

Done in Washington, DC, this 15th day of October 2007.

Kevin Shea,

Acting Administrator, Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service.

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DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Farm Service Agency

Notice of Funds Availability (NOFA) to Invite Applications for the American Indian Credit Outreach Initiative

AGENCY: Farm Service Agency, USDA.

ACTION: Notice.

SUMMARY: The Farm Service Agency (FSA) is requesting applications for competitive cooperative agreement funds for Fiscal Year (FY) 2008 for the credit outreach initiative targeted to American Indian farmers, ranchers, and youth residing primarily on Indian reservations within the contiguous United States. FSA anticipates the availability of \$933,120 in funding. This request for applications is being made prior to passage of a final appropriations bill to allow applicants sufficient time to submit proposals, give the Agency maximum time to process applications, and permit continuity of this program. FSA requests proposals from eligible nonprofit organizations, land-grant institutions, and federally-recognized Indian tribal governments interested in a competitively-awarded cooperative agreement to create and implement a mechanism that will provide credit outreach and promotion, pre-loan education, one-on-one loan application preparation assistance and other related services as proposed by the successful applicant that are specific to FSA's Agricultural Credit Programs.

DATES: Applications must be completed and submitted to the Agency no later than November 19, 2007. Late applications will not be accepted and will be returned to the applicant. Applicants must ensure that the service used to deliver the application can do so by the deadline. Due to recent security concerns, packages sent to the Agency by mail have been delayed several days or even weeks.

ADDRESSES: Submit applications and other required materials by mail to: Mike Hill, Director, Outreach Staff, Farm Service Agency, USDA, STOP 0511, Suite 508 Portals Building, 1400 Independence Avenue, SW., Washington, DC 20250-0511.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Mike Hill, (202) 690-1098; e-mail: mike.hill@wdc.usda.gov.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

Purpose of Solicitation

This solicitation is issued under 7 U.S.C. 2204b(b)(4), which authorizes the Secretary of Agriculture to enter into cooperative agreements to improve the coordination and effectiveness of Federal programs affecting rural areas. The principal objective of this cooperative agreement is to continue a national outreach program that enables American Indian farmers, ranchers, and youth primarily located on Indian reservations in the contiguous United States to understand and have access to the various FSA Agriculture Credit Programs.

Eligibility Information

All proposed approaches must have, within three months upon acceptance of award:

(1) A data tracking system that thoroughly records all credit outreach specific activities and has the ability to provide detailed statistical information on an ad hoc basis, that must also be functional on a real-time basis as well as being available online through the Internet, and

(2) The applicant must demonstrate its ability to learn to deliver these credit outreach services utilizing the FSA online Farm Business Plan software program.

Proposals must demonstrate innovative and unique ways of ensuring that American Indians:

- (1) Will be provided a targeted promotional campaign about,
- (2) Have ready access to,
- (3) Are educated about, and
- (4) Can obtain one-on-one assistance specific to the various FSA Agricultural Credit Programs.

Background

Today, American Indians own and control approximately 56 million acres of agricultural lands held in trust by the United States Government and administered, for the most part, by the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) of the Department of the Interior. Land-based agricultural enterprises are considered the primary source of revenue for most tribes, due in large part to their severe isolation from any urban type industrial development activities. Thus, protecting this resource is an important function of the elected tribal officials charged with operating business activities that take place within reservations.

The United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) provides farmers

and ranchers technical, financial, and educational resources. American Indian agricultural producers on reservations have long been less able to benefit from USDA services. Since 1987, changes, such as Farm Bills with Indian-specific language, have begun to close some of the gaps created by American Indians' lack of access to USDA's programs and services. As positive as these changes were, they did not fully address an implementation plan or the funds needed to carry out implementation of sorely needed agribusiness education and direct services to American Indian Reservation farmers and ranchers.

American Indian agribusinesses, as well as individual Indians, have consistently reported that the primary need in Indian agriculture was access to the capital required to own and operate their own farms or ranches. Therefore, FSA created and implemented this mechanism to provide credit outreach and other related services related to FSA's Agricultural Credit Programs as a way to resolve some of the credit needs of Indian agriculture.

Definitions

The following definitions are applicable to this Notice.

Agency or FSA. The United States Department of Agriculture Farm Service Agency.

Farm land. Land used for commercial agriculture crops, poultry and livestock enterprises, or aquaculture.

