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United States
Department of
Agriculture

Forest
Service

Inyo National Forest

Mono Lake Ranger District
P.O. Box 429
Lee Vining, CA 93541
(760) 647-3044
(760) 647-3045 TDD

File Code: 1950/2810 – Panorama
Project

Date: November 2, 2005

RECEIVED
NOV 09 2005
NBMG Director's Office

Dear Interested Party:

Homeland Precious Metals Corporation has submitted a proposal to complete exploration drilling approximately one mile north of Montgomery Pass in Sections 1 and 2 of Township 1 North, Range 32 East of the State of Nevada. The proposal is to drill up to 5 drill holes (F - K) using either a rubber tired or track-mounted exploration drilling rig along existing roads, 1500 feet of cross-country travel, and construction of up to 1500 feet of new roads. Total disturbance is estimated at less than 0.5 acres. Reclamation will consist of regrading and/or revegetation of all disturbed areas. All drill sites will be inspected by Forest Service personnel before, during, and after the proposed operations.

The Forest Service, Inyo National Forest, Mono Ranger District, has made a preliminary assessment that this proposal falls within a category of actions listed in the Forest Service NEPA Handbook (FSH) that are excluded from documentation in an Environmental Assessment (EA) or Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) and there are no extraordinary circumstances that would preclude use of the category (FSH 1909.15, Chapter 31.8— Short Term (one year or less) mineral, energy, or geophysical investigations and their incidental support activities that may require cross-country travel by vehicles and equipment, construction or less than one mile of low standard road, or use and minor repair of existing roads).

Additional information regarding this action can be obtained from: Lynn Oliver, Minerals Program Manager; 798 N. Main Street; Bishop, CA 93514; 760-873-2424; loliver@fs.fed.us.

How to Comment and Timeframe

This comment period is intended to provide those interested in or affected by this proposal an opportunity to make their concerns known prior to a decision being made by the Responsible Official. This comment period is being provided pursuant to the July 2, 2005, order issued by the U. S. District Court for the Eastern District of California in Case No. CIV F-03-6386JKS. Those who provide timely and substantive comments will be eligible to appeal the decision pursuant to 36 CFR part 215 regulations.

Written, facsimile, hand-delivered, oral, and electronic comments concerning this action will be accepted for 30 calendar days following publication of this notice in the Inyo Register. The publication date in the newspaper of record is the exclusive means for calculating the comment period for this proposal. Those wishing to comment should not rely upon dates or timeframe information provided by any other source. The regulations prohibit extending the length of the comment period.

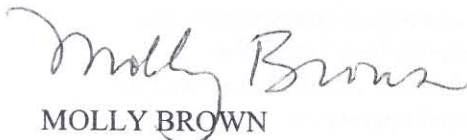


Written comments must be submitted to: Michael Liu, Acting Deputy District Ranger, Lee Vining Ranger Station, PO Box 429, Lee Vining, CA 93541. The office business hours for those submitting hand-delivered comments are: 8:00 am – 5:00 pm, Monday through Friday, excluding holidays.

Oral comments can be provided to my office during normal business hours via telephone 760-647-3033 or in person, or at an official agency function (i.e. public meeting) that is designed to elicit public comments. Electronic comments must be submitted in a format such as an email message, plain text (.txt), rich text format (.rtf), or Word (.doc) to loliver@fs.fed.us. In cases where no identifiable name is attached to a comment, a verification of identity will be required for appeal eligibility. If using an electronic message, a scanned signature is one way to provide verification. It is the responsibility of persons providing comments to submit them by the close of the comment period. Individuals and organizations wishing to be eligible to appeal must meet the information requirements of 36 CFR 215.6.

Comments or concerns will be most useful if received by December 2, 2005. Please call Lynn Oliver, Minerals Program Manager, at 760-873-2424 for more information.

Sincerely,



MOLLY BROWN
Acting District Ranger
Mammoth and Mono Lake Ranger Districts



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**DRAFT
DECISION MEMO**

Panorama Exploration Drilling Proposal

**Inyo National Forest
Mineral County, Nevada**

##/ ##/ 2005

Proposed Action

Homeland Precious Metals Corporation has submitted a proposal to complete exploration drilling approximately one mile north of Montgomery Pass in Sections 1 and 2 of Township 1 North, Range 32 East of the State of Nevada. The proposal is to drill up to 5 drill holes (F - K) using either a rubber tired or track-mounted exploration drilling rig along existing roads, 1500 feet of cross-country travel, and construction of upto 1500 feet of new roads.

