

**DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE****Forest Service****Notice of Initiating the Assessment Phase of the Forest Plan Revision for the Salmon-Challis National Forest****AGENCY:** Forest Service, USDA.**ACTION:** Notice.

**SUMMARY:** The Salmon-Challis National Forest, located in east central Idaho, is initiating the first phase of the forest planning process pursuant to the 2012 National Forest System Land Management Planning rule. This process will result in a revised forest land management plan (Forest Plan) which describes the strategic direction for management of forest resources on the Salmon-Challis National Forest for the next ten to fifteen years. The planning process encompasses three-stages: assessment, plan revision, and monitoring. The first stage of the planning process involves assessing ecological, social, and economic conditions of the planning area, which is documented in an assessment report.

The Forest is inviting the public to contribute in the development of the Assessment. The Forest will be hosting public forums near the end of February into early March 2017 with a second set of meetings forthcoming in June 2017. We will invite the public to share information relevant to the assessment including existing information, current trends, and local knowledge. Public engagement opportunities associated with the development of the Assessment will be announced on the Web site cited below.

**DATES:** From January 2017 through August 2017, the public is invited to participate in the development of the Assessment. The draft assessment report for the Salmon-Challis National Forest is being initiated and is expected to be available in August 2017 on the Forest Web site at: <http://www.fs.usda.gov/scnf/>.

Following completion of the assessment, the Forest will initiate procedures pursuant to the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) to prepare and evaluate a revised forest plan.

**ADDRESSES:** Written correspondence can be sent to Salmon-Challis National Forest, 1206 S. Challis Street, Salmon, ID 83467, or sent via email to [jmilligan@fs.fed.us](mailto:jmilligan@fs.fed.us). All correspondence, including names and addresses when provided, are placed in the record and are available for public inspection and copying.

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:** Josh Milligan, Forest Plan Revision Team Leader at 208-756-5560. Individuals who use telecommunication devices for the deaf (TDD) may call the Federal Information Relay Service (FIRS) at 1-800-877-8339 between 8:00 a.m. and 8:00 p.m. (Eastern time), Monday through Friday.

More information on the planning process can also be found on the Salmon-Challis National Forest Planning Web site at <http://www.fs.usda.gov/detail/scnf/home/?cid=FSEPRD522039>.

**SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:** The National Forest Management Act (NFMA) of 1976 requires that every National Forest System (NFS) unit develop a land management plan (LMP). On April 9, 2012, the Forest Service finalized its land management planning rule (2012 Planning Rule, 36 CFR part 291), which describes requirements for the planning process and the content of the land management plans. Forest plans describe the strategic direction for management of forest resources for ten to fifteen years, and are adaptive and amendable as conditions change over time. Pursuant to the 2012 Forest Planning Rule (36 CFR part 219), the planning process encompasses three-stages: assessment, plan revision, and monitoring. The first stage of the planning process involves assessing social, economic, and ecological conditions of the planning area, which is documented in an assessment report. This notice announces the start of the initial stage of the planning process, which is the development of the assessment report.

The second stage, formal plan revision, involves the development of our Forest Plan in conjunction with the preparation of an Environmental Impact Statement under the NEPA. Once the plan revision is completed, it will be subject to the objection procedures of 36 CFR part 219, subpart B, before it can be approved. The third stage of the planning process is the monitoring and evaluation of the revised plan, which is ongoing over the life of the revised plan.

The assessment rapidly evaluates existing information about relevant ecological, economic, cultural and social conditions, trends, and sustainability and their relationship to land management plans within the context of the broader landscape. This information builds a common understanding prior to entering formal plan revision. The development of the assessment will include public engagement.

With this notice, the Salmon-Challis National Forest invites other governments, non-governmental parties, and the public to contribute in assessment development. The intent of public engagement during development of the assessment is to identify as much relevant information as possible to inform the upcoming plan revision process. We encourage contributors to share material about existing conditions, trends, and perceptions of social, economic, and ecological systems relevant to the planning process. The assessment also supports the development of relationships with key stakeholders that will be used throughout the plan revision process.

