

5290 0122

WPG

WPG

ITEM 142

**SCOPING DOCUMENT  
SAGEBRUSH EXPLORATION INC.  
JASPER CLAIMS PROJECT  
POO #01-04-97  
Ely Ranger District  
Humbolt-Toiyabe National Forests**

**I. DESCRIPTION OF THE PROPOSED ACTIVITY**

**A. Project Description**

On November 22, 1997<sup>6</sup>, the Ely Ranger District received a minerals Plan of Operation from Sagebrush Exploration Inc. for the Jasper Claims Project. The area of exploration is located on the west side of the White Pine Range, Cathedral Canyon, in Township 15 North, Range 57 East, Sections 14 & 15, Nye County, Nevada (see attached maps).

The proposal is to drill 7 holes with a track reverse circulation rotary drill rig. There would be approximately 600 feet of reconstructed roads, spot upgrading of an existing two track trail for 1100 feet, and 3500 feet of new road construction. A stretch of approximately 780 feet would have spot blasting of rock outcrops for road construction. Drill mud pits would be installed at the toe of the road fills. Road construction grades would range between 6% to 29% with the majority at around 16%. Steeper grades are being proposed to minimize ground disturbance on steep slopes and limiting the amount of road switchbacks. Erosion control structures would be installed on all roads. Access to the exploration roads would be controlled for public safety.

Total proposed disturbance is estimated to be 3.8 acres. The start-up date is expected to be the beginning of June 1997. The expected duration of this operation is 30 days.

Reclamation would involve plugging drill holes in accordance with Nevada Regulations, cleaning and properly disposing of all garbage or petroleum based leaks or spills, and reclaiming all roads used off of the Cathedral Canyon road. Reclamation would include ripping and recontouring roads, pulling woody debris and rock boulders onto reshaped surfaces, applying a seed mixture designed for wildlife forage and soil stabilization, and constructing erosion bars where necessary. Reclamation of disturbed sites would be completed during the Fall of 1997. Forest Service vegetation release criteria would be included in the stipulations for requirements to be met prior to the release of the reclamation bond.

This project proposal had been previously proposed by Nevada Mine Development Corporation in 1990 (plan of operations #08-04-90). The environmental analysis had been completed and documented under a Decision Memo. A cultural survey had been completed with no cultural resources located within or adjacent to the proposed impact area. In addition, there were no wildlife or plant issues. The project was and is currently bonded for reclamation assurance and the plan of operations approved in August 1990. The project was never implemented. This new Jasper Claims exploration proposal would replace the plan of operations proposed by Nevada Mine Development Corporation.

Even though there were no concerns for wildlife or plants back in 1990, a Forest Service biologist will perform a field review and complete a biological evaluation for this project. Native American consultation will also be completed.

**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 Jasper Claims Project is located within the Humboldt-Toiyabe National Forests managed by the Department of Agriculture, US Forest Service whose management direction is



designed to integrate mining activities, such as the current proposal, with multiple 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 lands within the White Pine Range have high potential for the occurrence of gold, silver, molybdenum, and copper and therefore could 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 Code of Federal Regulations 228**, minimizing adverse environmental impacts on surface resources.

### C. Decision to be Made

The decision to be made is how the Jasper Claims 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 the disturbed sites?
- ...Native American concerns.

## III. PRELIMINARY ALTERNATIVES TO BE ANALYZED

**NO ACTION:** Under this alternative, the project proposal by Sagebrush Exploration Inc. 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.

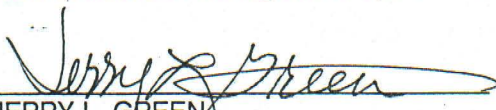
**PROPOSED ACTION:** The Proposed Action is Sagebrush Exploration Inc's. proposed Plan of Operations as submitted.

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

## 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 February 28, 1997. Those who respond to this scoping will remain on the active project list.

