

**ITEM 8-1**  
**Forest Service Project Effects on Minerals Activities**

ACTIVITY, PRACTICE OR EFFECT TO BE MEASURED	REPORTING PERIOD	VARIABILITY (+/-) WHICH WOULD INITIATE FURTHER EVALUATION
Review of legislative actions, administrative and/or agency actions and projects that may have an effect on Forest Service permitted mineral activities and/or mineral lands availability.	Annual	Any adverse effect on Forest Service permitted mineral projects and/or mineral lands availability.

**Introduction:** The proposal in the 1998 monitoring report to subdivide the Minerals and Geology Program monitoring and evaluation criteria into two items has been implemented in this report. However, with this report, the subdivision will go beyond last year’s suggestion and will be subdivided into three criteria. Item 8-1 is now only concerned with a review of actions, legislative and administrative, that may have had an effect on Forest Service permitted mineral activities and/or mineral lands availability. Monitoring Item 8-2, the “new” monitoring item, is a review of minerals activities that have caused adverse effects to other forest resources or forest resource activities. The other “new” monitoring item is 8-3, a discussion of mineral-related activities that have provided and/or will provide a positive effect on other forest resources and/or forest resource activities.

As noted above, Monitoring Item 8-1 is a review of legislative actions, administrative and/or agency actions, and Forest Service projects that may have an effect on permitted minerals activities and/or mineral lands availability. This includes any legislative actions, agency actions, or Forest Service projects that would preclude or delay minerals activity or that would remove lands from being available for permitted minerals activities. Examples include any change in land (mineral) status such as a minerals withdrawal due to a land being classified and designated as wilderness, a land exchange, recreational site development, or any other situation where the net result of such an action is either more or less land being made available for mining claim location and/or development.

It is rare that any project such as a timber sale or grazing permit would have any long-term effect on minerals availability or activities. A withdrawal or land exchange could have an effect. In the case of leaseable minerals, (i.e. oil and gas, coal, phosphate, etc.) management actions/decisions generally have a greater effect than do withdrawals since the lands made available for leasing is a discretionary action. In any case, the measure of effect would be the yearly change in acres open to location for mining claims and/or acres available for mineral leasing.

The permitting of activities and/or mineral lands availability can also be affected by the rules, regulations, policies, and actions of other agencies. In FY 1999, due to the requirements of the Endangered Species Act (ESA), those activities with a potential to affect bull trout had to be reviewed by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USF&WS). Therefore, the timeliness of that agency’s review as well as decisions or requirements made by that agency had an affect on the permitting of activities and/or the availability of lands for mineral activity.

**Methods:** A review of land status records kept by the Forest Service and Department of Interior’s Bureau of Land Management, forms the basis of information regarding the acres of mineral lands availability. The data recorded should include the number of acres available at the

time of Forest Plan implementation as well as the yearly number of acres available. A comparison of the net effect of legislative actions, land exchanges, withdrawals, etc., on the number of available mineral acres over time would be documented by changes in that data.

Official documents within the Forest’s file system—correspondence, environmental analysis, and decision documents—provides the bases for identifying those legislative actions, administrative and/or agency actions and Forest Service projects that may have had an effect on the permitting of mineral activities and/or mineral lands availability.

Minerals and Geology Program outputs provide a measure of not only demand but, in some cases, the effect that legislative actions, administrative and/or agency actions and projects may have had on the permitting of mineral activities and/or mineral lands availability. These outputs are obtained from the agency's annual Management Attainment Report (MAR) that is reported at the close of each fiscal year. The data collected for the Minerals and Geology Program includes current and completed cases for the fiscal year as well as the volume of selected commodities extracted from lands administered by the Forest Service.

**Results:** The only action to change the net mineral acreage on the forest during FY 1999 was the completion of the Babcock Land Exchange (M-85391) with the Plum Creek Timber Company on June 29, 1999. The effect of this land exchange was to increase the forest’s net mineral acreage by 460 acres.

Minerals and Geology Program outputs are shown in Table 8-1. The number of reported case outputs for FY 1999 was 201. This represents 140% of the Forest Plan projected annual average. The number of cases reported for FY 1998 was 203.

Table 8-1A. Fiscal Year Mineral Case Information.

Activity	Unit	FY 99	Forest Plan Projected Annual Average	Actual Average FY 87-99	Percent of Projection FY 87-99
Minerals Management	Cases*	201	165	215	130%

\*"Cases" are the number of new and existing Plans of Operation (PO's) and Notices of Intent (NOI's) to operate. Cases include: locatable minerals operations; oil and gas lease recommendations completed; oil and gas exploration and development permits administered; mineral validity determination reports completed; occupancy cases resolved; site evaluations (e.g. mineral material sources, groundwater sources, etc.); planning inputs; mineral-in-character determinations for land exchanges; and mineral withdrawal reviews.

