

Notices

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This section of the FEDERAL REGISTER contains documents other than rules or proposed rules that are applicable to the public. Notices of hearings and investigations, committee meetings, agency decisions and rulings, delegations of authority, filing of petitions and applications and agency statements of organization and functions are examples of documents appearing in this section.

JOINT BOARD FOR THE ENROLLMENT OF ACTUARIES

Meeting of the Advisory Committee; Meeting

AGENCY: Joint Board for the Enrollment of Actuaries.

ACTION: Notice of Federal Advisory Committee meeting.

SUMMARY: The Executive Director of the Joint Board for the Enrollment of Actuaries gives notice of a closed meeting of the Advisory Committee on Actuarial Examinations.

DATES: The meeting will be held on April 28, 2003, from 8:30 am to 5 pm.

ADDRESSES: The meeting will be held at the Mercer Human Resource Consulting, at 1166 Avenue of the Americas, Conference Room, 30th Floor, New York, NY.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Patrick W. McDonough, Executive Director of the Joint Board for the Enrollment of Actuaries, 202-694-1891.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: Notice is hereby given that the Advisory Committee on Actuarial Examinations will meet at the Mercer Human Resource Consulting, 1166 Avenue of the Americas, Conference Room, 30th Floor, New York, NY on Monday, April 28, 2003, from 8:30 am to 5 pm.

The purpose of the meeting is to discuss topics and questions that may be recommended for inclusion on future Joint Board examinations in actuarial mathematics, pension law and methodology referred to in 29 U.S.C. 1242(a)(1)(B).

A determination has been made as required by section 10(d) of the Federal Advisory Committee Act, 5 U.S.C. App., that the subject of the meeting falls within the exception to the open meeting requirement set forth in Title 5 U.S.C. 552b(c)(9)(B), and that the public interest requires that such meeting be closed to public participation.

Dated: March 25, 2003.

Patrick W. McDonough,
Executive Director, Joint Board for the Enrollment of Actuaries.

[FR Doc. 03-8028 Filed 4-2-03; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 4830-01-P

DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Commodity Credit Corporation

Farmland Protection Program

AGENCY: Commodity Credit Corporation, Department of Agriculture (USDA).

ACTION: Notice of request for proposals.

SUMMARY: Section 2503 of the Farm Security and Rural Investment Act of 2002 (Pub. L. 107-171) amended the Food Security Act of 1985 to include the Farmland Protection Program (FPP), providing up to \$100 million in financial assistance in fiscal year 2003, for the purposes described in FPP. Congress delegated authority for FPP to the Chief of the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS). NRCS, on behalf of the Commodity Credit Corporation (CCC) and using its authorities, requests proposals from Federally recognized Indian tribes, States, units of local government, and nongovernmental organizations to cooperate in the acquisition of conservation easements on farms and ranches. Eligible land includes farm and ranch land that has prime, unique, or other productive soil, or that contains historical or archaeological resources. These lands must also be subject to a pending offer from eligible entities for the purpose of protecting topsoil by limiting conversion of that land to nonagricultural uses.

DATES: Proposals must be received in the NRCS State Office within May 19, 2003.

ADDRESSES: Written proposals should be sent to the appropriate NRCS State Conservationist, Natural Resources Conservation Service, USDA. The telephone numbers and addresses of the NRCS State Conservationists are in the appendix of this notice.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Denise Coleman, NRCS; phone: (202) 720-9476; fax: (202) 720-0745; or e-mail: denise.coleman@usda.gov; Subject: FPP or consult the NRCS Web

site at: <http://www.nrcs.usda.gov/programs/farmland/2002/PubNotc.html>.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

Background

Urban sprawl continues to threaten the Nation's farm and ranch land, as social and economic changes over the past three decades have influenced the rate at which land is converted to non-agricultural uses. Population growth, demographic changes, preferences for larger lots, expansion of transportation systems, and economic prosperity have contributed to increases in agricultural land conversion rates.

The amount of farm and ranch land lost to development and the quality of farmland being converted are significant concerns. In most States, prime farmland is being converted at two to four times the rate of other, less-productive agricultural land.

There continues to be an important national interest in the protection of farmland. Land use devoted to agriculture provides an important contribution to environmental quality, protection of the Nation's historical and archaeological resources, and scenic beauty.

Availability of Funding

Effective on the publication date of this notice, NRCS announces the availability of up to \$100 million for FPP, until September 30, 2003. The NRCS State Conservationist must receive proposals for participation within 45 days of the date of this notice. State, Tribal, and local government entities and nongovernmental organizations may apply. Selection will be based on the criteria established in this notice, and additional criteria developed by the applicable State Conservationist. Pending offers by an eligible entity must be for acquiring an easement for perpetuity, except where State law prohibits a permanent easement.

