nonregulated status under 7 CFR part 340 for papaya lines designated as 55–1 and 63–1 that have been genetically engineered to contain genes that confer virus resistance. The Cornell/Hawaii petition states that papaya lines 55–1 and 63–1 should not be regulated by APHIS because they do not present a plant pest risk.

As described in the petition, papaya (*Carica papaya*) lines 55–1 and 63–1 have been genetically engineered to express the coat protein gene of papaya ringspot virus (PRV), strain HA5–1, which confers resistance to PRV. Both the subject papaya lines also contain the selectable marker gene *nptII*, and line 55–1 contains the *gus* selectable marker gene, in addition. Expression of the added genes is controlled by the untranslated 3′ region of the nopaline synthase gene from *Agrobacterium tumefaciens* and the 35S promoter and 35S terminator from the plant pathogen cauliflower mosaic virus (CAMV). In developing lines 55–1 and 63–1, the microprojectile process was used to transfer the introduced gene sequences into the gynodioecious cultivar Sunset. The Sunset cultivar is of commercial importance in Hawaii, where PRV is a serious plant pest of papaya.

The subject papaya lines have been considered regulated articles under the regulations in 7 CFR part 340 because they contain gene sequences from the plant pathogens mentioned above. The subject papaya lines have been evaluated in field trials conducted under APHIS permits. In the process of reviewing the applications for field trials of lines 55–1 and 63–1, APHIS determined that the vectors and other elements were disarmed and that the trials, which were conducted under conditions of reproductive and physical containment or isolation, would not present a risk of plant pest introduction or dissemination.

In the Federal Plant Pest Act, as amended (7 U.S.C. 150aa *et seq.*), ''plant pest'' is defined as ''any living stage of: Any insects, mites, nematodes, slugs, snails, protozoa, or other invertebrate animals, bacteria, fungi, other parasitic plants or reproductive parts thereof, viruses, or any organisms similar to or allied with any of the foregoing, or any infectious substances, which can directly or indirectly injure or cause disease or damage in any plants or parts thereof, or any processed, manufactured or other products of plants.'' APHIS views this definition very broadly. The definition covers direct or indirect injury, disease, or damage not just to agricultural crops, but also to plants in general, for example, native species, as well as to organisms that may be beneficial to plants, for example, honeybees, rhizobia, etc.

The Food and Drug Administration (FDA) published a statement of policy on foods derived from new plant varieties in the Federal Register on May 29, 1992 (57 FR 22984–23005). The FDA statement of policy includes a discussion of FDA's authority for ensuring food safety under the Federal Food, Drug, and Cosmetic Act, and provides guidance to industry on the scientific considerations associated with the development of foods derived from new plant varieties, including those plants developed through the techniques of genetic engineering.

In accordance with § 340.6(d) of the regulations, we are publishing this notice to inform the public that APHIS will accept written comments regarding the Petition for Determination of Nonregulated Status from any interested person for a period of 60 days from the date of this notice. The petition and any comments received are available for public review, and copies of the petition may be ordered (see the **ADDRESSES** section of this notice).

After the comment period closes, APHIS will review the data submitted by the petitioner, all written comments received during the comment period, and any other relevant information. Based on the available information, APHIS will furnish a response to the petitioner, either approving the petition in whole or in part, or denying the petition. APHIS will then publish a notice in the Federal Register announcing the regulatory status of the Cornell/Hawaii papaya lines 55–1 and 63–1 and the availability of APHIS' written decision.

Authority: 7 U.S.C. 150aa-150jj, 151–167, and 1622n; 31 U.S.C. 9701; 7 CFR 2.22, 2.80, and 371.2(c).

Done in Washington, DC, this 29th day of April 1996.

Lonnie J. King,

Administrator, Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service.

[FR Doc. 96–11016 Filed 5–2–96; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 3410–34–P

Forest Service

Little River—Demonstration of Ecosystem Management Options (DEMO)—Timber Sale, Umpqua National Forest, Douglas County, OR

AGENCY: Forest Service, USDA.

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

SUMMARY: The Forest Service, USDA, will prepare an environmental impact statement (EIS) for a proposal to harvest timber in the Little River DEMO Planning Area. This proposal will implement the Demonstration of Ecosystem Management Options Study Plan. The EIS will document the environmental analyses and effects of a range of alternatives, including a no-action alternative. This proposal is in accordance with direction set forth in the 1990 Umpqua National Forest Land and Resource Management Plan, as amended, which provides for timber management within applicable standards, guidelines, and management prescriptions and the 1988 Final Environmental Impact Statement for Managing Competing and Unwanted Vegetation. The agency invites written comments on the scope of this project. In addition, the agency gives notice of this analysis so that interested and affected parties are aware of how they may participate and contribute to the final decision.

DATES: Comments concerning the scope and analysis of this proposal must be received by June 1, 1996.

ADDRESSES: Submit written comments and suggestions concerning the scope of the analysis to Ned Davis, District Ranger, North Umpqua Ranger District, 18782 North Umpqua Highway, Glide, Oregon 97443.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Questions and comments about this EIS should be directed to Barbara Fontaine, Resource Planning Assistant, North Umpqua Ranger District, 18782 North Umpqua Highway, Glide, Oregon 97443.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: The proposed timber sale will partial harvest an estimated 160 acres producing 5.0 million board feet of timber and will construct several helicopter landing sites. Logging systems will be helicopter based. Silvicultural prescriptions will follow those prescribed in the DEMO Study Plan and will consist of several levels of green tree retention (15 percent, 40 percent, and 75 percent), with green trees left in aggregates or dispersed across the landscape.

