

Opportunity to Comment on a Land Exchange Proposal

The Forest Service (Black Hills National Forest) has prepared an Environmental Assessment (EA) for a proposal to exchange lands in Lawrence and Pennington Counties, South Dakota. The proposed land exchange with Homestake Mining Company, Homestake Forest Products, and LAC minerals (Homestake) would result in 476 acres of federal land being transferred to Homestake and 227 acres of private land being transferred to the Forest Service to consolidate land ownership and result in more effective land management for the Forest Service.

The EA is available for review at the Northern Hills Ranger District office in Spearfish, the Forest Supervisor's office in Custer, and online "<http://www.fs.fed.us/r2/blackhills/projects/nepa/index.shtml>". Additional information regarding this action can be obtained from: Rhonda O'Byrne, Northern Hills District Ranger, 2014 North Main, Spearfish, South Dakota 57783, 605-642-4622.

The purpose of this comment period is to provide an opportunity for the public to provide early and meaningful participation on a proposed action prior to a decision being made by the Responsible Official. Those who provide comments or otherwise express interest during this comment period are eligible to appeal the decision pursuant to 36 CFR part 215 regulations.

How to Comment and Timeframe

Written, facsimile, hand-delivered, oral, and electronic comments concerning this action will be accepted for 30 calendar days following the publication of this notice in *The Rapid City Journal*. The publication date in the newspaper of record is the exclusive means for calculating the comment period for this analysis. Those wishing to comment should not rely upon dates or timeframe information provided by any other source. The regulations prohibit extending the length of the comment period.

Oral or written comments must be submitted to: Rhonda O'Byrne, District Ranger, 2014 North Main, Spearfish, South Dakota 57783, telephone 605-642-4622, fax to 605-642-4156, TDD 605-673-9227. The office business hours for those submitting oral or hand-delivered comments are: 8:00 am to 4:30 pm, Monday through Friday, excluding holidays.

Electronic comments must be submitted in a format such as an email message, plain text (.txt), rich text format (.rtf), or Word (.doc) to "comments-rocky-mountain-black-hills-northern-hills@fs.fed.us". The subject line of the email message should include the words "Grizzly Land Exchange". The comments must also include name and address of the commenter. In cases where no identifiable name is attached to a comment, a verification of identity will be required for appeal eligibility. If using an electronic message, a scanned signature is one way to provide verification.

It is the responsibility of persons providing comments to submit them by the close of the comment period.

Individuals and organizations wishing to be eligible to appeal must meet the information requirements of 36 CFR 215.6(a)(3) by providing (i) name and address, (ii) title of the proposed action, (iii) specific substantive comments on the proposed action, along with supporting reasons that the Responsible Official should consider in reaching a decision, and (iv) signature or other verification of identity upon request; identification of the individual or organization who authored the comment(s) is necessary for appeal eligibility.