

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF INTERIOR  
BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT  
Twin Falls District  
*Shoshone Field Office*  
400 West "F" Street  
Shoshone, ID 83352

## **Categorical Exclusion Review and Decision**

**Project Name:** Mineral Hill #132 (*a.k.a. Bellevue Water Tank Shaft*) Closure

**NEPA Number:** DOI-BLM-ID-T030-2015-0003-CX

**Lead Preparer:** Tom Askew - Physical Scientist AML/Hazmat Programs

**Project or Serial Number** (if applicable): IDT03000132

**Project Description:** Proposed closure of a dangerous mine opening feature that exists in an area easily accessible and regularly frequented by the public. The feature located on BLM properties in the proximity of the City of Bellevue's drinking water supply storage tank on the Southeast side of Bellevue, Idaho. The feature consists of a physical opening in the form of a shaft driven vertically into the ground. The feature represented in this document is open providing unimpeded access by the general public and is a danger for persons or animals frequenting the area to fall into. The Mineral Hill #132 (*a.k.a. Bellevue Water Tank Shaft*) is easily accessible and is located in an area frequently used by hikers, and mountain bikers for recreation. This feature is located approximately one (1') off of the traveled path which is readily accessible by the general public from the main roads of travel in the area. This path is also adjacent to a developed subdivision and city park area making it attractive to use by residents and patrons of the park.

There are no historical structures or objects associated with this feature which are associated with the past mining industry of the area. The only feature associated with this open shaft is a waste rock dump material that encompasses the collar of the shaft.

The following proposal and remedy for mitigating this physical hazard rendering it safe to the general public is described as follows:

**Remediation Description:** Backfill S1 shaft with dirt and rock from adjacent waste rock dump of shaft. Excavator or miniexcavator will be used. Ten cubic yards of gravel road surface material will be dumped against the existing road cutbank approximately 40 feet away from the north edge of the City of Bellevue water tank down-road. The gravel will be used to build a temporary ramp to facilitate tracking the excavator up the bank to gain access to the S1 shaft. No excavation of the site will occur for the entire route to the S1 shaft. The excavator will track up the existing trail to the site approximately 100 yards. The waste rock material encompassing the collar of the shaft will be used as backfill. The waste rock is composed of the original materials removed from the shaft when it was driven. After the shaft has been backfilled and the

excavator will return to the water tank road, the excavator will be used to spread the gravel at a depth and grade that will aid in maintaining the road surface. No previously undisturbed ground will be disturbed.

**Project Location for the Proposed Closure of the Shaft Features:**

**Site Name:** Mineral Hill #132 (*a.k.a. Bellevue Water Tank Shaft*)

**USGS Quad 7.5 Minute Map:** Bellevue

**UTM Coord:** 4816331.872N / 722767.932E, Zone 11N

T2N R19E Section 31, SWNWNW

Boise Meridian

Blaine County, Idaho



There is one (1) open shaft at this site. This shaft is approximately 12'X15' in area and 15-18' in depth with a small exploratory drive in the west wall that goes back approximately 3-4 feet maximum. The collar of the shaft is slightly raised as it is encompassed by the original waste rock materials that were removed in the forming of the shaft. This material is currently sparsely vegetated which obscures the presence of the shaft from unsuspecting visitors to the site. There is more materials which flows downhill in a westerly direction of the waste rock dump.

The waste rock dump material will be utilized to backfill the shaft as proposed in the project description above.

There is very sparse vegetation within the boundaries of the proposed work areas adjacent to the S1 shaft at this site that would be disturbed with the closure operations being proposed.

Ground disturbance at this site would be less than 0.1 of an Acre from the proposed project closure site.

### **Plan Conformance**

The proposed actions conform to the terms, conditions and decisions of the Sun Valley Management Framework Plan (MFP) approved in 1981. Although the proposal is not specifically provided for under the plan, it complies with the purpose and intent of the plan. Recreation Objective R-7 provides for the “dispersed forms of recreation on all public lands in the planning area.” Extensive recreation has continued to increase throughout the area, and the proposal mitigates one of the potential hazards that may be encountered by the public. Lands Objective L-9 provides for “eliminating conditions that contribute to lowering public land quality.” The removal of the potentially hazardous conditions fulfills that objective.

### **Categorical Exclusion Reference**

The action described above generally does not require the preparation of an environmental assessment (EA) or environmental impact statement (EIS), as it has been found to not individually or cumulatively have a significant effect on the human environment. The applicable Categorical Exclusion reference is found in 516 DM 112.5 H. Other (8), which allows for the installation of minor devices to protect human life (e.g. grates across mines). Categorical Exclusion reference 516 DM 11.5H. Other (10) also applies to the proposal. This reference states, “Removal of structures and materials of non-historical value, such as abandoned automobiles, fences, and buildings, including those built in trespass and reclamation of the site when little or no surface disturbance is involved.”

