and Arizona State University researchers, who are specialists in economics, marketing, outdoor recreation, and statistics, will collect the information and analyze it to learn what current recreational visitors and potential recreational visitors desire in terms of recreational experiences. The data also will enable the agency to design a method for payment of fees, which will supplement agency funding and help the agency meet the demands for recreational experiences in an environmentally and socially responsible manner.

This information will be collected for two case studies: (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. The purpose of the Coconino study will be to evaluate the success of a new recreational fee demonstration project. The purpose of the Pacific Northwest Region study is to consider the public's perception of the feasibility of consolidating the 18 to 20 recreation fee demonstration sites into a Region-wide pass (the entire Pacific Northwest Region that includes all of Oregon and all of Washington) or into two State-wide passes (one for Oregon and one for Washington) that would be good at all the sites within the Region or within a single State. The other aspect of the study is to gain the public's perception of the feasibility of modifying the fee structure so the fees charged are the same for identical or similar amenities or experiences at different recreational sites. Both cases will be part of the Recreation Fee Demonstration Program authorized by the 1966 Recreation Fee Demonstration Program to evaluate the role of fees in providing recreational opportunities on the public lands.

For the Coconino National Forest case study, Forest Service personnel will work with Arizona State University personnel, and for the Pacific Northwest Region case study, Forest Service personnel will work with University of Montana personnel to conduct on-site, face-to-face interviews. Respondents will answer questions that include where they live, their planned length of visit, their planned primary recreational activity, whether the area provided them an opportunity for a satisfactory recreational experience, how satisfied they are with the area, their age, race, ethnic background, and their annual income.

Respondents also will be asked to complete an optional mail-back survey containing additional questions, such as whether they would like to have restroom facilities at the site, if restrooms were at the site, whether they were clean, if they would like to have directional signs, geographical maps, the extent to which their visit met their expectations, if they accept that fees will be charged for various recreational activities, their preferred method of paying their fees, if they consider the fee amounts charged to be fair.

Data gathered in this information collection is not available from other sources.

Estimate of annual burden: 30 minutes.

Type of respondents: Individuals visiting the Sedona District of the Coconino National Forest in Arizona and Pacific Northwest Region of the Forest Service in Oregon and Washington.

Estimated annual number of respondents: 2500.

Estimated annual number of responses per respondent: 1.

Estimated total annual burden on respondents: 1,250 hours.

Comment Is Invited

The agency invites comments on the following: (a) Whether the information proposed for the collection is appropriate for the stated purposes and 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 respondents, including the use of automated, electronic, mechanical, or other technological collection techniques or other forms of information technology.

Use of Comments

All comments, including name and address when provided, will become a matter of public record. Comments received in response to this notice will be summarized and included in the request for Office of Management and Budget approval.

Dated: February 10, 2000.

Robert Lewis, Jr.,

Deputy Chief for Research & Development.

[FR Doc. 00–3837 Filed 2–16–00; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 3410–11–U

DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Forest Service

Little East Creek Fuels Reduction Environmental Impact Statement

AGENCY: Forest Service, USDA.

ACTION: Notice of intent to prepare an Environmental Impact Statement.

SUMMARY: The Department of Agriculture, Forest Service, will prepare an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) to reduce the fire hazard and restore damaged components of the ecosystem within the Little East Creek Area. The Record of Decision will disclose how the Forest Service has decided to treat approximately 3,725 acres of blowdown fuels. The proposed action is to treat an estimated 2,122 acres by means such as commercial timber sales, mechanical piling and burning, prescribed fire, and by hand treatment and provide access to non-federally owned lands within the project boundaries. A range of alternatives responsive to significant issues will be developed, including a no-action alternative. The proposed project is located on the LaCroix Ranger District, Cook MN, Superior National Forest. In addition, the LaCroix Ranger District may be requesting the project be considered an emergency under 36 CFR 215.10(d)(1).

DATES: Comments concerning the scope of this project should be received by March 17, 2000.

ADDRESSES: Please send written comments to: LaCroix Ranger District, Superior National Forest, Attn: Little East Creek Fuels Reduction EIS, 320 N HWY 53, Cook, MN 55723.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Constance Chaney, District Ranger, or John Galazen, Team Leader, LaCrox Ranger District, Superior National Forest, 320 N HWY 53 Cook, MN 55723, telephone (218) 666–002.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: Public participation will be an integral component of the study process and will be especially important at several point during the analysis. The first is during the scoping process. The Forest Service will be seeking information, comments, and assistance from Federal, State and local agencies, individuals, and organizations that may be interested in, or affected by the proposed activities. The scoping process will include: (1) identification of potential issues,(2) identification of issues to be analyzed in depth, and (3) elimination of insignificant issues or those which have been covered by a previous environmental review. Written scoping

comments will be solicited through a scoping package that will be sent to the project mailing list and to the local newspaper. For the Forest Service to best use the scoping input. Comments should be received by February 23, 2000. Issues identified for analysis in the EIS include the potential effects of the project on and the relationship of the project to: fuel hazard reduction, riparian areas and Shipstead Newton Nolan areas, reforestation, temporary roads, inventoried candidate special management complexes, roadless areas, and others.

