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Comments:

As a student of ecosystem sciences, and as someone who has worked with the US Forest Service in the past to more efficiently protect this nation's precious and unique forest resources, I cannot support the 'streamlining' or 'expediting' of exploratory processes, as this proposed rule seeks to do. The nation's forests are held in the public trust, meaning they belong primarily to the citizens of this country - not to the government or to industry. Therefore, public interest must supersede industry interests. The process for seeking and developing mineral or other resources in public lands, especially in those as long-forming and ecologically important as forests, should be burdensome. It should not be easy for industry to win approval for activities that would damage public land if the citizenry does not wish it. So I make submit this comment as both a member of that citizenry and of the ecological scientific professional community when I say I do not support this new rule.