



Exploring, Prospecting and Mining for Minerals on the PSICC

United States Department of Agriculture
 Pike - San Isabel National Forests & Cimarron and Comanche National Grasslands (PSICC)
 2840 Kachina Drive
 Pueblo, CO 81008

Notice of Intent (NOI)– Except as provided in 36 CFR 228.4(a)(1) , a notice of intent to operate is required from any person proposing to conduct operations which might cause significant disturbance of surface resources. Anyone proposing to prospect, explore or mine for locatable minerals (gold/silver, gems, etc.) which might disturb surface resources **must file at minimum a NOI** with the local District Ranger. Any person not well versed and knowledgeable about the environmental concerns such as ESA Species and Archaeological concerns on the forest would be well advised to file a NOI. Activities which are limited to operation of vehicles on existing (open) forest roads, removal of small mineral specimens or marking/monumenting mining claims normally do not require a NOI.

Plan of Operations – The District Ranger will review the Plan of Operations and notify the operator whether a more detailed Plan of Operations will be required. An approved Plan of Operations is required if the activities proposed will likely cause or are causing significant disturbance to surface resources. To avoid problems and delays, contact the local District Ranger or Minerals Program staff well in advance of planned operations if you have any questions about whether a Notice or Plan will be needed for your activities. Use of mechanized equipment, cutting of trees, or long term occupancy of National Forest lands usually requires a Plan of Operations.

How long does it take to get an approved Plan of Operation? -- The length of time to process the Plan of Operations depends on the complexity of the proposal and the degree and type of surface-disturbing activities being proposed. Given that it may take over a year to process and approve a Plan, it is standard agency advice that an operator should submit their plan for USFS review as early as possible before the operating season **prior to** their desired start-up date.

HOW DOES THE PROCESS WORK?

Step	Information	Timeframe
1. Contact us by phone or stop by the office for a visit	<p>Minerals Program Amy Titterington, 719-838-0699 (South Park)</p> <p><u>District Rangers</u> Josh Voorhis, 719-836-2031 (South Park) Brian Banks, 303-275-5610 (South Platte) Carl Bauer, 719-636-1602 (Pikes Peak) Patrick Mercer, 719-486-0749 (Leadville) Perry Edwards, 719-539-3591 (Salida) Destiny Chapman, 719-269-8500 (San Carlos)</p>	The earlier, the better.
2. Submit your Plan of Operations	36 CFR 228 Locatable Minerals	District Ranger responds within 30 days of receiving.
3. Arrange a site visit of your proposal with the minerals program staff		As soon as weather conditions permit. If your PoO is submitted in late September and the weather and road conditions do not allow for a site visit until the following season, this will delay processing of your PoO.
4. Forest Service specialists will review your proposal and visit the site	Specialists usually include a hydrologist, wildlife biologist, fisheries biologist and an archaeologist. Other specialists may be needed depending on the proposal.	Usually during the same fiscal year (Oct 1 – Sept 30) as the site visit.
5. Forest Service specialists conduct an environmental analysis.	If your proposal includes the use of water, you will need to obtain a temporary water right from the State of Colorado. You may also need permits from the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers or the Environmental Protection Agency if your proposal may otherwise impact watercourses.	During the fiscal year following the review of the proposal and site visit.



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6. Consultation with other agencies	<p>If fish or wildlife species or cultural resources are likely to be impacted by your proposal, extra time will be needed to consult with agencies regulating those resources.</p>	<p>During the fiscal year following the review of the proposal and site visit.</p>
7. Environmental documentation	<p>Determine type of environmental analysis:</p> <p>The Decision Maker will determine the analysis needed -- Categorical Exclusion (CE), Environmental Assessment (EA) or Environmental Impact Statement (EIS). A Decision Memo (DM) associated with a CE is not subject to the objection process detailed below, and takes the least amount of time to process but is only good for one year. An EIS can take several years or longer.</p> <p>Scoping: The Forest Service publishes notice of your proposal in a local newspaper to inform interested parties and provide an opportunity for them to comment on your proposal.</p> <p>Legal Notice and Comment: Following scoping, design criteria will be developed to address concerns received by the public. The project description and draft design criteria will be provided to all who commented during scoping.</p> <p>Notice of Decision: The deciding official (typically the District Ranger) will sign a decision document and notice of it will be published in the Legal Notices section of the newspaper of record.</p>	<p>As early as possible during the fiscal year following the review of the proposal and site visit. Occasionally this can be done earlier.</p> <p>Scoping is typically done for 30 days, but shorter times are possible.</p> <p>30 days, timed at the deciding official's discretion, for interested parties to comment on whether the Forest Service addressed the concerns raised during scoping. If no parties comment during this period, there will be no objection period.</p> <p>Following the NOD, those who provided comments during the Legal Notice and Comment period have 45 days to object to the decision.</p> <p>36 CFR 218 (Objection Process)</p>
8. Implementation		<p>Dependent on the outcome of objection resolution. If no objections are received, implementation may begin sooner. Minerals Staff can help you with this process.</p>