

*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 comment period so that comments can be made available to the Forest Service at a time when they can be meaningfully considered responded to 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 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 at 40 CFR 1503.3 in addressing these points.

Comments received in response to this solicitation, including names and addresses of those who comment, will be considered part of the public record on this Proposed Action and will be available for public inspection and may be released under FOIA. Comments submitted anonymously will be accepted and considered; however, those who submit anonymous comments will not have standing to appeal the subsequent decision (36 CFR Parts 215).

*Responsible Official:* Jeni Evans, Seward District Ranger, Chugach National Forest, is the responsible official.

Dated: January 17, 2008.

**Jeni Bradley Evans,**

*District Ranger.*

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## DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

### Forest Service

#### Superior National Forest, LaCroix Ranger District, MN; Border Project Environmental Impact Statement

**AGENCY:** Forest Service, USDA.

**ACTION:** Notice of Intent to Prepare an Environmental Impact Statement.

**SUMMARY:** The Department of Agriculture, Forest Service, will prepare an environmental impact statement (EIS) for the Border Project. The proposed activities would manage forest vegetation composition, structure, and

spatial patterns. Proposed activities also address the transportation system associated with vegetation activities and long-term federal, non-federal, and public access needs.

The Project Area encompasses about 57,000 acres of National Forest System land. The Proposed Action would create young forest through timber harvest on about 8,617 acres; improve stand structure and within-stand diversity with harvests such as thinning on about 3,730 acres; and restore stand conditions without harvest on about 1,904 acres. Managing the minimum road system needed for long-term vegetation management would involve adding 1.6 miles of system road and decommissioning 9.2 miles of road. A range of alternatives, including a no-action alternative, will be developed to respond to significant issues. The proposed project is located on the LaCroix Ranger District, Cook, Minnesota, Superior National Forest.

**DATES:** Comments concerning the scope of the analysis must be received by March 10, 2008. The draft environmental impact statement is expected in summer 2008 and the final environmental impact statement is expected in winter 2008/2009.

**ADDRESSES:** Send written comments to Nancy S. Larson, LaCroix District Ranger, Border Project, 320 Hwy 53 North, Cook, MN 55723. Send electronic comments to [comments-eastern-superior-la-croix@fs.fed.us](mailto:comments-eastern-superior-la-croix@fs.fed.us).

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:** Carol Booth, Border Project Coordinator, 320 Hwy 53 North, Cook, MN 55723; telephone (218) 666-0020.

#### SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

#### Purpose and Need for Action

The primary purpose of the Border Project is to move the area towards the vegetation and landscape ecosystem desired conditions described in the Superior National Forest *Land and Resource Management Plan* (Forest Plan). Forest Plan direction for the transportation system is also part of the project's purpose.

#### Proposed Action

The proposed Action would manage forest vegetation composition, structure, and spatial patterns and the transportation system associated with these activities. Proposed activities include: creating young forest approximately 8,617 acres, improving stand structure and within-stand diversity on approximately 3,730 acres, and restoring stand conditions through a variety of non-harvest activities such as planting, biomass removal, and

conducting prescribed burns to reduce risk of wildfire on approximately 1,904 acres. Managing the minimum road system needed for long-term vegetation management would involve adding 1.6 miles of system road and decommissioning 9.2 miles of road.

#### Responsible Official

Nancy S. Larson, LaCroix District Ranger, 320 Hwy 53 North, Cook, MN 55723.

#### Nature of Decision To Be Made

An environmental analysis for the Border Project will evaluate site-specific issues, consider management alternatives, and analyze the potential effects of the proposed action and alternatives. The scope of the project is limited to decisions concerning activities within the Border Project Area that meet the Purpose and Need, as well as desired conditions. An environmental impact statement will provide the Responsible Official, Nancy S. Larson, with the information needed to decide which actions, if any, to approve.

#### Scoping Process

Public participation will be an integral component of the analysis process, and will be especially important at several points during the analysis. The first is during the scoping process. The Forest Service is seeking information, comments, and assistance from federal agencies, State agencies, local agencies, individuals, and organizations that may be interested or affected by the proposed activities. The scoping process will include: (1) Identification of potential issues, (2) identification of issues to be analyzed in depth, and (3) elimination of insignificant issues, or those which have been covered by a previous environmental review. Based on the results of scoping and the resource capabilities within the project area, alternatives, including a no-action alternative, will be developed for the draft environmental impact statement.

