

The BLM will evaluate identified issues to be addressed in the plan, and will place them into one of three categories:

1. Issues to be resolved in the plan;
2. Issues to be resolved through policy or administrative action; or
3. Issues beyond the scope of this plan. A public comment that suggests developing management for one of the resource uses from which the area was withdrawn by the legislation would likely fall within this category.

The BLM will provide an explanation in the Draft RMP/EIS as to why an issue was placed in category two or three. The public is also encouraged to help identify any management questions and concerns that should be addressed in the plan. The BLM will work collaboratively with interested parties to identify the management decisions that are best suited to local, regional, and national needs and concerns.

The BLM will use an interdisciplinary approach to develop the plan in order to consider the variety of resource issues and concerns identified. Specialists with expertise in the following disciplines will be involved in the planning process: rangeland management, minerals and geology, forestry, outdoor recreation, wilderness, archaeology, paleontology, wildlife and fisheries, lands and realty, hydrology, soils, sociology and economics.

Authority: 40 CFR 1501.7, 43 CFR 1610.

Lynn E. Rust,
Acting State Director.

[FR Doc. 2010-19060 Filed 8-2-10; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 4310-JB-P

DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

Bureau of Land Management

[LLID103000.L71220000.EX0000.
XXXX.LVTFD0977180; IDI-33145, IDI-35728]

Notice of Intent To Prepare an Environmental Impact Statement and Resource Management Plan Amendment for the Proposed Modification to the Thompson Creek Mine Plan of Operations, Section 404 Clean Water Act Permit Application, and Public Land Disposal, Custer and Bannock Counties, ID

AGENCY: Bureau of Land Management, Interior.

ACTION: Notice of Intent.

SUMMARY: In compliance with the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969, as amended (NEPA), and the Federal Land Policy and Management Act of 1976, as amended (FLPMA), the

Bureau of Land Management (BLM), Challis Field Office, Idaho intends to prepare an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) to analyze the potential environmental effects of the proposed approval by the BLM and U.S. Forest Service (Forest Service) of a modified mining plan of operations (MMPO) for the Thompson Creek molybdenum mine in Custer County, Idaho and the potential for disposal of BLM-administered public lands. The MMPO would allow an approximate 15-year extension of the mine life and an expansion of some facilities, requiring additional surface disturbance on approximately 350 acres of Federal lands and approximately 80 acres of private land. The EIS will include analysis of the potential environmental effects to waters of the United States that could occur under the MMPO. The Thompson Creek Mining Company (TCMC), has also proposed to exchange 900 acres of private lands owned by TCMC in Custer and Bannock counties for 5,000 acres of BLM-administered public land in the vicinity of the mine in Custer County, including the BLM-administered public land involved in the MMPO. The EIS will also evaluate a proposed amendment to the BLM Challis Field Office 1999 Resource Management Plan (RMP), to identify if the public land involved would be available for disposal pursuant to the FLPMA.

DATES: This notice initiates the public scoping process for the EIS. To be included in the Draft EIS comments must be submitted in writing using any of the methods described in the **ADDRESSES** section below until 30 days after publication of this notice in the **Federal Register** or 30 days after the last public meeting held to obtain scoping input, whichever is later. When a public meeting is held, documentation of that meeting and the list of attendees will be available to the public for 30 days so that any participant who wishes to clarify the views he or she expressed may do so. The date(s) and location(s) of any public scoping meetings will be announced at least 15 days in advance of the meetings through local media, newspapers, individual mailing, and the following BLM Web site: http://www.blm.gov/id/st/en/info/nepa/nepa/thompson_creek_mine.html. Additional opportunities for public participation will be provided upon publication of the Draft EIS.

ADDRESSES: You may submit comments regarding the proposed actions and planning criteria, and request to have your name added to the mailing list for the EIS by any of the following methods:

- *E-mail:* tcm_eis@jbr.com;
- *Fax:* (801) 942-1852, attention Brian Buck; or
- *Mail:* Thompson Creek Mine EIS, c/o Brian Buck, JBR Environmental Consultants, 8160 South Highland Drive, Sandy, Utah 84093.

The public may also examine documents pertinent to the proposed actions at the BLM Challis Field Office, 1151 Blue Mountain Road, Challis, Idaho 83226 during regular business hours (7:45 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.), Monday through Friday, except Federal holidays. Project information and documents will also be available on the following Web site: http://www.blm.gov/id/st/en/info/nepa/nepa/thompson_creek_mine.html.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:

BLM Challis Field Office, telephone (208) 879-6200; address 1151 Blue Mountain Road, Challis, Idaho 83226. Individuals who use telecommunication devices for the deaf (TDD) may call the Federal Information Relay Service (FIRS) at (800) 877-8339 between 8 a.m. and 8 p.m., Eastern Time, Monday through Friday.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: TCMC owns and operates the Thompson Creek molybdenum mine, located 7 miles northwest of Clayton and 21 miles southwest of Challis in Custer County, Idaho. The mine has been in operation since 1981 and is permitted for about 3,400 acres of surface disturbance, of which approximately 2,300 acres are private land and approximately 1,100 acres are Federal lands administered by the BLM and the Forest Service.

TCMC has proposed to modify its mining plan of operations. The proposed MMPO would allow mining to be extended by about 15 years, ending around 2030. The MMPO would expand two waste rock storage facilities and the tailings impoundment, requiring additional surface disturbance on about 350 acres of Federal lands, and 80 acres of private land. As a separate action TCMC has proposed to exchange 900 acres of private land owned by TCMC in Custer and Bannock counties for 5,000 acres of BLM-administered land near the mine in Custer County. The BLM is currently conducting a feasibility analysis of the proposed exchange. Upon completion of the feasibility analysis, the BLM may enter into an Agreement to Initiate a Land Exchange with TCMC and subsequently publish a separate Notice of Exchange Proposal (NOEP) in the newspapers servicing Custer and Bannock counties. Public comments received in response to the NOEP would be considered in the EIS if the NOEP is issued.

In response to these proposals (1) The BLM will decide whether to approve the portion of the MMPO involving BLM-administered public land under BLM regulations at 43 CFR 3809; (2) the Forest Service will decide whether to approve the portion of the MMPO involving National Forest System lands under Forest Service regulations at 36 CFR part 228 subpart A; (3) the USACE will decide whether to issue a permit under section 404 of the CWA and USACE regulations at 33 CFR part 320 to discharge fill materials into waters of the United States; (4) the BLM will decide whether to amend the Challis RMP pursuant to Section 202 of FLPMA and BLM regulations at 43 CFR part 1600, and identify the public land involved for disposal; and (5) the BLM will decide whether to approve a land disposal action.

The authorizations by the Forest Service for National Forest System lands and USACE may be required to implement the MMPO regardless of whether the BLM approves a land disposal action. If TCMC obtains title to all of the BLM-administered land within the mine area, the BLM's approval of the MMPO would no longer be necessary because the BLM does not regulate mining operations on private land. On the other hand, if TCMC obtains title to only some of the BLM-administered land involved with the MMPO, then any continuing mining operations on BLM-administered land would require BLM authorization under 43 CFR part 3809.

The purpose and need of the proposed actions are for (1) The BLM to respond to TCMC's proposed MMPO, which would enable TCMC to continue reasonable development of the existing mine in compliance with BLM laws and regulations (FLPMA, 43 CFR 3809); (2) the Forest Service to similarly respond to the MMPO in compliance with Forest Service laws and regulations (Organic Act of 1897; 36 CFR 228, Subpart A); (3) the USACE to respond to TCMC's application for a permit to discharge fill materials into waters of the United States, as necessary in the MMPO, in compliance with USACE laws and regulations (CWA, 33 CFR 320); (4) the BLM to consider amending the Challis RMP to allow a land disposal in compliance with Section 102 of FLPMA, and (5) the BLM to respond to TCMC's proposal for a land exchange and determine if a public land disposal would be in the public interest pursuant to FLPMA.

The No Action alternative (*i.e.*, completion of mining and reclamation under the current mining plan of operations) and alternatives that consider the RMP amendment and

various aspects of the proposed MMPO and public land disposal will be analyzed. Alternatives identified to date for the MMPO include using different locations for waste rock storage and alternative reclamation measures. Alternatives identified to date for the possible public land disposal include exchange of private land for public land; how the public and private lands would be managed if these lands were exchanged, including analysis of potential impacts of conducting the mining operations identified in the proposed MMPO under the applicable statutory and regulatory authority; and possible variations in the amount of public land and/or restrictions on the public land that might be exchanged. The planning criteria for the RMP amendment would include that lands identified for disposal would serve the national interest and that newly acquired lands or interests in lands would be managed for their highest potential or for the purposes for which they were acquired.

By this notice, the BLM is complying with the requirements in 43 CFR 1610.2(c) to notify the public of potential amendments to land use plans, predicated on the analysis in the EIS. The BLM will integrate the land use planning process with the NEPA process for the EIS. The BLM will utilize and coordinate the NEPA commenting process to satisfy the public involvement for section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act (16 U.S.C. 470f) as provided for in 36 CFR 800.2(d)(3).

The BLM is the lead Federal agency for the NEPA analysis process and preparation of the EIS. The BLM anticipates that the Forest Service, the USACE; the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, the Idaho Department of Environmental Quality, and the Idaho Department of will be cooperating agencies. Other cooperating agencies may be identified during the scoping process.

Native American tribal consultation will be conducted in accordance with policy, and tribal concerns will be given due consideration, including impacts on Indian trust assets. Federal, State, and local agencies, along with other stakeholders that may be interested or affected by the proposed actions subject to the EIS are invited to participate in the scoping process and, if eligible, may request or be requested by the BLM to participate as a cooperating agency.

The public is invited to submit comments and resource information as well as identify issues, concerns and alternatives to be analyzed in the EIS. Public input should be as specific as

possible (*i.e.*, clearly articulate concerns and contentions) to best assist in the NEPA process. Before including your address, phone number, e-mail address, or other personal identifying information in your comment, you should be aware that your entire comment—including your personal identifying information—may be made publicly available at any time. While you may 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.

