

U.S. Department of the Interior
Bureau of Land Management
Cottonwood Field Office
1 Butte Drive
Cottonwood, Idaho 83522

DECISION RECORD

*2013 Cottonwood FO – AML Physical Hazards Mitigation
DOI-BLM-ID-C020-2013-0011-CX*

1. Background

One focus of the Bureau of Land Management's (BLM) Abandoned Mine Lands (AML) program is inventorying and mitigating (closing) abandoned mine openings (adits and shafts) on public lands that pose a threat to public health and safety. The BLM considers openings abandoned when they are not specifically addressed by a surface management "Notice" or "Plan of Operations" with an appropriate financial guarantee (bond) per Title 43, Code of Federal Regulations, §3809.300 or §3809.400. This is a yearly effort in the Coeur d'Alene District Office which will continue during the foreseeable future as time and funding allow.

2. Decision

It is my decision to close or mitigate 12 inventoried hazardous abandoned mine openings on public land that pose a threat to public health and safety. The sites are in Idaho County, about 2 miles north of Lucile, ID along the west bank of the Salmon River. The openings would be closed by either backfilling with natural material (rock/dirt) or polyurethane foam (PUF); or, installation of a bat grate or a bat gate. (See attached Categorical Exclusion Documentation.)

Project specific design measures are provide in the Detailed Project Description included with the Categorical Exclusion Documentation; and, in the attached Memorandum signed by Craig Johnson (Fisheries/Wildlife Biologist) on August 26, 2013 (Subject: 2013 Cottonwood Abandoned Mine Closures – 12 Adits at Butcher Bar). These measures will be adhered to during project implementation.

3. Authority

Such closures are authorized in accordance with the Federal Land and Policy Management Act of 1976, as amended (43 USC 1701 et seq), and are included in the AML program strategic objectives; i.e., to protect public safety and reduce liabilities by eliminating or reducing hazards posed by abandoned mines (BLM Manual 3720.03).

4. Rationale

This action would improve public safety, and is in compliance with the above authorities and the 2009 Cottonwood Resource Management Plan. In making this determination, I considered that the project has been planned to protect public safety and reduce liabilities posed at hazardous

mine sites and none of the proposed mitigation would affect the potential for future development of mineral resources. As described in the attached Categorical Exclusion Documentation, this action is one that the BLM has determined will not have a significant effect on the quality of the human environment, and there are no exceptional circumstances.

5. Coordination and Consultation

Consultation with the State Historic Preservation Officer concluded no historic properties would be adversely affected.

6. Protest and Appeal

This decision may be appealed to the Interior Board of Land Appeals, Office of the Secretary, in accordance with the regulations contained in 43 CFR, Part 4, and Form 1842-1. If an appeal is taken, your notice of appeal must be filed in writing at the BLM Cottonwood Field Office (address; 1 Butte Drive, Cottonwood, Idaho, 83522) within 30 days from receipt of this decision. The appellant has the burden of showing that the decision appealed from is in error.

Pursuant to 43 CFR 4.21, if you wish to file a petition for a stay of the effectiveness of this decision, during the time that your appeal is being reviewed by the Board, the petition for a stay must accompany your notice of appeal. Copies of the notice of appeal and petition for a stay must also be submitted to each party named in this decision and to the Interior Board of Land Appeals and to the appropriate Office of the Solicitor (see 43 CFR 4.413), at the same time the original documents are filed with this office. If you request a stay, you have the burden of proof to demonstrate that a stay should be granted.

Except as otherwise provided by law or other pertinent regulation, a petition for a stay of a decision pending appeal shall show sufficient justification based on the following standards:

- A. The relative harm to the parties if the stay is granted or denied,
- B. The likelihood of the appellant's success on the merits,
- C. The likelihood of immediate and irreparable harm if the stay is not granted, and
- D. Whether the public interest favors granting the stay.

/s/

9/3/13

Will Runnoe
Field Manager

Date

Attachments:

- Categorical Exclusion Documentation w/ attachments (1 and 2)
- August 26, 2013 Memorandum signed by Craig Johnson w/ attachment (TES Analysis and Clearance)

U.S. Department of the Interior
Bureau of Land Management
Cottonwood Field Office
1 Butte Drive
Cottonwood, ID 83522

Categorical Exclusion Documentation
2013 Cottonwood FO – AML Physical Hazards Mitigation
DOI-BLM-ID-C020-2013-0011-CX

1. Proposed Action

The BLM proposes to close, or mitigate, 12 hazardous abandoned mine openings on public land that pose a threat to public health and safety. The sites are in Idaho County, about 2 miles north of Lucile, ID along the west bank of the Salmon River. The openings would be closed by either backfilling with natural material (rock/dirt) or polyurethane foam (PUF); or, installation of a bat grate or a bat gate. A detailed description of the work done prior to initiating, during implementation, and after completion of the closure efforts is provided as Attachment 1.

