



United States
Department of
Agriculture

Forest
Service



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Burns Basin Exploration Drilling Project Scoping Document

Mountain City, Ruby Mountains, and Jarbidge

Ranger District

Humboldt-Toiyabe National Forest

Elko County, Nevada

Responsible Official: Josh Nicholes, District Ranger
For Information Contact: Scott Richey, Senior Geologist



Burns Basin Exploration Drilling Project Scoping Document

The Mountain City, Ruby Mountains, and Jarbidge Ranger District (USFS) is initiating scoping and welcomes your comments on the proposed Burns Basin Exploration Drilling Project (Plan of Operations #06-20-01) on National Forest System (NFS) lands within the Humboldt-Toiyabe National Forest. The operator, Jerritt Canyon Gold LLC (Jerritt Canyon) has a statutory right to explore for locatable mineral resources on federally administered lands as recognized in the General Mining Law of 1872. The Plan is consistent with the Humboldt National Forest Land and Resource Management Plan of 1986 (IV-50). Locatable Minerals regulations (36 CFR 228-Subpart A) require that all mineral exploration, development, and operations activities be conducted in a manner that minimizes adverse environmental impacts on National Forest surface resources. The USFS is preparing to analyze this project under a categorical exclusion. The responsible official for the Burns Basin Exploration Project decision is Josh Nicholes, Mountain City, Ruby Mountains, and Jarbidge District Ranger.

Location:

The proposed Burns Basin Exploration Drilling Project (Project) is located on NFS lands approximately 50 miles north of the Elko, Nevada on the west side of the Independence Range located in Elko County, Nevada (See Figure 1) within the Jerritt Canyon Mine footprint.

Proposed Action Summary:

Jerritt Canyon has submitted a Plan of Operations to conduct locatable minerals exploration drilling from eight drill sites on land administered by the USFS and from two drill sites on private land (See Figures 1 & 2). Four of the drill sites would be located along existing roads on National Forest System (NFS) land and one drill site would be located on an existing road on private land. Additionally, four drill sites would be constructed on reopened reclaimed roads on NFS land and one drill site would be constructed on reopened road on private land. Two of the drill sites (one on NFS land and one on private) would be located on the crest of the Independence Mountains. All disturbance and drill holes would be kept to the west side of the range in order to minimize any potential impact to Lahontan Cutthroat Trout habitat that occur on the east side of the range. Each drill site would have a maximum footprint of 40' x 50' and sumps would be 15' x 20' and up to 9' deep. Up to three holes may be drilled from each drill site in order to minimize surface disturbance. Reopened reclaimed drill roads would have a running width of 15' with a 3' high safety berm constructed as needed (if required by MSHA). The reopened road length on NFS lands would be 0.91 miles. The new surface disturbance for the project on NFS lands would be up to 3.0 acres. Drill holes would have an average depth of 1,250 feet. Drilling is anticipated to occur 24 hours a day until all holes are completed. The maximum drill water use would be 8,000 gallons/day delivered by a 4,000 gallon water truck to drill sites. Drilling would occur from July 15, 2020 to February 28, 2021, depending on snow conditions. No drilling would occur between March 1 and July 15 to minimize impacts to sage grouse and migratory bird nesting. A portable chemical toilet would be present at each drill site. The reopened drill roads and all drill pads/sumps on NFS lands would be recontoured within one year of the start of operations and revegetated using a USFS approved seed mix to meet the Nevada Guidelines for Successful Revegetation (NDEP, BLM, FS Memorandum of Understanding).

Opportunity to Comment:

Your written comments, concerns, and suggestions for this project should be sent to Josh Nicholes, District Ranger, Mountain City, Ruby Mountains and Jarbidge Ranger District, 660 S. 12th, St., #108, Elko, NV 89801; phone (775) 738-5171. 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-mountain-city@usda.gov. Please use the term "Burns Basin Project" in the subject line of your email.

To be most effective, Forest Service should receive comments no later than June 10, 2020.