As public meetings, other opportunities for public engagement, and public review and comment opportunities are identified to assist with the development of the forest plan revision, public announcements will be made, notifications will be posted on the Forest's Web site at: <http://www.fs.usda.gov/scnf/> and information will be sent out to the Forest's mailing list. If anyone is interested in being on the Forest's mailing list to receive these notifications, please contact Josh Milligan at the address identified above, or by sending an email [jmilligan@fs.fed.us](mailto:jmilligan@fs.fed.us).

**Responsible Official**

The responsible official for the revision of the land management plan for the Salmon-Challis National Forest is Charles Mark, Forest Supervisor, Salmon-Challis National Forest.

Dated: January 4, 2017.

**Charles A. Mark,**  
Forest Supervisor.

[FR Doc. 2017-00684 Filed 1-12-17; 8:45 am]

**BILLING CODE 3411-15-P****DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE****Forest Service****Superior National Forest; Minnesota; Application for Withdrawal****AGENCY:** Forest Service, USDA.**ACTION:** Notice of intent to prepare an environmental impact statement.

**SUMMARY:** The United States Forest Service (USFS) has submitted an application to the Secretary of Interior proposing a withdrawal of approximately 234,328 acres of National Forest System (NFS) lands, for a 20-year term, within the Rainy River Watershed on the Superior National Forest from disposition under United States mineral and geothermal leasing laws, subject to

valid existing rights. This proposal will also include an amendment to the Superior National Forest Land and Resource Management Plan to reflect this withdrawal.

The purpose of the withdrawal request is protection of the natural resources and waters located on NFS lands from the potential adverse environmental impacts arising from exploration and development of fully Federally-owned minerals conducted pursuant to the mineral leasing laws within the Rainy River Watershed that flow into the Boundary Waters Canoe Area Wilderness (BWCAW) and the Boundary Waters Canoe Area Wilderness Mining Protection Area (MPA) in northeastern Minnesota. The USFS acknowledges this proposed request subjects these NFS lands to temporary segregation for up to 2 years from entry under the United States mineral and geothermal leasing laws. The lands have been and will remain open to such forms of use and disposition as may be allowed by law on National Forest System lands including the disposition of mineral materials. The USFS recognizes that any segregation or withdrawal of these lands will be subject to valid existing rights and therefore inapplicable to private lands owned in fee, private mineral estates, and private fractional minerals interests. This notice also gives the public an opportunity to comment on the proposed request for withdrawal, and announces the opportunity for a future public meeting.

**DATES:** Comments concerning the proposed request for withdrawal and the scope of the environmental analysis must be received by April 13, 2017. This Notice coincides with the Bureau of Land Management's (BLM) "Notice of Application for Withdrawal and Notification of Public Meeting" announced today in the **Federal Register**. The USFS comment period for the EIS is commensurate with the BLM's 90-day comment period associated with the consideration of the USFS application to propose a withdrawal of approximately 234,328 acres of NFS lands from disposition under United States mineral and geothermal leasing laws (subject to valid existing rights) within the Rainy River Watershed on the Superior National Forest.

The draft environmental impact statement is expected June 2018 and the final environmental impact statement is expected January 2019. The USFS and BLM will hold a public meeting within the initial 90-day comment period to gather public input on the proposed request for withdrawal. This meeting

will be held at the Duluth Entertainment and Convention Center on March 16, 2017 from 5:00 to 7:30 p.m. CT (350 Harbor Drive, Duluth, MN 55802). The USFS will publish a notice of the meeting location and time in a local newspaper at least 30 days before the scheduled date of the meeting.

**ADDRESSES:** Address written comments regarding the environmental effects associated with this proposed request for withdrawal to Connie Cummins, Forest Supervisor, Superior National Forest. Written comments are to be mailed to 8901 Grand Avenue Place, Duluth, MN 55808-1122. Comments may also be sent via email to *comments-eastern-superior@fs.fed.us* or via facsimile to 218-626-4398.

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:** Matt Judd, Superior National Forest (218-626-4382). The Superior National Forest Web site (<https://www.fs.usda.gov/projects/superior/landmanagement/projects>) also contains information relative to this proposed request for withdrawal.

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. This relay service is available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, to leave a message or question. You will receive a reply during normal business hours.

**SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:** The USFS has submitted an application on January 5, 2017 to the Secretary of the Interior proposing to withdraw the identified lands from disposition under United States mineral and geothermal leasing laws (subject to valid existing rights) for a period of 20 years.

