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values at the time of a rate determination in accordance with normal rate determination procedures.

(4) Products may be valued on a per acre basis.

(5) Such other provisions as are necessary to carry out the provisions of section 604 of the Healthy Forest Restoration Act of 2003 (16 U.S.C. 6591c).

### § 223.305 Agreements.

The Forest Service may enter into an agreement under this subpart in lieu of a contract.

(a) The regulations governing Federal financial assistance relationships are not applicable to such agreements.

(b) All agreements under this section shall contain a fire liability provision that is in substantially the same form as the fire liability provision contained in integrated resource timber contracts, as described in Forest Service contract numbered 2400-13, part H, section 4.

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AUTHORITY: 16 U.S.C. 478, 551; 30 U.S.C. 226, 352, 601, 611; 94 Stat. 2400.

SOURCE: 39 FR 31317, Aug. 28, 1974, unless otherwise noted. Redesignated at 46 FR 36142, July 14, 1981.

### Subpart A—Locatable Minerals

#### § 228.1 Purpose.

It is the purpose of these regulations to set forth rules and procedures through which use of the surface of National Forest System lands in connection with operations authorized by the United States mining laws (30 U.S.C. 21–54), which confer a statutory right to enter upon the public lands to search for minerals, shall be conducted so as to minimize adverse environmental impacts on National Forest System surface resources. It is not the purpose of these regulations to provide for the management of mineral resources; the responsibility for managing such resources is in the Secretary of the Interior.

#### § 228.2 Scope.

These regulations apply to operations hereafter conducted under the United States mining laws of May 10, 1872, as amended (30 U.S.C. 22 *et seq.*), as they affect surface resources on all National Forest System lands under the jurisdiction of the Secretary of Agriculture to which such laws are applicable: *Provided, however*, That any area of National Forest lands covered by a special Act of Congress (16 U.S.C. 482a–482q) is subject to the provisions of this part and the provisions of the special act, and in the case of conflict the provisions of the special act shall apply.

#### § 228.3 Definitions.

For the purposes of this part the following terms, respectively, shall mean:

(a) *Operations*. All functions, work, and activities in connection with prospecting, exploration, development,

mining or processing of mineral resources and all uses reasonably incident thereto, including roads and other means of access on lands subject to the regulations in this part, regardless of whether said operations take place on or off mining claims.

(b) *Operator*. A person conducting or proposing to conduct operations.

(c) *Person*. Any individual, partnership, corporation, association, or other legal entity.

(d) *Mining claim*. Any unpatented mining claim or unpatented millsite authorized by the United States mining laws of May 10, 1872, as amended (30 U.S.C. 22 *et seq.*).

(e) *Authorized officer*. The Forest Service officer to whom authority to review and approve operating plans has been delegated.

#### § 228.4 Plan of operations—notice of intent—requirements.

(a) Except as provided in paragraph (a)(1) of this section, a notice of intent to operate is required from any person proposing to conduct operations which might cause significant disturbance of surface resources. Such notice of intent to operate shall be submitted to the District Ranger having jurisdiction over the area in which the operations will be conducted. Each notice of intent to operate shall provide information sufficient to identify the area involved, the nature of the proposed operations, the route of access to the area of operations, and the method of transport.

(1) A notice of intent to operate is not required for:

(i) Operations which will be limited to the use of vehicles on existing public roads or roads used and maintained for National Forest System purposes;

(ii) Prospecting and sampling which will not cause significant surface resource disturbance and will not involve removal of more than a reasonable amount of mineral deposit for analysis and study which generally might include searching for and occasionally removing small mineral samples or specimens, gold panning, metal detecting, non-motorized hand sluicing, using battery operated dry washers, and collecting of mineral specimens using hand tools;

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(iii) Marking and monumenting a mining claim;

(iv) Underground operations which will not cause significant surface resource disturbance;

(v) Operations, which in their totality, will not cause surface resource disturbance which is substantially different than that caused by other users of the National Forest System who are not required to obtain a Forest Service special use authorization, contract, or other written authorization;

(vi) Operations which will not involve the use of mechanized earthmoving equipment, such as bulldozers or backhoes, or the cutting of trees, unless those operations otherwise might cause a significant disturbance of surface resources; or

(vii) Operations for which a proposed plan of operations is submitted for approval;

(2) The District Ranger will, within 15 days of receipt of a notice of intent to operate, notify the operator if approval of a plan of operations is required before the operations may begin.

(3) An operator shall submit a proposed plan of operations to the District Ranger having jurisdiction over the area in which operations will be conducted in lieu of a notice of intent to operate if the proposed operations will likely cause a significant disturbance of surface resources. An operator also shall submit a proposed plan of operations, or a proposed supplemental plan of operations consistent with § 228.4(d), to the District Ranger having jurisdiction over the area in which operations are being conducted if those operations are causing a significant disturbance of surface resources but are not covered by a current approved plan of operations. The requirement to submit a plan of operations shall not apply to the operations listed in paragraphs (a)(1)(i) through (v). The requirement to submit a plan of operations also shall not apply to operations which will not involve the use of mechanized earthmoving equipment, such as bulldozers or backhoes, or the cutting of trees, unless those operations otherwise will likely cause a significant disturbance of surface resources.

(4) If the District Ranger determines that any operation is causing or will likely cause significant disturbance of surface resources, the District Ranger shall notify the operator that the operator must submit a proposed plan of operations for approval and that the operations can not be conducted until a plan of operations is approved.

(b) Any person conducting operations on the effective date of these regulations, who would have been required to submit a plan of operations under § 228.4(a), may continue operations but shall within 120 days thereafter submit a plan of operations to the District Ranger having jurisdiction over the area within which operations are being conducted: *Provided, however,* That upon a showing of good cause the authorized officer will grant an extension of time for submission of a plan of operations, not to exceed an additional 6 months. Operations may continue according to the submitted plan during its review, unless the authorized officer determines that the operations are unnecessarily or unreasonably causing irreparable damage to surface resources and advises the operator of those measures needed to avoid such damage. Upon approval of a plan of operations, operations shall be conducted in accordance with the approved plan. The requirement to submit a plan of operations shall not apply: (1) To operations excepted in § 228.4(a) or (2) to operations concluded prior to the effective date of the regulations in this part.

(c) The plan of operations shall include:

(1) The name and legal mailing address of the operators (and claimants if they are not the operators) and their lessees, assigns, or designees.

(2) A map or sketch showing information sufficient to locate the proposed area of operations on the ground, existing and/or proposed roads or access routes to be used in connection with the operations as set forth in § 228.12 and the approximate location and size of areas where surface resources will be disturbed.

(3) Information sufficient to describe or identify the type of operations proposed and how they would be conducted, the type and standard of existing and proposed roads or access routes, the means of transportation used or to be used as set forth in §228.12, the period during which the proposed activity will take place, and measures to be taken to meet the requirements for environmental protection in §228.8.

(d) The plan of operations shall cover the requirements set forth in paragraph (c) of this section, as foreseen for the entire operation for the full estimated period of activity: *Provided, however,* That if the development of a plan for an entire operation is not possible at the time of preparation of a plan, the operator shall file an initial plan setting forth his proposed operation to the degree reasonably foreseeable at that time, and shall thereafter file a supplemental plan or plans whenever it is proposed to undertake any significant surface disturbance not covered by the initial plan.

(e) At any time during operations under an approved plan of operations, the authorized officer may ask the operator to furnish a proposed modification of the plan detailing the means of minimizing unforeseen significant disturbance of surface resources. If the operator does not furnish a proposed modification within a time deemed reasonable by the authorized officer, the authorized officer may recommend to his immediate superior that the operator be required to submit a proposed modification of the plan. The recommendation of the authorized officer shall be accompanied by a statement setting forth in detail the supporting facts and reasons for his recommendations. In acting upon such recommendation, the immediate superior of the authorized officer shall determine:

(1) Whether all reasonable measures were taken by the authorized officer to predict the environmental impacts of the proposed operations prior to approving the operating plan,

(2) Whether the disturbance is or probably will become of such significance as to require modification of the operating plan in order to meet the re-

quirements for environmental protection specified in §228.8 and

(3) Whether the disturbance can be minimized using reasonable means. Lacking such determination that unforeseen significant disturbance of surface resources is occurring or probable and that the disturbance can be minimized using reasonable means, no operator shall be required to submit a proposed modification of an approved plan of operations. Operations may continue in accordance with the approved plan until a modified plan is approved, unless the immediate superior of the authorized officer determines that the operations are unnecessarily or unreasonably causing irreparable injury, loss or damage to surface resources and advises the operator of those measures needed to avoid such damage.

(f) Upon completion of an environmental analysis in connection with each proposed operating plan, the authorized officer will determine whether an environmental statement is required. Not every plan of operations, supplemental plan or modification will involve the preparation of an environmental statement. Environmental impacts will vary substantially depending on whether the nature of operations is prospecting, exploration, development, or processing, and on the scope of operations (such as size of operations, construction required, length of operations and equipment required), resulting in varying degrees of disturbance to vegetative resources, soil, water, air, or wildlife. The Forest Service will prepare any environmental statements that may be required.

(g) The information required to be included in a notice of intent or a plan of operations, or supplement or modification thereto, has been assigned Office of Management and Budget Control #0596-0022. The public reporting burden for this collection of information is estimated to vary from a few minutes for an activity involving little or no surface disturbance to several months for activities involving heavy capital investments and significant surface disturbance, with an average of 2 hours per individual response. This includes time for reviewing instructions, searching existing data sources, gathering and maintaining the data needed,

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and completing and reviewing the collection of information. Send comments regarding the burden estimate or any other aspect of this collection of information, including suggestions for reducing this burden, to Chief (2800), Forest Service, USDA, P.O. Box 96090, Washington, DC 20090-6090 and to the Office of Information and Regulatory Affairs, Office of Management and Budget, Washington, DC 20503.

[39 FR 31317, Aug. 28, 1974. Redesignated at 46 FR 36142, July 14, 1981, and amended at 54 FR 6893, Feb. 15, 1989; 69 FR 41430, July 9, 2004; 70 FR 32731, June 6, 2005]

### § 228.5 Plan of operations—approval.

(a) Operations shall be conducted in accordance with an approved plan of operations, except as provided in paragraph (b) of this section and in § 228.4 (a), (b), and (e). A proposed plan of operation shall be submitted to the District Ranger, who shall promptly acknowledge receipt thereof to the operator. The authorized officer shall, within thirty (30) days of such receipt, analyze the proposal, considering the economics of the operation along with the other factors in determining the reasonableness of the requirements for surface resource protection, and;

(1) Notify the operator that he has approved the plan of operations; or

(2) Notify the operator that the proposed operations are such as not to require an operating plan; or

(3) Notify the operator of any changes in, or additions to, the plan of operations deemed necessary to meet the purpose of the regulations in this part; or

(4) Notify the operator that the plan is being reviewed, but that more time, not to exceed an additional sixty (60) days, is necessary to complete such review, setting forth the reasons why additional time is needed: *Provided, however*, That days during which the area of operations is inaccessible for inspection shall not be included when computing the sixty (60) day period; or

(5) Notify the operator that the plan cannot be approved until a final environmental statement has been prepared and filed with the Council on Environmental Quality as provided in § 228.4(f).

(b) Pending final approval of the plan of operations, the authorized officer will approve such operations as may be necessary for timely compliance with the requirements of Federal and State laws, so long as such operations are conducted so as to minimize environmental impacts as prescribed by the authorized officer in accordance with the standards contained in § 228.8.

(c) A supplemental plan or plans of operations provided for in § 228.4(d) and a modification of an approved operating plan as provided for in § 228.4(e) shall be subject to approval by the authorized officer in the same manner as the initial plan of operations: *Provided, however*, That a modification of an approved plan of operations under § 228.4(e) shall be subject to approval by the immediate superior of the authorized officer in cases where it has been determined that a modification is required.

(d) In the provisions for review of operating plans, the Forest Service will arrange for consultation with appropriate agencies of the Department of the Interior with respect to significant technical questions concerning the character of unique geologic conditions and special exploration and development systems, techniques, and equipment, and with respect to mineral values, mineral resources, and mineral reserves. Further, the operator may request the Forest Service to arrange for similar consultations with appropriate agencies of the U.S. Department of the Interior for a review of operating plans.

### § 228.6 Availability of information to the public.

Except as provided herein, all information and data submitted by an operator pursuant to the regulations in this part shall be available for examination by the public at the Office of the District Ranger in accordance with the provisions of 7 CFR 1.1–1.6 and 36 CFR 200.5–200.10. Specifically identified information and data submitted by the operator as confidential concerning trade secrets or privileged commercial or financial information will not be available for public examination. Information and data to be withheld from public examination may include, but is not limited to, known or estimated

outline of the mineral deposits and their location, attitude, extent, outcrops, and content, and the known or planned location of exploration pits, drill holes, excavations pertaining to location and entry pursuant to the United States mining laws, and other commercial information which relates to competitive rights of the operator.

**§ 228.7 Inspection, noncompliance.**

(a) Forest Officers shall periodically inspect operations to determine if the operator is complying with the regulations in this part and an approved plan of operations.

(b) If an operator fails to comply with the regulations or his approved plan of operations and the noncompliance is unnecessarily or unreasonably causing injury, loss or damage to surface resources the authorized officer shall serve a notice of noncompliance upon the operator or his agent in person or by certified mail. Such notice shall describe the noncompliance and shall specify the action to comply and the time within which such action is to be completed, generally not to exceed thirty (30) days: *Provided, however,* That days during which the area of operations is inaccessible shall not be included when computing the number of days allowed for compliance.