## Categorical Exclusion Documentation

The action has been reviewed to determine if any of the following extraordinary circumstances listed below apply:

<b>1. Have significant impacts on public health or safety.</b>		
<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>Rationale:</b>
	<b>X</b>	The project would have a positive impact on public health and safety by enhancing and improving protection of the general public from physical and other potential hazards that are being mitigated at these project sites.
<b>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.</b>		
<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>Rationale:</b>
	<b>X</b>	There are no areas specified as Areas of Critical Environmental Concern, Wilderness Study Areas, Monuments, and other areas with special designation. The proposed action will not occur in a floodplain or wetland area. The proposed actions would not significantly impact a floodplain or wetland area.
<b>3. Have highly controversial environmental effects or involve unresolved conflicts concerning alternative uses of available resources [NEPA section 102 (2) (E)].</b>		
<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>Rationale:</b>
	<b>X</b>	There are no known controversies over environmental effects pertains specifically to disagreement over the nature of the impacts among those with special expertise. Controversy does not reflect the level of public concern, support or opposition for an action. The impacts of the action are well-known and demonstrated in other projects that have been implemented and monitored in the AML program such as the Colorado Gulch AML closure projects performed in the same general area.

<b>4. Have highly uncertain and potentially significant environmental effects or involve unique or unknown environmental risks.</b>		
<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>Rationale:</b>
	<b>X</b>	Categorically excluded actions generally have very predictable consequences well established as insignificant. The proposed project action impacts based on specialist analysis and other like AML projects would not create circumstances and unique or unknown environmental risks.
<b>5. Establish a precedent for future action or represent a decision in principal about future actions with potentially significant environmental effects.</b>		
<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>Rationale:</b>
	<b>X</b>	The proposed action would not establish a precedent for future actions or represent a decision in principle about future actions with potentially significant environmental effects.  The proposed action is not connected or does not have a direct relationship to other actions that would require further environmental analysis and would not set a precedent for future actions that would normally require environmental analysis.
<b>6. Have a direct relationship to other actions with individually insignificant but cumulatively significant environmental effects.</b>		
<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>Rationale:</b>
	<b>X</b>	The proposed action would not have a direct relationship to other actions with individually insignificant but cumulatively significant environmental effects.  The proposed action does not have a direct relationship to other actions with individually insignificant but cumulatively significant environmental effects.

**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.**

<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>Rationale:</b>
	<b>X</b>	<p>The proposed action would not have significant impacts on properties listed or eligible for listing, on the National Historical Places as determined by either the bureau or office.</p> <p>A cultural resource survey was conducted for the project area in October 2011, with a determination that no eligible cultural resources would be affected by the proposed actions.</p>

**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.**

<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>Rationale:</b>
	<b>X</b>	<p>The proposed actions would not have a significant impact 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.</p> <p>The proposed actions at sites identified as potential habitat for bats are designed to preserve those habitats.</p> <p>A special animal species assessment was completed in February 2014 for the proposed project sites. It was determined that these proposed actions would not adversely impact any special status, including endangered or threatened, animal species or their habitat above current levels.</p>

**9. Violate a Federal law, or a State, local or tribal law or requirement imposed for the protection of the environment.**

<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>Rationale:</b>
	<b>X</b>	<p>No Federal, State, Local or tribal laws would be violated or require the acquisition of special permits for the proposed work.</p>

**10. The proposed action would not have a disproportionately high and adverse effect on low income or minority populations (Executive Order 12898)**

Yes	No	<b>Rationale:</b>
	X	The proposed action would not have a disproportionately high and adverse effect on low income or minority populations (Executive Order 12898). The effect would equally be the same as for the general population in the general area.

**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).**

Yes	No	<b>Rationale:</b>
	X	Consultation with tribes regarding Indian sacred sites must take place. The projects as proposed would not impede or interfere with 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)

**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).**

Yes	No	<b>Rationale:</b>
	X	Introduction as well as spread of noxious weeds, non-native and invasive species within the area must be considered. All equipment to be utilized during the projects is to be cleaned prior to entering a site to ensure no introduction of spreading noxious weeds, non-native and invasive species. Any disturbed soil areas will be reclaimed and reseeded with an appropriate project seed mixture for the local area and soil types. The sites will be monitored for any potential future need to abate and control the spread of noxious weeds, non-native and other invasive species.

**Resource surveys and review of the potential impacts of the proposed action was completed by the following:**

Tom Askew, Project Lead  
Gary Wright, Wildlife Biologist  
Lisa Cresswell, Archaeologist/Shoshone Field Office NEPA Coordinator  
Clare Josaitis, Rangeland Management Specialist

Environmental Coordinator: /s/ Lisa Cresswell      Date: 9/8/2015

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Lisa Cresswell  
Shoshone Field Office NEPA Coordinator

**Approval and Decision**

Based on a review of the project described above and field office staff recommendations, I have determined that the project is in conformance with the land use plan and is categorically excluded from further environmental analysis. It is my decision to approve the action as proposed, with the following stipulations (if applicable):

Authorized Officer: /s/ Codie Martin      Date: 9/8/2015

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Codie Martin  
Shoshone Field Office Manager