



United States Department of the Interior  
BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT

Burley Field Office  
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Burley, ID 83318  
(208) 677-6600



In Reply Refer To:  
3809 (IDT020) (P)  
DOI-BLM-ID-T020-2015-0008-EA

March 12, 2015

Dear Interested Parties:

The Bureau of Land Management (BLM) Twin Falls District, Burley Field Office, is soliciting comments, concerns, or issues specific to a proposed Plans of Operations received from Northern Stone Supply, Inc. (Northern) for the quarrying of splittable granite building stone, a locatable mineral. The Plan of Operations describes mining activities Northern proposes to conduct on unpatented mining claims located under the 1872 Mining Law (30 U.S.C. 22 et seq.).

The area of the proposed activities is located in Cassia County approximately 9.5 miles south of Oakley, ID in Boise Meridian, T. 15 S., R. 22 E., Section 22. The quarry is located on the western flank of Middle Mountain, an area that is known for production of Oakley Stone, a micaceous quartzite, used as a building material. Mining of Oakley Stone and granite building stone has occurred on Middle Mountain for over 50 years.

An Environmental Assessment (EA) is currently being prepared to identify and analyze the magnitude of any environmental effects that would occur from approving this action. Through the NEPA process, BLM will also identify any Conditions of Approval (COAs) needed for the protection of the environment.

The Scoping/Information package for this project can be accessed through the following website: [https://www.blm.gov/epl-front-office/eplanning/nepa/nepa\\_register.do](https://www.blm.gov/epl-front-office/eplanning/nepa/nepa_register.do). To access the document, go to the website and either zoom in on the map to the project area and click on the BLM symbol, or click on the text search tab and highlight the state of Idaho, Burley Field Office, and year 2015 and search. Then select the "Northern Stone Granite Quarry" from the search results to go to the project website where the document is posted at the bottom. Your comments, concerns, and issues regarding this Plan Modification are requested. Comments made on this proposal would be most helpful if they are received on or before April 12, 2015 and are directly relevant to the proposal and project area. Feedback may be accepted beyond this date, however, such comments may be considered secondary to comments received in a timely manner.

If you have difficulties obtaining this document from the internet, to request a hardcopy, or for questions and concerns, please contact Steve Lubinski, Geologist, Burley Field Office, at (208) 677-6667, or via email at [slubinski@blm.gov](mailto:slubinski@blm.gov).

Sincerely,  
/s/Amanda M. Dodson

Amanda M. Dodson  
Field Manager (Acting)

**Scoping/Information Package**  
**Northern Stone Granite Quarry Plan of Operations**  
**NEPA # DOI-BLM-ID-T020-2015-0008-EA**

**Introduction**

The information in this package summarizes a Bureau of Land Management (BLM), Burley Field Office action in response to a proposed Plans of Operations (POO), by Northern Stone Supply, Inc. (Northern) for the mining of locatable granite building stone. The POO outlines mining activities that the proponent wishes to conduct on unpatented mining claims located under the 1872 Mining Law (30 U.S.C. 22 et seq).

The purpose of this package is to inform potentially interested and affected parties of Northern's proposal, and to invite comments to assist with the review of the Proposed Action in accordance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and other relevant Federal and State laws and regulations.

An Environmental Assessment (EA) is currently being prepared to identify and analyze the magnitude of any environmental effects that would occur from approving this action. Through the NEPA process, BLM will also identify any Conditions of Approval (COAs) needed for the protection of the environment. Comments received in response to this solicitation will be used to identify potential environmental issues related to the proposed POO.

**Location**

Northern's proposed mining activities would occur on BLM managed lands in Cassia County located approximately 9.5 miles south of Oakley, ID (See Map 1). All of the proposed operations would occur in Section 22, T. 15 S., R. 22 E., Boise Meridian (See Map 2). The project area is located on the western slope of Middle Mountain, which drains into the Goose Creek Basin. This area is open to mining, mineral leasing, and mineral sales under the Cassia Resource Management Plan (RMP).

**Background**

Northern is proposing to mine a type of granite that was determined to be locatable through a common variety determination that was conducted in 2002. The unique qualities of the granite, such as foliation layering that allows it to be split in a controlled manner, coloring, and strength give the stone an intrinsic value.

Previously, the granite has been quarried out of two small areas and combined with access roads and previously disturbed areas, amount to a total ground disturbance of nine acres.

