Final ROD Table 2 Public Interest Factors That Must be Considered for the Land Exchange Proposed Action

Factors		FEIS Section Citation [1]	Land Exchange Proposed Action as Modified
Opportunity to achieve better management of federal lands and resources and to meet the needs of state and local residents and their economies [2]	Boundary (Perimeter) Managed	5.3.1	33.3-mile net reduction in Forest boundary to be managed
	Fragmentation (ratio of boundary to area)	5.3.1	No change
	Net Federal Estate Acreage [3]	5.3.1	40 acres (GLO) net increase to the federal estate
Secure important objectives, including but not limited to:	Protection of fish and wildlife habitats	5.3.4/5.3.5/ 5.3.6/6.2.5.4.2/ 7.2.4	• See Wildlife and Aquatic Species in FEIS Table 7.2.4-1 for a summary of potential effects to fish and wildlife resources from NorthMet Project Proposed Action • This project will impact 2 of 18 mapped wildlife corridors along the Iron Range • Individual moose and their sign have been observed during surveys on both the federal lands and near/on non-federal. • Moose have been rarely observed in the vicinity of the proposed mining site and associated traffic corridors. • Habitat and use has been observed on non-federal Tracts 1, 2, and 3 • Land Exchange Proposed Action would result in a decrease of mature mixed forest types on the federal estate that may provide thermal cover for moose during warm seasons of the year, but an increase in moose preferred foraging habitats, including early successional forests, brushland, and aquatic environments resulting from the proposed action land exchange • Overall, preferred moose habitat increases on the Superior National Forest from the current condition with the land exchange • 548.8-acre net increase of vegetation land cover types to the federal estate • 1,363.2-acre, 248.3-acre, 226.7-acre net increase of MIH-1, MIH-9, and MIH-14, respectively; 1,172.7-acre net decrease of MIH-5 • 6,025.8-acre net decrease in high MBS Sites; 767.9-acre net increase in medium MBS Sites • Decrease of 10 plant species, increase of three different plant species to the federal estate • Net increase in acreage of landscape ecosystems (dry-mesic red and white pine, lowland conifer, lowland hardwood, mesic birch-aspen-spruce fir, mesic red and white pine, and sugar maple) with a net decrease to jack pine-black spruce to the federal estate • Forested habitat would decrease; shrubland/grassland and aquatic habitats would increase • Increase to the federal estate of overall suitable habitat for lynx and for snowshoe hare (prey species); however the amount of unsuitable lynx habitat would also increase • Decrease to the federal estate of denning habitat and of federal lands within designated LAU • Critical lynx habitat would not change • Decrease of 59.1 acres to the federal estate of cover habitat; increase to the federal estate of forage habitat of 507.1 acres for the gray wolf • Increase of SGCN habitat to the federal estate • Net increase of surface water resources (MIH 14) to the federal estate thereby increase aquatic habitat • 99.1-acre of lake, 3.8-mile of river, and 8.1 miles of third-order stream net increase to the federal estate • 2.8-shoreline/acre unit for lakes and 34.0-shoreline/acre unit for streams (frontage index) net increase to federal estate • Increase in watershed riparian connectivity, which indicates that the streams on both the federal and non-federal lands are located within watersheds with existing high-quality riparian connectivity • Acquiring streams located in watersheds with better aquatic connectivity values • The USFS determined, through a Biological Evaluation, that the project would have no beneficial impact to RFSS species, and the project may impact individuals but is not likely to cause a trend to federal listing or loss of viability for the RFSS species
	Cultural resources	5.3.9/7.2.4	• See Cultural Resources & Historic Properties in FEIS Table 7.2.4-1 for a summary of potential effects to

[1] The numbers in this table were adjusted as needed from what is displayed in the FEIS for the Proposed Action by dropping Tract 5-McFarland Lake lands from the Proposed Action per the Final Record of Decision.

[2] The indicators for other public interest factors in this table also inform 'Opportunity to achieve better management of federal lands and resources and to meet the needs of state and local residents and their economies' – including but not limited to 'Enhancement of Recreation Opportunities and Public Access', 'Consolidation of lands and/or interests in lands, such as mineral and timber interests, for more logical and efficient management and development', 'Fulfillment of Public Needs', and 'Implementations of applicable Forest Land and Resource Management Plans'.

[3] Acres in this table are GIS acres which were used for analysis purposes unless noted as GLO acres.

