



United States Department of the Interior
BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT
Idaho Falls District Office
1405 Hollipark Drive
Idaho Falls, Idaho 83401
(208) 524-7500



In Reply Refer To:
IDI-28115; IDI-0258

**NOTICE OF SCOPING
DAIRY SYNCLINE DRILLING PROJECT**

The Bureau of Land Management, Pocatello Field Office (BLM) is issuing notice and asking for your comments and/or concerns to be addressed in an Environmental Assessment (EA) which will be prepared for a Drilling Project proposed by BLM and J.R. Simplot Company (Simplot) in the Dairy Syncline area (Figure 1). The Drilling Project is located in Township 9 South Range 44 East Section 6 and 7.

The proposed Drilling Project is directly related to and associated with the proposed Dairy Syncline Mine and Reclamation Plan, which Simplot submitted to BLM in 2008. Information obtained from this drilling program will further assist the BLM in preparing the Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for the proposed Dairy Syncline Mine and Reclamation Plan, which will be prepared separately. The Drilling Project consists of drilling activities for two distinct purposes: 1.) investigation of geologic conditions on a proposed land sale parcel, and 2.) geotechnical drilling within the proposed tailings impoundment area.

1.) Land Sale Parcel Investigation Drilling: The 2010 BLM Mineral Potential report, prepared for a parcel of land that has been proposed for possible sale to Simplot for the proposed Dairy Syncline Mine, recommended that a drilling program be conducted to determine if the Phosphatic shale member of the Phosphoria Formation underlies the southeast quarter of Section 6 and the northeast quarter of Section 7, Township 9 South, Range 44 East. Eleven potential geologic drill holes have been identified to make this determination. These holes are prioritized on the enclosed map as primary or secondary. The data collected during the drilling of the primary holes would determine the need or lack thereof to drill the secondary holes. This proposed action is intended to satisfy the recommendation from the 2010 Mineral Potential report. Simplot is requesting the consent of BLM to conduct this drilling as required by 43 CFR 2720.1-3 Part c.

Simplot would supply the BLM with electronic copies of the drill logs as well as drill cutting samples collected on every 2 foot interval for the total depth of the hole. All lab analyses for any potential phosphate ore samples would also be provided to the BLM in addition to split samples, assuming there would be adequate mass of sample for both the lab analyses and a split sample. These holes would be completed by reverse circulation drilling to a total depth of not less than 350 feet. Water required for the drilling activities would be obtained from Slug Creek on private land with a temporary water right secured from Idaho Department of Water Resources. Assuming a complete and independent project, proposed disturbance would total approximately 13.2 acres. This proposed disturbance total includes improvements to existing access roads/trails and the temporary construction of new access roads. 5.4 acres of the proposed disturbance would occur on the National System of Public Lands.

2.) Tailings Impoundment Area - Geotechnical Drilling: Simplot is proposing to drill eight boreholes within the proposed land sale parcel in the vicinity of a proposed tailings impoundment area (see Figure 2). These holes would be drilled by hollow stem auger to gather geotechnical and environmental data. This information would be utilized in the environmental analysis of this area as well as the engineering evaluation of the proposed tailings impoundment area. All data collected from this drilling would also be provided to the BLM. Assuming a complete and independent project, proposed disturbance would total approximately 6.1 acres. This proposed disturbance total includes improvements to existing access roads/trails and the temporary construction of new access roads on both private and public lands. A total of approximately 2.4 acres of this proposed disturbance would occur on BLM land.

As shown on Figure 2, access to the proposed drill areas would be from Slug Creek road, northwest of the proposed drilling area. This would require overland travel on private property in order to access both proposed drilling programs. Once on public land, overland access would also be utilized to access each proposed hole. Existing access roads/trails, that would likely need to be improved in some areas, would be used as much as possible to limit new disturbance. For disturbance calculations, it is assumed that up to 50% of the existing access roads/trails would require some improvements. Portions of existing access roads/trails would be used for both drilling programs and thus, overall disturbance would be reduced when compared to treating each program independently as described above. Utilizing this main access route would eliminate the need to cross Slug Creek. Simplot will obtain the necessary access agreements with the private land owners. In addition to existing access roads/trails, some new temporary access roads would also be needed. A 20-foot wide access road width was assumed for improvements to existing access roads/trails and new temporary access roads.

