

FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT

Newmont Mining Corporation Lone Tree Mine Expansion – Brooks Project Environmental Assessment DOI-BLM-NV-W010-2014-0034-EA

FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT

Based on the interdisciplinary analysis conducted in the Lone Tree Mine Expansion – Brooks Project Environmental Assessment (EA) DOI-BLM-NV-W010-2014-0034-EA dated February 2015, a review of the plan of operations, and my consideration of the Council of Environmental Quality’s criteria for significance (40 CFR 1508.27), both with regard to the context and the intensity of impacts, I have determined that the impacts associated with the Proposed Action, are not significant. Therefore, preparation of an Environmental Impact Statement pursuant to Section 102(C) of the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) for the Lone Tree Mine Expansion – Brooks Project is not required.

Though the Finding of No Significant Impact is not dependent on mitigation, recommendations were developed in section 4.1.4 of the EA that, if implemented, would reduce impacts to special status species. These recommendations are consolidated in section 5.0 of the EA.

I have determined that the Proposed Action is in conformance with the approved Sonoma-Gerlach Management Framework Plan (1982). The Proposed Action is consistent with other Federal agency, state, and local plans to the maximum extent consistent with Federal law and Federal Land Policy Management Act provisions.

Context

Newmont Mining Corporation (Newmont) submitted the Lone Tree Mine Expansion – Brooks Project (Brooks Project) proposing to develop a new open-pit on public lands administered by the Bureau of Land Management (BLM). The Brooks Project is located approximately 27 miles east-southeast of Winnemucca, and approximately 6.5 miles west of Valmy in Humboldt County, Nevada.

Specifically, Newmont proposes the following major components:

- One open pit (the “Brooks Pit”);
- Three overburden/interburden storage areas;
- Exploration;
- Laydown areas;
- Relocation of an existing lime silo;
- Installation of an expanded perimeter fence;
- Storm water diversion ditches and storm water sediment basins; and
- Haul roads and access roads.

The approximately 792-acre expansion to the Lone Tree Mine boundary is located on public lands administered by the BLM, Winnemucca District, Humboldt River Field Office on portions of Township 34 North, Range 42 East, sections 21, 22, 27, and 28, Mount Diablo Base and Meridian. As a result of the Proposed Action, the total surface disturbance on public lands would be approximately 230 acres.

Intensity

1) Impacts that may be both beneficial and adverse.

The EA considered possible beneficial and adverse impacts of the proposed project. Benefits to the local communities would be through employment of the local mining work force, and use of local retail services, restaurants, and lodging are possible throughout the life of the project.

Adverse impacts would include removal of vegetation and an increase in noise and activity levels that would decrease available habitat for special status wildlife species. The recommended mitigation measures would help to reduce these impacts. Upon completion of the mining activities, most surface disturbances would be recontoured and revegetated. Long-term impacts to the area would include approximately 32 acres of unreclaimed surface disturbance from the open pit.

2) The degree to which the proposed action affects public health or safety.

Mining activities are not expected to cause adverse public health effects. The Lone Tree Mine and Brooks Project include a Contingency Plan and Emergency Procedures, Petroleum Contaminated Soils Plan, Solid and Hazardous Waste Management Plan, Spill Prevention, Control, and Countermeasure Plan, a Stormwater Pollution Prevention Plan, and Dark-Sky Measures. Safety requirements would be required by the Mine Safety and Health Administration and the Nevada Industrial Relations Division of Mine Safety. No long-term adverse public health or safety effects are expected from use of the reclaimed area.

3) Unique characteristics of the geographic area such as proximity to historic or cultural resources, park lands, prime farmlands, wetlands, wild and scenic rivers, or ecologically critical areas.

The project would not affect park lands, prime farmland, wetlands, wild and scenic rivers or ecologically critical areas. All areas to be disturbed by mining activity have been surveyed and evaluated for historic and/or cultural resources. No National Register eligible properties are impacted by the proposed action.

4) The degree to which the effects on the quality of the human environment are likely to be highly controversial.

Mining activities are not new to Nevada or Humboldt County. Issues and concerns brought forward through the NEPA process were taken into consideration for analysis in preparing the

Preliminary EA. Concerns raised on the Preliminary EA have been addressed in the final EA. No controversial issues remain.

5) The degree to which the possible effects on the quality of the environment are likely to be highly uncertain or involve unique or unknown risks.

The mining techniques involved are all common methods employed in the mining industry and are not expected to produce uncertain or unique risks.

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.

Approval of the proposed action would not set any known precedents or establish any principles for future decisions. The proposed mining activities have been commonly applied for several decades in various phases of mining.

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

Cumulative impacts to the area were assessed in the EA. The Cumulative Effects Study Areas (CESAs) analyzed the potential effects to air quality, migratory birds, raptors, special status species, vegetation, and general wildlife. Detailed analyses of these areas were conducted to assess the potential cumulative impacts. Through these analyses it was determined that no significant cumulative impacts would result from the proposed action.

8) The degree to which the action may adversely affect districts, sites, highways, structures, or objects listed in or eligible for listing in the NRHP or may cause loss or destruction of significant scientific, cultural, or historic resources.

The proposed action would have no adverse effects to cultural or historic resources. No National Register eligible properties are present within the expanded plan of operations boundary. The California National Historic Trail (NHT) is in the vicinity of the Lone Tree Mine, however, the EA determined that the casual observer experiencing the California NHT would not be likely to notice the development of the Proposed Action, and the setting, feeling, and association of the California NHT would not be affected.

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 ESA of 1973.

No threatened or endangered species or their habitat would be affected by the proposed action and therefore, no adverse impacts are anticipated.

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

No threats of violation were identified in the preparation of the EA and any Decision regarding this proposed project would stipulate that the operator must obtain all necessary approvals from other federal, state, and local agencies before proceeding with the proposed action. The BLM would conduct at least four inspections at the Lone Tree Mine, including the Brooks Project, each year to ensure compliance with the approved plan of operations. Additionally, the Nevada Division of Environmental Protection would make regular inspections pertaining to the reclamation permit.

\S\ James W. Schroeder

James W. Schroeder
Field Manager
Humboldt River Field Office

2/13/2015

Date