

5940. To obtain a copy of the determination or the environmental assessment and finding of no significant impact, contact Ms. Kay Peterson at (301) 734-4885; e-mail: kay.peterson@usda.gov.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

Background

On December 1, 1998, the Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) received a petition (APHIS Petition No. 98-335-01p) from the Crop Development Centre (CDC) of the University of Saskatchewan (CDC/Saskatchewan) of Saskatchewan, Saskatoon, Canada, seeking a determination that a flax (*Linum usitatissimum* L.) line designated as CDC Triffid, which has been genetically engineered for tolerance to residues of sulfonylurea herbicides in soil, does not present a plant pest risk and, therefore, is not a regulated article under APHIS' regulations in 7 CFR part 340.

On March 4, 1999, APHIS published a notice in the **Federal Register** (64 FR 10442-10443, Docket No. 99-002-1) announcing that the CDC/Saskatchewan petition had been received and was available for public review. The notice also discussed the role of APHIS, the Environmental Protection Agency, and the Food and Drug Administration in regulating the subject flax line and food products derived from it. In the notice, APHIS solicited written comments from the public as to whether the CDC Triffid flax line posed a plant pest risk. The comments were to have been received by APHIS on or before May 3, 1999. APHIS received no comments on the subject petition during the designated 60-day comment period.

Analysis

The CDC Triffid flax line has been genetically engineered to contain a modified acetolactate synthase (*als*) gene derived from *Arabidopsis thaliana*. The *als* gene encodes a modified acetolactate synthase enzyme that extends to root tissues the reported natural ability of flax to withstand sulfonylurea herbicides. The subject flax line also contains and expresses the nopaline synthase (*nos*) gene derived from *Agrobacterium tumefaciens* and the neomycin phosphotransferase-II (*nptII*) gene derived from *Escherichia coli*. The *nos* and *nptII* genes were used as selectable markers during the plant transformation process. Expression of the added genes is controlled in part by gene sequences from the plant pathogen *A. tumefaciens*, and the *A. tumefaciens* method was used to transfer the added genes into the parental Norlin commercial flax variety.

The CDC Triffid flax line has been considered a regulated article under APHIS' regulations in 7 CFR part 340 because it contains gene sequences derived from a plant pathogen. However, evaluation of data from field tests and site monitoring conducted in Canada indicates that there were no deleterious effects on plants, nontarget organisms, or the environment as a result of the environmental release of the CDC Triffid flax line.

Determination

Based on its analysis of the data submitted by CDC/Saskatchewan and a review of other scientific data and field tests of the subject flax line, APHIS has determined that the CDC Triffid flax line: (1) Exhibits no plant pathogenic properties; (2) is no more likely to become a weed than flax varieties developed by traditional plant breeding; (3) is unlikely to increase the weediness potential for any sexually compatible cultivated or wild species; (4) will not harm nontarget organisms, including threatened or endangered species or organisms that are recognized as beneficial to the agricultural ecosystem; and (5) will not cause damage to raw or processed agricultural commodities. Therefore, APHIS has concluded that the subject flax line and any progeny derived from hybrid crosses with other flax varieties will be as safe to grow as flax in traditional breeding programs that is not subject to regulation under 7 CFR part 340.

The effect of this determination is that CDC/Saskatchewan's CDC Triffid flax line is no longer considered a regulated article under APHIS' regulations in 7 CFR part 340. Therefore, the requirements pertaining to regulated articles under those regulations no longer apply to the subject flax line or its progeny. However, importation of the CDC Triffid flax line or seeds capable of propagation are still subject to the restrictions found in APHIS' foreign quarantine notices in 7 CFR part 319.