Drill holes would be situated within the disturbance footprint of access roads. Drilling lubricants would consist primarily of air and water. If necessary, biodegradable, non-toxic foam would be used to aid in maintaining drill hole integrity. All drill site locations and associated new disturbance would occur on the National System of Public Lands. Four-wheel drive pick-up trucks would be used to transport workers to and from worksites. Reclamation of the area would involve the plug installation in all abandoned drill holes in compliance with Idaho State Law. Re-contouring drill site locations to resemble pre-disturbance topography, obliteration and closure of previously closed/reopened and newly constructed access roads, and seeding the entire disturbance area is included in the reclamation plan. Reclamation would include appropriate site-specific erosion control protection for seeds and seedlings. Reclamation would be performed by a backhoe. Seed mixes would be compatible with BLM Resource Management Plan direction.

The EA would be used by the BLM to determine whether to approve the entire drill plan, a portion of the drill plan, what conditions may apply, or not to approve any portion of the drill plan.

To ensure that all issues related to this proposed project are addressed and that impacts are identified, comments and suggestions are invited from all interested parties. Written comments on the issues and concerns regarding the scope of this proposal and agency analysis will be accepted until May 3, 2010.

Comments should be directed to:

**Bureau of Land Management
Pocatello Field Office
Attn: Barry Myers, Dairy Syncline Drilling Program EA Scoping
4350 Cliffs Drive
Pocatello, Idaho 83204**

For further information contact:

Barry Myers, Planning and NEPA Specialist, Bureau of Land Management, Pocatello Field Office, 4350 Cliffs Drive, Pocatello, Idaho 83204, (208) 478-6369

Comments, including names and street addresses of respondents will be available for public review at the BLM Pocatello Field Office and will be subject to disclosure under the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA). They will be published as part of the EA and other related documents. Individual respondents may request confidentiality. If you wish to withhold your name or street address from public review and disclosure under FOIA, you must state this prominently at the beginning of your written comment. 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. All submissions from organizations or businesses will be made available for public inspection in their entirety.

