

DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE**Department of the Army, Corps of Engineers****Intent To Prepare a Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) for the Whitney Point Lake Reallocation, Susquehanna River Basin Water Management Feasibility Study and Integrated Environmental Impact Statement**

AGENCY: U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, DOD.

ACTION: Notice of intent.

SUMMARY: In accordance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), the Baltimore District, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers is initiating the Whitney Point Lake Reallocation, Susquehanna River Basin Water Management Feasibility Study and Integrated Environmental Impact Statement. The purpose of the study is to develop a low flow augmentation plan for the Eastern New York sub-basin (below Whitney Point Lake) in Broome, Cortland, and Tioga Counties, New York. This study will determine the feasibility of reallocating reservoir storage at the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers' Whitney Point Lake for the purpose of aquatic habitat restoration. Specifically, the study will evaluate the aquatic habitat benefits to stream reaches below the reservoir as a result of various low flow augmentation releases. The feasibility study will involve the collection of existing conditions data; identification of problems, needs and opportunities; development and evaluation of plan alternatives; documentation of potential effects; comparison of plan alternatives; and selection of a recommended plan for implementation that is environmentally, economically, and engineeringly sound.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Questions about the proposed action and DEIS can be addressed to Mr. Richard R. Starr, Study Team Leader, Baltimore District, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, ATTN: CENAB-PL-P, P.O. Box 1715, Baltimore, Maryland 21203-1715, telephone (410) 962-4633. E-mail address: richard.r.starr@nab02.usace.army.mil.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

1. The Whitney Point Lake Reallocation Study was authorized in Section 721(a) of the Water Resources Development Act (WRDA) of 1986.

2. The study area is located in the Eastern New York sub-basin and is the headwaters to the Susquehanna River. The study will focus on the area around

the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers' Whitney Point Lake and approximately 60 miles downstream to Waverly, New York, along the Otselic, Tioughnioga, Chennago, and Susquehanna Rivers. The study area has experienced continued impacts to aquatic habitat during low flow periods. Specifically, the physical aquatic habitat within the study area's riverine channels fluctuates throughout the river from deep, free flowing conditions during high and normal flow periods, to much shallower, restricted conditions during low-flow conditions or times of dewatering. It is the dewatered habitats, specifically riffles and back water areas, for which this study will be addressing. Aquatic habitat, under extended periods of these conditions, have been stressed, and established benthic and other small fish species populations have been impacted. Consequently, this condition has resulted in an impact on other riverine species populations higher in the food chain. In addition, riverine water quality problems have been exacerbated by low-flow conditions, further stressing the fishery resource.

3. In July 1997, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Baltimore District and the Susquehanna River Basin Commission (SRBC) executed a feasibility cost-sharing agreement for the Whitney Point Lake Reallocation, Susquehanna River Basin Water Management Feasibility Study. The planning goals of this study are to restore and protect water flows that can support healthy aquatic and riparian ecosystems and to promote environmental awareness and values necessary for the continual restoration of a stressed ecosystem. To achieve these goals the Corps and SRBC will: (1) conduct hydraulic, hydrologic, economic, cultural, and environmental analyses of the study area; (2) identify low flow conditions and available water storage in Whitney Point Lake; (3) select a range of low flow conditions that can be enhanced by the available reservoir storage; (4) prioritize low flow release scenarios for each reallocation alternative; (5) evaluate low flow augmentation release scenarios for each reallocation alternative; (6) identify which low flow release scenario, for each reallocation alternative, that has the greatest potential for increased habitat benefits; (7) conduct trade-off analysis; and (8) select the recommended plan. Three products will be produced upon completion of this study: (1) a feasibility report with an integrated environmental impact statement; (2) 65-percent complete designs; and (3) a Instream Flow Incremental Methodology model.

4. The feasibility study is in line with the Susquehanna River Basin Commission's ultimate goal of developing a Susquehanna River basinwide water management plan under the "pooled water" concept. The "pooled water" concept is based on the development of a reservoir water release system with water storage located in various reservoirs throughout the entire Susquehanna basin. The intent is to release small amounts of water from more than one reservoir to meet water use needs (environmental and human) while minimizing potential impact to reservoir resources. As each individual sub-basin water management plan is developed and implemented, the management plan becomes more effective in meeting basinwide water use needs.

5. The decision to implement these actions will be based on an evaluation of the probable impact of the proposed activities on the public. That decision will reflect the national concern for both protection and utilization of important resources. The benefit that reasonably may be expected to accrue from the proposal will be balanced against its reasonably foreseeable costs. The Baltimore District is preparing a DEIS that will describe the impacts of the proposed reallocation on environmental and cultural resources in the study area and the overall interest's of the public. The DEIS will be in accordance with NEPA and will document all factors that may be relevant to the proposal, including the cumulative effects thereof. Among these factors are conservation, economics, aesthetics, general environmental concerns, wetlands, cultural values, fish and wildlife values, flood hazards, floodplain values, land use, recreation, water supply and conservation, water quality, energy needs, safety, and the general needs and welfare of the people. If applicable, the DEIS will also apply guidelines issued by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, under the authority of Section 404(b)(1) of the Clean Water Act of 1977 (Public Law 95-217).

6. The public involvement program will include workshops, meetings, and other coordination with interested private individuals and organizations, as well as with concerned Federal, state, and local agencies. Coordination letters and newsletters have been sent to appropriate agencies, organizations, and individuals on an extensive mailing list. Additional public information will be provided through print media, mailings, and radio and television announcements.

