



Bureau of Land Management
Ridgecrest Field Office

Proposed Mojave Exploration Drilling Project

Public Scoping Presentation



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

Topics covered

- I. NEPA Process Overview
- II. Scoping
- III. Proposed Project Overview
- IV. BLM Preliminary Issues and Resource Considerations
- V. How to Comment



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NEPA Process

Proponent Submitted Mojave Project Exploration Drilling – Plan of Operations Modification to BLM in February 2021

WE
ARE
HERE

Public Scoping Period & Presentation Availability
(7/30/2021/- 8/30/2021)

Prepare Project Description and Identify Project Alternatives

Describe Affected Environment, Analyze Impacts, and Identify Mitigation

Prepare Environmental Document

Public Review and Comment Period on Environmental Document

Respond to Public Comments and Finalize Environmental Document

Issue Decision



U.S. Department of the Interior
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Proposed Mojave Exploration Drilling Project- Public Scoping

COUNCIL ON ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY
EXECUTIVE OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT

A Citizen's Guide to NEPA

Having Your Voice Heard



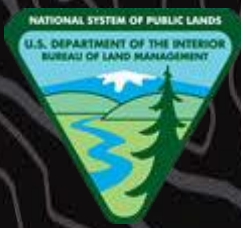
JANUARY 2021

<https://ceq.doe.gov/docs/get-involved/citizens-guide-to-nepa-2021.pdf>

Public Scoping –

The purpose of the scoping process is to gather information, issues, and concerns related to the Mojave Exploration Project from the public and stakeholders. The process can also include new data for resources.

This presentation is an excerpt of the Plan of Operations (PoO) submitted by the Proponent, Mojave Precious Metals (MPM). The entire PoO can be found online through the BLM ePlanning website at eplanning.blm.gov



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Proposed Mojave Exploration Drilling Project

PoO Overview

MOJAVE PROJECT EXPLORATION DRILLING

Plan of Operations CACA-056495 Modification



*MPM drilled-at the Dragonfly Target in
October 2020 within the footprint of a prior exploration roadway.*

PROPOSED PROJECT

MPM is proposing a modification to the approved PoO for additional exploration drilling on a portion of its mining claims termed the “Mojave Property.” The drilling would expand the geologic information in areas of known mineralization.

If approved, MPM would access and drill at up to 30 locations with an estimated 120 holes averaging 300 meters (984 feet) below ground surface along an exploration road developed and reclaimed between 1997 and 2000.

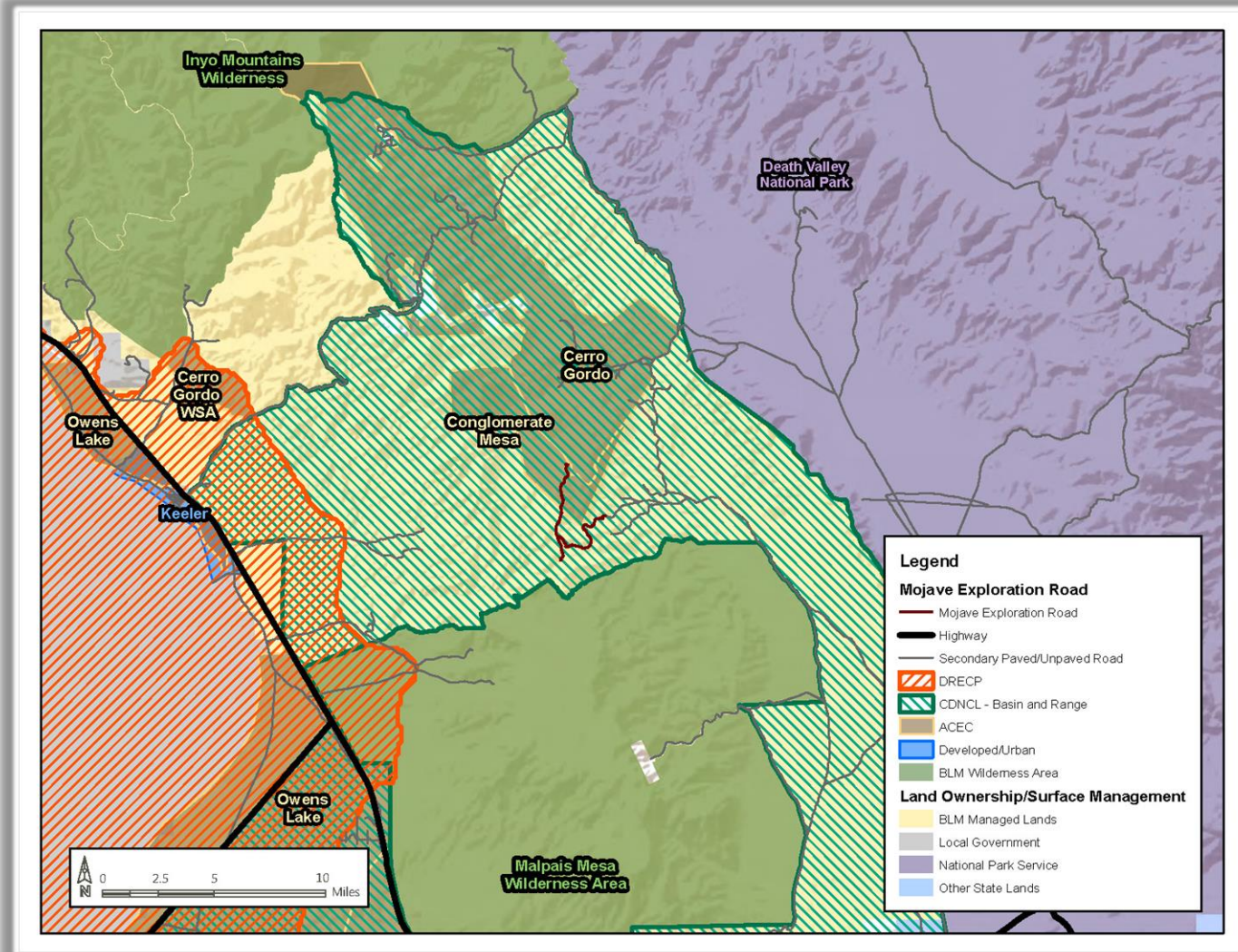
The proposed planned footprint of surface disturbance is largely consistent with a 2016 proposal that received full review under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) in an Environmental Assessment (DOI-BLM-CA-0050-2017-0037-EA).