**Evaluation:** There were no legislative actions, administrative and/or agency actions and projects during FY 1999 that significantly changed the net acres of lands available for permitted minerals activities. The Babcock Land Exchange with the Plum Creek Timber Company increased the available acreage by 460 acres.

While the overall number of cases was similar to past years, there was a slight shift in activity numbers reported for FY 1999. There were 201 cases in FY 1999 as compared to 140 and 203 in FY’s 1997 and 1998, respectively. Non-bonded non-energy operations processed increased by

10 while bonded non-energy operations processed decreased by 16, and bonded non-energy operations administered to standard decreased by 13.

While the case numbers reported between fiscal years 1998 and 1999 differed by only two, there was a notable difference in the mix of actions reported. Fewer rock sales and placer mining operating permits were approved. In terms of the extraction of mineral materials (rock, sand, and gravel), more production was contained in fewer permits with an increase from 4383 tons removed in FY 1998 to 8422 tons in FY 1999.

Fewer plans of operations for placer mining claims were approved in FY 1999 because the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service didn't complete the review of the forest's request for consultation on the effect that 14 proposals might have on bull trout and/or bull trout habitat. A biological opinion is anticipated in the second quarter of FY 2000.

**Recommendations:** As noted in the monitoring report for FY 1998, this monitoring item could benefit from a thorough review of land status records kept by both the Forest Service and Department of Interior's Bureau of Land Management.

This collection of data would better establish what the base line conditions were at the time the Forest Plan was implemented with respect to mineral lands availability. Once the data is compiled, it would be updated yearly to track the true number of available mineral acres on the forest over time. The acres would have to be categorized as to locatable mineral acres (those minerals available under the General Mining Law of 1872) and leaseable acres (those mineral substance available under the provisions of the Mineral Leasing Act of 1920 as amended). In terms of the latter, it may have to be further subdivided into oil and gas acres, coal acres, etc.

### **ITEM 8-2 Minerals Activities and Effects on Other Forest Resources**

ACTIVITY, PRACTICE OR EFFECT TO BE MEASURED	REPORTING PERIOD	VARIABILITY (+/-) WHICH WOULD INITIATE FURTHER EVALUATION
Review of mining activities affecting surface resources and/or surface land management.	Annual	Departures from approved operating plans, leases, or permits that cause adverse effects to other forest resources or forest resource activities.

**Introduction:** This monitoring item is a review of mining activities affecting surface resources and/or surface land management. Activities can include departures from approved operating plans, leases, or permits. A departure might occur as a result of criminal intent not to follow the terms and conditions of the authorizing document or permit. A departure could also occur due to an unanticipated naturally occurring event and where the operating measures prove to be inadequate to counter the effects of that event, such as a landslide caused by a 100-year flood. The measure for this monitoring item is the number of departures and the action(s) taken to correct the departure(s).

**Methods:** Knowledge regarding "departures" from approved operating plans, leases, or permits are obtained through a review of permit inspection reports. To gauge compliance, the inspector evaluates the site and operations at the site against the terms and conditions found in the use

permit, lease, or operating plan. A departure would be an observed condition or activity that is not allowed by the permit, lease, and/or operating plan.

**Results:** The Superior Ranger District issued the claimant of the Wildcat #1 Placer Claim in Spring Gulch, a tributary to Cedar Creek, a Notice of Non-compliance for failure to either perform reclamation or to submit a plan of operations (POO). The claimant had previously operated under an annual Notice of Intent (NOI). The claimant submitted a POO in response to the Notice of Non-compliance. As a result of the listing of bull trout, action on the POO will be delayed until consultation with USF&WS is completed. In the meantime, the claimant has been notified that no ground disturbance can take place until a POO has been approved.

As noted in the Monitoring Report for FY 1998, the Superior Ranger District issued the claimant of the Stemwinder Placer Claim (MMC 196915) a Notice of Non-compliance for unauthorized placer mining and route construction in the upper reaches of Cedar Creek (Snowshoe Gulch). Reclamation to the unauthorized placer mining and route construction was completed in the fall of 1998. Recovery was reviewed during the summer of 1999 to determine how well the site had stabilized and vegetated. This review revealed that the majority of the reclamation accomplished by the operator had stabilized. However, reseeding was necessary in several locations. The operator was also required to spread weed seed free straw on the surface to promote better growth of vegetation within the disturbed area. The bond is still being held pending final approval of the reclamation/stabilization measures. Total disturbance was approximately two acres.

In conjunction with this reclamation, the operator also reclaimed an adjoining site of approximately one acre where he had operated with an approved plan of operations. The majority of this work has been completed. It is anticipated that all reclamation on these sites will receive final approval in the summer of 2000 and the full bond will be returned.

**Evaluation:** Only one departure from the terms and conditions of an approved operating plan was documented during FY 1999.

