

IN REPLY REFER TO:

United States Department of the Interior

BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT

Ely District Office
HC 33 Box 33500
Ely, Nevada 89301-9408

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ITEM 61
TAKE
PRIDE IN
AMERICA

IN REPLY REFER TO

3809 (NV-047)
N46-83-004P

DEC 5 1996

Dear Interested Party:

The Ely District Bureau of Land Management will be completing an Environmental Assessment for the LJ-Ridge Project. A description of the project is enclosed for your review. This project is an expansion of the existing Bald Mountain Mine operated by Placer Dome, U.S. Inc.

The LJ-Ridge project was identified as a reasonably foreseeable future action in the cumulative impacts analysis in the Bald Mountain Mine Expansion Project Environmental Impact Statement completed in 1995. This EIS discusses many of the critical issues identified for the LJ-Ridge Project. The EA to be completed will discuss site specific issues and concerns.

The information you provide will help us to identify issues, alternatives, and appropriate mitigations to minimize environmental impacts. If you have comments, or just wish to be on the mailing list for this project, please respond in writing by January 6, 1997 to:

Ely District BLM
Attention: Lynn Bjorklund, LJ-Ridge Team Leader
HC33 Box 33500
Ely, NV 89301-9408

You may also call the Ely Office at 289-1893 or 289-1800.

Sincerely,

Gene L. Draais
ADM-Nonrenewable Resources

2 Enclosures:

1. LJ Ridge scoping document
2. LJ Ridge site maps

Bald Mountain Mine, LJ Ridge Project

Public Scoping Information and

Request of Identification of Environmental Issues and Alternatives

Introduction

Bald Mountain Mine (BMM) has proposed to amend the current Plan of Operations for the Bald Mountain Mine Expansion Project to include the deposit known as LJ Ridge. The LJ Ridge Modification Project is located less than one mile east of the 2/3 Pit area on the western slope of Bald Mountain, White Pine County, Nevada (Figure 1). It is within the currently permitted Plan of Operations for the Bald Mountain Mine, and was included as a reasonably foreseeable action in the cumulative impacts analysis in the Bald Mountain Mine Expansion Project Environmental Impact Statement (BLM 1995). The proposed modifications to the BMM Plan of Operation have been formulated to allow continued production at current rates, while adding 1.5 years of mine life.

The LJ Ridge Modification Project would involve mining two separate pits, construction of one or two waste rock dumps, construction of a new haul road and secondary roads, and additional disturbance for storage, drainage control, and exploration (Figure 2). Total surface disturbance is estimated to be 140 acres. All disturbance would occur on public lands administered by the Ely District, Bureau of Land Management (BLM). Project life would extend from 1997 through the year 2003 or longer. BLM has decided that to comply with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), an Environmental Assessment (EA) must be prepared to identify and analyze those resources anticipated to be impacted by the proposed project.

LJ Ridge Pits

The LJ Ridge Mine would consist of two open pits - the LJ Ridge Main Pit and the LJ Ridge South Pit. Total acreage of disturbance for the two pits would be 32.8 acres plus 2.0 acres of disturbance around the perimeter (e.g., berms). The areas of mineralization and waste rock in the LJ Ridge deposit are primarily limestones and calcareous siltstone, while igneous rocks are present in lesser amounts. The acid neutralizing potential of these formations is high. Approximately 2.4 million tons of ore mined from the LJ Ridge deposit would be processed at the existing facilities and would produce approximately 261,000 ounces of gold.

Waste Rock Dumps

A total of 14.2 million tons of waste rock would be removed from the LJ Ridge Mine. Waste rock would be placed in two waste rock dumps. The South Ridge Dump would result in approximately 27.6 acres of disturbance and the North Ridge Dump would disturb 6.3 acres. The dumps would be designed for reclaimed slopes of 2.5H:1V for the South Ridge Dump and 2.2H:1V for the smaller North Ridge Dump. Alternatively, only one dump may be used, in which case the South Ridge Dump would be expanded to accommodate the additional waste rock.

Haul and Secondary Roads

Ore would be transported approximately 5.4 miles to the existing processing facilities. Only 2.9 miles of new haul road would be required to reach the existing Top Pit haul road. The disturbance for construction of the new haul road would be 27.8 acres. Secondary roads to the waste rock dumps, fuel storage, etc. would result in an additional 11.0 acres of disturbance.

