that participated in a BQMS pilot development project conducted during 2009. Five organizations participated in the pilot development project and assisted APHIS in evaluating the draft audit standard, program training sessions, and audit procedures established for the BQMS Program.

Following the pilot development project and after evaluating the comments submitted on the BQMS draft audit standard, APHIS made adjustments to the BQMS audit standard. You may view the public comments submitted on the draft audit standard, APHIS' evaluation of the comments received, and the revised BQMS audit standard on the Regulations.gov Web site (see footnote 1 for a link).

The revised audit standard and the comment evaluation document, as well as additional information about the BQMS Program, may be found on the APHIS Web site at *http://www.aphis.usda.gov/biotechnology/news_bqms.shtml.* Copies of those documents may also be obtained from the person listed under **FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT**.

Done in Washington, DC, this 29th day of September 2010.

Kevin Shea,

Acting Administrator, Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service.

[FR Doc. 2010–24995 Filed 10–4–10; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 3410–34–P

DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Rural Utilities Service

Basin Electric Power Cooperative: South Dakota PrairieWinds Project

AGENCY: Rural Utilities Service, USDA.

ACTION: Notice of Availability of Record of Decision.

SUMMARY: The Rural Utilities Service, hereinafter referred to as RUS and/or the Agency, has issued a Record of Decision (ROD) for the Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for the proposed South Dakota PrairieWind Project (Project) in Aurora, Bule and Jerauld Counties, South Dakota. The Administrator of RUS has signed the ROD, which is effective upon signing. The EIS was prepared pursuant to the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (NEPA) (U.S.C. 4231 et seq.) and in accordance with the Council on Environmental Quality's (CEQ) regulations for implementing the procedural provisions of NEPA (40 CFR Parts 1500–1508), RUS's NEPA implementing regulations (7 CFR Part 1794), and the Western Area Power Administration's (Western) NEPA implementing regulations (10 CFR Part 1021). RUS and Western are serving as co-lead agencies in preparation of the EIS as defined at 40 CFR 1501.5. Each agency is issuing a separate ROD for the project. The purpose of the EIS was to evaluate the potential environmental impacts of and alternatives to Basin Electric Power Cooperative's (Basin Electric) application for a RUS loan and a Western interconnection agreement to construct the proposed Project. The proposed Project's facility would include a new 151.5-megawatt wind-powered generation facility.

ADDRESSES: To obtain copies of the ROD, or for further information, contact: Mr. Dennis Rankin, Environmental Protection Specialist, USDA, Rural Utilities Service, 1400 Independence Avenue, SW., Stop 1571, Room 2239–S, Washington, DC 20250–1571, *telephone:* (202) 720–1453, *fax:* (202) 690–0649, or *e-mail: dennis.rankin@wdc.usda.gov.* A copy of the ROD can be viewed online at: *http://www.usda.gov/rus/water/ees/eis.htm.*

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: Basin Electric's proposed Project is to construct, own, operate, and maintain the Project. The proposed Project includes a 151.5-megawatt (MW) nameplate capacity wind-powered energy generation facility that would feature 101 wind turbine generators; 6,000-square-foot operations and maintenance building and fence perimeter; 64 miles of underground communication system and electrical collector lines (within the same trench); 34.5-kilovolt (kV) to 230-kV collector substation and microwave tower; 11-mile-long overhead 230-kV transmission line; temporary equipment/material storage or lay-down areas; temporary crane walks; and 81 miles of new and/or upgraded service roads to access the facilities in Aurora, Brule and Jerauld Counties in eastern South Dakota. The purpose for the proposed Project is to meet Basin Electric's load growth responsibilities, State mandated Renewable Portfolio Standards and Renewable Energy Objectives and renewable energy goals. In accordance with NEPA, the CEQ regulations for implementing the procedural provisions of NEPA, and applicable agency NEPA implementing regulations, RUS and Western prepared an EIS to assess the potential environmental impacts associated with the proposed Project. The decision being documented in RUS's ROD is that the Agency agrees to consider, subject to loan approval, funding the proposed Project at the Crow Lake location. More details regarding RUS's regulatory authority, rationale for the decision, and compliance with applicable regulations are included in the ROD. Because two distinct federal actions are being proposed, RUS and Western decided to issue separate RODs.