Federally-Recognized Indian Tribal Government. The governing body or a governmental agency of any Indian tribe, band, nation, or other organized group or community (including any Native village as defined in section 3 of the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act (43 U.S.C. 1602) certified by the Secretary of the Interior as eligible for the special programs and services provided through the Bureau of Indian Affairs.

Land Grant Institutions.

(1) A 1994 institution (as defined in section 2 of the Agricultural Research, Extension, and Education Reform Act of 1998 (7 U.S.C. 7601)), or an 1890 institution.

(2) An Indian tribal community college or an Alaska Native cooperative college.

(3) A Hispanic-serving institution (as defined in section 1404 of the National Agricultural Research, Extension, and Teaching Policy Act of 1977 (7 U.S.C. 3103)).

Non-Profit Organization. Any corporation, trust, association, cooperative, or other organization that:

(1) Is operated primarily for scientific, educational, service, charitable, or similar purposes in the public interest;

(2) Is not organized primarily for profit; and

(3) Must be an organization that is recognized by the Internal Revenue Service as being certified as 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code (26 U.S.C. 501(c)(3)).

Recipient Eligibility Requirements

Applicants must either be a non-profit organization, a federally recognized Indian tribe, or a land grant institution as defined above. Applications without sufficient information to determine their eligibility will not be considered.

Proposal Preparation

A proposal must contain an original and two copies of the following (contact Mike Hill (see **FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT** above) if you need help getting the forms):

1. Form SF-424, "Application for Federal Assistance."

2. Form SF-424A, "Budget Information—Non-Construction Programs."

3. Form SF-424B, "Assurances—Non-Construction Programs."

4. *Table of Contents*—For ease of locating information, each proposal must contain a detailed Table of Contents immediately following the required Federal forms. The Table of Contents should include page numbers for each component of the proposal. Pagination should begin immediately following the Table of Contents.

5. *Proposal Summary*—A summary of the Project Proposal, not to exceed one page, that includes the title of the project, a description of the project (including goals and tasks to be accomplished), the names of the individuals responsible for conducting and completing the tasks, and the expected time frame for completing all tasks (which should not exceed twelve months).

6. *Eligibility*—A detailed discussion, not to exceed two pages, describing how the applicant meets the definition of land grant institution, non-profit organization, or Federally recognized Indian tribal government. In addition, the applicant must describe all other collaborative organizations that may be involved in the project.

7. *Proposal Narrative*—The narrative portion of the project proposal must be in a font such as Times New Roman (12 pt.) or comparable font and must include the following:

(a) *Project Title*—The title of the proposed project must be brief, not to

exceed 100 characters, yet represent the major thrust of the project.

(b) *Information Sheet*—A separate one page information sheet that lists each of the seven evaluation criteria listed in this NOFA (see the "Evaluation Criteria and Weights" section below) followed by the page numbers of all relevant material and documentation contained in the proposal that address or support that criteria.

(c) *Goals and Objectives of the Project*—A clear statement of the ultimate goals and objectives of the project must be presented.

(d) *Evaluation Criteria*—Each of the seven evaluation criteria listed in this NOFA (see the "Evaluation Criteria and Weights" section below) must be addressed specifically and individually by category. These criteria should be in narrative form with any specific supporting documentation attached as addenda and should be placed directly following the proposal narrative. If other materials, including financial statements, will be used to support any evaluation criteria it should also be placed directly following the proposal narrative. The applicant must also propose and delineate significant agency participation in the project.

Amount of Award

The amount of funds expected to be available for FY 2008 is approximately \$933,120 based on historical fund levels. If actual funding differs from this amount, the Agency will publish a separate Notice of Funds Availability.

Number of Awards

Only one cooperative agreement will be awarded.

Eligible Cooperative Agreement Fund Uses

Cooperative agreement funds may be used to cover allowable costs incurred by the recipient and approved by the Agency. Allowable costs are governed by 7 CFR parts 3015, 3016, and 3019, as applicable, and applicable Office of Management and Budget Circulars.

Ineligible Fund Uses

Cooperative agreement funds must not be used to:

(1) Plan, repair, rehabilitate, acquire, or construct a building or facility (including a processing facility);

(2) Purchase, rent, or install fixed equipment, including mobile and other processing equipment;

(3) Pay for the preparation of the grant application;

(4) Pay expenses not directly related to the funded venture (for example, cooperative agreement funds cannot be

used to support the organization's general operations);

(5) Fund political or lobbying activities;

(6) Pay costs incurred prior to receiving this Cooperative Agreement;

(7) Fund any activity prohibited by 7 CFR parts 3015, 3016, and 3019, as applicable; and

(8) Fund architectural or engineering design work for a specific physical facility.

