



United States Department of the Interior



BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT

Folsom Field Office
63 Natoma Street
Folsom, CA 95630
www.blm.gov/ca/folsom

EA Number: CA-180-07-54

Proposed Action: Campo Seco Abandoned Mine Lands Hazard Mitigation

Location: NE $\frac{1}{4}$ of Section 3, T.4 N., R.10 E., MDM, Calaveras County

1.0 Purpose of and Need for Action

1.1 Need for Action

In 2002, during a field survey of public lands about a half-mile northwest of Campo Seco near the Mokelumne Coast to Crest Trail, four abandoned shafts were identified as significant hazards to the general public. This project would abate these hazards. The four shafts are 40 to 50 feet deep with portals up to 12 feet in diameter. Three are fenced with barbed wire. These prospects were abandoned in the early 1900s and are shown in Figure 1.

1.2 Conformance with Applicable Land Use Plans

The proposed action complies with the 1988 Sierra Planning Area Management Framework Plan (MFP) Amendment. Refer to General Policy, page 6.

2.0 Proposed Action and Alternatives

2.1 Proposed Action

The proposed action is to backfill the four vertical shafts. This would be accomplished through the use of a D-5H Caterpillar bulldozer using waste rock and surface materials available in the vicinity of these abandoned prospects. The area of disturbance would be less than one acre. The dozer would access the site using existing routes. The work will take two to three days to complete.

2.2 Project Design Features

To minimize the risk of wildfires, all earth-moving equipment used on this project would be equipped with spark arresters. Other vehicles taken to the site would not be parked where vegetation may come in contact with exhaust systems and catalytic converters.

Disturbance to historic rock walls within and in the vicinity of the project area would be avoided during dozer operations.

Areas cleared of vegetation would be water-barred as needed to control post-project erosion. The project area would be periodically monitored to ensure rehabilitation of impacted sites.

2.3 No Action

Under the no action alternative, the shafts would be left open and no abatement of the physical safety hazards would be provided.

2.4 Alternatives Considered but Eliminated from Detailed Analysis

Other options for mitigating the safety hazards were considered. These include using polyurethane foam to plug the shafts and constructing fence enclosures around the shafts. Although less surface area would be disturbed, using the foam would cost substantially more than backfilling with a dozer. Fencing would require monitoring and maintenance and would not prevent entry into the shafts by those persistent enough to climb over it. Fencing would not reduce BLM's liability associated with this type of safety hazard.

3.0 Environmental Effects

The following critical elements have been considered for this environmental assessment, and unless specifically mentioned later in this chapter, have been determined to be unaffected by the proposal: air quality, areas of critical environmental concern, prime/unique farmlands, floodplains, water quality, threatened or endangered species, hazardous waste, cultural resources, Native American concerns, wetlands and riparian zones, wild and scenic rivers, wilderness, invasive/nonnative weeds, and environmental justice.

3.1 Impacts from the No Action Alternative

The environmental consequence of choosing the no action alternative would be the continued threat to the health and safety of users of the public lands in the vicinity of these AML sites.

3.2 Impacts from the Proposed Action

The project area is in a relatively open blue oak/gray pine forest. Some vegetation would be removed from areas adjacent to the four shafts. Total surface disturbance would be less than one acre. Oaks located near the shaft sites may be adversely impacted by dozer operations. The dozer blade may cut tree roots and some branches hanging over excavation sites may become damaged. However, no loss of trees is anticipated. Less than 1,000 cubic yards of material would be excavated from waste rock piles and from lands adjacent to the hazardous sites. Natural re-vegetation would be expected within a few growing seasons. Because these sites are located on gentle slopes with little potential for erosion, no increase in sediment load in nearby streams would result from the proposed action.

In 2007 the project area was surveyed in the field by wildlife biologist Peggy Cranston and botanist Al Franklin. No T&E species or their habitat was observed. No impacts to threatened or endangered plants or animals would result from the proposed action.

No invasive/nonnative weeds were observed during Al Franklin's field survey. The proposed action is not expected to contribute to the spread of these weeds.

A potentially nesting barn owl was observed in shaft number 4. Backfilling of this shaft would be postponed until after the nesting and fledgling season which ends August 15th.

Historic-era mining features within the project area have been identified by James Barnes in his May 9, 2007 cultural resource inventory report prepared for this project. They will be damaged during project implementation. However, the features were evaluated and determined to be not eligible for inclusion in the National Register of Historic Places. Nearby the project area, there are rock walls, an earthen dam, and other features associated with a historic-era residential site. No disturbance to these features will take place.

3.3 Cumulative Impacts

No site specific impacts to any of the critical environmental elements identified in section 3.0 would be expected from the proposed action. Minor, short term impacts such as the removal of vegetation, disturbance/compaction of soil and generation of fugitive dust particles would not result in cumulative impacts to soil productivity, vegetative diversity or air quality at the larger, watershed scale.

4.0 Agencies and Persons Consulted

4.1 BLM Interdisciplinary Team

- Tim Carroll, Geologist and EA Writer
- James Barnes, Cultural Resources
- Al Franklin and Peggy Cranston, Biological Resources
- Dan Lusby, Equipment Operator
- Sandra McGinnis, Planning and Environmental Coordinator

4.2 Availability of Document and Comment Procedures

This EA, posted on Folsom Field Office's website (www.blm.gov/ca/folsom) under Information and NEPA (or available upon request), will be available for a 15-day public review period. Comments should be sent to the BLM at 63 Natoma Street, Folsom, CA 95630 or emailed to us at ca180@ca.blm.gov. Individual respondents may request confidentiality. If you wish to withhold your name and address from public review or from disclosure under the Freedom of Information Act, you must state this at the beginning of your written comment. Such requests will be honored to the extent allowed by law. All submissions from organizations and businesses, and from individuals identifying themselves as representatives or officials of organizations or businesses, will be available for public inspection in their entirety.

