

**U.S. Department of the Interior
Bureau of Land Management**

**Categorical Exclusion
Merrimac AML District Closures**

PREPARING OFFICE

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Bureau of Land Management
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Categorical Exclusion

Merrimac AML District Closures

Prepared by
U.S. Department of the Interior
Bureau of Land Management
Elko District, Tuscarora Field Office

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Chapter 1. Categorical Exclusion Worksheet

Merrimac AML District Closures

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A. Background

NEPA ID No: DOI-BLM-NV-E020–2015–0024–CX

BLM Office: Tuscarora Field Office

LLNVE0200

Prepared by: Nycole Burton

Lease/Serial/Case File No.:

Type of Action (Subject Code):

Location of Proposed Action: MDM, T.37N., R. 53E., Sections 1,3,11,13,14, and T.38N., R.53E., Sections 35, 36.

Applicant:

Description of Proposed Action: BLM is proposing to close 17 historic mining adits, declines, and shafts in Northeast Elko County, NV. The project would consist of closing openings by either foaming the openings closed with a poly-urethane mixture, by placing steel gating over the openings, or by backfilling (see project maps and Chapter 3 for details). The work would be scheduled to begin August 2015.

B. Land Use Plan Conformance

Land Use Plan Name: Elko Resource Management Plan (RMP)

Date Approved/Amended: 1987

The proposed action is in conformance with the applicable LUP because it is specifically provided for in the following LUP decision(s):

Elko RMP Record of Decision, signed in 1987, page 35:

“Minerals Objective: Maintain public lands open for exploration, development, and production of mineral resources while mitigating conflicts with wildlife, wild horses, recreation, and wilderness resources.”

Closures of Abandoned Mine Lands (AML) address the unsafe conditions left by historic mining activities; these unsafe conditions conflict with other uses of public lands.

C. Compliance with NEPA:

The Proposed Action is categorically excluded from further documentation under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) in accordance with BLM Categorical Exclusion pursuant to 516 DM 11.9.

J. Other: #10 Removal of structures and materials of no 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.

This categorical exclusion is appropriate in this situation because there are no extraordinary circumstances potentially having effects that may significantly affect the environment. The proposed action has been reviewed, and none of the extraordinary circumstances described in 516 DM 2 apply.

D. Conclusion and Signature

Based upon this review, I have determined that the Proposed Action, as described, is in conformance with the land use plan and meets the criteria for the selected CX. There is no potential for significant impacts. Therefore, the action is excluded from further environmental analysis and documentation.

/s/ Richard E. Adams 5/15/2015

Richard E. Adams
Manager, Tuscarora Field Office

Date

Contact Information

For additional information concerning this CX review, contact:

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* NOTE A separate decision document must be prepared for the action covered by the CX.

Chapter 2. Screening for Extraordinary Circumstances

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Each of the following questions must be answered negatively, with concurrence from all resource specialists participating on the interdisciplinary team (IDT), before this CX may be approved (516 DM).

Table 2.1. Screening for Extraordinary Circumstances

Resource Concerns	Yes	No
1. Will this project have significant adverse effects on public health or safety?		X
2. Will this project adversely affect such unique geographic characteristics as: (a) historic or cultural resources; (b) park, recreation or refuge lands, wilderness areas, wild or scenic rivers; (c) sole or principal drinking water aquifers; (d) prime farmlands, wetlands, flood plains, or (e) ecologically significant or critical areas, including those listed on the Department of the Interior's National Register of Natural Landmarks?		(a) X (b) X (c) X (d) X (e) X
3. Will this project have highly controversial environmental effects?		X
4. Will this project have highly uncertain and potentially significant environmental effects or involve unique or unknown environmental risks?		X
5. Will this project establish a precedent for future action or represent a decision in principle about future actions with potentially significant environmental effects?		X
6. Will this project be related to other actions with individually insignificant but cumulatively significant environmental effects?		X
7. Will this project have adverse effects on properties listed or eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places?		X
8. Will this project have adverse effects on species listed or proposed for listing on the Threatened or Endangered Species List, or have adverse effects on designated Critical Habitat for these species?		X
9. Will this project require compliance with Executive Order 11988 (Floodplain Management), Executive Order 11990 (Protection of Wetlands), or the Fish and Wildlife Coordination Act?		X
10. Will this project threaten to violate a Federal, State, local or tribal law or requirement imposed for the protection of the environment?		X
11. Will this project 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— Sacred Sites)		X
12. Will this project contribute to the introduction, continued existence, or spread of noxious weeds or non-native species known to occur in the area or actions that may promote the introduction, growth, or expansion of the range of such species?		X