The claimant has in part, addressed the departure noted in the Monitoring Report for FY 1998. During FY 2000 the progress of reclamation at the affected site will receive further monitoring and a decision will be made at the end of the summer season as to whether or not the reclamation will be accepted and the bond released or whether another growing season is necessary before adequate reclamation success has occurred and the bond can be released.

**Recommendations:** Frequent field monitoring is essential to noting mineral-related departures that may have an adverse effect on surface resources and/or surface land management. Each drainage with a potential for minerals activity should be visited no less than three times during each fiscal year-twice during each "summer" field season and at least once more during other times of the year.

**ITEM 8-3**  
**Minerals Activities with Positive Effects on Other Forest Resources**

ACTIVITY, PRACTICE OR EFFECT TO BE MEASURED	REPORTING PERIOD	VARIABILITY (+/-) WHICH WOULD INITIATE FURTHER EVALUATION
Review of mineral related activities positively affecting surface land resources and/or surface land management.	Annual	Forest Service permitted mineral project that have a positive affect on other forest resources and or forest resource activities.

**Introduction:** This monitoring item is a review of mining activities that have or potentially will have a positive affect on surface resources and/or surface land management. A positive effect could result from the willingness of an operator to commit to a level of site reclamation or operating practices beyond that required by regulation or the authorizing document, and by activities undertaken by the Forest Service or a cooperator to reclaim mined land sites and/or reduce mine site safety hazards.

**Methods:** Knowledge regarding positive actions affecting surface land resources and/or surface land management comes from a review of permit inspection reports and agency work plans. To gauge compliance to permit, the inspector evaluates the site and operations at the site against the terms and conditions found in the use permit, lease, or operating plan as well as knowledge of where the operator offered to go beyond that required by regulation or the authorizing document. Agency work plans document actions directed toward the reclamation of areas adversely affected by minerals related activities.

**Results:** Operations closure and reclamation was accepted at two sites during FY 1999 and the planning for the cleanup and reclamation of two abandoned mine sites continued.

**Evaluation:** The Ninemile Ranger District closed two Plans of Operations (POO) by accepting the reclamation preformed at the Gail #1 Placer Mining Claim and at another placer site as well. The reclamation performed at the Gail #1 Placer Claim encompassed an area of approximately five acres. A bond of \$1720 for the site will be retained for at least two years to insure that weed treatment is provided.

The reclamation for the other site was actually accomplished several years ago, but he claimant did not notify the district until FY 1999. The reclamation was accepted and the bond returned for the site.

Ryan Harris of Montana Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) also examined both of these operations and accepted the reclamation for the State of Montana.

The Superior Ranger District is developing protocols for the management of noxious weeds in and adjacent to sand and gravel pit developments. The purpose of this management is to assure that weeds do not proliferate within pit developments and serve as a source of seed that can affect other areas when the sand and gravel is removed from the site and used on forest development roads.

In the interest of mined land reclamation and hazard reduction, the Nancy Lee and Tarbox Mine sites were submitted for out year funding. Nationwide, the Nancy Lee has been identified as the Forest Service's number one priority reclamation site for funding in FY 2001. The Tarbox Mine was also funded for reclamation in FY 2001. In order to design an adequate closure device for the shaft Tarbox Mine site, a ground-penetrating-radar study was conducted in FY 1999 to locate

the shaft of the Tarbox Mine that has been partially filled and covered with fill dirt. Contractors will complete the Engineering Evaluation and Cost Analysis (EECA) report for the Tarbox Mine in FY 2000. The EECA for the Nancy Lee Mine site should be completed by the second quarter of FY 2001.

**Recommendations:** Additional funding should be granted to identify and plan for the reclamation of additional abandoned mine sites on the forest. Successful mined land site reclamation and hazard reduction depend on competent staff as well as adequate planning and funding. Currently, the forest has only one individual with the qualifications to administer a mine site reclamation contract. It is recommended the forest have no less than three qualified individuals at any one time. At a minimum, individuals to be qualified for working in mined land reclamation need to have attended the following two courses:

- ❖ On-Scene Coordinator
- ❖ HAZWOPPER

**ITEM 12-1**  
**Effects on Local Communities & Other Landowners**

ACTIVITY, PRACTICE OR EFFECT TO BE MEASURED	REPORTING PERIOD	VARIABILITY (+/-) WHICH WOULD INITIATE FURTHER EVALUATION
Effects of forest management on local economy, recreation opportunities, downstream water uses, visual quality, local air quality.	5 years	Unacceptable results of an ID Team review

**Introduction/Methods:** The change in area employment and area income is based on a historic timber harvest level in the Forest Plan of 92 MMBF and an average permitted livestock level of 13,800 AUMs. The Lolo Forest provides only a portion of the total timber harvest and forage produced in this market area. Actual changes in area employment and income are a result of total area economic activity, of which the Lolo is only a part.

