



United States Department of the Interior
BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT
Burley Field Office
15 East 200 South
Burley, ID 83318
(208) 677-6600



In Reply Refer To:
3809 (IDT020) (P)
DOI-BLM-ID-T020-2012-0026-DNA

May 20, 2013

Dear Interested Parties:

The Bureau of Land Management (BLM) Twin Falls District, Burley Field Office, is soliciting comments, concerns, or issues specific to a proposal (Plans of Operations Modification) received from Sawtooth Stone LLC (Sawtooth) for the quarrying of "Oakley Stone," a locatable mineral. This Modification outlines additional mining activities Sawtooth wishes to conduct on an unpatented mining claim located under the 1872 Mining Law (30 U.S.C. 22 et seq.).

The area of the proposed activities is located in Cassia County approximately 5.5 miles south of Oakley, ID in Boise Meridian, T. 14 S. , R. 22 E., Section 34. The quarries are located on the north end of Middle Mountain, an area that is known for production of Oakley Stone, a Micaceous Quarzite, used as a building material. Mining of Oakley Stone has occurred on Middle Mountain for over 50 years.

Two environmental assessments (EAs) have been written to analyze the effects of mining in the area of the proposed action. A Document of NEPA Adequacy (DNA) is currently being prepared to determine whether these EAs adequately analyzed effects that could occur from the new proposed action, determine whether any circumstances have changed since the EAs were written, and to identify any needed Conditions of Approval (COAs) for the protection of the environment.

The Scoping/Information package for this project can be found at the following website: https://www.blm.gov/epl-front-office/eplanning/nepa/nepa_register.do. Your comments, concerns, and issues regarding this Plan Modification are requested. Comments made on this proposal would be most helpful if they are received on or before June 20, 2013 and are directly relevant to the proposal and project area. Feedback may be accepted beyond this date, however, such comments may be considered secondary to comments received in a timely manner.

If you have difficulties obtaining this document from the internet, to request a hardcopy, or for questions and concerns, please contact Steve Lubinski, Geologist, Burley Field Office, at (208) 677-6667, or via email at slubinski@blm.gov.

Sincerely,
/s/ 5/20/2013
Michael C. Courtney/
Burley Field Manager

cc:

City of Oakley

Oakley Mountain Corp.

Larry Scrivanich

Idaho Conservation League

Idaho Department of Lands

Idaho Department of Fish and Game

Pickett Ranch and Sheep

G5 Land Company

Jake Vawser

Cassia County Federal Land Advisory Group

Danny Cooper

Estelle Cooper

Scoping/Information Package
Sawtooth #4 Plan of Operations Modification
NEPA # DOI-BLM-ID-T020-2013-0026-DNA

Introduction

The information in this package summarizes a Bureau of Land Management (BLM), Burley Field Office action in response to a proposal (Plans of Operations Modification), by Sawtooth Stone (Sawtooth) for the mining of “Oakley Stone.” The Plan of Operations (POO) Modification outlines mining activities that the proponent wishes to conduct on an unpatented mining claim located under the 1872 Mining Law (30 U.S.C. 22 et seq).

The purpose of this report is to inform potentially interested and affected parties of Sawtooth’s proposals, and to invite comments to assist with the review of the Proposed Action in accordance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and other relevant Federal and State laws and regulations. In the past five years, two environmental assessments (ID-220-2007-EA-3574 and ID-220-2007-EA-3573) have been written to analyze the effects of mining in the area of the proposed action. A Document of NEPA Adequacy (DNA) is currently being prepared to determine whether these EAs adequately analyzed effects that could occur from the new proposed action, determine whether any circumstances have changed since the EAs were written, and to identify any needed Conditions of Approval (COAs) for the protection of the environment.

Comments received in response to this solicitation will be used to identify potential environmental issues related to the proposed POOs.

Location

Sawtooth’s proposed new mining activities would occur on BLM managed lands in Cassia County located approximately seven miles south of Oakley, ID (See Map 1). All of the proposed operations would occur in Section 34, T. 14 S. , R. 22 E., Boise Meridian. (See Map 2). The project area is located on the north end of Middle Mountain, which drains into the Goose Creek Basin. This area is open to mining, mineral leasing, and mineral sales under the Cassia Resource Management Plan (RMP).

Background

Oakley Stone is a Micaceous Quartzite that is foliated, allowing it to be split along the planes of foliation and used as building stone. Oakley Stone is a locatable mineral under the 3809 regulations as it has been determined to be of “uncommon variety.” It has been mined for over 70 years in the Middle Mountain area.

