

number of visits that occur on the National Forest System lands for recreation and other purposes, and (2) the views and satisfaction levels of recreational visitors to National Forest System lands about the services, facilities, and settings. The Agency receives requests for this kind of information from a variety of organizations, including Congressional staffs, newspapers, magazines, and recreational trade organizations.

Need and Use of the Information: The Customer and Use Survey Techniques for Operations, Management, Evaluation and Research (CUSTOMER) study combines several different survey approaches to gather data describing visitors to and users of public recreation lands, including their trip activities, satisfaction levels, evaluations, demographic profiles, trip characteristics, spending, and annual visitation patterns. FS will use face-to-face interviewing for collecting information on-site as well as English and Spanish written survey instruments to be mailed back by respondents. The NVUM results and data are a source of data and information in addressing forest land management planning, national strategic planning, service to minorities, and identification of a forest's recreation niche. Conducting the collection less frequently puts information updates out of cycle with forest planning and other data preparations and reporting activities.

Description of Respondents: Individuals or households.

Number of Respondents: 45,000.

Frequency of Responses: Reporting; Quarterly; Annually.

Total Burden Hours: 6,386.

Levi S. Harrell,

Departmental Information Collection Clearance Officer.

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DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Forest Service

Bitterroot National Forest; Montana; Gold Butterfly Project Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement

AGENCY: Forest Service, USDA.

ACTION: Notice of intent to prepare a supplemental environmental impact statement.

SUMMARY: The Bitterroot National Forest, Stevensville Ranger District, Montana, intends to prepare a Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement (SEIS) for the Gold Butterfly

Project. Since publication of the original EIS, it was determined that a project-specific forest plan amendment is necessary.

DATES: The Draft SEIS is expected February 2020 and the Final SEIS is expected May 2020.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:

Steve Brown, Stevensville District Ranger, by telephone at (406) 777-7410, or by email at steve.brown2@usda.gov.

ADDRESSES: Additional information concerning this project may be obtained at <https://www.fs.usda.gov/project/?project=51486>.

Individuals who use telecommunication devices 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:

Purpose and Need for Action

The purpose and need for the SEIS is to analyze a project-specific Forest Plan Amendment related to management of old growth. The current Bitterroot Forest Plan is from 1987. New and better science is available concerning old growth ecosystems, specifically "Old Growth Forest Types of the Northern Region" or Green et. al as it is more commonly referred to in the Region. This science has already been adopted by the majority of the Forests within R1, including those who have revised or are currently revising their plans using the 2012 Planning Rule.

The purpose of the Gold Butterfly project is to:

- Improve landscape resilience to disturbances (such as insects, diseases, and fire) by modifying forest structure and composition, and fuels.
- Provide timber products and related jobs.
- Reduce chronic sediment sources in the Willow Creek watershed to improve water quality and bull trout habitat in the long-term.
- Restore or improve key habitats such as meadows, aspen, and whitebark pine.

Proposed Action

The project-specific amendment would change the definition of old growth to be consistent with Green et. al. The amendment would also set aside management area direction related to specific percentages of old growth required to be allocated in each management area. There is no scientific basis for the percentages, and they do not align with the principles outlined in Green et. al.

When proposing a Forest Plan amendment, the 2012 Planning Rule (36 CFR 219), as amended, requires the responsible official to provide in the initial notice about the amendment "which substantive requirements of §§ 219.8 through 219.11 are likely to be directly related to the amendment (§ 219.13(b)(5)) . . ." Whether a rule provision is likely to be directly related to an amendment is determined by the purpose for and the effects of the amendment, and informed by the best available scientific information, effects analysis, monitoring data or other rationale.

Based on the proposed amendment and requirement of the planning rule, the following substantive requirements of the 36 CFR 219 planning regulations would likely be directly related to the proposed amendments: § 219.9 Diversity of plant and animal communities.

The proposed action includes commercial harvest, non-commercial thinning, and prescribed fire on 7,376 acres within the project area. Approximately 90 percent of treatment acres are within the insect and disease treatment area designated under the Healthy Forest Restoration Act Title VI. Commercial harvest includes regeneration treatments on 2,081 acres and intermediate treatments on 3,540 acres. Approximately 392 acres of intermediate harvest would occur in dry site old growth stands. In addition, there are 359 acres of regeneration harvest in old growth that would remove these acres from old growth status. Road decommissioning would occur on 22.3 miles of National Forest System Roads and 21.3 miles of roads would be stored for future management use. Approximately 6.4 miles of permanent road and 17.3 miles of temporary road would be constructed to implement silvicultural prescriptions and provide for wood removal. Best management practices would be implemented on 32.4 miles of haul road to reduce potential sediment runoff and improve water quality. The Burnt Fork and Willow Creek trailheads are proposed to be moved lower in the drainages to address watershed concerns, with the associated 2.4 miles of road being converted to the NFS trail system.

Responsible Official

Bitterroot National Forest Supervisor.

Nature of Decision To Be Made

The decision will authorize vegetation treatments and whether to amend the

Bitterroot Forest Plan site-specifically for the duration of the project.

Christine Dawe,

Acting Associate Deputy Chief, National Forest System.

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DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Rural Utilities Service

Announcement of Funding Availability, Loan Application Procedures, and Deadlines for the Rural Energy Savings Program (RESP)

AGENCY: Rural Utilities Service, USDA.