National Environmental Policy Act

An environmental assessment (EA) has been prepared to examine the potential environmental impacts associated with this determination. The EA was prepared in accordance with: (1) The National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (NEPA), as amended (42 U.S.C. 4321 *et seq.*), (2) regulations of the Council on Environmental Quality for implementing the procedural provisions of NEPA (40 CFR parts 1500-1508), (3) USDA regulations implementing NEPA (7 CFR part 1b), and (4) APHIS' NEPA Implementing Procedures (7 CFR part 372). Based on that EA, APHIS has

reached a finding of no significant impact (FONSI) with regard to its determination that CDC/Saskatchewan's CDC Triffid flax line and lines developed from it are no longer regulated articles under its regulations in 7 CFR part 340. Copies of the EA and the FONSI are available upon request from the individual listed under **FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT**.

Done in Washington, DC, this 21st day of May 1999.

Craig A. Reed,

Administrator, Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service.

[FR Doc. 99-13515 Filed 5-26-99; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 3410-34-P

DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Frank Church-River of No Return, Wilderness, ID

AGENCY: Forest Service, USDA.

ACTION: Notice of intent to prepare a supplemental draft environmental impact statement (SEIS).

SUMMARY: The Forest Service is in the process of developing a plan for future management of the Frank Church-River of No Return Wilderness (FC-RONRW). Review of the comments received on the Frank Church-River of No Return Draft Environmental Impact Statement has led the Forest Service to revise management direction, which will be accomplished by issuing two additional NEPA documents to the public. The Forest Service will prepare a site specific analysis for noxious weed control through a separate finalized EIS. A supplemental draft EIS will be prepared analyzing six new alternatives along with new information. The final EIS will be responsive to comments received on both the draft and supplemental draft EIS.

DATES: The supplemental draft EIS is expected to be available for public review and comment in mid Summer, 1999. Once the Supplemental draft is released, public comment will be accepted through December 1, 1999. The Forest Service Interdisciplinary Team will analyze the comments on the supplemental draft EIS and prepare a final EIS. The final EIS is expected to be available in the Fall of 2000 and a record of decision (ROD) will be signed shortly thereafter. The final EIS for site specific Noxious Weed Control and ROD will be released in mid Summer 1999.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Ken Wotring, Coordinator, FC-RONRW, RR2 Box 600, Hwy 93 S, Salmon, ID 83467, telephone 208-756-5131.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: On December 7, 1994, the Forest Service published in the **Federal Register**, a Notice of Intent to prepare an EIS to develop a management plan for the FC-RONRW. On January 23, 1998, the Environmental Protection Agency published a notice of availability of the draft EIS and informed the public of a 90-day review period. The review period was later extended to February 1, 1999. During the public review, 1643 comments were received on the draft.

Review of the comments received has led the Forest Service to supplement the range of alternatives, add new information and revise the management direction described in the draft EIS. The Forest Service has decided to respond to noxious weed concerns by moving forward with a separate final analysis for site specific noxious weed control. The supplemental draft EIS will analyze six new alternatives along with new information identified from public comments. The supplemental analysis will continue to be responsive to the issues identified in the draft EIS including: the acceptable level of commercial aircraft use and degree of maintenance on specific landing strips; Recreation Opportunity Spectrum (ROS) settings; determining acceptable campsite locations and conditions; and determining capacities for both river and land recreation.

The supplemental draft EIS will describe and analyze six new alternatives: two alternatives emphasize current level of use; two alternatives emphasize opportunities for noncommercial float boat use; one alternative emphasizes wilderness preservation and one alternative emphasizes private jet boat use.

The selected alternatives will result in amendments of the land use plans for the administrative units in the Forest Service within the FC-RONRW Wilderness.

George Matejko,

Lead Forest Supervisor FC-RONRW, Salmon-Challis National Forest.

[FR Doc. 99-13491 Filed 5-26-99; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 3410-11-M

DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Forest Service

Committee of Scientists Meeting

AGENCY: Forest Service, USDA.

ACTION: Notice of meeting.

SUMMARY: A meeting of the Committee of Scientists is scheduled for June 12, 1999, in Denver, Colorado. The purpose

of the meeting is for the Department and the Forest Service to brief the committee on aspects of draft planning regulations and for the committee to compare the general themes and approaches in the draft regulations with the themes and approaches set out in the committee's March 15, 1999, report. The meeting is open to the public.

