

SUMMARY: Pursuant to Section 102(2)(c) of the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969; the Council on Environmental Quality Regulations (40 CFR Part 1500); and the Natural Resources Conservation Service Rules (7 CFR Part 650); the Natural Resources Conservation Service, U.S. Department of Agriculture, gives notice that an environmental impact statement is not being prepared for the rehabilitation of two dams (South and North Fork dams) and their disposal system in the Doña Ana Arroyo Watershed.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Rosendo Treviño III; State Conservationist; Natural Resources Conservation Service; 6200 Jefferson, NE.; Albuquerque, NM 87109-3734; telephone 505-761-4400.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: The environmental assessment (EA) of this Federally assisted action indicates that the project will not cause significant local, regional, or national effects on the human environment. As a result of these findings, Rosendo Treviño III, State Conservationist, has determined that the preparation and review of an environmental impact statement are not needed for this project.

The project purpose is flood damage prevention. The action includes the rehabilitation of two floodwater retarding dams and their common disposal system. The Notice of a Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) has been forwarded to the Environmental Protection Agency; various Federal, state, and local agencies; and interested parties. A limited number of copies of the FONSI are available to fill single copy requests at the above address. Basic data developed during the EA are on file and may be reviewed by contacting Rosendo Treviño III. No administrative action on implementation of the proposed action will be taken until 30 days after the date of publication in the **Federal Register**.

Dated: February 20, 2004.

Rosendo Treviño,

State Conservationist.

[FR Doc. 04-4460 Filed 2-27-04; 8:45 am]

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DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Natural Resources Conservation Service

Notice of Availability of finding of no significant impact and Supplement to the environmental assessment for the Environmental Quality Incentives Program

AGENCY: Natural Resources Conservation Service, USDA.

ACTION: Notice of availability of finding of no significant impact and Supplement to the environmental assessment for the Environmental Quality Incentives Program.

SUMMARY: The Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), has prepared a Supplement to the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) Environmental Assessment (EA) consistent with the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969, as amended. The Supplement was prepared as a means of amending the Final EQIP EA to correct the record and address comments received on the draft EQIP EA but not acknowledged in the final EQIP EA. Upon review of the information in the Supplement to the EQIP EA, the Chief of NRCS made a Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) and the determination was made that no environmental impact statement is required to support National implementation of EQIP.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION: Copies of the Supplement to the EQIP EA and the FONSI, or additional information on matters related to this **Federal Register** Notice can be obtained by contacting one of the following individuals at the addresses and telephone numbers shown below:

Mr. Melvin Womack, Conservation Incentives Team Leader, Conservation Operations Division, NRCS, U.S. Department of Agriculture, PO Box 2890, Room 5239-S, Washington, DC 20013-2890. Telephone: (202) 720-0907.

Ms. André DuVarney, National Environmental Coordinator, Ecological Sciences Division, NRCS, U.S. Department of Agriculture, PO Box 2890, Room 6158-S, Washington, DC 20013-2890. Telephone: (202) 720-4925.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: To implement EQIP, as amended by the Farm Security and Rural Investment Act of 2002, Pub. L. 107-71 (May 13, 2002) ("the 2002 Act"), the NRCS published in the **Federal Register** a proposed rule with requests for comments (68 FR 6655 (February 10, 2003)). At the same time,

NRCS made available to the public a Draft Environmental Assessment (EA) that analyzed the impacts of the proposed rule on the quality of the human environment. The Draft EA was prepared on a National Programmatic basis. NRCS was of the preliminary opinion, based on the results of the Draft EA, that implementation of EQIP would have no significant impact on the quality of the human environment, particularly when focusing on the significant adverse impacts which NEPA is intended to help decision makers avoid and mitigate; therefore, NRCS also made a Draft FONSI available to the public at that time. NRCS indicated that it would accept comments on the Draft EA and Draft FONSI through the mail or via the internet until March 12, 2003.

On May 30, 2003, NRCS published in the **Federal Register** the final rule implementing EQIP, as amended (68 FR 32337 (May 30, 2003)), and at that time provided the public with notice of the availability of the Final EA and FONSI.

In the Final EA, NRCS stated that it "received no comments on the draft EA or draft FONSI." In fact, however, NRCS had received a comment letter on the Draft EA. NRCS misplaced these comments and they were not considered during formulation of the final EA that was prepared to comply with the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969, as amended (NEPA). The error was discovered after the EA and FONSI were made available to the public. To ensure the comments received appropriate consideration as part of the NEPA process, NRCS made a determination to correct the record and address the comments by issuing a supplement to the Final EQIP EA.

NEPA requires that Federal agencies prepare Environmental Impact Statements (EISs) for major Federal actions significantly affecting the quality of the human environment. In addition, the Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ) regulations implementing NEPA (40 CFR parts 1500-1508) require Federal agencies to prepare EAs to assist in determining whether there is a need to prepare an EIS for actions that have not been categorically excluded from NEPA. NRCS has reviewed the comments on the Draft EQIP EA to determine whether the comments provide new information that would lead NRCS to find that publication of the final rule to implement EQIP on a National basis may result in the significant adverse impacts that NEPA is intended to help decision makers avoid and mitigate; and thus, whether an EIS should be prepared.

