

# Categorical Exclusion Documentation Format for Actions Other Than Hazardous Fuels and Fire Rehabilitation Actions

## New River AML Backfill DOI-BLM-AZ-P010-2011-006-CX

### A. Background

**BLM Office:** Hassayampa Field Office

**Lease/Serial/Case File No.:** N/A

**Proposed Action Title/Type:** New River AML Backfill

**Location of Proposed Action:** T. 7 N., R. 2 E., SE<sup>1</sup>/<sub>4</sub>SE<sup>1</sup>/<sub>4</sub> of section 20, and N<sup>1</sup>/<sub>2</sub> of section 29, G&SRM, Maricopa County, Arizona.

**Description of Proposed Action** BLM would backfill nineteen hazardous features on four abandoned mine land (AML) sites located on public lands west of New River, AZ. Site AZ7N2E20001 consists of three shafts straddling the Black Canyon Trail. Site AZ7N2E29003 consists of two shafts, one pit and one prospect pit. Site AZ7N2E29004 consists of three shafts. Site Sweat consists of four shafts, two pits, one trench, and two prospect pits. All four sites surveyed and cleared for cultural resources by BLM Archaeologist Chris McLaughlin in October 2010. Sites surveyed for wildlife by the Arizona Game & Fish Dept. (AZGFD) in the spring and summer of 2010, who recommended that all sites could be backfilled without first installing wildlife exclusions. BLM would use a backhoe or dozer to push material from the waste rock dumps next to the features into the holes. Backfilling the features would significantly improve public safety, as the physical safety hazards would be permanently eliminated. There are no active mining claims onsite. The four sites are located at:

<u>AMSCM identifier</u>	<u>Latitude</u>	<u>Longitude</u>	<u>UTM coordinates (NAD 83)</u>
AZ7N2E20001	33.930329	-112.170596	12S 391807E 3755048N
AZ7N2E29003	33.926586	-112.17723	12S 391189E 3754640N
AZ7N2E29004	33.928543	-112.175396	12S 391361E 3754855N
Sweat	33.928155	-112.181082	12S 390835E 3754818N

### B. Land Use Plan Conformance

Land Use Plan (LUP) Name: Bradshaw-Harquahala Record of Decision and Approved Resource Management Plan.

Date Approved/Amended: April 2010

The proposed action is in conformance with the applicable LUP because it is specifically provided for in the following LUP decision(s): N/A

The proposed action is in conformance with the LUP, even though it is not specifically provided for, because it is clearly consistent with the following LUP decision(s) (objectives, terms, and conditions):

The Bradshaw-Harquahala Record of Decision and Approved Resource Management Plan, approved April 2010, states on page A-24, in Public Safety – Standard Operating Procedures – Abandoned Mine Lands: “Inspect abandoned mine land sites to identify all physical hazards presenting a safety risk to the public, and take appropriate action to mitigate any hazards and prevent public access to abandoned mine land contaminated areas.”

### **C: Compliance with NEPA:**

The Proposed Action is categorically excluded from further documentation under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) in accordance with 516 DM 11.9, Appendix 4, J (8) – Installation of minor devices to protect human life, (e.g., grates across mines), and, Appendix 4, J (10) -- Removal of structures and materials of no historical value, such as abandoned automobiles, fences, and buildings, including those built in trespass and reclamation of the site when little or no surface disturbance is involved.

This categorical exclusion is appropriate in this situation because there are no extraordinary circumstances potentially having effects that may significantly affect the environment. The proposed action has been reviewed, and none of the extraordinary circumstances described in 516 DM2 apply.

I considered the following when reviewing the proposed project:

- The act of backfilling the open shafts, pits and trench will have a positive effect on public health & safety.
- According to an LR2000 Mining Claim Geo Report run on November 2, 2010, there are no active mining claims in sections 20 and 29.
- Cultural clearances have been completed for the sites. No historic features would be impacted by the proposed backfilling. Standard stipulations apply, along with the following special stipulation: “During backfilling work, the contractor will carefully avoid all historic features and structures. An environmental monitor shall ensure that the work is carried out away from all historic features.”
- No T&E habitat or species are present in this area, and there is no significant bat habitat in the shafts to be backfilled, according to wildlife surveys completed by biologists from the Arizona Game & Fish Dept. (AZGFD), who recommended that all sites could be backfilled without first installing wildlife exclusions.

**D: Signature**

Authorizing Official: \_\_\_\_\_/s/\_\_\_\_\_ Date: 11/03/10  
Steve Cohn

Name: Steven Cohn

Title: Field Manager, Hassayampa Field Office

**Contact Person**

For additional information concerning this CX review, contact Mining Engineer Matt Plis, Phoenix District Office, 21605 N. 7th Avenue, Phoenix, Arizona 85027, 623-580-5500

**Note:** A separate decision document must be prepared for the action covered by the CX.

## Approval and Decision

**Compliance and assignment of responsibility:** Matt Plis, Environmental Engineer

**Monitoring and assignment of responsibility:** Roy Draper, Surface Protection Specialist

**Review:** We have determined that the proposal is in accordance with the categorical exclusion criteria and that it would not involve any significant environmental effects. Therefore, it is categorically excluded from further environmental review.

**Prepared by:** \_\_\_\_\_/s/\_\_\_\_\_ **Date:** 11 / 02 / 10

**Matt Plis**  
Environmental Engineer

**Reviewed by:** \_\_\_\_\_/s/\_\_\_\_\_ **Date:** 11 / 02 / 10

**Leah Baker**  
Planning & Environmental Coordinator

**Reviewed by:** \_\_\_\_\_/s/\_\_\_\_\_ **Date:** 11/03/10

**Steven Cohn**  
Field Manager

**Project Description:** BLM would backfill nineteen hazardous features on four abandoned mine land (AML) sites located on public lands west of New River, AZ. Site AZ7N2E20001 consists of three shafts straddling the Black Canyon Trail. Site AZ7N2E29003 consists of two shafts, one pit and one prospect pit. Site AZ7N2E29004 consists of three shafts. Site Sweat consists of four shafts, two pits, one trench, and two prospect pits. BLM would use a backhoe or dozer to push material from the waste rock dumps next to the features into the holes. Backfilling the features would significantly improve public safety, as the physical safety hazards would be permanently eliminated. There are no active mining claims onsite.

**Decision:** Based on a review of the project described above and field office staff recommendations, I have determined that the project is in conformance with the land use plan and is categorically excluded from further environmental analysis. It is my decision to approve the action as proposed, with the following stipulation: During backfilling work, the contractor will carefully avoid all historic features and structures. An environmental monitor shall ensure that the work is carried out away from all historic features.

**Approved By:** \_\_\_\_\_/s/\_\_\_\_\_ **Date:** 11/03/10

**Steven Cohn**  
Field Manager