All the NFS Lands identified in this application are described in Appendix A and displayed on a map in Appendix B. This application is available upon request at the Superior National Forest office (8901 Grand Ave Place, Duluth, MN 55808) or their Web site (<https://www.fs.usda.gov/projects/superior/landmanagement/projects>). The lands depicted on this map include NFS lands in the townships below, and all non-Federal lands within the exterior boundaries described below that are subsequently acquired by the Federal government to the boundary of the Boundary Waters Canoe Area Wilderness (BWCAW) and the Boundary Waters Canoe Area Wilderness Mining Protection Area (MPA).

## National Forest System Lands

### Superior National Forest

4th Principal Meridian, Minnesota

Tps. 61 and 62 N., Rs. 5 W.,  
Tps. 60 to 62 N., Rs. 6 W.,  
Tps. 59 and 61 N., Rs. 7 W.,  
Tps. 59 to 61 N., Rs. 8 W., to the boundary of the BWCAW  
Tps. 58 to 61 N., Rs. 9 W., to the boundary of the BWCAW  
Tps. 57 to 62 N., Rs. 10 W.,  
Tps. 57 to 63 N., Rs. 11 W.,  
Tp. 59 N., R. 12 W.,  
Tps. 61 to 63 N., Rs. 12 W.,  
Tps. 61 to 63 N., Rs. 13 W.,  
Tp. 63 N., R. 15 W.,  
Tp. 63 N., R. 16 W.,  
Tps. 65 to 67 N., Rs. 16 W.,  
Tp. 64 N., R. 17 W.,

The areas described contain approximately 234,328 acres of NFS lands that overlay Federally-owned minerals in Cook, Lake, and Saint Louis Counties, Minnesota located adjacent to the BWCAW and the MPA.

## Purpose and Need for Action

The purpose of this withdrawal request is protection of NFS lands located in the Rainy River Watershed, and preservation of NFS lands within the BWCAW, from the potential adverse environmental impacts arising from exploration and development of fully Federally-owned minerals conducted pursuant to the Federal mineral leasing laws.

The 234,328 acres of Federal land in this proposed request for withdrawal are located within the Rainy River watershed on the Superior National Forest and are adjacent to the BWCAW and MPA. There is known interest in the development of hardrock minerals that have been found—and others that are thought to exist—in sulfide-bearing rock within this portion of the Rainy River Watershed. Any development of these mineral resources could ultimately result in the creation of permanently stored waste materials and other conditions upstream of the BWCAW and the MPA with the potential to generate and release water with elevated levels of acidity, metals, and other potential contaminants. Additionally, any failure of mitigation measures, containment facilities or remediation efforts at mine sites and their related facilities located upstream of the BWCAW and the MPA could lead to irreversible impacts upon natural resources and the inability to meet the purposes for the designation of the BWCAW and the MPA specified by Sec. 2 of Public Law 95-495, 92 Stat. 1649 (1978) and the inability to comply with Section 4(b) of the 1964 Wilderness Act. These concerns are exacerbated by the likelihood that perpetual maintenance

of waste storage facilities along with the perpetual treatment of water discharge emanating from the waste storage facilities and the mines themselves would likely be required to ameliorate these adverse effects. Yet, it is not at all certain that such maintenance and treatment can be assured over many decades.

#### Proposed Action

The United States Forest Service (USFS) has submitted an application to the Secretary of Interior proposing a withdrawal, for a 20-year term, of approximately 234,328 acres of NFS lands within the Rainy River Watershed on the Superior National Forest from disposition under United States mineral and geothermal leasing laws, subject to valid existing rights. This proposal will also include an amendment to the Superior National Forest Land and Resource Management Plan to reflect this withdrawal.

#### Possible Alternatives

In addition to the USFS proposal, a "no action" alternative will be analyzed, and no additional alternatives have been identified at this time. No alternative sites are feasible because the lands subject to the withdrawal application are the lands for which protection is sought from the impacts of exploration and development under the United States mineral and geothermal leasing laws.

#### Lead and Cooperating Agencies

The USFS will be the lead agency. The USFS will designate the BLM as a cooperating agency. The BLM shall independently evaluate and review the draft and final environmental impact statements and any other documents needed for the Secretary of Interior to make a decision on the proposed withdrawal.

