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Department of
Agriculture

Forest
Service

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Environmental Assessment

Grizzly Land Exchange

Northern Hills Ranger District, Black Hills National Forest
Lawrence and Pennington Counties, South Dakota

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ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT
For Comment

Black Hills National Forest

PROPOSED

GRIZZLY LAND EXCHANGE

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Forest Service
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Black Hills National Forest
Custer, South Dakota

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SUMMARY

The Black Hills National Forest proposes to convey approximately 476 acres of National Forest System lands (Federal lands) to Homestake Mining Company (Homestake) in exchange for approximately 227 acres of land currently held in private ownership by Homestake (Non-Federal lands).

The need for this exchange is to simplify current boundaries, reduce the amount of private inholdings within the National Forest boundaries, secure public access, reduce the overall administrative issues arising from the management of National Forest System (Federal) lands adjacent to private lands, and protect resource values, such as wildlife and recreation on the Non-Federal lands by placing them under the administrative control of the Forest Service. This exchange would consolidate land ownership where Homestake's property is surrounded by Federal lands and Federal lands are surrounded by Homestake.

Two alternatives were analyzed for this project: a No Action Alternative and the Proposed Action Alternative. The anticipated effects of these alternatives are described in this Environmental Assessment (EA). An alternative to acquire the Non-Federal lands through direct purchase was considered, but eliminated from detailed analysis in the EA. Comments on this EA will be accepted for 30 days following publication of a legal notice of availability in the Rapid City Journal, the newspaper of record for the Black Hills National Forest.

Based upon the anticipated effects of the alternatives and taking into consideration public comment on this EA, the Forest Supervisor for the Black Hills National Forest will decide whether to convey approximately 476 acres of National Forest System lands to Homestake in exchange for approximately 227 acres of land privately owned by Homestake.

The Forest Supervisor's decision will be documented and explained in a Decision Notice following the 30-day public notice and comment period for this EA.

CHAPTER 1.0

PURPOSE AND NEED FOR ACTION

1.1 INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this Environmental Assessment (EA) is to describe the environmental effects of a proposed land exchange of National Forest System lands (Federal lands) administered by the Black Hills National Forest (Forest) in Lawrence County, South Dakota for private lands (Non-Federal lands) located in Lawrence and Pennington Counties, South Dakota as proposed by Homestake Mining Company of California, Homestake Forest Products Company, and LAC Minerals (USA) LLC (collectively referred to as Homestake or the Non-Federal Party).

This EA is not a decision document. It is a document disclosing the environmental consequences of implementing the proposed action and alternatives to that action.

This action is in accordance with the General Exchange Act of March 20, 1922 (42 Stat. 465; 16 U.S.C. 485) as amended by the Act of February 28, 1925 (43 Stat. 1090); the Federal Land Policy and Management Act of October 21, 1976 (90 Stat. 2743; 43 U.S.C. 1716); and the Federal Land Exchange Facilitation Act of August 20, 1988 (102 Stat. 1086; 43 U.S.C. 1716).

This proposal is consistent with the Forest-wide standards and guidelines for landownership adjustments presented on pages II-67-69 of the Land and Resource Management Plan, as amended, for the Black Hills National Forest (Forest Plan).

1.1.1 BACKGROUND

Homestake Gold Mine, the largest underground gold mine in North America, is located in Lead, South Dakota. In December 2001, the mine closed after 125 years of nearly continuous operation. As part of the mine closure, Homestake is liquidating non-essential land holdings and is proposing to consolidate its land ownership near the mine site in Lead. Both of Homestake's objectives – to consolidate land ownership and to dispose of isolated tracts of land – meet the land adjustment objectives of the Black Hills National Forest.

In November of 2004, Homestake proposed a land exchange with the Forest Service to acquire approximately 497 acres of Federal lands to consolidate land ownership near the Richmond Hill Mine and Grizzly Gulch. Richmond Hill Mine is a reclaimed gold mine owned by LAC Minerals (USA) LLC which is owned by Barrick Gold Corporation, who is also the parent company of Homestake. Homestake owns a large tailings dam located in Grizzly Gulch and although the dam does not directly affect Federal land, Homestake is interested in consolidating its land ownership around it.

In exchange for these Federal lands, Homestake proposed to convey approximately 227 acres of its land holdings located in two distinct areas. The first area, which encompasses the Rio Tinto Claims parcel, is in Pennington County to the west of Blackhawk, located between Buck Mountain and Green Mountain. The other area, which encompasses the Billie Spring and Riflepit parcels, is in Lawrence County to the north of U.S. Highway 85 near O'Neil Pass in the

Riflepit Canyon drainage.

On November 29, 2006, the Forest Service signed an Agreement to Initiate (ATI) for a land-for-land exchange with Homestake. The ATI deleted approximately 27 acres of Federal lands that were in Homestake's original proposal located in the Grizzly Gulch area in the northeast quarter of Section 11, T.4.N., R.3.E. In addition, the ATI added two Small Tracts Act (STA) Federal parcels that were not in Homestake's original proposal. Homestake will acquire these STA parcels totaling approximately 5.89 acres as part of the exchange, and subsequently sell them to the adjacent landowners. These modifications to the Federal parcels included in the proposed action resulted in a new Federal land acreage of approximately 476 acres.

The Federal and Non-Federal parcels included in Alternative 1 are further described in Tables 1 and 2 (pages 7 and 8) and Maps 1 through 5 (pages 9-13). A detailed description of each of these parcels is presented in Chapter 3.0. Affected Environment.

1.2 PURPOSE AND NEED FOR THE PROPOSED ACTION

The purpose of and need for this exchange is to simplify current boundaries, reduce the amount of private inholdings within the National Forest boundaries, secure public access, reduce the overall administrative issues arising from the management of Federal lands adjacent to private lands, and protect resource values, such as wildlife and recreation on the Non-Federal parcels by placing them under the administrative control of the Forest Service.

This exchange would consolidate land ownership where Homestake's property is surrounded by Federal lands and Federal lands are surrounded by Homestake. The proposed action is consistent with the guidelines and criteria for land adjustments presented in the Forest Plan. As the proposed exchange is a stand alone action with no future phases, it would not create a precedent for future actions with significant effects and does not represent a decision in principle about a future consideration.

The Forest Service is authorized to complete land exchanges after a determination has been made that the exchange will serve the overall public interest. When considering the public interest, the Authorized Officer shall give full consideration to: 1) the opportunity to achieve better management of Federal lands; 2) the needs of the state and local residents and their economies; and 3) achieving important resource management objectives including protection of fish and wildlife habitat, riparian habitat, cultural resources, recreational opportunities and watersheds.

Of the more than 1.53 million acres within the Black Hills National Forest administrative boundary, approximately 282,000 acres are in private, state, or other Federal ownership (Black Hills National Forest 1997 Land and Resource Management Plan FEIS Phase II Amendment page I-5). This creates a complex landownership pattern. Complications and inefficiencies resulting from this ownership pattern include the following: the need to acquire and manage rights-of-way and other permits across both public and private lands for roads, trails, and utilities; increased cost of surveying and maintaining property boundaries; increased amount of urban interface that requires additional wildfire and structural fire protection; fragmented wildlife and fish habitat; and increased cost of providing governmental services to private landowners. As housing development expands in the Black Hills, so too do these complications and inefficiencies.

Goal five of the Black Hills National Forest Plan strives for improved land ownership and access that benefits both public and landowners. Furthermore, Federal lands that are isolated, or encumbered with special use permits will be typical of lands considered for conveyence through exchange and other methods. Coordination and cooperation will be the key to successful management of Federal lands within the Forest and urban interface.

1.3 PROPOSED ACTION AND SCOPE OF PROPOSAL

The Forest Service proposes to authorize the land exchange as described in this document. Implementation of this proposal would result in the conveyance to the United States of approximately 227 acres currently owned by Homestake. In exchange, approximately 476 acres of Federal lands would be conveyed to Homestake. The specific tracts involved in this exchange are presented in Tables 1 and 2 on pages 7-8 and shown in Maps 1 through 5 on pages 9-13. A full description of the proposed action is provided in Section 2.3, page 15 under Alternative 1.

1.4 DECISION FRAMEWORK

Given the purpose of and need for this project, the Forest Supervisor, as the Deciding Official, will review the Proposed Action and No-action alternatives. Based upon the anticipated effects of the alternatives and taking into consideration public comment on this EA, the Forest Supervisor will decide whether to proceed with conveyence of approximately 476 acres of Federal lands in exchange for 227 acres of land privately held by Homestake.

The Forest Supervisor's decision will be documented and explained in a Decision Notice following the 30-day public notice and comment period for this EA.

This EA provides information sufficient to demonstrate that the proposed activities will not have a significant effect on the human environment.

1.5 SCOPING AND PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT

A scoping effort to solicit issues and concerns related to the proposed action was accomplished through:

- The publication of the exchange proposal and opportunity for public comment in the Rapid City Journal on August 17, August 24, August 31, and September 7, 2007.
- The mailing of a letter addressing the proposed action and soliciting comment to organizations and individuals listed as parties interested in proposed activities on the Black Hills National Forest and parties that may be affected by the proposal, including adjacent landowners, tribal governments, permit holders, County Commissioners, various state agencies, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, and the Congressional Delegation on August 2, 2007.
- The mailing of a letter describing the proposed action and soliciting comment to tribal organizations and representatives on August 2, 2007.
- This project was listed in the Forest's Schedule of Proposed Actions (SOPA) in August 2007.

