

SCOPING DOCUMENT

ALTA GOLD COMPANY - GRIFFON EXPLORATION PROJECT
POO #10-04-95 AMENDMENT 05-14-96Ely Ranger District
Humboldt-Toiyabe National Forests

I. DESCRIPTION OF THE PROPOSED ACTIVITY

A. Project Description

On May 1, 1996, the Ely Ranger District received a proposal by Alta Gold Company to amend their existing Plan of Operations (POO#10-04-95) for the Griffon Exploration Project by adding 10 additional drill sites. The area Alta Gold would like to explore is located near the middle of the White Pine Range in Sections 24, 25, 28, 31, and 32, Township 14 North, Range 58 East, White Pine County, Nevada (see Figures 1, and 2).

Alta Gold proposes to drill up to 10 holes (Drill holes 96-8 through 96-17, see Figure 2) with a track mounted drill. The drill sites are located along the main access road through the area, therefore no new road construction is required. Total proposed disturbance is estimated to be less than 1.0 acre. The proposed start date is July 1, 1996 and is expected to take up to 15 days to complete.

Reclamation would involve plugging the drill holes according to State regulations, scarifying and seeding disturbed ground with a mixture of native species designed for deer and elk forage, and pulling woody debris back onto seeded areas to create microsites for vegetation to take hold. Reclamation of disturbed sites would occur within about 1 year.

II. MANAGEMENT DIRECTION AND DECISION TO BE MADE

A. Management Direction

The **Mining Law of 1872** established the rights of citizens to explore, claim, and mine certain minerals, categorically known as locatable minerals, wherever they are found on lands open to mineral entry. The Griffon Exploration Project is located within the Humboldt-Toiyabe National Forests on lands open to mineral entry, and as such, falls under the management jurisdiction of the U.S. Forest Service. Direction for managing mining activities on these lands can be found in the **Humboldt National Forest Land and Resource Management Plan (Forest Plan - 1986)** including subsequent amendments thereto.

Forest Plan direction on mining activities includes forest-wide standards and guidelines and management prescriptions specific to each of the 16 Management Areas (MA) on the Forest. These standards and guidelines and prescriptions are designed to integrate mining activities with the use and protection of other resource values.

The Griffon Exploration Project lies within the White Pine MA. The Forest Plan acknowledged this area has a high potential for the occurrence of gold, silver, molybdenum, and tungsten and therefore would receive a large amount of mining activity. The minerals prescription for this MA is "Mineral proposals will be handled expeditiously and operations will be carried out in an environmentally sound manner." (Forest Plan, page IV-180). This is accomplished by meeting the purposes and objectives of **36 CFR 228**, Subpart A and the National Environmental Policy Act (1969, as amended).

B. Decision to be Made

The decision to be made is whether or not additional stipulations need to be made a part of the existing Plan of Operations and whether the proposal needs to be modified in any way to mitigate impacts to other resources. The chosen course of action may include changes to the original proposal that reflect how relevant issues and concerns have been addressed.

III. IDENTIFYING LAND AND RESOURCE MANAGEMENT ISSUES AND CONCERNS

Preliminary review of the proposal by an interdisciplinary team has identified the following resource areas as a starting point for public input and to assist in identifying additional input needed for completion of the environmental analysis.

...impact on threatened, endangered, or sensitive species?

...impact on deer, elk, and cattle, species known to use the area?

...impact to cultural resources?

The environmental analysis will also incorporate the findings of the **Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS)** written for and resulting in the Forest Plan. The FEIS discloses the impacts mineral exploration may have on the land.

IV. PRELIMINARY ALTERNATIVES TO BE ANALYZED

NO ACTION: Under this alternative, the proposal by Alta Gold would not be implemented. As stated earlier, the law establishes Alta Gold's right to conduct exploration on these lands, and the Forest Service's obligation to permit such activities in an environmentally sound manner. Therefore, this is not a viable alternative, but it does establish a baseline by which the other alternatives can be compared.

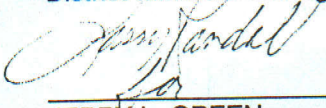
PROPOSED ACTION: The Proposed Action is Alta Gold's proposal as submitted.

PROPOSED ACTION WITH MITIGATION: Under this alternative, mitigation measures developed by Forest Service specialists in consideration of site-specific resources and conditions would be incorporated into the proposal submitted by Alta Gold.

V. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

To assist us in this environmental analysis, we would like to hear what concerns and suggestions you may have on the project. Write to the Ely Ranger District, PO Box 539, Ely, Nevada 89301. To be most helpful, all comments should be received by this office no later than June 7, 1996. Also, those who respond to this scoping will receive notice of the final decision.

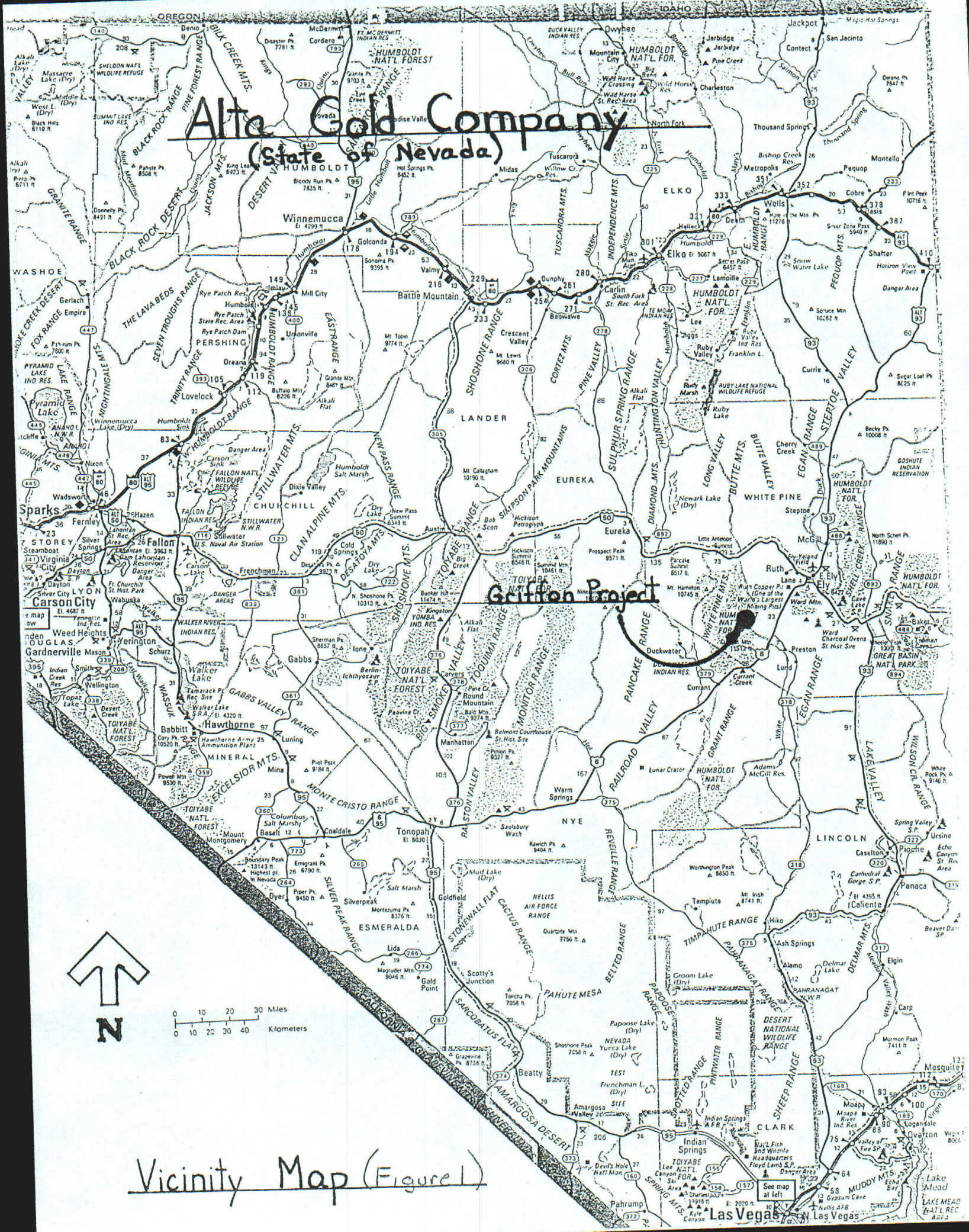
If you have any questions or would like additional information, please contact David Valenzuela, Ely District Minerals Management Specialist, or myself at (702) 289-3031.



JERRY L. GREEN
District Ranger

5/14/96

DATE



Vicinity Map (Figure 1)

