

- Enhance engagement with partners for collaborative implementation of new plan direction.

Proposed Action

A collaborative stakeholder group led by the Wyoming Department of Agriculture worked for several months in 2018 to develop recommendations for a proposed action. To meet the needs identified above and based on the recommendations of the collaborative workgroup, the Thunder Basin National Grassland proposes the following:

1. Change the existing Thunder Basin National Grassland Management Area 3.63, “Black-footed Ferret Reintroduction Habitat,” to a new Management Area 3.67, “Rangelands with Short-stature Vegetation Emphasis.”

2. Draw the boundaries for Management Area 3.67 to strategically use natural barriers to prairie dog movement such as the Cheyenne River and Rochelle Hills and to reduce conflicts in prairie dog management.

3. Eliminate use of the Black-tailed Prairie Dog Conservation Assessment and Management Strategy for the Thunder Basin National Grassland (2009, 2015), and amend the Thunder Basin National Grassland Land and Resource Management Plan to include all necessary direction for prairie dog management.

4. Establish a minimum ¼ mile boundary management zone in Management Area 3.67 where the Grassland shares a border with private or State property, and allow landowners to request up to a ¾ mile boundary management zone for special circumstances. Within boundary management zones, lethal control of prairie dogs in cooperation with other landowners will be the priority.

5. Where possible, adopt use of the Natural Resources Conservation Service’s Ecological Site Descriptions in Management Area 3.67 as the basis to describe plant communities, evaluate current and desired conditions, and maintain or improve native vegetation and wildlife habitat.

6. Within Management Area 3.67, manage active prairie dog colonies toward a target of 10,000 acres to support viable populations of associated species such as mountain plover, burrowing owl, and swift fox. Colonies would be distributed across the landscape and vary in size up to approximately 1,000 acres with an emphasis on colonies of 100 to 400 acres. At least one complex in Management Area 3.67 would be managed for at least 1,500 acres of active prairie dog colonies.

7. Allow use of a suite of tools for prairie dog management throughout Management Area 3.67, including but not limited to translocation, application of Deltamethrin (*i.e.*, “Delta dust” or equivalent), fences, vegetative barriers, and rodenticides. Do not allow use of anticoagulant rodenticides.

8. Allow recreational shooting in Management Area 3.67 with seasonal restrictions in place when necessary.

9. Consider recommendations for prairie dog management from a third-party collaborative stakeholder group.

Lead and Cooperating Agencies

The Forest Service will be the lead agency. The Wyoming Department of Agriculture, Wyoming Game and Fish Department, Campbell County, Converse County, and Weston County have been identified as formal cooperating agencies at this time. Other federal, State, and local agencies; tribes; and other stakeholders that are interested in or affected by the proposed action are invited to participate in the scoping process. If eligible, they may request or be asked by the Forest Service to participate in the environmental analysis process as a cooperating agency.

Responsible Official

Medicine Bow-Routt National Forests and Thunder Basin National Grassland Supervisor Russell Bacon.

Nature of Decision To Be Made

The responsible official will decide: (1) Whether or not to implement the plan amendment as described in the proposed action, (2) whether or not to implement the plan amendment as described in a future alternative analyzed in detail, (3) whether or not to implement a combination of alternatives analyzed in detail, (4) whether or not to adopt amended grassland-wide, geographic area, and management area direction consistent with the selected alternative(s), and (5) whether to take no action.

Scoping Process

This Notice of Intent initiates the scoping process, which guides the development of the environmental impact statement. The Forest Service is seeking information, comments, and assistance from Tribal Governments; Federal, State, and local agencies; and individuals and organizations interested in or affected. During the weeks of May 6 or May 13, 2019, the Forest Service will host one public meeting in Douglas, WY and one online public webinar. Information about public meetings is posted online with a scoping document

that includes detailed information on the proposed action, maps, and proposed amended plan direction (*e.g.*, desired conditions, objectives, standards, and guidelines) at: http://www.fs.fed.us/nepa/nepa_project_exp.php?project=55479. Individuals may also provide comments and sign up to be on the electronic mailing list at that site.

Comments that address specific environmental impacts that are of concern or modifications to the proposal will be most useful in the development of the environmental impact statement and plan amendment. Comments received in response to this solicitation, including names and addresses of those who comment, will be part of the public record for this proposed action.

