Indian Affairs - Office of Public Affairs

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For Immediate Release: July 25, 1959
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The Department of the Interior today announced a proposed revision of Federal regulations to remove restrictions against road construction that have applied for more than 20 years on 310,000 acres on four Indian reservation areas in three States.

The lands that would be affected are the Columbia-San Poil Divide Area of 155,000 acres on the Colville Reservation in Washington, the Mission Range Area of 125,000 acres on the Flathead Reservation in Montana, and the Fort Charlotte Area of 19,000 acres and the Grand Portage Area of 11,000 acres on the Grand Portage Reservation in Minnesota.

The first two were designated as “roadless" areas and the latter two as "wild' areas by administrative action of the Department during the 1930's without consulting the Indians. All four areas consist not of Federal land but of tribally owned property held in trust by the United States. However, about 700 acres of the land on the Grand Portage Reservation is scheduled to be set aside in the near future as the Grand Portage National Monument under legislation enacted last year with the full concurrence of the Indians.

All of the tribal groups involved have requested removal of the restrictions to facilitate economic development of the areas.

Interested parties may submit their comments to the Bureau of Indian Affairs, Washington 25, D. C., within 30 days after publication of the proposed revision in the Federal Register.