Under the Farmland Protection Program, NRCS may provide up to 50 percent of the appraised fair market value of the conservation easement. Landowner donations up to 25 percent of the appraised fair market value of the conservation easement may be considered part of the entity's matching offer. For the entity, two cost-share options are available when providing its matching offer. One option is for the

entity to provide in cash at least 25 percent of the appraised fair market value of the conservation easement. The second option is for the entity to provide at least 50 percent of the purchase price in cash, of the conservation easement. The second option may be preferable to an entity in the case of a large bargain sale by the landowner. If the second option is selected, the NRCS share cannot exceed the entity's contribution.

The following two examples illustrate how these two cost-share options may function. Under Option 1 where 25 percent of the appraised fair market value is selected by the entity, the total appraised fair market value of the conservation easement is \$1 million. The landowner chooses to donate 40 percent of the appraised fair market value, resulting in the actual easement purchase price being \$600,000. In this case, the cooperating entity contributes \$250,000 and NRCS contributes \$350,000. Option 2, where 50 percent of the purchase price is selected, would occur when a landowner makes a large charitable donation, where 25% of the appraised fair market value exceeds 50 percent of the purchase price. For example, the total appraised fair market value of the conservation easement is \$1 million. The landowner chooses to donate 60 percent of the appraised fair market value, resulting in the actual easement purchase price being \$400,000. In this case, NRCS and the cooperating entity both contribute \$200,000.

Definitions

For the purposes of this notice, the following definitions apply:

Chief means the Chief of NRCS, USDA.

Conservation plan is the document that—

- Applies to highly erodible cropland;
- Describes the conservation system applicable to the highly erodible cropland and describes the decisions of the person with respect to location, land use, tillage systems, and conservation treatment measures and schedules; and
- Is approved by the local soil conservation district in consultation with the local committees as established under section 8(b)(5) of the Soil Conservation and Domestic Allotment Act (16 U.S.C. 590h(b)(5)) and by NRCS for purposes of compliance with 7 CFR part 12.

Eligible entities means Federally recognized Indian tribes, States, units of local government, and nongovernmental organizations that have pending offers for acquiring conservation easements for

the purpose of protecting agricultural use.

Eligible land is land on a farm or ranch that has prime, unique, State-wide, or locally important soil, or contains historical or archaeological resources, and is subject to a pending offer by an eligible entity. Eligible land includes cropland, rangeland, grassland, pastureland, and forest land that is an incidental part of an agricultural operation. Other incidental land that would not otherwise be eligible, but when considered as part of a pending offer, may be considered eligible if inclusion of such land would significantly augment protection of the associated eligible farmland. Eligible land must be owned by landowners who certify that they do not exceed the adjusted gross income limitation eligibility requirements set forth in section 1604 of the Farm Security and Rural Investment Act of 2002. As defined by section 1604 of the Farm Security and Rural Investment Act of 2002, a landowner's adjusted gross income cannot exceed \$2.5 million for the three tax years immediately preceding the payment disbursement, which occurs when the conservation easement deed is executed.

Fair market value of the conservation easement is ascertained through standard real property appraisal methods. Fair market value is the amount in cash for which in all probability the easement would have sold on the effective date of the appraisal, after a reasonable exposure of time on the open competitive market, given a willing and reasonably knowledgeable seller and a willing and reasonably knowledgeable buyer, with neither acting under any compulsion to buy or sell, giving due consideration to all available economic uses of the property at the time of the appraisal.

Field Office Technical Guide (FOTG) contains the official NRCS guidelines, criteria, and standards for planning and applying conservation treatments and conservation management systems. The FOTG contains detailed information on the conservation of soil, water, air, plant, and animal resources applicable to the local area for which it is prepared.

Historic and archaeological resources are:

- Listed in the National Register of Historic Places established under the National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA), 16 U.S.C. 470, *et seq.*, or
- Formally determined eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places by the State Historic Preservation Officer (SHPO) or Tribal Historic Preservation Officer (THPO) and the Keeper of the National Register

in accordance with section 106 of the NHPA, or

- Formally listed in the State or Tribal Register of Historic Places of the SHPO that is designated under section 101(b)(1)(B) of the NHPA, or the THPO that is designated under section 101(d)(1)(C) of the NHPA.

Land Evaluation and Site Assessment (LESA) system is a land evaluation site assessment system, approved by the NRCS State Conservationist, used to rank land for farm and ranchland protection purposes. The ranking is based on soil potential for agriculture, as well as social and economic factors, such as location, access to markets, and adjacent land use.

