



United States
Department of
Agriculture

Forest Service

Humboldt-Toiyabe
National Forest

December 2015

SCOPING DOCUMENT

NEXUS WALKER RIDGE MINERAL EXPLORATION PROJECT

MOUNTAIN CITY RANGER DISTRICT ELKO COUNTY, NEVADA

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COMMENTS WELCOME

The Mountain City Ranger District is initiating scoping and welcomes your comments on the proposed Nexus Walker Ridge Mineral Exploration Project (Project) which is located within the Humboldt-Toiyabe National Forest. The project proponent, Nexus Gold Corp (Nexus) proposes to conduct mineral exploration activities within the Independence Range in Elko County, Nevada.

The District has tentatively proposed that the activity may be categorically excluded from further analysis and documentation in an environmental assessment (EA) or environmental impact statement (EIS) (36 Code of Federal Regulations [CFR] 220). A proposed action may be categorically excluded only if there are no extraordinary circumstances related to the proposed action and the proposed action is within a category listed in section 31.12 or 32.2 of FSH 1909.15. This proposed action falls within section 32.2(8) (see 36 CFR 220.6(e)(8)) – (8) Short-term (1 year or less) mineral, energy, or geophysical investigations and their incidental support activities that may require cross-country travel by vehicles and equipment, construction of less than 1 mile of low standard road, or use and minor repair of existing roads.

In development and preparation of the Project, the participation of interested persons, state and local governments, and Native American tribes is encouraged at this time and throughout the process prior to a decision by the Responsible Official. The Project Plan of Operations can be reviewed at the Mountain City Ranger District Office in Elko during normal business hours. Further information is also available from Doug Powell, Geologist and Project Lead, at (775) 289-5125.

PURPOSE OF AND NEED FOR ACTION

The purpose of and need for the Proposed Action is to identify, locate, and delineate mineral deposits, specifically by exploration drilling on National Forest System (NFS) Land in the Project Area. The statutory right of Nexus Gold Corp to explore for mineral resources on federally administered lands is recognized in the General Mining Law of 1872 and is consistent with the Humboldt 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).

LOCATION

The Project is located approximately 55 miles north of Elko in sections 29, 30, 31 & 32 of Township 42 North, Range 54 East (T42N, R54E), Mount Diablo Base and Meridian, Elko County, Nevada (see attached map).

PROPOSED ACTION SUMMARY

Nexus proposes to conduct an exploration drilling program that will be accomplished within one year of implementation. They have identified 25 drill sites that could be used during this program. Approximately 4 acres of disturbance would occur from construction of drill pads and access routes. Existing road tracts, cross-country travel and less than one mile of temporary new road construction would be used to gain access to drill sites. While the disturbance area of each drill site would vary, the total footprint of each site would be less than 5,000 square feet. Disturbed areas would be kept to the minimum size necessary to accommodate drilling

operation. Where ground leveling activities are needed, all suitable on-site organic litter layer, soil and soil material would be salvaged prior to any other site disturbance, and stockpiled and used for reclamation. Drill holes would be drilled to depths as deep as 3,500 feet. During drilling, water trucks would fill above ground tanks located on site. Pumps with hose line would be used to move the water to drill sites at higher elevations and gravity used to move the water to lower elevations.

All equipment and materials would be removed at end of drilling. All project disturbances would be recontoured and revegetated to predisturbance condition and re-seeded with FS approved seed mix for reclamation upon completion of the project. Cross country travel routes may be ripped and reseeded depending on use and as determined by the FS. All drill holes would be plugged and sealed in a manner consistent with state of Nevada regulations.

The project area is located adjacent to the Mcaffie Inventoried Roadless Area (IRA). The project was designed so that all proposed drill pads and temporary road construction would occur outside of the IRA.

The entire project area is within the Greater sage-grouse priority habitat management area (PHMA). Timing restrictions for the project would be established for the Greater sage-grouse, northern goshawk and migratory birds.

The project area is located approximately 1 mile from a stream containing Lahontan cutthroat trout (LCT). Because LCT is listed as Threatened by the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service (USFWS), the FS would consult with the USFWS as part of the permitting process.

HOW TO COMMENT AND TIMEFRAME

Your written comments, concerns, and suggestions for this project should be sent to Scott Richey, Acting District Ranger, Mountain City Ranger District at 2035 Last Chance Road, Elko, Nevada 89801; phone (775) 738-5171, fax (775) 778-6167; or you may hand-deliver your comments during normal business hours from 7:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., Monday through Friday, excluding federal holidays to 2035 Last Chance Road, Elko, Nevada. Electronic comments should be submitted in a format such as an email message, plain text (.txt), rich text format (.rtf), or Word (.doc) to this email address: comments-intermtn-humboldt-toiyabe-mtn-city@fs.fed.us. Please use the term "Nexus Walker Ridge" in the subject line of your email.

To be most effective, Forest Service should receive comments no later than February 1, 2016.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Comments received in response to this solicitation, including names and addresses of those who comment, would be considered part of the public record for this Project and would be available for public inspection and would be released if requested under the Freedom of Information Act.

For updated information, this project is listed on the Forest Service Schedule of Proposed Actions (SOPA) at http://www.fs.fed.us/nepa/nepa_project_exp.php?project=47671. You can also contact Doug Powell, Geologist and Project Lead, at (775) 289-5125 or by email at johnpowell@fs.fed.us for more information on the environmental analysis process or for general project information.

