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Title:

Comments: Hi Chad and Corey,

We've received inquiries as to opportunities for public comment on the land exchange. We've discussed this generally in our Cooperating Agency meetings, but we'd like to be able to be more specific when people ask us questions about the process. As I am sure you know, "privatization" is a concern for state and federal environmental groups that receives extra scrutiny when accomplished through a categorical exclusion.

My understanding is that the USFS will issue a decision memo under NEPA that documents its decision to use a categorical exclusion for the land exchange. Once the memo is executed, It must be shared with "interested or affected parties." Do you have an idea how and when this memo will be shared with interested or affected parties?

Relevant to the exchange itself, will the feasibility analysis and/or Agreement to Initiate be available to the public when information about the exchange is sent out for public comment during public scoping?

We also have discussed an opportunity for public comment on whether the public interest will be served by the exchange. Although not required under a categorical exclusion, public comment on the public interest determination is always important to groups that are skeptical about public lands being conveyed to mining companies.

Specifics about the public comment period, available to the public, would be extremely helpful in reducing skepticism about the exchange.

Thank you so much,

Barbara