

United States  
Department of  
Agriculture

Forest  
Service

Humboldt NF  
Toiyabe NF

255  
Ely  
Ranger  
District

P.O. Box 539  
Ely, NV 89301  
(702) 289-3031

255  
ITEM 28

4900 0028

File Code: 1950, 2810

Date: February 16, 1996

Nevada Bureau of Mines  
Attn: Joe Tingley  
Mail Stop 178  
University of Nevada, Reno  
Reno, Nevada 89557

Dear Mr. Tingley:

Please find enclosed a scoping document for the Locke Mine Exploration Project being proposed by Saga Exploration Company. If you have any questions regarding this project, please contact Loretta Cartner, District Minerals Management Specialist, at the address and/or telephone number given above.

Sincerely,



JERRY L. GREEN  
District Ranger

Enclosures (2)

## SCOPING DOCUMENT

### SAGA EXPLORATION COMPANY LOCKE MINE EXPLORATION PROJECT POO #04-04-96

#### Ely Ranger District Humbolt-Toiyabe National Forests

## I. DESCRIPTION OF THE PROPOSED ACTIVITY

### A. Project Description

On January 16, 1996, the Ely Ranger District received a minerals Plan of Operation from Saga Exploration Company for the Locke Mine Exploration Project. The area of exploration is located on the West side of the Grant Range, Troy Canyon, in Township 6 North, Range 57 East, Sections 33, Nye County, Nevada (see attached maps).

The proposal is to drill up to 21 holes with an all terrain Canterra, reverse circulation, rotary drill rig. No new road construction is needed, but approximately 700 feet of overland travel is required to access 2 of the 21 drill sites. The remaining 19 drill sites are located on existing roads. Some dozer work is proposed for clearing boulders and soil material and filling eroded spots in the existing roads for access. Total proposed disturbance is estimated to be 0.1 acres. The start-up date is expected to be the beginning to mid-April 1996. Drilling is expected to take up to 3 weeks to complete.

Reclamation would involve plugging drill holes in accordance with Nevada Regulations, cleaning and properly disposing of any garbage, ripping the overland travel routes and drill sites to loosen compacted soil if necessary, pulling woody debris onto reclaimed surfaces, raking in a seed mixture designed for wildlife forage and soil stabilization, and constructing erosion bars in overland travel routes and the existing access roads where necessary. Reclamation of disturbed sites would occur immediately after the drilling has been completed and during the Fall of 1996 (seeding).

### B. Management Direction

Management direction is guided by the **Mining Law of 1872**, as amended. This law established the rights of citizens to explore, claim, and mine certain minerals, categorically known as locatable minerals, wherever they are found on National Forest System lands, unless those lands are closed to mineral entry. The Locke Mine Exploration Project is located on public domain lands within the Humboldt National Forest managed by the US Forest Service whose management direction is designed to integrate mining activities, such as the current proposal, with use and protection of other resources. Permitting of this project will be guided by the **Humboldt National Forest Land and Resource Management Plan (Forest Plan - 1986)**.

The Forest Plan acknowledged that public domain lands within the Grant Range have high potential for the occurrence of gold, silver, molybdenum, tungsten, and copper and therefore would receive a large amount of mining activity. Consistent with the 1872 Mining Law and other regulations, the Forest Plan states, "Mineral proposals [within this area] will be handled expeditiously and operations will be carried out in an environmentally sound manner." (Forest Plan, page IV-180). This is accomplished by meeting the objectives of the National Environmental Policy Act of 1964, as amended and the objectives of **36 CFR 228**, minimizing adverse environmental impacts on surface resources.



### C. Decision to be Made

The decision to be made is how the Locke Mine Exploration Project will be implemented on the ground. The chosen course of action may include changes to the original proposal that reflect how relevant issues and concerns have been addressed.

## II. IDENTIFYING LAND AND RESOURCE MANAGEMENT ISSUES AND CONCERNS

Preliminary review of the proposal by an interdisciplinary team has identified the following areas of interest as a starting point for public input and to assist in identifying additional input needed for completion of the environmental analysis.

...impact on threatened, endangered, or sensitive species?

...measures needed to control erosion during drilling and reclamation of disturbed sites?

...impact on archaeological resources in the area?

...impact on Desert Mountain Sheep and their lambing?

## III. PRELIMINARY ALTERNATIVES TO BE ANALYZED

**NO ACTION:** Under this alternative, the project proposal by Saga Exploration Company would not be acted upon. As stated earlier, the law establishes a right to conduct exploration on these lands, and the Forest Service's obligation to permit such activities in an environmentally sound manner. Therefore, this is not a viable alternative, but it does establish a baseline by which the other alternatives can be compared.


**PROPOSED ACTION:** The Proposed Action is Saga Exploration Company's proposed Plan of Operations as submitted.

**PROPOSED ACTION WITH MITIGATION:** Under this alternative, mitigation measures developed by Forest Service specialists in consideration of site-specific resources and conditions would be incorporated into the Plan of Operation submitted by Saga Exploration Company.