Nongovernmental organization is any organization that:

- Is organized for, and at all times since the formation of the organization, has been operated principally for one or more of the conservation purposes specified in clause (i), (ii), (iii), or (iv) of section 170(h)(4)(A) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986; and
- Is an organization described in section 501(c)(3) of that Code that is exempt from taxation under 501(a) of that Code; and
- Is described in section 509(a)(2) of that Code; or
- Is described in section 509(a)(3) of that Code and is controlled by an organization described in section 509(a)(2) of that Code.

Pending offer is a written bid, contract, commitment, or option extended to a landowner by one or more eligible entities to acquire a conservation easement for the purpose of protecting topsoil by limiting nonagricultural uses of the land.

Prime soils are soils that have the best combination of physical and chemical characteristics for producing food, feed, fiber, forage, oilseed, and other agricultural crops with minimum inputs of fuel, fertilizer, pesticides, and labor, without intolerable soil erosion, as determined by the Secretary.

Soils that are of Statewide or local importance are soils used to produce food, feed, fiber, forage, or oilseed crops. The appropriate State or local government agency determines statewide or locally important farmland with concurrence from the Secretary.

State conservationist refers to an NRCS employee authorized to direct and supervise NRCS activities in a State, the Caribbean Area, (Puerto Rico and the Virgin Islands) or the Pacific Basin Area (Guam, American Samoa, and the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands).

Unique soils are soils other than prime soils that are used for the

production of specific high-value food and fiber crops, as determined by the Secretary. They have a special combination of soil quality, location, growing season, and moisture supply needed to economically produce sustained high quality or high yields of specific crops when treated and managed according to acceptable farming methods. Examples of such crops include citrus, tree nuts, olives, cranberries, fruits, and vegetables. Additional information on the definition of prime, unique, or other productive soil can be found in section 1540(c)(1) of the Farmland Protection Policy Act (Public Law 97-98) (7 U.S.C. 4201, *et seq.*) and 7 CFR part 658.

Overview of the Farmland Protection Program

The CCC, acting through NRCS, will accept proposals submitted to the NRCS State Offices from eligible entities, including Federally recognized Indian tribes, States, units of local government, and nongovernmental organizations that have pending offers for acquiring conservation easements for the purposes of protecting topsoil by limiting nonagricultural use of the land and/or protecting historical and archaeological sites on farm and ranch lands. Reference information regarding the FPP can be found in the "Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance #10.913."

All proposals must be submitted to the appropriate NRCS State Conservationist within 45 days from the date of this notice. The NRCS State Conservationist may consult with the State Technical Committee (established pursuant to 16 U.S.C. 3861) to evaluate the merits of the proposals.

The NRCS State Conservationist will review and evaluate the proposals based on State, Tribal or local government or nongovernmental organization eligibility, land eligibility, and the extent to which the proposal adheres to the objectives outlined in the NRCS State FPP plan. Proposals must provide adequate proof of a pending offer for the subject land. Adequate proof includes a written bid, contract, commitment, or option extended to a landowner. Pending offers based upon appraisals completed and signed by State-certified or licensed appraisers will receive higher priority for FPP funding. Proposals submitted directly to the NRCS National Office will not be accepted, and will be returned to the submitting entity.

Development of the State Farmland Protection Program Plan

Funding awards to participants will be based on National and State criteria.

FPP will be available in those States for which an NRCS State Office submits a State FPP Plan to the NRCS National Office. At a minimum, the State FPP Plan contains the following:

- Acreage of prime and important farm and ranch land estimated to be protected;
- Acreage of prime and important farm and ranch land converted to nonagricultural uses;
- Number or acreage of historic and archaeological sites estimated to be protected on farm or ranch lands;
- Degree of development pressure;
- Percentage of funding guaranteed to be provided by cooperating entities;
- History of cooperating entities' commitments to conservation planning and implementing conservation practices;
- Participating entities' histories of acquiring, managing, holding, and enforcing easements (including average annual farmland protection expenditures over the past five years, accomplishments, and staff);
- Amount of FPP funding requested; and
- Participating entities' estimated unfunded backlog of conservation easements on prime, unique, and important farmland acres.

At the State level, each State Conservationist will develop a State FPP Plan to submit to NRCS National Office. This State FPP Plan may be completed in consultation with the State Technical Committee, and it will include ranking considerations used by the State, including the above-mentioned NRCS National criteria and other NRCS State ranking criteria. The following examples of NRCS State ranking criteria may be used to evaluate and rank specific parcels, including but not limited to proximity to protected clusters, viability of the agricultural operations, parcel size, type of land use, maximum cost expended per acre, an entity's commitment to assuring farm and ranch succession and transfer to viable farming operations, and percentage of funding guaranteed to be provided by cooperating entities. State ranking criteria will be developed on a State-by-State basis and will be available to interested participating entities before proposal submission. Interested entities should contact their State Conservationist for a complete listing of applicable National and State ranking criteria.

