

READER INFORMATION

Attached for your review and comment is the Draft Coeur d'Alene Basin Restoration Plan and Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) for the Coeur d'Alene Basin Restoration Plan. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS), and U.S. Forest Service (USFS) prepared the DEIS on behalf of the Coeur d'Alene Basin Natural Resource Trustees (Trustees) to address the effects of a comprehensive strategic framework to guide the restoration of natural resources injured by the release of mining related hazardous substances in the Coeur d'Alene Basin.

The planning area consists of the 3,840 square mile Coeur d'Alene Lake Basin (Basin) and the 230 square mile portion of the Hangman Creek watershed on the Coeur d'Alene Tribal Reservation. The area is located primarily in Shoshone, Kootenai, and Benewah Counties. Small portions of Latah and Clearwater Counties occur in the planning area at the headwaters of tributaries of the St. Maries River.

Alternative 2 has been identified as the Preferred Alternative for the purposes of public comment and review.

As a member of the public, your timely comments on the Restoration Plan and DEIS will help formulate the Proposed Final Restoration Plan and EIS. We are particularly interested in feedback concerning the adequacy and accuracy of the proposed alternatives, the analysis of effects associated with their implementation, and any new information that would help the Trustees as they develop the Restoration Plan and EIS from a draft to a final version. Your comments should be as specific as possible and include suggested changes, sources, methodologies and references to a section or page number.

Comments will be accepted for 60 days following the publication of the Notice of Availability (NOA) in the Federal Register, which is expected to occur on **November 10th, 2016**. The comment period is expected to close on **January 13th, 2017**. Changes in these dates will be published on the website listed below.

Comments may be submitted electronically at

Website: www.restorationpartnership.org/comments

Email: comments@restorationpartnership.org

Comments may also be submitted by mail to:

Coeur d'Alene Basin Restoration Plan EIS
Idaho Panhandle National Forest
3815 Schreiber Way
Coeur d'Alene, ID 83815

Your review and comments on the content of this document are critical to the success of this planning effort. The Trustees can best utilize your comments and resource information submissions if received within the review period, in electronic format. Comments containing only opinions or preferences will be considered and included as part of the decision making process; however, they will not receive a formal response in the Final EIS.

Before including your address, phone number, email address, or other personal identifying information in your comment, be advised that your entire comment - including your personal identifying information - may be made publicly available at any time. While you can ask us to withhold your personal identifying information from public review, we cannot guarantee we will be able to do so.

The Trustees will hold public meetings (“open house” format) to provide an overview of the document, commenting opportunities, and allow the public to ask questions and speak with representatives from the Trustees and members of the EIS analysis team. These meetings will be announced at least 15 days in advance through local media, the website, and/or public mailings. Public meetings are currently scheduled for:

December 6, 2016 – 5:00-7:00 p.m. at the St Maries Fire Department, 308 W. Jefferson St. Maries, ID

December 7, 2016 – 5:00-7:00 p.m. at the Coeur d’Alene Public Library 702 E. Front St. Coeur d’Alene, ID

December 8, 2016 – 5:00-7:00 p.m. at the Osburn VFW Hall, 318 E. Mullan Ave. Osburn, ID

The Draft Restoration Plan and DEIS may be downloaded from **www.restorationpartnership.org/RPDEIS**.

Copies of the Draft Restoration Plan and DEIS have been sent to affected federal, state, and local government agencies and Tribal governments. Copies of the Draft Restoration Plan and DEIS are available for public inspection at the Idaho Panhandle National Forest Supervisor’s Office in Coeur d’Alene as well as the Silver Valley Office in Smeltonville and the St Maries Ranger Station in St. Maries.

Please note that this proposed action is not subject to the USFS’s pre-decisional administrative review regulations at 36 C.F.R. Part 218. The Part 218 regulations create a process for filing an objection to certain categories of “proposed actions of the Forest Service concerning projects and activities” 36 C.F.R. § 218.1. The Restoration Plan submitted for public review establishes an overall restoration approach as well as project selection criteria for restoration of natural resources injured by more than a century of mining in the Coeur d’Alene Basin. It establishes goals and objectives for restoration, delineates the geographic area where restoration projects can occur and sets eligibility and selection screening criteria for projects. Because the Plan does not select or authorize any project or activity, it does not fall within the bounds of the Forest Service’s pre-decisional administrative review process.

For more information on the Restoration Plan or DEIS, please contact one of the following

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