National Historic Preservation Act Compliance:

Section 106 consultation under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (NHPA) requires federal agencies, including the US Forest Service, to identify and consider the potential effects of its actions on historic properties through a collaborative framework for seeking, discussing and considering the views of the public on how potential adverse effects on historic properties resulting from a proposed Federal action should be addressed. To meet these requirements of Section 106, the Humboldt-Toiyabe National Forest will be using the NEPA process in lieu of 36 CFR Part 800, the regulations implementing Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended (54 U.S.C. 306108).

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. Comments submitted anonymously will be accepted and considered; however, the District will not be able to send further project information to anonymous commenters.

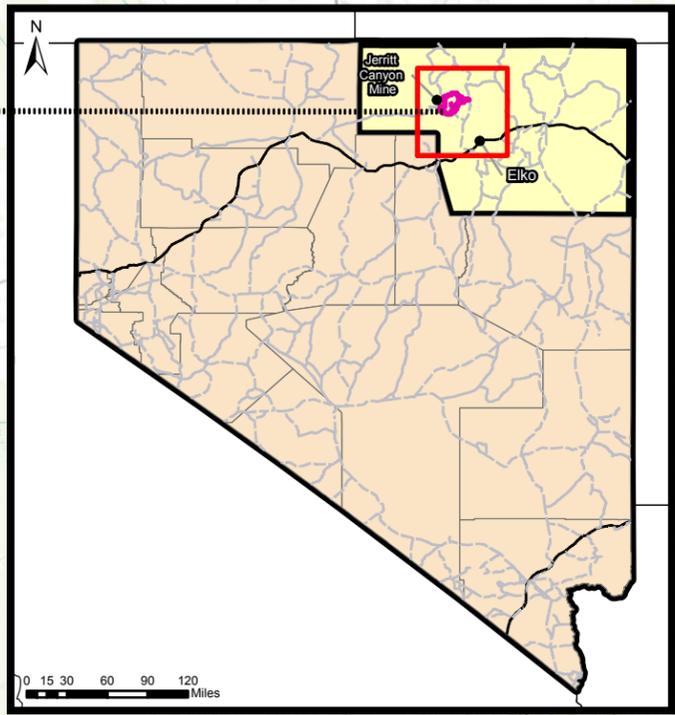
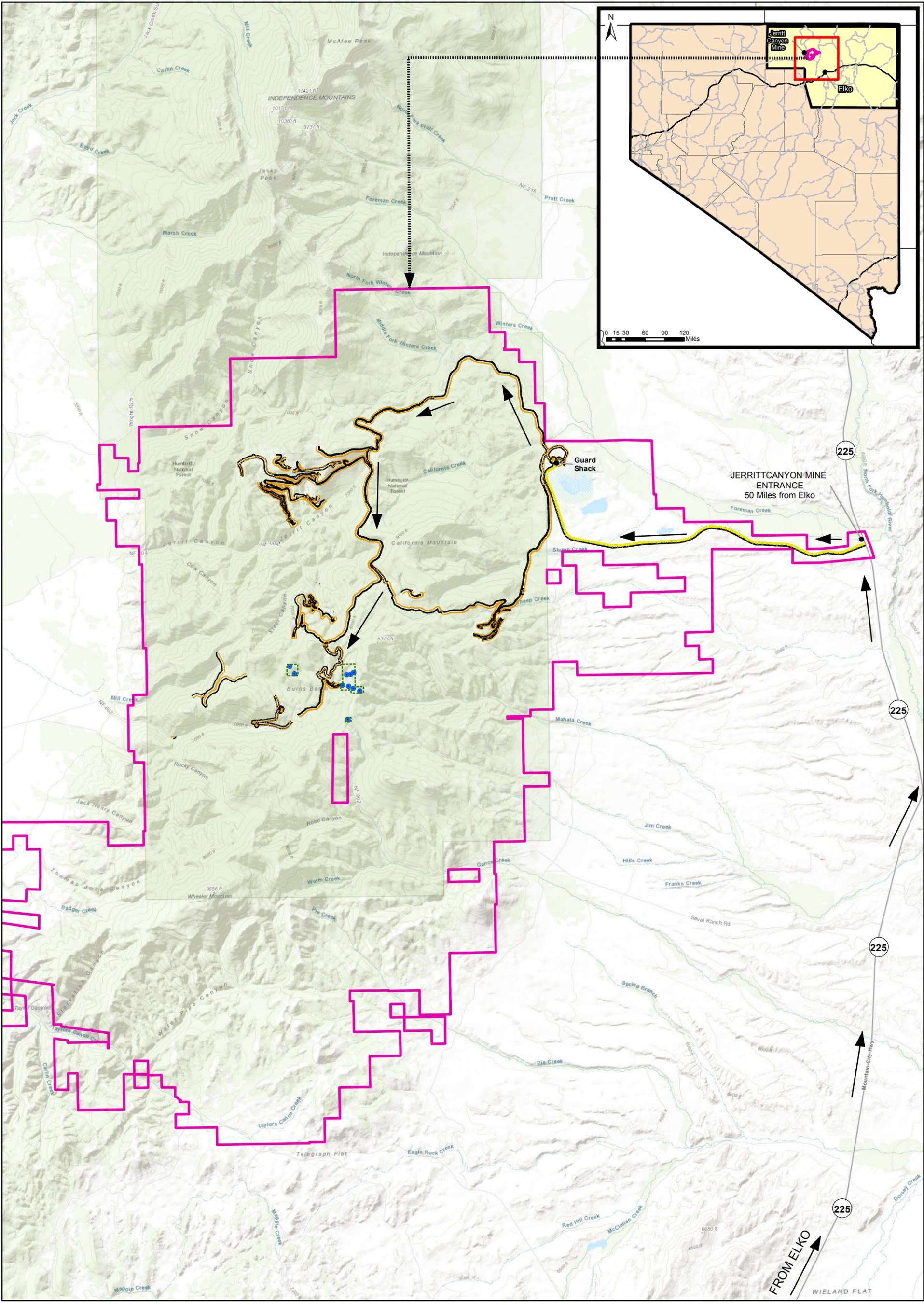
For updated information, this project is listed on the Forest Service Schedule of Proposed Actions (SOPA) at <https://www.fs.usda.gov/project/?project=58133>. You can also contact Scott Richey, Senior Geologist and Project Lead, at (775) 778-6117 or by email at scott.richey@usda.gov for more information on the environmental analysis process or for general project information.

