

DECISION MEMO
ALTA GOLD COMPANY
GRIFFON TRENCHING PROJECT
PLAN OF OPERATIONS #11-04-96

USDA-FOREST SERVICE
HUMBOLDT-TOIYABE NATIONAL FOREST
ELY RANGER DISTRICT
WHITE PINE COUNTY

PROJECT DESCRIPTION - On June 10, 1996, the Ely Ranger District received a proposal by Alta Gold Company (Alta) to conduct subsoil characterization work through trenching. The Plan of Operations (POO#11-04-96), as amended, states the activity would occur within five different sites located within the White Pine Range in sections 24 and 25, Township 14 North, Range 58 East, White Pine County, Nevada (see attached maps). The proposal is to use a rubber-tired backhoe to dig a total of 60 trenches, with each trench having the approximate dimensions of 10 feet long by 2 feet wide by 10 feet deep. Approximately 0.025 cubic yards of material would be removed from each trench for evaluation.

Alta would use existing roads to access the general area of the trenching, then travel overland to each trench. Total proposed disturbance is estimated to be about 0.028 acres for the trenches and about 3.5 acres for the overland travel. The proposed start date is July 25, 1996, and is expected to take up to 60 days to complete.

Reclamation would involve backfilling the trenches, covering them with salvaged topsoil and seeding.

SCOPING - Internal scoping of Forest Service specialists did not result in any issues that would require further environmental analysis and documentation in an environmental assessment.

External scoping was performed by mailing information about the project to parties known to have an interest in mineral activities in the Forest. No unusual circumstances or significant issues that would warrant an environmental assessment were presented.

DECISION - It is my decision to allow the implementation of the Griffon Trenching Project, Plan of Operations #11-04-96, as amended, to proceed without further environmental documentation. My decision is based upon consideration of the public comments received on the proposal and the following:

- The degree of activity allows it to fall under the categorical exclusion 31.2 (8) published in the Federal Register, Volume 57, #182, September 18, 1992. The category relates to short-term (one year or less) mineral, energy, or geophysical investigations and their support activities that may require cross-country travel by vehicles and equipment, construction of less than one mile of low standard road or use and minor repair of existing roads.
- A cultural resource survey has been performed on the project area. The subsequent report indicates there will be no effect on cultural resources.
- Local Native American Tribes have been contacted and no site-specific issues were raised.

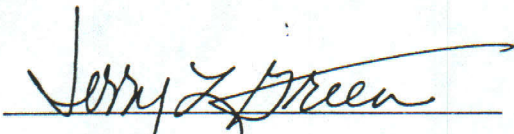
- A Biological Evaluation, as to effects under the Endangered Species Act of 1973, has been performed for the project area. It documents there will be no effect on threatened, endangered, or sensitive species.
- There are no extraordinary circumstances associated with the project.
- The project is consistent with the 1872 Mining Law, as amended, and current Forest Service locatable minerals regulations, 36 CFR 228. A.
- It follows the Forest Service minerals program policy.
- It is consistent with Goals and Objectives of the Humboldt National Forest Land and Resource Management Plan.

Considering the above, no known extraordinary circumstances exist that would warrant further environmental analysis or that a significant effect would result from implementation of this project.

IMPLEMENTATION DATE - The project may be implemented after the date of signing this Decision Memo and the Plan of Operations.

APPEAL OPPORTUNITIES - Under Code of Federal Regulations 215.8 (4) this decision is not subject to appeal.

CONTACT PERSON - For information concerning this decision, contact Jerry L. Green, Ely District Ranger, P. O. Box 539, Ely Nevada, 89301 or telephone (702) 289-3031.