Evaluation Criteria, Proposal Review

A National Office panel of USDA employees will review applications for eligibility, completeness, and responsiveness to this NOFA. Incomplete or non-responsive applications will be returned to the applicant and not evaluated further. If the submission deadline has not expired and time permits, ineligible applications may be returned to the applicants for possible revision.

The proposal will be evaluated using the criteria specified below. Failure to address any one of the criteria will disqualify the application. All proposals must be in compliance with this NOFA and applicable statutes.

Prior to technical examination, a preliminary review will be made by FSA Outreach Staff for responsiveness to this solicitation. Proposals that do not fall within the solicitation guidelines or are otherwise ineligible will be eliminated from competition. All responsive proposals will be reviewed by a panel of reviewers using the evaluation criteria stated below. The selected USDA employee reviewers will be chosen to provide maximum expertise and objective judgment in the evaluation of proposals. Evaluated proposals will be ranked by the FSA Outreach Staff based on the evaluation criteria and weights listed below. Final approval of those proposals will be made by the Administrator of FSA, subject to the availability of funding.

Evaluation Criteria and Weight

All responsive proposals will be reviewed based on the following seven criteria:

(1) *Applicant's Commitment and Resources (15 points)*—The standard evaluates the degree to which the organization is committed to the project, and the experience, qualifications, competency, and availability of personnel and resources to direct and carry out the project. In addition, the applicant must demonstrate its ability to deliver credit outreach services utilizing the FSA online Farm Business Plan software program immediately upon acceptance of any financial award.

(2) *Feasibility and Policy Consistency (20 points)*—The standard evaluates the degree to which the proposal clearly describes its objectives and evidences a high level of feasibility. This criterion relates to the adequacy and soundness of the proposed approach to the solution of the problem and evaluates the plan of operation, timetable, evaluation, and dissemination plans.

(3) *Detailed Description of Collaborative Partnerships, if any, and Program Recipients (20 points)*—This standard evaluates the degree to which the proposal reflects partnerships and collaborative initiatives with other agencies or organizations to enhance the quality and effectiveness of the program. Additionally, the areas and number of underserved American Indian farmers, ranchers, and youth who would benefit from the services offered will be evaluated.

(4) *Outreach to Socially Disadvantaged American Indian Applicants (10 points)*—This standard evaluates the degree to which the proposal contains detailed programs to reach persons identified as socially disadvantaged American Indian farmers, ranchers, and youth. The proposal will be evaluated for its potential for encouraging and assisting socially disadvantaged American Indian farmers, ranchers, and youth to utilize the various FSA agriculture credit programs. Elements considered include impact, continuation plans, innovation, and expected products and results.

(5) *Innovative Strategies (25 points)*—This standard evaluates the degree to which the proposal reflects innovative strategies for reaching the population targeted in the proposal and achieving the project objectives. Elements also evaluated include data tracking and innovative solutions. For data tracking, the standard evaluates evidence that the applicant has the ability to put in place a data tracking system that can thoroughly record all credit outreach specific related activities and the ability to provide detailed statistical information on an ad hoc basis, with additional evidence supporting its ability to function on a real-time basis as well its ability to be available online through the Internet. For innovative solutions, the standard evaluates originality, practicality, and creativity in proposing ways to develop and test innovative solutions to existing or anticipated credit issues or problems of socially disadvantaged American Indian farmers, ranchers, and youth. The proposal will be reviewed for its responsiveness to the need to provide socially disadvantaged American Indian farmers, ranchers, and youth with

promotion, relevant information, and direct assistance in applying for and receiving FSA agriculture credit, and other essential information to enhance participation in agricultural programs and conduct a successful farming or ranching operation.

(6) *Overall Quality of the Proposal (5 points)*—This standard evaluates the degree to which the proposal complies with this NOFA and is of high quality. Elements considered include adherence to instructions, accuracy and completeness of forms, clarity and organization of ideas, thoroughness and sufficiency of detail in the budget narrative, specificity of allocations between targeted areas if the proposal addresses more than one area, and completeness of vitae for all key personnel associated with the project.