**§ 228.8 Requirements for environmental protection.**

All operations shall be conducted so as, where feasible, to minimize adverse environmental impacts on National Forest surface resources, including the following requirements:

(a) *Air Quality.* Operator shall comply with applicable Federal and State air quality standards, including the requirements of the Clean Air Act, as amended (42 U.S.C. 1857 *et seq.*).

(b) *Water Quality.* Operator shall comply with applicable Federal and State water quality standards, including regulations issued pursuant to the Federal Water Pollution Control Act, as amended (33 U.S.C. 1151 *et seq.*).

(c) *Solid Wastes.* Operator shall comply with applicable Federal and State standards for the disposal and treatment of solid wastes. All garbage, refuse, or waste, shall either be removed from National Forest lands or

disposed of or treated so as to minimize, so far as is practicable, its impact on the environment and the forest surface resources. All tailings, dumpage, deleterious materials, or substances and other waste produced by operations shall be deployed, arranged, disposed of or treated so as to minimize adverse impact upon the environment and forest surface resources.

(d) *Scenic Values.* Operator shall, to the extent practicable, harmonize operations with scenic values through such measures as the design and location of operating facilities, including roads and other means of access, vegetative screening of operations, and construction of structures and improvements which blend with the landscape.

(e) *Fisheries and Wildlife Habitat.* In addition to compliance with water quality and solid waste disposal standards required by this section, operator shall take all practicable measures to maintain and protect fisheries and wildlife habitat which may be affected by the operations.

(f) *Roads.* Operator shall construct and maintain all roads so as to assure adequate drainage and to minimize or, where practicable, eliminate damage to soil, water, and other resource values. Unless otherwise approved by the authorized officer, roads no longer needed for operations:

(1) Shall be closed to normal vehicular traffic,

(2) Bridges and culverts shall be removed,

(3) Cross drains, dips, or water bars shall be constructed, and

(4) The road surface shall be shaped to as near a natural contour as practicable and be stabilized.

(g) *Reclamation.* Upon exhaustion of the mineral deposit or at the earliest practicable time during operations, or within 1 year of the conclusion of operations, unless a longer time is allowed by the authorized officer, operator shall, where practicable, reclaim the surface disturbed in operations by taking such measures as will prevent or control onsite and off-site damage to the environment and forest surface resources including:

(1) Control of erosion and landslides;

(2) Control of water runoff;

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(3) Isolation, removal or control of toxic materials;

(4) Reshaping and revegetation of disturbed areas, where reasonably practicable; and

(5) Rehabilitation of fisheries and wildlife habitat.

(h) Certification or other approval issued by State agencies or other Federal agencies of compliance with laws and regulations relating to mining operations will be accepted as compliance with similar or parallel requirements of these regulations.

### **§ 228.9 Maintenance during operations, public safety.**

During all operations operator shall maintain his structures, equipment, and other facilities in a safe, neat and workmanlike manner. Hazardous sites or conditions resulting from operations shall be marked by signs, fenced or otherwise identified to protect the public in accordance with Federal and State laws and regulations.

### **§ 228.10 Cessation of operations, removal of structures and equipment.**

Unless otherwise agreed to by the authorized officer, operator shall remove within a reasonable time following cessation of operations all structures, equipment and other facilities and clean up the site of operations. Other than seasonally, where operations have ceased temporarily, an operator shall file a statement with the District Ranger which includes:

(a) Verification of intent to maintain the structures, equipment and other facilities,

(b) The expected reopening date, and

(c) An estimate of extended duration of operations. A statement shall be filed every year in the event operations are not reactivated. Operator shall maintain the operating site, structures, equipment and other facilities in a neat and safe condition during nonoperating periods.

### **§ 228.11 Prevention and control of fire.**

Operator shall comply with all applicable Federal and State fire laws and regulations and shall take all reasonable measures to prevent and suppress fires on the area of operations and

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shall require his employees, contractors and subcontractors to do likewise.

### **§ 228.12 Access.**

An operator is entitled to access in connection with operations, but no road, trail, bridge, landing area for aircraft, or the like, shall be constructed or improved, nor shall any other means of access, including but not limited to off-road vehicles, be used until the operator has received approval of an operating plan in writing from the authorized officer when required by § 228.4(a). Proposals for construction, improvement or use of such access as part of a plan of operations shall include a description of the type and standard of the proposed means of access, a map showing the proposed route of access, and a description of the means of transportation to be used. Approval of the means of such access as part of a plan of operations shall specify the location of the access route, design standards, means of transportation, and other conditions reasonably necessary to protect the environment and forest surface resources, including measures to protect scenic values and to insure against erosion and water or air pollution.

### **§ 228.13 Financial Assurance.**

(a) Any operator required to file a plan of operations shall, when required by the authorized officer, furnish financial assurance for completion of the obligations set forth in these regulations and the approved plan of operations in the amount determined by the authorized officer to be required to provide reasonable financial assurance of such obligations prior to approval of such plan of operations, or by providing blanket assurance for multiple defined operations conducted by the operator such as within a particular State or nation-wide. The operator may elect to provide such financial assurance in the form of any of the following instruments that are acceptable to the authorized officer, singly or in combination:

(1) cash in an amount equal to the required dollar amount of the reclamation cost estimate and the estimated cost of stabilizing, rehabilitating, and

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reclaiming the area of operations deposited into a Federal depository, as directed by the Forest Service, and maintained therein;

(2) negotiable securities of the United States having market value at the time of deposit of not less than the required dollar amount of the bond;

(3) a surety bond provided by a third party that is certified by the Department of the Treasury and listed in Treasury Circular 570 as financial assurance for the obligations for specific operations, or providing blanket assurance for multiple defined operations conducted by the operator such as within a particular State or nationwide, and/or;

(4) an irrevocable letter of credit provided by an institution acceptable to the authorized officer.

(b) In determining the amount of the required financial assurance, the authorized officer shall give consideration to the reclamation cost estimate which shall be submitted by the operator prior to the approval of the final plan of operations, and the estimated cost of stabilizing, rehabilitating, and reclaiming the area of operations.

(c) In the event that an approved plan of operations is modified in accordance with § 228.4 (d) and (e), the authorized officer will review the financial assurance for adequacy and, if necessary, will adjust the financial assurance amount to conform to the operations plan as modified.

(d) When reclamation has been completed in accordance with § 228.8(g), the authorized officer will notify the operator that obligations covered by the financial assurance have been met: *Provided, however*, that when the Forest Service has accepted any portion of the reclamation as completed, the authorized officer shall notify the operator of such acceptance and proportionally reduce the required financial assurance amount thereafter to be required for the remaining obligations of the operator.

(e) When an operator is required to continue to operate or maintain certain aspects of the operation after the mine has closed, the authorized officer may require the operator to establish a trust fund to ensure that adequate funds are available for long-term post-

closure reclamation activities required by the regulations or the approved plan of operations following mine closure. The authorized officer shall determine which activities may be secured through a trust fund, and which activities may be secured through another form of financial assurance. Establishing a trust fund does not relieve the operator of the responsibility to provide long-term management, maintenance, and reclamation of the site. A trust fund for long-term post closure obligations shall be comprised of financial instruments limited to negotiable securities of the United States Government; State and Municipal securities or bonds; money market funds; certificates of deposits; investment-grade securities; and stock equity shares listed on a national exchange.

[39 FR 31317, Aug. 28, 1974; 39 FR 32029, Sept. 4, 1974, as amended at 88 FR 74049, Oct. 30, 2023]

### § 228.14 Appeals.

Appeal of decisions of an authorized officer made pursuant to this subpart is governed by 36 CFR part 214 or 215.

[78 FR 33724, June 5, 2013]

### § 228.15 Operations within National Forest Wilderness.

(a) The United States mining laws shall extend to each National Forest Wilderness for the period specified in the Wilderness Act and subsequent establishing legislation to the same extent they were applicable prior to the date the Wilderness was designated by Congress as a part of the National Wilderness Preservation System. Subject to valid existing rights, no person shall have any right or interest in or to any mineral deposits which may be discovered through prospecting or other information-gathering activity after the legal date on which the United States mining laws cease to apply to the specific Wilderness.

(b) Holders of unpatented mining claims validly established on any National Forest Wilderness prior to inclusion of such unit in the National Wilderness Preservation System shall be accorded the rights provided by the

United States mining laws as then applicable to the National Forest land involved. Persons locating mining claims in any National Forest Wilderness on or after the date on which said Wilderness was included in the National Wilderness Preservation System shall be accorded the rights provided by the United States mining laws as applicable to the National Forest land involved and subject to provisions specified in the establishing legislation. Persons conducting operations as defined in §228.3 in National Forest Wilderness shall comply with the regulations in this part. Operations shall be conducted so as to protect National Forest surface resources in accordance with the general purposes of maintaining the National Wilderness Preservation System unimpaired for future use and enjoyment as wilderness and to preserve its wilderness character, consistent with the use of the land for mineral location, exploration, development, drilling, and production and for transmission lines, water lines, telephone lines, and processing operations, including, where essential, the use of mechanized transport, aircraft or motorized equipment.

(c) Persons with valid mining claims wholly within National Forest Wilderness shall be permitted access to such surrounded claims by means consistent with the preservation of National Forest Wilderness which have been or are being customarily used with respect to other such claims surrounded by National Forest Wilderness. No operator shall construct roads across National Forest Wilderness unless authorized in writing by the Forest Supervisor in accordance with §228.12.

(d) On all mining claims validly established on lands within the National Wilderness Preservation System, the operator shall take all reasonable measures to remove any structures, equipment and other facilities no longer needed for mining purposes in accordance with the provisions in §228.10 and restore the surface in accordance with the requirements in §228.8(g).

(e) The title to timber on patented claims validly established after the land was included within the National Wilderness Preservation System re-

mains in the United States, subject to a right to cut and use timber for mining purposes. So much of the mature timber may be cut and used as is needed in the extraction, removal, and beneficiation of the mineral deposits, if needed timber is not otherwise reasonably available. The cutting shall comply with the requirements for sound principles of forest management as defined by the National Forest rules and regulations and set forth in stipulations to be included in the plan of operations, which as a minimum incorporate the following basic principles of forest management:

(1) Harvesting operations shall be so conducted as to minimize soil movement and damage from water runoff; and

(2) Slash shall be disposed of and other precautions shall be taken to minimize damage from forest insects, disease, and fire.

(f) The Chief, Forest Service, shall allow any activity, including prospecting, for the purpose of gathering information about minerals in National Forest Wilderness except that any such activity for gathering information shall be carried on in a manner compatible with the preservation of the wilderness environment as specified in the plan of operations.

**Subpart B—Leasable Minerals**

§§ 228.20–228.39 [Reserved]

**Subpart C—Disposal of Mineral Materials**

SOURCE: 49 FR 29784, July 24, 1984, unless otherwise noted.

**§ 228.40 Authority.**

Authority for the disposal of mineral materials is provided by the Materials Act of July 31, 1947 (30 U.S.C. 601 *et seq.*), as amended by the Acts of August 31, 1950 (30 U.S.C. 603–604), July 23, 1955 (30 U.S.C. 601, 603), and September 25, 1962 (30 U.S.C. 602), and by the following: the Act of June 4, 1897 (16 U.S.C. 477); the Act of March 4, 1917 (16 U.S.C. 520); the Bankhead-Jones Farm Tenant Act of July 22, 1937 (7 U.S.C. 1010); the Act of September 1, 1949 (section 3) (30 U.S.C. 192c); the Act of June

30, 1950 (16 U.S.C. 508b); the Act of June 28, 1952 (section 3) (66 Stat. 285); the Act of September 2, 1958 (16 U.S.C. 521a); the Act of June 11, 1960 (74 Stat. 205); the Federal Highway Act of August 27, 1958 (23 U.S.C. 101 *et seq.*); and the Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation Act of December 2, 1980 (section 502) (16 U.S.C. 539a).

**§ 228.41 Scope.**

(a) *Lands to which this subpart applies.* This subpart applies to all National Forest System lands reserved from the public domain of the United States, including public domain lands being administered under the Bankhead-Jones Farm Tenant Act of July 22, 1937 (7 U.S.C. 1010); to all National Forest System lands acquired pursuant to the Weeks Act of March 1, 1911 (36 Stat. 961); to all National Forest System lands with Weeks Act status as provided in the Act of September 2, 1958 (16 U.S.C. 521a); and to public lands within the Copper River addition to the Chugach National Forest (16 U.S.C. 539a). For ease of reference and convenience to the reader, these lands are referred to, throughout this subpart, as *National Forest lands*.

(b) *Restrictions.* Disposal of mineral materials from the following National Forest lands is subject to certain restrictions as described below:

(1) *Segregation or withdrawals in aid of other agencies.* Disposal of mineral materials from lands segregated or withdrawn in aid of a function of another Federal agency, State, territory, county, municipality, water district, or other governmental subdivision or agency may be made only with the written consent of the governmental entity.

(2) *Segregated or withdrawn National Forest lands.* Mineral materials may not be removed from segregated or withdrawn lands where removal is specifically prohibited by statute or by public land order. Where not specifically prohibited, removal of mineral materials may be allowed if the authorized officer determines that the removal is not detrimental to the values for which the segregation or withdrawal was made, except as provided in paragraph (b)(1) of this section. Where operations have been established prior

to the effective date of this Subpart and where not prohibited by statute, they may be permitted to continue. Nothing in this subparagraph is intended to prohibit the exercise of valid existing rights.

