



# United States Department of the Interior

## BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT

Grants Pass Resource Area

2164 N.E. Spalding

Grants Pass, Oregon 97526

JUL 27 2010

IN REPLY REFER TO

1792(ORM070)

Dear Neighbor and Interested Citizen:

The Bureau of Land Management (BLM) has initiated planning and will begin analysis for the proposed placer mining operation, the French Flat Hillside Association Plan of Operations. This proposal is on public lands in the East Fork Illinois River watershed in T40S, R8W, Sections 10 and 15. The mining plan was submitted in accordance with the 43 CFR 3809—Surface Management Regulations.

Mr. Freeman holds mining claims in the area of his proposed Plan of Operations. Under the mining regulations BLM is required to process the application and perform the required NEPA analysis for his plan as per 43 CFR 3809.401 through 3809.420; and as per the Medford District Resource Management Plan, which states, "Maintain exploration and development opportunities for leasable and locatable energy and mineral resources" (1995 RMP p. 76). If approved, this project will be consistent with the BLM's Medford District Resource Management Plan as well as other applicable regulations.

We are sending you this letter because you live or own property near the project area; have been involved in previous BLM projects planned or implemented in the vicinity; have a special interest in this watershed; or have requested to be informed about projects of this type. The enclosed map shows the planning area for this project.

We received a proposed Plan of Operations from Mr. Freeman to mine an area of the French Flat Area of Critical Environmental Concern (ACEC), an area designated for its rare serpentine plant species including federally endangered Cook's desert parsley (*Lomatium cookii*). The proposal is to mine gravels located on a gently sloping bench outside known locations of *L. cookii* and outside of active stream channels. Mr. Freeman's proposal is to remove all the vegetation in the mining areas (see attached map) and excavate these areas to a depth of approximately 9 to 12 feet. Mining would occur in two areas totaling approximately 10 acres. Excavated material from this site would be transported using a rubber-tired loader or dump truck to the processing unit. Water would be pumped to the processing unit, material would be processed, and concentrates would be taken off site for final production. Water would be cycled through settling ponds and recycled back to the processing unit.

No chemicals or process materials would be used on site. No on-site fuel storage is planned. Diesel fuel and lubricants would be transported to the mine site using service vehicles as needed.

Reclamation is part of the Mining Plan, and the area would be reclaimed concurrent with mining. Reclamation would include grading the fine material into (and over) both the current and historic

mining areas. Re-vegetation would proceed in accordance with BLM instructions. The settling pond(s) may be left intact to create a wetland for wildlife enhancement.

The project duration would be based on economic considerations and is unknown.

Environmental analysis will be completed to evaluate the impacts of the proposed mining Plan of Operations and potential mitigation measures that may be required as part of mining operations. The purpose of the analysis is to determine if the Plan of Operations can be authorized as submitted or if additional mitigation measures are needed to prevent unnecessary or undue degradation, protect threatened and endangered species, or protect cultural resources (43 CFR 3908.420). These measures may be analyzed in a separate alternative.

In this early phase of project planning, our objective is to identify site specific resource concerns that should be considered during project planning. If you have information you feel we should consider, please include it in your comments.

Early comments are especially helpful to us. We would greatly appreciate receiving your scoping comments by August 30, 2010. This is not, however, the only opportunity you will have to provide input on this project. Upon completion of the environmental assessment (EA), you will have another opportunity for review and comment.

If you have any questions you may contact Tony Kerwin at 541-471-6564. If you have specific questions about the mining regulations, please contact Diane Parry at (541) 618-2353. Please send your written comments to me at the above address or you can email them to me at [Medford\\_Mail@blm.gov](mailto:Medford_Mail@blm.gov).

If you would like to comment, but confidentiality is of concern to you, you may request that we withhold your name and address from public review or from disclosure under the Freedom of Information Act. Please state this clearly at the beginning of your written comment. We will honor your request to the extent allowed by law. All comments received from organizations or officials of organizations, businesses or government agencies will be made available for public inspection in their entirety.