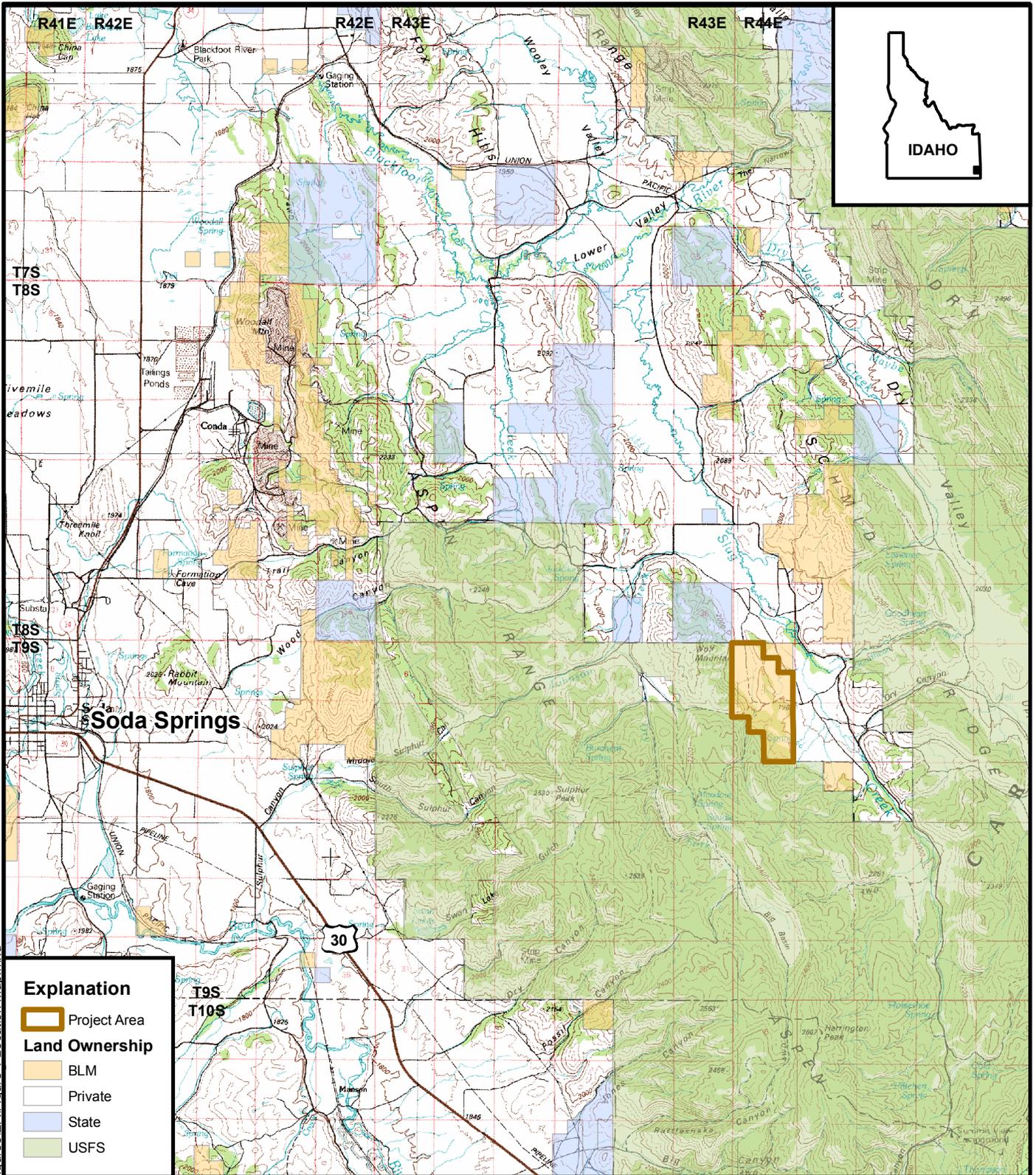
Upon completion of the EA, a Decision Record would be issued by the BLM and sent to all interested parties. The decision would not be implemented until 30 days after issuance.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Joe Kraayenbrink". The signature is fluid and cursive, written over a white background.

