

appropriate. A Forest Planning Web site will be maintained to serve as an additional avenue for communicating with interested publics.

Public participation, facilitated by open decision making process, will be sought throughout the plan revision process and will be especially important at several points along the way. The first opportunity to comment will be during the scoping process (40 CFR 1501.7). Scoping includes: (1) Identifying additional potential issues (other than those previously described), (2) from these, identifying significant issues or those which have been covered by prior environmental review, (3) exploring additional alternatives, and (4) identifying potential environmental effects of the proposed action and alternatives (*i.e.*, direct, indirect, and cumulative effects). Public scoping comments received during the 2000 public scoping meetings will be used along with public comments received following this revised Notice of Intent.

Public meetings will be scheduled throughout the plan revision process. Their location and frequency of occurrence will vary depending on their specific objectives. Public meetings may focus on specific key issues to seek clarification and understanding prior to development of alternatives and evaluation of effects. Public notice will be provided through publication in the newspaper of record for National Forests in Mississippi (the Clarion-Ledger, published daily in Jackson, Mississippi). Notice will also be served through direct mailings to interested and affected parties identified during the plan revision process and posting on the National Forests in Mississippi Web site at: [www.southernregion.fs.fed.us/mississippi](http://www.southernregion.fs.fed.us/mississippi).

## VII. Release and Review of EIS

The Draft Environmental Impact Statement is expected to be filed with the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and to be available for public review by November 2005. At that time, EPA will publish a notice of availability of the draft supplement in the **Federal Register**. The comment period for the Draft Environmental Impact Statement will be 90 days from the date the EPA's notice of availability appears in the **Federal Register**.

The Forest Service believes, at this early stage, it is important to give reviewers notice of several court rulings related to public participation in the environmental review process. First, reviewers of the DEIS 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). Also environmental objections that could be raised at the DEIS stage but that are not raised until completion of the Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS) 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 three month comment period so that substantive comments and objections are made available to the Forest Service at a time when it can consider them and respond to them in the FEIS.

To assist the Forest Service in identifying and considering issues and concerns on the proposed actions, comments on the DEIS should be as specific as possible. It is also helpful if comments refer to specific pages or chapters of the draft statement. Comments may also address the adequacy of the DEIS 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 the procedural provisions of the National Environmental Policy Act at 40 CFR 1503.3 in addressing these points.

After the comment period ends on the DEIS, the comments will be analyzed, considered, and responded to by the Forest Service in preparing the FEIS. The FEIS is scheduled to be completed by November, 2006. The responsible official will consider the comments, responses, environmental consequences discussed in the final environmental impact statement, and applicable laws, regulations, and policies in making a decision regarding this proposal. The responsible official will document the decision and reasons for the decision in a Record of Decision. The decision will be subject to appeal in accordance with 36 CFR 217.

Dated: September 22, 2003.

**Roberta A. Moltzen,**

*Acting Regional Forester.*

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## 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 request an extension for a currently approved information collection in support of the program for Farm Labor Housing Technical Assistance Grants.

**DATES:** Comments on this notice must be received by November 25, 2003, to be assured of consideration.

#### FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:

Douglas MacDowell, Senior Loan Specialist, Multi-Family Housing Processing Division, RHS, United States Department of Agriculture, Stop 0781, 1400 Independence Ave., SW., Washington, DC 20250-0781, Telephone (202) 720-1604.

#### SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

*Title:* Farm Labor Housing Technical Assistance Grants.

*OMB Number:* 0575-0181.

*Expiration Date of Approval:* June 30, 2004.

*Type of Request:* Extension of a currently approved information collection.

*Abstract:* The Rural Housing Service (RHS) is authorized under Section 514 of Title V of the Housing Act of 1949, as amended, to make loans for the construction of farm labor housing. Section 516 of the Act authorizes USDA to make grants for the same purpose. These authorities are implemented through 7 CFR part 1944, subpart D.

Section 516 also authorizes USDA to provide financial assistance to private and public nonprofit agencies to encourage the development of farm labor housing. Recipients of this assistance, in turn, assist other organizations obtain loans and grants for the construction of farm labor housing. RHS refers to this assistance as Farm Labor Housing Technical Assistance. RHS publishes Requests for Proposals (RFPs) in the **Federal Register** to invite grant proposals from private and public nonprofit agencies who wish to participate in this funding. The RFP sets forth the eligibility and application requirements.

The information will be collected from applicants and grant recipients by