Creek and listed as FRS #1 in the 2002 Report. It would be 78′ high, have a pool surface of 2.4 acres, and store 95 acre-feet of water and 46 acre-feet of sediment from a drainage area of 550 acres. The third dam would be located on private lands, the rights to which the SLO would need to secure.

Alternative 3—Employ Other Structural Measures. Under this alternative, NRCS would provide financial and technical assistance to the SLO for implementation of structural measures other than dams to address flooding problems. Such measures would include channel widening of Rockhouse Creek, replacement of certain culverts and bridges, and removal of obstructions to flow.

Alternative 4—Employ Non-Structural Flood Protection Measures. Under Alternative 3, NRCS would provide financial and technical assistance to the SLO for implementation of non-structural measures only. Flood proofing would be implemented to protect structures in the floodplain, including installation of floodwalls, raising structures on pilings, or moving structures out of the highest risk locations. Households at high flood risk would be relocated out of the Rockhouse Creek watershed to another suitable location. Under this alternative NRCS would consider moving households to existing dwellings outside the watershed and demolishing the remaining structure after payment of fair market value or would consider relocation of the home structure itself to a new location.

Alternative 5—Employ a Combination of Structural and Non-Structural Flood Protection Measures. Under this alternative, NRCS would provide financial and technical assistance to the SLO for implementation of a combination of flood protection measures that would include the structural and non-structural measures determined to be most appropriate and cost-effective to protect property and reduce flood damages. Dams and other structural measures and the use of flood proofing measures and household relocation would be considered.

Alternative 6—No Action Alternative. Under this alternative, NRCS would provide no financial or technical assistance to sponsoring local organizations for flood protection measures in the Rockhouse Creek watershed. Federal agencies are required to evaluate the impacts of a No Action alternative in preparing an Environmental Impact Statement, even though the alternative would not meet the agency's purpose and need.

Permits or Licenses Required: Construction of flood retarding structures is authorized under the Watershed Protection and Flood Prevention Act of 1954, (Pub. L. 83–566) administered by NRCS. A special use permit would have to be issued by the Forest Service for construction of such structures and impoundment of water on National Forest lands. A permit would be required from the State of Kentucky, Division of Water for any dam structures.

A permit would be required from the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers under Clean Water Act (CWA), Section 404 for any project that would impede the flow of waters of the U.S. or that would affect any wetlands. The project would also require a water quality certification by the State under CWA, Section 401, which could be issued in conjunction with the CWA 404 permit. Approval from the State Historic Preservation Office would be required if any National Register-eligible historic properties would be affected. Consultation with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service would be required if the proposal may affect any species listed as threatened or endangered under the Endangered Species Act.

Estimated Dates for Draft EIS and Final EIS: NRCS expects to file the Draft EIS with the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and to have it available for public review and comment during the summer or fall of 2004. At that time, EPA will publish a Notice of Availability (NOA) of the Draft EIS in the **Federal Register**. The public comment period on the Draft EIS will be a minimum of 45-days from the date EPA publishes the NOA.

NRCS and the Forest Service believe, at this early stage, it is important to give reviewers notice of several court rulings related to public participation in the environmental review process. First, reviewers of the Draft EIS must structure their participation in the environmental review of the proposal so that it is meaningful and alerts an agency to the reviewer's position and concerns (*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 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 project participate by the close of the Draft EIS review period, so that substantive comments are made available to the NRCS and Forest Service at a time when the comments can be meaningfully considered in the Final EIS.

To assist NRCS and the Forest Service in identifying and considering issues and concerns on the proposed action and alternatives, 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 Draft EIS. Reviewers may wish to refer to the Council on Environmental Quality Regulations for implementing the procedural provisions of the National Environmental Policy Act at 40 CFR 153.3 in addressing these points.

After the comment period on the Draft EIS ends, the comments will be analyzed, considered, and responded to by NRCS and the Forest Service in preparing the Final EIS. The Final EIS is scheduled for completion by the end of 2004. The responsible officials will consider the comments, responses, environmental consequences discussed in the Final EIS, and applicable laws, regulations, and policies in making a decision regarding this proposed action. The responsible officials will document the decisions and reasons for the decisions in a Record of Decision. That decision will be subject to appeal in accordance with 36 CFR Part 215.

Dated: March 12, 2004.

David G. Sawyer,

State Conservationist, Natural Resources Conservation Service, USDA.

[FR Doc. 04–6200 Filed 3–18–04; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 3410–16–P

DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Natural Resources Conservation Service

Thirtymile Creek Watershed, MT

AGENCY: Natural Resources Conservation Service, USDA.

ACTION: Notice of intent to deauthorize federal funding.

SUMMARY: Pursuant to the Watershed Protection and Flood Prevention Act, Pub. L. 83–566, and the Natural Resources Conservation Service Guidelines (7 CFR Part 622), The Natural Resources Conservation Service gives notice of the intent to deauthorize Federal funding for the Thirtymile Creek Watershed Project, Blaine County, Montana.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Dave White, State Conservationist, Natural Resources Conservation Service, 10 East Babcock, Room 443, Bozeman, Montana, 59715, Telephone: 406–587–6811.

