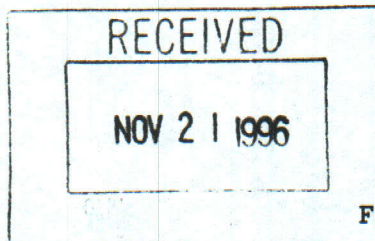


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Toiyabe National Forest
Tonopah Ranger District
Box 3940 Tonopah, NV 89049

NYG
ITEM 146

File Code: 2810

Date: November 19, 1996

State of Nevada
Dept of Administration, State Clearinghouse
Capitol Complex
Carson City, NV 89710

Dear Sir or Madam:

The Tonopah Ranger District is currently assessing a project proposed by Homestake Mining Co. The Golden Drilling project is designated Plan of Operations (P.O.O.) #04-97-002. This project is being assessed to insure that it complies with the standards and guidelines in the Toiyabe National Forest's Land and Resource Management Plan (Forest Plan). The project is located in the Shoshone Mountain Range, approximately 40 miles northwest of the town of Tonopah, NV. The drilling project is located within Sections 13 and 24, T. 9 N., R. 39 E, and in Sections 17, 18, 19 and 20, T. 9 N., R. 40 E, Nye County, Nevada with a total proposed area of disturbance of 27.55 acres.

The Forest Service encourages you to assist in the environmental analysis process by providing written comments on your concerns that pertain to the resource management on this project. **Comments should be received by the Tonopah District Ranger by December 23, 1996, at the following address: Michael A. Valdes, Tonopah Ranger District, Toiyabe National Forest, P.O. Box 3940, Austin, NV 89049.**

Proposed Action

Homestake Mining Co., proposes to conduct exploration drilling of 122 holes for the **Golden Project**. Existing roads would be used to access the project areas, as well as, 7,900 feet of identified cross-country travel. Proposed new road construction totals 24,600 feet with the additional reopening of 7,900 feet of previously reclaimed road. Drilling would be conducted by 2 reverse circulation track-mounted drill-rigs with support water trucks and several support vehicles.

Mitigation measures outlined in the proposal consists of using existing roads, cross-country travel where possible, and concurrent reclamation to minimize surface disturbance. Mud-pits would be used to contain drill fluids. Tree cutting would be kept to a minimum. Removed trees would be cut to ground level, bucked and scattered. Waterbars and rolling dips, where necessary, would be constructed on roads to control water runoff.

Reclamation measures outlined in the proposal is as follows: Drill holes would be plugged in compliance with State Regulations. Seasonal Reclamation, if necessary, will include seeding disturbed areas as an interim measure for soil stabilization. All garbage and refuse will be collected and properly disposed of. As final reclamation, disturbed pad areas and all newly constructed roads would be reshaped to natural contour, raked, and reseeded.

Recreational Opportunity Spectrum and Visual Quality Objectives

The ROS ranges from semi-primitive non-motorized to roaded natural and the VQO ranges from retention to partial retention/modification.

Preliminary Issues and Concerns

No issues or concerns have been identified during the preliminary review of this project:

Forest Plan Compliance

Forest Management Direction includes the following standards and guidelines:

1) Minerals Goals:

Mineral exploration and development will be encouraged while establishing reclamation policies that minimize or shorten the duration of impacts on renewable and non-renewable surface resources.

2) Minerals Desired Future Condition:

Any operation with potential to cause significant surface disturbance will be covered by an operation plan with provisions to minimize or mitigate effects on natural and cultural resource values. Reclamation plans will address surface disturbance and will contain provisions to return disturbed areas to as near the pre-existing condition as possible. Reclamation bonds will be calculated in accordance with the reclamation plan.

3) Minerals Standards and Guidelines:

The standards and guidelines set forth in paragraphs 1 thru 24 on pages IV-57 thru IV-59 of the Forest Plan. The Shoshone Mountain Range falls within Management Area #7. Total management area direction and proposed management practices are found on pages IV-120 thru IV-122 of the Forest Plan.

Preliminary Alternatives

1) No Action. No exploration would be conducted, no holes would be drilled, no drill pads and no new disturbance would occur.

2) Proposed Action. Approval of Plan of Operations, as submitted, would be granted.

3) Proposed Action With Modifications. Approval of Plan of Operations, as submitted with modifications that address the issues and concerns that are identified.

For your convenience, I have enclosed a generalized location map of the project area. All site specific maps are considered confidential, as outlined in 36 Code of Federal Regulations, Part 228.6.

Again, I welcome your comments on this project. Please call Will Wilson or Wayne Frye at (702) 964-2671 or at (702) 482-6286 for any additional information or questions you might have.

Sincerely,



Michael A. Valdes
District Ranger

enclosure

LOCATION MAP

38°
45'

T. 10 N.

8

T. 9 N.

37°
30'

9

T. 8 N.

38°
30'

R. 38 E.

R. 39 E.

R. 40 E.

HOMESTAKE MINING COMPANY Golden Project Plan of Operation #04-97-002

Shoshone Mtn Range T9N, R39E, Sec.s: 13 and 24;
Nye County, NV T9N, R40E, Sec.s 17-20

Tonopah Ranger District Forest Visitor Map
Scale: 1/2 inch = 1 mile