Other Disturbances

Approximately 0.5 acres would be disturbed to create a storage area for explosives and 2.0 acres for construction of drainage control at the waste rock dumps and haul road. In addition, the Plan of Operations identified 30.0 acres for exploration. This would include additional exploration in the vicinity of the known ore deposit.

Issues of Special Concern

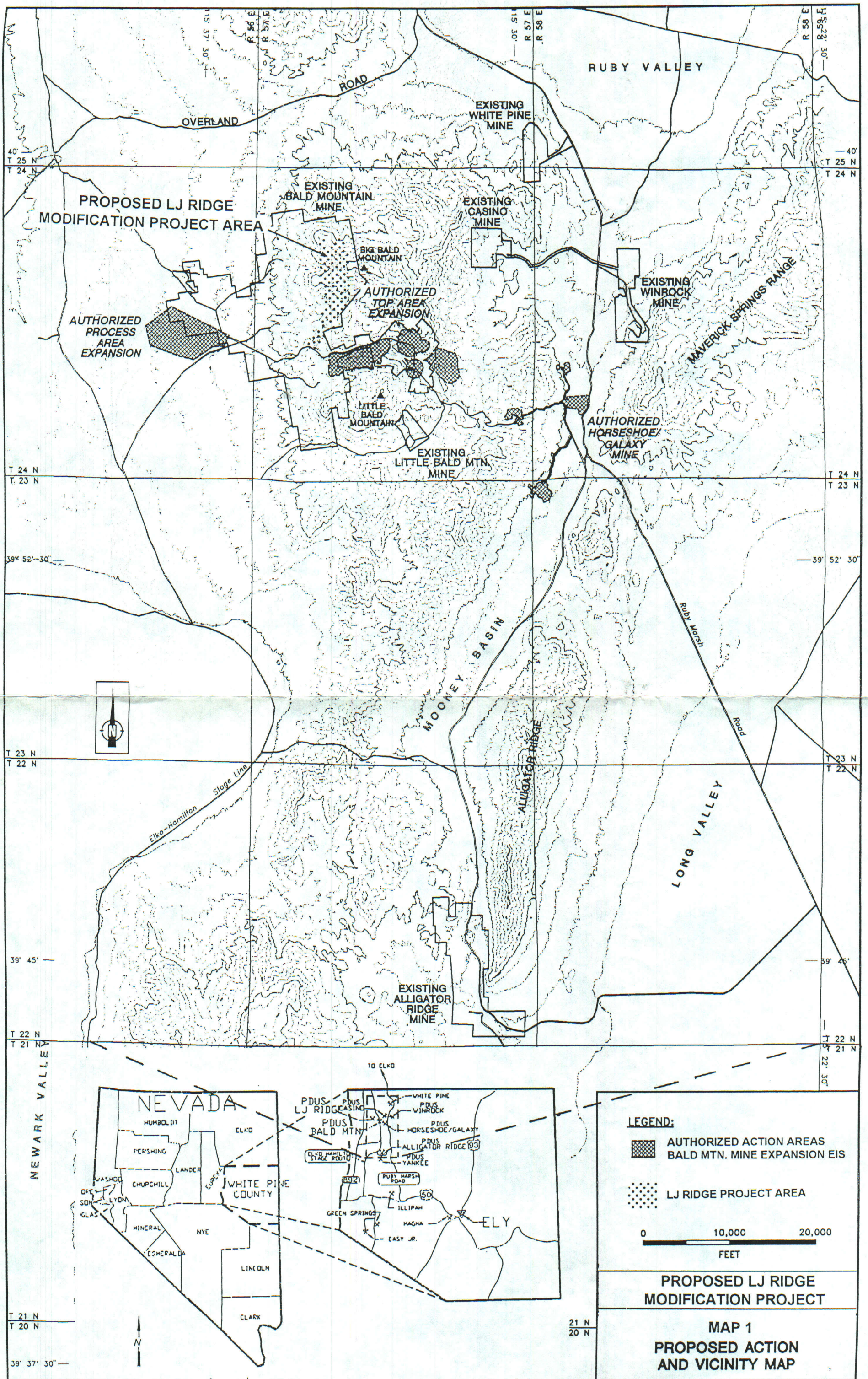
Actions to be analyzed in the EA are those with potential impacts to resources on public lands administered by the Ely District of the BLM. The BMM LJ Ridge Modification Project EA will address the resources and issues typically considered during the EA process for mining projects in the northern Great Basin. BLM specialists have identified several resource issues anticipated for analysis of the LJ Ridge Modification Project: wildlife (mule deer migration and crucial mule deer winter range), water resources (storm water runoff), reclamation (steep terrain reclamation of dumps and roads), and visual resources (view of the North Ridge Dump from the Ruby Marsh Road).

