

Decision Record

Decision Record: WY-050-EA14-97

Noel Wood- Crow Foot Placer Plan of Operations

WYW168591

**NE Sec. 14, NW Sec. 13, T. 29 N., R. 99 W., 6th
P.M., Fremont County, WY**

**Prepared by
U.S. Department of the Interior
Bureau of Land Management
Lander Field Office
Lander, Wyoming**

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Chapter 1. Environmental Assessment: WY-050-EA14-97

Noel Wood— Crow Foot Placer Plan of Operations

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1.1. Introduction:

Noel Wood submitted a Plan of Operations for the Crow Foot Placer Project on August 22, 2014. On September 10, 2014 the Plan was determined complete; that is, the standards described at the Title 43 Code of Federal Regulations part 3809.401 had been met. The Plan consists of excavating several trenches and processing gold bearing material using a self contained wash plant. Total disturbance is approximately 5 acres over the 6 year project life. A Plan of Operations is required by the BLM because the operations are proposed within the South Pass Area of Critical Environmental Concern (ACEC) and constitute mining rather than exploration.

1.2. Decision:

It is my decision to authorize the Plan of Operations submitted by Noel Wood, for the Crow Foot Placer Project with the additional mitigation measures determined necessary to prevent unnecessary and undue degradation of public lands which are considered Conditions of Approval (COA) as described in the EA.

1.3. Rationale for Decision:

1.3.1. Conformance with Resource Management Plan and Land Use Plan(s):

Current policies for development and land use decisions within this area are contained in the Lander Record of Decision and Approved Resource Management Plan, June 26, 2014. The Lander RMP allows for exploration and development of locatable minerals subject to mitigation measures as appropriate to prevent undue and unnecessary degradation of public lands.

1.3.2. National Policy:

The Plan of Operations to be issued to Noel Wood, for the Crow Foot Placer project is an authorization under the 43 CFR 3809 regulations. The 3809 regulations accommodate the proponents need to explore for valuable mineral deposits on their mining claims on public lands under the 1872 Mining Laws, as amended, and the Federal Land Policy Management Act (FLPMA) of 1976, as amended. The BLM is encouraged to allow for exploration and development of locatable minerals in accordance with the Mining Laws as long as undue or unnecessary degradation is prevented. Therefore, the decision is consistent with national policy.

1.3.3. Agency Statutory Requirements:

The decision is consistent with all federal, state, and county authorizing actions required to implement the Proposed Action. This project is administered by the BLM Lander Field Office and the State of Wyoming (Wyoming Department of Environmental Quality-Land Quality Division). Additionally, this project complies with major laws and regulations pertinent to the decision such as the FLPMA, the Endangered Species Act, the National Historic Preservation Act, and the Clean Water Act, and conforms to the current land use plan in effect. Cultural surveys and compliance with Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act has been completed for this proposal.

1.3.4. Relevant Resource and Economic Issues:

Potential environmental impacts from the Crow Foot Placer Plan of Operations to resources identified in the Environmental Assessment are all deemed acceptable with mitigation. The economic benefits derived from the implementation of the Proposed Action in the form of continuing employment opportunities, equipment, services, and allowing access to the mine for the claimant are necessary and due.

1.3.5. Application of Measures to Avoid or Minimize Environmental Impacts:

Federal environmental protection laws, such as the Clean Air Act, and the National Historic Preservation Act, apply to all lands and were considered in development of the EA. The adoption of measures identified in Chapters 2.0 and 3.0 of the EA provides practicable means to avoid or minimize potential environmental impacts. If conditions should warrant, additional measures could be applied to individual permits subject to additional analysis.

1.3.6. Compliance and Monitoring:

Monitoring will be done by the area Geologist or Surface Compliance Technician in coordination with the County and the WDEQ-LQD to ensure compliance with this authorization.

1.4. Finding of No Significant Impacts:

Based upon the analysis contained in the Environmental Assessment WY-050-EA14-97, along with the implementation of protection measures, I have determined that the Proposed Action will not cause any significant impacts on the human, natural and physical environment. Therefore, an Environmental Impact Statement is not required.

1.5. Opportunity for Public Involvement:

Scoping is an important part of the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) process and is used to determine the scope of issues related to a Proposed Action (40 CFR 1500.7). The scoping process can involve federal, state and local government agencies, resource specialists, industry representatives, local interest groups and members of the public. Scoping is an interdisciplinary process.

Staff specialists reviewed the proposal and identified impacts and appropriate mitigation measures through involvement with the EA and through resource clearance requests. The public was allowed 30 days to review the Plan of Operations and provide scoping comments on the EA in accordance with the 43 CFR 3809 regulations, but no comments were received.

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Relevant Resource and Economic Issues:

1.6. Opportunity for Protest or Appeal:

This decision may be requested to be reviewed by the BLM State Director, or this decision may be appealed to the IBLA in accordance with the provisions in 43 CFR 3809.805. The decision letter to the operator will include appropriate appeal language.

1.7. Authorizing Official:

Richard Vander Voet, Field Manager, Lander Field Office
Attachment: EA No. WY-050-EA14-97

Date