



File Code: 1950/2810

Date: September 14, 2009

Dear Interested Party:

The Mountain City Ranger District invites your comments and concerns regarding a small underground exploration project on National Forest System lands in Elko County. Known as Hard Badger, the project is located about fifteen (15) miles east - northeast of Wildhorse Reservoir, near Charleston, Elko County, Nevada. The legal description is T.44N., R.57E., Section 14, Mount Diablo Base and Meridian (MDB&M). A general location map is included for your information.

During the summer of 2008 the mining claimant re-opened an existing road (approximately 200 yards in length) in order to access old underground workings. Work also included re-opening the adit for sampling. Approximately 10 to 20 yards of material was placed on the existing mine dump.

The claimant was informed that his operation needs to be brought under compliance through a plan of operations, approved by the Forest service.

In February of 2009, the Mountain City Ranger District received a Plan of Operations (plan) from the claimant describing the work that undertaken in 2008, the plan also proposed additional ground disturbing work. After a field review with the claimant and the Forest Service in June of 2009, the plan was modified to remove the additional proposed work; however reclamation and mitigation may be required.

The Forest Service will conduct an environmental analysis on this project in accordance with the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (NEPA). As part of this analysis, we invite you to comment on the project at this time.

Based on our experience with exploration, initial concerns for this proposed project include:

- The effects on riparian areas, water quality, and water quantity.
- Impacts on wildlife species and wildlife habitat.
- Impacts on threatened, endangered, and sensitive plant species.
- Impacts to other National Forest System land users including, but not limited to livestock permittees and recreationists.
- Impacts to heritage resources.

Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act requires Federal agencies to take into account the effects of their undertakings on historic properties. Regulations (36 CFR part 800) concerning protection and preservation of historic properties give the public, local governments, and other entities the opportunity to participate in the review and evaluation of effects to cultural sites.



Your written comments and concerns should be sent to Glenn Davis, Project Coordinator, at the above address or emailed to: gddavis@fs.fed.us with subject heading of “Hard Badger Scoping Response.”

Comments may also be faxed to the following number: 775-778-6167. All comments provided in response to this letter become part of the project record and will be made available to the public if requested under the Freedom of Information Act. This includes names, addresses and any other information provided with the comments.

In order to be most helpful, the Forest Service requests your comments on this project by **October 20, 2009**. We also ask that you inform us of whether or not you wish to remain on the mailing list for this project. If we do not hear from you regarding your interest, we may remove you from the project mailing list.

For more information on this project, please contact Glenn Davis at (775) 778-6108. Thank you for your interest in the management of your national forests.

Sincerely,

/s/ Thomas A. Montoya
THOMAS A. MONTOYA
District Ranger

Enclosure