The National Office will allocate funds to States based on the information provided in the State FPP Plan. Within 30 days after the Request for Proposal deadline has closed, the NRCS State Conservationist may make awards to

eligible entities based on the funds provided. Once selected, eligible entities must work with the appropriate NRCS State Conservationist to finalize and sign cooperative agreements, incorporating all FPP requirements.

The conveyance document (*i.e.*, conservation easement deed or conservation easement deed template) used by the eligible entity must be reviewed and approved by the USDA Office of General Counsel before being recorded. Since title to the easement is held by an entity other than the United States, the conveyance document must contain a clause that all rights conveyed by the landowner under the document will become vested in the United States should the Federally recognized Indian tribe, State, local unit of government, or nongovernmental organization (*i.e.*, the participant(s) abandon, fail to enforce, or attempt to terminate the conservation easement). As a condition of participation, all highly erodible land in the easement shall be included in a conservation plan. The conservation plan will be developed using the standards and specifications of the NRCS Field Office Technical Guide and 7 CFR part 12, unless otherwise determined by the State Conservationist, in partnership with the eligible entity. The conservation plan will be implemented in a timely manner, as determined by the State Conservationist, following FPP enrollment.

Organization and Land Eligibility Selection Criteria

To be eligible, a Federally recognized Indian tribe, State, unit of local government, or nongovernmental organization must have a farmland protection program that purchases conservation easements for the purpose of protecting prime, unique, or other productive soil or historical and archaeological resources by limiting conversion of farm or ranch land to nonagricultural uses.

Criteria for Proposal Evaluation

Proposals must contain the information set forth below in order to receive consideration for assistance:

1. *Organization and programs:* Eligible entities must describe their farmland protection program and their record of acquiring and holding permanent agricultural land protection easements or other interests. Information provided in the proposal should:

(a) Demonstrate a commitment to long-term conservation of agricultural lands through the use of voluntary easements or other interests in land that

protect farmland from conversion to nonagricultural uses;

(b) Demonstrate the capability to acquire, manage, and enforce easements;

(c) Demonstrate the number and ability of staff that will be dedicated to monitoring easement stewardship;

(d) Demonstrate the availability of funds. The purchase price may not exceed the appraised fair market value of the conservation easement. If a landowner donation is included in the entity's match, the entity must demonstrate the availability of 25 percent of the appraised fair market value or 50 percent of the purchase price; and

(e) Include pending offer(s). A pending offer is a written bid, contract, commitment, or option extended to a landowner by an eligible entity to acquire a conservation easement that limits nonagricultural uses of the land before the legal title to these rights has been conveyed. The primary purpose of the pending offers must be for protecting topsoil by limiting conversion to nonagricultural uses. Pending offers having appraisals completed and signed by State-certified general appraisers will receive higher funding priority by the NRCS State Conservationist. Appraisals completed and signed by a State-certified or licensed general appraiser must contain a disclosure statement by the appraiser. The disclosure statement should include at a minimum the following: The appraiser accepts full responsibility for the appraisal, the enclosed statements are true and unbiased, the value of the land is limited by stated assumptions only, the appraiser has no interest in the land, and the appraisal conforms to the Uniform Standards of Professional Appraisal Practice, the Uniform Appraisal Standards for Federal Land Acquisitions, or another land valuation system used by the State, where the land transaction will occur, in purchasing real estate.

2. *Lands to be acquired:* The proposal must describe the lands to be acquired with assistance from FPP. Specifically, the proposal must include the following:

(a) A map showing the proposed protected area(s);

(b) The amount and source of funds currently available for each easement to be acquired;

(c) The criteria used to set the acquisition priorities; and

(d) A detailed description of the land parcels, including:

(i) The priority of the offers;

(ii) The names of the landowners;

(iii) The address and location maps of the parcels;

(iv) The size of the parcels, in acres;

(v) The acres of the prime, unique, or State-wide and locally important soil in the parcels;

(vi) The number or acreage of historical or archaeological sites, if any, proposed to be protected, and a brief description of the sites' significance;

(vii) A map showing the location of other protected parcels in relation to the land parcels proposed to be protected;

(viii) Estimated cost of the easement(s): The consideration to be paid to any landowners for the conveyance of any lands or interests in lands cannot be more than the fair market value of the land or interests conveyed, as determined by an appraiser licensed in the State.

