

**§ 478. Egress or ingress of actual settlers; prospecting**

Nothing in sections 473 to 478, 479 to 482 and 551 of this title shall be construed as prohibiting the egress or ingress of actual settlers residing within the boundaries of national forests, or from crossing the same to and from their property or homes; and such wagon roads and other improvements may be constructed thereon as may be necessary to reach their homes and to utilize their property under such rules and regulations as may be prescribed by the Secretary of Agriculture. Nor shall anything in such sections prohibit any person from entering upon such national forests for all proper and lawful purposes, including that of prospecting, locating, and developing the mineral resources thereof. Such persons must comply with the rules and regulations covering such national forests.

(June 4, 1897, ch. 2, § 1, 30 Stat. 36; Feb. 1, 1905, ch. 288, § 1, 33 Stat. 628.)

CODIFICATION

“National forests” substituted in text for “reservations” and “forest reservations” on authority of act Mar. 4, 1907, ch. 2907, 34 Stat. 1269, which provided that forest reserves shall hereafter be known as national forests.

TRANSFER OF FUNCTIONS

Enforcement functions of Secretary or other official in Department of Agriculture, insofar as they involve lands and programs under jurisdiction of that Department, related to compliance with provisions of sections 473, 474 to 482, and 551 of this title with respect to preconstruction, construction, and initial operation of transportation system for Canadian and Alaskan natural gas transferred to Federal Inspector, Office of Federal Inspector for Alaska Natural Gas Transportation System, until first anniversary of date of initial operation of Alaska Natural Gas Transportation System, see Reorg. Plan No. 1 of 1979, §§ 102(f), 203(a), 44 F.R. 33663, 33666, 93 Stat. 1373, 1376, effective July 1, 1979, set out in the Appendix to Title 5, Government Organization and Employees. Office of Federal Inspector for the Alaska Natural Gas Transportation System abolished and functions and authority vested in Inspector transferred to Secretary of Energy by section 3012(b) of Pub. L. 102-486, set out as an Abolition of Office of Federal Inspector note under section 719e of Title 15, Commerce and Trade. Functions and authority vested in Secretary of Energy subsequently transferred to Federal Coordinator for Alaska Natural Gas Transportation Projects by section 720d(f) of Title 15.

Act Feb. 1, 1905, transferred certain functions with regard to administration of public forests from Secretary of the Interior to Secretary of Agriculture.

**§ 478a. Townsites**

When the Secretary of Agriculture determines that a tract of National Forest System land in Alaska or in the eleven contiguous Western States is located adjacent to or contiguous to an established community, and that transfer of such land would serve indigenous community objectives that outweigh the public objectives and values which would be served by maintaining such tract in Federal ownership, he may, upon application, set aside and designate as a townsite an area of not to exceed six hundred and forty acres of National Forest System land for any one application. After public notice, and satisfactory showing of need therefor by any

county, city, or other local governmental subdivision, the Secretary may offer such area for sale to a governmental subdivision at a price not less than the fair market value thereof: *Provided, however*, That the Secretary may condition conveyances of townsites upon the enactment, maintenance, and enforcement of a valid ordinance which assures any land so conveyed will be controlled by the governmental subdivision so that use of the area will not interfere with the protection, management, and development of adjacent or contiguous National Forest System lands.

(Pub. L. 85-569, July 31, 1958, 72 Stat. 438; Pub. L. 94-579, title II, § 213, Oct. 21, 1976, 90 Stat. 2760.)

CODIFICATION

Section is also set out as section 1012a of Title 7, Agriculture.

AMENDMENTS

1976—Pub. L. 94-579 substituted provisions setting forth the procedures applicable to designation of townsites of tracts of National Forest System lands in Alaska or the eleven contiguous Western States for provisions setting forth the procedures applicable to designation of townsites from any national forest lands or lands administered by the Secretary of Agriculture under the Bankhead-Jones Farm Tenant Act.

SAVINGS PROVISION

Amendment by Pub. L. 94-579 not to be construed as terminating any valid lease, permit, patent, etc., existing on Oct. 21, 1976, see note set out under section 1701 of Title 43, Public Lands.

**§ 479. Sites for schools and churches**

The settlers residing within the exterior boundaries of national forests, or in the vicinity thereof, may maintain schools and churches within such national forest, and for that purpose may occupy any part of the said national forest, not exceeding two acres for each schoolhouse and one acre for a church.

(June 4, 1897, ch. 2, § 1, 30 Stat. 36.)

CODIFICATION

“National forests” substituted in text for “forest reservations”, and “national forest” substituted for “reservation” and “forest reservation” on authority of act Mar. 4, 1907, ch. 2907, 34 Stat. 1269, which provided that forest reserves shall hereafter be known as national forests.

**§ 479a. Conveyance of National Forest System lands for educational purposes**

**(a) Authority to convey**

Upon written application, the Secretary of Agriculture may convey National Forest System lands to a public school district for use for educational purposes if the Secretary determines that—

- (1) the public school district seeking the conveyance will use the conveyed land for a public or publicly funded elementary or secondary school, to provide grounds or facilities related to such a school, or for both purposes;
- (2) the conveyance will serve the public interest;
- (3) the land to be conveyed is not otherwise needed for the purposes of the National Forest System;