**Results:** The estimates displayed in Table 12-1A show the change in total income and employment if changes in Lolo outputs were not offset by supplies from other sources. Since there are other sources of timber and grazing inputs to area markets in addition to those from the Lolo, the actual total impact experienced in the market area may be substantially less than the values displayed in this table.

**Table 12-1A.** Outputs or Effects - Actual vs. Projected, 1987-1999.

Activity	Unit	Plan Projected (Annual Average)	Actual Average to date	Percent of Projected
Change in Area Employment	jobs/year	435	-476	-109%
Change in Area Income	million 1996 \$	\$11.5	-\$12.1	-105%
Payments to Counties	million 1996 \$	\$5.1	\$1.8	35%

**Evaluation:** The changes in income, employment and payments to counties are based on the same assumptions for jobs and income per unit (MBF for timber harvest and AUM for grazing) as we used in the Forest Plan. The changes associated with livestock grazing averages eight jobs less than the Forest Plan projected. The change associated with timber volume averages 833 jobs less than projected. Payments to counties are actual payments, based on 25% of gross receipts for timber sales, grazing permits, etc. Actual impacts for the Lolo market area depend on public and private supplies which are influenced to some extent by economic conditions at local and national levels.

**ITEM 13-1  
Land Adjustment Program**

ACTIVITY, PRACTICE OR EFFECT TO BE MEASURED	REPORTING PERIOD	VARIABILITY (+/-) WHICH WOULD INITIATE FURTHER EVALUATION
Evaluate progress of landownership adjustment program	Annual	N/A

**Introduction:** The intent of this monitoring item is to evaluate the progress of the forest's landownership adjustment program.

**Methods:** The forest lands specialist reviews last year's projects/cases.

**Results:** The forest focused on the Babcock land exchange with Plum Creek Timber Company (PCTC). The purpose of the Babcock exchange is to transfer important wildlife habitat and scenic landscapes into federal ownership and to consolidate ownerships to help improve federal and non-federal management efficiency. The Decision Notice has been signed on the exchange. This exchange was completed December 1999.

**Evaluation:** The Forest Plan directs acquisition of isolated parcels or interests in isolated parcels having specific resources complementing National Forest management. This land exchange enhances wildlife habitat by placing 1200 acres of grizzly bear habitat under National Forest Management. In addition, two of the parcels (2000 acres approximately) benefit fisheries by providing additional habitat and aquatic resources important for bull trout. The exchange also improves scenic landscapes. The exchange is consistent with Forest Plan direction.

**Recommendations:** Direction from the Washington Office on the landownership adjustment program and Forest Plans will be coming out in the near future. When the Forest Plan is revised, this new direction should be incorporated.

**ITEM 13-2**  
**Utility/Transportation Corridors**

ACTIVITY, PRACTICE OR EFFECT TO BE MEASURED	REPORTING PERIOD	VARIABILITY (+/-) WHICH WOULD INITIATE FURTHER EVALUATION
Insure major utility and transportation systems are developed within identified corridors	During Project Construction	Deviation from identified corridors

**Introduction:** The intent of this monitoring item is to evaluate the development of major utility and transportation systems within identified corridors.

**Methods:** The forest lands specialist reviews last year's projects/cases.

**Results:** No utility or transmission corridors were designated through the Lolo National Forest last year. The Yellowstone Pipeline Company withdrew its application on February 14, 2000, for a new right-of-way corridor for its petroleum pipeline that crosses National Forest System lands. The Lolo National Forest has begun the process to reissue the existing pipeline. The EIS is to be completed in the third quarter of fiscal year 2000.

**Evaluation:** There is no project under construction to evaluate.

**Recommendations:** No recommendations.

**ITEM 13-3**  
**Right-of-Way Grants**

ACTIVITY, PRACTICE OR EFFECT TO BE MEASURED	REPORTING PERIOD	VARIABILITY (+/-) WHICH WOULD INITIATE FURTHER EVALUATION
Assure proposed R/W grants are in identified corridors.	Annual	Any project outside identified corridor.

**Introduction:** The intent of this monitoring item is to evaluate the right-of-way grants outside identified corridors.

**Methods:** The forest lands specialist reviews last year's projects/cases.

**Results:** The Lolo NF issued authorizations or amendments to existing authorizations for utility rights-of-way. These right-of-way authorizations were for minor "spur" or "feeder" electric and telephone lines that provide local service, not major power transmission nor other utility facilities. Some of the authorizations or amendments included upgrading from overhead line to under ground lines.

**Evaluation:** All of the projects are reviewed to ensure they are in compliance with the Forest Plan before authorization is issued.

**Recommendations:** This may not be an effective evaluation criteria. Considering that private requests to use NFS land will likely increase, evaluating all land use authorizations may be more appropriate.