(3) *Unpatented mining claims.* Provided that claimants are given prior notice and it has been determined that removal will neither endanger nor materially interfere with prospecting, mining, or processing operations or uses reasonably incident thereto on the claims, disposal of mineral materials may be allowed from:

(i) Unpatented mining claims located after July 23, 1955; and/or

(ii) Unpatented mining claims located before July 23, 1955, and on which the United States has established the right to manage the vegetative and other surface resources in accordance with the Multiple Use Mining Act of July 23, 1955 (30 U.S.C. 601, 603, 611-615).

(4) *Acquired Bankhead-Jones lands.* Mineral materials on lands which were acquired under the authority of the Bankhead-Jones Farm Tenant Act of July 22, 1937 (7 U.S.C. 1010-1012), and which lie outside the exterior boundaries of National Forests, or on acquired lands which are being administered under the Act and which also lie outside the exterior boundaries of National Forests, may be disposed of under these regulations only to public authorities and agencies, and only on condition that the mineral materials are used for public purposes (7 U.S.C. 1011(c)).

(c) *Mineral materials to which this subpart applies.* This subpart applies to mineral materials which consist of petrified wood and common varieties of sand, gravel, stone, pumice, pumicite, cinders, clay, and other similar materials. Such mineral materials include deposits which, although they have economic value, are used for agriculture, animal husbandry, building, abrasion, construction, landscaping, and similar uses. This subpart also applies to other materials which may not be minerals but are produced using mining methods, such as peat. The categories of these materials, including representative examples, are:

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(1) *Agricultural supply and animal husbandry materials.* This category includes, but is not limited to, minerals and vegetative materials used as or for: Soil conditioners or amendments applied to physically alter soil properties such as direct applications to the soil of carbonate rocks, soil containing “trace elements” and peat; animal feed supplements; and other animal care products.

(2) *Building materials.* Except for minerals identified as *Uncommon Varieties*, this category includes, but is not limited to, minerals used as or for: Paint fillers or extenders; flagstone, ashlar, rubble, mortar, brick, tile, pipe, pottery, earthenware, stoneware, terrazzo, and other nonstructural components in floors, walls, roofs, fireplaces, and the like; and similar building uses.

(3) *Abrasive materials.* This category includes, but is not limited to, minerals used for: Filing; scouring; polishing; sanding; and sandblasting.

(4) *Construction materials.* This category includes, but is not limited to, minerals such as sand, gravel, clay, crushed rock and cinders used as or for fill; borrow; rip-rap; ballast (including all ballast for railroad use); road base; road surfacing; concrete aggregate; clay sealants; and similar construction uses.

(5) *Landscaping materials.* This category includes, but is not limited to minerals and peat used as or for: Chips, granules, sand, pebbles, scoria, cinders, cobbles, boulders, slabs, and other components in retaining walls, walkways, patios, yards, gardens, and the like; and similar landscaping uses.

(d) *Minerals not covered by this subpart.* Mineral materials do not include any mineral used in manufacturing, industrial processing, or chemical operations for which no other mineral can be substituted due to unique properties giving the particular mineral a distinct and special value; nor do they include block pumice which in nature occurs in pieces having one dimension of two inches or more which is valuable and used for some application that requires such dimensions. Disposal of minerals not covered by this subpart is subject to the terms of the United States Mining Laws, as amended (30 U.S.C. 22 *et seq.*), on those portions of the National

Forest System where those laws apply. Such minerals may include:

(1) Mineral suitable and used as soil amendment because of a constituent element other than calcium or magnesium carbonate that chemically alters the soil;

(2) Limestone suitable and used, without substantial admixtures, for cement manufacture, metallurgy, production of quicklime, sugar refining, whiting, fillers, paper manufacture, and desulfurization of stack gases;

(3) Silica suitable and used for glass manufacture, production of metallic silicon, flux, and rock wool;

(4) Alumino-silicates or clays having exceptional qualities suitable and used for production of aluminum, ceramics, drilling mud, taconite binder, foundry castings, and other purposes for which common clays cannot be used;

(5) Gypsum suitable and used for wallboard, plaster, or cement.

(6) Block pumice which occurs in nature in pieces having one dimension of two inches or more and which is valuable and used for some application that requires such dimensions; and

(7) Stone recognized through marketing factors for its special and distinct properties of strength and durability making it suitable for structural support and used for that purpose.

(e) *Limitations on applicability.* (1) The provisions of paragraphs (c) and (d) of this section shall not apply to any mining claims for which a Mineral Entry Final Certificate was issued on or before January 16, 1991. Nor shall these provisions apply to any mining claim located on or before July 23, 1955, which has satisfied the marketability test for locatable minerals from on or before July 23, 1955, until the present date.

(2) A use which qualifies a mineral as an uncommon variety under paragraph (d) overrides classification of that mineral as a common variety under paragraph (c) of this section.

[49 FR 29784, July 24, 1984, as amended at 55 FR 51706, Dec. 17, 1990]

**§ 228.42 Definitions.**

For the purposes of this subject, the following terms are defined:

*Acquired National Forest lands.* National Forest System lands acquired

under the Weeks Act of March 1, 1911 (36 Stat. 961), and National Forest System lands with Weeks Act status as provided in the Act of September 2, 1958 (16 U.S.C. 521a).

*Authorized officer.* Any Forest Service officer to whom authority for disposal of mineral materials has been delegated.

*Common-use area.* Generally, a broad geographic area from which nonexclusive disposals of mineral materials available on the surface may be made to low volume and/or noncommercial users.

*Community site.* A site noted on appropriate Forest records and posted on the ground from which nonexclusive disposals of mineral materials may be made to low volume and/or noncommercial users.

*Contract.* A signed legal agreement between the Forest Service and a purchaser of mineral materials, which specifies (among other things) the conditions of a competitive, negotiated, or preference right sale of mineral materials to the purchaser.

*Mineral materials.* A collective term used throughout this subpart to describe petrified wood and common varieties of sand, gravel, stone, pumice, pumicite, cinders, clay, and other similar materials. Common varieties do not include deposits of those materials which are valuable because of some property giving them distinct and special value, nor do they include "so-called 'block pumice'" which occurs in nature in pieces having one dimension of two inches or more and which is valuable and used for some application that requires such dimensions.

*Permit.* A signed legal document between the Forest Service and one who is authorized to remove mineral materials free of charge, which specifies (among other things) the conditions of removal by the permittee.

*Preference right negotiated sale.* A negotiated sale which may be awarded in response to the finding and demonstration of a suitable deposit of mineral material on acquired National Forest lands as the result of exploratory activity conducted under the authority of a prospecting permit.

*Prospecting permit.* A written instrument issued by the Forest Service

which authorizes prospecting for a mineral material deposit on acquired National Forest lands within specific areas, under stipulated conditions, and for a specified period of time.

*Single entry source.* A source of mineral materials which is expected to be depleted under a single contract or permit or which is reserved for Forest Service use.

*Unpatented mining claim.* A lode or placer mining claim or a millsite located under the General Mining Law of 1872, as amended (30 U.S.C. 21-54), for which a patent under 30 U.S.C. 29 and regulations of the Department of the Interior has not been issued.

*Withdrawn National Forest lands.* National Forest System lands segregated or otherwise withheld from settlement, sale, location, or entry under some or all of all of the general land laws (43 U.S.C. 1714).

[49 FR 29784, July 24, 1984, as amended at 55 FR 51706, Dec. 17, 1990]

#### § 228.43 Policy governing disposal.

(a) *General.* Forest Service policy is to make mineral materials on National Forest lands available to the public and to local, State, and Federal government agencies where reasonable protection of, or mitigation of effects on, other resources is assured, and where removal is not prohibited.

(1) A contract or permit limits processing of the mineral material onsite to the first salable product.

(2) Additional onsite processing may be authorized by a separate permit (36 CFR 251.50).

(3) The authorized officer must ensure that an environmental analysis is conducted for all planned disposals of mineral materials.

(4) Decisions to authorize the disposal of mineral materials must conform to approved land and resource management plans (36 CFR 219.22).

(b) *Price.* Mineral materials may not be sold for less than the appraised value. The authorized officer may assess a fee to cover costs of issuing and administering a contract or permit.

(c) *Conservation.* Adequate measures must be taken to protect, and minimize damage to the environment. Mineral materials may be disposed of only if the authorized officer determines

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that the disposal is not detrimental to the public interest.

(d) *Ownership.* Title to the mineral materials vests in the purchaser or permittee immediately before excavation, subject to the provisions of §§ 228.47 through 228.56 and other provisions of the contract or permit. Title to excavated material not removed within the time provided reverts in the United States.

(e) *Decisions.* All decisions as to whether or not to grant disposals proposed under this subpart shall be made in writing by the authorized officer. Such decisions must specify their factual and legal basis.

(f) *Option for mining claimants.* All mining claimants holding mining claims which are located for a mineral classified in accordance with this subpart as a mineral material have the option of maintaining that the mineral is locatable and filing for patent. All mining claimants holding mining claims located in good faith on or before January 16, 1991, for a mineral classified in accordance with this subpart as a mineral material may accept the classification and, if appropriate, receive a sale by negotiated contract for that mineral material under 36 CFR 228.57(b)(2) of this subpart.

[49 FR 29784, July 24, 1984, as amended at 55 FR 51706, Dec. 17, 1990]

## § 228.44 Disposal on existing Federal leased areas.

Mineral material contracts or permits may be issued within existing areas leased or under permit under the 1920 Mineral Leasing Act, as amended (30 U.S.C. 181-187); section 402 of Reorganization Plan No. 3 of 1946 (5 U.S.C. Appendix); the 1947 Mineral Leasing Act for Acquired Lands, as amended (30 U.S.C. 351 *et seq.*); and the 1970 Geothermal Steam Act (30 U.S.C. 1001-1025), provided that it has been determined that removal will neither endanger nor unreasonably interfere with lease operations, and provided further that the lease terms do not prohibit disposal.

## § 228.45 Qualifications of applicants.

The authorized officer may require applicants for prospecting permits, negotiated contracts, or free-use permits

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or bidders for the sale of mineral materials to furnish information necessary to determine their ability to perform the obligations of the contract or permit.

## § 228.46 Application of other laws and regulations.

All mining operations for removal of mineral materials from National Forest lands must meet or exceed applicable Federal standards for the protection of public safety, health, and the environment, and must also meet or exceed State and local standards for the protection of public safety, health, and the environment, to the extent that such standards are not in conflict with Federal purposes and functions.

### GENERAL PROVISIONS

## § 228.47 General terms and conditions of contracts and permits.

(a) *Disposal of designated mineral materials.* Only those specified mineral materials found within the area designated in the contract or permit may be extracted and removed.

(b) *Unauthorized removal (trespass) of mineral materials.* The removal of mineral materials from National Forest lands, except when authorized in accordance with applicable law and regulations of the Department of Agriculture, is prohibited (36 CFR 261.9).

(c) *Conservation.* Mineral material contracts and permits must contain provisions to ensure the efficient removal and conservation of the mineral material.

(d) *Improvements.* Contracts and permits must contain provisions for removal or Government retention of improvements.

(e) *Use of existing National Forest development roads.* The authorized officer may require purchasers and permittees to obtain appropriate road-use permits, make deposits for or perform their commensurate share of road maintenance, and comply with road-use rules contained in 36 CFR part 212, depending upon their planned extent of road use.

(f) *Reclamation.* Requirements for reclamation of areas disturbed by mineral material operations must be included in contracts and permits, except for

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disposals from community sites and common-use areas.

### § 228.48 Appraisal and measurement.

(a) *Appraisal.* All mineral materials for sale must be appraised to determine fair market value. Appraisals must be based on knowledge of the extent of the deposit, quality of material, and economic value. A sale must not be made at less than the appraised value which may be expressed as either price per cubic yard or weight equivalent. In all cases the units of measurement must correspond to the units used in the appraisal. The authorized officer must estimate and record the amount and value of minerals to be disposed of by free-use permit.

(b) *Measurement.* The amount of mineral material actually removed may be measured by volume, weight, truck tally, by combination of these methods, or by such other form of measurement as the authorized officer determines to be appropriate and in the public interest.

### § 228.49 Reappraisal.

If an extension of time is granted as provided in § 228.53(b), the authorized officer must reappraise or reestimate the mineral materials covered by the contract or permit and which remain unexcavated at the time of extension. The recalculated unit value becomes the new unit value for the remaining unexcavated material; excavated and stockpiled material is not subject to reappraisal.

### § 228.50 Production records.

At least annually, the purchaser or permittee must furnish a record of the volume extracted, in cubic yards or weight equivalent, to the authorized officer. The units of measurement must correspond to the units used in the appraisal or estimate.

### § 228.51 Bonding.

(a) *Bond requirements.* Before operations may begin under any contract or permit, a bond must be furnished to the authorized officer to ensure performance of payment (as necessary), reclamation, and other conditions of the contract or permit, except as noted in paragraphs (a) (1) and (3) of this sec-

tion, where the authorized officer may waive such bonding. If an extension of time is granted as provided in § 228.53(b), the bond requirements must be recalculated and changed accordingly.

