243

– Send a copy to Warren Harper in Forest Service

– Put in ~~staff~~ action

DEPARTMENT of ENVIRONMENT and NATURAL RESOURCES
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Call Warren to see how he wants to handle these comments? Should they go in staff action or what?

July 12, 1999

James R. Lyons
Under Secretary for Natural Resources and Environment
US Department of Agriculture
14th Street and Independence Avenue, SW
Washington DC 20250

Sylvia Baca
Assistant Secretary, Land and Minerals Management
US Department of the Interior
1849 C Street NW
Washington DC 20240

Subject: Comments - Draft Unified Federal Policy for a Watershed Approach to Federal Land and Resource Management

Dear Mr. Lyons and Ms. Baca:

Thank you for providing the South Dakota Department of Environment and Natural Resources with the opportunity to review the draft Unified Federal Policy for a Watershed Approach to Federal Land and Resource Management. The department has enjoyed a good working relationship with and participation in watershed projects by federal agencies in the past. By formalizing the relationship, the potential exists to build on current cooperative efforts and more effectively focus our collective resources on priority water quality issues.

The department offers the following comments relative to the draft policy and looks forward to the opportunity to review the policy after publication in the Federal Register later this summer.

1. The South Dakota Department of Environment and Natural Resources supports adoption of the proposed policy.

2. If the policy is implemented as an equal partnership that builds on current working relationships and utilizes water quality and other resource information gathered by either the state or federal agencies, it should be supportive of South Dakota's water quality and watershed programs.

3. The policy must accommodate multiple use of the federal lands.

4. Coordination of the policy can best be accomplished through:

    - The state's established Nonpoint source/watershed program that:

        - is coordinated by DENR's Water Resources Assistance Program,
        - administers South Dakota's community-based 319 Program,
        - receives direction and advice from the Nonpoint Source Task Force,
        - completes watershed assessments through local partnerships,
        - prepares the 303d list for the state,
        - prepares TMDLs for targeted waterbodies, and
        - develops and completes watershed projects through local resource agencies and stakeholder groups.

    - Adoption of the state's water quality standards as the parameters used to determine impairment in watersheds that have commingled ownership.

    - Use of the state's 303d list to determine priority watersheds.

    - Acceptance of the validity of state collected water quality data.

    - Resolution of differences through the use of collaborative processes.

Again, thank you for providing the department the opportunity to make prepublication comments on the draft Unified Federal Policy for a Watershed Approach to Federal Land and Resource Management. My staff and I look forward to the opportunity to review the policy after publication in the Federal Register.

Sincerely,

David Templeton

David Templeton, Director
Division of Financial and Technical Assitance

cc: Susan Hixson