PROJECT LOCATION



The exploration project is in west-central Inyo County in the southern Inyo Mountains approximately 3.4 miles east of Keeler, CA and 15.5 miles southeast of Lone Pine.

SITE AND SURROUNDING LAND MANAGEMENT

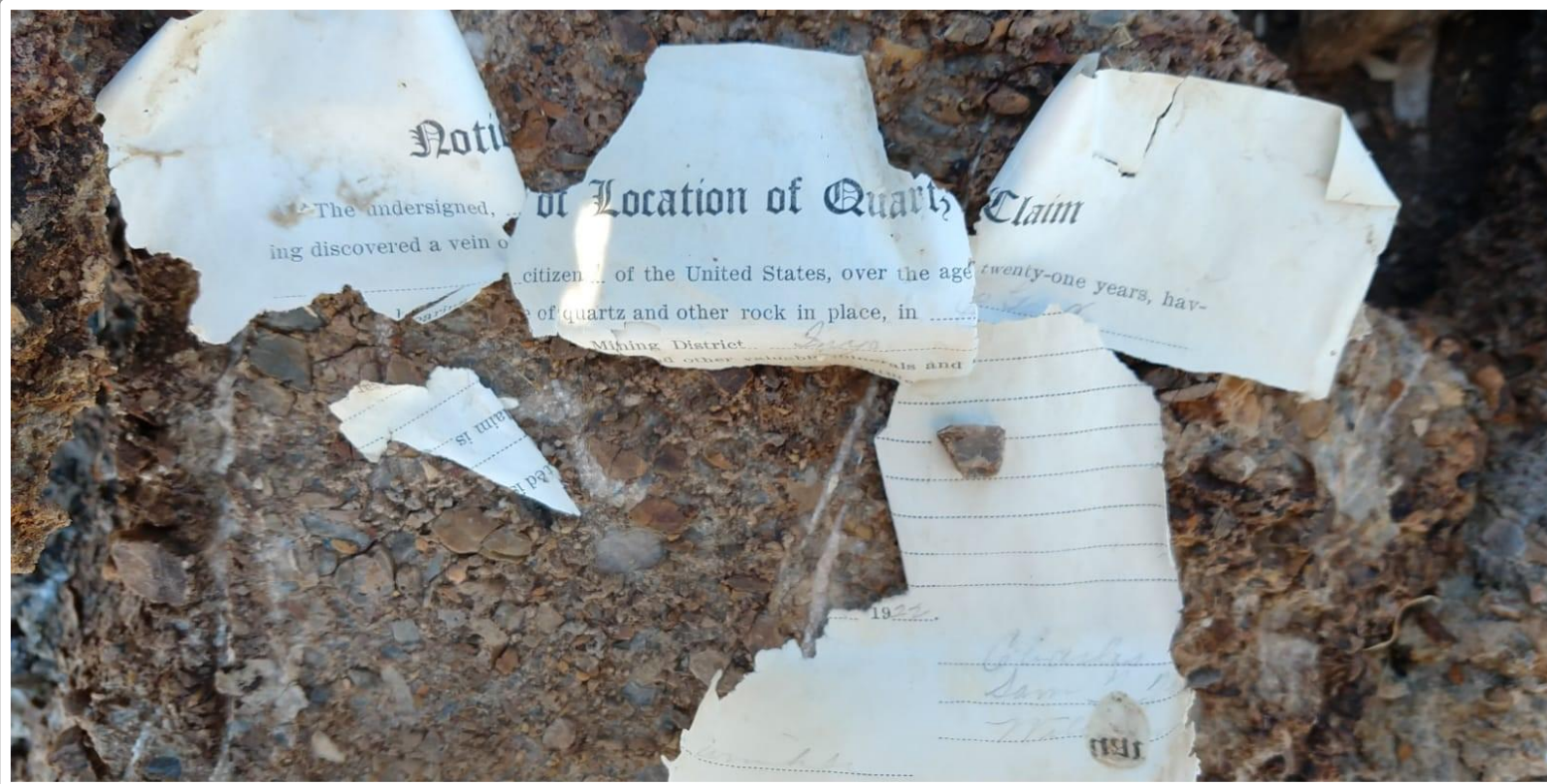


The site is on BLM-managed land within the Desert Renewable Energy Conservation Plan (DRECP), including a portion of the Cerro Gordo Area of Critical Environmental Concern (ACEC) and Basin and Range Ecoregion, CA Desert National Conservation Lands. The exploration drilling program is on unpatented mining claims on federal lands open to mineral entry.

BLM's 43 CFR § 3809 surface management regulations provide the policies, procedures and standards authorizing exploration and surface mining.

For surface disturbance exceeding-one acre, a reclamation plan is required under the California Surface Mining and Reclamation Act (SMARA). Inyo County is the local lead agency and will process a reclamation plan for the project as a separate approval.

MINING AND EXPLORATION HISTORY



Mine claim tag from 1922 found on MPM site.

The site and vicinity have a history of mining and exploration:

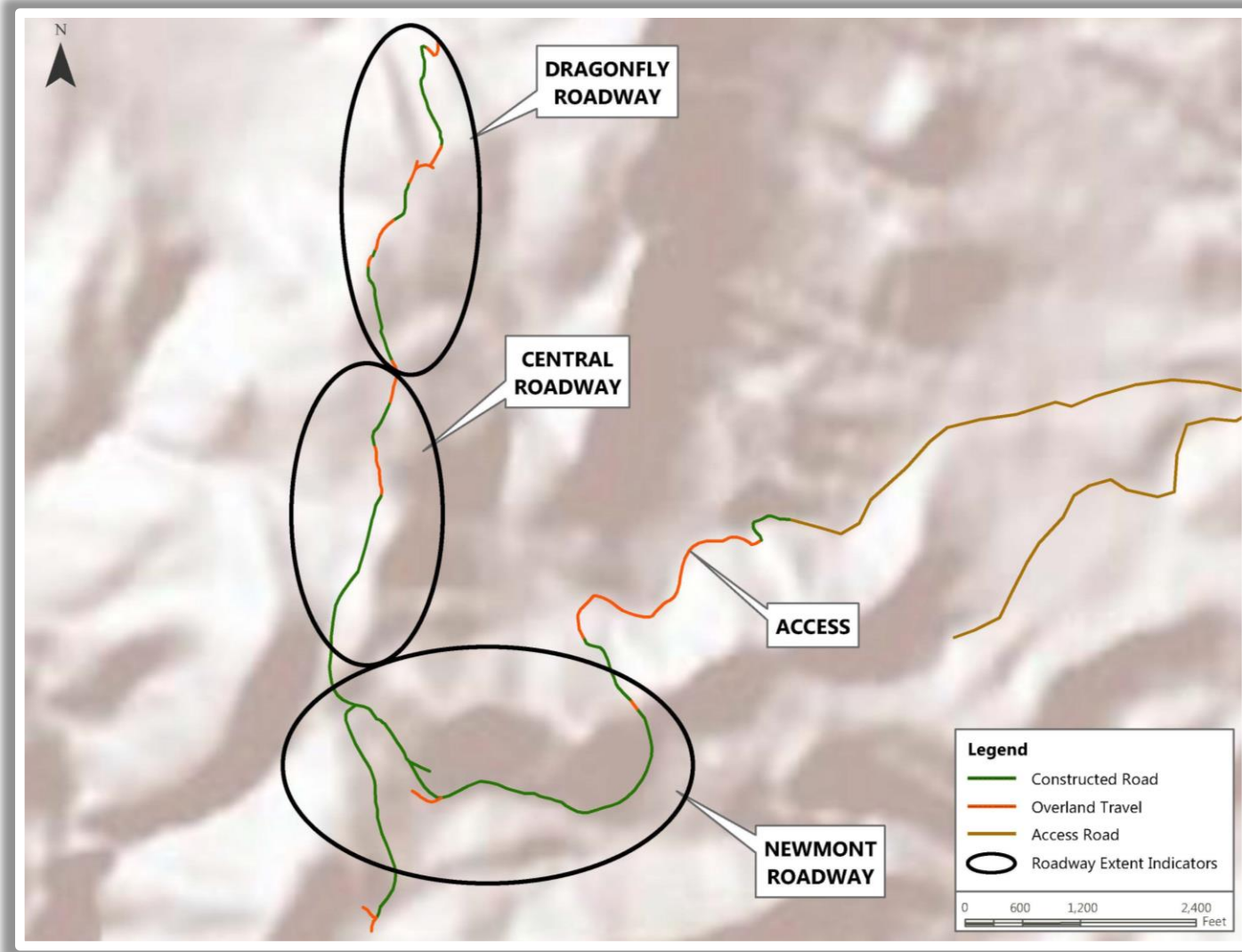
- Cerro Gordo area mined 1865-1890 and during Great Depression-*
- site drilled by Compass Minerals in 1980's*
- exploration Road developed and area drilled by Newmont 1989*
- additional road development and drilling by BHP in 1997-*

SITE CONDITIONS



Portions of existing reclaimed exploration roadway (foreground) created by BHP in 2000 are proposed to be reopened for additional drilling. Road grading and reclamation would be along the visible established footprint. Conglomerate Mesa is visible in upper right background.