Authority: 42 U.S.C. 4321 et seq.; 33 CFR 325.3; 43 CFR 1610.2.

David Rosenkrance,
Field Manager.

[FR Doc. 2010-19054 Filed 8-2-10; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 4310-GG-P

DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

Bureau of Land Management

[LLCAD070000 L16100000.DP0000]

Notice of Re-Opening of Comment Period for the Draft Imperial Sand Dunes Recreation Area Management Plan and Draft Environmental Impact Statement, California

AGENCY: Bureau of Land Management, Interior.

ACTION: Notice.

SUMMARY: The Bureau of Land Management (BLM) announces the re-opening of the comment period on the Draft Imperial Sand Dunes Recreation Area Management Plan (RAMP) and Draft Environmental Impact Statement (EIS). The original notice published in the **Federal Register** on March 26, 2010 [75 FR 14623] provided for a comment period ending on June 24, 2010. The BLM is re-opening the comment period to end on August 9, 2010.

DATES: To assure that comments will be considered, the BLM must receive written comments on the Draft RAMP/EIS by August 9, 2010.

ADDRESSES: You may submit comments at the public meetings or by any of the following methods:

- *E-mail:* caisdrmp@ca.blm.gov.
- *Fax:* (760) 337-4490.
- *Mail:* 1661 So. 4th St., El Centro, California 92243.

Copies of the Draft Imperial Sand Dunes RAMP/EIS are available in the El Centro Field Office at the above address and at the BLM California State Office, 2800 Cottage Way, Sacramento, California 95825. Interested persons may also review the Draft Resource

PUBLIC NOTICE – IMPORTANT CORRECTION
Environmental Impact Statement
REQUEST FOR COMMENTS

Thompson Creek Mine Expansion and Land Exchange

IMPORTANT CORRECTION: The e-mail address (tcm_eis@jbr.com) originally provided for submitting public comments in electronic format is incorrect. Please use **tcm_eis@jbrenv.com** instead. If you have already sent comments to the incorrect e-mail address, please re-send your comments to **tcm_eis@jbrenv.com**.

The Bureau of Land Management (BLM), Idaho Falls District, Challis Field Office and the U.S. Forest Service, Salmon-Challis National Forest (Forest Service) solicit your written comments (including resource information and the identification of issues, concerns and alternatives) regarding 1) a proposed Amended Plan of Operations (APOO) that would allow an extension of the life of the Thompson Creek Molybdenum mine, and 2) exchange of public land administered by the BLM for private land controlled by Thompson Creek Mining Company (TCMC). You are also invited to notify the BLM of any liens, encumbrances, or other claims relating to the lands proposed for exchange. The BLM is preparing an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) to analyze the impacts of the proposed Federal actions (Proposed Action) in response to the two proposals. The EIS will also analyze the No Action Alternative and other alternatives that may be developed during scoping.

The EIS will be prepared in cooperation with the Forest Service, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, Idaho Department of Environmental Quality, and Idaho Department of Lands. Other cooperating agencies may be identified through the scoping process. Your comments will guide the development of the EIS, including the identification of relevant issues and possible alternatives.

The mine is 7 miles northwest of Clayton and 21 miles southwest of Challis in Custer County, Idaho. The APOO proposes new surface disturbance on approximately 85 acres of private land and 360 acres on Federal lands administered by the BLM and Forest Service. The proposed land exchange involves approximately 5,000 acres of public land administered by the BLM and approximately 900 acres of private land owned by TCMC, which possesses resource qualities considered to be of significant value to the public. The public land contains the southern portion of the mine and adjacent area, including access roads and utility corridors. The private land consists of the Broken Wing Ranch, 6 miles northeast of Clayton in Custer County, Idaho, and the Garden Creek property, 16 miles south of Pocatello in Bannock County, Idaho.

Implementation of the APOO would require approval by the BLM and Forest Service, and a permit to discharge fill materials into waters of the United States from the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers under Section 404 of the Clean Water Act. Implementation of the land exchange would require approval by the BLM, as well as the amendment of the 1999 Challis Resource Management Plan to identify the public land involved in the land exchange as suitable for exchange pursuant to Section 206 of the Federal Land Policy Management Act. Hence, the Proposed Action comprises five separate but related Federal actions, all of which will be

analyzed in the EIS: 1) the BLM will process the proposed APOO pursuant to 43 CFR 3809, the proposed land exchange pursuant to 43 CFR 2200, and the proposed Resource Management Plan amendment pursuant to 43 CFR 1600; 2) the Forest Service will process the APOO pursuant to 36 CFR 228; and 3) the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers will process a Section 404 permit for the APOO pursuant to 33 CFR 320 *et seq.*

The BLM will maintain a mailing list for the project. The parties in the mailing list will receive the Records of Decision and be notified of the availability of the Draft EIS and Final EIS. A draft EIS is expected to be made available to the public during fall or winter of 2010. A final EIS is expected to be made available to the public during fall 2011. Parties wishing to be included in the mailing list or to comment on the Proposed Action may do so by sending their contact information and/or comments to the following address:

Thompson Creek Mine EIS
c/o Brian Buck
JBR Environmental Consultants
8160 South Highland Drive
Sandy, Utah 84093.

To be most useful, please submit your comments by 1 September 2010, and make your comments as specific as possible. Your comments may also be delivered personally to the BLM Challis Field Office, sent by facsimile to the attention of Brian Buck at (801) 942-1852, or sent electronically to **tcm_eis@jbrenv.com** using any widely available electronic format such as .doc, .pdf, .rtf, .txt, etc. The public may examine materials pertinent to the Proposed Action, including a project description, at the BLM Challis Field Office, 1151 Blue Mountain Road, Challis, Idaho during 7:45 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., Mountain Time, Monday through Friday, except holidays. These materials will also be available on the Web at **<http://www.blm.gov/id/st/en/prog/0.html>**. Individuals who use telecommunication devices for the deaf (TDD) may call the Federal Information Relay Service (FIRS) at (800) 877-8339 between 8 a.m. and 8 p.m., Eastern Time, Monday through Friday.

Before including your address, phone number, e mail address, or other personal identifying information in your comment, you should be aware that your entire comment – including your personal identifying information – will be part of the public record for the project, and may be made publicly available at any time. While you may 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.

You are also invited to attend one of the public open house meetings to view information on the project, ask questions about the project, and provide written scoping comments:

August 23, 2010: 6 PM to 8 PM, BLM Boise District Office, 3948 S. Development Ave., Boise, ID 83705

August 24, 2010: 6 PM to 8 PM, Challis Middle School, 700 Main Street, Challis, ID 83226

For further project information contact: Ken Gardner, Project Lead, BLM Challis Field Office, 1151 Blue Mountain Road, Challis, Idaho 83226, (208) 879-6210.



Release Date: 08/11/10

Contacts: Sarah Wheeler, 208-524-7550

Agencies Seek Public Input on Proposed Thompson Creek Mine Expansion, Section 404 Clean Water Act Permit Application, and Public Land Disposal

IMPORTANT CORRECTION - The e-mail address (tcm_eis@jbr.com) originally provided for submitting public comments in electronic format is incorrect. Please use tcm_eis@jbrenv.com instead. If you have already sent comments to the incorrect e-mail address, please re-send your comments to tcm_eis@jbrenv.com.

CHALLIS, Idaho – The Bureau of Land Management (BLM) Challis Field Office in cooperation with the U.S. Forest Service Salmon-Challis National Forest, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE), U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), Idaho Department of Environmental Quality, and Idaho Department of Lands intend to prepare an environmental impact statement (EIS) to analyze the potential environmental effects of a modified mining plan of operations (MMPO) and Section 404 Clean Water Act permit application for the Thompson Creek molybdenum mine and a related public land disposal.

Thompson Creek Mining Company has submitted the MMPO and water permit application to obtain authorization to expand two existing waste rock storage facilities and the tailings impoundment, update the long-term water management plan, and disturb additional wetlands and waters of the United States. Approval of the MMPO by the BLM and Forest Service, and issuance of a 404 permit by the USACE would allow the mine to continue operations until approximately 2030. The mine is currently permitted for approximately 3,400 acres of surface disturbance, and the MMPO would require additional permitted surface disturbance on approximately 350 acres of Federal lands and approximately 80 acres of private land. The Federal lands are administered by the BLM and the Forest Service.

Thompson Creek Mining Company has also proposed a land exchange involving approximately 5,000 acres of public land administered by the BLM Challis Field Office and approximately 900 acres of private lands owned by the company. The public land proposed for exchange contains the southern portion of the mine. The private lands proposed for exchange consists of the Broken Wing Ranch, six miles northeast of Clayton, and the Garden Creek property, 16 miles south of Pocatello in Bannock County, Idaho. In response, the BLM proposes to amend the 1999 Challis Resource Management Plan to identify the public land in the proposed exchange as suitable for disposal pursuant to the Federal Land Policy and Management Act of 1976, as amended.

The EIS will be the basis for the BLM and Forest Service to issue decisions regarding the portions of the MMPO for which each agency has jurisdiction, the USACE to issue a decision regarding a 404 permit for the mine, and the BLM to issue a decision regarding the amendment of the Challis Resource Management Plan and a decision regarding the related land disposal action. The EPA, Idaho Department of Environmental Quality, and Idaho Department of Lands will cooperate in the preparation of the EIS to ensure that the preferred alternative complies with all relevant and applicable laws, regulations and policies.