#### Responsible Official

Forest Supervisor, Superior National Forest.

#### Nature of Decision To Be Made

The Responsible Official will complete an environmental impact statement, documenting the information and analysis necessary to support a decision on withdrawal, and to support an amendment to the Superior National Forest Land and Resource Management Plan.

The Secretary of Interior is the authorized official to approve a proposal for withdrawal.

The Responsible Official is the authorized official to approve an amendment to the Superior National

Forest Land and Resource Management Plan to reflect the proposed withdrawal.

#### Scoping Process

This notice of intent initiates the scoping process, which guides the development of the environmental impact statement. The USFS and Bureau of Land Management (BLM) will hold a public meeting within the initial 90-day comment period to gather public input on the proposed request for withdrawal. This meeting will be held at the Duluth Entertainment and Convention Center on March 16, 2017 from 5:00 to 7:30 p.m. CT (350 Harbor Drive, Duluth, MN 55802). Further opportunities for public participation will be provided upon publication of the Draft EIS, including a minimum 45-day public comment period. A plan amendment is subject to pre-decisional objection procedures at 36 CFR 219, Subpart B.

It is important that reviewers provide their comments at such times and in such manner that they are useful to the agency's preparation of the environmental impact statement. Therefore, comments should be provided prior to the close of the comment period and should clearly articulate the reviewer's concerns and contentions.

Comments received in response to this solicitation, including names and addresses of those who comment, will be part of the public record for this proposed action. Comments submitted anonymously will be accepted and considered, however.

Dated: January 6, 2017.

**Richard Periman,**

*Deputy Forest Supervisor.*

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**BILLING CODE 3410-11-P**

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## DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

### Census Bureau

#### **Generic Clearance for Proposed Information Collection; Comment Request; Generic Clearance for Internet Nonprobability Panel Pretesting and Qualitative Survey Methods Testing**

**AGENCY:** U.S. Census Bureau, Commerce.

**ACTION:** Notice.

**SUMMARY:** The Department of Commerce, as part of its continuing effort to reduce paperwork and respondent burden, invites the general public and other Federal agencies to take this opportunity to comment on proposed and/or continuing information

collections, as required by the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995.

**DATES:** To ensure consideration, written comments must be submitted on or before March 14, 2017.

**ADDRESSES:** Direct all written comments to Jennifer Jessup, Departmental Paperwork Clearance Officer, Department of Commerce, Room 6616, 14th and Constitution Avenue NW., Washington, DC 20230 (or via the Internet at [jjessup@doc.gov](mailto:jjessup@doc.gov)).

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:** Requests for additional information or copies of the information collection instrument(s) and instructions should be directed to Jennifer Hunter Childs, U.S. Census Bureau, 4600 Silver Hill Road, Center for Survey Measurement, Washington, DC 20233 or (202)603-4827.

#### **SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:**

##### **I. Abstract**

The Census Bureau is committed to conducting research in a cost efficient manner. Prior to this generic clearance, several stages of testing occurred in research projects at the Census Bureau. As a first stage of research, the Census Bureau pretests questions on surveys or censuses and evaluates the usability and ease of use of Web sites using a small number of subjects during focus groups, usability and cognitive testing. These projects are in-person and labor-intensive, but typically only target samples of 20 to 30 respondents. This small-scale work is done through another existing OMB generic clearance. Often the second stage is a larger-scale field test with a split-panel design of a survey or a release of a Census Bureau data dissemination product with a feedback mechanism. The field tests often involve a lot of preparatory work and often are limited in the number of panels tested due to the cost considerations. They are often targeted at very large sample sizes with over 10,000 respondents per panel. These are typically done using stand-alone OMB clearances.

Cost efficiencies can occur by testing some research questions in a medium-scale test, using a smaller number of participants than what we typically use in a field test, yet a larger and more diverse set of participants than who we recruit for cognitive and usability tests. Using Internet panel pretesting, we can answer some research questions more thoroughly than in the small-scale testing, but less expensively than in the large-scale field test. This clearance established a medium-scale (defined as having sample sizes from 100-2000 per study), cost-efficient method of testing