
Superior National Forest Withdrawal Application - January, 2022

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To: BLM_ES_Lands@blm.gov

SUPERIOR NATIONAL FOREST RAINY RIVER WATERSHED WITHDRAWAL APPLICATION - JANUARY 19, 2022

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the current Superior National Forest withdrawal and segregation applications (USFS and BLM) - January, 2022

My name is Errol D. Sehnke and I am a resident of Superior, Wisconsin. I oppose the United States Forest Service (USFS) application to withdraw approximately 225,378 acres of land across a portion of the Rainy River Watershed within the Superior National Forest in northeastern Minnesota from disposition under the mineral and geothermal leasing laws over a 20-year term, subject to valid existing rights. In addition, I equally oppose the related Bureau of Land Management (BLM) application for the withdrawal and a two-year segregation of these same Federal Lands. This current withdrawal and segregation area is in addition to the prior approximately 222,000 acres of land included within the 1978 BWCA Mining Protection Area.

I am a geologist with over 40-years of profession experience in mineral exploration devoted to industry and government. I have grown up and lived a large part of my life in the northern Midwest of the USA. From a very early age, I have spent many years of my life enjoying the beautiful outdoors of northern Minnesota. The region has a very special place in my heart and family's history. My mother was once the sole school teacher at a rural one-room school in Isabella, Minnesota, located within the proposed withdrawal area. Our family has always held this region in very high regard. Yes, this exceptional wilderness area can be protected at the same time as mineral exploration and mining development activities progress to provide the materials needed for our new Green Economy. We can have both environmentally safe mining and recreational use of these Federal Lands. As a nation, we truly need both activities! They can definitely coexist with a proficient and vigorous Federal management effort that thereby provides ongoing environmental stewardship of these treasured lands for the future, while allowing our nation an opportunity to receive the benefits of a substantial royalty and taxation revenue stream created by new mine developments in northeastern Minnesota. All of this will occur while, creating and supporting new high-level STEM-based employment opportunities for the local residents of the region and provide a strengthening of our domestic critical and strategic mineral resources, so greatly needed for our ongoing economic growth and national security in this new and rapidly changing world.

You have requested comments "to determine issues associated with the proposed withdrawal, develop alternatives, determine the scope of analysis, and refine the effects analysis." In that light, please allow me to suggest the Department of the Interior initiate a current Mineral Resource Evaluation program for the proposed Rainy River Watershed withdrawal and segregation area. A pure science-based, in-depth research effort similar to those previously conducted by the former U.S. Bureau of Mines (USBM), in alliance with the U.S. Geological Survey (USGS), which employed and utilized geological field mapping, geochemistry, geophysics, etc. etc. These scientific mineral-resource assessment methods were successfully utilized to determine and evaluate the potential mineral endowment and mining resources within our nation's Federal Wilderness Areas. A similar science-oriented approach is now required to clarify and correctly evaluate the proposed 225,378 acres of lands and waters within the potential 20-year withdrawal application area. As some people have been known to say - "We do not know, what we do not know." Science and detailed mineral exploration can provide the knowledge required to conceivably rectify this long-standing enigma. If unknown mineral occurrences are discovered within the withdrawal area, they may then be assessed to determine their viability to be mined economically, and in an environmentally safe manner using the best practices known to mankind, under the currently in-place Federal and State Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) protocols and laws. Any and all, potentially discovered

ore bodies are finite, site-specific entities, which have their own individual characteristics and properties that require they can only be mined where they actually physically occur. Therefore, the nation definitely needs a detailed and focused scientific assessment before this area is closed to mineral exploration and mining development by a possible 20-year moratorium. How can this nation disregard the development of basic and pure science to solve its present challenges?

To place this proposed Superior National Forest withdrawal into context with our current times, the elements of natural and human-induced global warming must be considered in the greatest of detail. Global warming is here now and must be confronted at this very moment! It is on your "watch." Please consider the results from the recent UN Climate Change Conference - Conference of Parties (COP26) meetings in Glasgow. Furthermore, kindly review International Energy Agency (IEA) and World Bank reports on this very subject to "determine the scope of analysis" for your USFS and BLM Rainy River Watershed withdrawal and segregation application. The present withdrawal and segregation application is in the very center of this global disaster. Where and how is the USA going to secure the required massive amounts of critical minerals and rare-earth elements necessary for the Green Economy to combat this global calamity? Recycling will only partially solve our nation's supply issues problems. As USGS Import Reliance studies indicate the U.S. economy is highly vulnerable to foreign sources and supply chains for its very basic material needs, especially in acquiring these necessities from countries with high human rights and environmental standards. The USA must step up and secure its own future! For purely domestic sources, the first steps are science and mineral exploration. It is truly inevitable that the global warming effects will rapidly increase and will eventually reach a level of a true NATIONAL EMERGENCY!!! A 20-year moratorium for an area of interconnected rivers and lakes of the Rainy River Watershed that lies partially in Canada, which maintains a very active and robust exploration exploration and mining economy on Crown and Tribal lands, just across the International Border, is very questionable and suspect during this time of global peril. When the global warming effects reach the inevitable level of a NATIONAL EMERGENCY, will the U.S. President have the right to move forward with the provisions provided by the Wilderness and Mining Protection Area in the original Boundary Waters Canoe Area Wilderness Act of 1987 - Public Law 95-495 - 92 Stat. 1649 - Section 11? Specifically: "The prohibitions contained in this subsection and any withdrawal from entry or appropriation for mining of or exploration for minerals applicable to the Boundary Waters Canoe Area Wilderness and Boundary Waters Canoe Area Mining Protection Area shall nor apply to the extent specifically provided in the legislation enacted by the United States after the date of enactment of this Act in a national emergency declared by the President." How would this element of the Act impact the present Superior National Forest Rainy River Watershed withdrawal and segregation application?

This chance to provide my personal comments directly to you regarding these very important issues is deeply appreciated, especially at this very crucial time in our nation's history. Once again, I strongly oppose the USFS and BLM Superior National Forest withdrawal and segregation applications.

Best of regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Errol D. Schnke". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "E" and "S".

Errol D. Schnke