

DECISION RECORD

EA Number: DOI-BLM-AZ-G020-2013-0012-EA

Serial/Case File No. AZA-036195

BLM Office: Tucson Field Office

Decision: It is my decision to select the proposed action which is to authorize the Mine Plan of Operation submitted by Altar Resources Partnership on February 20, 2013 for the Mildred Peak (Babo) Exploration Project subject to the stipulations listed below.

Alternatives Considered: A “No Action” alternative was considered and analyzed. The No Action Alternative would not fulfill the purpose and need of the project.

Rational for Decision: The proposed action is generally provided for in the Phoenix RMP on a case-by-case basis. The environmental assessment dated May 15, 2013 analyzed the potential impacts to the environment and the public should the mine plan of operation be authorized. A Findings of No Significant Impacts (FONSI) has been signed; therefore, there are no significant impacts to the environment that would require an environmental impact statement. By selecting the proposed action, the Tucson Field Office is implementing this portion of the Phoenix RMP. I have concluded that the MPO will not result in the undue and unnecessary degradation of the public lands. Therefore, pursuant to 43 CFR 3809.411 (d)(2), it is my decision to approve the Altar Resources Partnership mining plan of operations including the mitigation measures shown below.

Mitigation Measures/ Additional Stipulations:

1. If in connection with operations under this authorization, any human remains, funerary objects, sacred objects, or objects of cultural patrimony as defined in the Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act (50 U.S.C. 101-601; Stat. 3048; 25 U.S.C. 3001) are discovered, the operator shall stop operations in the immediate area of the discovery, protect the remains and objects, and immediately notify the BLM Tucson Assistant Field Manager for Resources of the discovery. The operator shall continue to protect the immediate area of the discovery until notified by the Assistant Field Manager that operations may resume.

Should any archaeological resources or vertebrate fossils be discovered during implementation of projects, all surface disturbing activities in the area of discovery shall cease and the Field Office archeologist shall be notified. The archeologist will evaluate the discovery and provide recommendations

to the Assistant Field Manager for Resources. Surface disturbing activities shall not resume until permission is obtained from the Assistant Field Manager.

An additional cultural and/or paleontological resource survey may be required in the event the project location is changed or additional surface disturbing operations are added to the project after the initial survey. Any such survey must be completed prior to commencement of such operations.

2. In order to reduce potential disturbance of the jaguar, Altar Resources Partnership shall not engage in lighted, night time operations.
3. Altar Resources Partnership shall train employees in tortoise avoidance and handling procedures, particularly in regard to road use and the potential for tortoise mortality due to operational traffic and other mechanized operations.
4. Altar Resources Partnership shall salvage any saguaro, barrel, and other cacti from the access road and transplant to nearby disturbed areas on public land not subject to proposed mining activities. Salvage shall occur only if the cacti cannot be avoided during passage of the drill rig.
5. All equipment entering the site shall be washed prior to arrival on site to avoid the transmission of invasive or non-native seeds.
6. Altar Resources Partnership shall consult with the BLM on proper seed mix and method of application for use in reclamation.
7. Altar Resources Partnership shall provide a designated fire watch for any welding or metal grinding operations undertaken on the public lands. Altar Resources Partnership shall adhere to any fire restrictions that might be ordered on the public lands over the life of the MPO. Altar Resources shall report any fires promptly.

Appeals:

This decision may be protested or appealed under the procedures outlined in BLM Handbook 8720-1 Chapter IV (8) and 43 CFR Part 4 and the enclosed Form 1842-1.

/S/ Brian Bellew
Brian Bellew, Field Manager

May 22, 2013
Date

Attachments: Finding of No Significant Impact dated May 20, 2013
Environmental Assessment – DOI-BLM-AZ-G020-2013-0012-EA