

0170 0016 *White Pine Co. - general*
Item 63

SCOPING DOCUMENT
for
U.S. MINERALS EXPLORATION COMPANY'S
Proposed

Green Springs Mine Development

INTRODUCTION

On October 2, 1987 the Ely Ranger District of the Humboldt National Forest received a plan of operations describing the proposed Green Springs Mine development project submitted by U.S. Minerals Exploration company (USMX). USMX is proposing to construct and operate an open pit gold mine and cyanide heap leach recovery facility in White Pine County on the west slope of the White Pine Range located approximately 35 air miles west of Ely, Nevada. The proposed project is specifically located in T14N, R57E, Mt. Diablo Meridian, in portions of sections 21, 22, 27, and 28 as shown on the attached map. Lands administered by the Forest Service (FS) and the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) would be directly impacted by this proposal.

The FS will act as lead agency in coordinating the environmental analysis and preparation of an environmental document that is in accordance with the surface resource management direction provided by the Humboldt National Forest Land and Resource Management Plan and BLM management requirements. The environmental document will address public concerns in an evaluation of the proposal's potential socio-economic and environmental impacts and it will determine whether an Environmental Impact Statement is required.

PROJECT SUMMARY

USMX proposes to excavate ore from three pits located on land administered by the FS and haul this ore to a conventional cyanide heap leach facility on adjacent BLM administered land. Unpatented mining and mill-site claims constitute the project area. Approximately 115 acres would be disturbed by this proposal.

Based on current knowledge, the mine life is expected to be between two and five years with possible expansion dependent upon successful exploration efforts. Ore would be mined by conventional open-pit methods at the rate of 360,000 tons per year, to annually produce between 14,000 and 18,000 ounces of gold and minor amounts of silver. The operational period is anticipated to last eight to twelve months each year.

The proposed 60-70 employees required to operate the mine and plant facility would be equally divided as USMX and contractor personnel. Living quarters for all or a portion of the required work force may be established on nearby private land, along with administrative facilities. USMX plans to transport its workforce to and from the mine site.

A proposed 8 foot high wire-mesh fence would surround the ore leaching and processing facilities to prohibit access to livestock and most wildlife.

In addition, a 4-strand barbed wire fence would surround the active mine area; this perimeter would be posted with warning signs. The present level of public access in this area would continue to be maintained.

At closure, an approved reclamation plan designed to meet the administering agencies' post mining land use objectives would be implemented.

MANAGEMENT CONCERNS

Technical reports are being prepared to provide supplemental data for cultural resources, threatened and endangered plants and animals, wildlife habitat, soil and water resources, socio-economic conditions, and reclamation potential. This data will be used to address the following identified management concerns.

1. Management and Administration
 - a) Would the project components meet the standards and guidelines developed in the Humboldt National Forest Land and Resource Management Plan.
2. Biological Resources
 - a) Are there sensitive species of plants or animals within or near the project site and if so how would they be affected?
 - b) What impact would the project have on mule deer, particularly spring range?
 - c) What direct and/or indirect impact would the project have on wildlife, such as; migratory water fowl, wildhorses, chukars, etc?
3. Cultural, Social, and Economic Effects
 - a) What is the significance of cultural resources that may exist within the project area and how could impact be avoided?
 - b) What effect would the project have on; population, employment, and demand for services in White Pine County?
 - c) How would increased activity from the project effect the local intensity of law enforcement (eg. game, county/state agencies) with regard to poaching, overharvest, etc.?
4. Reclamation
 - a) How would the site be reclaimed to ensure stabilization and revegetation?

5. Water Resources

- a) How would the project facilities be affected by a potential flash flood, particularly in the Cathedral Canyon drainage?
- b) How would toxic materials be handled to avoid contamination of the environment?

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

Interested persons, organizations, and agencies are encouraged to participate in this environmental review process by providing written or verbal comments on the issues, concerns and possible alternatives that should be addressed. USMX's proposed Green Springs mine development plan of operations is on file at the Ely Ranger Station and may be viewed during business hours (7 AM to 12 AM and 1 PM to 5 PM). All written and verbal comments regarding this proposal should be received by December 18, 1987 at the following address and telephone number:

Mr. Rene P. Demeule, District Ranger
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Ely Ranger Station
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P.O. Box 539
Ely, Nevada 89301
(702) 289-3031