(ix) An example of the cooperating entity's proposed easement deed used to prevent agricultural land conversion;

(x) Indication of the accessibility to markets;

(xi) Indication of an existing agricultural infrastructure, on- and off-farm, and other support system(s);

(xii) Statement regarding the level of threat from urban development;

(xiii) A description of the eligible entity's farmland protection strategy and how the FPP proposal submitted by the entity corresponds to the entity's strategic plan;

(xiv) Other factors from an evaluation and assessment system used to set priorities. If the eligible entity used the LESA system or a similar land evaluation system as its tool, include the scores for the land parcels slated for acquisition;

(xv) Other partners involved in acquisition of the easement and their estimated financial contribution; and

(xvi) Other information that may be relevant as determined by the NRCS State Conservationist.

Ranking Considerations

When the NRCS State Office has assessed organization eligibility and the merits of each proposal, the NRCS State Conservationist will determine whether the farm or ranch land is eligible for financial assistance from FPP. NRCS will use the National, as well as State criteria, which may include a LESA system or other similar system, to evaluate the land and rank the parcels.

NRCS will only consider enrolling eligible land in the program that is of sufficient size and has boundaries that allow for efficient management of the area. The land must have access to markets for its products and an infrastructure appropriate for agricultural production. NRCS will not enroll land in FPP that is owned in fee title by an agency of the United States,

is publicly-owned land, or land that is already subject to an easement or deed restriction that limits agricultural viability. NRCS will not enroll otherwise eligible lands if NRCS determines that the protection provided by the FPP would not be effective because of onsite or offsite conditions. For example, a proposal may nominate an agricultural parcel surrounded by a developed area or a parcel that contains hazardous material, or a parcel that lies within a local government's long-term plan earmarking the parcel for future development. The parcel's isolation from other farms and the local government's position, expressed in either its land use plan or zoning, may cause NRCS to determine that the use of FPP funds is not appropriate.

NRCS will place a priority on acquiring easements that provide permanent protection from conversion to nonagricultural use. NRCS will place a higher priority on easements acquired by entities that have extensive experience in managing and enforcing easements. NRCS may place a higher priority on lands and locations that help create a large tract of protected area for viable agricultural production and that are under increasing urban development pressure. NRCS may place a higher priority on lands and locations that correlate with the efforts of Federal, State, Tribal, local, or nongovernmental organizations' efforts that have complementary farmland protection objectives (e.g., open space or watershed and wildlife habitat protection). NRCS may place a higher priority on lands that provide special social, economic, and environmental benefits to the region. A higher priority may be given to certain geographic regions where the enrollment of particular lands may help achieve National, State, and regional goals and objectives, or enhance existing government or private conservation projects.

Cooperative Agreements

The CCC, through NRCS, enters into a cooperative agreement with a selected eligible entity to document participation in FPP. The cooperative agreement will address, among other subjects—

(1) The easement type, terms and conditions;

(2) The management and enforcement of the rights acquired;

(3) The role and responsibilities of NRCS and the cooperating entity;

(4) The responsibilities of the easement manager on lands acquired with FPP assistance; and

(5) Other requirements deemed necessary by the CCC, acting through

NRCS, to protect the interests of the United States.

The cooperative agreement will also include an attachment listing the pending offers accepted in FPP, landowners' names, addresses, location map(s), and other relevant information. An example of a cooperative agreement may be obtained from the NRCS State Conservationist.

Signed in Washington, DC, on March 17, 2003.

Bruce I. Knight,

Vice President, Commodity Credit Corporation, and Chief, Natural Resources Conservation Service.

NRCS State Conservationists

Alabama: Robert N. Jones, 3381 Skyway Drive, Post Office Box 311, Auburn, AL 36830; phone: (334) 887-4500; fax: (334) 887-4552; robert.jones@al.usda.gov.

Alaska: Shirley Gammon, Atrium Building, Suite 100, 800 West Evergreen, Atrium Building, Suite 100, Palmer, AK 99645-6539; phone: (907) 761-7760; fax: (907) 761-7790; sgammon@ak.nrcs.usda.gov.

Arizona: Michael Somerville, Suite 800, 3003 North Central Avenue, Phoenix, AZ 85012-2945; phone: (602) 280-8810; fax: (602) 280-8809 or 8805; msomervi@az.nrcs.usda.gov.

Arkansas: Kalven L. Trice, Federal Building, Room 3416, 700 West Capitol Avenue, Little Rock, AR 72201-3228; phone: (501) 301-3100; fax: (501) 301-3194; kalven.trice@ar.usda.gov.

California: Charles W. Bell, Suite 4164, 430 G Street, Davis, California 95616-4164; phone: (530) 792-5600; fax: (530) 792-5790; charles.bell@ca.usda.gov.