Joe Kraayenbrink
Idaho Falls District Manager

Enclosures: Figure 1: Site Location Map
Figure 2: Site Map

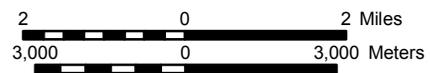


drawings\Simplelot Dairy Syncline.EOS\Figures\EA\Figure 1 Location Map.mxd

BASE FROM USGS 1:100,000-SCALE METRIC TOPOGRAPHIC MAP: SODA SPRINGS, IDAHO

Explanation

- Project Area
- Land Ownership**
- BLM
- Private
- State
- USFS

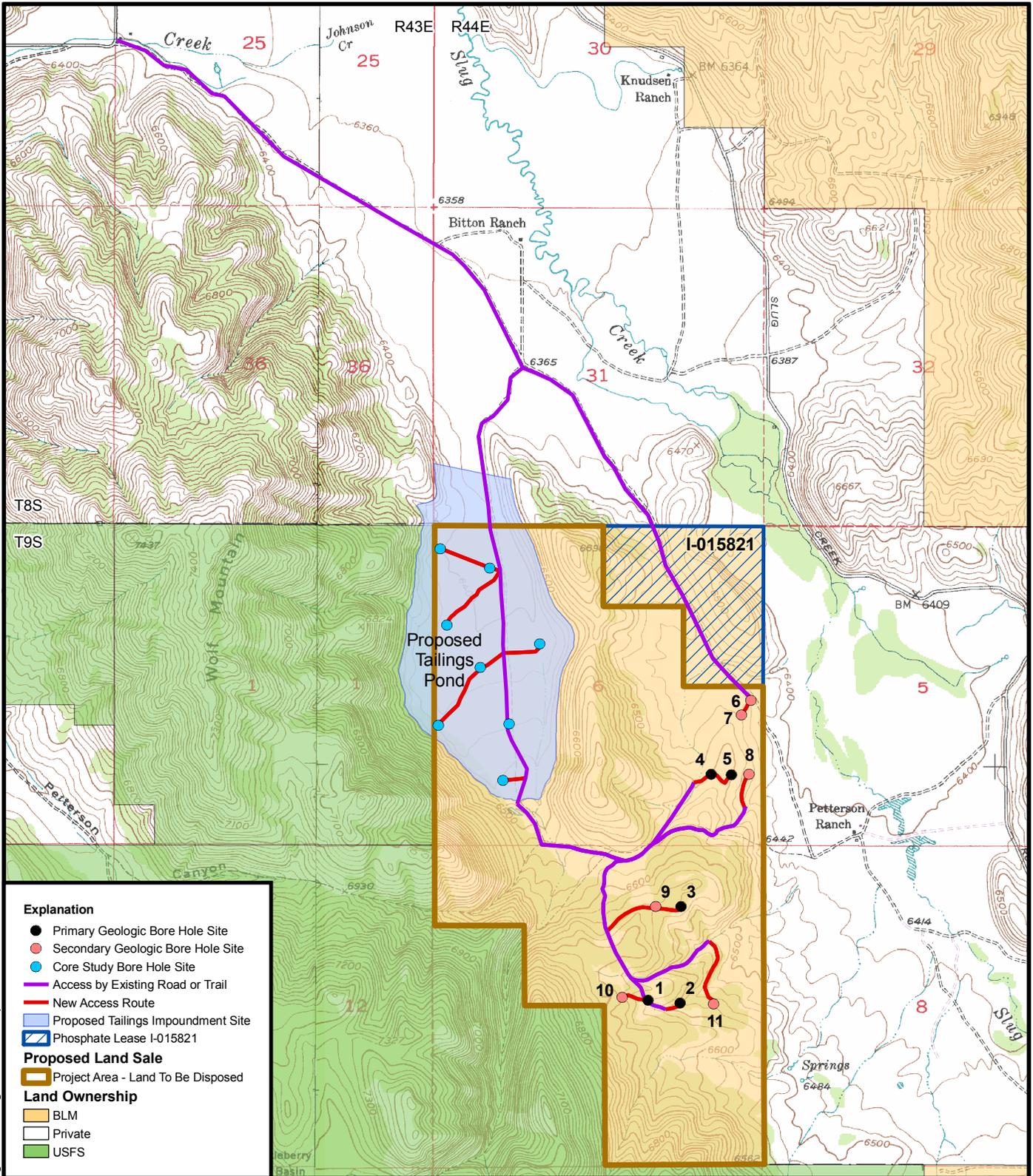


DAIRY SYNCLINE DRILLING PROJECT

FIGURE 1 SITE LOCATION MAP



DRAWN BY	CP	DATE DRAWN	04/14/2010
SCALE		1:150,000	



- Explanation**
- Primary Geologic Bore Hole Site
 - Secondary Geologic Bore Hole Site
 - Core Study Bore Hole Site
 - Access by Existing Road or Trail
 - New Access Route
 - Proposed Tailings Impoundment Site
 - ▨ Phosphate Lease I-015821
- Proposed Land Sale**
- Project Area - Land To Be Disposed
- Land Ownership**
- BLM
 - Private
 - USFS

Base from USGS 1:24,000 Topographic Quadrangles.



DAIRY SYNCLINE DRILLING PROJECT

FIGURE 2
SITE MAP



DRAWN BY	CP	DATE DRAWN	04/14/2010
SCALE	1:28,000		

drawings\Simplot Dairy Syncline EOS\Figures\EA\Figure 2 Site Map.mxd