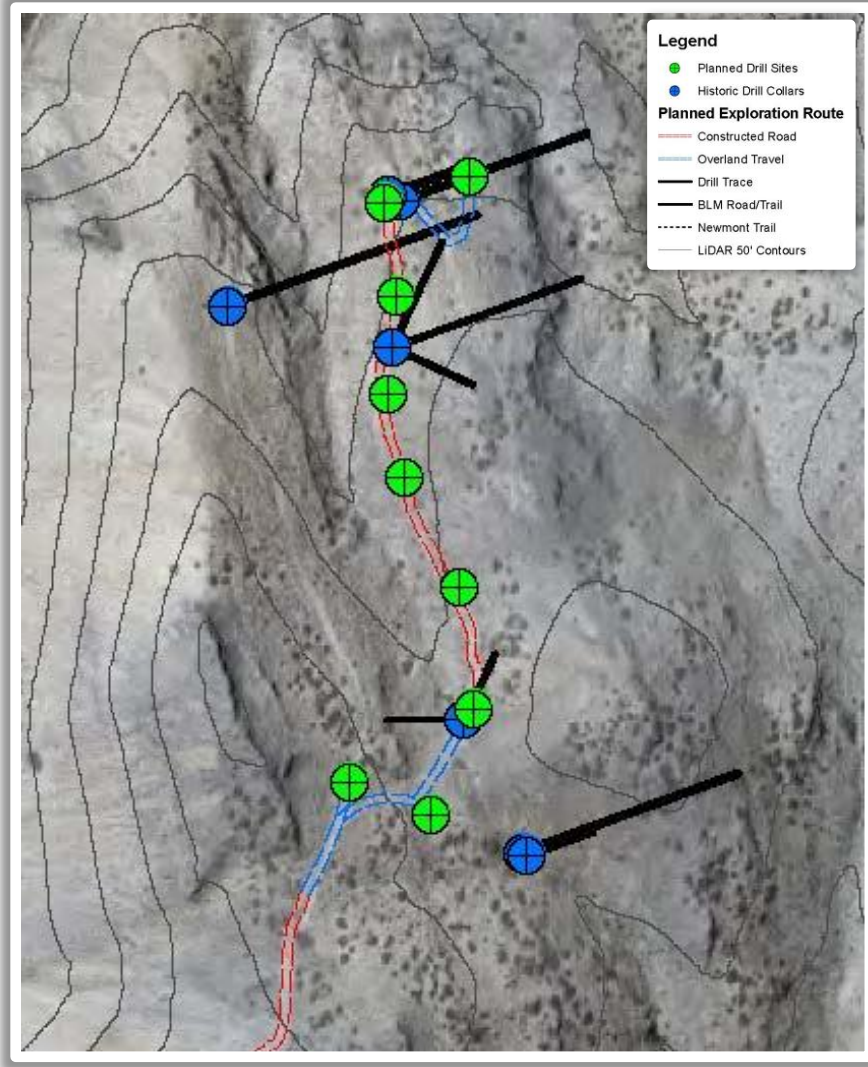
PLANNED ROADWAY AND DRILLING SITES



Activities proposed in the modification to the PoO include:

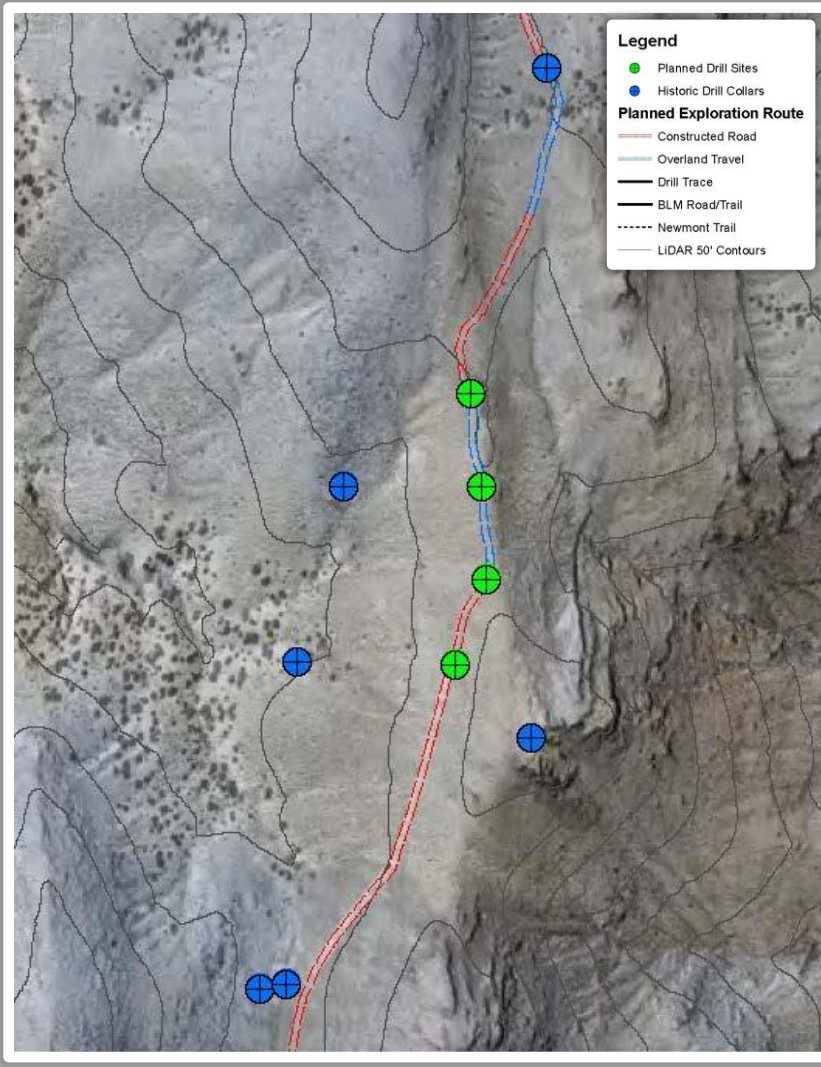
- *overland (no reconstruction) travel*
- *reconstruction of previously graded and reclaimed roads*
- *construction of exploration drill pads and sumps*
- *exploration support activities (i.e. campsites, etc.)*
- *reclamation*