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

DATE 1/28/97



# FIGURE 1

## GENERAL LOCATION MAP



## JASPER CLAIMS PROJECT

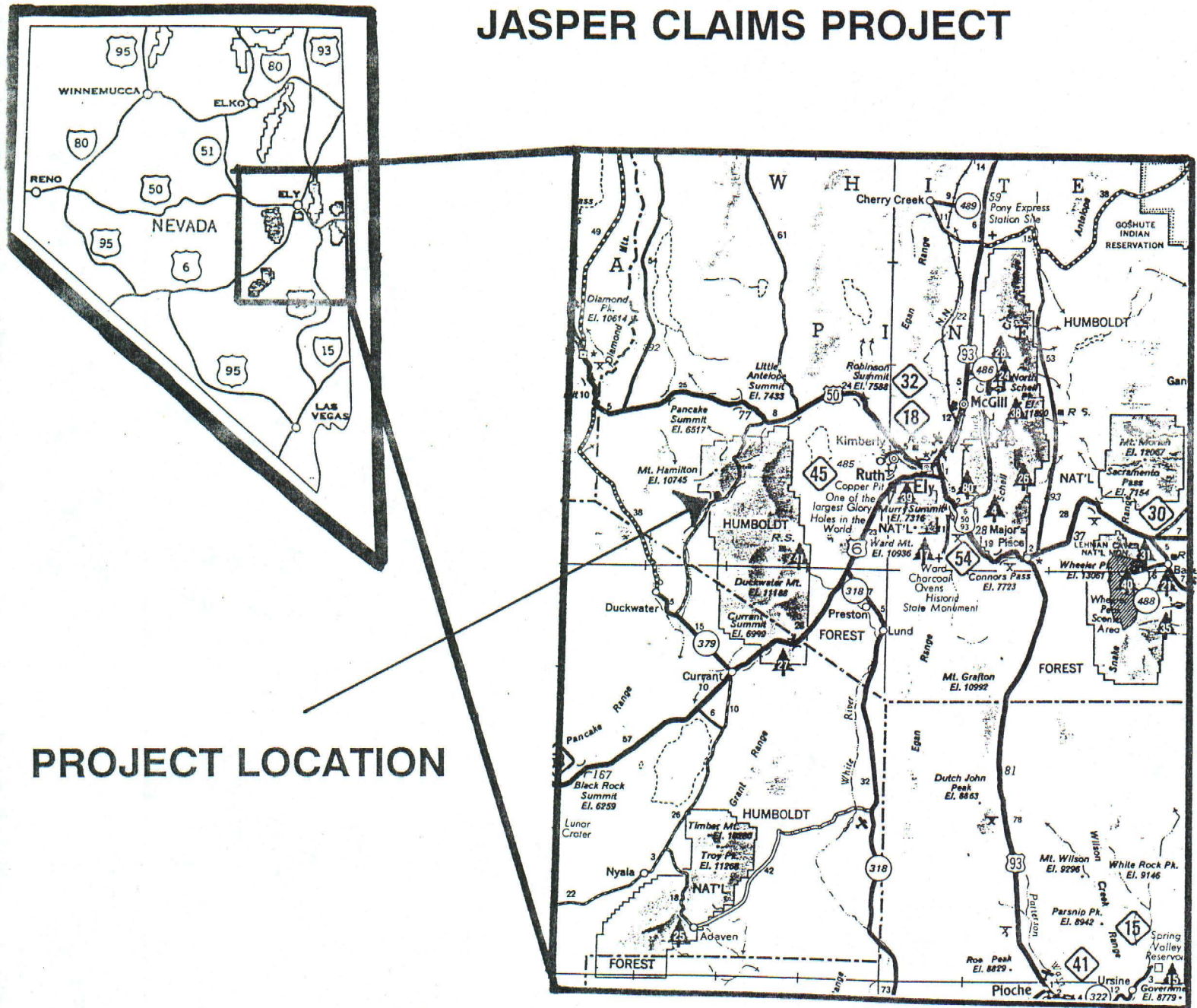