The decision on this proposed plan amendment will be subject to the objection process for the planning process (36 CFR part 219, subpart B). Only those individuals and entities who submit substantive formal comments related to this proposed plan amendment during the opportunities for public comment as provided in 36 CFR part 219, subpart A may file an objection. The burden is on the objector to demonstrate compliance with requirements for objection (36 CFR 219.53).

Comments received in response to this solicitation, including names and addresses of those who comment, will be part of the public record for this proposed action. Comments submitted anonymously will be accepted and considered, however.

Dated: March 22, 2019.

Allen Rowley,

Acting Associate Deputy Chief, National Forest System.

[FR Doc. 2019–07809 Filed 4–17–19; 8:45 am]

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DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

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, the United States Department of Agriculture’s (USDA) Rural Utilities Service (RUS) invites comments on this information collection for which the Agency intends to request approval from the Office of Management and Budget (OMB).

DATES: Comments on this notice must be received by June 17, 2019.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:

Thomas Dickson, Rural Development Innovation Center—Regulatory Team, U.S. Department of Agriculture, 1400 Independence Avenue SW, STOP 1522, Washington, DC 20250, Telephone: 202-690-4492, email: thomas.dickson@usda.gov.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: The Office of Management and Budget's (OMB) regulation (5 CFR part 1320) implementing provisions of the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995 (Pub. L. 104-13) requires that interested members of the public and affected agencies have an opportunity to comment on information collection and recordkeeping activities (see 5 CFR 1320.8(d)). This notice identifies an information collection that RUS is submitting to OMB as a revision to an existing collection. Comments are invited on: (a) 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; (b) 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; (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: Thomas Dickson, Rural Development Innovation Center—Regulatory Team, U.S. Department of Agriculture, 1400 Independence Avenue SW, STOP 1522, Washington, DC 20250, Telephone: 202-690-4492, email: thomas.dickson@usda.gov.

Title: Operating Reports for Telecommunications and Broadband Borrowers.

OMB Control Number: 0572-0031.

Type of Request: Extension of a currently approved collection.

Abstract: Rural Utilities Service (RUS), an agency delivering the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) utilities programs, is a credit agency. RUS makes mortgage loans and loan guarantees to finance electric, broadband, telecommunications, and water and waste facilities in rural areas. In addition to providing loans and loan guarantees, one of the Agency's main objectives is to safeguard loan security

until the loan is repaid. This collection of information covers the Telecommunications Operating Report, the Broadband Operating Report, and RUS Form 674, "Certificate of Authority to Submit or Grant Access to Data." The data collected via the Telecommunications Operating Report is collected through the USDA Data Collection System. The data collected via the Broadband Operating Report is collected through the USDA Broadband Collection and Analysis System. The data collected via the Telecommunication and Broadband Operating reports is required by the loan contract and provides Rural Development with vital financial information necessary to ensure the maintenance of the security for the Government's loans, and statistical data to enable the Agency to ensure the provision of quality telecommunications and broadband services as mandated by the Rural Electrification Act (RE Act) of 1936. The data collected through the operating reports provides financial information to ensure loan security consistent with due diligence and is essential to protect loan security. The data collected via RUS Form 674 provides information to the Agency to allow Rural Development Electric, Telecommunications and Broadband program Borrowers to file electronic Operating Reports with the Agency using the USDA Data Collection System. RUS Form 674, accompanied by a Board Resolution, identifies the name and USDA eAuthentication ID for a certifier and security administrator who will have access to the USDA Data Collection System for purposes of filing electronic Operating Reports. The information collected on the RUS Form 674 is submitted in hard copy by Borrowers only when revisions are required or, in the case of a first time Borrower, when initially submitting the data.

Estimate of Burden: Public reporting for this collection of information is estimated to average 4.7 hours per response.

Respondents: Business or other for-profits and not-for-profit Institutions.

Estimated Number of Respondents: 580.

Estimated Number of Responses per Respondent: 2.26.

Estimated Total Annual Burden on Respondents: 6296 hours.

Copies of this information collection can be obtained from MaryPat Daskal, Rural Development Innovation Center—Regulations Team, Telephone: (202) 720-7853, Email: MaryPat.Daskal@usda.gov. All responses to this notice will be summarized and included in the

request for OMB approval. All comments will also become a matter of public record.

Chad Rupe,

Acting Administrator, Rural Utilities Service.

[FR Doc. 2019-07806 Filed 4-17-19; 8:45 am]

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