2. Location

Idaho County: T. 26 N., R. 1 E., Section 26, B.M. (See General Location Map; Attachment 2.)

3. Land Use Plan Conformance

In accordance with the Federal Land Policy and Management Act (FLPMA), this proposed action has been reviewed for conformance with the Cottonwood Resource Management Plan (RMP), approved December, 2009. It is consistent with the following decisions from the RMP:

Social and Economic Conditions, Public Safety (pg 57):

Objective PS - 1.3; Pursue the reduction of hazards, particularly at abandoned mines...on public lands, to ensure they are safe for employees and the public.

Action PS – 1.3.1; Correct physical safety hazards...on public lands.

4. Compliance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA)

The proposed action is categorically excluded from further documentation under NEPA in accordance with 516 DM 11.9 J.8. This exclusion is for “Installation of minor devices to protect human life (e.g., grates across open mine entrances)”. Application of this categorical exclusion is appropriate in this situation because there are no extraordinary circumstances having effects that may significantly affect the environment. The proposed action has been reviewed, and none of the extraordinary circumstances described in 516 DM 2, Appendix C, exist.

/s/

9/3/13

Will Runnoe
Field Manager

Date

Attachments:

- 1) Detailed Description of the Proposed Action.
- 2) General Location Map

Coeur d'Alene District Office - AML Physical Hazards Mitigation Detailed Description

Proposed Action:

One focus of the Bureau of Land Management's (BLM) Abandoned Mine Lands (AML) program is inventorying and mitigating (closing) abandoned mine openings (adits and shafts) on public lands that pose a threat to public health and safety. The BLM considers openings abandoned when they are not specifically addressed by a surface management "Notice" or "Plan of Operations" with an appropriate financial guarantee (bond), regardless of the presence of an active mining claim. (See Title 43, Code of Federal Regulations, §3809.300 & §3809.400.) This is a yearly effort in the Coeur d'Alene District Office which will continue during the foreseeable future as time and funding allow.

Openings are closed by either backfilling with natural material (rock/dirt) or polyurethane foam (PUF); or, installation of a bat grate or a bat gate. Only the outer area (entrance) of the mine opening is closed; therefore, all of the underground workings essentially remain available for future exploration and development. Examples of the closure types utilized to mitigate the identified hazard are provided in the following pictures. The type of closure depends on the type of opening, the stability of an opening, and wildlife habitat within the workings. Bat grates or gates are utilized whenever meaningful bat habitat is present and the physical condition of the opening allows for a safe and secure installation. If PUF is used, the PUF is covered with 12 to 18 inches of soil and rock to camouflage the hole and protect the PUF from sunlight and fire.

The majority of mine closures (backfilling or grating/gating) are completed by the BLM's Idaho Mine Closure Team (IMCT). The closure work is typically completed during the summer/fall months and usually requires one to two days per opening. Prior to implementing the closure, the IMCT Lead and the Project Lead (Mining Engineer, Coeur d'Alene Field Office) do a reconnaissance of the identified site(s) to put together the closure plan (i.e., when, what closure type, how accessed, etc.). The IMCT concept has been in existence for several years and they complete dozens of closures throughout the state each year. As such, the IMCT has become very efficient and effective at completing the closures with very little, or no, impacts to the environment.

If a private contractor is required to complete the task, then the IMCT Lead will be on site as the Project Inspector (PI) during operations.