DRAGONFLY ROADWAY



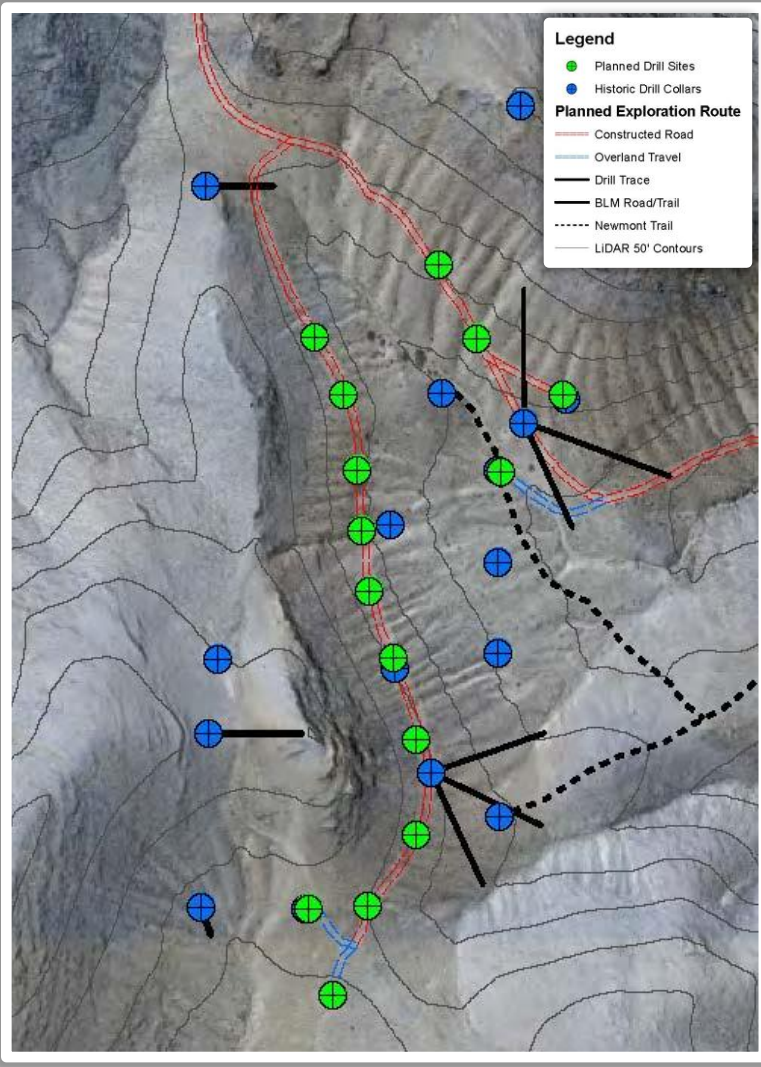
The northernmost extension of the roadway to the "Dragonfly" zone is largely an overland route where no grading would be needed to revisit the drilling areas.

CENTRAL ROADWAY



The "Central" zone follows a ridgeline road involving both overland and reconstructed roadway locations.

NEWMONT ROADWAY



The "Newmont" zone has steeper slopes and would require the most re-grading of the prior roadway.

SURFACE DISTURBANCE

Surface disturbance would be limited as the project extensively utilizes prior exploration footprints. Exploration activities and incidental disturbance are summarized below.

Category	Acreage
<i>Overland Routes</i>	
Travel Routes	1.1
Drill Pads	0.2
<i>Reclaimed Exploration Road Reconstruction</i>	
Grading (Including Drill Pads)	9.7
Exploration Trenches	0.1
New Road Construction	0.0
Incidental ¹	1.1
Total	12.2

¹ Surface disturbance incidental to the planned activities may include sediment and erosion control berms and fencing, geophysical activities, tents for camping and emergency preparedness, drill crew camping and pack string camp, footpaths, variations in grading and overland travel, and adjustments to the size and location of road and drill sites in the field. Estimated at 10% of planned surface disturbance.

EXPLORATION SUPPORT ACTIVITIES

- Up to **20 people** may be involved in various aspects of the proposed project, including biological and cultural monitors, weed removal and plant salvage, drilling crew, geologists and technical support, water and supplies deliveries, management, revegetation and monitoring.
- **No fuel or lubricant storage** tanks are planned. Hydrocarbons used would be stored on the equipment and fueling of equipment would be done with mobile fuel/lube trucks.
- Stormwater controls would be constructed and maintained to **prevent erosion**.
- Water would be required when drilling activities take place (between 500 and 1,000 gal/day). **Water would be supplied from a licensed commercial delivery service** and trucked to the site.
- Drilling could be suspended due to adverse weather conditions, safety concerns (such as fire or smoke) or unforeseen delays in operations due to lack of equipment, supplies or personnel. **Temporary crew camping is requested** in the PoO.
- **Use of mule pack strings** may be employed to deliver supplies and remove exploration rock samples.

ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION MEASURES

MPM has **incorporated specific operational and reclamation measures** into PoO that will avoid or minimize environmental impacts to prevent unnecessary and undue degradation. The measures identify actions that will:

- **limit surface disturbance** to the minimum necessary,
- provide for **concurrent reclamation**,
- integrate applicant-committed **measures for environmental protection into the exploration program**, and
- provide for **public safety**.

ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION MEASURES *(CONTINUED)*

Cultural Resources: A cultural survey was completed for the project in accordance with BLM requirements. Should resources be discovered not found in the surveys, MPM will ensure its employees and contractors understand they may not knowingly disturb, alter, injure, or destroy any scientifically important paleontological remains or any historical or archaeological site, structure, building or object on federal lands. Any such discovery would be left intact pending a determination by the BLM.

Threatened and Endangered Species: There are no animals or plants on the site listed as threatened or endangered under the federal Endangered Species Act or the California Endangered Species Act (CESA). However, the State of California designated the Joshua tree as a candidate species on September 22, 2020. Candidate species are protected under the CESA. The area of exploration drilling does not include high density stands of Joshua trees and impacts to individual trees would be avoided or mitigated.

ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION MEASURES *(CONTINUED)*

- **Pre-construction nesting bird surveys** would be conducted within an appropriate radius of vegetation removal or ground disturbance by a qualified biologist.
- A biological monitor would conduct preconstruction **surveys for active bat roosts** no more than one week prior to any ground-disturbing activities.
- A biological monitor would be present during grading for road re-construction. Working closely with the construction contractor, the biological monitor would conduct **morning sweeps of active work areas for ground-dwelling animals. Sensitive plants would be flagged for avoidance.**
- Non-native and **invasive weeds will be removed** prior to grading where they occur to control spread. Weed abatement would be undertaken as necessary within planned areas of grading and routes of overland travel.
- MPM will comply with applicable state and federal fire laws, regulations and all reasonable measures would be taken to **prevent and suppress fires** in the operations area.

