

Notices

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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.

AFRICAN DEVELOPMENT FOUNDATION

Board of Directors Meeting; Sunshine Act Meeting

TIME: 12:00 noon—3:00 p.m.

PLACE: ADF Headquarters.

DATE: Wednesday, May 1, 1996.

STATUS: Open.

Agenda

12:00 noon—Lunch

12:30—Chairman's Report

12:45 p.m.—President's Report

1:30 p.m.—Other

If you have any questions or comments, please direct them to Ms. Janis McCollim, Executive Assistant to the President, who can be reached at (202) 673-3916.

William R. Ford,

President.

[FR Doc. 96-10530 Filed 4-24-96; 12:57 pm]

BILLING CODE 6116-01-M

DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Forest Service

Waterville Valley Ski Area Ltd. Snowmaking Ponds

AGENCY: Forest Service, USDA.

ACTION: Notice of intent to prepare an environmental impact statement.

SUMMARY: The Forest Service will prepare an environmental impact statement for Waterville Valley Ski Area Ltd.'s proposal to construct snowmaking impoundments on the Pemigewasset Ranger District, White Mountain National Forest, Grafton County, New Hampshire. The New Hampshire Department of Environmental Services has been asked to participate as a cooperating agency. The U.S. Corps of Engineers the Fish and Wildlife Service, Department of the Interior and the Town of Waterville Valley have been asked to

provide assistance. The agency invites written comments and suggestions on the scope of the analysis. In addition, the agency gives notice of the full environmental analysis and decision-making process that will occur on the proposal so that interested and affected people are aware of how they may participate and contribute to the final decision.

DATES: Comments concerning the scope of the analysis must be received by June 10, 1996.

ADDRESSES: Submit written comments and suggestions concerning the scope of the analysis to Donna Hepp, Forest Supervisor, White Mountain National Forest, 719 Main St., Laconia, New Hampshire 03246.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Direct questions about the proposed action and environmental impact statement to Fred Kacprzynski, Waterville Valley Snowmaking Impoundments Coordinator, White Mountain National Forest, 719 Main Street, Laconia, New Hampshire 03246, phone: 603-528-8721.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: Skiing is an important component of the recreational opportunities offered by the National Forests. The enabling authorities of the USDA-Forest Service are contained in many laws enacted by Congress and the regulations and administrative directives that implement these laws. The major laws include, the Organic Administrative Act of 1897, the Weeks Act of 1911, the Multiple-Use Sustained Yield Act of 1960, the Forest and Rangeland Renewable Resources Planning Act of 1974, the National Forest Management Act of 1976 and the National Forest Ski Area Permit Act of 1986. Ski area operations are consistent with the recreation objectives of the National Forests.

It is the policy of the Forest Service to meet downhill skiing demand on National Forest Lands by partnering with the private sector. The National Recreation Strategy (USDA-Forest Service 1988a) details the Forest Service role in increasing outdoor recreation on National Forests through partnerships such as those with the ski industry.

The intent of ski areas as noted in the White Mountain National Forest plan is to, "Broaden the range of recreation opportunities by recognizing the potential for year-round recreation

facilities at alpine ski areas managed by the private sector." In addition, the Forest Plan states that, "The Forest will not consider developing any completely new alpine ski areas." Indicating a direction to emphasize the continued operation of current ski areas. Skiing on the White Mountain National Forest accounted for about 17 percent of the total recreational use on the Forest, and uses about 3,500 acres or 0.4 percent of the Forest, and use about 3,500 acres or 0.4 percent of the Forest. Waterville Valley Ski Area is an integral part of the Forest partnership in providing these recreation opportunities.

Snowmaking is essential to a quality downhill skiing experience, and as such, important in maintaining the economic viability of the area and the partnership. Waterville Valley currently withdraws water directly from the Mad River, which has historically been an extremely unreliable source of water. The intent of Waterville Valley Ski Area is to provide enough water to fully cover the existing trail system three times during the winter, while increasing the minimum flow of the Mad River from the currently permitted minimum flow of 0.50 csm to the calculated February Median Flow (FMF) of 0.75 csm. Utilizing the current system (without snowmaking impoundments), with a direct withdrawal at 0.75 csm, Waterville Valley could only provide full coverage 9 percent of the time. The goal of the ski area is to provide coverage 95 percent the time.

As a result, Waterville Valley Ski Area Ltd. has proposed to construct water storage impoundments to augment water withdrawal from the Mad River in order to provide a reliable and sufficient source of water to meet this goal. Their proposal is a combination of four to five sites with a total capacity of 130 million gallons available directly from the Mad River. Impoundment locations are near the existing Ski Area permit, they are in Management Areas 2.1 and/or 3.1. Proposed locations have been reviewed by the proponent based on screening factors including, operating costs, land availability, pond volume and environmental impact.

