

PART 254—LANDOWNERSHIP ADJUSTMENTS

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Subpart A—Land Exchanges

AUTHORITY: 7 U.S.C. 428a(a) and 1011; 16 U.S.C. 484a, 485, 486, 516, 551, and 555a; 43 U.S.C. 1701, 1715, 1716, and 1740; and other applicable laws.

SOURCE: 59 FR 10867, Mar. 8, 1994, unless otherwise noted.

§ 254.1 Scope and applicability.

(a) These rules set forth the procedures for conducting exchanges of National Forest System lands. The procedures in these rules may be supplemented by instructions issued to Forest Service officers in Chapter 5400 of the Forest Service Manual and Forest Service Handbooks 5409.12 and 5409.13.

(b) These rules apply to all National Forest System exchanges of land or interests in land, including but not limited to minerals, water rights, and timber, except those exchanges made under the authority of Small Tracts Act of January 12, 1983 (16 U.S.C. 521c–521i) (36 CFR part 254, subpart C), and as otherwise noted. These rules also apply to other methods of acquisition, where indicated.

(c) The application of these rules to exchanges made under the authority of the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act, as amended (43 U.S.C. 1621), or the Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation Act (16 U.S.C. 3192), shall be limited to those provisions which do not conflict with the provisions of these Acts.

(d) Unless the parties to an exchange otherwise agree, land exchanges for which the parties have agreed in writing to initiate prior to April 7, 1994, will proceed in accordance with the rules and regulations in effect at the time of the agreement.

(e) Except for exchanges requiring cash equalization payments made available through the Land and Water Conservation Act of 1965, as amended (16 U.S.C. 460[1]9), the boundaries of a national forest are automatically extended to encompass lands acquired under the Weeks Act of March 1, 1911, as amended (16 U.S.C. 516), provided the acquired lands are contiguous to existing national forest boundaries and total no more than 3,000 acres in each exchange.

(f) Exchanges under the Weeks Act of March 1, 1911, or the General Exchange Act of March 20, 1922, may involve land-for-timber (non-Federal land exchanged for the rights to Federal timber), or timber-for-land (the exchange of the rights to non-Federal timber for Federal land), or tripartite land-for-timber (non-Federal land exchanged for the rights to Federal timber cut by a

third party in behalf of the exchange parties).

(g) Land exchanges involving National Forest System lands are authorized by a number of statutes, depending upon the status (conditions of ownership) of such lands and the purpose for which an exchange is to be made. The status of National Forest System land is determined by the method by which the land or interests therein became part of the National Forest System. Unless otherwise provided by law, lands acquired by the United States in exchanges assume the same status as the Federal lands conveyed.

(h) The Federal Land Policy and Management Act of 1976, as amended (43 U.S.C. 1701), is supplemental to all applicable exchange laws, except the cash equalization provisions of the Sisk Act of December 4, 1967, as amended (16 U.S.C. 484a).

§ 254.2 Definitions.

For the purposes of this subpart, the following terms have the meanings set forth in this section.

Acquisition means the attainment of lands or interests in lands by the Secretary, acting on behalf of the United States, by exchange, purchase, donation, or eminent domain.

Adjustment to relative values means compensation for exchange-related costs, or other responsibilities or requirements assumed by one party, which ordinarily would be borne by the other party. These adjustments do not alter the agreed upon value of the lands involved in an exchange.

Agreement to initiate means a written, nonbinding statement of present intent to initiate and pursue an exchange, which is signed by the parties and which may be amended by consent of the parties or terminated at any time upon written notice by any party.

Appraisal or appraisal report means a written statement independently and impartially prepared by a qualified appraiser setting forth an opinion as to the market value of the lands or interests in lands as of a specific date(s), supported by the presentation and analysis of relevant market information.

Approximately equal value means a comparative estimate of value of the

lands involved in an exchange which have readily apparent and substantially similar elements of value, such as location, size, use, physical characteristics, and other amenities.

Arbitration is a process to resolve a disagreement among the parties as to appraised value, performed by an arbitrator appointed by the Secretary from a list recommended by the American Arbitration Association.

Assembled land exchange means an exchange of Federal land for a package of multiple ownership parcels of non-Federal land consolidated for purposes of one land exchange transaction.

Authorized officer means a Forest Service line or staff officer who has been delegated the authority and responsibility to make decisions and perform the duties described in this subpart.

Bargaining is a process other than arbitration, by which parties attempt to resolve a dispute concerning the appraised value of the lands involved in an exchange.

Federal lands means any lands or interests in lands, such as mineral and timber interests, that are owned by the United States and administered by the Secretary of Agriculture through the Chief of the Forest Service, without regard to how the United States acquired ownership.

Hazardous substances are those substances designated under Environmental Protection Agency regulations at 40 CFR part 302.

Highest and best use means an appraiser's supported opinion of the most probable and legal use of a property, based on market evidence, as of the date of valuation.

Lands means any land and/or interests in land.

Market value means the most probable price in cash, or terms equivalent to cash, which lands or interest in lands should bring in a competitive and open market under all conditions requisite to a fair sale, where the buyer and seller each acts prudently and knowledgeably, and the price is not affected by undue influence.