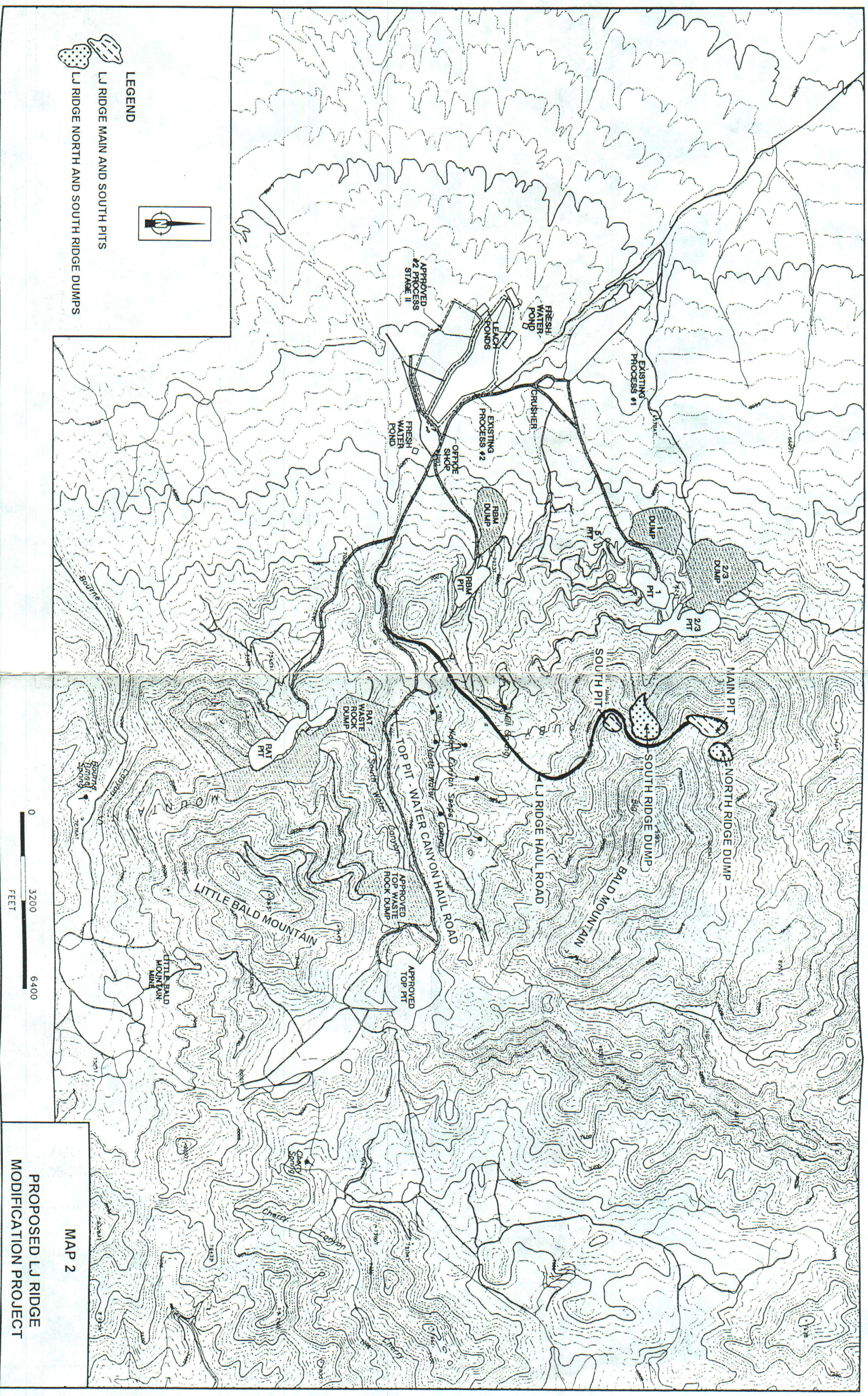
Land Use Plan Conformance

Mineral development was not identified as an issue in the Egan Resource Management Plan completed February 3, 1987. However, the proposed action is in conformance with other decisions of the plan. The action is consistent with the White Pine County Policy Plan for Public Lands which calls for the BLM to "Recognize that the development of Nevada's mineral resources is desirable and necessary to the nation, the State and White Pine County" and to "Retain existing mining areas and promote the expansion of mining operations and areas."