(7) *Accuracy of Proposed Budget and Justification (5 points)*—This standard evaluates the accuracy of the proposed budget and the accompanying budget justification and should sufficiently provide the reviewer with a detailed description of each budget category that includes categorical subtotals as well as an attached budget justification that clearly defines and explains each and every proposed budget line item.

Selection Process

When the reviewers have completed their individual evaluations, the panel reviewers, based on the individual reviews, will make recommendations to the Administrator that one responsive proposal be approved for support from available funds. Prior to award, the Administrator reserves the right to negotiate with an applicant whose project is recommended for funding regarding project revisions (for example, change in scope of work or the Agency's significant involvement), funding level, or period of support. A proposal may be withdrawn at any time before a final funding decision is made.

Cooperative Agreement Awards

Within the limit of funds available for such purpose, the Administrator will enter into a cooperative agreement with the successful applicant. The date specified by the Administrator as the effective date of the award will not be later than 12 months after the project is approved for support and funds are appropriated for such purpose, unless otherwise permitted by law.

When To Submit an Application

The deadline for receipt of all applications is November 19, 2007. The Agency will not accept any application received after the deadline.

Cooperator Requirements

Cooperators will be required to do the following:

- Sign required Federal grant-making forms including:
 - Form AD-1047, Certification Regarding Debarment, Suspension, and Other Responsibility Matters—Primary Covered Transactions;
 - Form AD-1048, Certification Regarding Debarment, Suspension, Ineligibility and Voluntary Exclusion—Lower Tier Covered Transactions;
 - Form AD-1049, Certification Regarding Drug-Free Workplace Requirements (Grants); and
 - Form RD 400-4, Assurance Agreement (Civil Rights).
- Use Standard Form 270, Request for Advance or Reimbursement to request payments.
- Submit a Standard Form 269, Financial Status Report, and list expenditures according to agreed upon budget categories on a semi-annual basis. A semi-annual financial report is due within 45 days after the first 6-month project period and an annual financial report is due within 60 days after the second 6-month project period.
- Submit quarterly performance reports that compare accomplishments to the objectives; if established objectives are not met, discuss problems, delays, or other problems that may affect completion of the project; establish objectives for the next reporting period; and discuss compliance with any special conditions on the use of awarded funds.
- Maintain a financial management system that is acceptable to the Agency.
- Submit a final project performance report.
- Sign an agency approved cooperative agreement (an example of which is provided at the end of this notice).

Other Federal Statutes and Regulations That Apply

In addition to the requirements provided in this notice, other Federal statutes and regulations apply to proposals considered for review and to our cooperative agreement awarded. These include, but are not limited to:

- 7 CFR part 15, subpart A, Nondiscrimination in Federally-Assisted Programs of the Department of Agriculture—Effectuation of Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964;
- 7 CFR part 3015, Uniform Federal Assistance Regulations;
- 7 CFR part 3016, Uniform Administrative Regulations for Grants and Cooperative Agreements to State and Local Governments;

- 7 CFR parts 3017 and 3021, Governmentwide Debarment and Suspension (Non-procurement) and Governmentwide Requirements for Drug-Free Workplace (Grants);
- 7 CFR part 3018, New Restrictions on Lobbying;
- 7 CFR part 3019, Uniform Administrative Requirements for Grants and Agreements with Institutions of Higher Education, Hospitals, and Other Non-profit Organizations; and
- 7 CFR part 3052, Audits of States, Local Governments, and Non-Profit Organizations.

Paperwork Reduction Act

The Paperwork Reduction Act does not apply to this NOFA because the program does not receive applications from more than 10 persons covered by 5 CFR 1320.3(c).

Signed in Washington, DC, on October 5, 2007.

Teresa C. Lasseter,

Administrator, Farm Service Agency.

United States Department of Agriculture
Farm Service Agency
Cooperative Agreement—American
Indian Outreach Initiative

This Cooperative Agreement (Agreement) dated____, between____(Cooperator), and the United States of America, acting through the Farm Service Agency of the Department of Agriculture (the Agency, or Grantor), for \$____ in cooperative agreement funds under the program, delineates the agreement of the parties.

Now, therefore, in consideration of the cooperative agreement;

The parties agree that:

(1) All the terms and provisions of the Notice entitled "Notice of Funds Availability (NOFA) Inviting Applications for the American Indian Credit Outreach Initiative," published in the **Federal Register** on October 19, 2007 and the application submitted by the Grantee for this Agreement, including any attachments or amendments, are incorporated and included as part of this Agreement. Any changes to these documents or this agreement must be approved in writing by the Agency.