Purpose and Need for the Proposed Action

Mining operations on unpatented mining claims must comply with Title 43 of the Code of Federal Regulations (43 CFR), Group 3800, “Mining Claims under the General Mining Laws” and Subpart 3715, “Use and Occupancy Under the Mining Laws. Sawtooth’s proposal falls under 43 CFR 3809.430, “Modifications of Plans of Operations, as well as, 43 CFR 3809.401, “Operations Conducted Under Plans of Operations.” For proposals subject to Subpart 4809.401, the BLM must complete the environmental review of the proponent’s POO as required under NEPA and conduct any necessary consultations prior to issuing a decision on the proposal.

Sawtooth’s proposed operations must comply with the Federal Land Policy and Management Act of 1976 (FLPMA) which requires that an action under consideration be in conformance with the applicable BLM land-use plan and be consistent with other Federal, State, Local, and Tribal policies to the maximum extent possible. The applicable BLM land-use plan is the Cassia Resource Management Plan (RMP), approved in January 1985. Middle Mountain falls under management area 4 in the RMP which states on page 19, Objective E is, “to facilitate orderly development of the building (Oakley) stone resource.”

Proposed Action (Map 2)

Sawtooth’s proposed action is to open a new 10 acre quarry (Pit #2) that would facilitate the mining of two additional colors of stone. The site would be accessed via an existing road leading from the existing quarry (Pit #1) northeast to Pit #2. Heavy equipment, including tracked excavators and front end loaders would move the rock from the working quarry face, to an area for the workers to split and palletize the stone. Once palletized the stone would be stored on-site until needed to fill customers orders. Pursuant to 3809.411(c), the full POO Modification is available for review at the Burley Field Office.

Preliminary Issues

Issues are generated through the public scoping process, a review of the RMP, and/or generated from a need for compliance with laws or regulations. Preliminary issues that have been identified through internal scoping include:

- Air Quality: Fugitive dust, exhaust, and smoke created during the completion of the Proposed Action could affect air quality and may require measures to avoid or reduce adverse impacts on air quality.
- Human Health and Safety: Measures are needed to prevent and/or control safe public access in the project areas during completion of the Proposed Action.
- Migratory Birds: Measures are needed to avoid or reduce potential disturbance to migratory bird species and their habitat during completion of the Proposed POO Modification.
- Non-Native Invasive and Noxious Species: Measures to prevent and/or control the weed spread into the project area will be incorporated into the Proposed Action.
- Special Status Species: Sage Grouse is a candidate species and is present adjacent to the project area and impacts to it and other BLM sensitive species will be assessed.
- Wastes: The proposed activities and occupation have the potential to generate both hazardous and solid waste.

Public Input Invited

Your comments are specifically requested for this project. Comments would be most helpful if they are received by June 20, 2013 and are directly relevant to the area. The BLM may accept public feedback outside of established public involvement time frames. However, such comments may be considered secondary to comments received in a timely manner and may only be assessed to determine if they identify concerns that would substantially alter the assumptions or analyses that will be presented in the subsequent EA.

Written comments must be submitted to the BLM, Burley Field Office, 15 East 200 South, Burley, ID 83318. The office business hours for submitting hand-delivered comments are 7:45 am through 4:30 pm, Monday through Friday, excluding holidays. Electronic comments must be submitted in a format such as an email message, plain text (.txt), rich text format (.rtf), Word (.doc), or portable document format (.pdf) to id_burley_fo@blm.gov. E-mails submitted to e-mail addresses other than the one listed, in other formats than those listed, or containing viruses will be rejected. To be most helpful, comments sent electronically should include the title of this project in the subject line. Please identify whether you are submitting comments as an individual or as the designated spokesperson on behalf of an organization. Issues that are outside the scope of this DNA will not be addressed at this planning level.

Before including your address, phone number, e-mail address, or other personal identifying information in your comment, be advised that your entire comment, including your personal identifying information, may be made publicly available at any time. While you can ask us in your comment to withhold your personal identifying information from public review, we cannot guarantee that we will be able to do so.

The primary contact for questions and comments for this project is Steve Lubinski, Geologist, Burley Field Office, (208) 677-6667, or email at slubinski@blm.gov.

2 Enclosures

- 1 - Map 1 - Project Location Map
- 2 - Map 2 – Project Area Map

Sawtooth #4 Plan of Operations Modification



