



DECISION MEMORANDUM FOR THE CHIEF

TO: *for* Victoria Christiansen *Jennings* Chief Date: March 13, 2019

THROUGH: Christopher B. French *for* Acting Deputy Chief, NFS Date: March 13, 2019

FROM: Christine Dawe *for* Director, EMC Date: March 13, 2019

SUBJECT: Modification to Colorado Roadless Area Boundary, Final Action

FILE CODE: 1230

ISSUE RECOMMENDATION:

Provide final approval or denial of a Colorado Roadless Rule modification consistent with the NEPA decision for the Summitville Small Tracts Interchange, Rio Grande National Forest, Conejos Peak Ranger District.

I recommend the Chief provide final approval of the CO Roadless Rule boundary line modification contained within the Summitville Small Tracts Act Interchange for the following reasons:

- Allows the Forest Service to dispose of un-manageable mineral survey fractions within the superfund site in exchange for adjacent properties that allow for boundary consolidation by eliminating three private inholdings.
- Allows the State, County and EPA to formalize a long-term Environmental Covenant for the site.
- The exchange also allows the RGNF to administratively correct segments of the northern boundary of the Wightman Fork-Lookout Roadless Area by exchanging impacted mining lands void of roadless character and acquire Rio Grande county lands that could be included in existing Roadless Areas.
- The proposed land exchange is consistent with the Colorado Roadless Rule and does not involve a change to 36 CFR Part 294 Subpart D (Rule).

BACKGROUND:

The referenced activity falls under the Chief's review process of May 24, 2016. A copy of this process memo is contained within the review packet. Initial approval of the modification was provided in October, 2017. A Federal Register, 90-day public comment period was initiated November 30, 2017. No comments were received.

The Forest Service proposes to convey 32 parcels of National Forest System land, totaling



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approximately 75 acres, in exchange for three parcels of private land totaling approximately 70 acres. Approximately 16 acres of Inventoried Roadless Area within the 5,700-acre Wightman Fork-Lookout Roadless Area would be conveyed and approximately 10 acres of non-federal land would be acquired. The proposed land exchange would result in a net decrease of approximately 6 acres for the Colorado roadless inventory. The Decision Memorandum for this action was signed on February 15, 2019.

DECISION BY THE CHIEF :

Approved: _____



Disapproved: _____

Discuss with Me: _____

Date: _____

Enclosures: 5



Topic: Colorado Roadless Area Boundary Modification – Summitville Small Tracts Act Interchange, Rio Grande National Forest, Conejos Peak Ranger District

Date: February 22, 2019

Contact: Christopher French, Acting Deputy Chief for the National Forest System

Phone: 202-205-1523

Email: cfrench@usda.gov

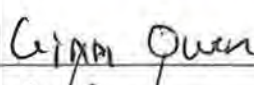
Issue Summary: The Rocky Mountain Region requests the Chief's approval on the proposed Colorado Roadless Area (CRA) boundary modifications.

Background: The Colorado Roadless Rule allows the Chief to modify the boundaries of Colorado Roadless Areas based on changed circumstances, after a minimum 90-day comment period (36 CFR 294.47(a)). The May 24, 2016 Boundary Modification and Administrative Corrections Process, Idaho and Colorado Roadless Rules letter from the Chief detail procedures for Colorado Roadless Area boundary modifications.

- The Forest Service proposes to convey 32 parcels of National Forest System land, totaling approximately 75 acres, in exchange for three parcels of private land totaling approximately 70 acres. Approximately 16 acres of Inventoried Roadless Area within the 5,700-acre Wightman Fork-Lookout Roadless Area would be conveyed and approximately 10 acres of non-federal land would be acquired. The proposed land exchange would result in a net decrease of approximately 6 acres for the Colorado roadless inventory.
- The land exchange is in support of environmental management of the Summitville Superfund Site located in Rio Grande County, Colorado. The 1,400 acre Superfund site contains approximately 32 separate mineral fractions owned by the USFS. It is the intent of both the State and EPA to have all lands within the remedial boundary that are necessary to protect the Superfund remedy be covered under an Environmental Covenant. Since the State of Colorado is unable to place a protective Environmental Covenant upon Federal lands, a Small Tracts Act Interchange was proposed and agreed to pursue.
- In October of 2017 the Forest received concurrence from NFS on the initial CRA boundary line modification action. A Federal Register, 90-day opportunity to comment period began on November 30, 2017. No comments were received regarding the proposal. There are no anticipated effects to the local economy.
- The Rio Grande National Forest has analyzed the effects of the proposed land exchange and CRA boundary modifications in a categorical exclusion. The Rio Grande National Forest published a legal notice on the land exchange as well as a news release in local papers, both soliciting comments. No comments were received.
- The Rocky Mountain Region coordinated with the State of Colorado as required by the Rule.
- The proposed land exchange would not require any changes to the Code of Federal Regulations text or tables for the Colorado Roadless Rule.

Recommendation/Next Steps: Upon approval from the Chief, the Forest will complete the environmental analysis (CE) and sign the NEPA decision document.



FINAL APPROVAL OF COLORADO ROADLESS RULE, BOUNDARY LINE MODIFICATIONS: WASHINGTON OFFICE CLEARANCE		
In accordance with the Colorado Roadless Rule (36 CFR 294.47(a)) the Chief of the Forest Service may modify the boundaries of any designated Colorado Roadless Areas identified in § 294.49 or add new Colorado roadless areas based on changed circumstances.		
Title/Heading of Document: <u>Colorado Roadless Rule, boundary line modification, final approval</u>		
Author (Contact if additional information is needed): David Loomis, R2 Acting Roadless Coordinator	Staff Unit/Region: R2	Telephone Number: 303-275-5008 david.loomis@usda.gov
Issue: There is a proposed Colorado Roadless Rule boundary line modification contained within the Summitville Small Tracts Act Interchange, Rio Grande NF, Conejos Peak RD. The Colorado Roadless Area listed in § 294.49 and involved in this project is: Wightman Fork-Lookout Roadless Area, 5,700 acres		
Brief Summary of Document/Action Being Cleared: The Forest Service proposes to convey 32 parcels of National Forest System land, totaling approximately 75 acres, in exchange for three parcels of private land totaling approximately 70 acres. Approximately 16 acres of Inventoried Roadless Area within the 5,700-acre Wightman Fork-Lookout Roadless Area would be conveyed and approximately 10 acres of non-federal land would be acquired. The proposed land exchange would result in a net decrease of approximately 6 acres for the Colorado roadless inventory.		
FOR WASHINGTON OFFICE ONLY:		
Clearance Required	Concurrence (Sign and Date)	
1. Director - Ecosystem Management Coordination	 02/25/2019 FOR Christine Dawe	
2. Deputy Chief/Associate Deputy Chief – National Forest System	 3/4/19	
3. Chief – United States Forest Service	 18 Mar '19	
Remarks: This is for final approval. Initial approval of the modification was provided in October, 2017. A Federal Register, 90-day public comment period was initiated November 30, 2017. No comments were received.		
Return to Steve Stadelman (EMC), sstadelman@usda.gov , 202-205-1521		



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