

**U.S. Department of the Interior
Bureau of Land Management**

**Finding of No Significant Impact
DOI-BLM-NV-L020-2013-0017-EA
March 13, 2014**

Meadow Bay Gold Corporation, Atlanta Mine
Exploratory Drilling Operations
NVN - 091367

Lincoln County, Nevada

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UNITED STATES
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT
SCHELL FIELD OFFICE

INTRODUCTION

I have reviewed the Final Environmental Assessment (EA) (DOI-BLM-NV-L020-2013-0017-EA) for *Meadow Bay Gold Corporation's (Meadow Bay's) Exploratory Drilling Operations at Atlanta Mine*, dated February 2014, and considered the proposed action and the applicant-committed environmental protection measures (ACEPMs) identified in the EA.

I have also considered the Council on Environmental Quality's (CEQ) criteria for significance (40 CFR 1508.27), both with regard to the context and the intensity of impacts described in the EA:

Context:

Meadow Bay proposes an exploratory drilling program to further define the extent and nature of the quality and quantity of minerals within the claim boundaries at Atlanta Mine located approximately 37 miles north of Pioche, Lincoln County, Nevada. The plan of operations would include drilling of up to 44 reverse circulation (RC) holes and up to 18 core holes (including 2 deep angled holes), construction of associated drill pads and reserve pits and use non-constructed primitive routes for drilling equipment mobilization for a total of approximately 15 new acres of disturbance. This EA analyzed resource concerns of the proposed exploratory drilling operations.

Intensity:

- 1) *Impacts that may be both beneficial and adverse:*
The proposed exploratory drilling operations will help identify and delineate new ore bodies, which will in turn meet the need for precious metals and provide stimulus for the economy. Areas of exploration will be reclaimed and re-vegetated and returned to pre-mining land use.
- 2) *The degree to which the Proposed Action affects public health or safety:*
The Proposed Action will not change the effect on public health or safety. Exploration issues were adequately analyzed in the NEPA document.
- 3) *Unique characteristics of the geographic area such as proximity to historical or cultural resources, parks lands, prime farmlands, wetlands, wild and scenic rivers, or ecologically critical areas:*
The proposed drill sites and associated access roads have been surveyed for cultural resources. Appropriate mitigation is included in the Proposed Action to avoid any cultural resources; therefore, there will be no impacts. The project area does not contain any park lands, prime farmlands, wetlands, wild and scenic rivers, or ecologically critical areas.
- 4) *The degree to which the effects on the environment are likely to be highly controversial:*

Presently there is little controversy on the effects of the project on the quality of the environment. Present land uses include mining, grazing, hunting, and diverse recreation in the area. Mineral exploration operations are common in Nevada and there is little controversy on the nature of impacts on resources, including sage grouse, soils, and cultural resources.

- 5) The degree to which the possible effects on the environment are highly uncertain or involve unique or unknown risks:

There are no known effects of the Proposed Action identified in the EA which are considered uncertain or involve unique or unknown risks. The EA identified direct, indirect, and cumulative effects associated with the proposed action.

- 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:

The Proposed Action does not establish a precedent for future actions with significant effects and does not represent a decision in principle about a future consideration. The proposed exploratory drilling operations do not establish any sort of precedent.

- 7) Whether the action is related to other actions with individually insignificant, but cumulatively significant impacts:

The proposed exploratory drilling operations will not contribute to cumulatively significant impacts on any resources.

- 8) The degree to which the action may adversely affect districts, sites, highways, structures, or objects listed in or eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places or may cause loss or destruction of significant scientific, cultural, or historic resources:

No districts, sites, highways, structures or objects listed in or eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP) would be disturbed during the proposed exploratory drilling operations. The Proposed Action will not cause the loss or destruction of significant scientific, cultural or historical resources.

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

No known endangered or threatened species or its habitat was identified during the analysis of the EA.

- 10) Whether the action threatens a violation of Federal, State, local or tribal law or requirements imposed for the protection of the environment:

The Proposed Action will not violate or threaten to violate any Federal, State, or local law or requirement imposed for the protection of the environment. The BLM solicited public comments on the Proposed Action. A public scoping letter was sent out on September 27, 2012, and comments were requested within 30 days of receipt of that letter. The mailing list can be found in the administrative record. The U.S. Fish and

Wildlife Service requested two raptor surveys with a 2-mile buffer zone. The two surveys were required to be at least one month apart. As part of the EA, two raptor surveys with a 2-mile buffer zone were conducted. The EA was also published on the BLM website for a review period from January 2, 2014 to February 3, 2014. Five comment letters were received on the EA. The comments and responses are located in section 5.2 of the EA.

11) The degree to which the action may adversely affect land with wilderness characteristics:

The proposed exploratory drilling operations under this EA are not within designated wilderness areas. However, one of the drill sites and the access road to the drill site are located within one unit of Land with Wilderness Characteristics (LWC). The overall impact within the unit was considered negligible during the analysis of the EA.

FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT

I have determined that, with incorporation of the ACEPMs listed in table 2-2 in appendix B of the EA, the Proposed Action will not significantly affect the quality of the environment and that preparation of an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) is not required.



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3/19/14

Date