these articles interstate. The permit application contains such information as the nature and amount of items to be imported or moved interstate, the country or locality of origin, the intended destination, and the intended port of entry in the United States.

Such data enable us to evaluate the risks associated with the proposed importation or interstate movement of plant pests, noxious weeds, and soil and to develop risk-mitigating conditions, if necessary, for the proposed importation or interstate movement.

We also require the owners or operators of certain garbage-handling facilities to apply to us for a permit so that they can be approved to process regulated garbage in such a way that it no longer poses a threat of disseminating plant pests or livestock and poultry diseases within the United States. We also employ compliance agreements in our programs to help ensure that garbage handlers and others use appropriate mitigation measures. Without these information gathering procedures, we would have no way of detecting and intercepting shipments that pose a potential risk to U.S. agriculture.

We are asking the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) to approve the continued use of this information collection activity.

The purpose of this notice is to solicit comments from the public (as well as affected agencies) concerning our information collection. These comments will help us:

(1) Evaluate 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;

(2) Evaluate the accuracy of our estimate of the burden of the proposed collection of information, including the validity of the methodology and assumptions used;

(3) Enhance the quality, utility, and clarity of the information to be collected; and

(4) Minimize the burden of the collection of information on those who are to respond, through use, as appropriate, of automated, electronic, mechanical, and other collection technologies; e.g., permitting electronic submission of responses.

Estimate of burden: The public reporting burden for this collection of information is estimated to average .80896 hours per response.

Respondents: Importers and shippers of plant pests, noxious weeds, and other regulated articles; State plant health authorities; owners/operators of regulated garbage-handling facilities.

Estimated annual number of respondents: 39,962.

Estimated annual number of responses per respondent: 1.1643.

Estimated annual number of responses: 46,530.

Estimated total annual burden on respondents: 37,641 hours. (Due to rounding, the total annual burden hours may not equal the product of the annual number of responses multiplied by the average reporting burden per response.)

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.

Done in Washington, DC, this 11th day of February 2000.

Bobby R. Acord,

Acting Administrator, Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service.

[FR Doc. 00–3834 Filed 2–16–00; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 3410–34–U

DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Food and Nutrition Service

Nutrition Program for the Elderly; Initial Level of Assistance From October 1, 1999 to September 30, 2000

AGENCY: Food and Nutrition Service, USDA.

ACTION: Notice.

SUMMARY: This notice announces the initial level of per-meal assistance for the Nutrition Program for the Elderly (NPE) for Fiscal Year 2000. The Fiscal Year 2000 initial level of assistance is set at $.5404 for each eligible meal in accordance with section 311(a)(4) of the Older Americans Act of 1965, as amended by section 310 of the Older Americans Act Amendments of 1992 and preempted by the Agriculture, Rural Development, Food and Drug Administration, and Related Agencies Appropriations Act, 1996.

EFFECTIVE DATE: October 1, 1999.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Suzanne Rigby, Chief, Schools and Institutions Branch, Food Distribution Division, Food an Nutrition Service, U.S. Department of Agriculture, 3101 Park Center Drive, Alexandria, Virginia 22302–1594 or telephone (703) 305–2644.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

Executive Order 12372

This program is listed in the Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance under Nos. 10.550 and 10.570 and is subject to the provisions of Executive Order 12372, which requires intergovernmental consultation with State and local officials (7 CFR Part 3015, Subpart V, and final rule-related notices published at 48 FR 29114, June 24, 1983 and 49 FR 22676, May 31, 1984.)

Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995

This notice imposes no new reporting or recordkeeping provisions that are subject to Office of Management and Budget review in accordance with the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995 (44 U.S.C. 3507).

Regulatory Flexibility Act

This action has been reviewed with regards to the requirements of the Regulatory Flexibility Act of 1980 (5 U.S.C. 601–612). The Administrator of the Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) has certified that this action will not have a significant economic impact and will not affect a substantial number of small entities. The procedures in this notice would primarily affect FNS regional offices, and the State Agencies on aging and local meal providers. While some of these entities constitute small entities, a substantial number will not be affected. Furthermore, any economic impact will not be significant.

Legislative Background

Section 310 of Public Law (Pub. L.) 102–375, the Older Americans Act Amendments of 1992, amended section 311(a)(4) of the Older Americans Act of 1965, 42 U.S.C. 3030a(a)(4), to require the Secretary of Agriculture to maintain an annually programmed level of assistance equal to the greater of: (1) The current appropriation divided by the number of meals served in the preceding fiscal year; or (2) 61 cents per meal adjusted annually beginning with Fiscal Year 1993 to reflect changes in the Consumer Price Index. Section 311(c)(2) of the Older Americans Act (42 U.S.C. 3030a(c)(2)) was amended to provide that the final reimbursement claims must be adjusted so as to utilize the entire program appropriation for the fiscal year for per-meal support. However, the Agriculture, Rural Development, Food and Drug Administration, and Related Agencies Appropriations Act of 1996 (Pub. L. 104–37) imposed, for Fiscal Year 1996 and succeeding years, the same NPE rate management requirements as applied to Fiscal Year 1994. That is, Title IV, Domestic Food Programs, of the Appropriations Act provides that ''* * * hereafter notwithstanding any other provision of law, for meals provided pursuant to the Older Americans Act of 1965, a maximum rate

of reimbursement to States will be established by the Secretary, subject to reduction if obligations would exceed the amount of available funds, with any unobligated funds to remain available only for obligation in the fiscal year beginning October 1, 1996.''

