

conditions and prescriptions concerning the application be filed with the Commission within 60 days from the issuance date of this notice. All reply comments must be filed with the Commission within 105 days from the date of this notice.

Anyone may obtain an extension of time for these deadlines from the Commission only upon a showing of good cause or extraordinary circumstances in accordance with 18 CFR 385.2008.

All filings must (1) bear in all capital letters the title "COMMENTS", "REPLY COMMENTS", "RECOMMENDATIONS," "TERMS AND CONDITIONS," or "PRESCRIPTIONS;" (2) set forth in the heading the name of the applicant and the project number of the application to which the filing responds; (3) furnish the name, address, and telephone number of the person submitting the filing; and (4) otherwise comply with the requirements of 18 CFR 385.2001 through 385.2005. All comments, recommendations, terms and conditions or prescriptions must set forth their evidentiary basis and otherwise comply with the requirements of 18 CFR 4.34(b). Agencies may obtain copies of the application directly from the applicant. Each filing must be accompanied by proof of service on all persons listed on the service list prepared by the Commission in this proceeding, in accordance with 18 CFR 4.34(b), and 385.2010.

Magalie R. Salas,

Secretary.

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ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY

[FRL-7460-4]

Science Advisory Board; Request for Nominations for Experts for a Panel on Valuing the Protection of Ecological Systems and Services

AGENCY: Environmental Protection Agency (EPA).

ACTION: Notice.

SUMMARY: The EPA's SAB is announcing the formation of a new SAB Panel and is soliciting nominations for members of the panel.

DATES: Nominations should be submitted on or before March 28, 2003.

ADDRESSES: Nominations should be submitted in electronic format through the Form for Nominating Individuals to

Panels of the EPA Science Advisory Board provided on the SAB Web site. The form can be accessed through a link on the blue navigational bar on the SAB Web site, <http://www.epa.gov/sab>. To be considered, all nominations must include the information required on that form. Anyone who is unable to submit nominations via this form may contact Dr. Angela Nugent, Designated Federal Officer, U.S. EPA Science Advisory Board (1400A), by telephone/voice mail at (202) 564-4562, by fax at (202) 501-0323, or via e-mail at nugent.angela@epa.gov.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Any member of the public wishing further information regarding this Request for Nomination may contact Dr. Angela Nugent at the address above.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

1. *Action:* Notice; request for nominations to a new "Panel on Valuing the Protection of Ecological Systems and Services" of the EPA's Science Advisory Board (SAB).

2. *Summary:* The EPA's SAB is announcing the formation of a new Panel to provide advice to strengthen the EPA's approaches for assessing the costs and benefits of environmental programs that protect ecological systems and services, to identify research needs to improve how ecological resources are valued, and to support decision making to protect ecological resources. The SAB is soliciting nominations to establish the members of the new Panel.

This Panel is being formed to provide advice to the Agency, as part of the EPA SAB's mission, to provide independent scientific and technical advice, consultation, and recommendations to the EPA Administrator on the technical bases for EPA regulations. The project it will undertake is a self-initiated project of the Board, intended as a multi-year effort; the background for the effort and the charge to the Panel is described below. The Board is a chartered Federal advisory Committee, which reports directly to the Administrator.

Members of the Panel will provide advice to the Agency, through the SAB's Executive Committee, over a two-to-three year period. Over that period, the Panel will comply with the provisions of FACA and all appropriate SAB procedural policies, including the SAB process for panel formation described in the Overview of the Panel Formation Process at the Environmental Protection Agency Science Advisory Board, which can be found on the SAB's Web site at: <http://www.epa.gov/sab/pdf/ec02010.pdf>.

3. *Background:* EPA's Strategic Plan (EPA-190-R-00-002) states as goals

one, two and four that a major part of the EPA's mission is to safeguard the natural environment, air, water, healthy communities and ecosystems, upon which life depends. The goals address ecosystem protection and restoration. Goal one, for example, specifies links between reductions in air pollution and protection of the environment, and such benefits as restoring life in damaged ecosystems. The Agency is seeking scientific guidance on measures to improve quantification and characterization of benefits of protecting ecosystems and restoring life in damaged ecosystems and to inform environmental protection decisions.

Goals two and four of the EPA Strategic Plan include "the restoration and protection of watersheds and their aquatic ecosystems to improve public health, enhance water quality, reduce flooding, and provide habitat for wildlife and the desire of "preventing pollution and reducing risk in communities, homes, workplaces, and ecosystems." Meeting these goals will require a scientifically rigorous method to quantify not only losses of commercially exploited ecosystem benefits (e.g., recreational fishing, impact of atmospheric sulfur and nitrogen oxides, lost commercial timber from ozone damage), but also to quantify and characterize the benefits of protecting ecological systems and services (emphasize more strongly) (e.g., carbon sequestration, water purification, water retention, biodiversity, existence values, aesthetic values, and habitat).

In short, the EPA needs a comprehensive effort that will improve the methods used to value the benefits of protecting ecological systems and services to facilitate Agency decisions concerning the protection and restoration of ecosystems. Developing and implementing such methods will assist the Agency in meeting the eighth Goal of the Strategic Plan, "to develop and apply the best available science for addressing current and future environmental hazards as well as new approaches toward improving environmental protection."

The SAB Executive Committee has determined that the issue of protection of ecological systems and services and valuing of their protection is an important, multi-dimensional issue where the scientific and technical advice of the Board is needed. It has acknowledged that valuing the protection of ecological systems and services has proved a challenging problem for the Agency and existing SAB Advisory committees to address.

In regard to this last point, the Board notes that in 2001, the independent