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			cultural resources from NorthMet Project Proposed Action • For federal lands the exchange could result in lack of access to those areas and species that are traditionally or culturally important to the Bands. Band members use of the Land Exchange area is not well-defined • No known cultural resources on the non-federal lands, however, cultural resources located on private lands being transferred to federal ownership would be considered to have greater preservation protection under federal law
	Watersheds	5.3.2/5.3.3/ 7.2.4	• See Water Resources Wetlands & Floodplains in FEIS Table 7.2.4-1 for a summary of potential effects to water resources from NorthMet Project Proposed Action • No substantive difference in the quality of groundwater resources between the federal and non-federal tracts • 4.6-mile net increase of public water streams to the federal estate • 94.3-acre net increase of public water lakes to the federal estate • 1.7-mile net increase of shoreline to the federal estate • 125.7-acre net increase of wild rice beds to the federal estate • 505.5-acre net increase of wetlands to the federal estate; therefore conforms to EO 11990 • 376.2-acre net increase of mapped floodplain but would result in a 1,226.0-acre net decrease of floodplains to the federal estate; however, no decrease in regulatory floodplains, no increase in flood damage potential, and no change in ecological function of floodplain. Therefore, conforms to EO 11988 • 98.2-acre net increase of lakes and 3.8-mile net increase of rivers to federal estate
	Wilderness and Special Designation Areas	5.3.12/7.2.4	• No change • See FEIS Table 7.2.4-1 for a summary of potential effects to Wilderness & Special Designation Areas from NorthMet Project Proposed Action
	Aesthetic values	5.3.11/7.2.4	• See Recreation and Visual Resources in FEIS Table 7.2.4-1 for a summary of potential effects to visual resources from NorthMet Project Proposed Action • Change in the composition of the visual character of the Superior National Forest, affecting less than one-quarter of one percent of the total area of the forest, has generally positive aspects • Addition of land with Moderate and High SIO (in lieu of land with a Low SIO) could affect the types of forestry and management activities that can occur on those lands • USFS would acquire land with a wider diversity of SIOs and would result in a net increase to the federal estate
Enhancement of recreation opportunities and public access		5.3.1/5.3.11/7.2.4	• Public overland access available on non-federal lands acquired, especially for Tracts 1 and 4; while public overland access is not available on federal lands conveyed • Net increase of 40 acres (GLO) of publicly owned land in the 1854 Ceded Territory
Consolidation of lands and/or interests in lands, such as mineral and timber interests, for more logical and efficient management and development		5.3.1	• Would result in relinquishing the federal parcel with severed, private mineral rights and known, economically developable minerals and acquiring parcels with predominantly low risk of conflict and predominantly moderate title quality • Improves the quality of title and reduces the complexity of title to the federal and non-federal lands • Risk of conflict and title quality may be further improved through subsequent arrangements with holders of mineral rights on the non-federal lands or affirmative title insurance coverage
Consolidation of split estates		5.3.1.2.5/5.3.1.3.5	• Eliminates about 6,495.4 acres of split estate at the site of proposed open pit mine • Superior National Forest acquires 7,044.2 acres with moderate to low (primarily low) risk of conflict between mineral interests and USFS surface management
Expansion of communities		5.3.10	• Community boundaries are unaffected • Creates positive economic effects through increased opportunity for forestry and recreation and associated employment, earnings, and revenue • Negligible negative effects on other socioeconomic factors, including housing, public facilities and services, EJ populations, and subsistence
Accommodation of existing or planned land use authorizations		5.3.1	• Compatible with the USFS Management Areas and zoning/land use designations of adjacent lands
Promotion of multiple-use values			• Current National Forest System lands would be mined on 1,673.2 acres; remainder would be privately owned forested lands

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		• 7,044.2 aces of non-federal parcels would become subject to Superior National Forest Land and Resource Management Plan
Implementations of applicable Forest Land and Resource Management Plans	1.0/3.3.3	• Addresses Purpose and Need described in Section 1.3.2.2 and Forest Plan desired condition direction • Eliminates Conflict in terms of D-LA-1 arrangement of National Forest System lands and eliminating conflicts, and • Environmentally Sound in terms of D-MN-2, mineral development and production are conducted in environmentally sound manner • Pending necessary agency decisions and permitting, the proposed mining, and minerals production would take place as described in Chapter 3 with the potential environmental and socioeconomic consequences identified in Chapters 5 and 6. • Acquired lands include addition of 307 acres to the candidate Research Natural Area Management Area designation.
Fulfillment of public needs	5.3.10/7.2.4	• See Water Resources in FEIS Table 7.2.4-1 for a summary of potential effects to water resources from NorthMet Project Proposed Action • Would result in an active mining operation that would generate federal, state, and local tax revenue, in addition to employment • Could increase economic activity associated with recreation and tourism. • Could generate four direct and 12 indirect forestry jobs. • To the degree that increased availability of publicly accessible land improves property value and generates revenue in the study area, could have positive effects on environmental justice populations • Would result in the loss of subsistence resources and opportunities on the federal lands, and a gain in subsistence resources and opportunities on the non-federal lands. • Would result in a loss of some of the ecosystem functions provided by the forest, wetland, and other natural habitats on the federal lands, particularly the portions of the federal lands (i.e., the Mine Site) where habitat would be replaced by mine facilities. Some of these functions could be restored during the post-closure period, when the federal lands (as well as the Plant Site) are revegetated. In exchange, would enable the USFS to directly manage the ecosystems functions on the non-federal lands.