

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.

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Mineral laws means the mining and mineral leasing laws applicable to Federally owned lands and minerals reserved from the public domain for national forest purposes and the Geothermal Steam Act of 1970 (30 U.S.C. 1001 *et seq.*), but not the Materials Act of 1947 (30 U.S.C. 601 *et seq.*).

Outstanding interests are rights or interests in property held by an entity other than a party to an exchange.

Party means the United States or any person, State, or local government who enters into an agreement to initiate an exchange.

Person means any individual, corporation, or other legal entity legally capable to hold title to and convey land. An individual must be a citizen of the United States and a corporation must be subject to the laws of the United States or of the State where the land is located or the corporation is incorporated. No Member of Congress may participate in a land exchange with an agency of the United States, as set forth in 18 U.S.C. 431–433.

Public land laws means that body of non-mineral land laws dealing with the disposal of National Forest System lands administered by the Secretary of Agriculture.

Reserved interest means an interest in real property retained by a party from a conveyance of the title to that property.

Resource values means any of the various commodity values or non-commodity values, such as wildlife habitat and aesthetics, contained within land interests, surface and subsurface.

Secretary means the Secretary of Agriculture or the individual to whom responsibility has been delegated.

Segregation means the removal for a limited period, subject to valid existing rights, of a specified area of the Federal lands from appropriation under the public land laws and mineral laws, pursuant to the authority of the Secretary of the Interior to allow for the orderly administration of the Federal lands.

Statement of value means a written report prepared by a qualified appraiser in conformance with the minimum standards of the Uniform Standards of Professional Appraisal Practice that

states the appraiser's conclusion(s) of value.

§ 254.3 Requirements.

(a) *Discretionary nature of exchanges.* The Secretary is not required to exchange any Federal lands. Land exchanges are discretionary, voluntary real estate transactions between the Federal and non-Federal parties. Unless and until the parties enter into a binding exchange agreement, any party may withdraw from and terminate an exchange proposal at any time during the exchange process.

(b) *Determination of public interest.* The authorized officer may complete an exchange only after a determination is made that the public interest will be well served.

(1) *Factors to consider.* When considering the public interest, the authorized officer shall give full consideration to the opportunity to achieve better management of Federal lands and resources, to meet the needs of State and local residents and their economies, and to secure important objectives, including but not limited to: protection of fish and wildlife habitats, cultural resources, watersheds, and wilderness and aesthetic values; enhancement of recreation opportunities and public access; consolidation of lands and/or interests in lands, such as mineral and timber interests, for more logical and efficient management and development; consolidation of split estates; expansion of communities; accommodation of existing or planned land use authorizations (§ 254.4(c)(4)); promotion of multiple-use values; implementation of applicable Forest Land and Resource Management Plans; and fulfillment of public needs.

(2) *Findings.* To determine that an exchange well serves the public interest, the authorized officer must find that—

(i) The resource values and the public objectives served by the non-Federal lands or interests to be acquired must equal or exceed the resource values and the public objectives served by the Federal lands to be conveyed, and

(ii) The intended use of the conveyed Federal land will not substantially conflict with established management objectives on adjacent Federal lands, including Indian Trust lands.