Adit backfilled with rock/dirt



Before



After (prior to re-seeding)

Shaft filled with Polyurethane Foam (PUF)

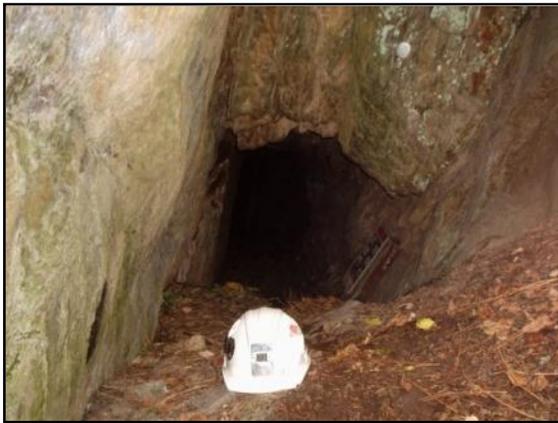


Before



After (prior to soil coverage & re-seeding)

Adit with Bat Grate (can be fitted with a removable bar and lock)



Before



After

Adit with Bat Grate Culvert (can be fitted with a removable bar and lock)



Before



After

Adit with Bat Gate (one variation)



Gate Closed



Gate Open

The following discussion provides the work done after the mine opening has been located and identified for closure.

Pre-Closure:

The BLM completes an archaeological inventory on any abandoned mine openings, buildings, and features (as defined below) prior to closure to comply with Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA). Openings meeting the following criteria would be excluded from project-specific Section 106 of the NHPA consultation with the Idaho State Historic Preservation Office [SHPO]:

1. Openings not associated with fragile or unavoidable historic structures (including stacked rock features, historic trails, roads, ditches, or collapsed or partially standing buildings) or associated historic features (including pieces of mining equipment or historic refuse scatters).
2. Adits where closure would be made using PUF and/or stacked native materials, with the closure to be recessed so as to maintain the general impression of the adit, without disturbance to any associated historic structures, buildings or features.
3. Adits where closure would be made using gating, where the gating would be recessed so as to maintain the general impression of the adit, without disturbance to any associated historic structures, buildings or features.
4. Shafts where closure would be made using PUF or grating, where closure would be accomplished without disturbance to any associated historic structures, buildings or features.

If a cultural (historic or prehistoric object or site) and/or paleontological resource is discovered during completion of closure work, the BLM will cease operations in the immediate area and evaluate the discovery to determine actions necessary to prevent the loss of significant cultural or scientific values. The BLM will consult with the SHPO and, if appropriate, American Indian tribes. The BLM will recommence operations only after receiving concurrence from the SHPO regarding appropriate mitigation measures, and implementation of these measures. Following appropriate Section 106 NHPA consideration by the BLM, non-native items less than 50 years old (e.g., solid waste) will be removed from the sites if deemed necessary.

Coeur d'Alene District Office - AML Physical Hazards Mitigation Detailed Description

The BLM inventories all openings identified for closure for the presence of bats. These inventories are typically an external survey by a wildlife biologist using acoustic detector(s), night vision goggles and/or mist net(s). Depending on the size of the underground workings, some internal surveys may occur. If an opening is being used by bats and conditions allow for a safe and secure installation, then a bat friendly closure is used. However, if installation of the bat friendly closure cannot be completed safely or secured properly, then an alternate method (backfilling) will be completed after an effort has been made to clear the workings of bats.

The BLM inventories each site for the presence of endangered or sensitive species, both plant and animal. If identified, then site specific measures are developed and implemented during closure efforts to either eliminate or mitigate any disruption to the species, or species habitat.

Closure Work:

Depending on the type and location of an identified opening, the equipment used to complete closures typically consists of trackhoes, backhoes, bulldozers, support pick-ups, ATVs, welder, drills, and cutting saw. Welding of bat closures may occur on-site in some locations, but in an area free from vegetation to prevent wildfire. Multiple fire extinguishers are readily available and used during site work in the event that any flammable material is ignited. If necessary, bat closures can be pre-fabricated using information gathered during site reconnaissance.

The amount of surface disturbance created during closure work is typically less than one-quarter acre. Any surface disturbance at the project site created during project completion is contoured to blend with the adjacent topography and re-seeded with an appropriate seed mixture. All efforts are made to not alter the flow of water at any site, including adit drainage; and, waste rock piles with deleterious elements, or the potential for acid rock drainage, are not disturbed. All mitigated sites are posted as appropriate with abandoned mine land warning signs.