The Forest Service received eight comment letters as a result of the initial scoping effort. All comments made or submitted were considered in this analysis and are available for review in the project file.

1.6 ISSUES

The Council on Environmental Quality's "Regulations for Implementing the Procedural Provisions of the National Environmental Policy Act" encourages agencies to limit the issues to be addressed in environmental assessments to those significant issues identified as a result of the public notification and scoping process. Several issues and management concerns were identified during the scoping process and internal agency review. These issues were evaluated to ascertain which were "significant" issues in the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) context, as they relate to the proposed action.

NEPA regulations state that lead agencies shall determine significant issues to be analyzed in depth (40 CFR 1508.25) through the analysis process. Other issues identified during the scoping process that were not considered significant issues, were also evaluated and, based on their relevance to the proposed action, are addressed in this analysis. Significant issues are used in the environmental analysis for formulating alternatives, developing mitigation and tracking effects. An issue is defined as 1) a point of disagreement, debate, or dispute 2) over a proposed action 3) based on environmental effects. To be considered an issue, all three portions of the issue definition must be present.

1.6.1 SIGNIFICANT ISSUES:

The following issues were identified from the internal and external scoping process as Significant Issues. The proposed action was developed to address these issues.

(1) <u>Development on the Non-Federal parcels may result in the loss of recreational opportunities and create safety issues.</u>

Issue: The Non-Federal parcels are isolated inholdings almost entirely surrounded by Federal lands. They are located in areas that receive year round public recreation use, including hunting, snowmobiling, and off-road vehicle use. Development of these parcels would restrict snowmobile access, increase the likelihood of traffic on plowed roads, and increase snowmobile conflicts.

1.6.2 NON-SIGNIFICANT ISSUES

A number of other issues and comments were identified during the scoping process for this analysis. Although many of these comments and issues were considered important, they were not considered significant issues. Where appropriate, these issues have been addressed in the analysis and considered during the decision-making process. The non-significant issues and comments identified during scoping are presented in Appendix A.

Table 1 DESCRIPTION OF FEDERAL LANDS

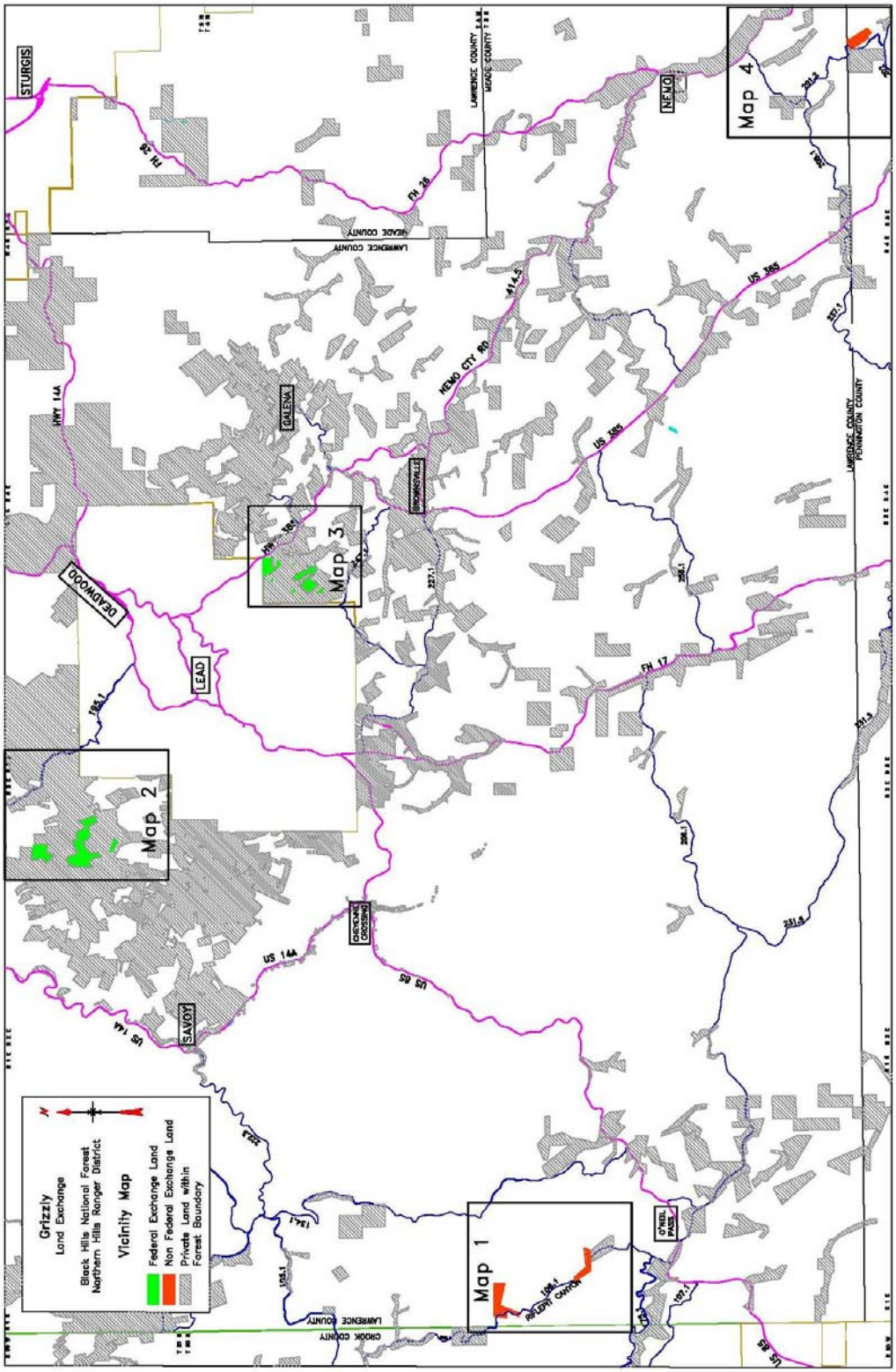
AREA	COUNTY	TOWNSHIP/ RANGE	SEC.	DESCRIPTION	ACRES
Grizzly Gulch	Lawrence	T.4N., R.3E.	11	lots 2-6 inclusive, lots 8-10 inclusive, lot 12, lots 14-26 inclusive	85.35
			12	lot 13	2.94
			13	lot 15	0.38
			14	lots 2-3, lots 11-13 inclusive	45.08
		TOTAL			133.75
Richmond Hill	Lawrence	T.5N., R.2E.	11	lot 10	11.95
			13	lot 12	2.22
			14	lots 2-4 inclusive and lots 7-10 inclusive	158.33
			23	lots 1-8 inclusive	146.80
			24	lots 12-14 inclusive	22.91
		TOTAL			342.21
		GRAND TOTAL			475.96

Table 2 DESCRIPTION OF NON-FEDERAL LANDS

PARCEL NAME	COUNTY	TOWNSHIP/ RANGE	SEC.	DESCRIPTION	ACRES
Rio Tinto Claims	Pennington	T.2N., R.5E., Black Hills Meridian	11 and 14	Rio Tinto Lode, Rio Tinto No. 1, Rio Tinto No. 2, Rio Tinto No. 3, Rio Tinto No. 4, and Rio Tinto Fraction, Mineral Survey 1592	58.731
Billie Springs	Lawrence	T.3N., R.1E., T.4N., R.1E., Black Hills Meridian	6 31	Homestead Entry Survey (HES) No. 611	113.59
Riflepit	Lawrence	T.3N., R.1E., Black Hills Meridian	8	Tracts B & C of Homestead Entry Survey (HES) No. 615	54.81
		GRAND TOTAL			227.131