On April 7, 2009, RUS and Western published in the **Federal Register** a Notice of Intent to prepare an EIS for the proposed Project. The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency acknowledged receipt of the Draft EIS on January 15, 2010. The 45-day comment period ended on March 1, 2010. A public hearing to receive comments on the Draft EIS was held in Chamberlain, South Dakota, on February 11, 2010. All comments received were addressed in the Final EIS, The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency acknowledged receipt of the Final EIS on July 30, 2010. The 30-day review period ended on August 28, 2010. Two comment letters were received; they were addressed in RUS's ROD.

After considering various ways to meet its purpose and need, Basin Electric identified construction of the proposed Project as its best course of action. This EIS considered four alternative methods to provide renewable energy and six alternative site locations. These alternatives were evaluated in terms of cost-effectiveness, technical feasibility, and environmental factors (*e.g.,* soils, topography and geology, water resources, air quality, biological resources, the acoustic environment, recreation, cultural and historic resources, visual resources, transportation, farmland, land use, human health and safety, the socioeconomic environment, environmental justice, and cumulative effects).

The EIS analyzes in detail the No Action Alternative and the Action Alternative (construction of the Project) at two separate locations: The Crow Lake site (approximately 36,000 acres 15 miles north of the City of White Lake within Brule, Aurora and Jerald Counties, South Dakota), and the Winner site (approximately 83,000 acres eight miles south of the City of Winner in Tripp County, South Dakota). The No Action Alternative would not meet the state's and Basin Electric's renewable energy goals. The resources or environmental factors that could be affected by the proposed Project were evaluated in detail in the EIS. These issues are summarized in Table ES–1: "Summary of Potential Impacts of South Dakota PrairieWinds Project," of the EIS.

Based on an evaluation of the information and impact analyses presented in the EIS, including the evaluation of all alternatives, and in consideration of the Agency's NEPA implementing regulations, Environmental Policies and Procedures, as amended (7 CFR Part 1794), RUS finds that the evaluation of reasonable alternatives is consistent with NEPA. The Agency has selected the Action Alternative at Crow Lake site as its preferred alternative. This Notice concludes RUS's compliance with NEPA and the Agency's "Environmental Policies and Procedures."

Dated: September 29, 2010.

James R. Newby,

Acting Administrator, Rural Utilities Service.

[FR Doc. 2010–24993 Filed 10–4–10; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE P

DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Forest Service

Admiralty National Monument: Tongass National Forest; Alaska; Expansion of Tailings Disposal Facility, Greens Creek Mine Environmental Impact Statement

AGENCY: Forest Service, USDA.

ACTION: Notice of Intent To Prepare an Environmental Impact Statement.

SUMMARY: The U.S. Department of Agriculture, Forest Service, will prepare an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) to consider the proposal to create additional tailings and waste rock disposal capacity and related infrastructure at the Greens Creek Mine on northern Admiralty Island on the Admiralty Island National Monument, Tongass National Forest. The proposed action provides for an expansion of the existing tailings facility area to the south for an increase of approximately 200 acres. This would include an increase of about 60 acres for tailings placement and an addition of approximately 140 acres for supporting infrastructure.

DATES: A scoping letter will be mailed out in early October. Individuals who want to receive a copy of this mailing or who want to be on the project mailing list should contact the Admiralty Island National Monument at the address below. Comments concerning the scope of the analysis must be received by November 4, 2010. The Draft EIS is projected to be filed with the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) in the summer of 2011 and will begin a 45 day public comment period. The Final Environmental Impact Statement and the Record of Decision are expected to be published in the spring of 2012.