Thirtymile Creek Watershed, Montana

Notice of Intent To Deauthorize Federal Funding

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: A determination has been made by Dave White, State Conservationist that the proposed works of improvement for the Thirtymile Creek project will not be installed. One of the two sponsoring local organizations has concurred in this determination and agrees that Federal funding should be deauthorized for the project. Information regarding this determination may be obtained from Dave White, State Conservationist, at the above address and telephone number.

No administrative action on implementation of the proposed deauthorization will be taken until 60 days after the date of this publication in the **Federal Register**.

(Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance Program No. 10.904, Watershed Protection and Flood Prevention. Office of Management and Budget Circular A–95 regarding State and Local clearinghouse review of Federal and federally assisted programs and projects is Applicable.)

Dated: February 19, 2004.

Dave White,

State Conservationist.

[FR Doc. 04–6201 Filed 3–18–04; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 3410–16–P

DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Rural Housing Service

Notice of Request for Extension of a Currently Approved Information Collection

AGENCY: Rural Housing Service, USDA.

ACTION: Proposed collection; comments requested.

SUMMARY: In accordance with the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995, this notice announces the Rural Housing Service's intention to request an extension for a currently approved information collection in support of the program for Management and Supervision of Multiple Family Housing Borrowers and Grant Recipients.

DATES: Comments on this notice must be received by May 18, 2004, to be assured of consideration.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Janet Stouder, Multi-Family Housing Portfolio Management Division, Rural Housing Service, Room 1245, Stop 0782, 1400 Independence Avenue, SW., Washington, DC 20250, Telephone: (202) 720–9728.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

Title: Management and Supervision of Multiple Family Housing Borrowers and Grant Recipients.

OMB Number: 0575–0033.

Expiration Date of Approval: October 31, 2004.

Type of Request: Extension of a currently approved information collection.

Abstract: The Rural Housing Service (RHS) is authorized under sections 514, 515, 516, and 521 of title V of the Housing Act of 1949, as amended, to provide loans and grants to eligible recipients for the development of rental housing in rural areas. Such multi-family housing (MFH) projects are intended to meet the housing needs of persons or families having very low to moderate incomes, senior citizens, the disabled, and domestic farm laborers.

RHS has the responsibility of assuring the public that MFH projects financed are managed and operated as mandated by Congress. This regulation (7 CFR part 1930, subpart C) was issued to insure consistent and proper management and operation of projects financed with MFH loan and grant funds. Minimal requirements have been established as deemed necessary to assure that applicable laws and authorities are carried out as intended.

With the provisions of this regulation, RHS will be able to provide the necessary guidance and supervision to new and existing borrowers to assist in the economical operation of their projects. RHS must be able to assure Congress and the general public that all MFH projects will be operated as economically as possible, for the purposes for which they are intended, and for the benefit of those they are mandated to serve.

The required information is collected on a project-by-project basis and is done so in accordance with the amended Housing Act of 1949, so that RHS can provide guidance and be assured of compliance with the terms and conditions of loan, grant, and/or subsidy agreements.

RHS will use the information collected to identify financially detrimental trends, poor management practices, and potential problems before they manifest themselves in the form of loan delinquencies, unpaid operation expenses, improper discriminatory practices, or high vacancy rates. With this information, RHS can assist the borrower through consultation (supervision) to improve the efficiency of the project and its operation. RHS supervision is especially critical during the first year of operation. In addition, the information provided is intended to verify whether or not the borrower is complying with the terms and conditions of loan, grant, or subsidy agreements. After the first year of operation, the information is requested of the borrower to assure continued compliance with the loan and grant agreements.

Failure by RHS to monitor progress of borrower operation through review of collected information and consultation would reasonably lead to noncompliance with statutory intent in some instances and financial default in others. Corrective action to remove such noncompliance or default would be costly to RHS and the public in terms of program integrity, public confidence, dollars, and staff time.

Estimate of Burden: Public reporting burden for this collection of information is estimated to average .90 hours per response.

Respondents: Individuals or households.

Estimated Number of Respondents: 18,200 borrowers, 420,000 tenants and 100,000 tenant applicant respondents.

Estimated Number of Responses Per Respondent: 4.43.

Estimated Total Annual Burden on Respondents: 2,143,740 hours.

Copies of this information collection can be obtained from Tracy Givelekian, RPMB Analyst, Regulations and Paperwork Management Branch, at (202) 692–0039.

Comments: Comments are invited on: (a) Whether the proposed collection of information is necessary for the proper performance of the functions of RHS, including whether the information will have practical utility; (b) the accuracy of RHS' estimate of the burden of the proposed collection of information including the validity of the methodology and assumptions used; (c) ways to enhance the quality, utility and clarity of the information to be collected; and (d) ways to 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. Comments may be sent to Tracy Givelekian, Regulations and Paperwork Management Branch, U.S. Department of Agriculture, Rural Development, STOP 0742, 1400 Independence Ave., SW., Washington, DC 20250. All responses to this notice