

**UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT
IDAHO FALLS DISTRICT
CHALLIS FIELD OFFICE
Categorical Exclusion**

CE Number: DOI-BLM-ID-I030-2013-0005-CE

Title of Action: Challis Field Office Abandoned Mine Closures

Location: Challis Field Office Area, Custer County, Idaho

Preparer: Carol Hearne, SRMS

Date of Preparation: August 2013

BACKGROUND

The Bureau of Land Management (BLM) has an active Abandoned Mine Lands (AML) program, which is responsible for identifying, assessing and remediating physical safety hazards posed by abandoned mine openings located on public lands managed by the BLM. More than 40 such hazards have been remediated by the BLM in the Challis Field Office area since 2007. Five similar hazards in the Bayhorse Mining District have been identified and proposed for remediation. Two of the sites, Bayhorse #68 and the Sulphide Prospect, are located near Clayton, Idaho and can be easily accessed from Idaho State Highway 75. The remaining three features, also easily accessed, are part of the Barton Mine located adjacent to the historic Bayhorse Townsite and Bayhorse State Park.

All mine openings are considered abandoned regardless of the presence of a mining claim, unless they have been specifically addressed by a surface management notice or plan of operations with an appropriate financial guarantee (43 CFR 3809). In all AML closures, the outer (entrance) areas of the openings are closed to prevent entry, but any and all underground workings remain available for future exploration and development.

DESCRIPTION OF PROPOSED ACTION

The Bureau of Land Management (BLM) proposes to close five abandoned mine openings within the Challis Field Office (CFO) area, Custer County, Idaho. Proposed closures include:

IDI03000068 Bayhorse #68

Location: T11N R18E NE/4 Section 28 County: Custer

USGS Map: Bald Mountain, ID 1963

Remediation Description: Plug adit (designated A1 by AML staff) with polyurethane foam (PUF). Cap PUF by hand with at least 18" of dirt and rock found adjacent to adit.

ID00800013 Sulphide Mine

Location: T11N R18E NW/4 Section 29 County: Custer

USGS Map: Bald Mountain, ID 1963

Remediation Description: Plug adit (designated A2 by AML staff) with PUF. Cap PUF by hand with at least 18” of dirt and rock found adjacent to adit.

Barton Mine, Bayhorse Mining District

Location: T12N R18E E/2 Section 3 County: Custer

USGS Map: Bayhorse, ID 1963

Remediation Description: Plug open adit (designated A13) and collapsed stope (designated stope O1) with polyurethane foam (PUF). Cap PUF by hand with at least 18” of dirt and rock found adjacent to holes. Collapse wood ‘roof’ cribbing of adit (designated A15) by hand to mimic natural collapse and remediate safety hazard.

See the attached map entitled “Exhibit A” for depiction of specific mine opening locations.

All closures would be accomplished using hand tools. No machinery would be used. Access to all sites would be on foot from already existing roads and trails. Work would occur only on previously disturbed ground. Closures at Bayhorse #68 (adit A1) and the Sulphide Mine (adit A2) would be accomplished in one day, and the closures at the Barton Mine would be completed in approximately two days.

CONSULTATION and COORDINATION

A summary description of the proposed project was made available to the public on the Idaho BLM’s ePlanning website in August 2013, and the public was given the opportunity to provide comments or consult on the action.

FINDING

I have considered the environmental effects of the proposed action and find that it is a categorical exclusion as outlined in Departmental Manual 516 DM 11.9, J.(8) which states “Installation of minor devices to protect human life (e.g., grates across mines)” and Departmental Manual 516 DM 11.9, G.(4) which states “Placement of recreational, special designation or information signs, visitor registers, kiosks and portable sanitation devices.” This action does not qualify as an exception under 516 DM 2., Appendix 2; the proposed action has been reviewed and none of the extraordinary circumstances described in 516 DM 2, Appendix 2 apply.

DECISION AND RATIONALE FOR THE DECISION

It is my decision to implement the proposed action as described above to close five abandoned mine openings in the Challis Field Office area using approved funding sources. Such closures are authorized under the authority of the Federal Land and Policy Management Act of 1976, as amended (43 USC 1701 *et seq*), and are included in the BLM’s Abandoned Mine Lands strategic objectives, i.e., protect public safety and reduce liabilities by eliminating or reducing hazards posed by abandoned mines (BLM Manual 3720.03).

All closures would be accomplished using hand tools. No machinery would be used. Access to all sites would be on foot from already existing roads and trails. Work would occur only on previously disturbed ground. Closures at Bayhorse #68 and the Sulphide Mine would be accomplished in one day, and the closures at the Barton Mine would be completed in approximately two days. Wildfire prevention measures would include having multiple fire extinguishers readily available during on-site work.

No waste rock piles with deleterious elements or the potential for acid rock drainage are associated with the proposed closures. There are no concerns necessitating sedimentation or erosion control structures, as no water flow from any of the mine openings has been noted. Closure sites would be posted with abandoned mine lands warning signs as appropriate.

