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]

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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.

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