



# Scoping Notice of Proposed Action and Opportunity to Comment

United States  
Department of  
Agriculture

## East Manhattan II Exploration Project

Forest Service

Humboldt-Toiyabe National Forest  
Austin Ranger District

Nye County, Nevada

April 2013

### Comments Welcome

The Tonopah Ranger District of the Humboldt-Toiyabe National Forest welcomes your comments on the proposed East Manhattan II minerals exploration project which is located on National Forest System lands within the Humboldt-Toiyabe National Forest. The project proponent proposes to drill from up to 14 drill sites and construct approximately 1,470 feet of new temporary road to access all drill site locations. The project is within Sections 14, 15, 22, and 23, T8N R44E, Mount Diablo Meridian, in Nye County, Nevada. The District has determined that this proposed activity may be categorically excluded from further analysis and documentation under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) [36 CFR 220]. The Forest Service is applying notice, comment, and appeal regulations found at 36 CFR 215 (specific to NEPA) to this project due to a 2012 U.S. District Court decision.

This document initiates both the scoping process (40 CFR 1501.7) and provides notice of the 30-day comment period pursuant to Forest Service regulations at 36 CFR 215. The purpose of this comment period is to provide an opportunity for the public to provide meaningful input on the proposed action prior to a decision by the Responsible Official.

For detailed information on how to provide comments please refer to the “Comment Process” section of this document.

### Purpose and Need

The proponent’s need is to determine if economically viable precious metals-bearing deposits exist within the Project Area, and define the nature and extent, shape, and economic value of those deposits. The statutory right of the proponent (Rio Fortuna (US) Inc.) to explore for and develop mineral resources on federally-administered lands is recognized in the General Mining

Law of 1872, and is consistent with the Toiyabe National Forest Land and Resource Management Plan of 1986 (IV-50). Surface management regulations (36 CFR 228) require that all mineral exploration, development, and operations activities be conducted in a manner that minimizes adverse environmental impacts on National Forest surface resources (36 CFR 228.8).

## Proposed Action

The East Manhattan II Project is located in the Toquima Range on National Forest System land administered by the U.S. Department of Agriculture, Forest Service, Tonopah Ranger District (Forest Service), within portions of:

- T8N, R44E, Sections 14, 15, 12, and 23

Rio Fortuna proposes to construct approximately 1,470 feet of new roads in order to access and drill at up to 14 drill sites within the proposed Project Area. New roads will be approximately 12 feet wide and each proposed drill site would require a pad approximately 50 by 50 feet in size and would include a sump (12 x 15 x 6 feet deep) to contain drill cuttings and fluids from each hole. Sumps will be constructed with bovine exit ramps for the protection of livestock.

Mechanized equipment proposed for the project includes: one track or truck-mounted core, or reverse circulation drill rig; a truck or buggy-mounted water truck; one excavator; one D8 dozer or equivalent; one backhoe; and pick-up trucks to transport crews, fuel, and other equipment.

Anticipated disturbance for this drill program would be approximately 1.1 acres including drill pad and sump construction, and new temporary road construction.

Access would be via the Nevada Hwy 377 eastward from Manhattan approximately 2.5 miles, thence southward, and northward on existing 2-track roads into the project area.

## Implementation Time Frames

Implementation for the project is expected in the early summer of 2013.

## Comment Process

The Forest Service encourages your comments on this proposed action, along with supporting reasons that the responsible official should consider in reaching a decision. Comments received in response to this solicitation, including names and addresses of those who comment, will be considered part of the public record for this project, will be available for public inspection, and will be released if requested under the Freedom of Information Act.

This proposed action will be posted in the Tonopah Times-Bonanza and Goldfield News on April 11, 2013. Any written, facsimile, hand-delivered, oral, and electronic comments concerning this action will be most helpful if submitted within 30 calendar days following the publication of legal notice in the Tonopah Times-Bonanza and Goldfield News. Mailed comments must be submitted to: District Ranger, Austin Ranger District, P.O. Box 130, 100 Midas Canyon Road, Austin, NV 89310, or fax 775-964-1451. The office business hours for those submitting comments in person are: 8:00 am to 4:30 pm Monday through Friday, excluding holidays. Electronic comments must be submitted in a format such as an email message, plain text (.txt), rich text format (.rtf), and Word (.doc) to [comments-intermtn-humboldt-toiyabe-austin-tonopah@fs.fed.us](mailto:comments-intermtn-humboldt-toiyabe-austin-tonopah@fs.fed.us). Comments must

have an identifiable name attached or verification of identity will be required. A scanned signature may serve as verification on electronic comments.

For further information please contact Jim Rigby at 775-482-6286.

*/s/ Steven Williams*

*April 3, 2013*

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STEVEN WILLIAMS  
Austin District Ranger

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Date

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# Project Location Map

## East Manhattan II Project Area



— Project Area

0 0.5 1 2 Miles