(1) For *advance payment contracts* for 10,000 cubic yards or more in volume (or weight equivalent), a bond of not less than 10 percent of the total contract price or the value of the estimated annual production (whichever is less), plus the reclamation cost for the area covered by annual mining, is required. When the total volume is less than 10,000 cubic yards, bond requirements, if any, are at the discretion of the authorized officer.

(2) For any *deferred payment contract*, a bond equaling the value of the estimated annual production plus the reclamation cost for the area covered by annual mining is required.

(3) For *free use*, the authorized officer may require a reclamation bond which must be sufficient to cover the cost of reclamation of the anticipated annual work.

(b) *Types of bonding.* A bond must be one of the following:

(1) A bond of a corporate surety shown on the latest approved list issued by the U.S. Treasury Department and executed on an approved standard form;

(2) A cash bond;

(3) Negotiable securities of the United States;

(4) An irrevocable letter of credit acceptable to the Forest Service;

(5) A performance bond required by other Forest Service contracts or permits, provided the bond covers the performance and reclamation requirements related to the removal of mineral material from a designated pit or area for use in the performance of the contract or permit; or

(6) Any other types of bond specified in the Forest Service Manual.

### § 228.52 Assignments.

(a) *Limitations.* A purchaser or permittee may not assign the contract or permit, or any interest therein, without the written approval of the authorized officer.

(b) *Requirements of assignee.* The authorized officer will not approve any

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proposed assignment involving contract or permit performance unless the assignee:

(1) Submits information necessary to assure the authorized officer of the assignee's ability to meet the same requirements as the original purchaser or permittee (assignor); and

(2) Furnishes a bond or obtains a commitment from the previous surety to be bound by the assignment when approved.

(c) *Rights and obligations.* Once the authorized officer approves an assignment, the assignee is entitled to all the rights and is subject to all of the obligations under the contract or permit, and the original purchaser or permittee may be released from any further responsibility under the contract or permit.

### § 228.53 Term.

(a) *Time allowed.* Except as provided in § 228.61(f), § 228.62(b), and elsewhere in this paragraph, a contract or permit may not exceed 1 year from the effective date of the contract or permit unless a written extension is obtained. For those mineral materials sold under a duration of production contract or under a contract for the sale of all mineral material within a specified area, or under a construction contract where removal cannot reasonably take place before completion of other work under the same contract, the authorized officer will establish a reasonable time period for removal.

(b) *Extension of time.* If it is shown that a delay in removal was due to causes beyond the control of the purchaser or permittee, the authorized officer may grant an extension, not to exceed 1 year, upon written request. Written requests for extensions of contracts must be received between 30 and 90 days before the expiration date of the contract. Written requests for extensions of permits must be received between 15 and 90 days before the permit expiration date. The authorized officer may grant a total of two extensions for contracts and permits.

### § 228.54 Single entry sales or permits.

The purchaser or permittee is required to reclaim a single entry source in accordance with an approved oper-

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ating plan which describes operating procedures and reclamation measures, unless the requirement is waived by the authorized officer.

### § 228.55 Cancellation or suspension.

The authorized officer may cancel or suspend a contract, permit, or prospecting permit if the purchaser or permittee fails to comply with its terms and conditions. If the noncompliance is unnecessarily or unreasonably causing injury, loss, or damage to surface resources, the authorized officer may cancel or suspend the contract, permit, or prospecting permit immediately. In cases where noncompliance is of a less serious nature, the authorized officer may cancel or suspend a contract, permit, or prospecting permit if such noncompliance continues for 30 days after service of written notice by the authorized officer. If the noncompliance is not corrected, the authorized officer may attach the bond to ensure compliance with the provisions of the contract, permit, or prospecting permit.

### § 228.56 Operating plans.

Any surface-disturbing operation under a contract, permit, or prospecting permit is subject to prior approval by the authorized officer of an operating plan and to reasonable conditions as may be required to ensure proper protection of the environment and improvements, including timely reclamation of disturbed lands. Significant changes to operations require prior approval of an amended operating plan. The operating plan must include, as a minimum, a map and explanation of the nature of the access, anticipated activity, surface disturbance, and intended reclamation including removal or retention of structures and facilities. Operating plans must be submitted by the purchaser, permittee, or prospecting permittee, except as noted in § 228.64(b).

### TYPES AND METHODS OF DISPOSAL

### § 228.57 Types of disposal.

Except as provided in § 228.41(b), disposal of mineral materials may be made by:

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(a) *Competitive sale* to the highest qualified bidder after formal advertising and other appropriate public notice;

(b) *Sale by negotiated contract.* (1) For removal of materials to be used in connection with a public works improvement program on behalf of a Federal, State, or local government agency if the public exigency will not permit delays incident to advertising, or

(2) For the removal of mineral materials for which it is impracticable to obtain competition;

(c) *Preference right negotiated sale* to the holder of a Forest Service-issued prospecting permit under which a suitable mineral material deposit has been demonstrated on acquired National Forest lands;

(d) *Free use* when a permit is issued to any nonprofit association, corporation, individual, or others listed in § 228.62(d), for other than commercial purposes, resale, or barter, or to any Federal, State, county, local unit, subdivision, municipality, or county road district for use in public projects; or

(e) *Forest Service force account or by contract* where the material is to be used to carry out various Forest Service programs involving construction and maintenance of physical improvements.

### § 228.58 Competitive sales.

(a) *Invitation for bid.* Sales must be conducted as described below after inviting competitive bids through publication and posting. The authorized officer may not offer a competitive sale unless there is a right-of-way or other access to the sale area which is available to anyone qualified to bid.

(b) *Advertising*—(1) *Sales over 25,000 cubic yards.* Mineral material sales offered by competitive bidding and which exceed 25,000 cubic yards must be advertised on the same day once a week for two consecutive weeks in a newspaper of general circulation in the area where the material is located, and in a trade or industrial newspaper when considered appropriate. Notice of the sale must be posted in a conspicuous place in the office where bids are to be submitted. In addition, the authorized officer may send the advertisement directly to known interested persons.

Bids may be received but not evaluated before the end of the advertising period, which may be extended at the discretion of the authorized officer.

(2) *Content of advertising.* The advertisement of sale must specify the location by legal description of the tract or tracts or by any other means identify the location of the mineral material deposit being offered, the kind of material, estimated quantities, the unit of measurement, appraised price (which sets the minimum acceptable bid), time and place for receiving and opening of bids, minimum deposit required, major special constraints due to environmental considerations, available access, maintenance required over haul routes, traffic controls, required use permits, required qualifications of bidders, the method of bidding, bonding requirement, notice of the right to reject any or all bids, the office where a copy of the contract and additional information may be obtained, and additional information the authorized officer deems necessary.

(3) *Advertising smaller sales.* Advertisement of mineral materials amounting to 25,000 cubic yards in volume (or weight equivalent) or less must be published and/or posted. The methods of advertisement are at the discretion of the authorized officer.

(c) *Conduct of sales.* (1) Bidding at competitive sales may be conducted by the submission of written sealed bids, oral bids, or a combination of both as directed by the authorized officer. In the event of a tie in high sealed bids, the highest bidder will be determined by oral auction among those tied bidders; when no oral bid is higher than the sealed bids, the selected bidder will be determined by lot, the purchase price being the amount of the tied bid. For all oral auctions, including those used to break sealed-bid ties, the high bidder must confirm the bid in writing immediately upon being declared the high bidder. The authorized officer must mail notification of the bidding results to all bidders within 10 days.

(2) The authorized officer may require bidders to furnish evidence of qualification at the time of award or, if

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such evidence has already been furnished and is still valid, make appropriate reference to the record containing it.

(3) When it is in the interest of the United States to do so, the authorized officer may reject any or all bids.

(d) *Bid deposits and award of contract.* Sealed bids must be accompanied by a deposit. For mineral materials offered at oral auction, bidders must make the deposit before opening of the bidding.

(1) Bid deposits must be equal to 10 percent of the appraised value but not less than \$100.00.

(2) Bid deposits must be in the form of cash, money order, bank drafts, cashier's or certified checks made payable to the Forest Service, or bonds acceptable to the Forest Service (§228.51(b)).

(3) Upon conclusion of the bidding, the authorized officer will return the deposits of all unsuccessful bidders. The successful bidder's deposit will be applied toward the purchase price. If the contract is not awarded to the high bidder due to an inability to perform the obligations of the contract, the deposit, less expenses and damages incurred by the United States, may be returned. The return of a deposit does not prejudice any other rights or remedies of the United States. The contract may be offered and awarded to the next successive qualified high bidder, or, at the discretion of the authorized officer, the sale may be either re-advertised or negotiated if it is determined that a competitive sale is impracticable.

(4) Within 30 days after receipt of the contract, the successful bidder must sign and return the contract, together with any required bond, unless the authorized officer has granted an extension for an additional 30 days. The bidder must apply for the extension in writing within the first 30-day period. If the successful bidder fails to return the contract within the first 30-day period or within an approved extension, the bid deposit, less the costs of re-advertising and damages, may be returned without prejudice to any other rights or remedies of the United States.

(5) All sales must be processed on Forest Service-approved contract

forms. The authorized officer may add provisions to the contract to cover conditions peculiar to the sale area. Such additional provisions must be made available for inspection by prospective bidders during the advertising period.

**§ 228.59 Negotiated or noncompetitive sales.**

(a) *Volume limitations.* When it is determined by the authorized officer to be in the public interest and when it is impracticable to obtain competition, mineral materials not exceeding 100,000 cubic yards in volume (or weight equivalent) may be sold in any one sale at not less than the appraised value, without advertising or calling for bids, except as provided in paragraphs (b) and (c) of this section. The authorized officer may not approve noncompetitive sales that exceed the total of 200,000 cubic yards (or weight equivalent) made in any one State for the benefit of any applicant in any period of 12 consecutive months.

(b) *Government programs.* In connection with a public works improvement project on behalf of a Federal, State, or local governmental agency, the authorized officer may sell to an applicant, at not less than the appraised value, without advertising or calling for bids, a volume of mineral materials not to exceed 200,000 cubic yards (or weight equivalent) when the public exigency will not permit delays incident to advertising (30 U.S.C. 602).

(c) *Appropriation for highway purposes.* For interstate and/or Federal aid highways, the Secretary of Transportation may appropriate any volume in accordance with 23 U.S.C. 107 and 317.

(d) *Use in development of Federal mineral leases.* When it is determined to be impracticable to obtain competition and the mineral materials are to be used in connection with the development of mineral leases issued by the United States (§228.44), the authorized officer may sell to a leaseholder a volume of mineral material not to exceed 200,000 cubic yards (or weight equivalent) in one State in any period of 12 consecutive months. No charge will be made for materials which must be moved in the process of extracting the

mineral under lease, as long as the materials remain stockpiled within the boundaries of the leased area.

(e) *Exceptions.* (1) The Chief of the Forest Service may authorize the non-competitive sale of mineral materials in excess of the volume limitations in paragraphs (a), (b), and (d) of this section when necessary to:

(i) Respond to an emergency affecting public health, safety or property;

(ii) Prevent the curtailment of operations conducted under the United States mining laws of May 10, 1872, as amended (30 U.S.C. 22 *et seq.*) which generate large volumes of mineral materials as a by-product; or

(iii) Respond to a critical public need for the prompt development of a mineral lease issued by the United States or a mining claim located under the United States mining laws of May 10, 1872, as amended (30 U.S.C. 22 *et seq.*).

(2) Any noncompetitive sale of mineral materials in excess of the volume limitations in paragraphs (a), (b), and (d) shall be subject to such restrictions as the Chief of the Forest Service determines to be in the public interest.

(3) Nothing in this paragraph shall otherwise alter the requirements of paragraphs (a) through (d) of this section.

[49 FR 29784, July 24, 1984, as amended at 52 FR 10565, Apr. 2, 1987; 53 FR 43691, Oct. 28, 1988]

#### § 228.60 Prospecting permits.

(a) *Right conferred.* On acquired National Forest lands, prospecting permits may be issued which grant the permittee the exclusive right to explore for and to demonstrate the existence of a suitable mineral material deposit when existing information is insufficient. After the demonstration of a suitable deposit and confirmation of this by the authorized officer, the permittee will have a preference right to apply for a negotiated sale.

(b) *Limitations.* Mineral material may be removed from lands under a prospecting permit only to the extent necessary for testing and analysis or for the demonstration of the existence of a suitable deposit.

(c) *Environmental analysis.* Prospecting permits will be issued only after submission by applicant and ap-

proval by the authorized officer of a detailed operating plan. The authorized officer may require a bond in accordance with § 228.51. The authorized officer must ensure compliance with the National Environmental Policy Act (42 U.S.C. 4321 *et seq.*).

(d) *Acreage and permit limitations.* A prospecting permit may not cover more than 640 acres. No individual or group may have an interest at any one time in more than three prospecting permits on Forest Service lands administered by one Forest Supervisor.

(e) *Duration and extension of permits.* Prospecting permits may be issued for a period not to exceed 24 months, but they may be extended once for up to an additional 24 months if necessary to complete prospecting. Any application for extension must be submitted no later than 30 days before the expiration of the permit. The application for extension must provide evidence of diligence and state the reasons why additional time is considered necessary to complete prospecting work.

(f) *Refusal to extend permits.* The authorized officer may reject applications for extension of prospecting permits for the following reasons:

(1) *Failure to perform.* Failure of the permittee to perform prospecting or exploration work without adequate justification may result in the denial of an extension; or

(2) *Failure to apply.* If an application for extension is not submitted within the specified period, the permit may expire without notice to the permittee.