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Persons with disabilities who require alternative means of communication for program information (e.g., Braille, large print, audiotope, American Sign Language, etc.) should contact the responsible Agency or USDA's TARGET Center at (202) 720-2600 (voice and TTY) or contact USDA through the Federal Relay Service at (800) 877-8339. Additionally, program information may be made available in languages other than English.

To file a program discrimination complaint, complete the USDA Program Discrimination Complaint Form, AD-3027, found online at [How to File a Program Discrimination Complaint](#) and at any USDA office or write a letter addressed to USDA and provide in the letter all of the information requested in the form. To request a copy of the complaint form, call (866) 632-9992. Submit your completed form or letter to USDA by: (1) mail: U.S. Department of Agriculture, Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights, 1400 Independence Avenue, SW, Washington, D.C. 20250-9410; (2) fax: (202) 690-7442; or (3) email: program.intake@usda.gov.

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0 0.5 1 2 3 4 Miles

Project Boundary and Access to the Drill Site



Legend	
	Project Boundary
	2020 Proposed Drill Holes
	Access Road
	Haul Road
	Property Boundary

Sheet No.
1 of 1

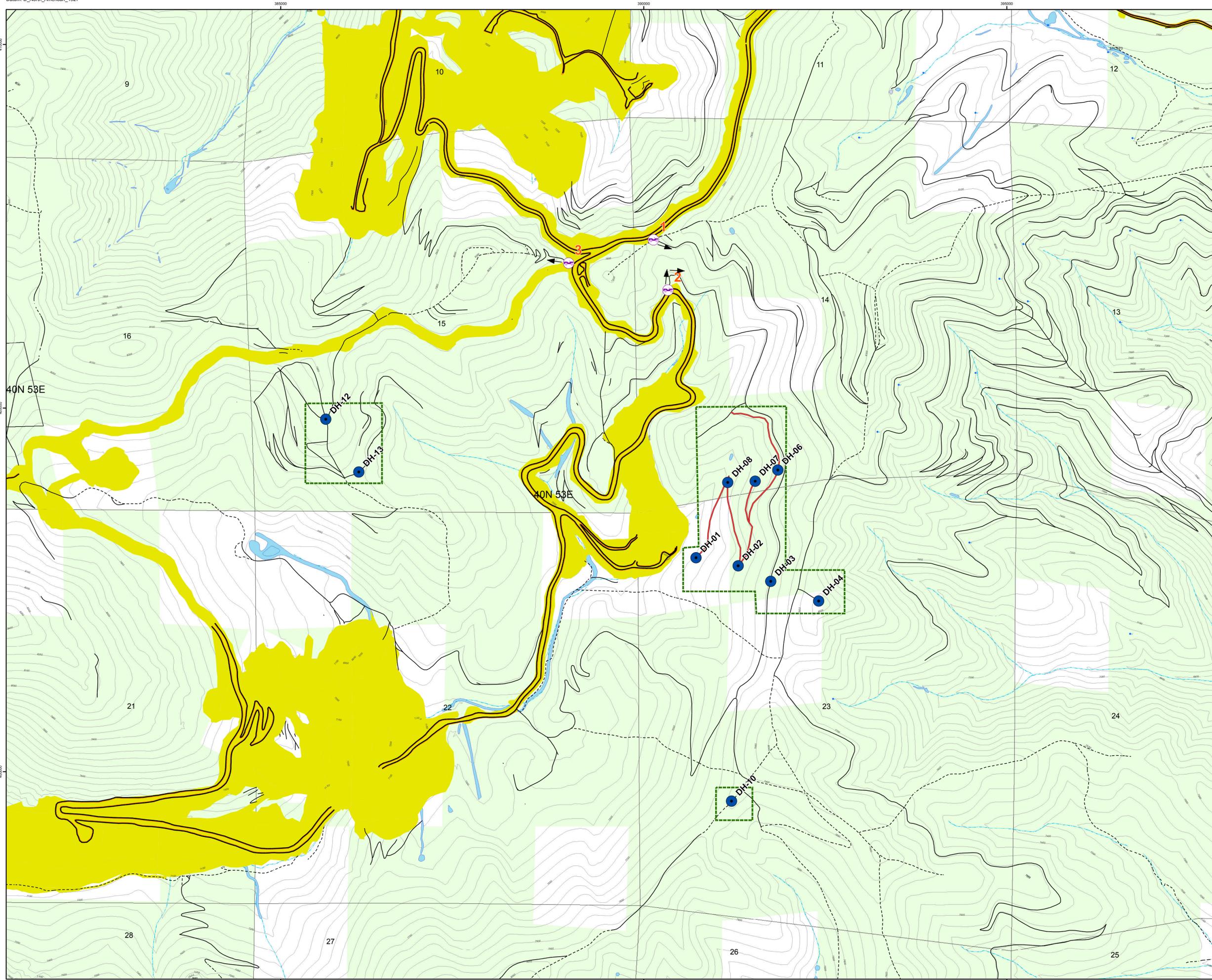
JERRITT CANYON MINE
ELKO COUNTY
FIGURE 1: GENERAL LOCATION MAP
Date: 1/13/2020



USFS APPROVAL

Reviewed By: _____
 Scott Richey
 Minerals Administrator

Date: _____



Legend

- Access_Points
- Project Boundary
- 2020_Proposed_SurfaceDrillCollars
- MINE DISTURBANCE
- Roads Status**
- 4WD_ROAD
- BUILT_ROAD
- HAUL_RD
- REOPEN_RECLAIM_DRILL_ROAD
- Hydrology**
- Basin and Range basin-fill aquifers
- Springs_JRG
- Ponds_Surveyed_2005_NAD27
- wetlands97_JRG
- streams98_JRG
- Public Lands**
- USFS
- BLM
- State

FIGURE 2: BURNS BASIN EXPLORATION PROJECT

Proposed Activities 2020

N
W E
S

1:7,317

0 550 1,100 2,200 Feet