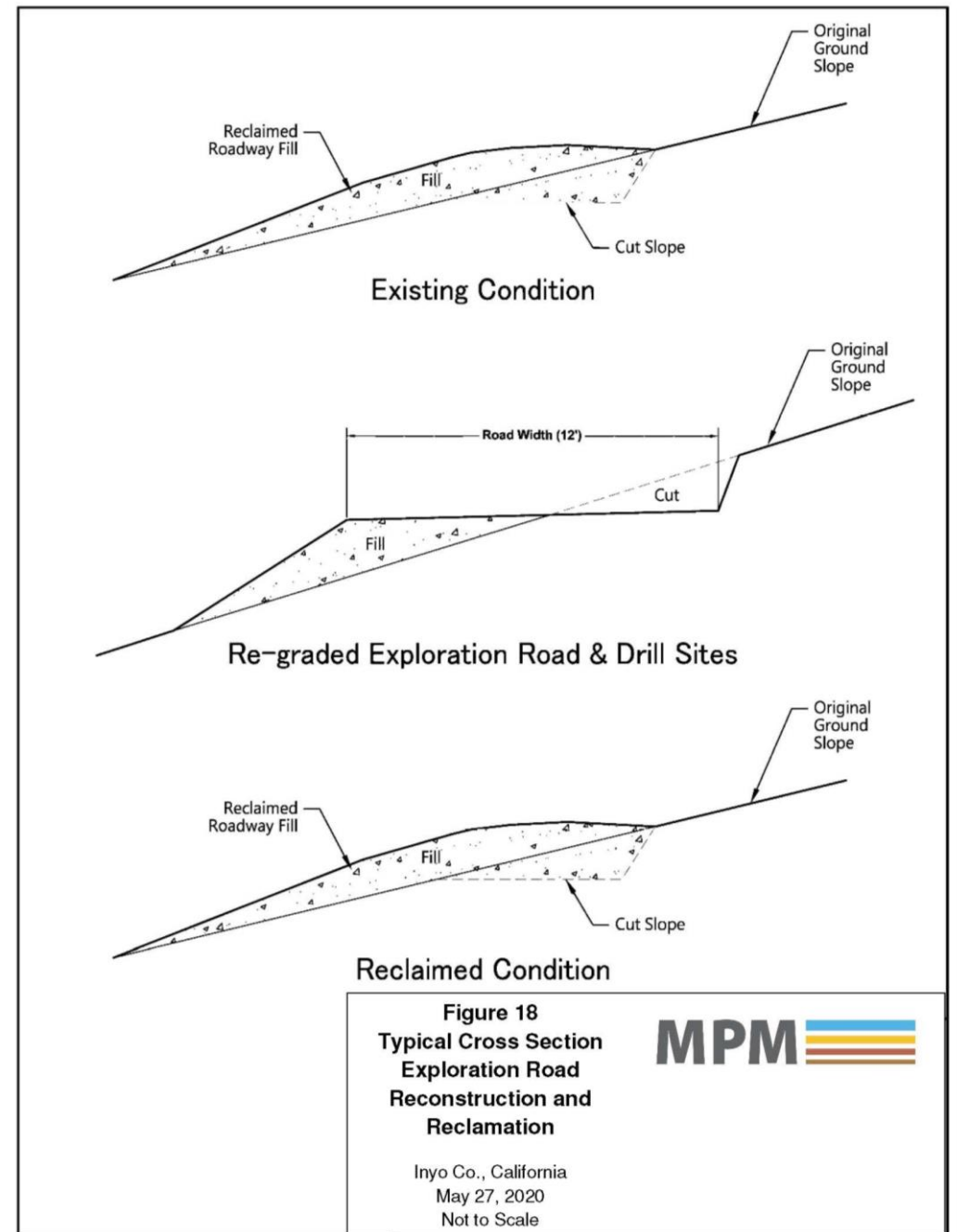
RECLAMATION

Reclamation of the drill sites would-generally involve drying and backfill of sumps, plugging drill holes, recontouring, and revegetation.

- *Fill slopes would be regraded to achieve the natural topography.*
- *Cut slopes would be filled against to recreate existing natural topography.*
- *Exploration trenches would be backfilled.*
- *Sites would be revegetated using a site-specific seed mix and optimum timing.*
- *Salvaged plants would be replanted.*
- *Revegetation efforts would be monitored according to approved success criteria.*



Note: *This schematic drawing exaggerates the cut and fill for illustrative purposes. Reclamation grading would return to approximate natural contours.*



RECLAMATION *(CONTINUED)*

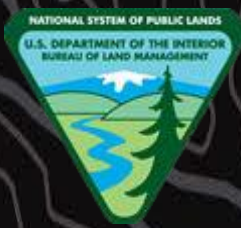
Reclamation, including returning the slopes to **pre-existing contours**, would return the roadway to a condition that would not facilitate motorized vehicle access.

The entire exploration site reclamation, including the native seed mix, must be **BLM-approved**.

SCHEDULE

If approved, the exploration work is anticipated to occur over an approximate 5 to 10 months, followed by reclamation monitoring.

Activity	Time
Preconstruction activities (weed removal, plant salvage, drill site placement survey and required preconstruction compliance actions)	6-12 Weeks