Alternatives

Alternatives as needed will be identified and analyzed based on public input, and in response to resource conflicts such as reclamation, deer migration and visual resources.





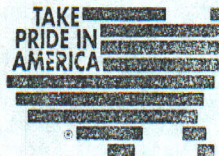


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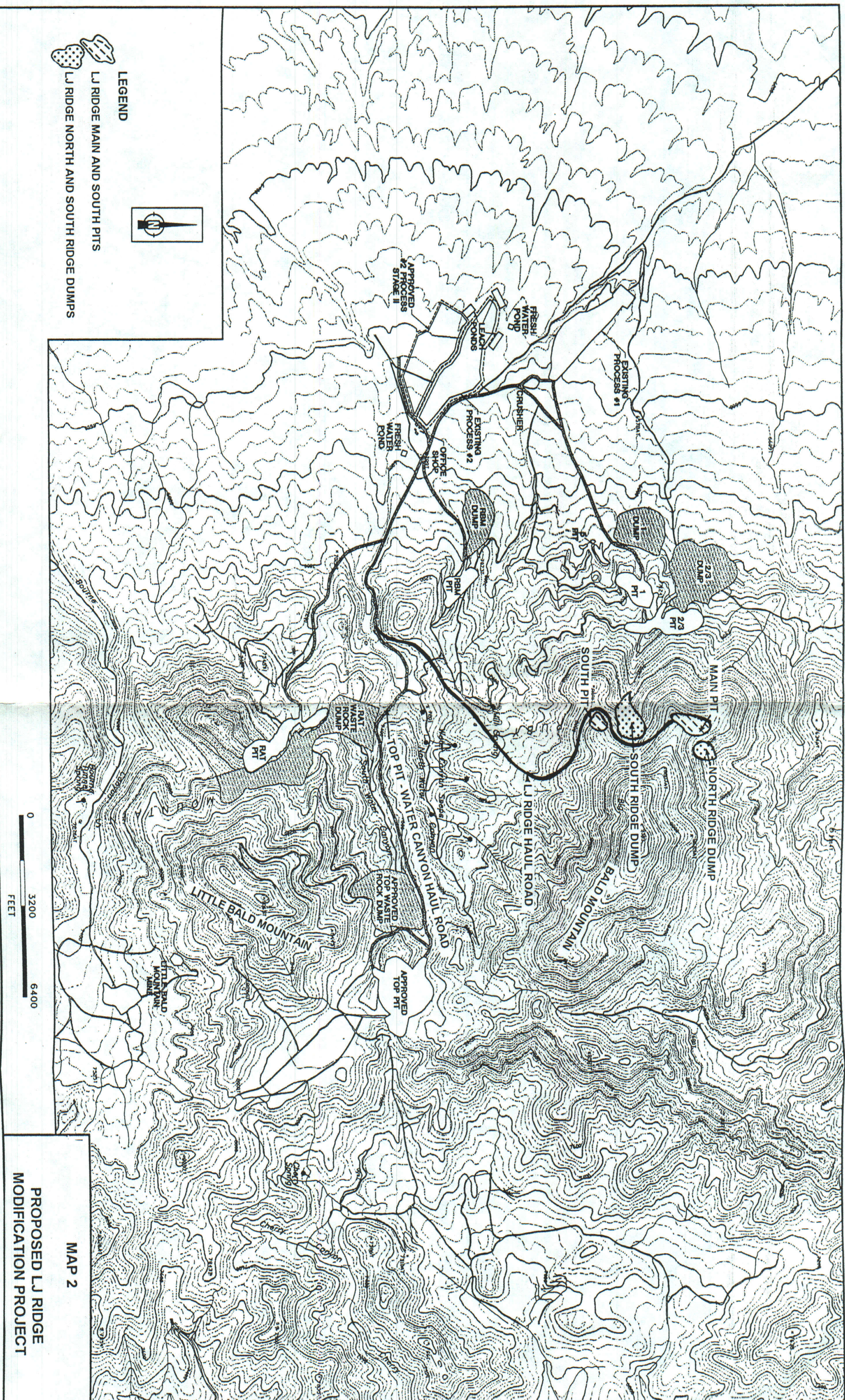
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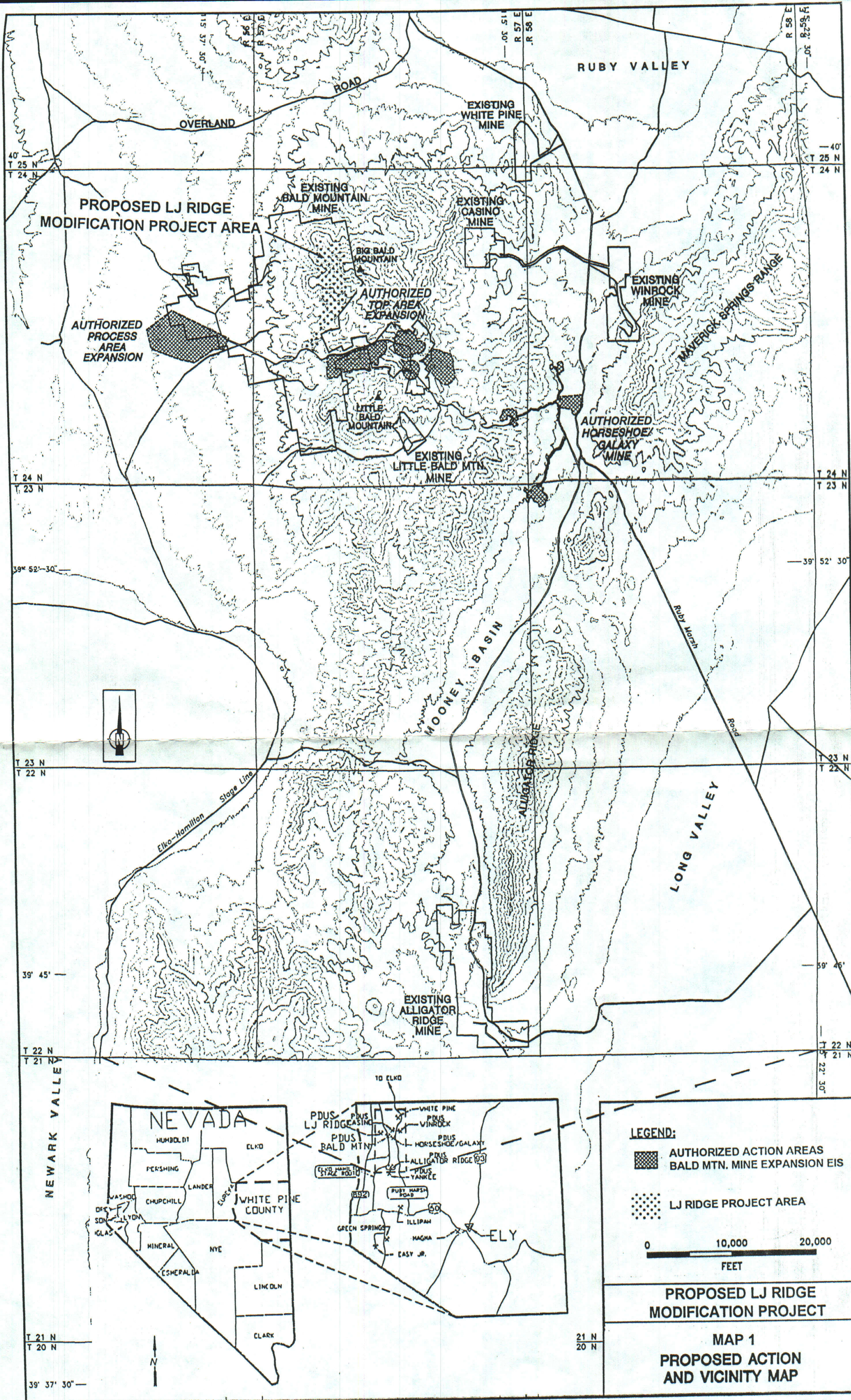
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PROPOSED LJ RIDGE MODIFICATION PROJECT



LEGEND:

-  AUTHORIZED ACTION AREAS
BALD MTN. MINE EXPANSION EIS
-  LJ RIDGE PROJECT AREA

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FEET

**PROPOSED LJ RIDGE
MODIFICATION PROJECT**

**MAP 1
PROPOSED ACTION
AND VICINITY MAP**