

and, therefore, the authorized officer has no obligation to evaluate whether the operator has valid existing rights or to process the operator's proposed plan of operations.

(b)(1) If the authorized officer concludes that there is not sufficient evidence of valid existing rights, the officer shall so notify the operator in writing of the reasons for the determination, inform the operator that the proposed mineral operation cannot be conducted, advise the operator that the Forest Service will promptly notify the Bureau of Land Management of the determination and request the initiation of a mineral contest action against the pertinent mining claim, and advise the operator that further consideration of the proposed plan of operations is suspended pending final action by the Department of the Interior on the operator's claim of valid existing rights and any final judicial review thereof.

(2) If the authorized officer concludes that there is not sufficient evidence of valid existing rights, the authorized officer also shall notify promptly the Bureau of Land Management of the determination and request the initiation of a mineral contest action against the pertinent mining claims.

(c) An authorized officer's decision pursuant to paragraph (b) of this section that there is not sufficient evidence of valid existing rights is not subject to further agency or Department of Agriculture review or administrative appeal.

(d) The authorized officer shall notify the operator in writing that the review of the remainder of the proposed plan will proceed if:

(1) The authorized officer concludes that there is sufficient evidence of valid existing rights;

(2) Final agency action by the Department of the Interior determines that the applicable mining claim constitutes a valid existing right; or

(3) Final judicial review of final agency action by the Department of the Interior finds that the applicable mining claim constitutes a valid existing right.

(e) Upon completion of the review of the plan of operations, the authorized officer shall ensure that the minimum information required by §292.63(c) of

this subpart has been addressed and, pursuant to §228.5(a) of this chapter, notify the operator in writing whether or not the plan of operations is approved.

(f) If the plan of operations is not approved, the authorized officer shall explain in writing why the plan of operations cannot be approved.

(g) If the plan of operations is approved, the authorized officer shall establish a time period for the proposed operations which shall be for the minimum amount of time reasonably necessary for a prudent operator to complete the mineral development activities covered by the approved plan of operations.

(h) An approved plan of operations is subject to review and modification as follows:

(1) To bring the plan into conformance with changes in applicable federal law or regulation; or

(2) To respond to new information not available at the time the authorized officer approved the plan, for example, new listings of threatened or endangered species; or

(3) To correct errors or omissions made at the time the plan was approved, for example, to ensure compliance with applicable federal law or regulation; or

(4) To permit operations requested by the operator that differ in type, scope, or duration from those in an approved plan of operations but that are not subject to paragraph (i) of this section.

(i) If an operator desires to conduct operations that differ in type, scope, or duration from those in an approved plan of operations, and if those changes will result in resource impacts not anticipated when the original plan was approved, the operator must submit a supplemental plan or a modification of the plan for review and approval.

§ 292.65 Plan of operations—suspension.

(a) The authorized officer may suspend mineral operations due to an operator's noncompliance with applicable statutes, regulations, or terms and conditions of the approved plan of operations.

(1) In those cases that present a threat of imminent harm to public

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health, safety, or the environment, or where such harm is already occurring, the authorized officer may take immediate action to stop the threat or damage without prior notice. In such case, written notice and explanation of the action taken shall be given the operator as soon as reasonably practicable following the suspension.

(2) In those cases that do not present a threat of imminent harm to public health, safety, or the environment, the authorized officer must first notify the operator in writing of the basis for the suspension and provide the operator with reasonably sufficient time to respond to the notice of the authorized officer or to bring the mineral operations into conformance with applicable laws, regulations, or the terms and conditions of the approved plan of operations.

(b) Except as otherwise provided in this section, the authorized officer shall notify the operator not less than 30 days prior to the date of the proposed suspension.

OUTSTANDING MINERAL RIGHTS

§ 292.66 Operating plan requirements—outstanding mineral rights.

(a) Proposals for mineral operations involving outstanding mineral rights within the SRNRA must be documented in an operating plan and submitted in writing to the authorized officer.

(b) An operating plan for operations involving outstanding mineral rights within the SRNRA must include the following:

(1) The name and legal mailing address of the operator, owner, and any lessees, assigns, and designees;

(2) A copy of the deed or other legal instrument that conveyed the outstanding mineral rights;

(3) Sketches or maps showing the location of the outstanding mineral rights, the proposed area of operations, including, but not limited to, existing and/or proposed roads or access routes identified for use, any new proposed road construction, and the approximate location and size of the areas to be disturbed, including existing or proposed structures, facilities, and other improvements to be used;

(4) A description of the type of operations which includes, at a minimum, a list of the type, size, location, and number of structures, facilities, and other improvements to be used;

(5) An identification of the hazardous materials and any other toxic materials, petroleum products, insecticides, pesticides, and herbicides that will be used during the mineral operation and the proposed means for disposing of such substances;

(6) An identification of the character and composition of the mineral wastes that will be used or generated and a proposed method or strategy for their placement, control, isolation, remediation, or removal; and

(7) A reclamation plan to reduce or control on-site and off-site damage to natural resources resulting from mineral operations. The plan must:

(i) Provide reclamation to the extent practicable;

(ii) Show how public health and safety are maintained;

(iii) Identify and describe reclamation measures to include, but not limited to, the following:

(A) Reduction and/or control of erosion, landslides, and water runoff;

(B) Rehabilitation of wildlife and fisheries habitat to be disturbed by the proposed mineral operation; and

(C) Protection of water quality.

(iv) Demonstrate how the area of surface disturbance will be reclaimed to a condition or use that is consistent with the Six Rivers National Forest Land and Resource Management Plan.

§ 292.67 Operating plan approval—outstanding mineral rights.

(a) Upon receipt of an operating plan, the authorized officer must review the information related to the ownership of the outstanding mineral rights and notify the operator that:

(1) Sufficient information on ownership of the outstanding mineral rights has been provided; or

(2) Sufficient information on ownership of outstanding mineral rights has not been provided, including an explanation of the specific information that still needs to be provided, and that no