Publication of the Notice of Intent in today's Federal Register initiates a 30-day scoping period during which the public is invited to review and provide input on the issues surrounding the proposals. Two public meetings have been scheduled at the following locations and times:

- BLM Boise District Office Monday, August 23, 2010 6 p.m. to 8 p.m.
3948 Development Avenue, Boise, Idaho
- Challis Middle School Tuesday, August 24, 2010 6 p.m. to 8 p.m.
700 Main Street, Challis, Idaho

Please send written comments to Thompson Creek Mine EIS, c/o Brian Buck, JBR Environmental Consultants, 8160 South Highland Drive, Sandy, Utah 84093. Comments may also be delivered personally to the BLM Challis Field Office, sent by facsimile to the attention of Brian Buck at (801) 942-1852, or sent electronically to tcm_eis@jbrenv.com. The public may review documents pertinent to the proposed actions at the BLM Challis Field Office, 1151 Blue Mountain Road, Challis, Idaho, from 7:45 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., Mountain Time, Monday through Friday, except Federal holidays. Project information and documents will also be available online at <http://www.blm.gov/id/st/en/prog/0.html>.

Construction of the Thompson Creek molybdenum mine began in 1981, and it has been commercially producing molybdenum concentrate since November 1983. Mining is currently authorized through approximately 2016 at the rate of approximately 30,000 tons per day of ore. The proposed mine expansion would allow molybdenum production to continue to approximately 2030. Under the MMPO, mine production would continue to be approximately 30,000 tons per day of ore (15-20 million pounds of molybdenum per year).

The BLM manages more land - more than 245 million acres - than any other Federal agency. This land, known as the National System of Public Lands, is primarily located in 12 Western states, including Alaska. The Bureau, with a budget of about \$1 billion, also administers 700 million acres of sub-surface mineral estate throughout the nation. The BLM's multiple-use mission is to sustain the health and productivity of the public lands for the use and enjoyment of present and future generations. The Bureau accomplishes this by managing such activities as outdoor recreation, livestock grazing, mineral development, and energy production, and by conserving natural, historical, cultural, and other resources on public lands.

--BLM--

Last updated: 08-11-2010

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**United States Department of
the Interior**

BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT
Idaho Falls District
1405 Hollipark Drive
Idaho Falls, Idaho 83401

**United States Department of
Agriculture**

FOREST SERVICE
Salmon-Challis National Forest
Forest Supervisor's Office
1206 S. Challis Street
Salmon, Idaho 83467

In Reply Refer To:

BLM: 2200/3809/8120/IDI-33145/IDI-35728 (IDI030)

FS: 1950/2800

August 3, 2010

SCOPING LETTER

**Thompson Creek Mine Expansion and Land Exchange
Environmental Impact Statement**

Dear Interested or Potentially Interested Party:

The Bureau of Land Management (BLM), Idaho Falls District, Challis Field Office and the U.S. Forest Service, Salmon-Challis National Forest (Forest Service) solicit your written comments, including resource information, regarding a proposed 1) Amended Plan of Operations (APOO) that would allow an extension of the life of the Thompson Creek Molybdenum mine, and 2) exchange of public land administered by the BLM for private land owned by Thompson Creek Mining Company (TCMC). The BLM is preparing an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) to analyze the impacts of the proposed Federal actions in response to the two proposals. The EIS will be prepared in cooperation with the Forest Service, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, Idaho Department of Environmental Quality, and Idaho Department of Lands. Other cooperating agencies may be identified through the scoping process. Your comments will guide the development of the EIS, including the identification of relevant issues and possible alternatives. You are receiving this letter because either you have indicated you are interested in one or both of the proposals or you have been interested in the past in Federal actions in Custer County, Idaho.

The mine is 7 miles northwest of Clayton and 21 miles southwest of Challis in Custer County, Idaho. The APOO proposes new surface disturbance on approximately 85 acres of private land and 360 acres of Federal lands administered by the BLM and Forest Service. The proposed land exchange involves approximately 5,000 acres of public land administered by the BLM and approximately 900 acres of private land owned by TCMC, which possesses resource qualities considered to be of significant value to the public. The public land contains the southern portion of the mine and adjacent area, including access roads and utility corridors. The private land consists of the Broken Wing Ranch, 6 miles northeast of Clayton in Custer County, Idaho, and the Garden Creek property, 16 miles south of Pocatello in Bannock County, Idaho.

Details of the two proposals are provided in the enclosed project description and maps. Implementation of the APOO would require approval of portions of the APOO by the BLM and Forest Service, and a permit to discharge fill materials into waters of the United States from the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers under section 404 of the Clean Water Act. Implementation of the land exchange would require approval by the BLM, as well as the amendment of the 1999 Challis Resource Management Plan to identify the public land involved in the land exchange as suitable for exchange pursuant to section 206 of the Federal Land Policy Management Act.

In addition to analyzing the impacts of the proposed Federal actions, the EIS will also analyze the No Action Alternative and other alternatives that may be developed during scoping. To be most useful, your scoping comments should be as specific as possible and provided to the BLM by 1 September 2010. If you wish to remain on the project mailing list, please complete the relevant parts of the enclosed comment form and return it to the address indicated. You will be notified when the Draft EIS, Final EIS, and Records of Decision are available if you remain on the EIS mailing list.

The comment form also contains instructions for additional methods of providing your comments to the BLM. The public may examine information about the project at the BLM Challis Field Office at the address in the letterhead during 7:45 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., Mountain Time, Monday through Friday, except holidays. Project information will also be available on the BLM website at <http://www.blm.gov/id/st/en/prog/0.html>. You are also invited to attend one of the public open house meetings to view information on the project, ask questions about the project, and provide written scoping comments:

August 23, 2010: 6 PM to 8 PM, BLM Boise District Office, 3948 S. Development Ave., Boise, ID 83705

August 24, 2010: 6 PM to 8 PM, Challis Middle School, 700 Main Street, Challis, ID 83226

For further project information contact Ken Gardner, Project Lead, BLM Challis Field Office, 1151 Blue Mountain Road, Challis, Idaho 83226, (208) 879-6210.

Sincerely,



Joe Kraayenbrink
Idaho Falls District Manager,
Bureau of Land Management,
Department of the Interior



For

Frank Guzman
Salmon-Challis Forest Supervisor,
Forest Service,
Department of Agriculture

Enclosures:

Project Description
Comment Form
(2) Maps



Thompson Creek Mine Expansion and Land Exchange Explanation of the NEPA Process



What is NEPA?

The National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) requires an environmental review of major Federal actions that have the potential to significantly affect the quality of the human environment. The purpose of the NEPA is to ensure that environmental considerations are incorporated into Federal decision-making. The two primary objectives of the NEPA are (1) agencies must have available and fully consider detailed information regarding environmental effects at the time a decision is made; and (2) agencies must make the same information available to interested and/or affected persons, agencies, and organizations before decisions are made and before actions are taken. In some instances, NEPA requires the preparation of an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) to analyze the environmental effects of a proposed Federal action.

Why Does NEPA apply to the Thompson Creek Mine Expansion and Land Exchange?

The Bureau of Land Management (BLM) and U.S. Forest Service (Forest Service) have determined that approval of the mine expansion or land exchange proposed by Thompson Creek Mining Company (TCMC) could have a significant impact on the environment, and that consequently an EIS is required.

What is the NEPA Process for the Project?

- 1) During December 2008 and January 2009 TCMC submitted an amended plan of operations (APOO) for the proposed mine expansion to the BLM, Forest Service, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE), U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), Idaho Department of Environmental Quality (IDEQ), and Idaho Department of Lands (IDL). A revised APOO was submitted in October 2009. In February 2009, TCMC proposed a land exchange offering the United States title to approximately 900 acres of private lands, which possess resources qualities considered to be of significant value to the public. In exchange, TCMC selected approximately 5,000 acres of BLM-administered land that TCMC wishes to acquire. The selected land contains the southern portion of the mine.
- 2) In response to TCMC's proposals, the EIS will evaluate five separate but related proposed Federal actions: 1) the BLM will decide whether to approve the portion of the APOO involving BLM-administered land under BLM regulations at 43 CFR 3809, 2) the Forest Service will decide whether to approve the portion of the APOO involving National Forest System land under Forest Service regulations at 36 CFR 228, Subpart A, 3) the USACE will decide whether to issue a permit under section 404 of the CWA and USACE regulations at 33 CFR 320 to discharge fill materials into waters of the United States in relation to the APOO, 4) the BLM will decide whether to amend the BLM 1999 Challis Resource Management Plan pursuant to section 202 of the Federal Land Policy Management Act (FLPMA) and BLM regulations at 43 CFR 1600, and identify the Federal involved in the proposed land exchange as suitable for disposal, and 5) the BLM will decide whether to approve a land disposal action pursuant to 43 CFR 2200 (land exchange) or 43 CFR 2700 (land sale).
- 3) Other non-NEPA actions related to the APOO include the issuance of stream channel alteration permit(s) by the Idaho Department of Water Resources pursuant to the Idaho Stream Channel Protection Act, issuance of a water quality certification decision by the IDEQ pursuant to section 401 of the Clean Water

Act, and IDL approval of the portion of the APOO for which the IDL has jurisdiction pursuant to the Idaho Surface Mining Act.