Colorado: James Allen Green, Room E200C, 655 Parfet Street, Lakewood, CO 80215-5521; phone: (720) 544-2810; fax: (720) 544-2965; james.green@co.usda.gov.

Connecticut: Margo L. Wallace, 344 Merrow Road, Tolland, Connecticut 06084; phone: (860) 871-4011; fax: (860) 871-4054; margo.wallace@ct.usda.gov.

Delaware: Elesia K. Cottrell, Suite 101, 1203 College Park Drive, Suite 101, Dover, DE19904-8713; phone: (302) 678-4160; fax: (302) 678-0843; elesia.cottrell@de.usda.gov.

Florida: T. Niles Glasgow, 2614 N.W. 43rd Street, Gainesville, FL 32606-6611, or Post Office Box 141510, Gainesville, FL 32606-6611; phone: (352) 338-9500; fax: (352) 338-9574; niles.glasgow@fl.usda.gov.

Georgia: Leonard Jordan, Federal Building, Stop 200, 355 East Hancock Avenue, Athens, GA 30601-2769; phone: (706) 546-2272; fax: (706) 546-2120; leonard.jordan@ga.usda.gov.

Guam: Joan B. Perry, Director, Pacific Basin Area, Suite 301, FHB Building, 400 Route 8, Maite, G U 96927; phone: (671) 472-7490; fax: (671) 472-7288; joan.perry@pb.usda.gov.

Hawaii: Lawrence Yamamoto, Acting, Room 4-118, 300 Ala Moana Boulevard, Post Office Box 50004, Honolulu, HI 96850-0002; phone: (808) 541-2600; fax: (808) 541-1335; lyamamoto@hi.nrcs.usda.gov.

Idaho: Richard W. Sims, Suite C, 9173 West Barnes Drive, Boise, ID 83709; phone: (208) 378-5700; fax: (208) 378-5735; richard.sims@id.usda.gov.

Illinois: William J. Gradle, 2118 W. Park Court, Champaign, IL 61821; phone: (217) 353-6600; fax: (217) 353-6676; bill.gradle@il.usda.gov.

Indiana: Jane E. Hardisty, 6013 Lakeside Boulevard, Indianapolis, IN 46278-2933; phone: (317) 290-3200; fax: (317) 290-3225; jane.hardisty@in.usda.gov.

Iowa: Leroy Brown, 693 Federal Building, Suite 693, 210 Walnut Street, Des Moines, IA 50309-2180; phone: (515) 284-6655; fax: (515) 284-4394; leroy.brown@ia.usda.gov.

Kansas: Harold Klaege, 760 South Broadway, Salina, KS 67401-4642; phone: (785) 823-4565; fax: (785) 823-4540; harold.klaege@ks.usda.gov.

Kentucky: David G. Sawyer, Suite 110, 771 Corporate Drive, Lexington, KY 40503-5479; phone: (859) 224-7350; fax: (859) 224-7399; dsawyer@ky.usda.gov.

Louisiana: Donald W. Gohmert, 3737 Government Street, Alexandria, LA 71302; phone: (318) 473-7751; fax: (318) 473-7626; don.gohmert@la.usda.gov.

Maine: Russell A. Collett, Suite #3, 967 Illinois Avenue, Bangor, ME 04401; phone: (207) 990-9100, ext. #3; fax: (207) 990-9599; russ.collett@me.usda.gov.

Maryland: David P. Doss, John Hanson Business Center, Suite 301, 339 Busch's Frontage Road, Annapolis, MD 21401-5534; phone: (410) 757-0861; fax: (410) 757-0687; david.doss@md.usda.gov.

Massachusetts: Cecil B. Currin, 451 West Street, Amherst, MA 01002-2995; phone: (413) 253-4351; fax: (413) 253-4375; cecil.currin@ma.usda.gov.

Michigan: Ronald C. Williams, Suite 250, 3001 Coolidge Road, East Lansing, MI 48823-6350; phone: (517) 324-5270; fax: (517) 324-5171; ron.williams@mi.usda.gov.

Minnesota: William Hunt, Suite 600, 375 Jackson Street, St. Paul, MN 55101-1854; phone: (651) 602-7900; fax: (651) 602-7913 or 7914; william.hunt@mn.usda.gov.

Mississippi: Homer L. Wilkes, Suite 1321, Federal Building, 100 West

Capitol Street, Jackson, MS 39269-1399; phone: (601) 965-5205; fax: (601) 965-4940; hwilkes@ms.nrcs.usda.gov.

Missouri: Roger A. Hansen, Parkade Center, Suite 250, 601 Business Loop 70, West Columbia, MO 65203-2546; phone: (573) 876-0901; fax: (573) 876-0913; roger.hansen@mo.usda.gov.