(2) As a condition of the Agreement, the Cooperator certifies that it is in compliance with and will comply in the course of the Agreement with all applicable laws, regulations, Executive Orders, and other generally applicable requirements, including those contained in 7 CFR 3015.205(b), which are incorporated into this agreement by reference, and such other statutory provisions as are specifically contained herein. The Cooperator will comply

with title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, and Executive Order 12250.

(3) The provisions of 7 CFR part 3015, Uniform Federal Assistance Regulations, and 7 CFR part 3019, Uniform Administrative Requirements for Grants and Agreements with institutions of Higher Education, Hospitals, and Other Nonprofit Organizations, as applicable, are incorporated herein and made a part hereof by reference.

Further, the Cooperator agrees that it will:

(1) Not use cooperative agreement funds to plan, repair, rehabilitate, acquire, or construct a building or facility (including a processing facility); or to purchase, rent, or install fixed equipment.

(2) Use funds only for the purpose and activities specified in the proposal approved by the Agency including the approved budget. Any uses not provided for in the approved budget must be approved in writing by the Agency in advance of obligation by the Agency.

(3) Submit a Standard Form 269, Financial Status Report and list expenditures according to agreed upon budget categories on a semi-annual basis. Reports are due by April 30 and October 30 after the grant is awarded.

(4) Provide periodic reports as required by the Agency. A financial status report and a project performance report will be required on a semi-annual basis. The financial status report must show how cooperative agreement funds have been used to date and project the funds needed and their purposes for the next quarter. A final report may serve as the last semi-annual report. Cooperators must constantly monitor performance to ensure that time schedules are being met and projected goals by time periods are being accomplished. The project performance reports must include the following:

a. A comparison of actual accomplishments to the objectives for that period.

b. Reasons why established objectives were not met, if applicable.

c. Reasons for any problems, delays, or adverse conditions which will affect attainment of overall program objectives, prevent meeting time schedules or objectives, or preclude the attainment of particular objectives during established time periods. This disclosure must be accomplished by a statement of the action taken or planned to resolve the situation.

d. Objectives and timetables established for the next reporting period.

e. The final report will also address the following:

(i) What have been the most challenging or unexpected aspects of this program?

(ii) What advice you would give to other organizations planning a similar program. These should include strengths and limitations of the program. If you had the opportunity, what would you have done differently?

(iii) If an innovative approach was used successfully, the cooperator should describe their program in detail so that other organizations might consider replication in their areas.

5. Provide Financial Management Systems which will include:

a. Records that identify adequately the source and application of funds for cooperative agreement supported activities. Those records must contain information pertaining to grant and cooperative agreement awards and authorizations, obligations, un-obligated balances, assets, liabilities, outlays, and income.

b. Effective control over and accountability for all funds, property, and other assets. Cooperator must adequately safeguard all such assets and ensure that they are used solely for authorized purposes.

c. Accounting records supported by source documentation.

6. Retain financial records, supporting documents, statistical records, and all other records pertinent to the cooperative agreement for a period of at least 3 years after closing, except that the records must be retained beyond the 3-year period if audit findings have not been resolved. Microfilm or photocopies or similar methods may be substituted in lieu of original records. The Agency and the Comptroller General of the United States, or any of their duly authorized representatives, must have access to any books, documents, papers, and records of the Cooperator that are pertinent to the specific cooperative agreement program for the purpose of making audits, examinations, excerpts, and transcripts.

7. Not encumber, transfer, or dispose of the equipment or any part thereof, acquired wholly or in part with Agency funds without the written consent of the Agency.

8. Not duplicate other program purposes for which monies have been received, are committed, or are applied to from other sources (public or private).

The Agency agrees to make funds available to the Cooperator under this Agreement in an amount not to exceed the amount indicated above. The funds will be reimbursed or advanced based on submission to the Agency by the

Cooperator of a complete Standard Form 270.

Authorized and executed this day by:

(Cooperator)

(Title)

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA
FARM SERVICE AGENCY

By:

(Name)

(Title)

[FR Doc. E7-20624 Filed 10-18-07; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 3410-05-P

DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Forest Service

Ochoco National Forest, Lookout Mountain Ranger District; Oregon; East Maurys Fuels and Vegetation Management Project

AGENCY: Forest Service, USDA.

ACTION: Revised notice of intent to prepare an environmental impact statement.