## IV. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

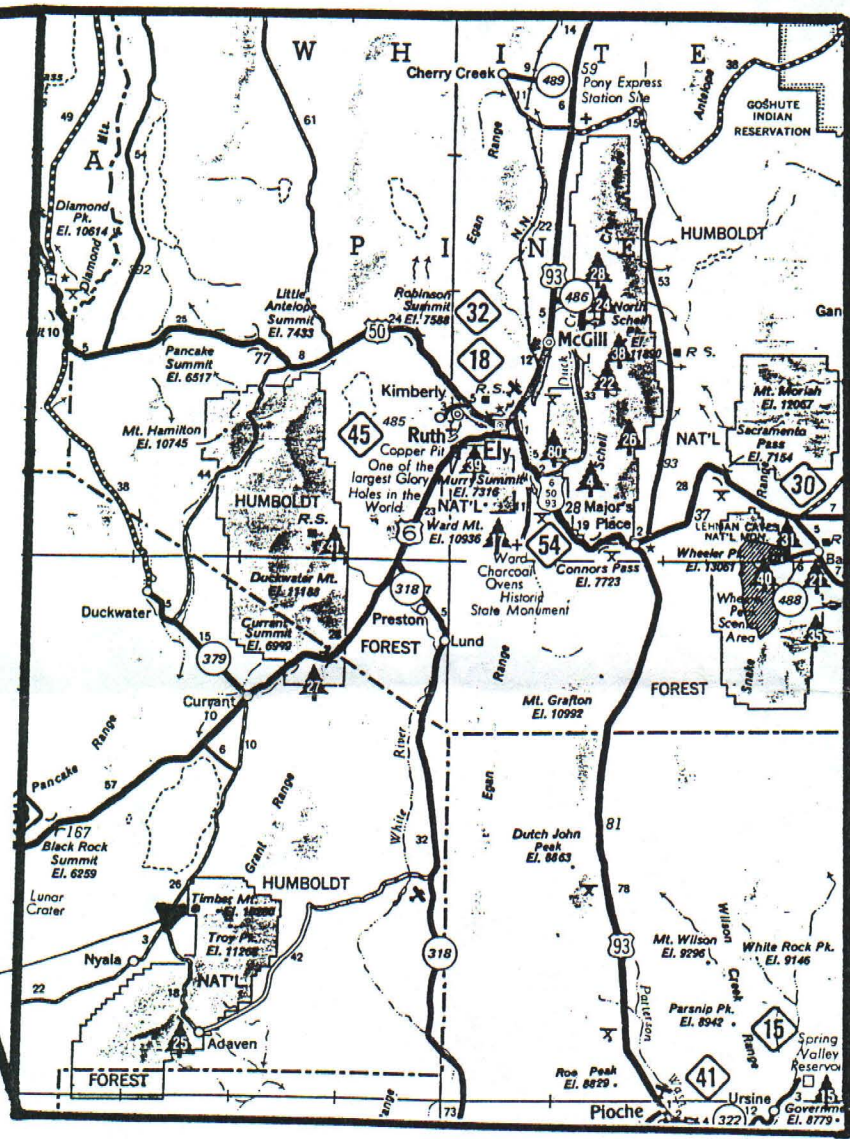
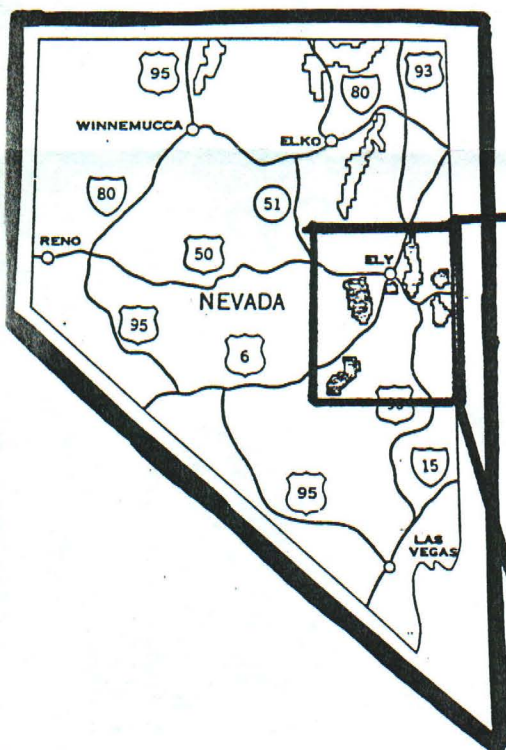
To assist us in this environmental analysis, we would like to hear what concerns and suggestions you may have on the project. Should you wish to comment on this project, please send your comments to Jerry L. Green, Ely District Ranger, PO Box 539, Ely, NV 89301 or Fax at (702) 289-2132. To be most helpful, all comments should be received by this office no later than March 22, 1996. Those who respond to this scoping will remain on the active project list and will receive notice of the final decision.

If you have any questions or would like additional information, please contact Loretta Cartner, Ely District Minerals Management Specialist, or myself at (702) 289-3031.

  
JERRY L. GREEN  
District Ranger

2/15/96  
DATE

# GENERAL PROJECT LOCATION MAP LOCKE MINE EXPLORATION PROJECT PLAN OF OPERATIONS #04-04-96



Project  
Location



# PROJECT MAP

## LOCKE MINE EXPLORATION PROJECT

PLAN OF OPERATIONS #04-04-96