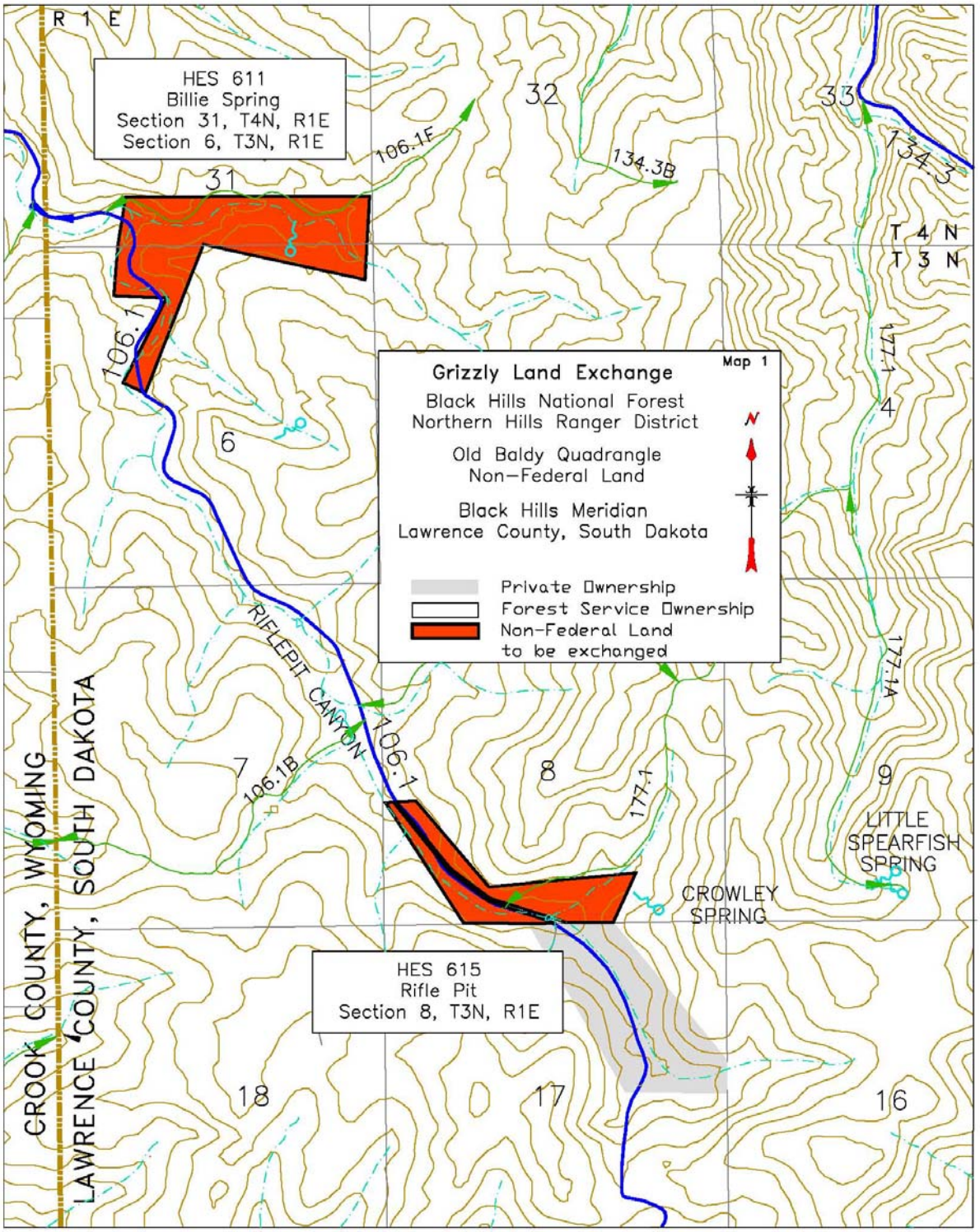
Map 1

VICINITY MAP OF FEDERAL AND NON-FEDERAL LANDS IN PROPOSED GRIZZLY LAND EXCHANGE



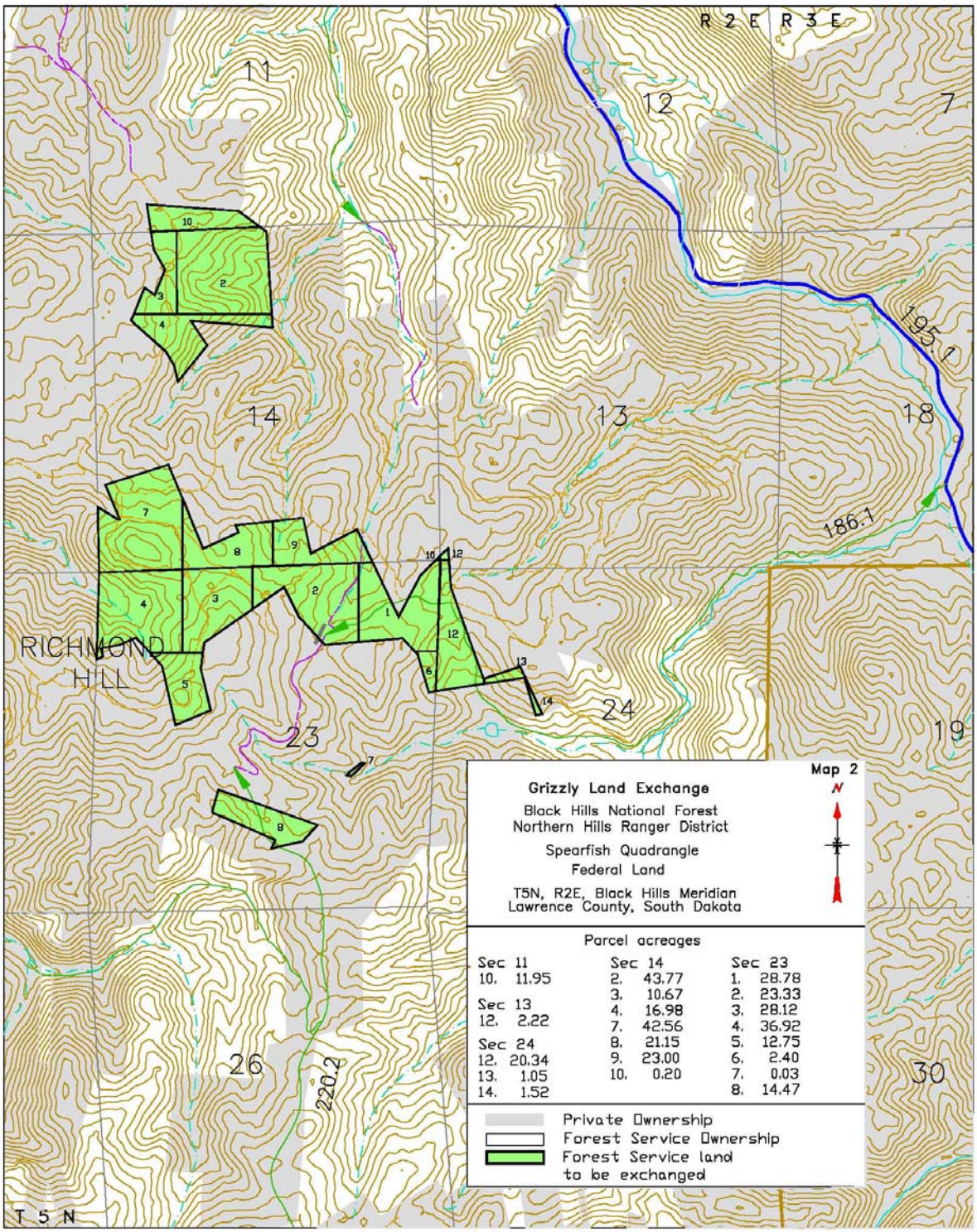
Map 2

FEDERAL LANDS – GRIZZLY GULCH AREA
T.4N., R.3E., SECTIONS 11 – 14



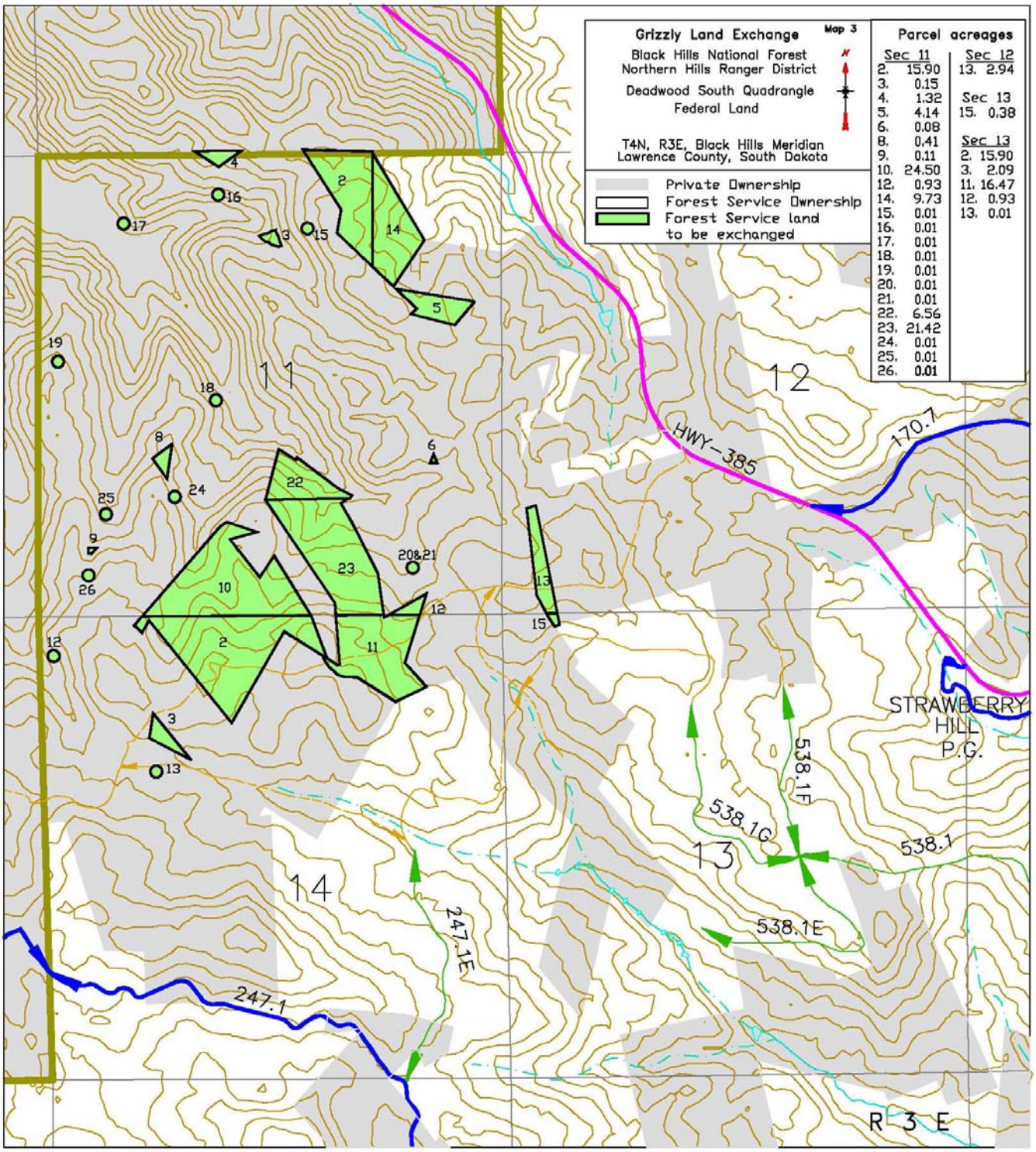
Map 3

FEDERAL LANDS – RICHMOND HILL AREA
T.5N., R.2E., SECTIONS 11, 13, 14, 23, AND 24



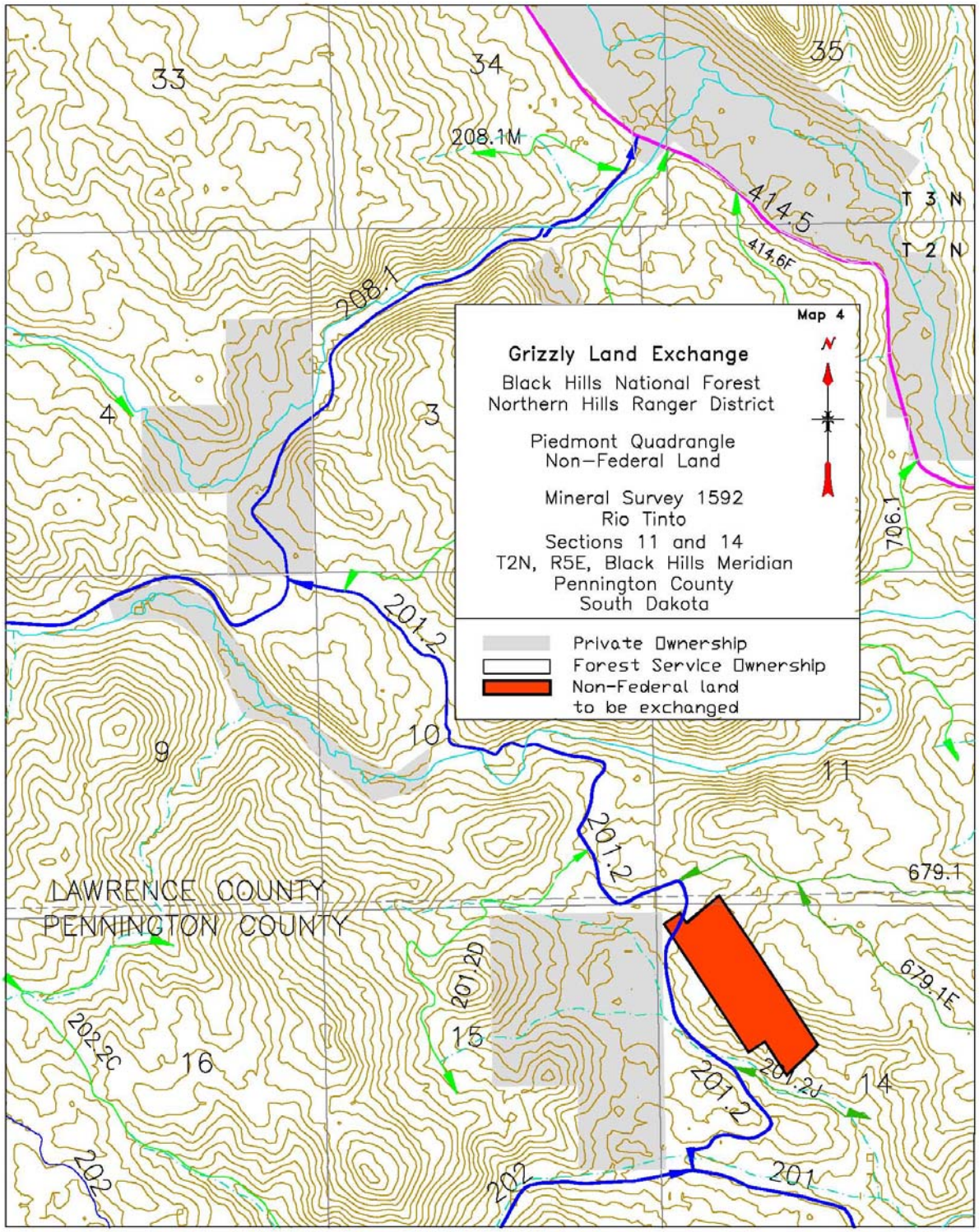
Map 4

NON-FEDERAL LANDS – RIO TINTO CLAIMS
T.2N., R.5E., SECTIONS 11 AND 14



Map 5

NON-FEDERAL LANDS – BILLIE SPRING AND RIFLEPIT PARCELS
T.3N., R.1E., SECTIONS 6 AND 8
T.4N., R.1E., SECTION 31



CHAPTER 2.0

ALTERNATIVES INCLUDING THE PROPOSED ACTION

2.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter describes the forest plan direction, the issues, and the alternatives considered during the analysis process.

2.2 FOREST PLAN DIRECTION

The Phase II revision of the1997 Land and Resource Management Plan for the Black Hills National Forest outlines guidelines for land adjustments (LRMP page II-67-69) to meet the plan's stated goals and objectives. Land adjustment guidelines that apply to the proposed action include:

- Acquire Non-Federal lands that will improve administration and reduce trespass.
- Acquire Non-Federal lands primarily of value for outdoor recreation purposes and lands needed for aesthetic protection.
- Acquire Non-Federal lands needed to reduce the potential for future administrative costs of special uses, road and trail right-of-way grants and easements.
- Acquire Non-Federal lands needed to reduce the potential for future administrative costs of special uses, road and trail right-of-way grants and easements.
- Acquire Non-Federal lands where conflicting uses would impact National Forest land or land management.
- Convey small National Forest parcels intermingled with mineral or homestead patents.
- Convey National Forest parcels isolated from other Federal lands.
- Convey National Forest lands encumbered by special-use permits and occupied by substantial structural improvements for which there is no greater need.

These guidelines served as a basis for the Forest Service review of the initial proposal presented to the Forest Service by Homestake, as well as the development of alternatives to this proposal.

All of the Federal parcels involved in the exchange proposal, with one exception, are within Management Area 5.1 as presented in the Forest Plan. This management area emphasizes resource production. Federal lands are managed for wood products, water yield, and forage production, while providing other commercial products, visual quality, diversity of wildlife and a variety of other goods and services. Numerous open roads on Federal lands in this management area provide commercial access and roaded recreation opportunities, while closed roads provide non-motorized recreation opportunities. Approximately 395.63 acres of Federal lands involved in the exchange proposal are within Management Area 5.1.

