

NEWS Release BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT

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BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT OR-12-26
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BLM Releases EA for Hardrock Prospecting

Portland, Ore. – The Bureau of Land Management (BLM) announced today that it is releasing an Environmental Assessment (EA) related to two hardrock prospecting permit applications for geological exploration within the Gifford Pinchot National Forest northeast of the Mount St. Helens National Volcanic Monument (NVM). Beginning in March 2011, Ascot Resources Ltd. (Ascot) – a Vancouver, B.C.-based company incorporated in the State of Washington as Ascot USA Inc. – applied for the two prospecting permits. The public comment period for the EA will run until July 31, 2012.

The permit applications are specific to an approximately 900-acre area, managed by the U.S. Forest Service, north of the Green River and just outside of the Mount St. Helens NVM. They pertain only to mineral exploration at 23 pad sites, each less than 400-square feet, and the use of portable equipment to directionally drilling approximately 63 small diameter (2 to 3 inches) boreholes to recover rock core samples.

This work would take place on or immediately adjacent to existing roads (some of which are currently decommissioned and will require temporary reactivation) and former drill sites (many of which were previously established by a company that held patent to these lands in the early 1980s). Most of the lands are in the blast zone from the 1980 eruption of Mount St. Helens and were salvage logged and reforested in the 1980s. The total disturbance area for all pads would be less than ¼ acre. Access to these sites would require the temporary reactivation of approximately 1.7 miles of partially closed roads.

In accordance with the plan of operations, all disturbances will be fully reclaimed. The hardrock minerals that are of interest include copper, molybdenum, silver and gold, and other associated minerals.

“The BLM is committed to ensuring that all laws and procedures regulating mineral prospecting are followed, guaranteeing both Ascot and the public a fair and open process. This is exactly how informed decision-making is supposed to happen,” said Michael Mottice, BLM Oregon and Washington Acting State Director.

Based on the EA, the U.S. Forest Service must determine whether or not to consent to a BLM decision to issue the prospecting permits along with such terms and conditions as are necessary to protect other resources and to comply with applicable land use plans. The U.S. Forest Service will issue a Decision Notice that includes consent (or denial of consent).

It is important to note that this action is unconnected and is distinctly different from the planning work that took place in 2008 regarding a former lease application from General Moly Inc. for the same lands. Ascot is not seeking a lease right, rather it is requesting only authorization to conduct limited geological prospecting.

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Web site: Information about the project, including the EA; associated maps, illustrations, and appended items; and the draft Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) can be obtained from the BLM web site at:

www.blm.gov/or/programs/minerals/prospecting

Substantive written comments pertaining to the EA will be accepted at the site shown below using either the built in comment form or as an email. Comments can also be posted to the addresses shown below:

Email: BLM_OR_Prospecting_EA@blm.gov (Note: an underscore (_) must be placed in each blank space)

Advisory: Before including your address, phone number, e-mail address, or other personal identifying information in your comment, please 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.

Paper copies are available for review at these offices:

BLM Oregon/Washington State Office
Public Room
Attn: Goat Mtn. Prospecting Permits
333 SW 1st Avenue
Portland, OR 97204

USFS Gifford Pinchot National Forest
Attn: Goat Mtn. Prospecting Permits
10600 N.E. 51st Circle
Vancouver, WA 98682

TDD: Persons who use a telecommunications device for the deaf (TDD) may call the Federal Information Relay Service (FIRS) at: 1(800) 877-8339 to contact these offices during normal business hours. The FIRS is available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, to leave a message or question. You will receive a reply during normal business hours.

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