Tentative issues which have been identified include, (1) changing water withdrawal limits from the current approved .50 csm to the FMF of .75 csm., (2) visual, (3) safety of the dams,

(4) continued implementation of the Forest Plan and (5) economics. In preparing the environmental impact statement, the Forest Service will consider the proposal against a range of reasonable alternatives to address issues identified through scoping. Alternatives may be other combinations of potential sites, on demand sources of supply, (direct withdrawal, wells) and the required No Action Alternative.

Permits and licenses to implement the proposed action may include a Wetlands Permit, State of New Hampshire dam permits and Alteration of Terrain permit. The issuing authority will be a term special use permit under the Term Permit Act of March 4, 1915 as amended (16 U.S.C. 497).

Donna Hepp, Forest Supervisor, White Mountain National Forest, 719 Main Street, Laconia, New Hampshire, is the responsible official.

Public participation will be important at several points during the analysis. The first point is during the scoping process (40 CFR 1501.7). The Forest Service will be seeking information and comments from Federal, State, and local agencies and other individuals or organizations who may be interested in or affected by the proposed action. This input will be used in preparation of the draft environmental impact statement (DEIS). The scoping process includes;

1. Identifying potential issues.
2. Identifying issues to be analyzed in depth.
3. Eliminating insignificant issues or those which have been covered by a relevant previous environmental analysis.
4. Exploring additional alternatives.
5. Identifying potential environmental effects of the proposed action and alternatives (i.e., direct, indirect, and cumulative effect and connected actions).
6. Determining potential cooperating agencies and task assignments.

The State of New Hampshire Department of Environmental Services has been invited to participate as a cooperating agency. The Fish and Wildlife Service, Department of the Interior, the U.S. Corps of Engineers and the Town of Waterville Valley have been informed and will be assisting in the analysis.

Public scoping meetings will be held in the Spring of 1996. Meeting dates will be advertised in the media.

The draft environmental impact statement (DEIS) is expected to be filed with the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and to be available for public review in Summer, 1996. At that time EPA will publish a notice of

availability of the DEIS in the Federal Register.

The comment period on the draft environmental impact statement will be 45 days from the date the Environmental Protection Agency's notice of availability appears in the Federal Register.

The Forest Service believes that, 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 draft environmental impact 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). Also, environmental objections that could be raised at the draft environmental impact stage that are not raised until after completion of the final environmental impact statement 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 responding to the DEIS by the close of the 45 day comment period so that substantive comments and objections are made available to the Forest Service at a time when it can meaningfully consider them and respond to them in the final environmental impact statement.

To assist the Forest Service in identifying and considering issues and concerns on the proposed action, comments on the draft environmental impact statement 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 draft environmental impact statement or the merits of the alternatives formulated or 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 at 40 CFR 1503.3 in addressing these points.

After the comment period ends on the DEIS, the comments will be analyzed and considered by the Forest Service in preparing the final environmental impact statement (FEIS). The FEIS is scheduled to be completed by the Fall of 1996. In the FEIS the Forest Service is required to respond to the comments received (40 CFR 1503.4). The responsible official will consider the

comments, responses, environmental consequences discussed in the FEIS, 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 on the Record of Decision. The decision will be subject to appeal under 36 CFR 217 and 36 CFR 251.

Dated: April 22, 1996.

[FR Doc. 96-10359 Filed 4-25-96; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 3410-11-M

Rural Housing Service

Notice of Request for Extension of a Currently Approved Information Collection

AGENCY: Rural Housing Service, USDA.

ACTION: Proposed collection; comments request.

SUMMARY: In accordance with the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995, this notice announces the Rural Housing Service (RHS) intention to request an extension for a currently approved information collection in support of the program for the Housing Preservation Grant Program.

DATES: Comments on this notice must be received by June 25, 1996 to be assured of consideration.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Sue M. Harris-Green, Senior Loan Specialist, RHS, U.S. Department of Agriculture, AG BOX 0781, Washington, D.C. 20250, Telephone (202) 720-1606.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

Title: RHS/Housing Preservation Grant Program.

OMB Number: 0575-0115.

Expiration Date of Approval: July 31, 1996.

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

Abstract: The primary purpose of the Housing Preservation Grant Program is to repair or rehabilitate individual housing, rental properties, or co-ops owned or occupied by very low- and low-income rural persons. Grantees will provide eligible homeowners, owners of rental properties, and owners of co-ops with financial assistance through loans, grants, interest reduction payments or other comparable financial assistance for necessary repairs and rehabilitation of dwellings to bring them up to code or minimum property standards.

These grants were established by Public Law 98-181, the Housing Urban-Rural Recovery Act of 1983, which amended the Housing Act of 1979 (Pub.