DATES: A meeting is scheduled for June 12, 1999, in Denver, Colorado.

ADDRESSES: The meeting will be held at the Holiday Inn at the Denver International Airport, 15500 East 40th Avenue, Denver, Colorado. The meeting will begin at 10 a.m. and end at 4 p.m.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:

Bob Cunningham, Designated Federal Official to the Committee of Scientists, telephone: 202-205-1523.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: The Committee of Scientists was chartered to provide scientific and technical advice to the Secretary of Agriculture and the Chief of the Forest Service on improvements that can be made to the National Forest System land and resource management planning process (62 FR 43691; August 15, 1997).

Dated: May 24, 1999.

Gloria Manning,

Acting Deputy Chief, NFS.

[FR Doc. 99-13545 Filed 5-26-99; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 3410-11-M

DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Rural Utilities Service

Lincoln-Pipestone Rural Water; Existing System North/Lyon County Phase and Northeast Phase Expansion Project

AGENCY: Rural Utilities Service, USDA.

ACTION: Notice of availability of final environmental impact statement.

SUMMARY: Notice is hereby given that the Rural Utilities Service (RUS) is issuing a Final Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for the Lincoln-Pipestone Rural Water Existing System North/Lyon County Phase and Northeast Phase Expansion Project. The Draft EIS was prepared pursuant to the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (NEPA) (U.S.C. 4231 *et seq.*) in accordance with the Council on Environmental Quality's (CEQ), Regulations for Implementing the Procedural Provisions of NEPA (40 CFR 1500-1508) and RUS's Environmental Policies and Procedures (7 CFR 1794). RUS invites comments on the FEIS.

DATES: Written comments on the FEIS will be accepted on or before June 28, 1999.

ADDRESSES FOR FURTHER INFORMATION:

To send comments or for more information, contact: Mark S. Plank, USDA, Rural Utilities Service, Engineering and Environmental Staff, 1400 Independence Avenue, Stop 1571, Washington, DC 20250, telephone (202) 720-1649, fax (202) 720-0820, or e-mail: mplank@rus.usda.gov.

A copy of the FEIS or an Executive Summary can be obtained over the Internet at <http://www.usda.gov/rus/water/ees/envIRON.htm>. The files are in a portable document format (pdf); in order to review or print the document, users need to obtain a free copy of Acrobat Reader. The Acrobat Reader can be obtained from <http://www.adobe.com/prodindex/acrobat/readstep.html>.

Copies of the FEIS will be available for public review during normal business hours at the following locations:

USDA Service Center, Rural Development, 1424 E. College Drive, Suite 500, Marshall, MN 56258, (507) 532-3234, Ext. 203. Limited copies of the Draft EIS will be available for distribution at this address.

USDA Rural Development State Office, 410 AgriBank Building, 375 Jackson Street, St. Paul, MN 55101-1853, (612) 602-7800. Limited copies will be available for distribution at this address.

USDA, Rural Development, 810 10th Ave. SE, Suite 2, Watertown, SD 57201-5256, (605) 886-8202. Limited copies will be available for distribution at this address.

Lincoln-Pipestone Rural Water, East Highway 14, P.O. Box 188, Lake Benton, MN 56149, (507) 368-4248. Limited copies will be available for distribution at this address.

Marshall Public Library, 301 W. Lyon, Marshall, MN 56258, (507) 537-7003

Ivanhoe Public Library, P.O. Box 54, Ivanhoe, MN 56142, (507) 694-1555
Canby Public Library, 110 Oscar Ave., N, Canby, MN 56220, (507) 223-5738
Deuel County Extension Service, 419 3rd Ave. S, P.O. Box 350, Clear Lake, SD 57226, (605) 874-2681

Lincoln County Extension Service, 402 N. Harold, Ivanhoe, MN 56142, (507) 694-1470

Lyon County Extension Service, 1400 E. Lyon St., Marshall, MN 56258, (507) 537-6702

Yellow Medicine County Extension Service, 1000 10th Ave, Clarkfield, MN 56223

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: The purpose of the EIS is to evaluate the