The Little River DEMO Planning Area encompasses portions of the Emile Creek and the Upper Little River area located in the Little River Watershed, approximately 30 air-miles East of Roseburg, Oregon. The Emile area encompasses 8,718 acres north of Little River Road and the main-stem Little River. The Upper Little River area encompasses 10,408 acres and includes the main-stem and headwaters of Little River.

To date, the preliminary issues identified relate to the effects on the following: old-growth structure in terms

of its value to society; interior forest habitat; late-seral species; Threatened, Endangered, and Sensitive species, and survey and manage species; water quality; aquatic habitat; current and future recreational opportunities; archaeological sites from landing construction and road reconstruction; and introduction and dispersal of noxious weeds and aggressive non-native species.

The 1990 Umpqua National Forest Land and Resource Management Plan, as amended, allocates the Little River Watershed into an Adaptive Management Area (AMA). The Forest Plan's overall objective for AMA's is to learn how to manage on an ecosystem basis in terms of both technical and social challenges, and in a manner consistent with applicable laws. For Little River specifically, the emphasis is placed on ''development and testing of approaches to integration of intensive timber production with restoration and maintenance of high quality riparian habitat ''.

Public participation has consisted of open houses, field trips, and scoping conducted during the environmental assessment process. Numerous comments have been received and have been incorporated and reflect in the issues described above. Additional public comments will be received until June 1, 1996. The information collected will be used in preparation of the draft EIS. The scoping process includes the following:

1. Identification of issues.
2. Identification of key issues.
3. Elimination of insignificant issues, issues which have been covered by a relevant previous environmental process, and issues that could be successfully mitigated.
4. Exploration of additional alternatives based on the key issues identified during the scoping process.
5. Identification of potential environmental effects of the proposed action and alternatives (i.e. direct, indirect, and cumulative effects and connected actions).

The draft EIS is expected to be filed with the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and to be available for public review by November, 1996. At that time, copies of the draft EIS will be distributed to interested and affected agencies, organizations, and members of the public for their review and comment. EPA will publish a Notice of Availability of the draft EIS in the Federal Register.

The comment period on the draft EIS will be 45 days from the date the EPA notice appears in the Federal Register. It is very important that those interested in the management of the Umpqua National Forest participate at that time.

The Forest Service believes it is important to give reviewers notice at this early stage of several court rulings related to public participation in the environmental review process. First, reviewers of the draft EIS's must structure their participation in the environmental review of the proposal so that it is meaningful and alerts the agency to the reviewers 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 EIS stage but that are not raised until after completion of the final EIS 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 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 EIS.

To assist the Forest Service in identifying and considering issues and concerns on the proposed action, comments on the draft EIS should be as specific as possible. It is also helpful if comments refer to specific pages or chapters of the draft EIS. Comments may also address the adequacy of the draft EIS or the merits of the alternatives formulated and discussed in the statement.

The final EIS is scheduled to be completed by February, 1997. In the final EIS, the Forest Service is required to respond to comments and responses received during the comment period that pertain to the environmental consequences discussed in the draft EIS, as well as applicable laws, regulations, and policies considered in making the decision regarding this proposal. The lead agency is the Forest Service. Don Ostby, Forest Supervisor, Umpqua National Forest, is the responsible official. As the responsible official, he will document the decision and reasons for the decision in the Record of Decision. That decision will be subject to Forest Service appeal regulations (36 CFR Part 217).

Dated: April 25, 1996.

Don Ostby,

Forest Supervisor.

[FR Doc. 96–11029 Filed 5–2–96; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 3410–11–M

Rural Utilities Service

Information Collection Activity; Comment Request

AGENCY: Rural Utilities Service, USDA.

ACTION: Notice and request for comments.

SUMMARY: In accordance with the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995 (44 U.S.C. Chapter 35, as amended), the Rural Utilities Service (RUS) invites comments on this information collection for which RUS intends to request approval from the Office of Management and Budget (OMB).

DATES: Comments on this notice must be received by July 2, 1996.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Dawn D. Wolfgang, Program Support and Regulatory Analysis Group, Rural Utilities Service, U.S. Department of Agriculture, 14th & Independence Ave., SW., AG Box 1522, Washington, DC 20250–1522. Telephone: (202) 720–0812. FAX: (202) 720–4120.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

Title: Request for Approval to Sell Capital Assets.

OMB Control Number: 0572–0020.

Type of Request: Revision of a Currently Approved Information Collection.

Abstract: A borrower's assets provide the security for a Government loan. The selling of assets reduces the security and increases the risk to the Government. RUS Form 369 allows the borrower to seek agency permission to sell some of its assets. The form collects detailed information regarding the proposed sale of a portion of the borrower's systems. RUS electric utility borrowers complete this form to request RUS approval in order to sell capital assets with a fair market value is 10 percent of the borrower's net utility plant.

Estimate of Burden: Public reporting burden for this collection of information is estimated to average 3 hours per response.

Respondents: Small business or organizations.

Estimated Number of Respondents: 5.

Estimated Number of Responses per Respondent: 1.

Estimated Total Annual Burden on Respondents: 15.

Copies of this information collection, and related form and instructions, can be obtained from Dawn Wolfgang, Program Support and Regulatory Analysis Group, at (202) 720–0812.

Comments are invited on: (a) Whether this proposed collection of information is necessary for the proper performance of the functions of the agency, including