An ATV will be used to bring fuel, supplies, and operating personnel for all drill holes requiring cross-country travel. All pickups and other support equipment will be restricted to the existing road network. Reclamation will consist of regrading and/or revegetation of all disturbed areas. All drill sites will be inspected by Forest Service personnel before, during, and after the proposed operations.

The total impacted area for all proposed project activities is less than 0.5 acres in size.

Scoping and Public Involvement

Issues raised through external and internal scoping were used to develop proposed mitigation measures, including reclamation needs and standards. A project description and request for interest was sent to Forest Service specialists on July 19, 2005. A news release was prepared and submitted to the newspapers in Mammoth, CA; Bishop, CA; and Tonopah, NV on July 20, 2005; and also placed on the Inyo National Forest web site. A public scoping letter was sent to 114 interested parties on July 18, 2005. Four responses were received from public agencies concerning and three were received from interested citizens. Each of the three citizens indicated support for the project if all appropriate environmental mitigations were applied to the project. Officials with the Nevada Department of Conservation Division of Environmental Protection were contacted as required in the July 15, 2002 Memorandum of Understanding. A public notice will be published in the newspaper of record (Inyo Register) no later than October 8, 2005.

Reasons for Categorically Excluding the Proposed Action

Based on the information contained in the Forest Service resource reports completed for this project it is my determination that these activities will be of limited size, duration and degree of disturbance. I have determined this action can be categorically excluded from documentation in an environmental assessment or environmental impact statement. It meets the criteria for



categorical exclusion in category 8, Section 31.2 of Forest Service Handbook 1909.15, Chapter 30, (Short-term (one year or less) mineral, energy, or geophysical investigations and their incidental support activities that may require cross-country travel by vehicle and equipment, construction of less than one mile of low standard road (service level D, FSH 7709.56) or use and minor repair of existing roads" and does not require documentation in an EIS or EA.

An amendment to the Plan of Operation submitted on June 8, 2005 has been prepared that contains a number of measures that would mitigate the impacts of this project. The following site specific mitigation measures would further reduce the impacts of the proposed project:

- **ENTIRE PROJECT AREA.** Access to the project area will be limited to dry season. When excessive precipitation or snow events are in the project area access to the project area will be precluded to protect the existing road system and the health and safety of all workers. You will coordinate with the mineral program manager concerning access to the site. Implement BMP 2-3 and 3-1 as identified in the Amended Plan of Operation. Equipment will be washed on-site before leaving sites A - E.
- **DRILL HOLE F.** This drill hole will be accessed using the proposed cross-country travel route. The last 100 feet of the proposed cross-country travel route is on a 20 - 30% grade and would require road construction to access the proposed drill hole. Relocate proposed drill hole approximately 100 feet due west of proposed location at the crest of the slope on flagged route. Implement BMP 5-4 as identified in the Amended Plan of Operation. Ensure equipment is clean prior to moving to drill hole F from anywhere else in the project area – this area is weed free at this time.
- **ACCESS TO DRILL SITES G - J.** Access to these drill sites will require approximately 1000 feet of cross-country travel and re-opening 1000 feet of previously rehabilitated drill road. The cross-country travel route will be raked upon completion of drilling activities. The entrance to the cross-country travel route (and other nearby access points) will be blocked by placing already down pinyon pine trees. The previously rehabilitated drill road is now infested with a noxious weed (cheat grass). Equipment will be washed on-site prior to leaving drill holes G - J. The newly constructed road will not be reclaimed to minimize the further transport of noxious weeds from this site. Implement BMP's 2-2, 2-3, 2-4, 2-5, 2-7, 2-9, 2-10, 2-11, 2-19, 2-22, 2-24 as identified in the Amended Plan of Operation. Ensure equipment is clean prior to moving to leaving drill holes G - J.
- **DRILL HOLE G.** Drilling activities at this site are prohibited from October 15th to May 15th to ensure potentially hibernating Townsend's bats at a nearby mine adit are not affected. If the proponent decides to drill after this date an underground bat survey will be conducted by a Forest Service biologist to determine if the adits are occupied by bats. If no bats are present drilling may proceed. Two (2) eight foot tall pinyon pine trees will need to be cut to access the proposed drill site. All trees cut to provide access to the proposed drill site will be felled and placed in open areas away from live trees. All branches less than 3 inches in diameter will be limbed and will be randomly scattered in a 100 foot diameter around the felled tree. Do not consolidate piles of branches. Implement BMP 5-4 as identified in the Amended Plan of Operation.
- **DRILL HOLE H.** Drilling activities at this site are prohibited from October 15th to May 15th to ensure potentially hibernating Townsend's bats at a nearby mine adit are not affected. If the proponent decides to drill after this date an underground bat survey will be conducted by