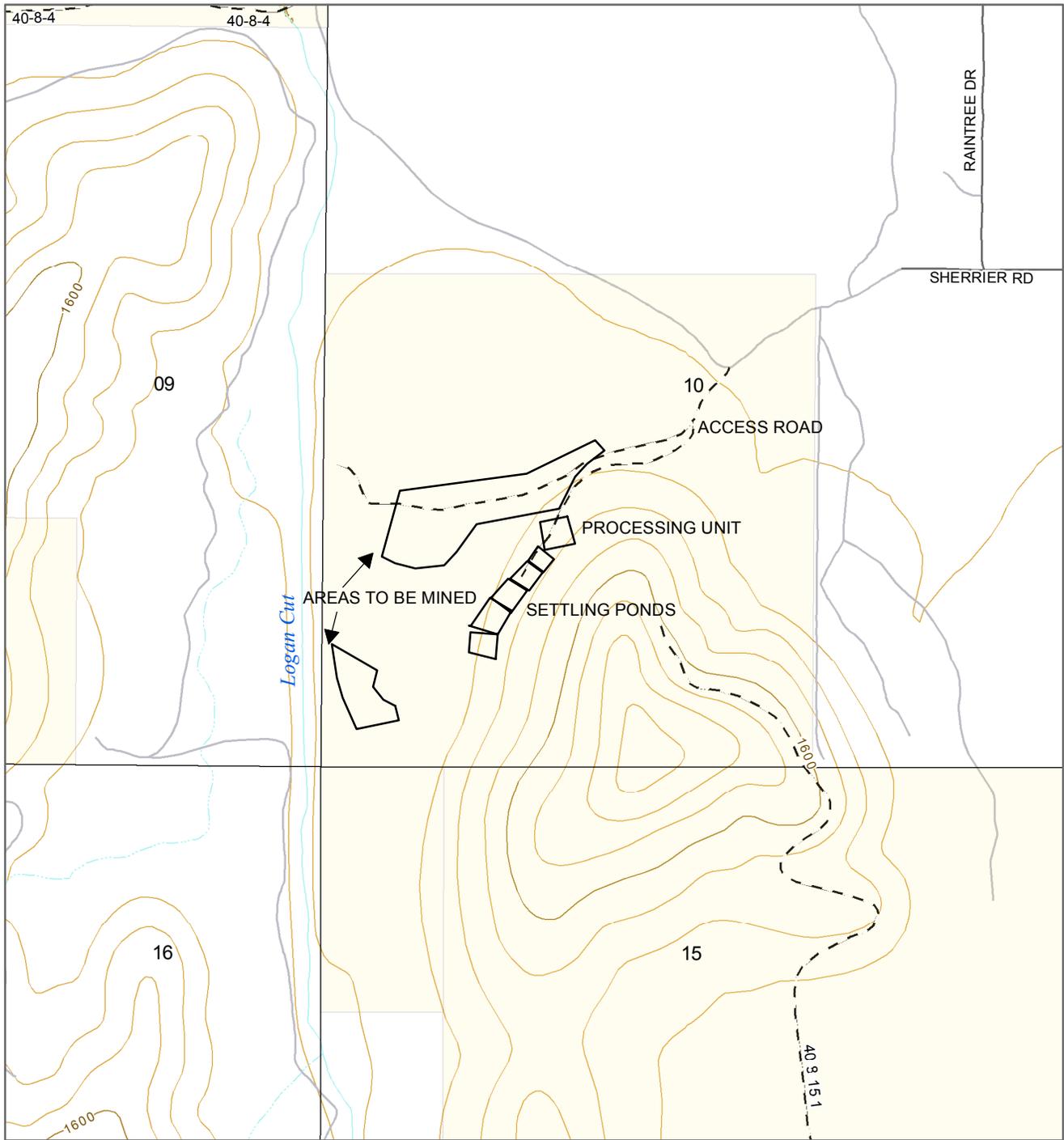
Sincerely,



Abbie Jossie  
Field Manager  
Grants Pass Resource Area

Enclosure

# Freeman Plan of Operations



**Legend**

**BLM**

**Road**

- Bureau of Land Management
- County route
- Forest Service
- Other state route
- Municipal route (urban, residential, etc.)
- Private road (no symbol)
- Not Known

**Stream**

- Intermittent/seasonal
- Perennial

0 0.125 0.25 0.5 Miles 1:10,000



Resource Area: Grants Pass

Map Created On: Jul 14, 2010

This Map Was created using the Map Series Extension.  
 The maps series grid was designed by Sean Mohren, District  
 Wildlife/Botany Data Steward, Medford BLM.  
 541-618-2530

NAD 83 - Zone 10