**Purpose and Need for the Proposed Action**

Mining operations on unpatented mining claims must comply with Title 43 of the Code of Federal Regulations (43 CFR), Group 3800, "Mining Claims under the General Mining Laws" and Subpart 3715, "Use and Occupancy Under the Mining Laws. Northern's proposal falls under 43 CFR 3809.401, "Operations Conducted Under Plans of Operations." For proposals subject to Subpart 3809.401, the BLM must complete the environmental review of the proponents POO as required under NEPA and conduct any necessary consultations prior to issuing a decision on the proposal.

Northern's proposed operations must comply with the Federal Land Policy and Management Act of 1976 (FLPMA) which requires that an action under consideration be in conformance with the

applicable BLM land-use plan and be consistent with other Federal, State, Local, and Tribal policies to the maximum extent possible. Middle Mountain falls under management area 4 in the RMP which states on page 19; Objective E is, “to facilitate orderly development of the building stone resource.”

### **Proposed Action (Map 2)**

Northern’s proposed action is to operate out of an existing nine acre site, with two separate quarry faces. The site would be accessed via an existing road. Every four to six years, a section of topsoil behind the working face would be stripped and stockpiled, and the working face would be drilled and blasted in order to loosen enough stone for workers to split. Tracked excavators would move the rock from the working quarry face to an area for the workers to split and palletize the stone. Once palletized, the stone would be stored on-site until needed to fill customers orders. In addition, waste material may be crushed using a mobile crushing plant, and used on site for road and landing maintenance. Pursuant to 3809.411(c), the full POO is available for review at the Burley Field Office.

### **Preliminary Issues and Conditions of Approval (COA’s)**

Issues are generated through the public scoping process, a review of the RMP, and/or generated from a need for compliance with laws or regulations. Preliminary issues that have been identified through internal scoping, and COAs already identified to mitigate them include:

- Air Quality: A COA would be included to abate dust by watering roads when necessary.
- Human Health and Safety: A COA would be included to ensure proper signage and safety measures would be taken.
- Migratory Birds and Sage Grouse: A COA would be included that prohibits new construction (ground disturbing activities) during the migratory bird nesting season, March 1 through July 15.
- Blasting: Blasting would be limited to the time frame between July 1 and March 15 as a mitigation measure to prevent impacts to lekking and nesting sage-grouse and other wildlife.
- Non-Native Invasive and Noxious Species: A COA would be included to require Northern to control noxious weeds in and adjacent to the project area.
- Riparian: The proposed activities are adjacent to the Cold Creek riparian area. A COA would be included that ground disturbing activities could not occur within 100 feet of the riparian area. Also, a COA would be included requiring all roads and disturbed areas to drain away from riparian areas.
- Wastes: The proposed activities and occupation have the potential to generate both hazardous and solid waste. A COA would be included requiring Northern to dispose of all wastes off-site, and in a manner consistent with local, State and Federal regulations.

### **Public Input Invited**

Your comments are specifically requested for this project. Comments would be most helpful if they are received by April 12, 2015 and are directly relevant to the area. The BLM may accept public feedback outside of established public involvement time frames. However, such comments may be considered secondary to comments received in a timely manner and may only be assessed to determine if they identify concerns that would substantially alter the assumptions or analyses that will be presented in the subsequent EA.

Written comments must be submitted to the BLM, Burley Field Office, 15 East 200 South, Burley, ID 83318. The office business hours for submitting hand-delivered comments are 7:45 am through 4:30

pm, Monday through Friday, excluding holidays. Electronic comments must be submitted in a format such as an email message, plain text (.txt), rich text format (.rtf), Word (.doc), or portable document format (.pdf) to id\_burley\_fo@blm.gov. E-mails submitted to e-mail addresses other than the one listed, in other formats than those listed, or containing viruses will be rejected. To be most helpful, comments sent electronically should include the title of this project in the subject line. Please identify whether you are submitting comments as an individual or as the designated spokesperson on behalf of an organization. Issues that are outside the scope of this EA will not be addressed at this planning level.

Before including your address, phone number, e-mail address, or other personal identifying information in your comment, be advised that your entire comment, including your personal identifying information, may be made publicly available at any time. While you can ask us in your comment to withhold your personal identifying information from public review, we cannot guarantee that we will be able to do so.