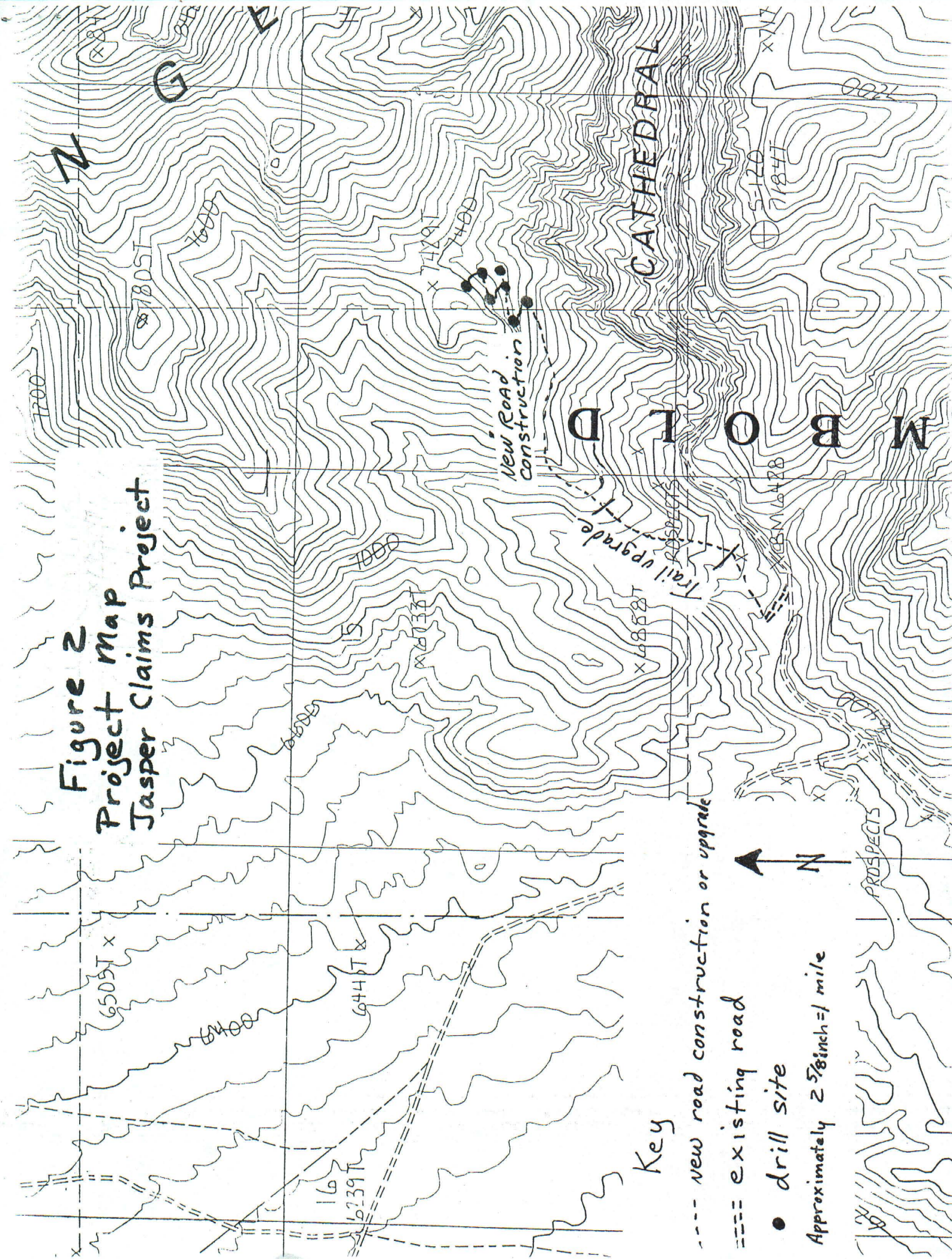




Figure 2  
Project Map  
Tasper Claims Project



Key

- new road construction or upgrade
- === existing road
- drill site

Approximately 2 5/8 inch = 1 mile