(3) *Public interest.* If the authorized officer determines that an extension may not be in the public interest, the application may be rejected.

#### § 228.61 Preference right negotiated sales.

(a) *Qualification for sale.* When applying for a preference right negotiated sale, the permittee must demonstrate to the satisfaction of the authorized officer that a suitable deposit of mineral material has been discovered within the area covered by the prospecting permit. Information concerning trade secrets and financial matters submitted by the permittee and identified as confidential will not be available for

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public examination except as otherwise agreed upon by the permittee.

(b) *Application for sale.* The application must be submitted to the District Ranger's office on or before the expiration date of the prospecting permit or its extension. The authorized officer may grant 30 additional days for submitting the application if requested in writing by the permittee before expiration of the prospecting permit or its extension.

(c) *Terms and conditions of contract.* The terms and conditions will be evaluated on an individual case basis. Only those mineral materials specified in the contract may be removed by the purchaser. Before a preference right negotiated contract is awarded, the authorized officer must ensure that an environmental analysis is conducted. All contracts are subject to the conditions under §§ 228.47 through 228.56.

(d) *Acreage limitations.* The authorized officer will determine the amount of acreage in the preference right negotiated sale based on a presentation of the permittee's needs. The maximum acreage allowable to any individual or group must not exceed 320 acres on National Forest lands administered by one Forest Supervisor. The allowable acreage may be in one or more units which are not necessarily contiguous.

(e) *Volume limitations.* Preference right negotiated sales are exempt from volume limitations.

(f) *Contract time allowable.* A contract or a renewal must not exceed 5 years; however, the purchaser may have renewal options at the end of each contract or renewal period. The authorized officer may renew a contract if it is determined that the renewal is not detrimental to the public interest and that the purchaser has demonstrated diligence in conducting operations. The authorized officer may cancel the contract, or the purchaser may forfeit the contract, if no substantial commercial production occurs during any continuous 2-year period after the award of the contract or if the contract terms and conditions are breached. However, if a delay is caused by conditions beyond the purchaser's control, the authorized officer may grant an extension equal to the lost time.

(g) *Contract renewal reappraisal.* At the time of contract renewal, the authorized officer will reappraise the mineral material deposit in accordance with § 228.49.

### § 228.62 Free use.

(a) *Application.* An application for a free-use permit must be made with the appropriate District Ranger's office.

(b) *Term.* Permits may be issued for periods not to exceed 1 year and will terminate on the expiration date unless extended by the authorized officer as in § 228.53(b). However, the authorized officer may issue permits to any local, State, Federal, or Territorial agency, unit or subdivision, including municipalities and county road districts, for periods up to 10 years.

(c) *Removal by agent.* A free-use permittee may extract the mineral materials through a designated agent provided that the conditions of the permit are not violated. No part of the material may be used as payment for the services of an agent in obtaining or processing the material. A permit may be issued in the name of a designated agent for those entities listed in § 228.62(d)(1), at the discretion of the authorized officer, provided there is binding agreement in which the entity retains responsibility for ensuring compliance with the conditions of the permit.

(d) *Conditions.* Free-use permits may be issued for mineral materials to settlers, miners, residents, and prospectors for uses other than commercial purposes, resale, or barter (16 U.S.C. 477). Free-use permits may be issued to local, State, Federal, or Territorial agencies, units, or subdivisions, including municipalities, or any association or corporation not organized for profit, for other than commercial or industrial purposes or resale (30 U.S.C. 601). Free-use permits may not be issued when, in the judgment of the authorized officer, the applicant owns or controls an adequate supply of mineral material in the area of demand. The free-use permit, issued on a Forest Service-approved form, must include the basis for the free-use as well as the

provisions governing the selection, removal, and use of the mineral materials. No mineral material may be removed until the permit is issued. The permittee must notify the authorized officer upon completion of mineral material removal. The permittee must complete the reclamation prescribed in the operating plan (§ 228.56).

(1) A free-use permit may be issued to any local, State, Federal, or Territorial agency, unit, or subdivision, including municipalities and county road districts, without limitation on the number of permits or on the value of the mineral materials to be extracted or removed.

(2) A free-use permit issued to a non-profit association, corporation, or individual may not provide for the removal of mineral materials having a volume exceeding 5,000 cubic yards (or weight equivalent) during any period of 12 consecutive months.

(e) *Petrified wood.* A free-use permit may be issued to amateur collectors and scientists to take limited quantities of petrified wood for personal use. The material taken may not be bartered or sold. Free-use areas may be designated within which a permit may not be required. Removal of material from such areas must be in accord with rules issued by the authorized officer and posted on the area. Such rules must also be posted in the District Ranger's and Forest Supervisor's offices and be available upon request. The rules may vary by area depending on the quantity, quality, and accessibility of the material and the demand for it.

**§ 228.63 Removal under terms of a timber sale or other Forest Service contract.**

In carrying out programs such as timber sales that involve construction and maintenance of various physical improvements, the Forest Service may specify that mineral materials be mined, manufactured, and/or processed for incorporation into the improvement. Where the mineral material is located on National Forest lands and is designated in the contract calling for its use, no permit is required as long as an operating plan as described in § 228.56 is required by the contract pro-

visions. Title to any excavated material in excess of that needed to fulfill contract requirements reverts in the United States without reimbursement to the contract holder or to agents or representatives of the contract holder. Such excess material may be disposed of under §§ 228.58, 228.59, or 228.62.

**§ 228.64 Community sites and common-use areas.**

(a) *Designation.* Nonexclusive disposals may be made from the same deposit or areas designated by the authorized officer; the designation of such an area and any reclamation requirements must be based on an environmental analysis.

(b) *Pit plans.* The Forest Service must prepare operating plans (§ 228.56) for the efficient removal of the material and for appropriate reclamation of community sites and common-use areas.

(c) *Reclamation.* The Forest Service is responsible for reclamation of community sites and common-use areas.

**§ 228.65 Payment for sales.**

(a) *Conditions.* Mineral materials may not be removed from the sale area until all conditions of payment in the contract have been met.

(b) *Advance payment.* (1) For negotiated and competitive sales the full amount may be paid before removal is begun under the contract or by installment at the discretion of the authorized officer. Installment payments must be based on the estimated removal rate specified in the operating plan and must be, as a minimum, the value of 1 month's removal. The first installment must be paid before removal operations are begun; remaining installments must be paid in advance of removal of the remaining materials as billed by the authorized officer. The total amount of the purchase price must be paid at least 60 days before the expiration date of the contract.

(2) All advance payment contracts must provide for reappraisal of the mineral material at the time of contract renewal or extension.

(3) Minimum annual production must be sufficient to return a payment to the United States equal to the first installment. In lieu of minimum production, there must be an annual payment

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in the amount of the first installment which will not be credited to future years' production. Payments for or in lieu of minimum annual production must be received by the authorized officer on or before the anniversary of the effective date of the contract.

(4) If the purchaser fails to make payments when due, the contract will be considered breached, the authorized officer will cancel the contract, and all previous payments will be forfeited without prejudice to any other rights and remedies of the United States.

(5) In order to determine payment amount, the purchaser must make a report of operations. The report must include the amount of mineral material removed, which must be verified by the authorized officer.

(c) *Deferred payments.* The authorized officer may approve deferred payments for sales.

(1) The purchaser may make payments monthly or quarterly which must be based on the in-place value (volume or weight equivalent) of material removed during the contract period. The units of measurement must correspond to the units used in the appraisal. The purchaser must make all payments before contract renewal.

(2) The purchaser must deliver a bond which conforms to the provisions of § 228.51(a)(2) to the authorized officer before operations are begun under the contract.

[49 FR 29784, July 24, 1984, as amended at 78 FR 33724, June 5, 2013]

## § 228.66 Refunds.

Upon termination of any contract, payments in excess of \$10 may be refunded, less the costs incurred by the United States, under any of the following conditions:

(a) *Payment in excess of value.* If the total payment exceeds the value of the mineral material removed, unless it is the minimum annual payment in lieu of production;

(b) *Insufficiency of material.* If insufficient mineral material existed in the sale area to provide the quantity of material estimated to have been available;

(c) *Cancellation.* (1) If the contract is cancelled by the authorized officer for

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reasons which are beyond the purchaser's control; or

(2) If the contract is cancelled by mutual agreement. This refund provision is not a warranty that a specific quantity of material exists in the sale area.

[49 FR 29784, July 24, 1984, as amended at 78 FR 33724, June 5, 2013]

## § 228.67 Information collection requirements.

(a) The following sections of this subpart contain information collection requirements as defined in the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1980 (5 CFR part 1320): § 228.45, Qualifications of applicants; § 228.51, Bonding; § 228.52(b)(1), Requirements of assignee; § 228.53(b), Extension of time; § 228.56, Operating plans; § 228.57(c), Conduct of sales; § 228.60, Prospecting permits; § 228.61, Preference right negotiated sales; and § 228.62, Free use. These requirements have been approved by the Office of Management and Budget and assigned clearance number 0596–0081.

(b) The public reporting burden for this collection of information is estimated to vary from a few minutes to many hours per individual response, with an average of 2 hours per individual response, including time for reviewing instructions, searching existing data sources, gathering and maintaining the data needed, and completing and reviewing the collection of information. Send comments regarding the burden estimate or any other aspect of this collection of information, including suggestions for reducing this burden, to Chief (2800), Forest Service, USDA, P.O. Box 96090, Washington, DC 20090–6090 and to the Office of Information and Regulatory Affairs, Office of Management and Budget, Washington, DC 20503.

[55 FR 51706, Dec. 17, 1990]

## Subpart D—Miscellaneous Minerals Provisions

### § 228.80 Operations within Misty Fjords and Admiralty Island National Monuments, Alaska.

(a) Mineral activities on valid mining claims in the Misty Fjords and Admiralty Island National Monuments must

be conducted in accordance with regulations in subpart A of this part and with the provisions of this section.

(b) Prior to approving a plan of operations, the authorized officer must consider:

(1) The resources of ecological, cultural, geological, historical, pre-historical, and scientific interest likely to be affected by the proposed operations, including access; and

(2) The potential adverse impacts on the identified resource values resulting from the proposed operations.

(c) A plan of operations will be approved if, in the judgment of the authorized officer, proposed operations are compatible, to the maximum extent feasible, with the protection of the resource values identified pursuant to paragraph (b)(1) of this section.

(1) The authorized officer will deem operations to be compatible if the plan of operations includes all feasible measures which are necessary to prevent or minimize potential adverse impacts on the resource values identified pursuant to paragraph (b)(1) of this section and if the operations are conducted in accordance with the plan.

(2) In evaluating the feasibility of mitigating measures, the authorized officer shall, at a minimum, consider the following:

(i) The effectiveness and practicality of measures utilizing the best available technology for preventing or minimizing adverse impacts on the resource values identified pursuant to paragraph (b)(1) of this section; and

(ii) The long- and short-term costs to the operator of utilizing such measures and the effect of these costs on the long- and short-term economic viability of the operations.

(3) The authorized officer shall not require implementation of mitigating measures which would prevent the evaluation or development of any valid claim for which operations are proposed.

(d) In accordance with the procedures described in subpart A and paragraphs (c)(1) through (c)(3) of this section, the authorized officer may approve modifications of an existing plan of operations:

(1) If, in the judgment of the authorized officer, environmental impacts un-

foreseen at the time of approval of the existing plan may result in the incompatibility of the operations with the protection of the resource values identified pursuant to paragraph (b)(1) of this section; or

(2) Upon request by the operator to use alternative technology and equipment capable of achieving a level of environmental protection equivalent to that to be achieved under the existing plan of operations.

[51 FR 20827, June 9, 1986]

### Subpart E—Oil and Gas Resources

SOURCE: 55 FR 10444, Mar. 21, 1990, unless otherwise noted.

#### § 228.100 Scope and applicability.

(a) *Scope.* This subpart sets forth the rules and procedures by which the Forest Service of the United States Department of Agriculture will carry out its statutory responsibilities in the issuance of Federal oil and gas leases and management of subsequent oil and gas operations on National Forest System lands, for approval and modification of attendant surface use plans of operations, for monitoring of surface disturbing operations on such leases, and for enforcement of surface use requirements and reclamation standards.

(b) *Applicability.* The rules of this subpart apply to leases on National Forest System lands and to operations that are conducted on Federal oil and gas leases on National Forest System lands as of April 20, 1990.

(c) *Applicability of other rules.* Surface uses associated with oil and gas prospecting, development, production, and reclamation activities, that are conducted on National Forest System lands outside a leasehold must receive prior authorization from the Forest Service. Such activities are subject to the regulations set forth elsewhere in 36 CFR chapter II, including but not limited to the regulations set forth in 36 CFR parts 251, subpart B, and 261.

#### § 228.101 Definitions.

For the purposes of this subpart, the terms listed in this section have the following meaning:

*Authorized Forest officer.* The Forest Service employee delegated the authority to perform a duty described in these rules. Generally, a Regional Forester, Forest Supervisor, District Ranger, or Minerals Staff Officer, depending on the scope and level of the duty to be performed.

*Compliance Officer.* The Deputy Chief, or the Associate Deputy Chiefs, National Forest System or the line officer designated to act in the absence of the Deputy Chief.

*Leasehold.* The area described in a Federal oil and gas lease, communitized, or unitized area.