- 4) The BLM will be the lead agency for the preparation of the EIS and compliance with NEPA in cooperation with the Forest Service and other cooperating agencies including the USACE, EPA, IDEQ, and IDL. The BLM will direct the preparation of the EIS by a third-party contractor, JBR Environmental Consultants.
- 5) An internal (agency) scoping meeting occurred on November 24, 2009 in which meaningful issues and preliminary feasible alternatives were identified.
- 6) The public scoping process began on August 3, 2010 with publication of a Notice of Intent (NOI) in the Federal Register. The scoping notice was also provided to the media in Idaho by a BLM news release, publication in the legal notice sections of The Challis Messenger and The Idaho Statesman newspapers, posting on the BLM website, and mailing of the scoping notice to parties that have been previously interested in BLM, Forest Service or USACE projects in Custer County, as well as additional parties that might be interested in the project, e.g., adjacent land owners or land managers.
- 7) The publication of the NOI began a 30-day public scoping period during which two public meetings will be held. The public meetings will be in an open house format with poster exhibits, knowledgeable personnel to answer questions about the project, and a forum for commenting on the project. One meeting will be at the BLM Boise District Office, 3948 Development Avenue, Boise, Idaho from 6:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m. on August 23, 2010. The second meeting will be at the Challis Middle School, 700 Main Street, Challis, Idaho from 6:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m. on August 24, 2010. The dates and times of these meetings will be announced once the 30-day public scoping period begins, and at least 15 days before the meetings are held.
- 8) Written comments, resource information, or concerns regarding the EIS may be submitted in person during one of the public meetings. Such information may also be mailed to Thompson Creek Mine EIS c/o Brian Buck, JBR Environmental Consultants, 8160 South Highland Drive, Sandy, Utah 84093. The information may also be delivered personally to the BLM Challis Field Office, sent by facsimile (please reference "Thompson Creek Mine EIS" on the cover page) to the attention of Brian Buck at (801) 942-1852, or sent electronically to tcm_eis@jbrenv.com.
- 9) The public may examine documents pertinent to the Proposed Action at the BLM Challis Field Office, 1151 Blue Mountain Road, Challis, Idaho during 7:45 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., Mountain Time, Monday through Friday, except holidays. Project information and NEPA documents will be available on the Web at <http://www.blm.gov/id/st/en/prog/0.html>. Individuals who use telecommunication devices for the deaf (TDD) may call the Federal Information Relay Service (FIRS) at (800) 877 8339 between 8 a.m. and 8 p.m., Eastern Time, Monday through Friday.
- 10) Public input will be used to develop a range of alternatives and identify meaningful issues for environmental analysis. A scoping report will subsequently be prepared describing both the agency and public scoping input, major issues to be evaluated in the analysis, alternatives considered, and alternatives to be evaluated in the EIS. The report will be available per item 9, and will also be provided to all persons on the NEPA mailing list for the project. Persons who provide scoping input, as well as anyone who at any time provides notice of their interest in the project, will be included on the NEPA mailing list.
- 11) Existing information and studies will be conducted as required to characterize the existing conditions of the environment at the project site. A draft EIS (DEIS) will be prepared which describes the Proposed Action and alternatives, and the baseline (existing) environmental conditions. The DEIS will also evaluate

the potential environmental impacts of the Proposed Action and alternatives to a wide range of environmental and social resources. In addition, mitigation to reduce impacts will be evaluated. The impacts analysis will also include an evaluation of cumulative impacts, i.e., the impacts on the environment that result from the incremental impact of an action when added to other past, present, and reasonably foreseeable actions. The DEIS will also describe consultation and coordination efforts that have occurred as part of the project. The DEIS is expected to be available to the public during late 2011.

- 12) When the DEIS is completed, a Notice of Availability (NOA) will be published in the Federal Register to begin a 90-day public comment period on the DEIS. A news release regarding the availability of the DEIS will also be provided to the Idaho media, and the NOA will be published in The Challis Messenger and The Idaho Statesman newspapers. Copies of the DEIS will be available per item 9, and will be provided to all persons on the NEPA mailing list. During the comment period, public meetings will be held on the DEIS in the same cities as were held the public meetings during scoping process.
- 13) Comments on the DEIS received from other agencies and the public during the comment period will be reviewed and addressed in the final EIS (FEIS). The FEIS will identify the preferred alternative of the agencies. The FEIS is expected to be available to the public during late 2012.
- 14) When the FEIS is completed, an NOA will be published in the Federal Register to begin a 30-day availability period for the FEIS. A news release regarding the availability of the FEIS will also be provided to the Idaho media, and the NOA will be published in The Challis Messenger and The Idaho Statesman newspapers. Copies of the FEIS will be available per item 9, and will be provided to all persons on the NEPA mailing list. Although the availability period is not a formal public comment period, the public may provide comments on the FEIS.
- 15) The BLM will consider public comments on the FEIS, and determine if any such comments would require the preparation of a supplemental EIS. The BLM, Forest Service, and USACE will consider all public comments received during the availability period and may address the comments on the FEIS in their respective Records of Decision (RODs). The BLM, Forest Service, and USACE will each complete a ROD based on the FEIS (or any supplemental EIS) and according to their respective jurisdictions. The RODs will document and discuss each agency's selected alternative, the environmentally preferable alternative (if different from the selected alternative), and any accompanying mitigation measures. The RODs are expected to be available to the public during late 2012.
- 16) A news release(s) regarding the availability of the RODs will be provided to the Idaho media, and published in The Challis Messenger and The Idaho Statesman newspapers. Copies of the RODs will be available per item 9, and will be provided to all persons on the NEPA mailing list. The RODs will be issued in full force and effect, and thus cannot be issued until at least 30 days after publication of the NOA for the FEIS and at least 90 days after release of the DEIS. A party adversely affected by a decision in a ROD may appeal the decision according to the applicable regulations, which will be noted in each ROD.

How Can I Stay Involved?

Attend a scoping meeting. Add your name to the project mailing list. Fill out a comment sheet and return it for consideration by the BLM.

Whom Can I Contact if I Have Any Questions?

Should you have any questions, please contact: Ken Gardner, Project Lead, BLM Challis Field Office, 1151 Blue Mountain Road, Challis, Idaho 83226. Mr. Gardner may also be contacted at (208) 879-6210.



Thompson Creek Mine Expansion and Land Exchange Environmental Impact Statement



SCOPING COMMENT SHEET

Informed decisions are better decisions: The Bureau of Land Management (BLM), U.S. Forest Service and other cooperating agencies believe that public involvement will serve to improve communication, develop enhanced understanding of different perspectives, and identify solutions to issues and problems. We look forward to hearing from you!.

How to provide public input:

- 1) deliver the form in person to the BLM Challis Field Office at 1151 Blue Mountain Road, Challis, Idaho,
- 2) deliver the form in person to a public scoping meeting,
- 3) mail the form to the address on the reverse,
- 4) send the form by facsimile to the attention of Brian Buck at (801) 942-1852, or
- 5) provide your input to **tcm_eis@jbrenv.com** using any widely available electronic format such as .doc, .pdf, .rtf, .txt, etc.

Name _____ County _____

Title _____ Organization _____

Mailing Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Email _____

Date _____ Meeting Location (if applicable) _____

Please check box if you want to be on the mailing list for future updates and notifications for this project. The Draft EIS will be posted on the BLM Challis Field Office website. You will be notified when it is available.

Please check box if you want to receive a copy of the Draft EIS (on CD) in the mail.

COMMENT *(use back side if you need additional space or attach additional sheets)*

Please check box if you do **not** want your name released when comments are made public.

Comments, including names, street addresses, e-mail addresses, and phone numbers (if provided) of respondents will be available for public review at the BLM Challis Field Office during regular business hours (7:45 am to 4:30 pm), Monday through Friday, except holidays. Before including your address, phone number, e-mail address, or other personal identifying information in your comment, you should be aware 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.

Thompson Creek Mine EIS
c/o Brian Buck
JBR Environmental Consultants
8160 S. Highland Drive
Sandy, Utah 84093

Place
Stamp
Here

From:

Thank you for your comment!

To return via mail:

Fold in thirds so address is visible,
add postage, tape bottom of fold, and mail.

Comment continued:



Thompson Creek Mine Environmental Impact Statement: Mine Expansion, 404 Permit, Land Use Plan Amendment, and Federal Land Disposal



PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Overview

Thompson Creek Mining Company (TCMC) has submitted an Amended Plan of Operations (APOO) to the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) Challis Field Office, the U.S. Forest Service, Salmon-Challis National Forest (Forest Service), and other cooperating agencies for an expansion (extension of mine life) of the Thompson Creek Molybdenum mine. TCMC also has proposed an exchange of BLM-administered land for private land owned by TCMC. The BLM and Forest Service have determined that approval of the APOO or the land exchange would be significant Federal actions requiring preparation of an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS).

Implementation of the APOO would also require the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) to issue a permit under section 404 of the Clean Water Act to discharge fill materials into waters of the United States in relation to the APOO. In addition, in response to the proposed land exchange, the BLM proposes to evaluate a Federal land disposal action (e.g., land exchange or land sale) and amendment of the 1999 Challis Resource Management Plan (RMP) to identify the Federal land involved in the exchange as suitable for disposal pursuant to the Federal Land Policy Management Act (FLPMA).

Consequently, the BLM, Forest Service and USACE will cooperate to prepare a single EIS which will be the basis for the agencies to issue decisions in response to TCMC's two proposals. The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), Idaho Department of Environmental Quality (IDEQ), and Idaho Department of Lands (IDL) will also cooperate in the preparation of the EIS to ensure that the Preferred Alternative is in compliance with the relevant laws, regulations, and policies.

Location

The APOO addresses the continued operation of the mine, located 7 miles northwest of Clayton and 21 air miles southwest of Challis in Custer County, Idaho. The mine is at an elevation of approximately 8,000 feet within the Squaw Creek and Thompson Creek watersheds, both of which drain to the Salmon River. The mine is currently permitted to disturb approximately 3,400 acres within a block of patented and unpatented mining claims comprising approximately 17,000 acres. The permitted surface disturbance comprises approximately 820 acres on BLM-administered land, 280 acres on National Forest System land, and 2,300 acres on private land. The patented claims (private land) comprise approximately 2,500 acres. The unpatented claims comprise approximately 6,000 acres on BLM-administered land and approximately

8,000 acres on National Forest System land. The APOO proposes additional surface disturbance on approximately 85 acres of private and 360 acres of Federal lands. The proposed disturbance is in addition to the area already disturbed by existing mine facilities, or permitted for future facilities.

