDI website at: www.rurdev.usda.gov/rhs/rcdi/index.htm. Applicants may also request application packages from: Beth Jones, Rural Housing Service, STOP 0787, 1400 Independence Ave. SW, Washington, DC 20250-0787, Telephone (202) 720-1498, E-mail: epjones@rdmail.rural.usda.gov.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Beth Jones, Senior Loan Specialist, Community Programs, RHS, USDA, STOP 0787, 1400 Independence Ave.

SW, Washington, DC 20250-0787, Telephone (202) 720-1498, Facsimile (202) 690-0471, E-mail: epjones@rdmail.rural.usda.gov. You may also obtain information from the RCDI website at: www.rurdev.usda.gov/rhs/rcdi/index.htm.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

Paperwork Reduction Act

The reporting requirements contained in this notice have received temporary emergency clearance by the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) under Control Number 0575-0180. However, in accordance with the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995, RHS will seek standard OMB approval of the reporting requirements contained in this Notice and hereby opens a 60-day public comment period.

Abstract: RHS, an Agency within the USDA Rural Development mission area, will administer the RCDI grant program through their Community Facilities Division. The intent of the RCDI grant program is to develop the capacity and ability of rural area recipients through a program of technical assistance provided by qualified intermediary organizations.

Estimate of Burden: Public reporting burden for this collection of information is estimated to average 1.37 hours per response.

Respondents: Intermediaries and recipients.

Estimated Number of Respondents: 100.

Estimated Number of Responses per Respondent: 15.

Estimated Total Annual Burden on Respondents: 2,012 hours.

Copies of this information collection can be obtained from Tracy Gillin, Regulations and Paperwork Management Branch, (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 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 the use of appropriate automated, electronic, mechanical, or other technological collection techniques or other forms of information technology. Comments on the paperwork burden may be sent to Tracy Gillin, Regulations and Paperwork Management Branch,

Rural Development, U.S. Department of Agriculture, Stop 0742, 1400 Independence Avenue SW, Washington, DC 20250-0742. 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.

Background

Congress created the Rural Community Development Initiative (RCDI) in Fiscal Year 2000 with an appropriation of \$6 million under the Rural Community Advancement Program (RCAP). These funds are to be used solely to develop the capacity and ability of private, nonprofit community-based housing and community development organizations, and low income rural communities to improve housing, community facilities, and community and economic development projects in rural areas. Qualified private and public (including tribal) intermediary organizations proposing to carry out technical assistance programs will be eligible to receive the funding. The intermediary will be required to provide matching funds from non-Federal sources in an amount at least equal to the RCDI grant.

Definitions for RCDI Purposes

Agency—The Rural Housing Service (RHS) or its successor.

Beneficiary—entities or individuals that receive benefits from assistance provided by the recipient.

Capacity—the ability of a recipient to finance and implement housing, community facilities, and community and economic development projects or provide technical assistance to enhance a community's potential.

Intermediary—a qualified private or public (including tribal) organization that provides technical assistance to multiple recipients.

Low-income community a city, town, village, county, parish, or borough with a median household income at, or below, 80 percent of the statewide median household income.

Matching Funds cash or confirmed funding commitments from non-Federal sources. Matching funds must be at least equal to the grant amount. In-kind contributions cannot be used as matching funds.

Recipient—the entity that receives the technical assistance from the intermediary. The recipient must be either a private, nonprofit community-based housing or community development organization or a low-income rural community.

Rural and Rural Area—a city, town, or unincorporated area that has a