

the other involved federal agencies (Corps of Engineers, Fish and Wildlife Service and National Marine Fisheries Service) and to the general public for review and comment.

States/tribes must be able to issue permits that comply with the 404(b)(1) Guidelines, the environmental review criteria. States/tribes and the reviewing federal agencies must be able to review proposed projects to evaluate and/or minimize anticipated impacts. EPA's assumption regulations establish recommended elements that should be included in the state/tribe's permit application, so that sufficient information is available to make a thorough analysis of anticipated impacts. These minimum information requirements are based on the information that must be submitted when applying for a section 404 permit from the Corps of Engineers.

EPA is responsible for oversight of assumed programs to ensure that state/tribal programs are in compliance with applicable requirements and that state/tribal permit decisions adequately consider and minimize anticipated impacts. States/tribes must evaluate their programs annually and submit an annual report to EPA assessing their program. EPA's assumption regulations establish minimum requirements for the annual report. An agency may not conduct or sponsor, and a person is not required to respond to, a collection of information unless it displays a currently valid OMB control number. The OMB control numbers for EPA's regulations are listed in 40 CFR part 9 and 48 CFR Chapter 15.

The EPA would like to solicit comments to:

(i) Evaluate whether the proposed collection of information is necessary for the proper performance of the functions of the agency, including whether the information will have practical utility;

(ii) Evaluate the accuracy of the agency's estimate of the burden of the proposed collection of information, including the validity of the methodology and assumptions used;

(iii) Enhance the quality, utility, and clarity of the information to be collected; and

(iv) 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 technological collection techniques or other forms of information technology, e.g., permitting electronic submission of responses.

Burden Statement: EPA's currently approved ICR includes 101,440 hours. The state/tribe's assumption request is a

one-time request; a permit application is made each time someone desires to do work that involves the discharge of dredged or fill material into waters of the United States, including wetlands; and a state/tribe with an approved program must submit an annual report to EPA each year. This collection is split into three pieces:

(i) We estimate that a state/tribe will need 520 hours (approximately 1/4 of a work year) to prepare the documentation for EPA to determine that a state/tribe's assumption request is complete. We estimate that \$45,000 (mid-range of a GS-11) is an average state/tribal employee salary. This results in a one-time cost of \$11,250. We estimate that 2 states or tribes may request program assumption over the next three years. This results in a total one-time burden of 1,040 hours and a total cost of \$22,500.

(ii) We estimate that the average time needed to complete a permit application is five hours. The actual time to complete a permit application will vary greatly depending on the size and location of a planned project. Small projects will require less time; large, complex projects could require significantly more time. We estimate that the "average" assumed program will process 5,000 permits a year. This results in a burden of 25,000 burden hours per year per assumed program. This figure will vary with the assumed program. It is likely that some states/tribes will have significantly fewer permit applications requested each year; others may have more. It is impossible to estimate the cost of filing an "average" permit application. The application for small projects can be completed by the permit applicant with little or no cost incurred. The permit application for larger, complex projects may require hiring outside parties such as environmental and engineering firms, surveyors and lawyers.

(iii) We estimate that a state/tribe will need 80 hours to collect and analyze the information and prepare the annual report. Using the \$45,000 for an average state/tribal employee salary results in an approximate cost of \$1,800 to prepare the annual report.

Burden means the total time, effort, or financial resources expended by persons to generate, maintain, retain, or disclose or provide information to or for a Federal agency. This includes the time needed to review instructions; develop, acquire, install, and utilize technology and systems for the purposes of collecting, validating, and verifying information, processing and maintaining information, and disclosing and providing information; adjust the

existing ways to comply with any previously applicable instructions and requirements; train personnel to be able to respond to a collection of information; search data sources; complete and review the collection of information; and transmit or otherwise disclose the information.

Dated: April 16, 1999.

Robert H. Wayland III,

Director, Office of Wetlands, Oceans and Watersheds.

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ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY

[FRL-6331-6]

Gulf of Mexico Program Focus Teams Meeting

AGENCY: U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (US EPA).

ACTION: Notice of meeting of the Gulf of Mexico Program (GMP) Focus Teams and Support Committees.

SUMMARY: Under the Federal Advisory Act, P.L. 92463, EPA gives notice of a comprehensive meeting of GMP Focus Teams (Public Health, Nutrient Enrichment, Habitat, and Nonindigenous Species) and Support Committees.

DATES: The comprehensive meeting will be held on Wednesday, May 26, 1999 from 1:00 p.m. to 5:30 p.m. and on Thursday, May 27, 1999 from 8:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.

ADDRESSES: The meeting will be held at the Hilton New Orleans Riverside, Poydras at the Mississippi River, New Orleans, LA (504) 561-0500.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Gloria D. Car, Designated Federal Officer, Gulf of Mexico Program Office, Building 1103, Room 202, Stennis Space Center, MS 39529-6000 at (228) 688-2421.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: The proposed agenda items will include: Program Overview, Priority Watershed Analysis, Assessment Case Study—Barataria-Terrebonne, Overview and Discussion of GMP Workplan, Focus Team Leaders' Reports, and Discussion of Next Steps.

The meeting is open to the public.

Dated: April 19, 1999.

James D. Giattina,

Director, Gulf of Mexico Program Office.

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