History and Existing Operations

Cyprus Mines Corporation staked the first mining claims at the mine site in 1967. In 1979 Cyprus submitted a Notice of Intent to Operate and a Plan of Operations to the Forest Service and BLM. The Forest Service and BLM prepared a Final EIS and approved a plan of operations for the mine in 1980. Cyprus Mines Corporation was purchased by Standard Oil Company (Indiana) in 1979, which made the decision to build the mine for a cost of \$350 million. Mine construction began in 1981, and open pit mining began in 1983. Following several intervening transactions, the mine is currently owned by Cyprus Thompson Creek Mining Company, a wholly owned subsidiary of the operator (TCMC), which is a wholly owned subsidiary of Thompson Creek Metals Company, Inc.

The mine is currently in full production mining and milling approximately 30,000 tons per day of ore and removing 107,000 tons per day of overburden. It is cost prohibitive to remove all of the overburden to expose the entire ore body at once; therefore, through mine designs and planning, ore and overburden are removed from the open pit in phases. Currently, TCMC is mining ore in Phase 6 of the pit and removing overburden from Phase 7, the final phase currently approved and tentatively scheduled for completion in 2016. Current operations consist of a large open pit (5,200 feet long, 3,600 feet wide, 2,000 feet deep), two cross-valley-fill waste rock facilities (600 million tons), a tailings impoundment (550 feet high, 200 million tons), a mill, and a network of roads, pipelines, power lines, conveyor belts, sedimentation ponds, etc.

The mine is a conventional open pit hard rock mine, utilizing drilling and blasting to fragment the rock; electric shovels to excavate waste rock and ore; off-road diesel haul trucks and a conveyor to transport excavated materials; crushing, grinding, and flotation to process the ore; waste rock facilities; and a tailings impoundment for storage of mill tailings.

Samples of drill cuttings are assayed to differentiate ore from waste rock and determine the grade of the ore. The waste rock is analyzed to determine its total sulfur content, acid generation potential (AP), and neutralization potential (NP). Waste rock with an NP:AP ratio less than 1.5:1 and total sulfur greater than 0.10 percent is classified as acid generating, and is placed in either the Pat Hughes waste rock facility or a designated part of the Buckskin waste rock facility. Overburden and waste rock with an NP:AP ratio greater than or equal to 1.5:1 and total sulfur less than or equal to 0.10 percent is classified as non-acid generating material and can be disposed of at any waste rock facility.

Sedimentation ponds are located downgradient of each waste rock facility and the tailings impoundment to intercept runoff water and materials eroded from the faces of the waste rock facilities and tailings impoundment. The sedimentation ponds are monitored to ensure adequate storage capacity is maintained. Water can be discharged from the sedimentation ponds and related pipeline systems to five permitted National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System

(NPDES) discharge points (outfalls) to local drainages; however, only three of the discharge points are used at this time.

Ore from the open pit is hauled to the primary crusher, where it is reduced in size and then transported to the mill and concentrator by a belt conveyer. At the mill the crushed ore is finely ground and mixed with water in semi-autogenous grinding (SAG) and ball mills. The ground ore-water slurry is placed in cells with floatation reagents to separate the molybdenum disulfide from the ground rock. Some of the molybdenum disulfide is concentrated to a very high purity, ground to very precise particle sizes, and sold for use as a high temperature lubricant. However, most of the molybdenum disulfide concentrate is dried and shipped to the Langeloth, Pennsylvania conversion plant where the concentrate is converted to technical grade molybdenum trioxide. Small additions of molybdenum trioxide during the production of steel greatly improve the strength and toughness of the steel. Most of the molybdenum trioxide is utilized in that form, but some is further converted to ferromolybdenum or pure molybdenum metal.

After the molybdenum sulfide has been removed from the ore, the remaining ground rock slurry (tailings) is processed in the mill to remove most of the pyrite (potentially acid generating) from the tailings, which then flow through a pipeline to the tailings impoundment 7,000 feet to the north in the Bruno Creek drainage. The pyrite concentrates are disposed of in a specific area of the tailings impoundment where they will remain under water and do not oxidize. During non-freezing months, the pyrite-cleaned tailings pass through cyclone separators where the coarser (sand size) material is separated from the finer fraction and used in the continuing construction of the tailings embankment (dam). The coarse tailings are hydraulically placed on the outer face of the tailings dam to provide a slope of 3 horizontal to 1 vertical. The finer tailings are hydraulically placed behind the dam where the solids settle out from the water. During months of freezing temperatures, total tailings are deposited 600 feet upstream of the embankment. Systems of blanket and finger drains were constructed within and at the base of the tailings dam to drain the embankment (i.e., maintain the embankment in an unsaturated condition). Regardless, some water seeps into the soils and rock underlying the dam. To control and monitor the quality of water at the site, two systems were constructed: 1) a seepage return dam (SRD) (sedimentation pond) to capture surface water, and 2) a network of wells to monitor ground water around the perimeter of the impoundment. Water from the sedimentation pond is pumped to the impoundment or directly into the process water storage tank for the mill. Decanted water from the impoundment is recycled back to the mill process. Additional fresh water for the mine is pumped from the Salmon River in a pipeline along Thompson Creek to the mine.

Environmental controls and monitoring activities at the mine include the following:

- Fugitive dust suppression and point source emission controls;
- Erosion, runoff, and sedimentation controls according to best management practices with discharge of collected water through permitted NPDES outfalls;
- Prevention and control of petroleum and chemical spills;
- Waste rock monitoring, classification, and management;

- Selective management of pyrite in the tailings and acid generating waste rock;
- Regrading and re-vegetation of disturbed areas no longer required for operations;
- Monitoring and reporting for multiple environmental media according to approved plans;
- Compliance with a road maintenance and transportation plan to manage stormwater runoff and protect surface water quality; and
- Stability monitoring of the tailings dam, pit highwalls, and waste rock facilities.

Specific environmental compliance plans and a reclamation plan are in place. The reclamation plan was approved in 1999, and is the basis for periodic calculations of the estimated reclamation costs for the mine, and corresponding financial guarantees held by Federal and State agencies. The reclamation goals are to stabilize the topography and re-vegetate the site to reduce the potential for erosion and protect water quality, provide wildlife habitat that is similar to undisturbed areas, and eliminate hazards to public safety. Procedures used to stabilize the topography and reduce erosion include a combination of various procedures such as re-contouring, benching, capping, re-vegetating, riprap, and diversions. Re-vegetation focuses on restoring disturbed areas to a mix of sagebrush grasslands and coniferous forest; talus slopes, cliffs, and other rock outcrops; wetlands and wet meadows; and riparian vegetation. Criteria for successful reclamation are also outlined by habitat type in the reclamation plan.

Mine facilities with specific reclamation plans include the open pit, waste rock facilities, tailings impoundment, and roads. A general summary of these plans is as follows. Public access to the open pit will be restricted by blocking key access roads and placing warning signs around the pit perimeter. Rock benches in volcanic rock areas of the pit will be recontoured and volcanic rock distributed along the pit wall to reduce erosion and increase the potential for re-vegetation. Accessible areas will be seeded by hand and all other areas will be left bare. The faces of the waste rock facilities will also be left bare and faced with durable, non-acid generating material. The tops and lower angle areas of the waste rock facilities will be recontoured and re-vegetated to a mix of sagebrush grasslands and coniferous forest. Acid-generating waste rock facilities will be covered with an impermeable cap prior to re-vegetation. The tailings impoundment will also be capped and re-vegetated as wetland and wet meadow habitat. A small pond-wetland area will be constructed within the tailings impoundment. The tailings embankment itself will be terraced and re-vegetated as wetland-meadow habitat. Roads not needed following mine closure will be re-contoured and re-vegetated with grasses. Roads needed for reclamation, monitoring, and access to public lands will be narrowed.

The existing mine operations are supported by a variety of ancillary facilities and personnel. The support facilities include maintenance shops, warehouses, change houses, and administrative offices. The mine infrastructure includes systems to supply process and potable water, to dispose of solid waste, to treat sewage and water, and to distribute electrical power.

Personnel not directly involved in mining and ore processing perform management, safety, security, engineering, environmental monitoring and compliance, accounting, purchasing, human resources, and various other tasks. The mine generally employs approximately 350 (currently 375) full-time workers and operates 24 hours per day, 365 days per year.

Proposed (Federal) Action

In response to TCMC's two proposals, the EIS will evaluate five separate but related proposed Federal actions: 1) the BLM will decide whether to approve the portion of the APOO involving BLM-administered land under BLM regulations at 43 CFR 3809, 2) the Forest Service will decide whether to approve the portion of the APOO involving National Forest System land under Forest Service regulations at 36 CFR 228, Subpart A, 3) the USACE will decide whether to issue a permit under section 404 of the CWA and USACE regulations at 33 CFR 320 *et seq.* to discharge fill materials into waters of the United States in relation to the APOO, 4) the BLM will decide whether to amend the RMP pursuant to section 202 of the FLPMA and BLM regulations at 43 CFR 1600, and identify the Federal involved in the proposed land exchange as suitable for disposal, and 5) the BLM will decide whether to approve a land disposal action pursuant to 43 CFR 2200 (land exchange) or 43 CFR 2700 (land sale).

Purpose and Need

The purpose and need of the proposed Federal actions are for 1) the BLM to respond to TCMC's proposed APOO, which would enable TCMC to continue reasonable development of the existing mine as described in the APOO in compliance with BLM laws and regulations (FLPMA, 43 CFR 3809); 2) the Forest Service to similarly respond to the APOO in compliance with Forest Service laws and regulations (Organic Act of 1897; 36 CFR 228, Subpart A); 3) the USACE to respond to TCMC's application for a permit to disturb additional waters of the United States, as necessary in the APOO, in compliance with USACE laws and regulations (CWA, 33 CFR 320 *et seq.*); 4) the BLM to consider amending the RMP to allow a land disposal in compliance with section 102 of the FLPMA, and 5) the BLM to respond to TCMC's proposal for a land exchange and determine if a Federal land disposal would be in the public interest pursuant to the FLPMA.