*Lessee.* A person or entity holding record title in a lease issued by the United States.

*National Forest System.* All National Forest lands reserved or withdrawn from the public domain of the United States, all National Forest lands acquired through purchase, exchange, donation, or other means, the National Grasslands and land utilization projects administered under title III of the Bankhead-Jones Farm Tenant Act (7 U.S.C. 1010 *et seq.*), and other lands, waters, or interests therein which are administered by the Forest Service or are designated for administration through the Forest Service as a part of the system (16 U.S.C. 1609).

*Notices to Lessees, Transferees, and Operators.* A written notice issued by the authorized Forest officer. Notices to Lessees, Transferees, and Operators implement the regulations in this subpart and serve as instructions on specific item(s) of importance within a Forest Service Region, National Forest, or Ranger District.

*Onshore Oil and Gas Order.* A formal numbered order issued by or signed by the Chief of the Forest Service that implements and supplements the regulations in this subpart.

*Operating right.* The interest created out of a lease that authorizes the holder of that interest to enter upon the leased lands to conduct drilling and related operations, including production of oil and gas from such lands in accordance with the terms of the lease.

*Operating rights owner.* A person holding operating rights in a lease issued by the United States. A lessee also may be an operating rights owner if

the operating rights in a lease or portion thereof have not been conveyed to another person.

*Operations.* Surface disturbing activities that are conducted on a leasehold on National Forest System lands pursuant to a current approved surface use plan of operations, including but not limited to, exploration, development, and production of oil and gas resources and reclamation of surface resources.

*Operator.* Any person or entity, including, but not limited to, the lessee or operating rights owner, who has stated in writing to the authorized Forest officer that they are responsible under the terms and conditions of the lease for the operations conducted on the leased lands or a portion thereof.

*Person.* An individual, partnership, corporation, association or other legal entity.

*Substantial modification.* A change in lease terms or a modification, waiver, or exception of a lease stipulation that would require an environmental assessment or environmental impact statement be prepared pursuant to the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969.

*Surface use plan of operations.* A plan for surface use, disturbance, and reclamation.

*Transfer.* Any conveyance of an interest in a lease by assignment, sublease or otherwise. This definition includes the terms: *Assignment* which means a conveyance of all or a portion of the lessee's record title interest in a lease; and *sublease* which means a conveyance of a non-record interest in a lease, i.e., a conveyance of operating rights is normally a sublease and a sublease also is a subsidiary arrangement between the lessee (sublessor) and the sublessee, but a sublease does not include a transfer of a purely financial interest, such as overriding royalty interest or payment out of production, nor does it affect the relationship imposed by a lease between the lessee(s) and the United States.

*Transferee.* A person to whom an interest in a lease issued by the United States has been transferred.

## LEASING

**§ 228.102 Leasing analyses and decisions.**

(a) *Compliance with the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969.* In analyzing lands for leasing, the authorized Forest officer shall comply with the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969, implementing regulations at 43 CFR parts 1500–1508, and Forest Service implementing policies and procedures set forth in Forest Service Manual chapter 1950 and Forest Service Handbook 1909.15.

(b) *Scheduling analysis of available lands.* Within 6 months of April 20, 1990, Forest Supervisors shall develop, in cooperation with the Bureau of Land Management and with public input, a schedule for analyzing lands under their jurisdiction that have not been already analyzed for leasing. The Forest Supervisors shall revise or make additions to the schedule at least annually. In scheduling lands for analysis, the authorized Forest officer shall identify and exclude from further review the following lands which are legally unavailable for leasing:

(1) Lands withdrawn from mineral leasing by an act of Congress or by an order of the Secretary of the Interior;

(2) Lands recommended for wilderness allocation by the Secretary of Agriculture;

(3) Lands designated by statute as wilderness study areas, unless oil and gas leasing is specifically allowed by the statute designating the study area; and

(4) Lands within areas allocated for wilderness or further planning in Executive Communication 1504, Ninety-Sixth Congress (House Document No. 96-119), unless such lands subsequently have been allocated to uses other than wilderness by an approved Forest land and resource management plan or have been released to uses other than wilderness by an act of Congress.

(c) *Leasing analyses.* The leasing analysis shall be conducted by the authorized Forest officer in accordance with the requirements of 36 CFR part 219 (Forest land and resource management planning) and/or, as appropriate, through preparation of NEPA docu-

ments. As part of the analysis, the authorized Forest officer shall:

(1) Identify on maps those areas that will be:

(i) Open to development subject to the terms and conditions of the standard oil and gas lease form (including an explanation of the typical standards and objectives to be enforced under the standard lease terms);

(ii) Open to development but subject to constraints that will require the use of lease stipulations such as those prohibiting surface use on areas larger than 40 acres or such other standards as may be developed in the plan for stipulation use (with discussion as to why the constraints are necessary and justifiable); and

(iii) Closed to leasing, distinguishing between those areas that are being closed through exercise of management direction, and those closed by law, regulation, etc.

(2) Identify alternatives to the areas listed in paragraph (c)(1) of this section, including that of not allowing leasing.

(3) Project the type/amount of post-leasing activity that is reasonably foreseeable as a consequence of conducting a leasing program consistent with that described in the proposal and for each alternative.

(4) Analyze the reasonable foreseeable impacts of post-leasing activity projected under paragraph (c)(3) of this section.

(d) *Area or Forest-wide leasing decisions (lands administratively available for leasing).* Upon completion of the leasing analysis, the Regional Forest shall promptly notify the Bureau of Land Management as to the area or Forest-wide leasing decisions that have been made, that is, identify lands which have been found administratively available for leasing.

(e) *Leasing decisions for specific lands.* At such time as specific lands are being considered for leasing, the Regional Forester shall review the area or Forest-wide leasing decision and shall authorize the Bureau of Land Management to offer specific lands for lease subject to:

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(1) Verifying that oil and gas leasing of the specific lands has been adequately addressed in a NEPA document, and is consistent with the Forest land and resource management plan. If NEPA has not been adequately addressed, or if there is significant new information or circumstances as defined by 40 CFR 1502.9 requiring further environmental analysis, additional environment analysis shall be done before a leasing decision for specific lands will be made. If there is inconsistency with the Forest land and resource management plan, no authorization for leasing shall be given unless the plan is amended or revised.

(2) Ensuring that conditions of surface occupancy identified in § 228.102(c)(1) are properly included as stipulations in resulting leases.

(3) Determining that operations and development could be allowed somewhere on each proposed lease, except where stipulations will prohibit all surface occupancy.

[55 FR 10444, Mar. 21, 1990, as amended at 56 FR 56157, Nov. 1, 1991]

### § 228.103 Notice of appeals of decisions.

The authorized Forest officer shall promptly notify the Bureau of Land Management if appeals of either an area or Forest-wide leasing decision or a leasing decision for specific lands are filed during the periods provided for under 36 CFR part 217.

### § 228.104 Consideration of requests to modify, waive, or grant exceptions to lease stipulations.

(a) *General.* An operator submitting a surface use plan of operations may request the authorized Forest officer to authorize the Bureau of Land Management to modify (permanently change), waive (permanently remove), or grant an exception (case-by-case exemption) to a stipulation included in a lease at the direction of the Forest Service. The person making the request is encouraged to submit any information which might assist the authorized Forest officer in making a decision.

(b) *Review.* The authorized Forest officer shall review any information submitted in support of the request and any other pertinent information.

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(1) As part of the review, consistent with 30 U.S.C. 226 (f)-(g), the authorized Forest officer shall ensure compliance with the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (42 U.S.C. 4331 *et seq.*) and any other applicable laws, and shall ensure preparation of any appropriate environmental documents.

(2) The authorized Forest officer may authorize the Bureau of Land Management to modify, waive, or grant an exception to a stipulation if:

(i) The action would be consistent with applicable Federal laws;

(ii) The action would be consistent with the current forest land and resource management plan;

(iii) The management objectives which led the Forest Service to require the inclusion of the stipulation in the lease can be met without restricting operations in the manner provided for by the stipulation given the change in the present condition of the surface resources involved, or given the nature, location, timing, or design of the proposed operations; and

(iv) The action is acceptable to the authorized Forest officer based upon a review of the environmental consequences.

(c) *Other agency stipulations.* If a stipulation was included in a lease by the Forest Service at the request of another agency, the authorized Forest officer shall consult with that agency prior to authorizing modification, waiver, or exception.

(d) *Notice of decision.* (1) When the review of a stipulation modification, waiver, or exception request has been completed and the authorized Forest officer has reached a decision, the authorized Forest officer shall promptly notify the operator and the appropriate Bureau of Land Management office, in writing, of the decision to grant, or grant with additional conditions, or deny the request.

(2) Any decision to modify, waive, or grant an exception to a lease stipulation shall be subject to administrative appeal only in conjunction with an appeal of a decision on a surface use plan of operation or supplemental surface use plan of operation.

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### AUTHORIZATION OF OCCUPANCY WITHIN A LEASEHOLD

#### § 228.105 Issuance of onshore orders and notices to lessees.

(a) *Onshore oil and gas orders.* The Chief of the Forest Service may issue, or cosign with the Director, Bureau of Land Management, Onshore Oil and Gas Orders necessary to implement and supplement the regulations of this subpart.

(1) *Surface Use Plans of Operations and Master Development Plans.* Operators shall submit Surface Use Plans of Operations or Master Development Plans in accordance with Onshore Oil and Gas Order No. 1. Approval of a Master Development Plan constitutes a decision to approve Surface Use Plans of Operations submitted as a part of the Master Development Plan. Subsequently submitted Surface Use Plans of Operations shall be reviewed to verify that they are consistent with the approved Master Development Plan and whether additional NEPA documentation or consultation pursuant to the National Historic Preservation Act or the Endangered Species Act is required. If the review determines that additional documentation is required, the Forest Service will review the additional documentation or consult as appropriate and make an independent decision regarding the subsequently submitted Surface Use Plan of Operations, and notify the BLM and the operator whether the Surface Use Plan of Operations is approved.

(2) *Adoption of additional onshore oil and gas orders.* Additional onshore oil and gas orders shall be published in the FEDERAL REGISTER for public comment and codified in the CFR.

(3) *Applicability of onshore oil and gas orders.* Onshore Oil and Gas Orders issued pursuant to this section are binding on all operations conducted on National Forest System lands, unless otherwise provided therein.

(b) *Notices to lessees, transferees, and operators.* The authorized Forest officer may issue, or cosign with the authorized officer of the Bureau of Land Management, Notices to Lessees, Transferees, and Operators necessary to implement the regulations of this subpart. Notices to Lessees, Transferees,

and Operators are binding on all operations conducted on the administrative unit of the National Forest System (36 CFR 200.2) supervised by the authorized Forest officer who issued or cosigned such notice.

[55 FR 10444, Mar. 21, 1990, as amended at 72 FR 10328, Mar. 7, 2007]

#### § 228.106 Operator's submission of surface use plan of operations.

(a) *General.* No permit to drill on a Federal oil and gas lease for National Forest System lands may be granted without the analysis and approval of a surface use plan of operations covering proposed surface disturbing activities. An operator must obtain an approved surface use plan of operations before conducting operations that will cause surface disturbance. The operator shall submit a proposed surface use plan of operations as part of an Application for a Permit to Drill to the appropriate Bureau of Land Management office for forwarding to the Forest Service, unless otherwise directed by the Onshore Oil and Gas Order in effect when the proposed plan of operations is submitted.

(b) *Preparation of plan.* In preparing a surface use plan of operations, the operator is encouraged to contact the local Forest Service office to make use of such information as is available from the Forest Service concerning surface resources and uses, environmental considerations, and local reclamation procedures.

(c) *Content of plan.* The type, size, and intensity of the proposed operations and the sensitivity of the surface resources that will be affected by the proposed operations determine the level of detail and the amount of information which the operator includes in a proposed plan of operations. However, any surface use plan of operations submitted by an operator shall contain the information specified by the Onshore Oil and Gas Order in effect when the surface use plan of operations is submitted.

(d) *Supplemental plan.* An operator must obtain an approved supplemental surface use plan of operations before conducting any surface disturbing operations that are not authorized by a current approved surface use plan of

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operations. The operator shall submit a proposed supplemental surface use plan of operations to the appropriate Bureau of Land Management office for forwarding to the Forest Service, unless otherwise directed by the Onshore Oil and Gas Order in effect when the proposed supplemental plan of operations is submitted. The supplemental plan of operations need only address those operations that differ from the operations authorized by the current approved surface use plan of operations. A supplemental plan is otherwise subject to the same requirements under this subpart as an initial surface use plan of operations.

### § 228.107 Review of surface use plan of operations.

(a) *Review.* The authorized Forest officer shall review a surface use plan of operations as promptly as practicable given the nature and scope of the proposed plan. As part of the review, the authorized Forest officer shall comply with the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969, implementing regulations at 40 CFR parts 1500–1508, and the Forest Service implementing policies and procedures set forth in Forest Service Manual Chapter 1950 and Forest Service Handbook 1909.15 and shall ensure that:

(1) The surface use plan of operations is consistent with the lease, including the lease stipulations, and applicable Federal laws;

(2) To the extent consistent with the rights conveyed by the lease, the surface use plan of operations is consistent with, or is modified to be consistent with, the applicable current approved forest land and resource management plan;

(3) The surface use plan of operations meets or exceeds the surface use requirements of § 228.108 of this subpart; and

(4) The surface use plan of operations is acceptable, or is modified to be acceptable, to the authorized Forest officer based upon a review of the environmental consequences of the operations.