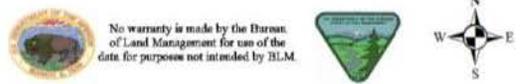
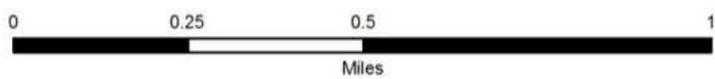
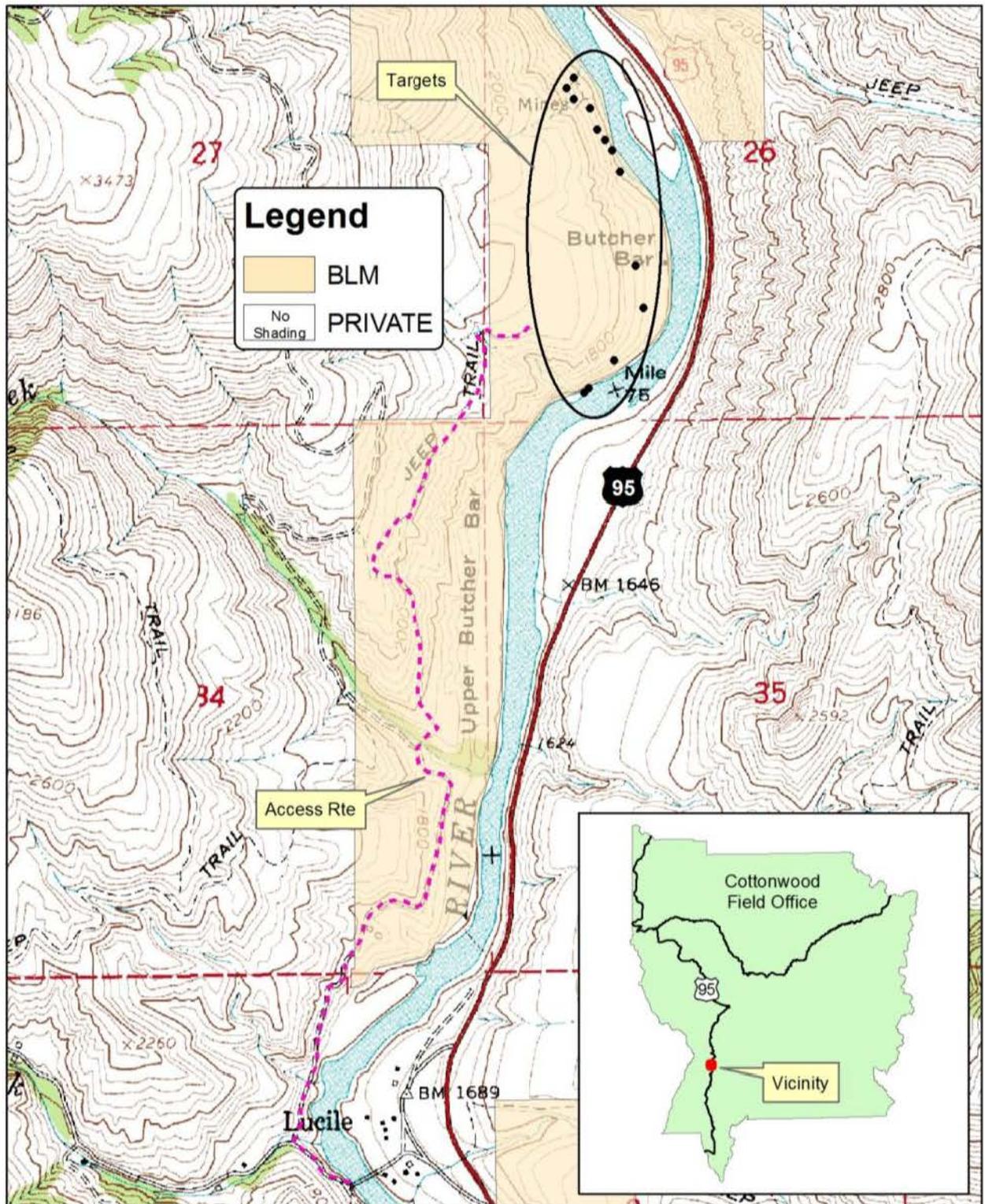
No work occurs in riparian areas, including the staging of equipment or materials, unless site specific resource clearances are completed. Equipment refueling and fuel storage occurs at least 100 feet away from surface water and outside of riparian areas. Any petroleum products in excess of 50 gallons are stored in constructed containment structures with an impervious liner of volume equal to or larger than the storage container. Spill containment kits of appropriate size for the equipment used are available at the sites during work periods.

Sedimentation and erosion control structures are used as appropriate to ensure that no meaningful amounts of sediment loss occur at the sites. Unless identified and cleared for removal, no structures are altered. Because the closure type is placed within the first fifteen to twenty feet of the underground workings, the workings beyond this point are left un-altered. Vehicles or heavy equipment used at the sites are washed to remove noxious plants/seeds if they have been used off of maintained roads prior to entering the site.