One Federal parcel involved in the exchange proposal is within Management Area 5.4 as presented in the Forest Plan. This parcel is approximately 83.37 acres in size and is located in

Township 5 North Range 2 East in the southern edge of Section 11 and northern portion of Section 14. Management Area 5.4 emphasizes big game winter range. National Forest lands are managed to provide high-quality winter and transitional habitat for deer and elk, high-quality turkey habitat, habitat for other species, and a variety of multiple uses.

The Federal lands that surround the Billie Spring (HES 611) and Riflepit (HES 615) Non-Federal parcels are within Management Area 5.1. The Federal lands to the north of the Rio Tinto Claims Non-Federal parcel are within Management Area 5.4, while the Federal lands to the south of this Non-Federal parcel are within Management Area 5.1. The Non-Federal parcels, if conveyed to the Forest Service, would be assigned the Management Area designation of the surrounding Federal lands.

2.3 PROPOSED ACTION AND ALTERNATIVES

This section describes the proposed action and alternatives to the proposed action including the No-Action alternative. Alternatives considered but eliminated from detailed analysis are also described.

2.4 ALTERNATIVES ANALYZED IN DETAIL

Alternative 1 – Proposed Action

Under Alternative 1, the Forest Service would convey approximately 476 acres of Federal land into private ownership as shown in Table 1. The Forest Service and Homestake have agreed to include two parcels that are the subject of pending Small Tracts Act (STA) applications and located in the area of the proposed exchange as part of the Federal lands proposed to be conveyed. These parcels qualify for STA status because they are Mineral Survey Fractions. Homestake would subsequently sell these two parcels totaling approximately 5.89 acres to adjacent landowners, specifically:

Township 4 North, Range 3 East, BHM, Lawrence County, SD:

Section 12: lot 13

Section 13: lot 15

Township 5 North, Range 2 East, BHM, Lawrence County, SD:

Section 24: lots 13 and 14

If the private landowners that are interested in these STA parcels decide not to continue their purchase after appraised values are known, Homestake will have the option of dropping them from the proposed exchange.