a Forest Service biologist to determine if the adits are occupied by bats. If no bats are present drilling may proceed. Approximately 100 feet of previously rehabilitated road will be re-opened to access this drill site. Rehabilitation will consist of restoring the grade and contour of the original topography using an excavator or similar piece of equipment. Implement BMP's 2-2, 2-3, 2-4, 2-5, 2-7, 2-9, 2-10, 2-11, 2-19, 2-22, 2-24 as identified in the Amended Plan of Operation.

- **ACCESS TO DRILL SITES I and J.** The proposed access route will require approximately 500 feet of new road construction. The Forest Service is requiring that the access route be re-routed across an existing waste dump and can dump from the historical mine workings to access Drill Sites I and J. This route will require only a minimal amount of ground disturbance. The can dump will be encapsulated using fill from the construction of the access route to drill hole H. All road blading activities will be limited to minimize ground disturbance and leave the existing soil horizon and associated vegetation as intact as possible. This technique will minimize or limit the new weed infestations and allow natural revegetation to proceed. Vegetation will be left undisturbed on the outside shoulder of all roads. Reclamation will consist of restoring the original topography and raking the site where necessary. Implement BMP 5-4 as identified in the Amended Plan of Operation.
- **DRILL HOLE I.** Drilling activities at this site are prohibited from October 15th to May 15th to ensure potentially hibernating Townsend's bats at a nearby mine adit are not affected. If the proponent decides to drill after this date an underground bat survey will be conducted by a Forest Service biologist to determine if the adits are occupied by bats. If no bats are present drilling may proceed.

The following is a list of contributing data that led to my conclusion that there are no extraordinary circumstances related to the proposed actions:

- The project is limited in scope and magnitude, which diminishes the physical and biological effects. Low standard roads that provide access to the site may be improved.
- Biological evaluations have been completed. Sensitive plant and animal species that could be affected by the project were identified; however, the project has been altered to avoid or minimize those impacts. A weed risk assessment has been completed. Measures designed to reduce the introduction and/or the spread of noxious weeds have been incorporated into the project approval.
- A review of Heritage Resource records was completed during the initial review of the proposed operation in September 2005. Cultural resources were identified and the project has been modified to avoid impacting these resources. Concurrence from Nevada SHPO would occur before project implementation.
- Public health and safety will not be affected.
- The exploration project is not within a congressionally designated area, such as Wilderness, Wilderness Study Areas, or National Recreation Areas. Based on measurements made on the Mt. Montgomery, NV, 7.5-minute topographic quadrangle map, at its closest, the project is 6.0 miles north of the Boundary Peak Wilderness. The project will have no affect on Wilderness resources.
- The exploration project does not include any proposed operations within an inventoried roadless area. All proposed activities will occur on the existing network of Forest System roads.

- There are no known affects on the human environment that are highly uncertain or involve unique or unknown risk.
- The action does not violate Federal, State, or local laws or regulations imposed for the protection of the environment.
- All practicable means to avoid or minimize environmental harm have been adopted.

Past experience and environmental analysis reveal that no extraordinary circumstances exist that might cause the action to have significant effects upon the human environment. This proposed action is therefore excluded from further documentation in either an environmental assessment or environmental impact statement.

Findings Required by other Laws

I have determined that this action is also consistent with the Inyo National Forest Land and Resource Management Plan approved in August 1998 and amended in February 2001. This action is also consistent with the State of Nevada authorities for mining and exploration activities as described in Nevada Revised Statutes, Chapter's 445A and 519A.

Decision

It is my decision to approve the Proposed Action including the Plan Of Operation submitted by Homeland Precious Metals Corporation with the modifications described in the Amendment to the Plan of Operation.

Implementation Date

Administrative Review or Appeal

This decision may be eligible for administrative review (appeal) pursuant to Title 36 Code of Federal Regulations 215.8, as provided pursuant to the July 2, 2005, order issued by the U.S. District Court for the Eastern District of California in Case No. CIV F-03-6386JKS.

Contact Person

For further information contact: Lynn Oliver (760-873-2424), Minerals Program Manager, Inyo National Forest, 798 North Main Street, Bishop, CA 93514.

Michael C. Liu, Acting Deputy District Ranger, Lee Vining Ranger Station

Date