ADDRESSES: You may comment on the project in the following ways: Send written comments to the Admiralty Island National Monument, Tongass National Forest, Attn: Greens Creek Tailings Expansion, 8510 Mendenhall Loop Road, Juneau, AK 99801. Hand delivered comments may be taken to this same address. Comments may also be sent via e-mail to *comments-alaska-tongass-admiralty-national-monument@fs.fed.us* with Greens Creek Tailings EIS on the subject line, or via facsimile to 907–586–8808. Include your name, address and organization name if you are commenting as a representative of an organization.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Questions about the proposal and the EIS should be directed to Chad VanOrmer, District Ranger, Admiralty Island National Monument, 8510 Mendenhall Loop Road, Juneau, AK 99801, telephone (907) 789–6202, or Sarah Samuelson, Interdisciplinary Team Leader, Tongass National Forest Minerals Program Leader, 8510 Mendenhall Loop Road, Juneau, AK 99801, telephone (907) 789–6274. Individuals who use telecommunication devices for the deaf (TDD) may call the Federal Information Relay Service (FIRS) at 1–800–877–8339 between 8 a.m. and 8 p.m., Eastern Time, Monday through Friday.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

Background

Hecla Greens Creek Mining Company (HGCMC) operates an underground polymetallic mine located approximately 18 miles southwest of Juneau, Alaska on the northern part of Admiralty Island in Southeast Alaska. Exploration work at the site began in the mid-1970s, with the first exploration portal to go underground started in 1981. Before mining operations began the Forest Service completed a *Greens Creek Final Environmental Impact Statement* (1983) and Record of Decision for overall development and operations of the mine. Full scale mine development began in 1987.

The original General Plan of Operations (GPO) called for underground mining with the ore crushed and concentrated in the mill near the portal. The tailings were to be slurried in a pipeline parallel to the road corridor to a disposal site at the Cannery Muskeg. In 1986 the new owners of the mine (Amselco) decided to change the method of tailings disposal; instead of transporting tailings in a slurry via a pipeline, the owners proposed to truck "dry tailings" to a smaller area at the same Cannery Muskeg for disposal. In 1988, the Forest Service completed the *Environmental Assessment for Proposed Changes to the General Plan of Operation for the Development and Operation of the Greens Creek Mine* (1988) and approved the dry-stack tailings method for the Greens Creek Mine.

In 1990 new mine owners (Kennecott Greens Creek Mining Company—KGCMC) sought approval for additional waste rock disposal capacity. In 1991, the Forest Service began a third National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) review, the *Environmental Assessment for Additional Waste Rock Disposal Capacity at Greens Creek Mine* (1992).

In 2001, KGCMC submitted an application to the Forest Service requesting a modification of the then-current GPO for expansion of the existing tailings facility. Based on known ore reserves and the success of the exploration program, it was estimated that the approved tailings facility could not contain tailings associated with projected future operations. In 2003, the *Greens Creek Tailings Disposal Final Environmental Impact Statement* (2003) *and ROD* were completed; this provided for a modification of the GPO to allow for an expansion of the tailings disposal facility.

Purpose and Need for Action

The Forest Service has been requested by HGCMC to consider additional tailings expansion at the Greens Creek Mine. With continued positive exploration results, improved metal prices, and ongoing operational efficiencies, there is a need for additional tailings and waste rock disposal and related infrastructure at the Greens Creek Mine to allow for continuous site operations in a safe, environmentally sound, technically feasible, and economically viable manner, while being in compliance with regulatory requirements. The purpose of this EIS is for the Forest Service to consider certain changes to the approved HGCMC General Plan of Operations regarding tailings and waste rock disposal and related infrastructure. The existing tailings facility is considered sufficient to provide for HGCMC needs until 2014 but HECLA has indicated that preparation work for tailings must begin during the 2012 construction season.

Proposed Action

HGCMC is proposing a tailings expansion which will accommodate an