ACTION: Notice of Solicitation of Applications (NOSA).

SUMMARY: The Rural Utilities Service (RUS), a Rural Development agency of the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA), is soliciting Letters of intent for loan applications under the Rural Energy Savings Program (RESP), announcing the application process for those loans and deadlines for applications from eligible entities for funding in fiscal year (FY) 2021, until expended or further notice.

DATES: To be considered for this funding, applications under this NOSA will be accepted immediately. The RESP application process is described in detail pursuant to 7 CFR 1719. In brief, the RESP is comprised of two steps:

Step 1: To be considered for financing, an Applicant seeking financing must submit a Letter of intent, in an electronic portable display format (PDF) not to exceed 10 Megabytes (10 MB) by electronic mail (email) to *RESP@USDA.GOV*. No paper Letters of intent will be accepted. The Letters of intent will be queued as they are received. If it advances program and policy goals, RUS may consider loan applications from Eligible entities that have submitted Letters of intent under prior funding announcements but were not invited to proceed with a loan application.

Step 2: A RESP applicant that has been invited in writing by RUS to proceed with the loan application, will have up to ninety (90) days to complete and submit to RUS the documentation for a complete loan application. The ninety (90) day timeframe will begin on the date the RESP applicant receives RUS' invitation to proceed. If the deadline to submit the completed loan application falls on Saturday, Sunday, or a Federal holiday, the application is due the next business day. The loan application package must be marked

with the subject line "Attention: Christopher McLean, Assistant Administrator for the Electric Program; RESP Loan Application."

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:

Robert Coates, Electric Program, Rural Utilities Service, Rural Development, United States Department of Agriculture, 1400 Independence Avenue SW, STOP 1568, Room 4121 0257-S, Washington, DC 20250-1510; Telephone: (202) 260-5415; Email: *Robert.Coates@usda.gov*.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: Authority:

These loans are made available under the authority of 7 U.S.C. 8107a (Section 6407 of the Farm Security and Rural Investment Act of 2002, as amended,) and the Rural Electrification Act of 1936, 7 U.S.C. 901 *et seq.*

General Information

The purpose of the RESP is to help rural families and small businesses achieve cost savings by providing loans to qualified consumers through eligible entities to implement durable cost-effective energy efficiency measures pursuant to 7 U.S.C. 8107a(a) of the RESP authorizing statute. The Secretary may use this funding to allow eligible entities to offer energy efficiency loans to customers in any part of their service territory in accordance to § 7 CFR part 1719. The Administrator may approve loans proposing to include these eligible activities for entities currently in the queue provided they still meet all of the application requirements. Additionally, subject to appropriations, funding for projects may be used to replace manufactured housing units with another manufactured housing unit if the replacement would be more cost effective in saving energy.

The Agency encourages applications that will support recommendations made in the Rural Prosperity Task Force report to help improve life in rural America, see <https://www.usda.gov/topics/rural/rural-prosperity>. Applicants are encouraged to consider projects that provide measurable results in helping rural communities build robust and sustainable economies through strategic investments in infrastructure, partnerships and innovation. Key strategies include: Achieving e-Connectivity for rural America, developing the rural economy, harnessing technological innovation, supporting a rural workforce, and improving quality of life.

Application and Submission Information

Application Requirements: All requirements for submission of an

application under the RESP are subject to 7 CFR part 1719.

Application Materials/Submission: The Letter of intent must be submitted by the Applicant in an electronic PDF format not to exceed 10 Megabytes (10 MB) by electronic mail (email) to *RESP@USDA.GOV*. No paper letters of intent will be accepted. The completed loan application package must be submitted following the instructions that will be outlined in the RUS Invitation to proceed to the RESP Applicant. The loan application package must be marked with the subject line "Attention: Christopher McLean, Assistant Administrator for the Electric Program; RESP Loan Application."

Paperwork Reduction Act

In accordance with the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995 (44 U.S.C. chapter 35), OMB approved this information collection under OMB Control Number 0572-0151. This NOSA contains no new reporting or recordkeeping burdens under OMB control number 0572-0151 that would require approval under the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995 (44 U.S.C. Chapter 35).

USDA Non-Discrimination Statement

In accordance with Federal civil rights law and USDA civil rights regulations and policies, the USDA, its agencies, offices, and employees, and institutions participating in or administering USDA programs are prohibited from discriminating based on race, color, national origin, religion, sex, gender identity (including gender expression), sexual orientation, disability, age, marital status, family/parental status, income derived from a public assistance program, political beliefs, or reprisal or retaliation for prior civil rights activity, in any program or activity conducted or funded by USDA (not all bases apply to all programs).

Remedies and complaint filing deadlines vary by program or incident. Persons with disabilities who require alternative means of communication for program information (e.g., braille, large print, audiotape, American Sign Language, etc.) should contact the Agency or USDA's TARGET Center at (202) 720-2600 (voice and TTY) or contact USDA through the Federal Relay Service at (800) 877-8339 (English) or (800) 845-6136 (Spanish). Individuals who wish to file a Program Discrimination Complaint must complete the USDA Program Discrimination Complaint Form (PDF). To file a program discrimination complaint, you may obtain a complaint form by sending an email to *Cr-*