



United States Department of Agriculture

Rio Grande National Forest

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Rio Grande National Forest seeking input on two proposals in Summitville area

SOUTH FORK, Colo. – The Rio Grande National Forest is seeking input on two lands proposals affecting the Summitville area located 14 miles south of South Fork.

In the first proposal, a portion of the northern boundary of the Wightman to Lookout Roadless Area identified in the 2012 Colorado Roadless Rule would be modified. Approximately 16 acres that lie within and adjacent to the Summitville superfund site would be removed from Colorado Roadless designation. The proposal would also add 10 acres of newly acquired lands to the roadless area, resulting in a net decrease to Colorado Roadless Areas of approximately 6 acres.

A 90-day comment period for this project began with publication of the proposed boundary modification in the Federal Register on November 30, 2017. Comments are due to the Rio Grande National Forest by February 28, 2018. See information at the end of this release on how to send in comments.

In the second project, referred to as the Summitville Interchange, the Forest proposes to convey 76 acres in 31 separate mineral survey fractions within and adjacent to the Summitville Superfund site to Rio Grande County in exchange for three County parcels totaling 71 acres, also in the Summitville area. The Forest is seeking public input to inform the environmental analysis. Input should be provided to the Rio Grande National Forest by February 22, 2018.

The purpose of the Summitville Interchange is tied to the cleanup history and future maintenance of the Summitville Mines Superfund Site. The Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment (C.D.P.H.E.) and the Environmental Protection Agency have completed the construction of the infrastructure needed to remedy acid mine drainage at the Summitville Mine Superfund site. The remaining activities at the site include continued treatment of the drainage and placement of administrative controls to protect the superfund remedy actions over the long-term.

The C.D.P.H.E., E.P.A. and Rio Grande County have been working cooperatively to update and formalize a revised long-term environmental covenant on the site. The State of Colorado is unable to place a protective environmental covenant upon federal lands and so, together with the EPA, are requesting the transfer of these small parcels to Rio Grande County.

Rio Grande County currently owns most of the non-federal land within and outside the Summitville Institutional Control Boundary. The County acquired the land in 2003 through property tax default as a result of the former Summitville mine operator declaring bankruptcy. It is the intention of C.D.P.H.E., E.P.A. and Rio Grande County to have County ownership of all lands within the institutional control boundary to protect the superfund remedy under the

environmental covenant. The County has proposed to convey specific parcels it owns outside the boundary for the federal parcels within the boundary.

The proposed interchange would allow the State of Colorado, Rio Grande County and Environmental Protection Agency to place a protective environmental covenant on all lands within the Summitville Superfund Site. The Forest Service would 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.

Written comments may be mailed or delivered to the Rio Grande National Forest, Attn: Tom Malecek, 1803 West Highway 160, Monte Vista, CO 81144; by facsimile to 719-852-6250; or email to comments-rocky-mountain-rio-grande@fs.fed.us. Comments should be postmarked or received no later than February 22, 2018 for the land interchange proposal and February 28, 2018 for the boundary modification.

Additional information, including maps of the interchange parcels and proposed roadless boundary modification, may be viewed at the Rio Grande National Forest website at <https://www.fs.usda.gov/projects/riogrande/landmanagement/projects>. Contact Deputy Forest Supervisor Tom Malecek for additional information at 719-852-6225 or tmalecek@fs.fed.us.

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