

**United States Department of the Interior
Bureau of Land Management
Elko Field Office**

**LONG CANYON EXPLORATION PROJECT
NewWest Gold USA, Inc..**

**DECISION RECORD
BLM/EK/PL-2008/011
3809, N-82445**

NewWest Gold USA, Inc. (NWG) submitted a Plan of Operations (NVN-82445) for mineral (Gold) exploration activities, which includes construction of drill sites, roads, and installation of four (4) monitor wells (Proposed Action). The Long Canyon Exploration Project (Project) is located in the Pequop Mountains approximately 28 miles east-southeast of the city of Wells, in Elko County, Nevada. The project area encompasses approximately 2,114 acres of public and private land. The public land is administered by the Bureau of Land Management's Wells Field Office of the Elko District (BLM).

A total disturbance of 64.93 acres is proposed within the project area; 44.93 acres of public land and 20 acres of split estate land.

Decision

It is my decision to authorize the Long Canyon Exploration Project Plan of Operations, as described by the proposed action in the attached EA and contingent on the following stipulations and monitoring requirements.

Stipulations

1. NWG shall not remove, disturb, alter, injure or destroy any scientifically important paleontological remains; or any historical or archaeological site, structure, building, object or artifact that qualify for listing on the National Register of Historic Places or have not been evaluated for listing on the National Register. The proponent shall be responsible for ensuring that its employees, contractors or any others associated with the project do not damage, destroy or vandalize archaeological, historical or vertebrate paleontological sites or the artifacts/fossils within them. Should damage to cultural or paleontological resources within or near the project area occur during the period of construction, operation, or rehabilitation due to the unauthorized, negligent or inadvertent actions of the proponent or any other project-associated personnel, the proponent shall be responsible for costs of rehabilitation or mitigation. Individuals involved in illegal activities could be subject to penalties under the Archaeological Resources Protection Act (16 U.S.C 470ii), the Federal Land Management Policy Act (43 U.S.C 1701), the Native American Graves and Repatriation Act (16 U.S.C. 1170) and other applicable statutes.
2. Where feasible the project will be designed to avoid impacts to eligible or unevaluated

cultural resources within or near the project area. Eligible or unevaluated cultural resources in proximity to proposed roads or other project activities shall be revisited prior to initiating surface disturbing activities and a 50-meter wide buffer shall be established between such properties and project areas. A lesser buffer could be approved by the BLM if a physical barrier (fence, creek, etc) exists between them. A temporary or long-term barrier may need to be established along project disturbance boundaries adjacent to cultural resources should there be potential for accidental intrusion onto the cultural property.

3. If project redesign is not a practical or effective method for mitigating adverse effects to cultural properties, and BLM determines this is the best approach, data recovery in conformance with the Secretary of the Interior's Standards and Guidelines for Archaeology and Historic Preservation (48 CFR 44716 (September 29, 1983), as amended or replaced), will be conducted by the proponent. Data recovery plans shall be approved by the BLM and SHPO prior to implementation. Once data recovery has been completed and accepted by BLM and the State Historic Preservation Officer (SHPO), the BLM would issue a Notice to Proceed for work at that location.
4. If unevaluated sites cannot be avoided, additional information shall be gathered and the site will be evaluated. If the site does not meet eligibility criteria as determined by the BLM, no further cultural work will be performed. If the site meets eligibility criteria, a data recovery plan or other appropriate mitigation shall be completed.
5. NWG shall implement measures, as outlined in the EA, to ensure that the project does not reduce the flow of Johnson Springs, nor reduce the capacity of any West Wendover City wells, nor impair the quality of the water of Johnson Springs or any city wells. Such measures include but are not limited to constructing a replacement water well at a site to be designated by West Wendover, Nevada and Wendover, Utah and conducting a hydrologic study of Johnson Springs.
6. NWG will conduct surveys prior to commencing activities during the nesting season (generally April 1 - July 31), and report any observation of an active nest by a sensitive raptor and/or migratory bird of concern to the BLM Wells Field Office, so that BLM can advise the operator of measures to mitigate potential adverse effects.

Monitoring

Per 43 CFR § 3809.600, BLM will conduct inspections a minimum of once a year throughout operation and reclamation activities, including reviews of the annual report submitted by NWG that will summarize exploration activities of the previous year with a reclamation cost estimate. Field compliance inspections will extend through monitoring of the reclamation and release of the bond. The results of field compliance inspections will be documented in the project file at the BLM Wells Field Office.

Rationale

The General Mining Law of 1872 gives the claimant the right to explore, discover, and diligently develop the mineral deposit(s) on their claims in a prudent manner. BLM's responsibility is review the operation and reclamation plan submitted by the claimant in accordance with mining regulations found at 43 CFR 3809. As a result of BLM's review of the exploration and reclamation plan, no unnecessary or undue degradation would occur to public lands during the exploration for the locatable mineral deposit(s).

As a result of the analysis in the Long Canyon Exploration Project EA, BLM determined that the proposed action is consistent with the objectives of the Wells Resource Management Plan and complies with Federal, State, and local laws and regulations to the maximum extent possible.

The implementation of the proposed action will allow NWG to continue their exploration drilling program on public lands within the project area. As discussed in the EA, the environmental protection measures proposed as part of the operation and reclamation plan would avoid or reduce impacts from the proposed action and the commitment to the mitigation and monitoring measures from this decision would further the risk of adverse impacts and not result in unnecessary or undue degradation to public lands.

The No Action Alternative was not selected because it would not allow NWG to explore for minerals as provided for in the General Mining Law of 1872.

Public, agency and tribal involvement included posting of the plan of operations for comment, coordination with tribal representatives, and input and review of the EA by the Nevada Department of Wildlife. The EA, together with this decision document is available for inspection upon request to the Elko District Office, and will be posted on the BLM, Elko District Office webpage during a 30-day appeal period.

Bryan K. Fuell
Manager, Wells Field Office

/s/ September 15, 2008
Date