

State or unit	Number of vacancies
South Dakota .....	2
Tennessee .....	1
Texas .....	4
Utah .....	1
Wisconsin .....	2
Wyoming .....	1
Mid-Atlantic Unit .....	1
Northeast Unit .....	1
Western Unit (Oregon-Nevada Region) .....	1
Importer Unit .....	2

Since there are no anticipated vacancies on the Board for the remaining States' positions, or for the positions of the Northwest unit, nominations will not be solicited from certified organizations or associations in those States or units.

Uncertified eligible producer organizations in all States that are interested in being certified as eligible to nominate cattle producers for appointment to the listed producer positions, must complete and submit an official "Application for Certification of Organization or Association," which must be received by close of business February 28, 1997. Uncertified eligible importer organizations that are interested in being certified as eligible to nominate importers for appointment to the listed importer positions must apply by the same date. Importers should not use the application form but should provide the requested information by letter as provided for in 7 CFR § 1260.540(b). Applications from States or units without vacant positions on the Board and other applications not received within the 30-day period after publication of this Notice in the Federal Register will be considered for eligibility to nominate producers or importers for subsequent vacancies on the Board.

Only those organizations or associations which meet the criteria for certification of eligibility promulgated at 7 CFR § 1260.530 are eligible for certification. Those criteria are:

(a) For State organizations or associations:

(1) Total paid membership must be comprised of at least a majority of cattle producers or represent at least a majority of cattle producers in a State or unit.

(2) Membership must represent a substantial number of producers who produce a substantial number of cattle in such State or unit.

(3) There must be a history of stability and permanency.

(4) There must be a primary or overriding purpose of promoting the economic welfare of cattle producers.

(b) For organizations or associations representing importers, the determination by the Secretary as to the eligibility of importer organizations or associations to nominate members to the Board shall be based on applications containing the following information:

(1) The number and type of members represented (i.e., beef or cattle importers, etc.).

(2) Annual import volume in pounds of beef and beef products and/or the number of head of cattle.

(3) The stability and permanency of the importer organization or association.

(4) The number of years in existence.

(5) The names of the countries of origin for cattle, beef, or beef products imported.

All certified organizations and associations, including those which were previously certified in the States or units having vacant positions on the Board, will be notified simultaneously in writing of the beginning and ending dates of the established nomination period and will be provided with required nomination forms and background information sheets.

The names of qualified nominees received by the established due date will be submitted to the Secretary of Agriculture for consideration as appointees to the Board.

The information collection requirements referenced in this notice have been previously approved by the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) under the provisions of 44 U.S.C., Chapter 35 and have been assigned OMB No. 0581-0093, except Board member nominee information sheets are assigned OMB No. 0505-0001.

Authority: 7 U.S.C. 2901 *et seq.*

Dated: January 23, 1997.

Lon Hatamiya,

Administrator.

[FR Doc. 97-2126 Filed 1-28-97; 8:45 am]

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## Forest Service

### Environmental Impact Statement, Crystal Creek Timber Harvest on the Petersburg Ranger District, Stikine Area, Tongass National Forest, Petersburg, Alaska

AGENCY: Forest Service, USDA.

ACTION: Notice of intent to prepare an Environmental Impact Statement.

SUMMARY: The Stikine Area of the USDA Forest Service proposes to harvest approximately 16 million board feet of timber in the Crystal Creek project area, which is near Thomas Bay on the

Southeast Alaska mainland. A variety of harvest methods and silvicultural prescriptions will be used. This project would include the necessary road construction for transport of timber. The existing log transfer site would be reconstructed at Thomas Bay.

The purpose and need for this project is to make available for harvest approximately 16 million board feet of timber. This will:

1. Implement direction in the Tongass Land Management Plan,

2. Contribute to providing a sustained volume of wood to meet local and national demand, and

3. Provide local and regional employment opportunities.

There may also be opportunities to maintain or enhance forage for moose habitat to sustain a huntable population in the area. Activities such as commercial and pre-commercial thinning of second growth stands, and geographically distributing timber harvest over time and habitat will be considered toward achieving this goal.

A variety of resources and values will be maintained through the application of ecosystem management principles in the design of the project.

A range of alternatives will respond to environmental and social issues. The no-action alternative will not harvest timber in the area. The Thomas Bay log transfer facility will be reconstructed and required roads will be constructed or reconstructed as needed.

The decision to be made is:

1. Whether or not timber harvest will occur in the Crystal Creek project area;

2. How much timber will be harvested;

3. Location and design of harvest units;

4. Location and design of road construction and reconstruction; and

5. What mitigation measures and monitoring will be implemented.

**EFFECTIVE DATE:** The Draft Environmental Impact Statement should be available for public review by June, 1997. The final Environmental Impact Statement is scheduled to be completed by November, 1997.