7. In addition to the Corps of Engineers and the Susquehanna River

Basin Commission, other participants that will be involved in the study and DEIS process includes the following: U.S. Environmental Protection Agency; U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service; U.S. Forest Service; U.S. Geological Survey; Natural Resource Conservation Service; and New York Department of Environmental Conservation. The Baltimore District invites potentially affected Federal, state, and local agencies, and other organizations and entities to participate in this study.

8. The DEIS is tentatively scheduled to be available for public review in April of 2000.

Dr. James F. Johnson,

Chief, Planning Division.

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BILLING CODE 3710-41-M

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

Notice of Proposed Information Collection Requests

AGENCY: Department of Education.

ACTION: Proposed collection; comment request.

SUMMARY: The Acting Deputy Chief Information Officer, Office of the Chief Information Officer, invites comments on the proposed information collection requests as required by the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995.

DATES: Interested persons are invited to submit comments on or before April 20, 1998.

ADDRESSES: Written comments and requests for copies of the proposed information collection requests should be addressed to Patrick J. Sherrill, Department of Education, 600 Independence Avenue, SW., Room 5624, Regional Office Building 3, Washington, DC 20202-4651.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:

Patrick J. Sherrill (202) 708-8196.

Individuals who use a

telecommunications device for the deaf (TDD) may call the Federal Information Relay Service (FIRS) at 1-800-877-8339 between 8 a.m. and 8 p.m., Eastern time, Monday through Friday.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: Section 3506 of the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995 (44 U.S.C. Chapter 35) requires that the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) provide interested Federal agencies and the public an early opportunity to comment on information collection requests. OMB may amend or waive the requirement for public consultation to the extent that public participation in the approval process would defeat the purpose of the

information collection, violate State or Federal law, or substantially interfere with any agency's ability to perform its statutory obligations. The Acting Deputy Chief Information Officer, Office of the Chief Information Officer, publishes this notice containing proposed information collection requests prior to submission of these requests to OMB. Each proposed information collection, grouped by office, contains the following: (1) Type of review requested, e.g., new, revision, extension, existing or reinstatement; (2) Title; (3) Summary of the collection; (4) Description of the need for, and proposed use of, the information; (5) Respondents and frequency of collection; and (6) Reporting and/or Recordkeeping burden. OMB invites public comment at the address specified above. Copies of the requests are available from Patrick J. Sherrill at the address specified above.

The Department of Education is especially interested in public comment addressing the following issues: (1) Is this collection necessary to the proper functions of the Department, (2) will this information be processed and used in a timely manner, (3) is the estimate of burden accurate, (4) how might the Department enhance the quality, utility, and clarity of the information to be collected, and (5) how might the Department minimize the burden of this collection on the respondents, including through the use of information technology.

Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services

Type of Review: Extension.

Title: Title I State Plan for Vocational Rehabilitation Services and Title VI-Part C Supplemental for Supported Employment Services.

Frequency: Annually.

Affected Public: Individuals or households; Not-for-profit institutions; State, local or Tribal Gov't, SEAs or LEAs.

Annual Reporting and Recordkeeping Hour Burden: Responses: 82; Burden Hours: 1,002,050.

Abstract: The Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended, and its implementing regulations at 34 CFR parts 361 and 363 require each of the 82 State vocational rehabilitation agencies to submit a three-year State plan for vocational rehabilitation services and a supplement to the plan for supported employment services. Program funding is contingent on Departmental approval of the plan and its supplement.

Dated: February 11, 1998.

Linda Tague,

*Acting Deputy Chief Information Officer,
Office of the Chief Information Officer.*

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BILLING CODE 4000-01-P

DEPARTMENT OF ENERGY

Public Hearings on a Comprehensive National Energy Strategy

AGENCY: Office of Policy and International Affairs, U.S. Department of Energy.

ACTION: Notice of public hearing.

SUMMARY: On January 15, 1998 the Department of Energy published **Federal Register** Notice: 63 FR 2371 announcing a series of public hearings to solicit input from state and local officials, utility representatives, industry representatives, public interest groups and other interested parties in the development of a statutorily required national energy policy plan, hereinafter referred to as the "Comprehensive National Energy Strategy" or "CNES." This is a *supplemental notice* to provide additional information on the hearing locations, mechanisms, (i.e. website address and fax numbers), for obtaining a copy of the draft Comprehensive National Energy Strategy and deadline for public comments. The CNES is based on a framework of goals, objectives, and strategies that will enable the Nation to sustain an economically competitive, environmentally responsible, and secure energy sector into the next century. The Department also invites interested parties to submit written comments for use in developing the CNES.

DATES AND LOCATIONS:

Houston, Texas. February 12, 1998. 1:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m., George Brown Convention Center, 1001 Avenida de las Americas, Hearing Chair—Elizabeth A. Moler, Deputy Secretary of Energy

Davis, California. February 13, 1998. 8:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m., University of California at Davis, University Club Building, Club Room One, Hearing Chair—Ernest J. Moniz, Under Secretary of Energy

Washington, D.C. February 19, 1998. 1:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m., U.S. Department of Energy—Main Auditorium, 1000 Independence Ave. SW., Hearing Chair—Federico F. Peña, Secretary of Energy

ADDRESSES: Written comments may be sent to the U.S. Department of Energy,