

File Code: 5570

Date: December 5, 2016

Dear Interested Party,

The Forest Service is seeking feedback on a proposal to convey two connected parcels of land, and the associated water rights, in El Jebel, Colorado. The property may be sold directly to an identified purchaser or may be sold under competitive bidding procedures. The timing of the actual sale will be determined by the real estate market.

This conveyance would be processed under the authority of the Forest Service Facility Realignment and Enhancement Act (FSFREA) (P.L. 109-54). This authority allows for the sale, exchange, or lease of Forest Service facilities with the proceeds to be used for the acquisition, improvement, or reconstruction of Forest Service facilities and associated costs with the conveyance of properties under this authority.

The two connected parcels of land are the Lower Parcel and the Upper Parcel. The Lower Parcel is approximately 40 acres and is predominantly riparian in nature and the Upper Parcel is approximately 30 acres and consists of three residences, one mobile home pad, horse pastures, and vacant land. A conservation easement or deed restriction intended to protect the wetlands, floodplains, aquatic, botanical, wildlife resources, and future public access may be placed on the Lower Parcel at the time of sale. The intent of these encumbrances to the Lower Parcel is to protect the wetlands and floodplains from future development as required by Executive Orders 11988 and 11990, while also providing protection for the aquatic, botanical, and wildlife resources associated with this parcel and ensuring future public access. The property may be sold directly to an identified purchaser or may be sold under competitive bidding procedures. The method of sale will be determined at a later date. The proposal includes a project-specific forest plan amendment.

The action is being proposed as part of a forest-wide effort aimed at decreasing deferred maintenance costs of Forest Service administrative facilities located across the White River National Forest (WRNF). This effort includes the consolidation of administrative facilities where practical, while also eliminating isolated Forest Service parcels and create a more efficient pattern of land ownership in Eagle County. The proceeds that will be realized through the conveyance of these parcels will be reinvested into facility reconstruction projects across the forest. The facility reconstruction projects emphasize increasing energy efficiency, increasing operational efficiency, and helping the WRNF to better serve the public.

The project location is near El Jebel, Colorado in Eagle County. Bounded by Crown Mountain Park to the east, Valley Road to the north, and the Roaring Fork River to the south. With a legal description of: **N1/2 of Sec. 3, NE1/4 NE1/4 of Sec. 4, T. 8 S., R. 87 W., 6th P.M.**



A team of natural resource specialists is in the process of analyzing the potential environmental effects of the El Jebel "Tree Farm" Administrative Site Conveyance Project including impacts to special status wildlife and botanical species, historic/prehistoric sites, water and soils these are required by ESA, NHPA, and CWA. The Agency anticipates analyzing this project through the preparation of an Environmental Impact Statement.

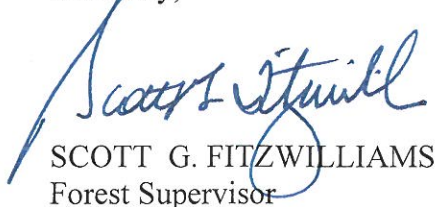
To make a fully informed decision, I would like to know if you have any thoughts, issues or concerns related to other effects caused by this proposal and how they may be addressed. Your feedback on the proposed action is an integral part of our environmental analysis process. This letter also serves to notify and invite public comment on the proposal as stipulated in 36 CFR 800.3 of the National Historic Preservation Act.

A full description of the project can be found on the WRNF website at: <http://www.fs.usda.gov/project/?project=50663>. The publication of the Notice of Intent (NOI) in the Federal Register (anticipated on December 7, 2016, which will initiate a 45-day scoping period. Therefore, the comment period is expected to end on January 20, 2017 The NOI provides the sole means of calculating the close of the comment period. Written comments must be submitted via mail, fax, electronically, or in person (Monday through Friday, 8:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., excluding holidays) to: Scott Fitzwilliams, c/o Carole Huey, Project Leader, 900 Grand Avenue, Glenwood Springs, CO 81601, email: clhuey@fs.fed.us, FAX: (970) 945-3266. Electronic comments including attachments can be submitted to: <https://cara.ecosystem-management.org/Public//CommentInput?Project=50663>. Respondents should include: (1) name, address, telephone number, and organization represented, if any and (2) specific facts, concerns or issues, and supporting reasons why they should be considered.

Only those who submit timely and specific written comments will have eligibility to file an objection under 36 CFR §218.8. For objection eligibility, each individual or representative from each entity submitting timely and specific written comments must either sign the comment or verify identity upon request. Comments received, including the names and addresses of those who comment, will become part of the public record for this project and will be subject to review pursuant to the Freedom of Information Act.

To request additional information regarding this proposal, please contact Carole Huey at (970) 945-3219 or clhuey@fs.fed.us.

Sincerely,



SCOTT G. FITZWILLIAMS
Forest Supervisor

cc: C.Huey, M.Ehrman, K. Warner