

**INFORMATION MEMORANDUM
FOR THE ASSISTANT SECRETARY – LAND AND MINERALS MANAGEMENT**

FROM: Neil Kornze, Director – Bureau of Land Management

SUBJECT: Petition/Application for Proposed Withdrawal, Trinity Wild and Scenic River, California

DATE: July 16, 2013

I. INTRODUCTION

The Bureau of Land Management (BLM) requests that the Assistant Secretary for Land and Minerals Management approve our petition to file an application to withdraw 3,123 acres of public lands from location and entry under the United States mining laws, but not from leasing under the mineral or geothermal leasing laws or disposal under the Materials Act of 1947, for a period of 20 years to protect the cultural, recreational, and biological resource values found within the recreational segments of the Trinity Wild and Scenic River in Trinity County, California.

II. BACKGROUND

Trinity River is noted as a recreational component of the National Wild and Scenic Rivers System which remained open to location and entry under the United States mining laws. The 1992 BLM Redding Resource Management Plan and Final Environmental Impact Statement (RRMP-EIS) evaluated the Trinity River between Lewiston and North Fork for designation as an Area of Critical Environmental Concern (ACEC). No ACEC designation was pursued in 1992 because Trinity River lands were “recommended for withdrawal from mineral entry” (RRMP-EIS Appendix C-8)). Withdrawal of public lands within the Trinity River management area was further identified in the BLM Redding Resource Management Plan (RMP) and Record of Decision that was approved on July 27, 1993.

The Trinity River is a well-known high potential area for placer gold deposits with a well documented history of mining and gold and platinum group metal production. Much of the rich, low operating cost deposits have been exhausted and/or are now inaccessible due to land ownership or regulatory constraints. There are currently 26 active mining claims located in T. 33 N., R. 8 W., T. 32 N., R. 9 W., and T. 32 N., R. 10 W.

Any segregation or ultimate withdrawal would be subject to valid existing rights. The BLM action with respect to existing mining claims is not automatically triggered by a segregation or withdrawal; however, if and when a mining claimant submits a plan operations or a mining notice under 43 CFR 3809 on withdrawn lands, a validity examination is required prior to the BLM approving the plan or acknowledging the notice. The examination is discretionary in such situations on segregated lands. Under 43 CFR 3800.5(b), a validity examination is subject to cost recovery on withdrawn or segregated lands, meaning that the claimant would be responsible

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for all costs associated with the examination and report.

The U.S. Forest Service (USFS) has filed an application to withdraw 541 acres of National Forest System lands along the Trinity River. The BLM and USFS applications will be processed concurrently.

III. POSITION OF INTERESTED PARTIES

The filing of the petition/application is the first step in processing a proposed Department of the Interior agency withdrawal. The BLM will publish a Notice of Proposed Withdrawal in the *Federal Register* and a newspaper of general circulation in the Trinity River area. These notices invite public review of the proposed withdrawal and offer an opportunity to request a public meeting. Assistant Secretary for Land and Minerals Management approval of the petition/application would allow the BLM to consult with Federal, State and local governmental organizations, tribal governments, and stakeholders and to complete an analysis relative to the need for the withdrawal.

IV. LEGAL STATUS

There is no litigation associated with this withdrawal petition/application.