from NBMG OFR 83-9
See also 83-10 for geochemical results.

Elko Co.-general
Item 47

4500 0001

SNOWSTORM MOUNTAINS AREA

The Snowstorm Mountains area is located on the north slope of the northern Snowstorm Mountains along the Elko-Humboldt County line in the extreme western portion of the Elko Resource Area. The area lies in generally remote country northwest of the town of Midas, west of the south fork of the Little Humboldt River. The only known prospects are along the drainages of First Creek and Snowstorm Creek, both northeast draining creeks which are tributary to the Little Humboldt.

The geology of this area is very poorly described. On the open-file geologic map of the area by Hope and Coats, 1976, the area is shown to be underlain by rhyolitic to dacitic flows and domes of Miocene age. Regional faults trending northeast and northwest cross the area.

The Snowstorm Range has the general appearance of a tilted block with a steeper southwest face and a more gently dipping northeast slope. The northwest-trending faults appear to be concentrated along the southwest face of the range and along the drainage of the Little Humboldt to the northeast. Snowstorm Creek, First Creek, and other small creeks on the eastern slope of the Snowstorms parallel the northeast trending faults.

The rocks exposed in the First Creek-Snowstorm creek area are a series of rhyolites and rhyolite flow breccias which now dip gently to the northeast. Individual flow units form spectacular columnar outcrops along cliffs or breaks, many of them marked by aspen groves and springs.

The small prospects visited at First Creek expose a vertical fracture zone which cuts a moderately kaolinized ash layer. Iron oxides and some calcite occur along a narrow breccia zone following the N70°E fracture system. No sign of recent activity was seen in this area.

The Snow claims, on Snowstorm Creek, cover an area of brecciation, iron staining, and moderate alteration in an outcrop of rhyolite flow or possibly welded tuff. The area of brecciation appears to include most of the area of a small, round hill located between two forks of Snowstorm Creek. This could mark the outcrop of a dome or plug which cuts the flow units. Rocks on the dumps of the prospects here are composed of fractured, moderately kaolinized breccia cemented with vein quartz. Some quartz veins are three to four inches thick, some have open centers, and some show quartz after calcite pseudomorphs.

The prospects here are fairly old, probably dating to the 1920's or 1930's. The area was staked in 1980, but no signs of recent exploration work were in evidence when the property was visited in August, 1982.

Both periods of prospecting activity here were, no doubt, for gold. The Midas district is located a little over ten miles to the southeast in similar rocks and the largely unexplored ground extending from Midas to the Snowstorm area could host other gold ore bodies.

Selected References:

Hope, R. A. and Coats, R. R. (1976) Preliminary geologic map of Elko County, Nevada: USGS open-file 76-779, sheet #1.