SUMMARY: On August 15, 2005, the USDA Forest Service (FS), Ochoco National Forest, published a Notice of Intent (NOI) in the **Federal Register** (70 FR 47785-47787) to prepare an environmental impact statement (EIS) for the East Maurys Fuels and Vegetation Management Project. The FS revises that NOI as follows: Except for the sections noted, all prior information remains the same.

DATES: The original NOI states the draft EIS is expected to be available for public comment in May 2006 and final EIS is expected in November 2006. This revised NOI modifies the date the draft EIS is expected to be available to December 2007. The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) will publish a Notice of Availability (NOA) of the draft EIS in the **Federal Register** when it is available. The final EIS is estimated to be available to the public in April 2008.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Barb Fontaine, Project Leader, at the Ochoco National Forest, 3160 NE Third Street, Prineville, Oregon 97754 or at (541) 416-6500.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

Possible Alternatives

The original NOI stated that an alternative limited to noncommercial thinning and prescribed fire activities was being considered. That alternative is no longer being considered. Based on

issues identified as a result of scoping efforts, an alternative that limits new road construction is being developed.

Responsible Official

The responsible official for this project is Jeff Walter, Forest Supervisor, Ochoco National Forest, 3160 NE Third Street, Prineville, Oregon 97754.

Preliminary Issues

As a result of scoping efforts, the Ochoco National Forest has identified two significant issues that will be analyzed in detail. These issues relate to road construction and the effects of roads on water quality and wildlife habitats.

Dated: October 10, 2007.

Arthur J. Currier,
District Ranger.

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DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Forest Service

RIN 0596-AC50

Proposed Directives for Forest Service Outfitting and Guiding Special Use Permits and Insurance Requirements for Forest Service Special Use Permits

AGENCY: Forest Service, USDA.

ACTION: Notice of proposed directives; request for public comment.

SUMMARY: The Forest Service is proposing changes to directives governing special use permits for outfitting and guiding conducted on National Forest System lands by simplifying the application and administration process; establishing a flat land use fee for temporary use permits; developing a process for allocation of use on a first-come, first-served basis for temporary use permits to facilitate greater participation in outfitting and guiding by youth, educational, and religious groups; offering the same terms and conditions to educational and institutional permit holders as to other types of permit holders; and clarifying policy for priority use permits governing performance, inspections, and allocation of use. In addition, the Forest Service is proposing changes to a directive governing insurance requirements for Forest Service special use permits. Public comment is invited and will be considered in development of the final directives.

DATES: Comments must be received in writing by January 17, 2008.

ADDRESSES: Send comments electronically by following the instructions at the Federal eRulemaking portal at <http://www.regulation.gov>. Comments also may be submitted by mail to U.S. Forest Service, Attn: Carolyn Holbrook, Recreation and Heritage Resources Staff (2720), 1400 Independence Avenue, SW., Stop 1125, Washington, DC 20250-1125. If comments are sent electronically, the public is requested not to send duplicate comments by mail. Please confine comments to issues pertinent to the proposed directives, explain the reasons for any recommended changes, and, where possible, reference the specific section and wording being addressed.

All comments, including names and addresses when provided, will be placed in the record and will be available for public inspection and copying. The public may inspect comments received on these proposed directives in the Office of the Director, Recreation and Heritage Resources Staff, 4th Floor Central, Sidney R. Yates Federal Building, 14th and Independence Avenue, SW., Washington, DC, on business days between 8:30 a.m. and 4 p.m. Those wishing to inspect comments are encouraged to call ahead at (202) 205-1426 to facilitate entry into the building.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Carolyn Holbrook, (202) 205-1426, Recreation and Heritage Resources Staff.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

1. Background and Need for the Proposed Directives

Outfitting and guiding conducted on National Forest System lands have become one of the chief means for the recreating public to experience the outdoors. The Forest Service administers approximately 5,000 outfitting and guiding permits, authorizing activities ranging from guided hunting and fishing trips to jeep tours and outdoor leadership programs. The agency anticipates that outfitting and guiding will increase in importance as the public's desire for use of Federal lands increases and as the agency encourages use by increasingly diverse and urban populations, many of whom may lack the equipment and skills necessary in the outdoors. Therefore, agency policy needs to reflect the public's demand for services while incorporating standard business practices and sustaining the natural environment in which these activities occur.

Except for the revision to term length for priority use permits (70 FR 19727),