



United States  
Department of  
Agriculture

Forest  
Service

Superior  
National  
Forest

8901 Grand Ave. Place  
Duluth, MN 55808-1122  
Phone: (218) 626-4300  
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File Code: 1950

Date: October 21, 2013

Dear Interested Party:

The Superior National Forest is preparing an Environmental Assessment (EA) under policies set forth in the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) that will review the application submitted by Twin Metals Minnesota LLC (Twin Metals Minnesota) to obtain a special use permit (SUP) to access federal lands within the Forest Service's authority, install hydrogeologic wells, and conduct monitoring activities in the vicinity of South Kawishiwi River and Birch Lake. Monitoring data obtained through this study will support a pre-feasibility study for a possible copper, nickel, and platinum group mineral mining operation. The intent of this letter is to inform you of the opportunity to comment on the issuance of the SUP that would authorize the hydrogeologic monitoring actions. No mine is proposed as part of these actions.

Specifically, the SUP will authorize the construction of up to 13 hydrogeologic well pads, mechanically drilled hydrogeologic wells on those pads, hand-driven wells adjacent to the pads and in other selected areas, construction of approximately 1.52 miles of temporary access roads, hydrogeologic testing and data collection at the wells, periodic maintenance and repair of wells and well pads, construction of temporary access roads, and the use of Forest Service gravel pits for access road maintenance and repair.

The proposed project's primary purpose is to evaluate and consider approving a special use permit authorization to collect baseline environmental data. The 2004 Superior National Forest Land and Resource Management Plan (Forest Plan) direction for special uses includes:

"O-SU-2 Attempt to meet demand for special use activities when consistent with the Forest Plan direction and when the proposed use cannot be accommodated on non-NFS land."

The Superior National Forest needs to address Twin Metals Minnesota's application for the special use permit and determine if and how the activities could be done consistent with the Forest Plan.

A more detailed Scoping Report describing the project's Purpose and Need, Proposed Action, and detailed proposal maps are posted on the Superior National Forest webpage at: [www.fs.usda.gov/projects/superior/landmanagement/projects](http://www.fs.usda.gov/projects/superior/landmanagement/projects). Navigate to the Twin Metals Minnesota Hydrogeologic Special Use Permit page. If you would prefer a paper copy of this information, please contact the Project Leader listed below.

The Forest Service will also host an open house to provide an opportunity to answer any questions or learn more about the project from Forest Service resource specialists on November 7, 2013, between 3:30 and 6:30 pm at the Kawishiwi Ranger District office in Ely, Minnesota (1393 Hwy. 169, Ely, MN 55731). While the open house provides an opportunity to learn more about the project, we ask that you submit your comments in written form.

You are invited to provide comments on the Proposed Action. Your comments will help determine the scope of analysis. Comments that lead to issues will assist in developing alternatives and analyzing environmental effects. Your comments are most useful if they refer to a specific project activity or location rather than general management of the Superior National Forest.



Comments should be received by November 21, 2013. You must submit your comments in writing by web form, e-mail, FAX, or by phone (listed below). All comments received, including names and addresses, will become part of the project file and are public information.

Electronic comments may be submitted through our web form at: <https://cara.ecosystem-management.org/Public/CommentInput?project=40756> or by email in a format such as e-mail message, plain text (.txt), Word (.doc), or any software supported by Microsoft applications to: [comments-eastern-superior@fs.fed.us](mailto:comments-eastern-superior@fs.fed.us)

For U.S. Postal Service submitted comments please include your name, address, and "Twin Metals MN Hydrogeologic Study" on all mailed comments addressed to:

Brenda Halter, Forest Supervisor  
Attn: TMM Hydrogeologic Study Comments  
Superior National Forest  
8901 Grand Ave. Place  
Duluth, MN 55808

Oral or written comments may also be submitted at the Forest Supervisor's Office, 8901 Grand Ave. Place, Duluth, MN 55808, during normal business hours (8:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., Monday through Friday), or via telephone to the project leader (218) 626-4382, or by Fax (218) 626-4398.

Should you choose to comment during the scoping phase for this EA, your name will remain on our project mailing list and you will be notified when the EA is available on the U.S. Forest Service website for public comment. If we do not hear from you, your name will be removed from the project mailing list. If you cannot access the website or prefer a hard copy of the EA, please let us know.

You can also subscribe to the project mailing list by navigating to the project's page at: <http://www.fs.fed.us/nepa/fs-usda-pop.php?project=40756> and select the "Subscribe to Email Updates" link on the right side bar. Fill in your email address information and select "Submit" link. After submitting, you will then be presented with a page that shows your subscriptions and allows you to add additional subscriptions.

For further information, please contact the project leader, Matthew Judd, at (218) 626-4382 or email: [mjudd@fs.fed.us](mailto:mjudd@fs.fed.us).

Sincerely,



BRENDA HALTER  
Forest Supervisor

cc: Mary Shedd, Peter R Taylor, Lisa Radosevich-Craig, Kristina A Reichenbach, Brian M Pentecost, Eric R Wirz