Montana: David White, Federal Building, Room 443, 10 East Babcock Street, Bozeman, MT 59715-4704; phone: (406) 587-6811; fax: (406) 587-6761; dwhite@mt.nrcs.usda.gov.

Nebraska: Stephen K. Chick, Federal Building, Room 152, 100 Centennial Mall, North Lincoln, NE 68508-3866; phone: (732) 246-1171; fax: (732) 246-2358; steve.chick@ne.usda.gov.

Nevada: Richard Vigil, Acting, Building F, Suite 201, 5301 Longley Lane, Reno, NV 89511-1805; phone: (775) 784-5863; fax: (775) 784-5939; rvigil@nv.usda.gov.

New Hampshire: Richard D. Babcock, Federal Building, 2 Madbury Road, Durham, NH 03824-2043; phone: (603) 868-7581; fax: (603) 868-5301; rbabcock@nh.nrcs.usda.gov.

New Jersey: Anthony J. Kramer, 1370 Hamilton Street, Somerset, NJ 08873-3157; phone: (732) 246-1171; fax: (732) 246-2358; tdrewes@nj.nrcs.usda.gov.

New Mexico: Rosendo Trevino III, Suite 305, 6200 Jefferson Street, N.E., Albuquerque, NM 87109-3734; phone: (505) 761-4400; fax: (505) 761-4462; rosendo.trevino@nm.usda.gov.

New York: Joseph R. DelVecchio, Suite 354, 441 South Salina Street, Syracuse, NY 13202-2450; phone: (315) 477-6504; fax: (315) 477-6550; joseph.delvecchio@ny.usda.gov.

North Carolina: Mary K. Combs, Suite 205, 4405 Bland Road, Raleigh, NC 27609-6293; phone: (919) 873-2101; fax: (919) 873-2156; mary.combs@nc.usda.gov.

North Dakota: Thomas E. Jewett, Room 278, 220 E. Rosser Avenue, Post Office Box 1458, Bismarck, ND 58502-1458; phone: (701) 530-2000; fax: (701) 530-2110; tom.jewett@nd.usda.gov.

Ohio: J. Kevin Brown, Room 522, 200 North High Street, Columbus, OH 43215-2478; phone: (614) 255-2500; fax: (614) 255-2548; kevin.brown@oh.usda.gov.

Oklahoma: M. Darrel Dominick, USDA Agri-Center Building, Suite 203, 100 USDA, Stillwater, Oklahoma 74074-2655; phone: (405) 742-1204; fax: (405) 742-1126; darrel.dominick@ok.usda.gov.

Oregon: Robert Graham, Suite 1300, 101 SW Main Street, Portland, OR 97204-3221; phone: (503) 414-3200; fax: (503) 414-3103; bob.graham@or.usda.gov.

Pennsylvania: Robin E. Heard, Suite 340, 1 Credit Union Place, Harrisburg, PA 17110-2993; phone: (717) 237-2202; fax: (717) 237-2238; robin.heard@pa.usda.gov.

Puerto Rico: Juan A. Martinez, Director, Caribbean Area, IBM Building, Suite 604, 654 Munoz Rivera Avenue, Hato Rey, PR 00918-4123; phone: (787) 766-5206; fax: (787) 766-5987; juan.martinez@pr.usda.gov.

Rhode Island: Judith Doerner, Suite 46, 60 Quaker Lane, Warwick, RI 02886-0111; phone: (401) 828-1300; fax: (401) 828-0433; judith.doerner@ri.usda.gov.

South Carolina: Walter W. Douglas, Strom Thurmond Federal Building, Room 950, 1835 Assembly Street, Columbia, SC 29201-2489; phone: (803) 253-3935; fax: (803) 253-3670; walt.douglas@sc.usda.gov.

South Dakota: Janet L. Oertly, Federal Building, Room 203, 200 Fourth Street, SW., Huron, SD 57350-2475; phone: (605) 352-1200; fax: (605) 352-1288; janet.oertly@sd.nrcs.usda.gov.

Tennessee: James W. Ford, 675 U.S. Courthouse, 801 Broadway, Nashville, TN 37203-3878; phone: (615) 277-2531; fax: (615) 277-2578; jford@tn.nrcs.usda.gov.

Texas: Lawrence Butler, W.R. Poage Building, 101 South Main Street, Temple, TX 76501-7682; phone: (254) 742-9800; fax: (254) 742-9819; larry.butler@tx.usda.gov.

Utah: Phillip J. Nelson, W.F. Bennett Federal Building, Room 4402, 125 South State Street, Salt Lake City, UT 84138, Post Office Box 11350, Salt Lake City, UT 84147-0350, phone: (801) 524-4550, fax: (801) 524-4403, skip.nelson@ut.usda.gov.