Road construction	1-2 Weeks
Crew and rig mobilization, drilling and demobilization	2-4 Months
Reclamation (final drill hole plugging and sump drying, regrading, growth media replacement, reseeding, replanting of salvaged plants)	4-8 Weeks
Post-reclamation monitoring	2-3 years



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BLM Preliminary Issues and Resource Considerations

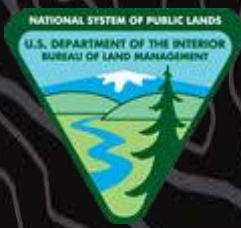


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BLM Preliminary Issues and Resource Considerations

BLM tentatively identified the following preliminary issues associated with the Proposed Mojave Exploration Drilling Project:

- **Native American Religious Concerns**
- **Cultural Resources**
- **Visual Resources**
- **Special Status Plants and Wildlife**
- **Non-native, Invasive Species**
- **Special Areas (ACEC/National Conservation Lands)**



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How to Comment

Substantive written comments may be submitted for the Project through the following methods:

1. Online through the BLM ePlanning website at [EplanningUi \(blm.gov\)](https://eplanningui.blm.gov).
2. By email at [BLM ca ri mojavePmetals@blm.gov](mailto:BLM_ca_ri_mojavePmetals@blm.gov) with "Mojave Project Scoping" in the subject line.
3. By mail to the address below:

Attn: Mojave Project
BLM Ridgecrest Field Office
300 S. Richmond Rd.
Ridgecrest, CA 93555