(b) *Decision.* The authorized Forest officer shall make a decision on the approval of a surface use plan of operations as follows:

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(1) If the authorized Forest officer will not be able to make a decision on the proposed plan within 3 working days after the conclusion of the 30-day notice period provided for by 30 U.S.C. 226(f), the authorized Forest officer shall advise the appropriate Bureau of Land Management office and the operator as soon as such delay becomes apparent, either in writing or orally with subsequent written confirmation, that additional time will be needed to process the plan. The authorized Forest officer shall explain the reason why additional time is needed and project the date by which a decision on the plan will likely be made.

(2) When the review of a surface use plan of operations has been completed, the authorized Forest officer shall promptly notify the operator and the appropriate Bureau of Land Management office, in writing, that:

(i) The plan is approved as submitted;

(ii) The plan is approved subject to specified conditions; or,

(iii) The plan is disapproved for the reasons stated.

(c) *Notice of decision.* The authorized Forest officer shall give public notice of the decision on a surface use plan of operations and include in the notice that the decision is subject to appeal under 36 CFR part 214 or 215.

(d) *Transmittal of decision.* The authorized Forest officer shall immediately forward a decision on a surface use plan of operations to the appropriate Bureau of Land Management office and the operator. This transmittal shall include the estimated cost of reclamation and restoration (§ 228.109(a)) if the authorized Forest officer believes that additional bonding is required.

(e) *Supplemental plans.* A supplemental surface use plan of operations (§ 228.106(d)) shall be reviewed in the same manner as an initial surface use plan of operations.

[55 FR 10444, Mar. 21, 1990, as amended at 72 FR 10328, Mar. 7, 2007; 78 FR 33724, June 5, 2013]

### § 228.108 Surface use requirements.

(a) *General.* The operator shall conduct operations on a leasehold on National Forest System lands in a manner that minimizes effects on surface

resources, prevents unnecessary or unreasonable surface resource disturbance, and that is in compliance with the other requirements of this section.

(b) *Notice of operations.* The operator must notify the authorized Forest officer 48 hours prior to commencing operations or resuming operations following their temporary cessation (§ 228.111).

(c) *Access facilities.* The operator shall construct and maintain access facilities to assure adequate drainage and to minimize or prevent damage to surface resources.

(d) *Cultural and historical resources.* The operator shall report findings of cultural and historical resources to the authorized Forest officer immediately and, except as otherwise authorized in an approved surface use plan of operations, protect such resources.

(e) *Fire prevention and control.* To the extent practicable, the operator shall take measures to prevent uncontrolled fires on the area of operation and to suppress uncontrolled fires resulting from the operations.

(f) *Fisheries, wildlife and plant habitat.* The operator shall comply with the requirements of the Endangered Species Act of 1973 (16 U.S.C. 1531 *et seq.*) and its implementing regulations (50 CFR chapter IV), and, except as otherwise provided in an approved surface use plan of operations, conduct operations in such a manner as to maintain and protect fisheries, wildlife, and plant habitat.

(g) *Reclamation.* (1) Unless otherwise provided in an approved surface use plan of operations, the operator shall conduct reclamation concurrently with other operations.

(2) Within 1 year of completion of operations on a portion of the area of operation, the operator must reclaim that portion, unless a different period of time is approved in writing by the authorized Forest officer.

(3) The operator must:

- (i) Control soil erosion and landslides;
- (ii) Control water runoff;
- (iii) Remove, or control, solid wastes, toxic substances, and hazardous substances;
- (iv) Reshape and revegetate disturbed areas;

(v) Remove structures, improvements, facilities and equipment, unless otherwise authorized; and

(vi) Take such other reclamation measures as specified in the approved surface use plan of operations.

(h) *Safety measures.* (1) The operator must maintain structures, facilities, improvements, and equipment located on the area of operation in a safe and neat manner and in accordance with an approved surface use plan of operations.

(2) The operator must take appropriate measures in accordance with applicable Federal and State laws and regulations to protect the public from hazardous sites or conditions resulting from the operations. Such measures may include, but are not limited to, posting signs, building fences, or otherwise identifying the hazardous site or condition.

(i) *Wastes.* The operator must either remove garbage, refuse, and sewage from National Forest System lands or treat and dispose of that material in such a manner as to minimize or prevent adverse impacts on surface resources. The operator shall treat or dispose of produced water, drilling fluid, and other waste generated by the operations in such a manner as to minimize or prevent adverse impacts on surface resources.

(j) *Watershed protection.* (1) Except as otherwise provided in the approved surface use plan of operations, the operator shall not conduct operations in areas subject to mass soil movement, riparian areas and wetlands.

(2) The operator shall take measures to minimize or prevent erosion and sediment production. Such measures include, but are not limited to, siting structures, facilities, and other improvements to avoid steep slopes and excessive clearing of land.

#### § 228.109 Bonds.

(a) *General.* As part of the review of a proposed surface use plan of operations, the authorized Forest officer shall consider the estimated cost to the Forest Service to reclaim those areas that would be disturbed by operations and to restore any lands or surface waters adversely affected by the lease operations after the abandonment or

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cessation of operations on the lease. If at any time prior to or during the conduct of operations, the authorized Forest officer determines the financial instrument held by the Bureau of Land Management is not adequate to ensure complete and timely reclamation and restoration, the authorized Forest officer shall give the operator the option of either increasing the financial instrument held by the Bureau of Land Management or filing a separate instrument with the Forest Service in the amount deemed adequate by the authorized Forest officer to ensure reclamation and restoration.

(b) *Standards for estimating reclamation costs.* The authorized Forest officer shall consider the costs of the operator's proposed reclamation program and the need for additional measures to be taken when estimating the cost to the Forest Service to reclaim the disturbed area.

(c) *Release of reclamation liability.* An operator may request the authorized Forest officer to notify the Bureau of Land Management of reduced reclamation liability at any time after reclamation has commenced. The authorized Forest officer shall, if appropriate, notify the Bureau of Land Management as to the amount to which the liability has been reduced.

## § 228.110 Indemnification.

The operator and, if the operator does not hold all of the interest in the applicable lease, all lessees and transferees are jointly and severally liable in accordance with Federal and State laws for indemnifying the United States for:

(a) Injury, loss or damage, including fire suppression costs, which the United States incurs as a result of the operations; and

(b) Payments made by the United States in satisfaction of claims, demands or judgments for an injury, loss or damage, including fire suppression costs, which result from the operations.

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### ADMINISTRATION OF OPERATIONS

## § 228.111 Temporary cessation of operations.

(a) *General.* As soon as it becomes apparent that there will be a temporary cessation of operations for a period of 45 days or more, the operator must verbally notify and subsequently file a statement with the authorized Forest officer verifying the operator's intent to maintain structures, facilities, improvements, and equipment that will remain on the area of operation during the cessation of operations, and specifying the expected date by which operations will be resumed.

(b) *Seasonal shutdowns.* The operator need not file the statement required by paragraph (a) of this section if the cessation of operations results from seasonally adverse weather conditions and the operator will resume operations promptly upon the conclusion of those adverse weather conditions.

(c) *Interim measures.* The authorized Forest officer may require the operator to take reasonable interim reclamation or erosion control measures to protect surface resources during temporary cessations of operations, including during cessations of operations resulting from seasonally adverse weather conditions.

## § 228.112 Compliance and inspection.

(a) *General.* Operations must be conducted in accordance with the lease, including stipulations made part of the lease at the direction of the Forest Service, an approved surface use plan of operations, the applicable Onshore Oil and Gas Order (§ 228.105(a)), an applicable Notice to lessees, transferees, and operators (§ 228.105(b)), and regulations of this subpart.

(b) *Completion of reclamation.* The authorized Forest officer shall give prompt written notice to an operator whenever reclamation of a portion of the area affected by surface operations has been satisfactorily completed in accordance with the approved surface use plan of operations and § 228.108 of this subpart. The notice shall describe the portion of the area on which the reclamation has been satisfactorily completed.

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(c) *Compliance with other statutes and regulations.* Nothing in this subpart shall be construed to relieve an operator from complying with applicable Federal and State laws or regulations, including, but not limited to:

(1) Federal and State air quality standards, including the requirements of the Clean Air Act, as amended (42 U.S.C. 1857 *et seq.*);

(2) Federal and State water quality standards, including the requirements of the Federal Water Pollution Control Act, as amended (33 U.S.C. 1151 *et seq.*);

(3) Federal and State standards for the use or generation of solid wastes, toxic substances and hazardous substances, including the requirements of the Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation and Liability Act, as amended, 42 U.S.C. 9601 *et seq.*, and its implementing regulations, 40 CFR chapter I, subchapter J, and the Resource Conservation and Recovery Act, 42 U.S.C. 6901 *et seq.*, and its implementing regulations, 40 CFR chapter I, subchapter I;

(4) The Endangered Species Act of 1973, 16 U.S.C. 1531 *et seq.*, and its implementing regulations, 50 CFR chapter IV;

(5) The Archeological Resources Protection Act of 1979, as amended (16 U.S.C. 470aa *et seq.*) and its implementing regulations 36 CFR part 296;

(6) The Mineral Leasing Act of 1920, 30 U.S.C. 1981 *et seq.*, the Mineral Leasing Act of Acquired Lands of 1947, 30 U.S.C. 351 *et seq.*, the Federal Oil and Gas Royalty Management Act of 1982, 30 U.S.C. 1701 *et seq.*, and their implementing regulations, 43 CFR chapter II, group 3100; and

(7) Applicable Onshore Oil and Gas Orders and Notices to Lessees and Operators (NTL's) issued by the United States Department of the Interior, Bureau of Land Management pursuant to 43 CFR chapter II, part 3160, subpart 3164.

(d) *Penalties.* If surface disturbing operations are being conducted that are not authorized by an approved surface use plan of operations or that violate a term or operating condition of an approved surface use plan of operations, the person conducting those operations is subject to the prohibitions and attendant penalties of 36 CFR part 261.

(e) *Inspection.* Forest Service officers shall periodically inspect the area of operations to determine and document whether operations are being conducted in compliance with the regulations in this subpart, the stipulations included in the lease at the direction of the Forest Service, the approved surface use plan of operations, the applicable Onshore Oil and Gas Order, and applicable Notices to Lessees, Transferees, and Operators.

### § 228.113 Notice of noncompliance.

(a) *Issuance.* When an authorized Forest officer finds that the operator is not in compliance with a reclamation or other standard, a stipulation included in a lease at the direction of the Forest Service, an approved surface use plan of operation, the regulations in this subpart, the applicable onshore oil and gas order, or an applicable notice to lessees, transferees, and operators, the authorized Forest officer shall issue a notice of noncompliance.

(1) *Content.* The notice of noncompliance shall include the following:

(i) Identification of the reclamation requirements or other standard(s) with which the operator is not in compliance;

(ii) Description of the measures which are required to correct the noncompliance;

(iii) Specification of a reasonable period of time within which the noncompliance must be corrected;

(iv) If the noncompliance appears to be material, identification of the possible consequences of continued noncompliance of the requirement(s) or standard(s) as described in 30 U.S.C. 226(g);

(v) If the noncompliance appears to be in violation of the prohibitions set forth in 36 CFR part 261, identification of the possible consequences of continued noncompliance of the requirement(s) or standard(s) as described in 36 CFR 261.1b; and

(vi) Notification that the authorized Forest officer remains willing and desirous of working cooperatively with the operator to resolve or remedy the noncompliance.

(2) *Extension of deadlines.* The operator may request an extension of a

deadline specified in a notice of noncompliance if the operator is unable to come into compliance with the applicable requirement(s) or standard(s) identified in the notice of noncompliance by the deadline because of conditions beyond the operator's control. The authorized Forest officer shall not extend a deadline specified in a notice of noncompliance unless the operator requested an extension and the authorized Forest officer finds that there was a condition beyond the operator's control, that such condition prevented the operator from complying with the notice of noncompliance by the specified deadline, and that the extension will not adversely affect the interests of the United States. Conditions which may be beyond the operator's control include, but are not limited to, closure of an area in accordance with 36 CFR part 261, subparts B or C, or inaccessibility of an area of operations due to such conditions as fire, flooding, or snowpack.

(3) *Manner of service.* The authorized Forest officer shall serve a notice of noncompliance or a decision on a request for extension of a deadline specified in a notice upon the operator in person, by certified mail or by telephone. However, if notice is initially provided in person or by telephone, the authorized Forest officer shall send the operator written confirmation of the notice or decision by certified mail.

(b) *Failure to come into compliance.* If the operator fails to come into compliance with the applicable requirement(s) or standard(s) identified in a notice of noncompliance by the deadline specified in the notice, or an approved extension, the authorized Forest officer shall decide whether: The noncompliance appears to be material given the reclamation requirements and other standards applicable to the lease established by 30 U.S.C. 226(g), the regulations in this subpart, the stipulations included in a lease at the direction of the Forest Service, an approved surface use plan of operations, the applicable Onshore Oil and Gas Order, or an applicable Notice to lessees, transferees, and operators; the noncompliance is likely to result in danger to public health or safety or irreparable resource damage; and the

noncompliance is resulting in an emergency.