Table 2.2. Reviewer Comments and Concurrence

Resource	Specialist Name	Comments	Initials	Date
AFM- Non-Renewables	Deb McFarlane	No Comments	/s/ DNM	5/14/2015
Air/Hydrology/Soils	John Daniel	No Issues	/s/ JD	4/22/2015
Archaeology	Tom Milter		/s/ TM	4/22/2015
Cultural Resources	Rich Adkins	No Issues	/s/ RA	5/4/2015
Environmental Justice	Terri Dobis	No Comment	/s/ TKD	5/13/2015
Health and Safety	Tom Schmidt		/s/ TS	4/22/2015
Native American Concerns	Rich Adkins	None	/s/ RA	5/4/2015
NEPA	Terri Dobis	No Issues	/s/ TKD	5/13/2015
Range Management/ Grazing	Jerrie Bertola	None	/s/ JB	5/8/2015
Recreation	Jason Dobis	See comment below	/s/ JJD	5/13/2015
Weeds	Sam Cisney	Ensure equipment is cleaned prior to on-site arrival.	/s/ SC	5/4/2015
Wildlife	Nycole Burton	None	/s/ NB	5/14/2015

Recreation: Public health and safety outweighs the need to wait for updated LWC surveys.

LWCs	
NV-EK-02-908	10,113 acres
NV-EK-02-907	7,235 acres

Chapter 3. Support Documentation

Merrimac AML District Closures

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Merrimac Abandoned Mine Lands (AML) Closures Support Documentation

Starting in April of 2014, the BLM and the Nevada Department of Wildlife (NDOW) surveyed the Merrimac AML District on Lone Mountain for safety hazards related to historic mining operations. The goal was to ascertain the potential of each opening as habitat for bat species and also its relative danger to recreationists, other public lands users, and residents in the vicinity. As a part of this process, five (5) hazards were surveyed internally by NDOW to discern the potential of the opening for quality bat habitat.

The findings and recommendations for addressing the seventeen (17) hazards identified during the Merrimac AML District surveys are as follows: Seven (7) of the hazards in the area were determined to be bat species habitat and would be closed by the construction of a bat gate. Three (3) of these seven (7) hazards were also deemed to require gating in order to protect significant archeological resources. Ten (10) of the hazards were found to be neither bat habitat or have cultural resources and would be permanently closed by backfilling with waste rock, tailings, or other material adjacent to the hazards.

Hazards that would be closed by backfilling would not need to have material be brought in from off-site, but would be closed by material either at or near the site.

These closures would address the safety concerns of all recreationists, mining personnel, members of the ranching community, and any other public land users that utilize the area.

Table 3.1. Hazard Attribute Table

Number	ID	Type	Easting	Northing	Land Status	Closure Recommendation
1	EL 766	Decline	586947	4555568	BLM	Doze
2	EL 768	Adit	586222	455471	BLM	Gate
3	EL 769	Stope	586309	4554606	BLM	Gate
4	EL 767	Adit	587529	4554775	BLM	Doze
5	EL 770	Decline	586565	4554233	BLM	Doze
6	EL 771	Shaft	586477	4554139	BLM	Doze
7	EL 774	Shaft	586450	4550595	BLM	Gate
8	EL 331	Decline	587318	4549787	BLM	Doze
9	EL 333	Stope/Prospect	587175	4549535	BLM	Doze/Gate
10	EL 334	Decline	587172	4549524	BLM	Doze
11	EL 776	Shaft	587182	4549508	BLM	Doze
12	EL 772	Decline	585917	4551931	BLM	Gate
13	EL 485	Adit	583884	4552889	BLM	Gate
14	EL 773	Decline	585983	4551844	BLM	Gate
15	EL 332	Shaft	587112	4549863	BLM	Doze
16	EL 775	Adit	586900	4555573	BLM	Doze
17	BLM 4494	Prospect	587053	4549979	BLM	Doze