Homestake would convey approximately 227 acres of lands to the Forest Service as shown in Table 2. These lands would be protected from further private development. The Forest Service would acquire the mineral estate on the Non-Federal parcels acquired from Homestake. Homestake would acquire the mineral estate on the Federal parcels from the Forest Service.

If the approved appraised values for the Federal and Non-Federal lands in this alternative do not result in an equal value land exchange, the exchange may be brought into balance in the

following ways. First, cash equalization payments according to 36 CFR 254.12 of up to 25 percent of the appraised value of the Federal lands may be made to Homestake by the Forest Service, if Non-Federal lands exceed the value of the Federal lands, or to the Forest Service by Homestake, if the Federal lands exceed the value of the Non-Federal lands. Any payment of cash by Hometake shall be kept to a minimum.

If the value of the Non-Federal lands exceeds the value of the Federal lands by more than 25 percent, Homestake may withhold a suitable portion of the Riflepit parcel (HES 615) from the exchange. The portions withheld would be in the southern portion of the parcel to the east of Forest Road 106, contiguous with other private lands. No additional Federal lands have been identified to add to the proposed exchange in the event the value of the Federal lands exceeds the value of the Non-Federal lands by more than 25 percent.

This alternative addresses the issues and opportunities outlined in Section 1.2, Purpose and Need for the Proposed Action. These include: simplifying current land boundaries between National Forest and private lands; reducing trespass and the risks of future administrative problems arising from differing land management direction on public and adjacent private lands; legitimizing hunting, snowmobiling, 4-wheeling, ATV use, and other dispersed recreation opportunities on the lands that would move into Federal ownership, as well as those on the adjacent Federal lands; and resolving potential conflicts regarding access. This alternative would not threaten a violation of Federal, state, or local law or other requirements imposed for the protection of the environment. Activities on these lands would be subject to the Forest Plan including future amendments such as the travel planning proposal now being evaluated.

Alternative 2 – No Action

Under this alternative the proposed land exchange would not occur. The National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA, 40 CFR 1502.14) requires that the “No Action” alternative be included as a viable option for the decision maker. This alternative is also used as a baseline against which action alternatives can be compared. No unresolved conflicts or opportunities would be presented by the poposal, nor would any be resolved.

The two parcels identified by the Forest Service as eligible for conveyance under the STA could still move forward under the No Action Alternative as stand alone STA cases with the adjacent landowners.

2.5 Alternatives Considered but Eliminated From Detailed Analysis

Alternative 3 – Acquire Non-Federal Lands Through Direct Purchase

Historically, the Forest Service has acquired Non-Federal parcels through a Congressional appropriation from the Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF). However, this alternative was dropped from further consideration because of the very limited LWCF appropriations that exist today and an appropriation to purchase the Non-Federal lands identified in Alternative 1 would have to compete against other such requests nationwide and, given higher priority requests both within the Region and nationwide, it is unlikely the acquisition would have been funded. Therefore, the Forest Service concluded that the land exchange process offered a more viable and expedient means of acquiring these properties.

However, the effects of this alternative are easily identified and described. They are identical to the effects associated with acquisition of the Non-Federal parcels under Alternative 1.

Table 3 SUMMARY OF ALTERNATIVE EFFECTS

Significant Issues	Project Alternatives	
	ALTERNATIVE 1 (Proposed Action)	**ALTERNATIVE 2 (No Action)**
Potential Loss of Recreational Opportunities	Prevent loss of dispersed winter recreation through gaining jurisdictional control over the Billie Springs and Riflepit parcels. Prevent loss of dispersed recreation by acquiring jurisdictional control over the Rio Tinto parcel .	Loss of dispersed and winter recreational opportunities if the tracts are developed.
Potential Loss of Sensitive Plant Habitat	No Impact	No Impact

CHAPTER 3.0

AFFECTED ENVIRONMENT

3.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter describes the existing condition (affected environment) in the project area. Aspects of the environment, which pertain to the identified issues and concerns, are given an emphasis in this discussion. This chapter forms the scientific and analytical basis for the comparison of alternatives.

3.2 DESCRIPTION OF AFFECTED ENVIRONMENT

3.2.1 GENERAL DESCRIPTION OF FEDERAL AND NON-FEDERAL LANDS

The following is a description of the Federal and Non-Federal lands involved in the exchange proposal.

Federal Lands

The Federal lands encompass several non-contiguous tracts located in two distinct areas. The first area is along Grizzly Gulch and the second area is near Richmond Hill.

The majority of the acreage in these two areas is dominated by ponderosa pine (Pinus ponderosa). However, there are areas with a notable component of dry-type hardwood species which include quaking aspen (Populus tremuloides), bur oak (Quercus macrocarpa), and beaked hazelnut (Corylus cornuta). There are some areas of moist hardwood stands dominated by paper birch (Betula papyrifera)/ beaked hazelnut (Corylus cornuta) and drainage bottoms with Black Hills spruce (Picea glauca). Most of the Federal lands have excessive weed infestations due to the adjacent past and present disturbances (mines, powerlines, roads). Weedy species that are particularly prevalent include: St. Johnswort (Hypericum perforatum), mullein (Verbascum thapsus), common tansy (Tanacetum vulgare), and Canada thistle (Cirsium arvense).

Grizzly Gulch

The Grizzly Gulch area includes numerous scattered mineral fractions, ranging in size from 0.01 acres to 36.56 acres. Elevations range from 5,600 to 5,800 feet representing multiple aspects. The Federal parcels in this area proposed to be exchanged total approximately133.75 acres in size. Some of the parcels are not physically accessible, while others have two-track road access. However, there is currently no legal access to the parcels. A locked gate, owned by Homestake, denies access to the larger parcels. Most of the parcels in this area are characterized by dry pine stands, some of which burned in the 2002 Grizzly Gulch Fire.

The headwaters of Grizzly Gulch flow through a spruce forest across one of the parcels. The habitat in this drainage is not of high quality due to the abundance of of weeds, especially common tansy.

Some of the parcels have shallow depressions that may have been related to historical mining explorations. There is no evidence of past site development for ore and mineral processing on the parcels. There are no buildings on the parcels.

The parcels are predominantly surrounded by private lands owned by Homestake. Downstream from the parcels is Homestake's Grizzly Gulch Tailings dam, which is part of the now closed Homestake Gold Mine. A few of the parcels are contiguous with Federal lands that are not part of the land exchange.

Richmond Hill

The Richmond Hill area includes three non-contiguous parcels that total approximately 342.21 acres in size. Elevations range from 5,600 to 6,000 feet with multiple aspects. All parcels are physically accessed by Forest Road 220 or Forest Road 186; however, these roads cross private land, with no legal access, and are gated on both the northerly and southerly access. Portions of the eastern side of the parcels can be accessed off of Maitland Road to Forest Road 186; however there is no legal access over this section of the road. Most of the Federal lands proposed to be exchanged in this area are characterized by dry pine stands and dry-type hardwoods (oak, aspen, birch, hazelnut) with significant past distrubance from mines, powerlines, and roads. There are a large number and diversity of weeds due to these disturbances.

Fire roads and trails bisect the area. There is no evidence of past development for ore and mineral processing on the parcels. There are no buildings on the parcels.

The majority of the property surrounding these parcels is owned by LAC Minerals (USA) LLC. LAC's Richmond Hill facility is located immediately west of the parcels.

Non-Federal Lands

The Non-Federal lands in the exchange proposal consist of three distinct parcels: the Rio Tinto Claims, Billie Spring, and Riflepit.

Rio Tinto Claims

The Rio Tinto Claims parcel is completely surrounded by Federal lands. This parcel is approximatley 58.73 acres and is characterized by hilly terrain containing dry pine stands. North Bogus Jim Creek is situated just west of the western property boundary. The presence of tree stumps suggest that the parcel had been logged at some point in the past. An overgrown road to the collapsed remains of a log structure, an adit and shaft and associated small mine dump, and numerous prospect pits and trenches were observed on this parcel. The extent of the visible workings and small mine dump suggests that any mineral production would have been very limited. There are no recent improvements on this parcel.

Billie Spring

The Billie Spring parcel (HES 611) is completely surrounded by Federal lands. This parcel is approximately 113.59 acres and is characterized by a high elevation (6,300 to 6,500 foot) open, dry, non-native meadow containing timothy, brome, yarrow, and bluegrass, with pine/aspen on the edges. Forest Road 106 borders or bisects the western edge of the parcel. There are no

improvements on this parcel except for a stock dam located near Billie Spring and a dry stock pond located toward the southern finger of the parcel. The presence of slash and stumps suggest that the site had been logged at some point in the past. The parcel has been subject to a grazing lease in the past. Homestake has filed a location notice for a small stock dam on this property. The location notice will be transferred into the name of the United States upon closing.

The Billie Spring parcel had a grazing license that has been terminated. It will be removed from record prior to closing.

Riflepit

The Riflepit parcel (HES 615) is mostly surrounded by Federal lands, except for private land that abuts the parcel on its southeastern boundary. Forest Road 106 bisects the western half of the parcel. An unimproved road bisects the eastern portion of the parcel, following a north-south trending valley. This parcel is approximately 54.81 acres and is characterized by a high elevation (6,300 to 6,500 foot) open, dry, non-native meadow containing timothy, brome, yarrow, and bluegrass, with pine/aspen on the edges. There are no improvements on this parcel except for a stock dam and water well located near the center point of the southern parcel boundary. The presence of slash and stumps suggest that the site had been logged at some point in the past. The parcel has been subject to a grazing lease in the past.