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION:** Questions, written comments, and suggestions concerning the analysis should be sent to Bruce Sims, Team Leader, Petersburg Ranger District, P.O. Box 1328, Petersburg, AK 99833, phone (907) 772-3871, fax (907) 772-5995.

**SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:** All appropriate agencies will be contacted and all required permits will be received before the proposed action is implemented. The following permits are anticipated in order to implement the proposed action:

- U.S. Army Corps of Engineers approval under Section 404 of the Clean Water Act,
- State of Alaska, Department of Natural Resources tideland permit and lease or easement, and
- State of Alaska, Department of Environmental Conservation authorization under Section 401 of the Clean Water Act.

#### Public Comment

Federal, State, and local agencies, potential contractors, and other individuals or organizations who may be interested in, or affected by, the decision are invited to participate in the scoping process. This process will include:

1. Identification of potential issues;
2. Identification of issues to be analyzed in depth;
3. Determination of potential cooperating agencies and assignment of responsibility; and
4. Examination of various alternatives.

The Forest Supervisor will hold public meetings during the planning process. Interested people are invited to comment. The comment period on the Draft EIS will be 45 days from the date the 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 draft environmental impact statements must structure their participation in the environmental review process. First, reviewers of the draft environmental impact statements must structure their participation in the environmental review of the proposal so 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, 533 [1978]). Also, environmental objections that could have been raised at the Draft EIS stage may be waived if not raised until after the completion of the final environmental impact statement 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 substantive comments and objections are made available to the Forest Service at the time when we 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 helpful if comments refer to specific pages or chapters of the draft environmental impact 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 Environment Policy Act in 40 CFR 1503.3 while addressing these points.

The responsible official for the decision is Abigail R. Kimbell, Forest Supervisor, Stikine Area, Tongass National Forest, Alaska Region, Petersburg, Alaska.

Dated: January 13, 1997.

Abigail R. Kimbell,

Forest Supervisor.

[FR Doc. 97-2120 Filed 1-28-97; 8:45 am]

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#### Rural Housing Service

##### Refinancing Community Facilities Loans

**AGENCY:** Rural Housing Service, USDA.

**ACTION:** Notice.

**SUMMARY:** This Notice describes the Rural Housing Service (RHS) Community Facilities (CF) loan program refinancing policies, informs commercial lenders of the availability of a list of eligible CF borrowers who have the potential to refinance outstanding debt, and invites cooperative and private credit sources to participate in refinancing loans. This action ensures that CF loan program borrowers are aware of lenders that are willing to provide reasonable rates and terms for refinancing. The intended effect of this action is to increase the number of cooperative or private credit sources which are actively involved with RHS's refinancing efforts.

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:** Chadwick O. Parker, Loan Specialist, Rural Housing Service, USDA, Room 6314, South Agriculture Building, 1400 Independence Avenue SW., Washington, D.C. 20250, Telephone: (202) 720-1502.

#### SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

Program Affected

This action affects the RHS program listed in the Catalog of Federal Domestic

Assistance as 10.766 Community Facilities Loans.

#### Discussion of Notice

The RHS CF loan program provides credit to public entities such as municipalities, counties, special-purpose districts, Indian tribes, and nonprofit corporations. Eligible CF loan purposes are to construct, enlarge, extend, or otherwise improve community facilities providing essential services. The loan program is administered in a manner which ensures that it does not compete with credit available from private sources. Loan agreements require financially capable borrowers to refinance debts owed to the RHS when other credit is available at reasonable rates and terms from a cooperative or private credit source.

The RHS would like to further develop its public/private partnerships while enhancing its refinancing efforts. As part of these efforts, each Rural Development State Office, which administers the CF loan program in the field, will maintain a current listing of borrowers who have the potential to refinance. The RHS will also maintain a national list on its World Wide Web site at <http://www.rurdev.usda.gov/agency/rhs/cf/cf.htm>.

The RHS will develop a unified database of lenders interested in this refinancing initiative as part of their ongoing effort to establish a stronger alliance with private sector lenders. The RHS requests that interested lenders contact the State Office in each State where they have active lending operations.

Dated: January 21, 1997.

Jan Shadburn,

Acting Administrator, Rural Housing Service.

[FR Doc. 97-2197 Filed 1-28-97; 8:45 am]

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#### DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

##### Bureau of the Census

[Docket No. 961213356-6356-01]

RIN 0607-XX25

##### Census Tract Program for Census 2000—Proposed Criteria

**AGENCY:** Bureau of the Census, Commerce.

**ACTION:** Notice of proposed program revisions and request for comments.

**SUMMARY:** Census tracts are relatively permanent small-area geographic divisions of a county or statistically