However, the purpose and need of the proposed Federal actions are constrained by the purpose and need of the proponent's (TCMC) proposals. TCMC is expected to mine molybdenum on Federal land open to mineral entry pursuant to the General Mining Laws of the United States, and is allowed to propose a land exchange involving Federal land pursuant to section 206 of the FLPMA. TCMC proposed the APOO is to allow TCMC to continue to develop its molybdenum mine in a reasonable (economical, technologically feasible, and safe) manner. The APOO is necessary for TCMC to continue to supply national and worldwide demand for molybdenum until approximately 2025. TCMC proposed the land exchange primarily to consolidate its land position, so that TCMC may best manage the mine.

Proponent Proposals

In December 2008 and January 2009 TCMC submitted the APOO to the BLM, Forest Service and other cooperating agencies. In February 2009 TCMC proposed a land exchange with the BLM. A revised APOO was submitted in October 2009.

APOO

Under the APOO, mine production would continue to be approximately 30,000 tons per day of ore (15-20 million pounds of molybdenum per year), and TCMC would continue to directly employ approximately 350 full time employees through approximately 2025. The APOO describes the next phase of mining (subdivided into Phase 8 West and Phase 8 East) for which there are detailed designs. The APOO describes new surface disturbance including expansion of the open pit, expansion of existing waste rock facilities, and expansion of the tailings impoundment (figure 1). The APOO also describes proposed modifications to the existing long-term water management plan, all of which would utilize the existing NPDES permit.

Open Pit

Removal of overburden for Phase 8 West would begin in 2012 to supplement ore from Phase 7 and to provide ore for the mill at the completion of mining Phase 7 ore in March 2016. Overburden from Phase 8 West would be placed in the existing Buckskin and Pat Hughes waste rock facilities. The removal of overburden for Phase 8 West is scheduled to be completed in 2025. Phase 8 overburden removal would expose ore for processing in the mill. Ore production from Phase 8 West would supply the mill through 2025. The Phase 8 West pit expansion would be entirely on private land owned by TCMC.

Removal of overburden for the Phase 8 East would begin in 2013 and would progress concurrently with the Phase 8 West expansion. Phase 8 East would also supplement ore from Phase 7 and provide ore for the mill after Phase 7 completion. Overburden from Phase 8 East would be placed in the existing Buckskin and Pat Hughes waste rock facilities. Phase 8 East overburden removal is scheduled to be completed in 2022. Phase 8 East overburden removal would also expose ore for mill processing. Ore production from Phase 8 East would supply the mill through 2022. The Phase 8 East pit expansion would be entirely on private land owned by TCMC.

A portion (4,900 feet) of an existing 25 kV power line on National Forest System land would be relocated due to the removal of overburden in Phase 8. The relocated utility corridor (200 feet wide, 23 acres of surface disturbance) would be on a ridge between Bruno Creek and the head of the Pat Hughes Creek, and would pass through the upper portion of the Buckskin drainage. Existing power, pipeline and road corridors, approved by the plan of operations and-or by Special Use Permits and Right-of-Way agreements will require maintenance and possible replacement on an as-needed basis in the future.

Waste Rock Facilities

The Phase 8 designs (revised APOO) propose the removal and storage of approximately 263 million tons of waste rock, which would be stored in expansions of existing Buckskin and Pat Hughes waste rock facilities. These areas were selected for haul road accessibility (e.g., distance and gradient), low mineral potential, and geotechnical requirements.

Waste rock from the Phase 8 designs placed in the Buckskin waste rock facility would disturb an additional 77 acres, with 12 acres on private land, 52 acres on National Forest System land, and 13 acres on BLM-administered land. In comparison, the currently permitted footprint is approximately 700 acres. Waste rock from the Phase 8 designs placed in the Pat Hughes waste rock facility would cover an additional 184 acres (of which 165 acres would be on BLM-administered land and 19 acres on private land owned by TCMC) compared to the currently permitted footprint of approximately 380 acres.

Tailings Impoundment

Phase 8 East and Phase 8 West would require additional tailings storage capacity, which would be accomplished by raising and partially realigning the current tailings dam crest. Such would increase the capacity of the tailings impoundment by 100 to 125 million tons, which will provide adequate space for tailings through the Phase 8 designs. The tailings impoundment is currently permitted to store approximately 240 million tons of tailings.

Under the proposed modification, the left abutment of the dam centerline would be realigned to the southeast, as controlled by topography, and the elevation of the entire dam would continue to be raised to an elevation of 7,742 feet using cycloned tailings construction methods. To reduce the downgradient impacts and the amount of sand required for dam construction, a downgradient dam slope of 2.75 horizontal to 1 vertical is proposed to yield a stable structure. The elevation of the underlying rock toe dam would be raised to an elevation of 6,960 feet. Total surface disturbance of the tailing impoundment through the Phase 8 expansion would be 557 acres, with 516 acres on private land, 29 acres on National Forest System land, and 12 acres on BLM-administered land. In comparison, the currently permitted footprint of the tailings impoundment is approximately 490 acres.

Water Management

The Process Water Treatment Plant (PWTP) was constructed during the summer of 2009 to treat underdrain water from the Pat Hughes waste rock facility, Buckskin springs, and the open pit. While the mine is in operation, the main objective of the PWTP is to condition this water so that it is optimal for use as a mill fresh water feed source. The mill fresh water must have a neutral pH and low turbidity. The PWTP uses conventional lime treatment for pH control and clarifiers for solids removal. Disk type filters are used as a final polishing step. The resulting sludge is gravity fed to the tailings impoundment for permanent storage. Water is delivered to the PWTP as follows: runoff and underflow from the waste rock facilities is collected in underdrain systems and routed to the Thompson Creek pipeline and transported to the Cherry Creek storage tank for subsequent delivery to the water treatment feed tank. Pit water is pumped from the pit to a booster system which delivers the water to the water treatment feed tank. The water treatment feed tank is located above the PWTP at the mill. Water flows from the feed tank by gravity to the PWTP and, after treatment, is pumped to the fresh water storage tank for use in the mill. At the end of mine life or during any short-term closures, the water could be discharged at NPDES Outfall 002 or 005.

Outfall 005 is near the confluence of Thompson Creek and the Salmon River, and would primarily be used after mine closure to discharge water collected from outfalls 001 and 002 to the Salmon River.

The open pit intercepts small amounts of ground water at depth, as well as precipitation into the pit and small amounts of runoff water from adjacent areas during periods of snowmelt and precipitation. The pit dewatering system consists of several collection sumps at the bottom of the pit. Water is pumped from each of the sumps to the pit dewater pump station, where the water is pumped to the pit dewater booster station. The booster station pumps the water to the PWTP for use as fresh water in the milling process, as described above. Following mine closure, the pit would gradually fill with water, but some pit water could also be pumped to NPDES outfall 005.

Land Exchange

The proposed land exchange involves approximately 5,000 acres of Federal land (selected land) (figure 1) and approximately 900 acres of private land (offered land) owned by TCMC. The offered land possesses resource qualities considered to be of significant value to the public (figure 2). The selected land comprises all BLM-administered land in Sections 1 to 4, 9 to 12, T. 11 N., R. 16 E. and Sections 5 to 8, T. 11 N., R. 17 E., Boise Meridian, and contains the southern portion of the mine and adjacent area, including various access roads and power line and pipeline corridors. The offered land consists of the Broken Wing Ranch, 6 miles northeast of Clayton in Custer County, Idaho, and the Garden Creek property, 16 miles south of Pocatello in Bannock County, Idaho. The Garden Creek property contains some of the upper Garden Creek watershed, which drains to Marsh Creek and the Portneuf River. The Broken Wing Ranch borders both sides of sections of the Salmon River

Alternatives

The No Action alternatives (i.e., completion of mining and reclamation under the current mining plan of operations and no RMP amendment and land disposal action) will be analyzed. Alternatives identified to date for the APOO include using different locations for waste rock storage and different reclamation measures. Alternatives for the 404 permit must include evaluation of the least environmentally damaging practicable alternative that meets the basic purpose of the APOO.

The RMP identifies the Federal land (63,075 acres) available in the Challis Field Office area for disposal under the FLPMA. Such land does not include the Federal land in the proposed land exchange. Therefore, as part of the evaluation of the proposed land exchange, the BLM will evaluate amending the RMP to identify the Federal land in the land exchange as suitable for disposal pursuant to the FLPMA.¹ Consequently, a direct land sale would be an alternative to approving the proposed land exchange.

¹ The planning criteria for the RMP amendment would include that lands identified for disposal would serve the national interest and that newly acquired lands or interests in lands would be managed for their highest potential or for the purposes for which they were acquired.

A land exchange or direct land sale alternative could involve reductions in the amount of Federal land and-or restrictions on the Federal land that might be exchanged or sold. In addition, such alternatives could include how Federal and-or private lands would be managed and used under either a land exchange or direct land sale. For example, the Garden Creek property could be managed under the Pocatello RMP, i.e., no site-specific management for the property. In contrast, the Broken Wing Ranch could be managed according to the recommendations of the BLM Idaho Falls District Resource Advisory Committee (figure 2). Specifically, Parcel A would be managed for wildlife and fisheries with only non-motorized public access, and a goal to increase the flow of Lyon Creek to enhance fisheries and riparian resources, yet maintain the meadow. Parcel B would remain in agriculture, but the pond would be removed to eliminate a fish barrier along Lyon Creek. Parcel C would serve as a field school for Boise State University and partners, and-or would be used by others for environmental outreach programs. A portion of Parcels D, E and F would be used as a campground, interpretive site, or other recreational facility that generates revenue by the Idaho Department of Parks and Recreation or another agency. All structures on these parcels would be demolished. Parcels G, I and the portion of Parcel E not used for a revenue-generating facility would remain in agriculture, with the Sink Creek facilities used as manager housing. Parcel H (building in Lyon Creek meadow) would be used as an interpretive site managed by Custer County, Boise State University, and Idaho Parks and Recreation. Areas along the Salmon River would be planted with riparian vegetation to increase the width of the riparian zone, and would be fenced if livestock would be present.