The Riflepit parcel had a grazing license that has been terminated. It will be removed from record prior to closing.

3.2.2 HAZARDOUS SUBSTANCES AND PETROLEUM PRODUCTS

Based on the results of the Environmental Site Assessment (ESA), no recognized hazardous substances or petroleum products were discovered on the Federal or Non-Federal parcels. Copies of the Phase 1 ESAs for the Federal parcels in the Grizzly Gulch and Richmond Hill areas prepared by Tetra-Tech, Inc. and for the Non-Federal parcels prepared by the Forest Service are contained in the project file.

3.2.3 MINERALS

A mineral report by a Forest Service geologist was completed for parcels in the land exchange. A copy of the mineral report is contained in the project file. Mineral production from the northern Black Hills has been significant, especially from the now closed Homestake Mine. The area has been heavily explored for mineral resources.

Federal Parcels

Mineral deposits have been found in the vicinity of all the Federal tracts involved in the land exchange. The most notable mine in the vicinity of the Federal parcels in the Richmond Hill area is the Richmond Hill Mine located about a mile to the west. Other smaller mines, such as the closed Eagle Bird Mine, the Echo Mine, and the Minnesota Mine are located a mile or two to the south and/or east. The Federal parcels in the Grizzly Gulch area lie on the southern fringe of the Two Bit metallic mineral district. Two small mines, the Puritan and an unnamed mine, are in the immediate vicinity.

The Federal parcels are currently encumbered by unpatented mining claims owned by Homestake Mining Company of California, Bond Gold Richmond, LAC Minerals (USA) Inc., and St. Joe Richmond Hill. All of these entities are owned by Barrick Gold Corporation. The Federal parcels have been explored for mineralization by Homestake. Homestake reports that a low-grade gold deposit underlies Lots 2, 3, and 4 of Section 14, T.5.N., R.2.E., Black Hills Meridian in the Richmond Hill area, but is considered by Homestake to be sub-economic. No other significant mineralization was found on the Federal parcels in the Grizzly Gulch and Richmond Hill areas.

Several of the Federal parcels in the Grizzly Gulch area have no known potential for mineral deposits. Parts of the Federal parcels have low potential for gold, silica sand, and silver, and moderate potential for detrital hematite. Some of the Federal parcels in the Richmond Hill area fall within an area with moderate potential and a high level of certainty for gold and associated silver and arsenic. Other Federal parcels in this area have high potential and medium potential for molybdenum and copper, and high potential with a high level of certainty for medium-sized disseminated or porphyry deposits containing precious metals and copper.

There is no known mineral potential for leasable commodities on the Federal parcels. There are no high potential areas for salable mineral commodities such as sand and gravel, crushed rock, dimension clay and stone on the Federal parcels.

Non-Federal Parcels

The Billie Spring and Riflepit parcels have no known potential for locatable minerals. A portion of the Rio Tinto parcel has moderate potential for medium-size deposits of silica sand. There are no unpatented mining claims in the vicinity of the Non-Federal parcels.

There is no known mineral potential for leasable commodities for the Rio Tinto parcel. The Billie Spring and Riflepit parcels are within an area with low potential for oil and gas resources based on the available information.

The Non-Federal parcels have low potential for salable mineral commodities such as sand and gravel, crushed rock, dimension stone and clay.

3.2.4 RECREATION

Because there is no legal access to the Federal lands in the Grizzly Gulch and Richmond Hill areas, there is minimal recreational use by the public of these lands.

Forest Road 106 off U.S. Highway 85 provides public access to the Billie Spring and Riflepit Non-Federal lands, as well as the surrounding Federal lands. This area is currently being used for dispersed recreation activities such as hunting, snowmobiling, 4-wheeling, and ATV use as if it is already in Federal ownership. Trailshead Lodge, the focal point of the Black Hills snowmobile program, is near this area. Groomed snowmobile trails run adjacent to the Billie Spring parcel and bisect the Riflepit parcel. In addition snowmobiles use open meadows in the area that are located on both Federal lands and private property.

Federal lands near the Rio Tinto parcel receive modest dispersed recreation use off existing roads and trails, including hunting and hiking. Recreation use on the Rio Tinto parcel is likely to be similar to surrounding Federal lands.

3.2.5 SPECIAL USE PERMITS

Four special use permits with Homestake are in place on the Federal lands in the Proposed Action Alternative.

A special use permit was granted to Homestake Mining Company by the Forest Service in September 1987 which authorizes the use of Federal lands for the operation and maintenance of a water diversion canal 625 feet long and 50 feet wide and an access road encompassing three acres of Federal lands in the Grizzly Gulch area in Section 11, T.4N., R.3E., BHM.

A special use permit was granted to LAC Minerals in March of 1994 for maintaining an embankment of a stormwater pond in the NW ¼ of the NW ¼, Section 14, T.5N., R.2E., BHM. The storm water pond is located on LAC Mineral Property and the embankment is located on Federal lands. This structure prevents spillage of pond water onto Federal lands.

A special use permit was granted to LAC Minerals in February 2005 for an access road and a haul road to Richmond Hill Mine in the S ½ of Section 23, T.5N., R.2E., BHM.

A special use permit was granted to LAC Minerals in May 2001 for maintaining a power line in connection with the operations at Richmond Hill Mine for approximately 2,875 feet across Federal lands in the SW ¼ of Section 14, T.5N., R.2E., BHM.

3.2.6 WILDLIFE

A Wildlife Biological Assessment/Biological Evaluation (BA/BE) analysis for the land exchange was prepared by a Forest Service Wildlife Biologist. A copy of the Wildlife BA/BE report is contained in the project file.

No Threatened or Sensitive Species were observed during field surveys on the Non-Federal and Federal parcels, nor does historical data indicate their presence.

In regards to Region 2 senstive species, the BA/BE concluded that habitat may exist for the Northern Leopard Frog (Rana pipiens), Black Hills Redbelly Snake (Storeria occipitomaculata pahasapae), and Regal Fritillary (Speyeria idalia) on the Billie Spring and Riflepit Non-Federal parcels. Although not confirmed, habitat may exist for the Bald Eagle (Haliaeetus leucocephalus), Black-backed Woodpecker (Picoides arcticus), Lewis' Woodpecker (Melanerpes lewis), and American Marten (Martes americana) on the Federal parcels.

3.2.7 VEGETATION

A Botany Biological Evaluation was prepared by a Forest Service Botanist for parcels in the land exchange. This evaluation was based upon surveys, professional knowledge, and the most updated information available. No Region 2 Sensitive Plant Species or suitable habitat for Region 2 Sensitive Plant Species were found on the Non-Federal parcels. No Region 2 Sensitive Plant Species were found on the Federal parcels; however, Region 2 Sensitive Plant Species that may have suitable habitat present on the Federal parcels include Yellow Lady's Slipper (Cypripedium parviflorum), Trailing Clubmoss (Lycopodium complanatum), Large Round-leaved Orchid (Platanthera orbiculata), Bloodroot (Sanguinaria canadensis), and Highbush Cranberry/American Cranberrybush (Viburnum opulus var. americanum). The Botany Biological Evaluation determined that the Proposed Action Alternative may adversely impact

individuals of the five plant species listed above, but is not likely to result in a loss of viability in the project area, nor cause a trend toward Federal listing.

No Plant Species of Local Concern (SOLC) were found or known to exist in the project area of the land exchange. Several Plant SOLC may have suitable habitat on Federal lands in the land exchange project area. They are: Pleated Gentian (Gentiana affinis), Broadlipped Twayblade (Listera convallarioides), Narrowleaf Sweet Coltsfoot (Petasites sagittatus), Northern Hollyfern (Polystichum lonchitis), and Shining Willow (Salix lucida caudata). A copy of the Botany Biological Evaluation is contained in the project file.

Most of the Federal lands in the Proposed Action Alternative have been logged or are currently not being considered available for removal because of the proposed exchange.

3.2.8 HYDROLOGY, WETLANDS, and FLOODPLAINS

A field review by the Forest Hydrologist found that there are no jurisdictional wetlands or floodplains on the Non-Federal and Federal parcels in the land exchange. A copy of the floodplain evaluation/wetland evaluation report for the land exchange is contained in the project file.

3.2.9 HERITAGE RESOURCES

A Heritage Resources Inventory Survey of the Federal parcels in the Grizzly Gulch and Richmond Hill areas was completed by Dakota Research Services. Approximately 405 acres of the Federal parcels had been previously surveyed, with four cultural properties recorded. All of these properties were determined to be not eligible for inclusion on the National Register of Historic Places. No cultural properties were identified within the approximately 67 acres that had not been previously surveyed. A copy of the Heritage Resources Inventory Survey report is on file at the Heritage Resources Division of the Northern Hills Ranger District. Concurrence from the State Historical Preservation Officer is contained in the project file.

The Non-Federal parcels are not evaluated for heritage resources until the exchange is completed.

