

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR - BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT
FOUR RIVERS FIELD OFFICE

FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT

Gold Hill Reclamation and Mining, Inc. Mining Plan of Operations
DOI-BLM-ID-B010-2012-0031-EA

I have reviewed the Council on Environmental Quality Regulations (CEQ) for significance (40 CFR 1508.27) and have determined the actions analyzed in EA# DOI-BLM-ID-B010-2012-0031-EA would not constitute a major federal action that would significantly affect the quality of the human environment; therefore, an Environmental Impact Statement is not required. This finding was made by considering both the context and intensity of the potential effects, as described in the above EA, using the following factors defining significance:

1) Impacts that may be both beneficial and adverse.

The environmental assessment considered both beneficial and adverse impacts of the proposed action. Authorizing a Mining Plan of Operations for Gold Hill Reclamation and Mining, Inc. at this site would eliminate a mine dump, thus restoring landscape, topography, and visual resources to a pre-mining state (pgs. 1 and 2, DOI-BLM-ID-B010-2012-0031-EA).

The benefit of the removal of the mine dump would be to restore the slope to its natural topography; facilitate slope stability initially through the use of wattling to control erosion and eventually through the successful planting and establishment of native vegetation thus minimizing any further possibility of runoff-related pollution of Granite Creek (pgs. 5, 6-10, DOI-BLM-ID-B010-2012-0031-EA). There would be no effect to any special status plant or animal species from the proposed action because none are present (pgs. 13-19, DOI-BLM-ID-B010-2012-0031-EA).

2) The degree to which the proposed action affects public health or safety.

There were no potential issues or effects to public health and safety identified as a result of the proposed action.

3) Unique characteristics of the geographic area such as proximity to historic or cultural resources, park lands, prime farmlands, wetlands, wild and scenic rivers, or ecologically critical areas.

Placer and lode mining has taken place in the area since 1860. Adjacent land to the north includes patented mining claims and the historic townsite of Quartzburg. The proposed action area is accessed by Granite Creek Road which essentially ends at the locked gate on the boundary between public and private, patented lands. Cultural resources have not been found to exist in the project area or adjacent areas, nor do park lands, prime farmlands, wetlands, wild and scenic rivers, or ecologically critical areas exist within or in proximity to the project area. No major effects on any unique characteristic were identified in the EA.

4) *The degree to which the effects on the quality of the human environment are likely to be highly controversial.*

The removal of the mine dump would have negligible impact on the human environment and therefore, is not expected to be controversial. (pgs. 11-22, DOI-BLM-ID-B010-2012-0031-EA)

5) *The degree to which the possible effects on the human environment are highly uncertain or involve unique or unknown risks.*

The analysis did not identify any effects on the human environment which are highly uncertain or involve unknown risks as a result of this action. Inaction may result in a variety of additional risks as uncontrolled erosion and consequent stream pollution may persist as it has in the past. (pgs. 11-22, DOI-BLM-ID-B010-2012-0031-EA)

6) *The degree to which the action may establish a precedent for future actions with significant effects or represents a decision in principle about a future consideration.*

This EA does not set a precedent for future actions that have significant effects. The action is consistent with decisions and direction established in the 1989 Cascade Resource Management Plan. (pgs. 2-3, DOI-BLM-ID-B010-2012-0031-EA)

7) *Whether the action is related to other actions with individually insignificant but cumulatively significant impacts.*

This EA considered potential cumulative impacts to the Cumulative Effects Analysis Area (CEAA) which comprises 1.1 acres within Section 9 of Township 8 North and Range 4 East, Boise Meridian. No other current similar or related actions are known to or proposed to exist within the CEAA. The effects of excavation and reclamation activities on adjacent private patented lands are mitigated through a SWPPP and are not expected to be significant to any given resources in the area. The incremental effect of the proposed action would not add any measurable increase to effects in the area. In conclusion, implementation would not cause significant cumulative effects on biological, cultural, or social resources (pg. 22, DOI-BLM-ID-B010-2012-0031-EA)

8) *The degree to which the action may adversely affect districts, sites, highways, structures, or objects listed in or eligible for listing in the NRHP or may cause loss or destruction of significant scientific or cultural resources.*

Based on the analysis documented in the EA, the proposed action would not cause loss or destruction of significant scientific or cultural resources. (pg. 21, DOI-BLM-ID-B010-2012-0031-EA)

9) *The degree to which the action may adversely affect an endangered or threatened species or its habitat that has determined to be critical under the Endangered Species Act of 1973.*

No threatened or endangered species are known to inhabit the project area. (pgs. 12-19, DOI-BLM-ID-B010-2012-0031-EA)

10) Whether the action threatens a violation of Federal, State, and local laws or requirements imposed for protection of the environment.

The proposed action was developed in accordance with all applicable Federal, State, and Local laws for the protection of the environment. The EA disclosed the effects of the proposed action on all critical and non-critical elements and it was determined that the proposed action would not adversely affect any of these elements.

/s/ Terry A. Humphrey

8/8/2012

Terry Humphrey
Four Rivers Field Manager

Date