Based on the results of scoping and the resource capabilities within the Project Area, alternatives, including a non-action alternative, will be developed for the Draft EIS. The Draft EIS is projected to be filed within the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) in July 2000. The Final EIS is anticipated in October 2000.

The commend period on the draft EIS will be a minimum of 45 days from the date the EPA publishes the Notice of Availability in the **FEDERAL REGISTER.**

The Forest Service believes, at this early stage, it is important to give reviewers notice of several court rulings related to public participation in the environmental review process. First, reviewers of Draft EISa must structure their participation in the environmental review of the proposal, so that it is meaningful and alerts an agency to the reviewer's position and contentions (*Vermont Yankee Nuclear Power Corp.* v. *HRDC,* 435 U.S. 519, 553, (1978)). Environmnental objections that could have been raised at the Draft EIS stage may be waived or dismissed by the courts (*City of Angoon* v. *Hodel,* 803 F.2nd 1016, 1022 (9th Cir. 1986) and *Wisconsin Heritages, Inc.* v. *Harris*, 490 F. Supp. 1334, 1338 (E.D. Wis. 1980)). Because of these court rulings, it is very important that those interested in this Proposed Action, participate by the close of the 45-day comment period, so that substantive comments and objections are made available to the Forest Service at a time when they can be meaningfully considered and responded to in the Final EIS.

To assist the Forest Service in indentifying and considering issues and concerns of the Proposed Act, comments during scoping and on the Draft EIS should be a specific as possible and refer to specific pages or chapter. Comments may address the adequacy of the Draft EIS or the merits of the alternatives formulated and discussed. In addressing these points reviewers may wish to refer to the Council on Environmental Quality Regulations for implementing the procedural provisions of the National Environmental Policy Act in 40 CFR 1503.3. Comments reviewed in response to this solicitation, including names and addresses of those who comment, will be considered part of the public record on the Proposed Action and will be available for public inspection. Comments submitted anonymously will be accepted and considered. Pursuant to 7 CFR 1.27(d), any person may request the agency to withthold a submission, from the public record, by showing how the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) permits such confidentiality. Requesters should be aware that under FOIA, confidentiality may be granted in only very limited circumstances, such as to protect trade secrets. The Forest Service will inform the requester of the agency's decision regarding the request for confidentiality. If the request is denied, the agency will return the submission and notify the requester that the comments may be resubmitted with or without name and address within seven days.

Permits/Authorizations: The proposed action may include prescribed burning and harvesting on Ecological Landtype 18. An amendment to the Superior National Forest Land and Resource Management Plan would be needed for such actions. James W. Sanders, Forest Supervisor, Superior National Forest, would be responsible official for the plan amendment.

Responsible Official: Constance Chaney, LaCroix District Ranger, Superior National Forest, is the responsible official. In making the decision, the responsible official will consider the comments, responses, disclosure of environmental consequences, and applicable laws, regulations, and policies. The responsible official will state the rationale for the chosen alternative in the Record of Decision.

Dated: January 11, 2000.

Constance Chaney,

District Ranger.

[FR Doc. 00–3841 Filed 2–16;–00; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 3410–11–M

DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Natural Resources Conservation Service

Barataria Basin Landbridge Shoreline Protection Project Phases 1, 2, and 3 (BA–27) Jefferson and Lafourche Parishes, Louisiana

AGENCY: Natural Resources Conservation Service, USDA.

ACTION: Notice of 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 Guidelines (40 CFR part 1500), and the Natural Resources Conservation Service Guidelines (7 CFR part 650), the Natural Resources Conservation Service, Department of Agriculture, gives notice that an environmental impact statement is not being prepared for the Barataria Basin Landbridge Shoreline Protection Project Phases 1, 2, and 3 (BA–27), Jefferson and Lafourche Parishes, Louisiana.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Donald W. Gohmert, State Conservationist, Natural Resources Conservation Service, 3737 Government Street, Alexandria, Louisiana 71302; telephone (318) 473–7751.

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

This project includes the installation of 71,000 linear feet of shoreline protection to reduce or eliminate shoreline/bankline erosion for portions of Bayous Perot and Rigolettes, Little Lake, and Harvey Cutoff in Jefferson and Lafourche Parishes, Louisiana. It is predicted that the project would prevent the loss of 1,570 acres of brackish and intermediate marsh over 20 years.

The Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) has been forwarded to the Environmental Protection Agency and to various federal, state, and local agencies and interested parties. Copies of the FONSI are available at the above address. Information gathered during project development is on file and maybe reviewed by contacting Donald W. Gohmert.

No administrative action on the proposal will be taken until 30 days after the date of this publication in the **Federal Register**.

Dated: February 4, 2000.

Donald W. Gohmert,

State Conservationist.

[FR Doc. 00–3842 Filed 2–16–00; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 3410–16–M