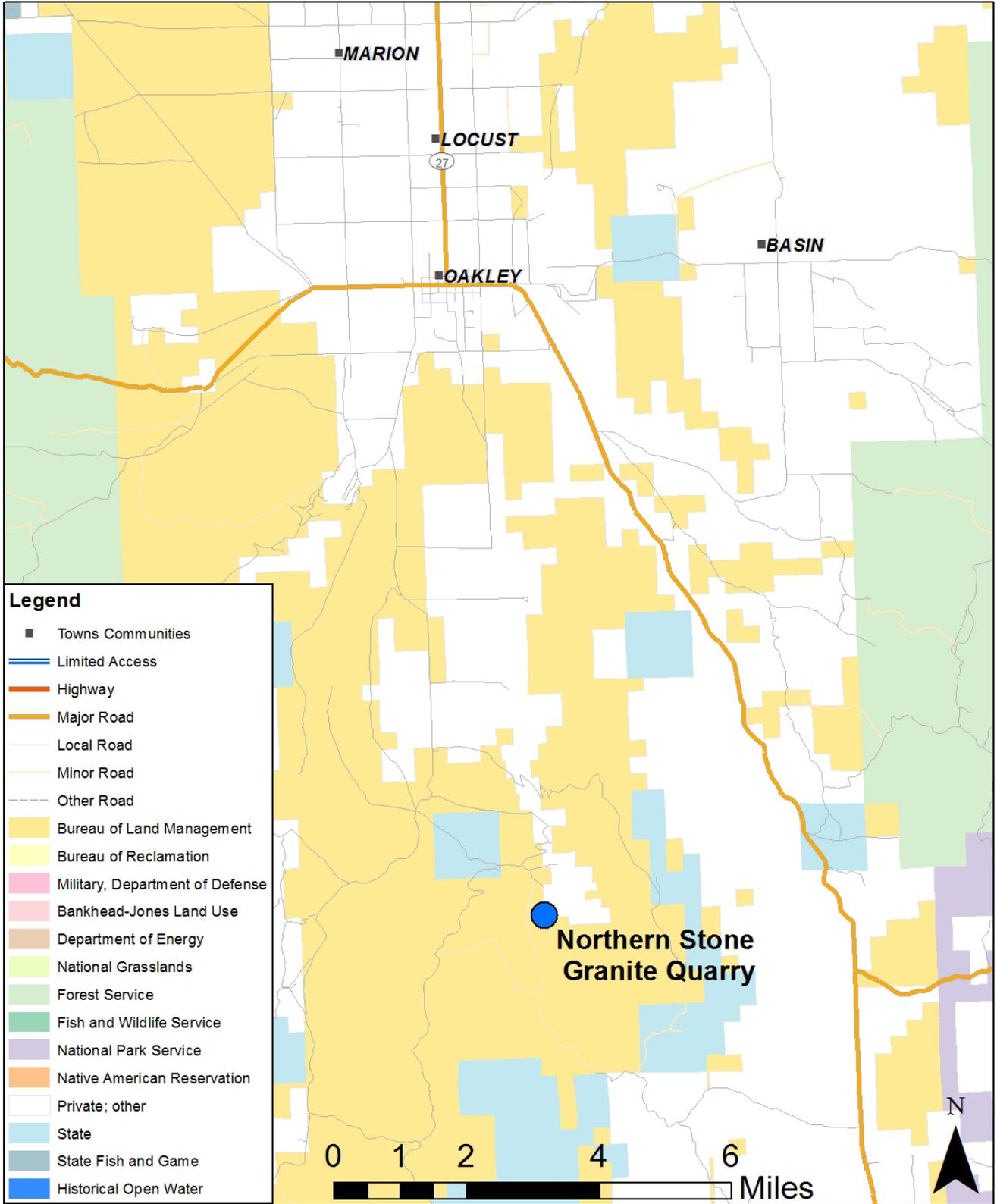
The primary contact for questions and comments for this project is Steve Lubinski, Geologist, Burley Field Office, (208) 677-6667, or email at slubinski@blm.gov.

#### 2 Enclosures

1 - Map 1 - Project Location Map (1 p)

2 - Map 2 – Project Map (1 p)

# Northern Stone Granite Quarry Project Location Map



# Northern Stone Granite Quarry Proposed Development