Post-Closure:

Once a site has been mitigated, it will be monitored on a pre-determined schedule to ensure the closure type continues to work as desired. Should a site begin to re-open due to natural causes or vandalism, it will be placed back on the list of sites needing mitigation and the process will be repeated. If re-vegetation issues are identified, measures will be developed and implemented (i.e., spraying for weeds, additional seeding, etc.) to assist with re-establishment of desired species.

General Location Map; 2013 Cottonwood FO - AML Physical Hazards Mitigation



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT
Cottonwood Field Office
1 Butte Drive
Cottonwood, Idaho 83522

IN REPLY REFER TO:
6514 (IDC020)

August 26, 2013

Memorandum

To: Will Runnoe, Field Manager
Scott Sanner, Mining Engineer

From: Craig Johnson, Fisheries/Wildlife Biologist

Subject: 2013 Cottonwood Abandoned Mine Closures – 12 Adits at Butcher Bar

In regards to the referenced 2013 Cottonwood Abandoned Mine Closures for 12 adits at Butcher Bar, the following is submitted. Attached is a completed Special Status Species Clearance Form for the project. The 12 adit openings would be closed by either backfilling with natural material (rock/dirt) or polyurethane foam (PUF); or, installation of a bat grate or a bat gate. Only the outer (entrance) areas of the openings would be closed. Therefore, essentially all of the underground workings would remain available for future exploration and development. The adits are located in T. 26 N., R. 1 E., Sec. 26 (west side Salmon River – Butcher Bar area). See project file for project specific information and a project map.

Bat surveys of the 12 adits was completed during 2009, by Rita Dixon, Idaho Department of Fish and Game (see attached map). While conducting the survey, bat use of three of the adits were documented (adits 6, 7, and 9), and significant bat use was documented for adits 6 and 7.

Following are project recommendations for the project:

1. A temporary “bat curtain” will be installed in front of adits 6, 7, and 9 a minimum of one week prior to scheduled closure (see attached map). Because the bat curtain will be temporary, it is recommended that “chicken wire” be used and will be secured with installation of a fence post and/or use of heavy gauge wire/stakes. Notify the Area Biologist a minimum of two weeks prior to when closure of adits 6, 7, and 9 would occur.
2. Consider installation of a culvert-bat gate/grate for adits 6 and 7, which is dependent on site specific analysis. A bat gate (locked) is preferred to facilitate future bat monitoring. Because of the unstable adit substrate, safety concerns, and logistic constraints; bat gates may not be installed in adits 6 and 7. When closures would be conducted, evaluation would take place to determine feasibility of installing a bat gate. Because these mines receive significant use by bats; prior to closures (backfill of adit or bat grate),

recommendation #1 above should still be implemented for adits 6 and 7 to insure that no bat entrapment would occur if backfilling is conducted.

3. Adits 6 and 7 should have a 6-8" diameter heavy duty PVC pipe inserted to provide for rodent and snake access. Many of the adits have fair to heavy use by rodents and snakes (e.g., western rattlesnake), and these adits provide the most suitable habitat.
4. If needed (e.g., excessive soil/vegetation disturbance occurs from bat closure), seed and mulch (weed seed free) disturbed areas with desired species (see Table 1).

Table 1. Recommended Seed Mix for Restoration of Butcher Bar Adit Closures

Species (Common Name)	Scientific Name	Rate of Application (Lbs./acre)	Percent of Seed Mix
Riparian wheatgrass	<i>Agropyron riparium</i>	9 lbs.	50.0
Big bluegrass "Sherman"	<i>Poa ampla</i>	2 lbs.	11.1
Sheep fescue "Covar"	<i>Festuca ovina</i>	2 lbs.	11.1
Sand dropseed	<i>Sporobolus cryptandrus</i>	2 lbs.	11.1
Annual rye	<i>Lolium multiflorum</i>	3 lbs.	10.7
TOTAL		18 lbs.	100%

¹Restoration will include seeding and mulching (certified weed seed free straw mulch).

5. To minimize any potential bat disturbance, conduct closures during late summer or early fall, after cessation of maternity activities and before the onset of hibernation.

If you have any questions or need additional information please contact me. Thank you for providing me the opportunity to review and comment on the proposed project.


Craig Johnson
Fisheries/Wildlife Biologist

Attachment:
TES Analysis and Clearance