TCMC expects to propose a land exchange with the Forest Service involving approximately 5,500 acres of National Forest System land that includes the northern portion of the mine. The EIS will not evaluate that land exchange as an action alternative, but the EIS will analyze some aspects of such potential exchange as a reasonably foreseeable, future action that may result in cumulative impacts when considered in relation to the proposed Federal actions.

Preliminary Resource Issues

The APOO, 404 permit and RMP amendment-land disposal involve issues related to natural resource values and uses of Federal and private land. Preliminary resource issues include potential impacts to air quality; surface and groundwater quality and quantity, water rights, and wetlands, floodplains, and riparian areas; fisheries; visual resources; vegetation and forest resources; wildlife (including threatened and endangered species and migratory birds); and recreation and transportation (public access). Other potential issues include, but are not limited to, cultural resources, including paleontological resources; existing and potential land uses; financial guarantees for site reclamation; Native American tribal treaty rights, interests and religious concerns; socioeconomic values; soil resources; and other issues that may be identified during public scoping.

Staying Informed and Involved

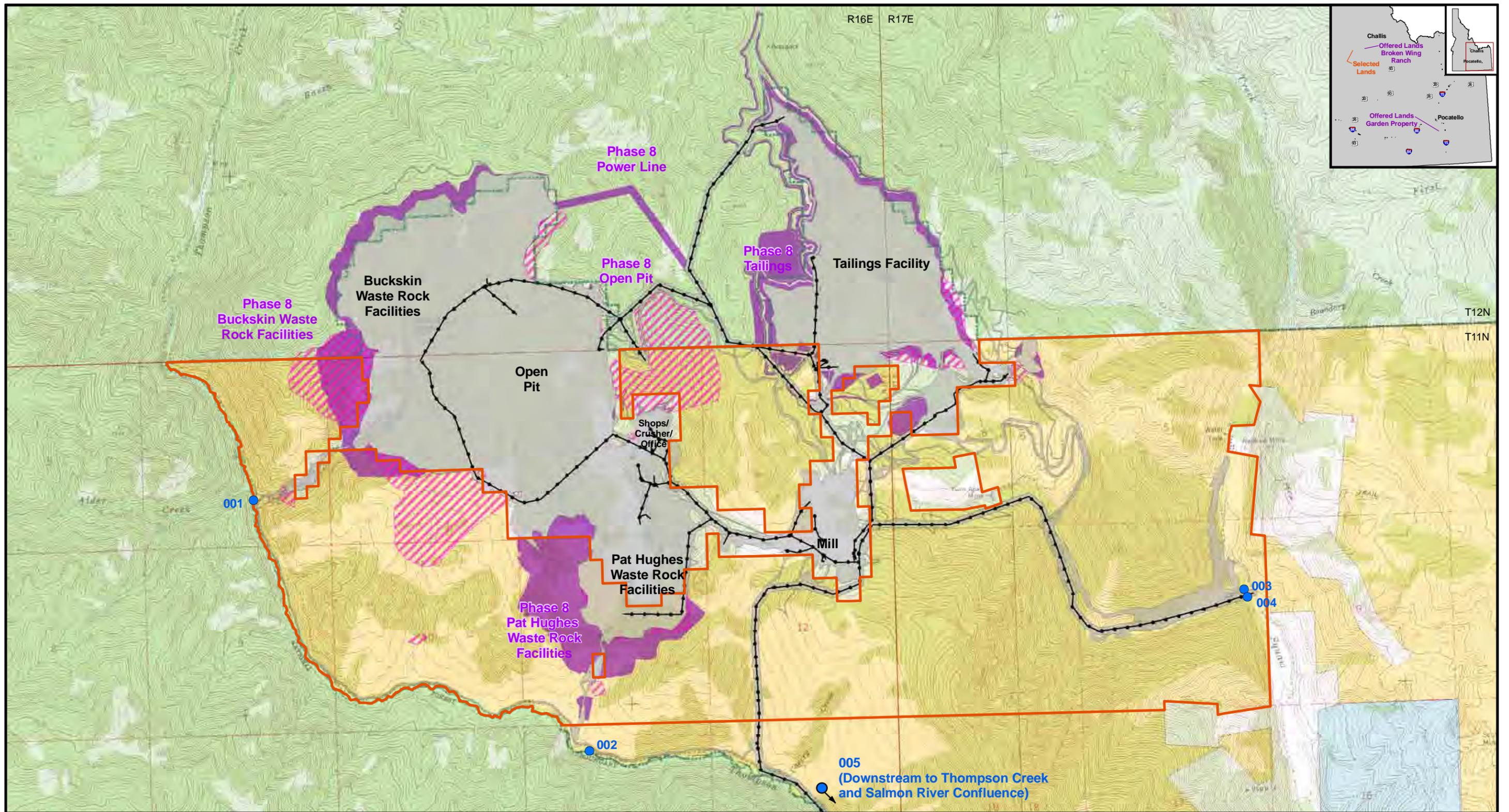
Notices regarding the project will be published in the Federal Register, The Challis Messenger and Idaho Statesman newspapers, and placed on the BLM website listed below, as well as released to the general news media in Idaho. The notices will inform the public of comment periods associated with the scoping for the Thompson Creek Mine EIS, and the release dates of

the Draft EIS and Final EIS. Dates, times, and locations of public meetings-open houses will be provided to the public at least 15 days in advance of such meetings-open houses.

The BLM will also develop a mailing list for the project. The parties on the mailing list will be contacted from time to time during the project to provide status updates and distribute copies of the Draft EIS, Final EIS and Records of Decision. Parties wishing to be included in the mailing list or to comment on the proposed Federal actions may do so by sending their contact information and-or comments, including resource information, to the following address:

Thompson Creek Mine EIS
c/o Brian Buck
JBR Environmental Consultants
8160 South Highland Drive
Sandy, Utah 84093.

Such information may also be delivered personally to the BLM Challis Field Office, sent by facsimile to the attention of Brian Buck at (801) 942-1852, or sent electronically to tcm_eis@jbrenv.com. The public may examine documents pertinent to the project at the BLM Challis Field Office, 1151 Blue Mountain Road, Challis, Idaho during 7:45 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., Mountain Time, Monday through Friday, except holidays. Project information will be available on the Web at <http://www.blm.gov/id/st/en/prog/0.html>. Individuals who use telecommunication devices for the deaf (TDD) may call the Federal Information Relay Service (FIRS) at (800) 877-8339 between 8 a.m. and 8 p.m., Eastern Time, Monday through Friday. For further project information please contact Ken Gardner, Project Lead, BLM Challis Field Office, 1151 Blue Mountain Road, Challis, Idaho 83226, (208) 879-6210.



Legend

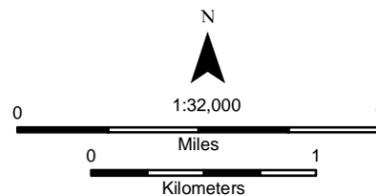
- Selected Lands
- Existing Mining Disturbance
- Undisturbed Existing Permitted Mining Area
- Phase 8 Expansion Areas
- Existing Power Line
- NPDES Outfall

NPDES - National Pollution Discharge Elimination System

Land Ownership

- Bureau of Land Management (BLM)
- Private
- State
- United State Forest Service (USFS)

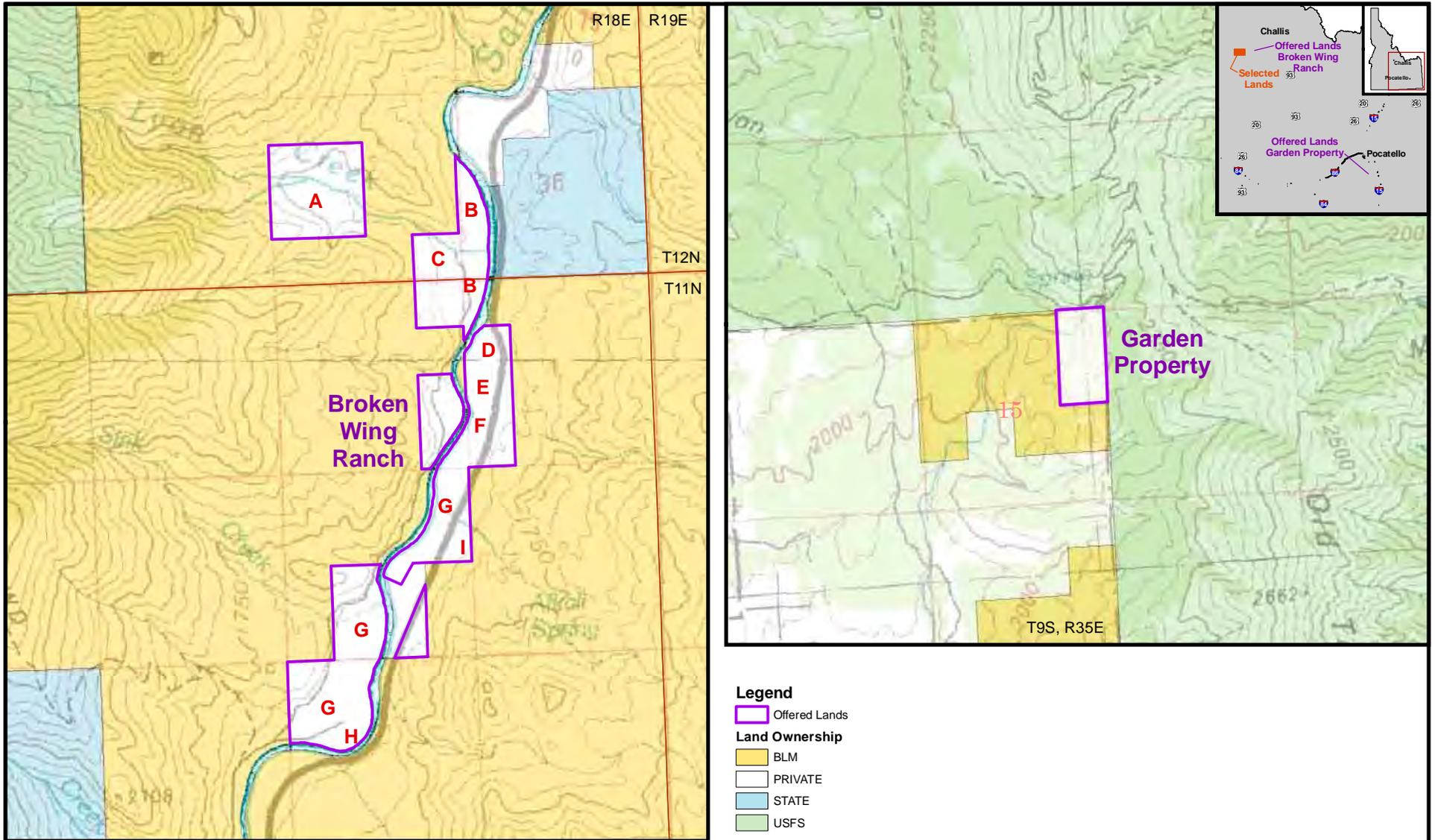
Selected land, existing mining disturbance, and Phase 8 expansion areas from Thompson Creek Mine data, polygons created by Ken Gardner. Ownership data is at 1:24,000 and created and maintained by the Bureau of Land Management, Idaho State Office, Geographic Sciences. Topographic background from USGS 7.5' Quadrangles 1:24,000 scale. Coordinate system UTM Zone 11 NAD 83