CHAPTER 4.0

ENVIRONMENTAL CONSEQUENCES

4.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter discusses the potential environmental effects resulting from the implementation of each of the project alternatives. The analysis area includes both the Federal and Non-Federal lands and is based on potential effects that may occur on the Federal parcels as a result of their conveyance to private ownership, as well as the beneficial effects that may occur through the addition of the Non-Federal lands to the National Forest system.

It is assumed that implementation of Alternative 2 (No Action) would result in no change in the current condition on both the Federal and Non-Federal parcels, as described in Section 1.2 Purpose and Need for the Proposed Action and in Chapter 30.0.-Affected Environment. This alternative serves as the baseline from which project effects, resulting through the implementation of "action" alternatives, are measured. Resource and administrative issues that currently exist on both the Federal and Non-Federal parcels, including loss of dispersed recreation opportunities on the Non-Federal parcels and surrounding Federal lands and management challenges associated with the Federal parcels because of their lack of public access and isolation from other Federal land, would remain unresolved through the implementation of the No Action alternative. A summary of the potential effects of each alternative, in relation to the key issues is provided in Summary of Alternative Effects, Table 3 (page 18). The effects of the proposed action on the human environment are scientifically well-understood and are not controversial or uncertain, and do not involve unique or unknown risks.

The two parcels proposed for conveyance under the STA that are adjacent to the land exchange area were included in the Proposed Action Alternative in order to more efficiently process the STA requests and include them in this analysis. It is anticipated that these STA sales will occur even if the Proposed Action Alternative is not selected.

Anticipated Changes in Land Use on the Federal and Non-Federal Lands

Through the proposed exchange jurisdictional control over the Federal lands by the Forest Service would be terminated, as these small, isolated mineral fractions would be conveyed to the Non-Federal Party. Management direction and constraints currently prescribed by the Forest Plan would no longer apply to these lands. Homestake has indicated that the lands will be managed similar to their adjacent lands for ongoing reclamation and protection of reclamation activities. However, the Forest Service believes is it conceivable that in the future the lands on the southern portion of the Grizzly Gulch parcels have the potential to change into residential development consistent with other development in the area. The future of the Richmond Hill parcels for development is not as likely since there are active mining and reclamation activities in this area and poorly developed access. The exception will be the two STA sales which will be conveyed by Homestake to private individuals who own land adjacent to the STA parcels. The STA lands will become additions to the holdings of these individuals.

The Non-Federal Lands would become part of the Federal ownership through this exchange. Past and current management of these lands under private ownership has been very similar to management of the adjacent public lands. Upon their acquisition by the government, these lands would be managed under the guidelines prescribed by the Forest Plan. The future management would be consistent with that currently applied to the surrounding National Forest System lands (see Section 2.2)

Because the Non-Federal parcels are identified as non-mining land holdings by Homestake, they would likely be sold to private parties by Homestake under the No Action alternative. The likely use of these parcels would be for rural residential development, resulting in a change of character on these lands and surrounding Federal lands.

Under the No Action Alternative, the two STA parcels would be disposed of by the Forest Service to adjacent landowners. This EA discloses the effects of such a conveyance. The Federal parcels that are essential to Homestake's reclamation operations would likely be placed under special use permits with the Forest Service. Conveyance of remaining Federal parcels would be pursued by the Forest Service through other disposal opportunities.

4.2. ANALYSIS OF ENVIRONMENTAL CONSEQUENCES

4.2.1 SOCIO-ECONOMIC

Alternative 1

Under this alternative Lawrence County has a net increase of 289.56 acres of private ownership. Pennington County has a net decrease of 58.731 acres of private ownership. Overall, there would be a slight shift in the property tax base for Lawrence and Pennington counties, with a slight increase in the property tax base for Lawrence County and a slight decrease in the property tax base for Pennington County. Maintaining the property tax base is an on-going issue on the Black Hills National Forest. Pennington County will see a small increase in 25% and PILT payments and Lawrence County will see a small reduction. It is unlikely that this alternative would substantially affect economic aspects of either County based on these small changes. No other socio-economic effects were identified.

No Action Alternative

There will be no changes to the private property base in either county. The potential for changes to Federal land base will remain the same. Local governments could experience an increased demand for services if rural residential development occurred on the Non-Federal lands.

4.2.2 Recreation

Alternative 1

Under the proposed action the opportunity for public recreational use on the Non-Federal parcels would continue as they exist today. The current summer and winter dispersed recreational opportunities along Forest Road 106 and on the adjacent Federal lands in the O'Neil Pass area,

Riflepit Non-Federal parcel, and Billie Spring Non-Federal parcel would continue under the Proposed Action. Dispersed recreation opportunities including hiking and hunting on the Rio Tinto parcel and adjacent Federal lands would also continue under the Proposed Action. Recreation activities would be subject to the Forest Plan including future amendments such as the travel planning proposal now being evaluated.

As discussed in Chapter 3.0., the recreational opportunities on much of the Federal lands are limited by access. Therefore, the overall loss of existing recreational opportunities on these parcels would probably not represent a substantial loss to the current recreational resource.

No Action Alternative

Under this alternative, the potential for residential development would exist on the Riflepit and Billie Spring parcels. Residential development on these parcels would require access across Federal lands, including the likely plowing of Forest Road 106, resulting in the displacement of recreation activities now occurring in the area. Residential development would displace public recreation which is currently occurring on the private land. In addition, such development could create indirect impacts to public health and safety, as residential access and the associated plowing of routes would conflict with the current recreational uses by the public in this area. These uses would also require permits for use and maintenance of access roads and installation of power be issued and adminstered by the Forest.

4.2.3 VEGETATION

Alternative 1

Under the proposed action there may be some impact to individual plants, but it is not likely to result in a loss of species viability on the Forest, nor cause a trend toward Federal listing for any of the species. The acreage of the lands to be exchanged is small relative to comparable suitable habitat that exists on the Forest. High quality suitable habitat exists on approximately 44 acres of alternating dry pine ridge and moist birch/hazelnut hardwood drainages in the Richmond Hill area in the NE1/4 NW1/4 of Section 14, T.5.N., R.2.E. The moist drainages are suitable Sensitive plant habitat, especially for the Large Round-leaved Orchid and Highbush Cranberry/American Cranberrybush. An additional 20 acres in the Grizzly Gulch area contains suitable habitat, but it is not high quality due to the abundance of weeds.

Approximately 64 acres of suitable habitat for five plants that are Region 2 Sensitive Species exists on the Federal parcels proposed to be conveyed. These Sensitive Plant Species are Yellow Lady’s Slipper (Cypripedium parviflorum), Trailing Clubmoss (Lycopodium complanatum), Large Round-leaved Orchid (Platanthera orbiculata), Bloodroot (Sanguinaria canadensis), Highbush Cranberry/American Cranberrybush (Viburnum opulus var. americanum).

Approximately 169 acres of meadow habitat and 59 acres of dry ponderosa pine habitat would be acquired by the Forest Service. Potential habitat exists for grasshopper sparrows, song sparrows, meadow jumping mice, Atlantis fritillary and tawny crescent. Ownership of these meadow areas by the Forest Service will result in more continuous tracts of land managed and eliminate rural residential development possibilities on these tracts.

No Action Alternative

Under the No Action alternative, there would not be any direct or indirect effects on Region 2 Sensitive Plants or Plant Species of Local Concern because no actions would take place. Development of the land is likely and will have some effect on individuals, but is not likely to result in a loss of species viability.

4.2.4 HYDROLOGY, WETLANDS, AND FLOODPLAINS

The proposed action will have no effect on jurisdictional wetlands or floodplains and is consistent with Executive Orders 11988 and 11990, as there are no wetlands or floodplains on the Non-Federal and Federal parcels in the land exchange.

4.2.5 WILDLIFE

Alternative 1

In the Grizzly Gulch area, habitat may exist for the following Region 2 Sensitive Species: Black-backed Woodpecker (Picoides arcticus), Lewis' Woodpecker (Melanerpes lewis), and American Marten (Martes americana). The proposed action would have no direct or indirect impacts to these species as the acreage of the lands to be exchanged is small relative to comparable suitable habitat that exists on the Forest.

In the Richmond Hill area, no Region 2 Sensitive Species habitat is present. No Region 2 Sensitive Species were observed within this area, nor does historical data indicate their presence. Consequently, there would be no impacts to Region 2 Sensitive Wildlife Species in this area as a result of the proposed land exchange.

In the area around the Billie Spring and Riflepit Non-Federal parcels, habitat may exist for the following Region 2 Sensitive Species: Northern Leopard Frog (Rana pipiens), Black Hills Redbelly Snake (Storeria occipitomaculata pahasapae), and Regal Fritillary (Speyeria idalia). This alternative would have no direct impacts to these species. The Billie Spring and Riflepit parcels are currently within the boundaries of the Riflepit Pasture of the Grand Canyon Range Allotment. Change in management entity would have a neutral effect on potential habitat, as it would be managed similarly to existing conditions. The proposed action would also prevent development on these parcels and would allow the Forest Service to manage the Riflepit Pasture as a continuous meadow.