#### Permits or Licenses Required

Easement or permission to cross non-federal property may be needed to access some treatment units to implement Forest Service activities.

#### Comment Requested

This notice of intent initiates the scoping process which guides the development of the environmental impact statement. Written comments will be solicited through a scoping package that will be sent to the project mailing list. For the Forest Service to

best use the scoping input, comments must be received by March 10, 2008. Include name, address, and title of the project with your comments.

*Early Notice of Importance of Public Participation in Subsequent Environmental Review:* A draft environmental impact statement will be prepared for comment. The comment period on the draft environmental impact statement will be 45 days from the date the Environmental Protection Agency publishes the notice of availability 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 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 statement stage but 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 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 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 at 40 CFR 1503.3 in addressing these points.

Comments received, including the names and addresses of those who comment, will be considered part of the public record on this proposal and will be available for public inspection.

(Authority: 40 CFR 1501.7 and 1508.22; Forest Service Handbook 1909.15, Section 21)

Dated: January 18, 2008.

**Nancy S. Larson,**

*LaCroix District Ranger.*

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## DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

### Rural Housing Service

### Rural Business-Cooperative Service

### Notice of Request for Revision of a Currently Approved Information Collection

**AGENCIES:** Rural Housing Service and Rural Business-Cooperative Service, USDA.

**ACTION:** Proposed collection; comments requested.

**SUMMARY:** In accordance with the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995, this notice announces the intention of the above-named Agencies to request an extension for the currently approved information collection in support of the servicing of Community and Direct Business Programs Loans and Grants.

**DATES:** Comments on this notice must be received by March 28, 2008 to be assured of consideration.

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:** Beth Jones, Senior Loan Specialist, Community Programs Direct Loans and Grants Processing and Servicing, RHS, USDA, 1400 Independence Ave., SW., STOP 0787, Washington, DC 20250-0787, Telephone (202) 720-1498, E-mail: [beth.jones@wdc.usda.gov](mailto:beth.jones@wdc.usda.gov).

**SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:**

*Title:* 7 CFR 1951-E, Servicing of Community and Direct Business Programs Loans and Grants.

*OMB Number:* 0575-0066.

*Expiration Date of Approval:* June 30, 2008.

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

*Abstract:* The Community Facilities program is authorized to make loans and grants to public entities, nonprofit corporations, and Indian tribes for the development of essential community facilities primarily serving rural residents. The Direct Business and Industry program, under Rural Business-Cooperative Service, is authorized to make loans to improve, develop, or finance business, industry, and employment, and improve the economic and environmental climate in rural communities.

The purpose of this collection is to establish security servicing policies, assist recipients in meeting the objectives of the loans and grants, repay loans on schedule, comply with agreements, and protect the Government's financial interest. Routine servicing responsibilities include collection of payments, compliance reviews, security inspections, review of financial reports, determining applicant/borrower eligibility and project feasibility for various servicing actions, monitoring delinquent accounts, and supervision activities.

Supervision by the Agencies include, but is not limited to: review of budgets, management reports, audits and financial statements; performing security inspections; providing, arranging, or recommending technical assistance; evaluating environmental impacts of proposed actions by the borrower; performing civil rights compliance reviews; and assisting in the development of workout agreements.

Information will be collected by the field offices from applicants, borrowers, consultants, lenders, and attorneys.

Failure to collect information could result in improper servicing of these loans.

*Estimate of Burden:* Public reporting burden for this collection of information is estimated to average 1 hour per response.

*Respondents:* State, local or tribal Governments, Not-for-profit institutions, businesses, and individuals.

*Estimated Number of Respondents:* 587.

*Estimated Number of Responses per Respondent:* 2.

*Estimated Number of Responses:* 1,094.

*Estimated Total Annual Burden on Respondents:* 1,042.

Copies of the information collection can be obtained from Cheryl Thompson, Regulations and Paperwork Management Branch, at (202) 692-0043.

*Comments:* Comments are invited on: (a) Whether the proposed collection of information is necessary for the proper performance of the functions of the Agencies, including whether the information will have practical utility; (b) the accuracy of the Agencies' 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 through the use of appropriate automated, electronic, mechanical, or other