Map created January 24, 2010
By C. Pixton

No warranty is made by the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) for the use of this data for purposes not intended by the BLM.

Figure 1
Selected Lands and
Thompson Creek Mine Project Area
Thompson Creek Mine Expansion EIS



Ownership data is at 1:24,000 and created and maintained by the Bureau of Land Management, Idaho State Office, Geographic Sciences. Topographic background is USGS 1:100,000-scale metric Topographic Maps, White Clouds Peak and Pocatello, Idaho.

Map created November 13, 2009



No warranty is made by the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) for the use of this data for purposes not intended by the BLM.

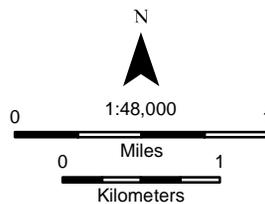
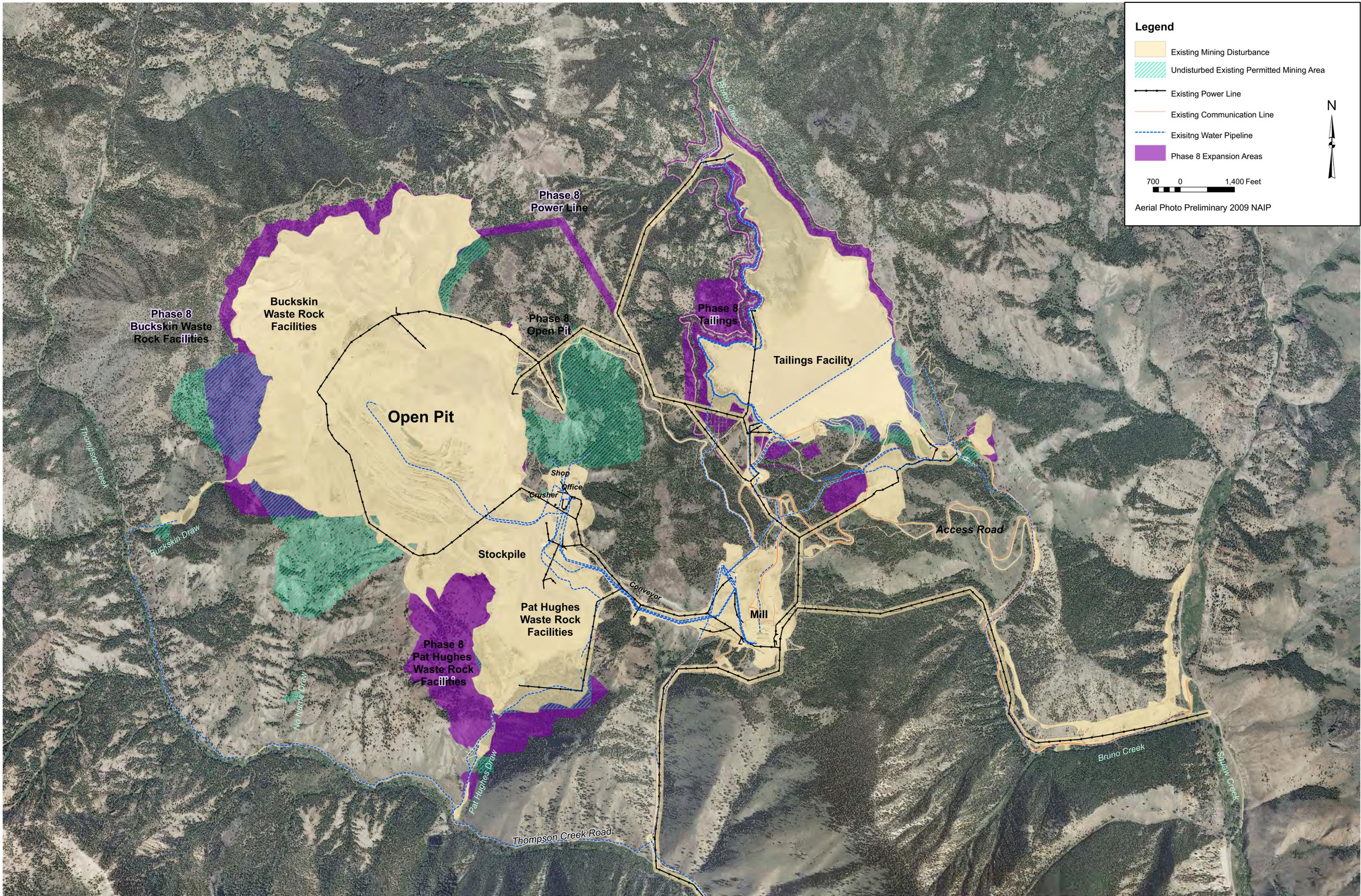


Figure 2
Offered Lands
Thompson Creek Mine Expansion EIS



Legend

- Existing Mining Disturbance
- Undisturbed Existing Permitted Mining Area
- Existing Power Line
- Existing Communication Line
- Existing Water Pipeline
- Phase 8 Expansion Areas

700 0 1,400 Feet

Aerial Photo Preliminary 2009 NAIP

Thompson Creek Mine Water Management

Operational water management at the mine is intended to control and recycle mine water whenever possible. Drainage from the waste rock facilities, open pit, and the tailings storage facility is collected in sumps and ponds and typically recycled through pipelines to be treated and used in the mill (blue lines). Water from the mill or tailings dam underdrains is disposed of in the tailings storage facility (red lines). Excess drainage from the waste rock facilities and mine roads (red lines) is released to Thompson Creek or Squaw Creek (primarily during periods of high precipitation or snowmelt) through permitted and monitored discharge points (numbered red arrows). Currently, no water is discharged to the Salmon River at 005 or to Squaw Creek at 004. At the end of operations, these mine water management systems will be maintained to route the collected water to the water treatment plant at the mill and subsequently release treated water through the established discharge points. Additional information on each discharge point is listed below.

001 – Discharge consists of seepage and runoff from the Buckskin waste rock facility, which overlies Buckskin Creek. The wastewater is collected in a sediment pond at the base of the waste rock facility, with overflow discharged to Buckskin Creek. Buckskin Creek enters Thompson Creek approximately 6.5 miles upstream from the confluence of Thompson Creek and the Salmon River. The average flow rate at 001 (based on data from 1995-2000) is 1.2 cubic feet per second (cfs). However, the creek is often dry during summer months. Due to selenium limits, when flow in Thompson Creek is less than 7 cfs, water is not discharged through 001. Instead, it is collected in the Thompson Creek pipeline and transported to the water treatment plant.

002 – Discharge consists of runoff from upper Pat Hughes Creek and the Pat Hughes waste rock facility, which overlies Pat Hughes Creek. Water flowing from beneath the waste rock facility is collected and transported through the Thompson Creek pipeline to the water treatment plant. Runoff and the diverted flow of upper Pat Hughes Creek is collected in the sediment pond, with overflow discharged to Pat Hughes Creek. Pat Hughes Creek enters Thompson Creek approximately 2.5 miles downstream of 001 and 4.0 miles upstream of the confluence of Thompson Creek and the Salmon River. The average flow rate at 002 (based on data from 1995-2000) is 0.7 cfs. However, the creek is dry during much of the year.

003 – Discharge consists of storm water runoff from the mill and mine roads. The storm water is collected in sediment ponds located in lower Bruno Creek. Overflow is discharge to Bruno Creek just above the confluence with Squaw Creek. The discharge peaks during May – July, with continuous low flow during the remainder of the year. The average flow rate at 003 (based on data from 1995-2000) is 1.1 cfs.

004 – Discharge will consist of seepage from the tailings impoundment that is currently collected and pumped back to the impoundment or to the mill for reuse. During normal milling operations and normal precipitation, there will be no discharge at 004. During temporary shutdowns, at the end of operation, or abnormally wet water years, water accumulates in the pond and must be discharge to maintain stability of the tailings impoundment dam.

005 – Discharge will consist of the same source as describe for 004 (tailings impoundment seepage) as well as wastewater from the open pit and effluent from outfalls 001 and/or 002. Water will be discharged directly to the Salmon River, just below the confluence with Thompson Creek. Discharge through 005 would reduce selenium concerns in Thompson Creek related to discharge from the Buckskin waste rock dump.