In the area around the Rio Tinto Claims parcel, no habitat for Region 2 Sensitive Species is present. No Region 2 Sensitive Species were observed within this area, nor does historical data indicate their presence. Consequently, there would be no impacts to Region 2 Sensitive Species in this area as a result of the land exchange. (See BA/BE in project file) There would also be no effects to any management indicator species from implementation of this alternative. (See Wildife Report in project file)

The Proposed Action would have no direct impacts on Bald Eagle habitat. The Bald Eagle is a sensitive species in the project area. Transient bald eagles may temporarily use parcels in the proposed land exchange for resting/ perching. However, no nesting, foraging, wintering or roosting habitat exists within a 0.5-mile radius of any of the Non-Federal or Federal parcels.

Therefore, regardless of future management entity, the proposed land exchange would not directly affect bald eagles.

No Action Alternative

Under the No Action alternative, there would not be any direct or indirect effects on Region 2 Sensitive Species because no actions would take place.

4.2.6 HERITAGE RESOURCES

Alternative 1

The Northern Hills Ranger District Archaeologist and the State Historic Preservation Officer concur that the proposed action will have no effect on Heritage Resources. In addition, no information has been received from any of the Tribal Historic Preservation Officers with regards to the effects of this project on cultural resources and traditional cultural properties.

CHAPTER 5.0

CUMULATIVE EFFECTS

5.1 INTRODUCTION

Cumulative effects are the impacts on the environment that result from the incremental impact of the proposed action when added to other past, present, and reasonably foreseeable future actions. Cumulative effects can result from individually minor but collectively significant actions taking place over a period of time.

5.2 ISSUES

Loss of Recreational Opportunities

The Black Hills National Forest has a large amount of private land scattered throughout the forest. As this land is developed, whether that is a fence or a full time residence or something in between, recreational impacts result. The impacts of development could be loss of public access to Forest lands, loss of recreational opportunities on federal lands conveyed to Homestake, changes in scenic views, noise, or other issues. This development is occurring in many locations throughout the Forest and will continue in the future. There would be negligible contribution to this trend under either the No Action alternative or the Action alternative.

Loss of Habitat for Region 2 Sensitive Species

The Forest Plan directs identification of potential habitat for sensitive species and encourages conservation of that habitat. There are incidences that result in loss of habitat including development of new roads and land adjustment as well as actions taken on private lands within the Forest. Wildfires and forest succession may also alter habitat conditions, resulting in a loss of habitat for some species and improving habitat conditions for others. The objective of habitat conservation is to manage the Forest in a manner that conserves habitat for sensitive species to minimize the potential for federal listing. The loss of habitat for several species under the Action Alternative could be similar to that which occurs from development of private lands elsewhere, but efforts by Homestake to reclaim lands adjacent could improve habitat values in these areas in the long term. In addition, under the Grizzly Land Exchange, there would be a net increase of about 160 acres of meadow habitat acquired by the Forest Service. Since cattle grazing would continue to occur on these parcels, as part of an existing grazing allotment, current conditions are not expected to change as a result of the land exchange. However, acquiring this land would assure that meadow habitat, often targeted for development, is not developed in the future.

CHAPTER 6.0

LIST OF PREPARERS AND CONSULTATION AND COORDINATION

The Forest Service consulted the following individuals, Federal, state and local agencies, tribes and non-Forest Service person during the development of this environmental assessment:

ID TEAM MEMBERS:

Craig Kjar	ID Team Leader, Physical Resources Staff Officer
Katherine Zacharkevics	Northern Hills District Botanist
Leslie S. Gonyer	Forest South Zone Hydrologist
James Jay Kinsman	Northern Hills District Archaeologist
Daryl Gusey	Regional Geologist
Valerie Carlson	Northern Hills District Wildlife Biologist
Kaye Olpin	Northern Hills District Recreation/Lands/Minerals
Michael Beale	Black Hills National Forest Lands Staff

FEDERAL, STATE, AND LOCAL AGENGIES:

Bureau of Land Management
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
South Dakota Department of Environment and Natural Resources
South Dakota Department of Game, Fish, and Parks
South Dakota Department of Transportation
South Dakota Division of Resource Conservation and Forestry
South Dakota State Historic Preservation Office
Wyoming Game and Fish Department
Wyoming State Historic Preservation Office
Butte County Board of Commissioners
Lawrence County Board of Commissioners
Meade County Board of Commissioners
Pennington County Board of Commissioners
Town of Central

TRIBES:

Yankton Sioux Tribe
Crow Creek Sioux Tribe
Northern Cheyenne Tribe
Rosebud Sioux Tribe
Sisseton-Wahpeton Sioux Tribe
Three Affiliated Tribes
Flandreau Santee Sioux Tribe
Cheyenne River Sioux Tribe
Mandan Hidatsa & Arikara Tribes
Eastern Shoshone Tribe
Oglala Sioux Tribe
Northern Arapaho Business Council
Lower Brule Sioux Tribe
Spirit Lake Sioux Tribe
Standing Rock Sioux Tribe
Grey Eagle Society
Cheyenne-Arapaho Tribes of Oklahoma
Santee Sioux Nation
Kiowa Ethnographic Endeavor for Preservation
Sicangu Lakota Treaty Council Office
Northern Arapaho Tribe

OTHERS:

Dakota Research Services
Western Land Group, Inc.
Tetra Tech, Inc.
Biodiversity Conservation Alliance
Spearfish Canyon Homeowners Association
Forest Conservation Council
Spearfish Canyon Society
Nancy Hilding
Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation
Jeff Buechler
Todd Robertson
Scot K. Keith
Spearfish Canyon Foundation
The Nature Conservancy
National Wild Turnkey Federation
Native Ecosystems Council
Norbeck Society
Praire Hills Audubon Society

PERTINENT DOCUMENTS AND STUDIES

Botany Biological Evaluation for the Grizzly Land Exchange, prepared by Katherine Zacharkevics, Botanist, August 17, 2006.

Floodplain Evaluation/Wetland Evaluation for the Grizzly Land Exchange, prepared by Leslie S. Gonyer, Hydrologist, October 22, 2006.

Heritage Resource Specialist Report for the Grizzly Gulch and Richmond Hill areas, prepared by James Jay Kinsman, Northern Hills District Archaeologist, December 4, 2006.

Level III Heritage Resources Inventory Survey of a Proposed Land Exchange Transaction Conducted for the Homestake Mining Company in the Grizzly Gulch and Richmond Hill Vicinities of Lawrence County, South Dakota, prepared by Jeff Buechler, RPA, Dakota Research Services, June 2006.

Mineral Report for the Grizzly Land Exchange, prepared by Daryl L. Gusey, Region 6 Regional Geologist, September 20, 2006.

Phase I Environmental Site Assessment, Grizzly Gulch Properties, prepared by Scot K. Keith, P.G., Tetra Tech, Inc., September 28, 2006.

Phase I Environmental Site Assessment, Richmond Hills Properties, prepared by Scot K. Keith, P.G., Tetra Tech, Inc., September 29, 2006.

Phase I Environmental Site Assessment, Riflepit Property – HES 615, prepared by Scot K. Keith, P.G., Tetra Tech, Inc., September 18, 2006.

Phase I Environmental Site Assessment, Rio Tinto Property, prepared by Scot K. Keith, P.G., Tetra Tech, Inc., September 19, 2006.

Phase I Environmental Site Assessment, Billie Spring Property, prepared by Scot K. Keith, P.G., Tetra Tech, Inc., September 17, 2006.

Wildlife Biological Assessment/Biological Evaluation for the Grizzly Land Exchange, prepared by Valerie Kopcso, Wildlife Biologist, August 28, 2006.

APPENDIX A

SCOPING COMMENTS

Project Name: Grizzly Gulch Land Exchange

Note: Scoping comments received were analyzed to determine whether they contained any issues. An issue is defined as 1) a point of disagreement, debate, or dispute 2) over a proposed action 3) based on environmental effects. To be considered an issue, all three portions of the issue definition must be present. Issues identified were analyzed to determine whether they were significant or non-significant (see outcome of analysis below).

Scoping Comment ID Number	Issue Statement	Issue: Significant or Non-Significant?	Coding for Non-significant Issues
Krupp 1	There is little or no public need for the proposed land exchange. There will only be the smallest incremental public benefit in consolidating land ownership. Homestake's parent company Barrick Gold Corporation would benefit greatly from increasing its land and subsurface holdings near the Richmond Hill Mine and the Grizzly Gulch tailings dam.	Non-Significant	4
Nelson	We would not want to see mining resumed in this area, since there is a history of disatster when Richmond Hill Mine was active and released toxic wastinto Squaw Creek which killed all the fish in that tributary of Spearfish Creek. The Richmond Hill cleanup activity required continued water monitoring.	Non-Significant	1
Krupp 2	The environmental analysis must consider a reasonable range of alternatives, including the alternative of purchasing the non-Federal land.	Not an issue	
Krupp 3	The environmental analysis must provide clear, detailed descriptions of the existing condition of both the public and private lands. .	Not an issue	
Krupp 4	The Forest Service must analyze the full extent of environmental impacts that would likely result if the proposed exchange were consumated.	Not an issue	

Coding for Non-significant Issues

1. Issue is beyond the scope of the proposed action.
2. Issue is irrelevant to the decision to be made.
3. Issue is already decided by law, regulation, Forest Plan, or other higher level decision.
4. Issue is conjectural in nature and not supported by scientific evidence.
5. The magnitude, duration, extent, speed, or direction of effects suggests that the issue is non-significant.