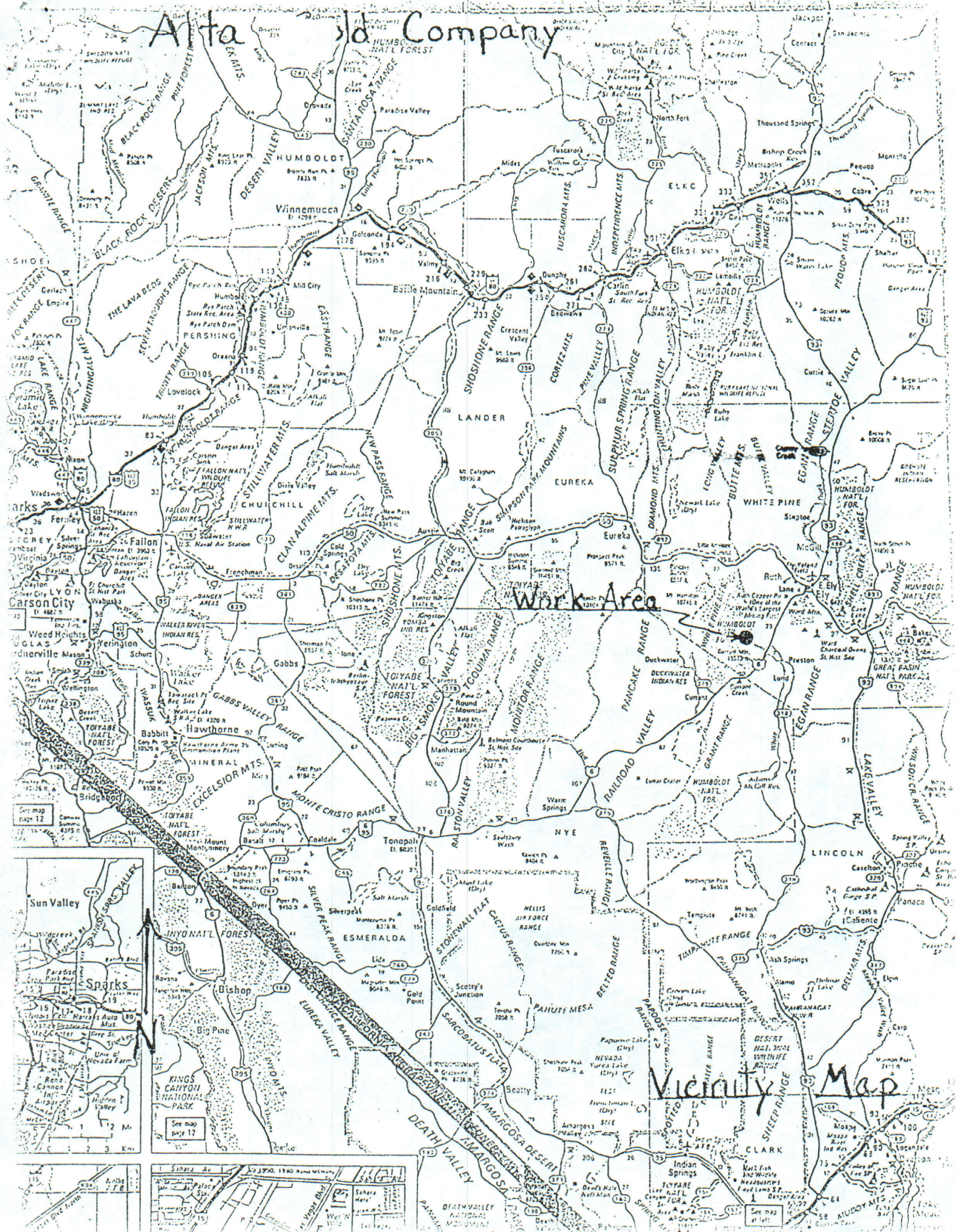


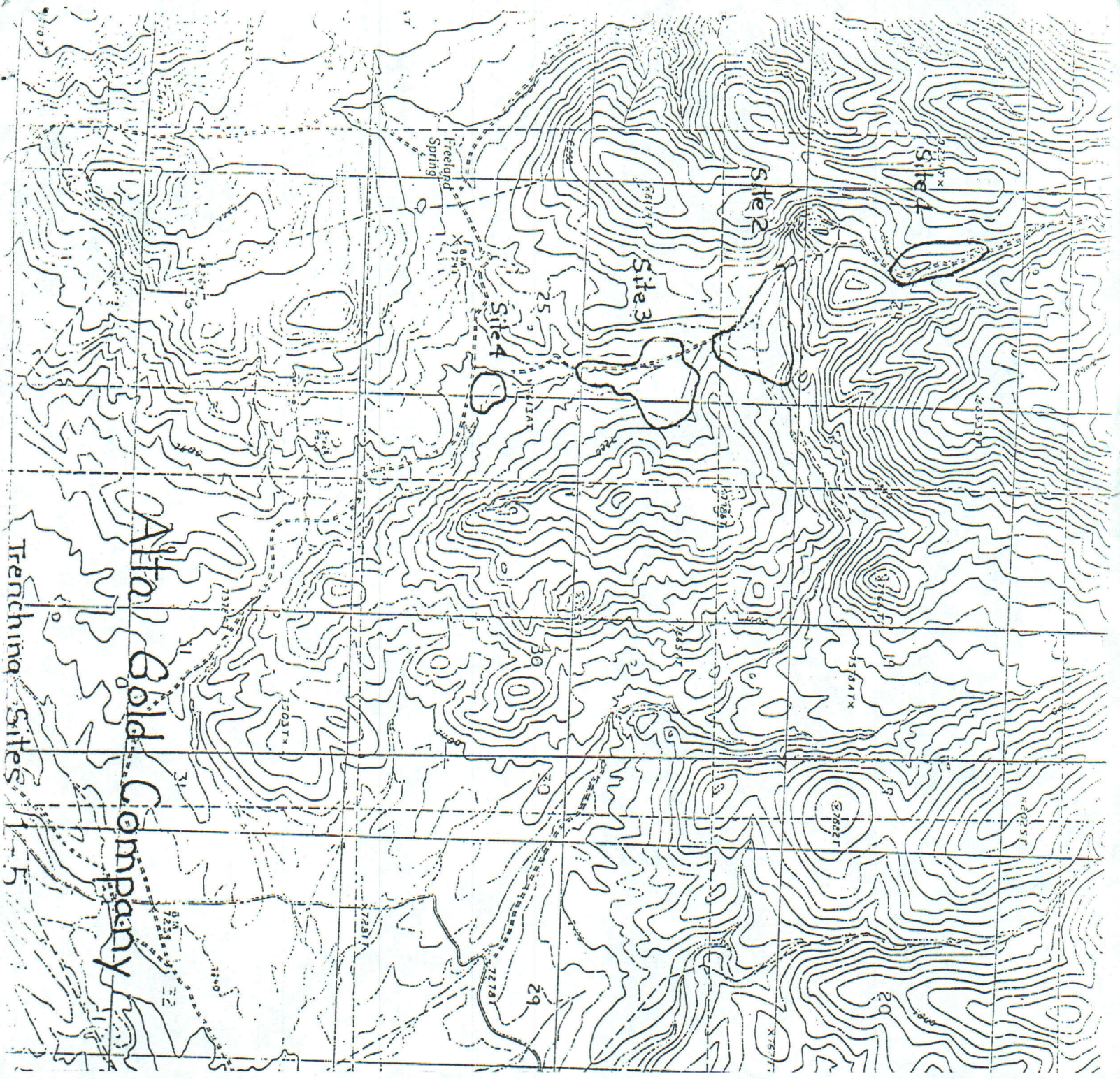
Jerry L. Green, District Ranger

Date

Alta

Company





Alfa Gold Company

Trenching Sites 1-5