Upon review of the information in the Supplement to the EQIP EA, the Chief found that no new information was provided in the comments to indicate NRCS should address additional issues or alternatives in the EA or that alters discussions in the Final EA of the potential effects of the program from a National perspective. The Chief of NRCS further found, after considering the information in the comments and the Supplement, the program will not result in a significant impact on the quality of the human environment, particularly when focusing on the significant adverse impacts which NEPA is intended to help decisionmakers avoid and mitigate. Therefore, a FONSI was issued and the determination was made that no EIS is required to support National implementation of EQIP.

Copies of the Supplement to the EA and FONSI may be reviewed at the following location: Conservation Operations Division, NRCS, U.S. Department of Agriculture, Room 5239-S, Washington, DC 20013-2890. The documents may also be accessed on the Internet at http://www.nrcs.usda.gov/programs/Env_Assess/EQIP/EQIP.html

Signed in Washington, DC on February 9, 2004.

Bruce I. Knight,

Chief, Natural Resources Conservation Service.

[FR Doc. 04-4459 Filed 2-27-04; 8:45 am]

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DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Rural Utilities Service

Announcement of Grant and Loan Application Deadlines and Funding Levels

AGENCY: Rural Utilities Service, USDA.

ACTION: Notice of solicitation of applications.

SUMMARY: The Rural Utilities Service (RUS) announces its Distance Learning and Telemedicine (DLT) Program grant application window for funding during fiscal year (FY) 2004. In addition, RUS announces the minimum and maximum amounts for DLT grants, combination loan-grants and loans applicable for the fiscal year. The DLT Program regulation (7 CFR 1703, subparts D, E, F and G) has not changed, but this Notice appears in a new format, as mandated by a policy directive issued by the Office of Federal Financial Management (OFFM) of the Office of Management and Budget (OMB), published in the **Federal Register** on June 23, 2003.

DATES: You may submit completed applications for grants on paper or electronically according to the following deadlines:

- Paper copies must be postmarked and mailed, shipped, or sent overnight no later than April 30, 2004, to be eligible for FY 2004 grant funding. Late applications are not eligible for FY 2004 grant funding.
- Electronic copies must be received by April 30, 2004, to be eligible for FY 2004 grant funding. Late applications are not eligible for FY 2004 grant funding.
- RUS will examine applications for items that would disqualify them from consideration if the applications are submitted on paper by March 31, 2004.

You may submit applications for FY 2004 combination loan-grants and loans at any time.

ADDRESSES: You may obtain application guides and materials for all DLT programs via the Internet at the DLT Web site: <http://www.usda.gov/rus/telecom/dlt/dlt.htm>. You may also request application guides and materials from RUS by contacting the DLT Branch at (202) 720-0413.

Submit completed paper applications for grants, combination loan-grants or loans to the Rural Utilities Service, U.S. Department of Agriculture, 1400 Independence Ave., SW., Room 2845, STOP 1550, Washington, DC 20250-1550. Applications should be marked "Attention: Director, Advanced Services Division, Telecommunications Program."

Submit electronic grant or combination loan-grant applications at <http://www.grants.gov> (Grants.gov), following the instructions you find on that Web site.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:

Orren E. Cameron, III, Director, Advanced Services Division, Rural Utilities Service, U.S. Department of Agriculture, telephone: (202) 720-0413, fax: (202) 720-1051.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

Overview

Federal Agency: Rural Utilities Service (RUS).

Funding Opportunity Title: Distance Learning and Telemedicine Loans and Grants.

Announcement Type: Initial announcement.

Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance (CFDA) Number: 10.855.

Dates: You may submit completed applications for grants on paper or electronically according to the following deadlines:

- Paper copies must be postmarked and mailed, shipped, or sent overnight

no later than April 30, 2004, to be eligible for FY 2004 grant funding. Late applications are not eligible for FY 2004 grant funding.

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• RUS will examine applications for items that would disqualify them from consideration if the applications are submitted on paper by March 31, 2004.

You may submit applications for FY 2004 combination loan-grants and loans at any time.

Items in Supplementary Information

- I. Funding Opportunity: Brief Introduction to the DLT Program
- II. Award Information: Available Funds, Minimum and Maximum Amounts
- III. Eligibility Information: Who Is Eligible, What Kinds of Projects Are Eligible, What Criteria Determine Basic Eligibility
- IV. Application and Submission Information: Where to Get Application Materials, What Constitutes a Completed Application, How and Where to Submit Applications, Deadlines, Items That Are Eligible
- V. Application Review Information: Considerations and Preferences, Scoring Criteria, Review Standards, Selection Information
- VI. Award Administration Information: Award Notice Information, Award Recipient Reporting Requirements
- VII. Agency Contacts: Web, Phone, Fax, E-Mail, Contact Name

I. Funding Opportunity

Distance learning and telemedicine loans and grants are specifically designed to provide access to education, training and health care resources for people in rural America. The Distance Learning and Telemedicine (DLT) Program (administered by the DLT Branch of the Rural Utilities Service (RUS)) funds the use of advanced telecommunications technologies to help communities meet those needs.

The grants, which are awarded through competitive process, may be used to fund telecommunications, computer networks and related advanced technologies.

Applications for loans and combination loan-grants are not competitively scored. In addition to the items listed for grants, loans and combination loan-grants may be used to fund construction of necessary transmission facilities on a technology-neutral basis. Examples of such facilities include satellite uplinks, microwave towers and associated structures, T-1 lines, DS-3 lines, and other similar facilities. Loan funds may also be used to obtain mobile units and for some building construction. Please see 7 CFR