Notwithstanding the initial rates established by the Older Americans Act, the Department is required to comply with the spending clause of the U.S. Constitution and 31 U.S.C. 1341(a)(1)(A) (known as the Antideficiency Act), which prohibit the obligation or expenditure of funds in excess of the available appropriation. Thus the Department is required to establish (and if necessary, adjust) rates in such a manner as to not exceed the program appropriation.

Fiscal Year 1999 Level of Assistance

Based on its projection of the number of meals to be claimed during the fiscal year, and in light of constitutional and statutory prohibitions on obligating or spending funds in excess of the available appropriation, the Department announced an initial per-meal reimbursement rate of $.5539 for Fiscal Year 1999, the highest rate which it believed could be sustained throughout the fiscal year. This initial level of per-meal assistance was announced in the March 3, 1999 **Federal Register** (64 FR 10269).

The Department's meal service projection for Fiscal Year 1999 assumed a slightly higher rate of growth than occurred in the preceding fiscal year. This initial per-meal support level of $.5539 was sustained throughout Fiscal Year 1999, and thus no adjustment was necessary to keep expenditures within the limit of the $140 million NPE appropriation established by Pub. L. 104–180, nor were any funds remaining at the end of Fiscal Year 1999.

Fiscal Year 2000 Initial Level of Assistance

It is the Department's goal to establish the highest rate that can be sustained throughout the fiscal year so as to maximize the flow of program funds to States during the fiscal year. However, the Department wants also to minimize the possibility of a rate reduction and the hardship it causes to program operators. In order to guard against the need for a reduction, the Department, once again, has projected a slightly higher rate of growth in meal service than occurred in the preceding fiscal year. Based on its projections, the Department announces an initial per-meal support level of $.5404, which will not be increased, and which will be decreased only if necessary to keep expenditures within the limit of the $140 million NPE Fiscal Year 2000 appropriation established by Pub. L. 106–78. Any of these funds not paid out for Fiscal Year 2000 reimbursement will, in accordance with Pub. L. 105–277, remain available through Fiscal Year 2000. In the unlikely event that the rate needs to decreased, States will be notified directly.

Dated: January 13, 2000.

Samuel Chambers,

Administrator, Food and Nutrition Service.

[FR Doc. 00–3830 Filed 2–16–00; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 3410–30–M

DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Forest Service

Information Collection; Request for Comments; Recreation Marketing Surveys for Coconino and Pacific Northwest

AGENCY: Forest Service, USDA.

ACTION: Notice.

SUMMARY: In accordance with the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995, the Forest Service announces its intention to request an extension of a currently approved information collection. This collected information enables the Forest Service to keep apprised of the recreational experiences most desired by visitors to National Forest System lands. The information also will help the agency develop a user fee system that will be most compatible with the demands visitors place on recreational sites and facilities. These fees supplement agency funding to help maintain the recreational sites experiencing the most visitor traffic. Adult visitors will be selected at random from two study areas, the Sedona District of the Coconino National Forest in Arizona and the Pacific Northwest Region of the Forest Service in Oregon and Washington.

DATES: Comments must be received in writing on or before April 17, 2000.

ADDRESSES: All comments should be addressed to: Daniel W. McCollum, Rocky Mountain Research Station, 2150 Centre Ave., Building A, Suite 350, Forest Service, USDA, Fort Collins, CO 80526–1891.

Comments also may be submitted via facsimile to (970) 295–5959 or by e-mail to dmccollu/rmrs@fs.fed.us.

The public may inspect comments received at the offices of the Rocky Mountain Research Station, Research Work Unit RM–4851, 2150 Centre Ave., Building A, Suite 350, Fort Collins, Colorado. Visitors are urged to call ahead to facilitate entrance into the offices.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Daniel W. McCollum, Rocky Mountain Research Station, at (970) 295–5962.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

Background

The types of and demand for outdoor recreational opportunities on public lands has increased in recent years. Funding often has been insufficient to meet the increased demand for recreational opportunities and, at the same time, protect the natural resources from overuse and degradation. In 1996, the U.S. Congress authorized the Recreation Fee Demonstration Program to allow ''new user fees'' to be collected by four Federal agencies at 100 locations. The purpose of the new user fees is to see if funding provided by the fees would address the problem of insufficient funding for recreational site maintenance and protection of natural resources. User fees are payments visitors must provide in order to utilize certain recreational amenities and sites on National Forest System lands.

The Forest Service is now seeking reactions from recreational visitors whose visit was or is contingent upon paying a fee to utilize a recreational amenity or site. This survey focuses on two sites: (1) The Sedona District of the Coconino National Forest in Arizona and (2) the Pacific Northwest Region of the Forest Service in Oregon and Washington. Responses of individuals who will visit these two sites for recreational experiences in the spring and summer of 2000 will be compared with responses obtained from recreational visitors to these sites in the fall and winter of 1999. Information will be collected in 2001, 2002, and 2003 to see how well the ''new user fees'' are meeting the objective of providing supplemental funding for maintenance of recreational amenities and sites, as well as natural resource protection.

This information collection also seeks to estimate the effects that user fees will have on the future numbers of visitors to National Forest System lands and how fees will influence the recreational experiences individuals will choose.

Description of Information Collection

Title: Recreation Marketing Surveys for Coconino and Pacific Northwest.

OMB Number: 0596–0149.

Expiration Date of Approval: December 31, 1999.

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

Abstract: Forest Service employees and cooperating University of Montana