No complete closures using polyurethane foam would occur if mine openings are found to involve underground workings over 60 feet in length to protect potential bat habitat. Post-closure periodic noxious weed assessments would be completed at each site. Any noxious weeds found during a post-closure assessment would be treated in accordance with the Challis-Salmon Integrated Weed Control Program Environmental Assessment and associated consultation documents.

No work activities would take place within a 300 feet buffer area from any fish bearing perennial stream or Riparian Habitat Conservation Area (RHCA). Additionally, no work activities would occur within a 150 feet buffer area from any perennial stream not bearing fish or intermittent stream channel. No staging of equipment or materials, vehicle or equipment refueling, and fuel storage would occur within the defined buffer areas. Spill containment kits of appropriate size for the equipment used would be available at the sites during work periods as appropriate. All closure work would be done by hand, and would take place in a manner that would not introduce sediment or other material directly or indirectly into a stream channel or surface water. All closure activities would take place in upland habitat that would have "No Effect" to riparian or aquatic habitat, or any aquatic species.

Closure tactics for isolated adit openings would include recessing the closure and leaving any extant adit portal components intact. This procedure would retain the visual components of the adit, while rendering the underground workings unavailable to the casual observer.

If cultural resources are discovered during any stage of project implementation, these would be immediately reported to the Challis Field Office archaeologist. All operations would cease, and an evaluation of the discovery would be made by a qualified archaeologist to determine actions necessary to prevent the loss of significant cultural or scientific values. Consultation with the State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) would be coordinated by the Challis Field Office archaeologist. Operations may recommence only when concurrence from the SHPO regarding appropriate mitigation measures is received and mitigation has been adequately completed.

The proposed action will reduce threats to public safety, as well as liabilities of the BLM, mining claimants, and former mining operators. The proposed action is in conformance with applicable land use plans. There will be no meaningful impacts to mineral resources as only the entrances of the mine workings will be closed. The remainder of the mine workings will not be disturbed

by the proposed action and will, therefore, remain relatively accessible for future mineral exploration and development.

Preparer signature _____ Date

Challis Field Manager _____ Date

APPEALS INFORMATION

Any person or organization who is party to and adversely affected by this decision may file an appeal to the Board of Land Appeals. The process for appeal is fully described in 43 Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) Subtitle A, Part 4, Subpart E.

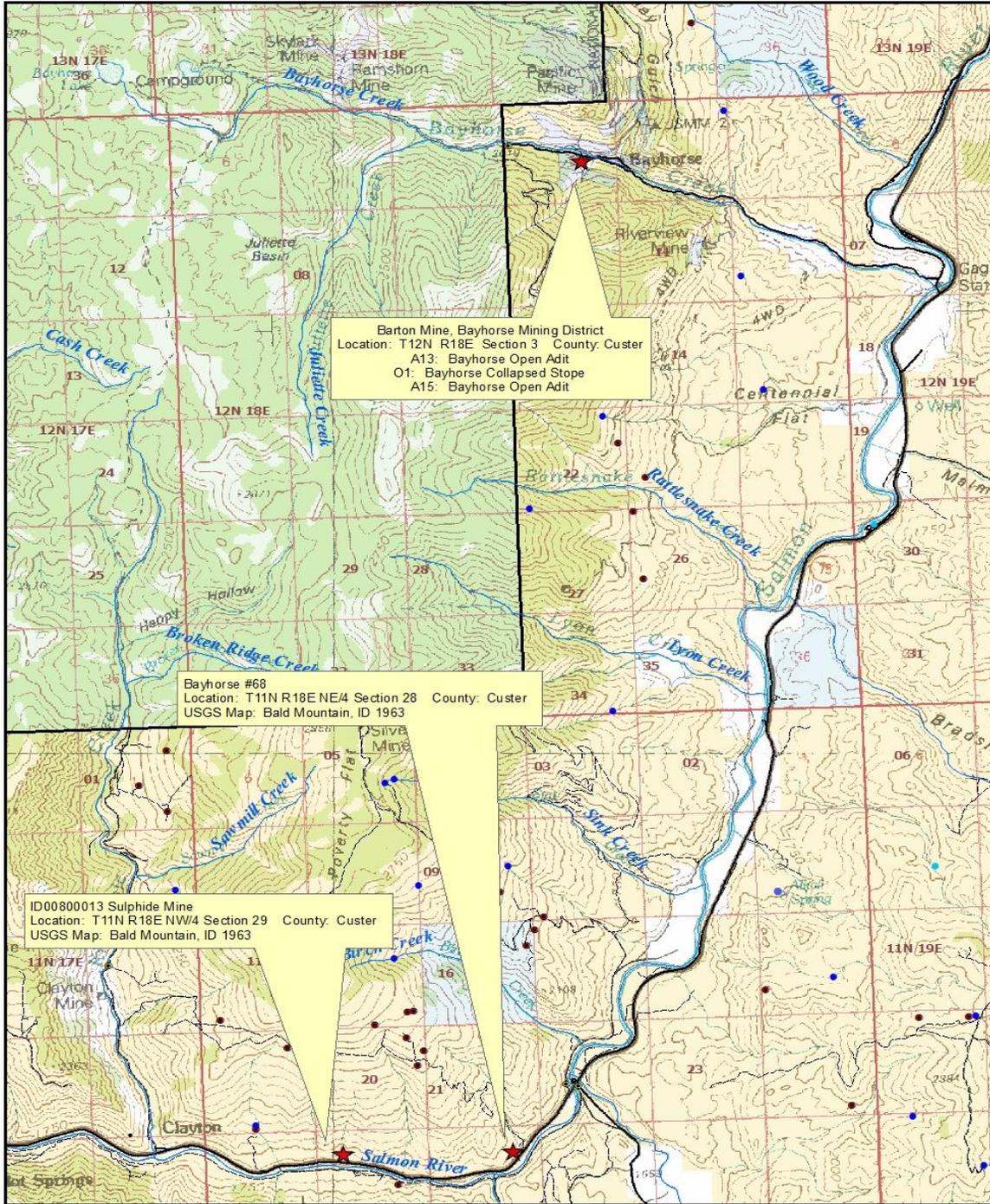
Extraordinary Circumstances Requiring the Preparation of an EA or EIS