Vermont: Francis M. Keeler, 69 Union Street, Winooski, VT 05404-1999; phone: (802) 951-6795; fax: (802) 951-6327; fran.keeler@vt.usda.gov.

Virginia: M. Denise Doetzer, Culpeper Building, Suite 209, 1606 Santa Rosa Road, Richmond, VA 23229-5014; phone: (804) 287-1691; fax: (804) 287-1737; denise.doetzer@va.usda.gov.

Washington: Raymond L. "Gus" Hughbanks, Rock Pointe Tower II, Suite 450, W. 316 Boone Avenue, Spokane, WA 99201-2348; phone: (509) 323-2900; fax: (509) 323-2909; raymond.hughbanks@wa.usda.gov.

West Virginia: Lillian Woods, Room 301, 75 High Street, Morgantown, WV 26505; phone: (304) 284-7540; fax: (304) 284-4839; lillian.woods@wv.usda.gov.

Wisconsin: Patricia S. Leavenworth, Suite 200, 6515 Watts Road, Madison, WI 53719-2726; phone: (608) 276-8732; fax: (608) 276-5890; pat.leavenworth@wi.usda.gov.

Wyoming: Lincoln E. Burton, Federal Building, Room 3124, 100 East B Street, Casper, WY 82601-1911; phone: (307) 261-6453; fax: (307) 261-6490; ed.burton@wy.usda.gov.

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BILLING CODE 3410-16-P

DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Forest Service

Willamette Province Advisory Committee

AGENCY: Forest Service, USDA.

ACTION: Notice of meeting.

SUMMARY: The Willamette Province Advisory Committee (PAC) will meet in Salem, Oregon. The purpose of the meeting is to discuss issues pertinent to the implementation of the Northwest Forest Plan and to provide advice to federal land managers in the Province. The specific topics to be covered at the meeting include background information of the Northwest Forest Plan for new members and updated on the on-going revisions to the NFP.

DATES: The meeting will be held April, 17, 2003.

ADDRESSES: The meeting will be held at the Salem District Office of the Bureau of Land Management, 1717 Farby Road, Salem, Oregon. Send written comments to Neal Forrester, Willamette Province Advisory Committee, c/o Willamette National Forest, P.O. Box 106078, Eugene, Oregon 97440, (541) 225-6436 or electronically to nforrester@fs.fed.us.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Neal Forrester, William National Forest, (541) 225-6436.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: The meeting is open to the public. Committee discussion is limited to PAC members. However, persons who wish to bring matters to the attention of the Community may file written statements with the PAC staff before or after the meeting. A public forum will be provided and individuals will have the opportunity to address the PAC. Oral comments will be limited to three minutes.

Dated: March 27, 2003.

Dallas J. Emich,

Forest Supervisor, Willamette National Forest.

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BILLING CODE 3410-11-M

DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Natural Resources Conservation Service

Lingle-Ft. Laramie Water Quality Project, Goshen County, WY

AGENCY: Natural Resources Conservation Service, USDA.

ACTION: Notice of a Finding of No Significant Impact.

SUMMARY: Pursuant to section 102(2)(c) of the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969; the Council on Environmental Quality Regulations (40 CFR part 1500); and the Natural Resources Conservation Service Regulations (7 CFR part 650); the Natural Resources Conservation Service, U.S. Department of Agriculture, gives notice that an environmental impact statement is not being prepared for the Lingle-Ft. Laramie Water Quality Project, Goshen County, Wyoming.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:

Lincoln E. Burton, State Conservationist, Natural Resources Conservation Service, Room 3124, Federal Building, 100 East B Street, Casper, Wyoming 82601, telephone (307) 261-6453.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: The environmental assessment of this federally assisted action indicates that the project will not cause significant local, regional, or national impacts on the human environment. As a result of these findings, Lincoln E. Burton, State Conservationist, has determined that the preparation and review of an environmental impact statement are not needed for this project.

The project purposes have been changed to include Wildlife Habitat Improvement. Project purposes are: (1) *Agricultural Water Management*—the on-site treatment of agricultural related pollutants for off-site benefits. The planned works of improvement include accelerated technical assistance for land treatment, accelerated financial assistance to treat 8,300 acres to reduce the amount of nitrogen available to be leached to the groundwater, 25 animal waste management facilities, and 35 abandoned wells will be decommissioned. (2) *Wildlife Habitat Improvement*—on-site treatment will increase wildlife habitat units by about 1,100 units.

The Notice of a Finding Of No Significant Impact (FONSI) has been forwarded to the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and to various federal, state, and local agencies, and interested parties. A limited number of copies of the FONSI is available to fill