(1) *Referral to compliance officer.* When the operations appear to be in material noncompliance, the authorized Forest officer shall promptly refer the matter to the compliance officer. The referral shall be accompanied by a complete statement of the facts supported by appropriate exhibits. Apparent material noncompliance includes, but is not limited to, operating without an approved surface use plan of operations, conducting operations that have been suspended, failure to timely complete reclamation in accordance with an approved surface use plan of operations, failure to maintain an additional bond in the amount required by the authorized Forest officer during the period of operation, failure to timely reimburse the Forest Service for the cost of abating an emergency, and failing to comply with any term included in a lease, stipulation, or approved surface use plan of operations, the applicable onshore oil and gas order, or an applicable Notice to lessees, transferees, and operators, relating to the protection of a threatened or endangered species.

(2) *Suspension of operations.* When the noncompliance is likely to result in danger to public health or safety or in irreparable resource damage, the authorized Forest officer shall suspend the operations, in whole or in part.

(i) A suspension of operations shall remain in effect until the authorized Forest officer determines that the operations are in compliance with the applicable requirement(s) or standard(s) identified in the notice of noncompliance.

(ii) The authorized Forest officer shall serve decisions suspending operations upon the operator in person, by certified mail, or by telephone. If notice is initially provided in person or by telephone, the authorized Forest officer shall send the operator written confirmation of the decision by certified mail.

(iii) The authorized Forest officer shall immediately notify the appropriate Bureau of Land Management office when an operator has been given notice to suspend operations.

(3) *Abatement of emergencies.* When the noncompliance is resulting in an emergency, the authorized Forest officer may take action as necessary to abate the emergency. The total cost to the Forest Service of taking actions to abate an emergency becomes an obligation of the operator.

(i) Emergency situations include, but are not limited to, imminent dangers to public health or safety or irreparable resource damage.

(ii) The authorized Forest officer shall promptly serve a bill for such costs upon the operator by certified mail.

**§ 228.114 Material noncompliance proceedings.**

(a) *Evaluation of referral.* The compliance officer shall promptly evaluate a referral made by the authorized Forest officer pursuant to § 228.113(b)(1) of this subpart.

(b) *Dismissal of referral.* The compliance officer shall dismiss the referral if the compliance officer determines that there is not adequate evidence to support a reasonable belief that:

(1) The operator was not in compliance with the applicable requirement(s) or standard(s) identified in a notice of noncompliance by the deadline specified in the notice, or an extension approved by the authorized Forest officer; or

(2) The noncompliance with the applicable requirement(s) or standard(s) identified in the notice of noncompliance may be material.

(c) *Initiation of proceedings.* The compliance officer shall initiate a material noncompliance proceeding if the compliance officer agrees that there is adequate evidence to support a reasonable belief that an operator has failed to come into compliance with the applicable requirement(s) or standard(s) identified in a notice of noncompliance by the deadline specified in the notice, or extension approved by the authorized Forest officer, and that the noncompliance may be material.

(1) *Notice of proceedings.* The compliance officer shall inform the lessee and operator of the material noncompliance proceedings by certified mail, return receipt requested.

(2) *Content of notice.* The notice of the material noncompliance proceeding shall include the following:

(i) The specific reclamation requirement(s) or other standard(s) of which the operator may be in material noncompliance;

(ii) A description of the measures that are required to correct the violation;

(iii) A statement that if the compliance officer finds that the operator is in material noncompliance with a reclamation requirement or other standard applicable to the lease, the Secretary of the Interior will not be able to issue new leases or approve new transfers of leases to the operator, any subsidiary or affiliate of the operator, or any person controlled by or under common control with the operator until the compliance officer finds that the operator has come into compliance with such requirement or standard; and

(iv) A recitation of the specific procedures governing the material noncompliance proceeding set forth in paragraphs (d) through (g) of this section.

(d) *Answer.* Within 30 calendar days after receiving the notice of the proceeding, the operator may submit, in person, in writing, or through a representative, an answer containing information and argument in opposition to the proposed material noncompliance finding, including information that raises a genuine dispute over the material facts. In that submission, the operator also may:

(1) Request an informal hearing with the compliance officer; and

(2) Identify pending administrative or judicial appeal(s) which are relevant to the proposed material noncompliance finding and provide information which shows the relevance of such appeal(s).

(e) *Informal hearing.* If the operator requests an informal hearing, it shall be held within 20 calendar days from the date that the compliance officer receives the operator's request.

(1) The compliance officer may postpone the date of the informal hearing if the operator requests a postponement in writing.

(2) At the hearing, the operator, appearing personally or through an attorney or another authorized representative, may informally present and explain evidence and argument in opposition to the proposed material non-compliance finding.

(3) A transcript of the informal hearing shall not be required.

(f) *Additional procedures as to disputed facts.* If the compliance officer finds that the answer raises a genuine dispute over facts essential to the proposed material noncompliance finding, the compliance officer shall so inform the operator by certified mail, return receipt requested. Within 10 days of receiving this notice, the operator may request a fact-finding conference on those disputed facts.

(1) The fact-finding conference shall be scheduled within 20 calendar days from the date the compliance officer receives the operator's request, unless the operator and compliance officer agree otherwise.

(2) At the fact-finding conference, the operator shall have the opportunity to appear with counsel, submit documentary evidence, present witnesses, and confront the person(s) the Forest Service presents.

(3) A transcribed record of the fact-finding conference shall be made, unless the operator and the compliance officer by mutual agreement waive the requirement for a transcript. The transcript will be made available to the operator at cost upon request.

(4) The compliance officer may preside over the fact-finding conference or designate another authorized Forest officer to preside over the fact-finding conference.

(5) Following the fact-finding conference, the authorized Forest officer who presided over the conference shall promptly prepare written findings of fact based upon the preponderance of the evidence. The compliance officer may reject findings of fact prepared by another authorized Forest officer, in whole or in part, if the compliance officer specifically determines that such findings are arbitrary and capricious or clearly erroneous.

(g) *Dismissal of proceedings.* The compliance officer shall dismiss the material noncompliance proceeding if, be-

fore the compliance officer renders a decision pursuant to paragraph (h) of this section, the authorized Forest officer who made the referral finds that the operator has come into compliance with the applicable requirements or standards identified in the notice of proceeding.

(h) *Compliance officer's decision.* The compliance officer shall base the decision on the entire record, which shall consist of the authorized Forest officer's referral and its accompanying statement of facts and exhibits, information and argument that the operator provided in an answer, any information and argument that the operator provided in an informal hearing if one was held, and the findings of fact if a fact-finding conference was held.

(1) *Content.* The compliance officer's decision shall state whether the operator has violated the requirement(s) or standard(s) identified in the notice of proceeding and, if so, whether that noncompliance is material given the requirements of 30 U.S.C. 226(g), the stipulations included in the lease at the direction of the Forest Service, the regulations in this subpart or an approved surface use plan of operations, the applicable onshore oil and gas order, or an applicable notice to lessees, transferees, and operators. If the compliance officer finds that the operator is in material noncompliance, the decision also shall:

(i) Describe the measures that are required to correct the violation;

(ii) Apprise the operator that the Secretary of the Interior is being notified that the operator has been found to be in material noncompliance with a reclamation requirement or other standard applicable to the lease; and

(iii) State that the decision is the final administrative determination of the Department of Agriculture.

(2) *Service.* The compliance officer shall serve the decision upon the operator by certified mail, return receipt requested. If the operator is found to be in material noncompliance, the compliance officer also shall immediately send a copy of the decision to the appropriate Bureau of Land Management office and to the Secretary of the Interior.

(i) *Petition for withdrawal of finding.* If an operator who has been found to be in material noncompliance under the provisions of this section believes that the operations have subsequently come into compliance with the applicable requirement(s) or standard(s) identified in the compliance officer's decision, the operator may submit a written petition requesting that the material noncompliance finding be withdrawn. The petition shall be submitted to the authorized Forest officer who issued the operator the notice of noncompliance under § 228.113(a) of this subpart and shall include information or exhibits which shows that the operator has come into compliance with the requirement(s) or standard(s) identified in the compliance officer's decision.

(1) *Response to petition.* Within 30 calendar days after receiving the operator's petition for withdrawal, the authorized Forest officer shall submit a written statement to the compliance officer as to whether the authorized Forest officer agrees that the operator has come into compliance with the requirement(s) or standard(s) identified in the compliance officer's decision. If the authorized Forest officer disagrees with the operator, the written statement shall be accompanied by a complete statement of the facts supported by appropriate exhibits.

(2) *Additional procedures as to disputed material facts.* If the compliance officer finds that the authorized Forest officer's response raises a genuine dispute over facts material to the decision as to whether the operator has come into compliance with the requirement(s) or standard(s) identified in the compliance officer's decision, the compliance officer shall so notify the operator and authorized Forest officer by certified mail, return receipt requested. The notice shall also advise the operator that the fact finding procedures specified in paragraph (f) of this section apply to the compliance officer's decision on the petition for withdrawal.

(3) *Compliance officer's decision.* The compliance officer shall base the decision on the petition on the entire record, which shall consist of the operator's petition for withdrawal and its accompanying exhibits, the authorized Forest officer's response to the petition

and, if applicable, its accompanying statement of facts and exhibits, and if a fact-finding conference was held, the findings of fact. The compliance officer shall serve the decision on the operator by certified mail.

(i) If the compliance officer finds that the operator remains in violation of requirement(s) or standard(s) identified in the decision finding that the operator was in material noncompliance, the decision on the petition for withdrawal shall identify such requirement(s) or standard(s) and describe the measures that are required to correct the violation(s).

(ii) If the compliance officer finds that the operator has subsequently come into compliance with the requirement(s) or standard(s) identified in the compliance officer's decision finding that the operator was in material noncompliance, the compliance officer also shall immediately send a copy of the decision on the petition for withdrawal to the appropriate Bureau of Land Management office and notify the Secretary of the Interior that the operator has come into compliance.

(j) *List of operators found to be in material noncompliance.* The Deputy Chief, National Forest System, shall compile and maintain a list of operators who have been found to be in material noncompliance with reclamation requirements and other standards as provided in 30 U.S.C. 226(g), the regulations in this subpart, a stipulation included in a lease at the direction of the Forest Service, or an approved surface use plan of operations, the applicable onshore oil and gas order, or an applicable notice to lessees, transferees, and operators, for a lease on National Forest System lands to which such standards apply. This list shall be made available to Regional Foresters, Forest Supervisors, and upon request, members of the public.

**§ 228.115 Additional notice of decisions.**

(a) The authorized Forest officer shall promptly post notices provided by the Bureau of Land Management of:

(1) Competitive lease sales which the Bureau plans to conduct that include National Forest System lands;

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(2) Substantial modifications in the terms of a lease which the Bureau proposes to make for leases on National Forest System lands; and

(3) Applications for permits to drill which the Bureau has received for leaseholds located on National Forest System lands.

(b) The notice shall be posted at the offices of the affected Forest Supervisor and District Ranger in a prominent location readily accessible to the public.

(c) The authorized Forest officer shall keep a record of the date(s) the notice was posted in the offices of the affected Forest Supervisor and District Ranger.

(d) The posting of notices required by this section are in addition to the requirements for public notice of decisions provided in § 228.104(d) (Notice of decision) and § 228.107(c) (Notice of decision) of this subpart.

### § 228.116 Information collection requirements.

(a) *Sections containing information requirements.* The following sections of this subpart contain information requirements as defined in 5 CFR part 1320 and have been approved for use by the Office of Management and Budget:

(1) Section 228.104(a) Requests to Modify, Waive, or Grant Exceptions to Leasing Stipulations;

(2) Section 228.106 (a), (c), and (d) Submission of Surface Use Plan of Operations;

(3) Section 228.109(c) Request for Reduction in Reclamation Liability after Reclamation;

(4) Section 228.111(a) Notice of Temporary Cessation of Operations;

(5) Section 228.113(a)(2) Extension of Deadline in Notice of Noncompliance; and

(6) Section 228.114 (c) through (i) Material Noncompliance Proceedings.

(b) *OMB control number.* The information requirements listed in paragraph (a) of this section have been assigned OMB Control No. 0596-0101.

(c) *Average estimated burden hours.* (1) The average burden hours per response are estimated to be:

(i) 5 minutes for the information requirements in § 228.104(a) of this subpart;

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(ii) No additional burden hours required to meet the information requirements in § 228.106 (a), (c), and (d) of this subpart;

(iii) 10 minutes for the information requirements in § 228.109(c) of this subpart;

(iv) 10 minutes for the information requirements in § 228.111(a) of this subpart;

(v) 5 minutes for the information requirements in § 228.113(a)(2) of this subpart; and

(vi) 2 hours for the information requirements in § 228.114 (c) through (i) of this subpart.

(2) Send comments regarding the burden estimate or any other aspect of this collection of information, including suggestions for reducing this burden, to Chief (2800), Forest Service, USDA, P.O. Box 96090, Washington, DC 20090-6090 and to the Office of Information and Regulatory Affairs, Office of Management and Budget, Washington, DC 20503.

## PART 230—STATE AND PRIVATE FORESTRY ASSISTANCE

### Subpart A—Community Forest and Open Space Conservation Program

Sec.

230.1 Purpose and scope.

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230.4 Application requirements.

230.5 Ranking criteria and proposal selection.

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### Subpart B—Urban and Community Forestry Assistance Program

230.20 Scope and authority.

230.21 Implementation of the program.

AUTHORITY: 16 U.S.C. 2103(d) & 2109(e).

SOURCE: 56 FR 63585, Dec. 4, 1991, unless otherwise noted.