The action described in categorical exclusion (CE) #_DOI-BLM-ID-I030-2013-0005-CE has been reviewed to determine if any of the following extraordinary circumstances listed below apply, as listed in the Departmental NEPA regulations (43 CFR 46.215).

Extraordinary Circumstance

- 2.1 Have significant impacts on public health or safety
- 2.2 Have significant impacts on such natural resources and unique geographic characteristics as historic or cultural resources; park, recreation or refuge lands; wilderness areas; wild or scenic rivers; national natural landmarks; sole or principal drinking water aquifers; prime farmlands; wetlands (Executive Order 11990); floodplains (Executive Order 11988); national monuments; migratory birds; and other ecologically significant or critical areas.
- 2.3 Have highly controversial environmental effects or involve unresolved conflicts concerning alternative uses of available resources [NEPA section 102(2)(E)].
- 2.4 Have highly uncertain and potentially significant environmental effects or involve unique or unknown environmental risks.
- 2.5 Establish a precedent for future action or represent a decision in principle about future actions with potentially significant environmental effects.
- 2.6 Have a direct relationship to other actions with individually insignificant but cumulatively significant environmental effects.
- 2.7 Have significant impacts on properties listed or eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places as determined by either the bureau or office.
- 2.8 Have significant impacts on species listed or proposed to be listed on the List of Endangered or Threatened Species, or have significant impacts on designated critical habitat for these species.
- 2.9 Violate a Federal law, or a State, local, or tribal law or requirement imposed for the protection of the environment.
- 2.10 Have a disproportionately high and adverse effect on low income or minority populations (Executive Order 12898).
- 2.11 Limit access to and ceremonial use of Indian sacred sites on Federal lands by Indian religious practitioners or significantly adversely affect the physical integrity of such sacred sites (Executive Order 13007).
- 2.12 Contribute to the introduction, continued existence, or spread of noxious weeds or non-native invasive species known to occur in the area or actions that may promote the introduction, growth, or expansion of the range of such species (Federal Noxious Weed Control Act and Executive Order 13112).

**EXHIBIT A: Challis Field Office Abandoned Mine Closures
FY2013 Proposed Adit Closures**



Barton Mine, Bayhorse Mining District
Location: T12N R18E Section 3 County: Custer
A13: Bayhorse Open Adit
O1: Bayhorse Collapsed Stope
A15: Bayhorse Open Adit

Bayhorse #68
Location: T11N R18E NE4 Section 28 County: Custer
USGS Map: Bald Mountain, ID 1963

ID00800013 Sulphide Mine
Location: T11N R18E NW4 Section 29 County: Custer
USGS Map: Bald Mountain, ID 1963

Legend

- LINEAR DISTURBANCE
- - - PRIMITIVE ROAD
- ROAD
- - - TRAIL
- STREAMS

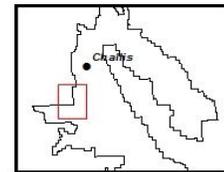
Surface Management Agency (Challis Field Office)

Surface Management Agency

- Bureau of Land Management
- Private
- State
- Idaho Dept of Fish & Game
- State Park
- Forest Service
- Other



The sources of the data are from Idaho-BLM Corporate Data, and the USGS. No warranty is made by the Bureau of Land Management (BLM). The accuracy, reliability, or completeness of these data for individual use or aggregate use with other data is not guaranteed.



0 5 10 20 30 Miles