



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-180-08-12

Serial Number: CACA 45469

Proposed Action: Amendment to existing R/W, authorizing additional improvements to Colorado Road.

Location: Lots 6 and 7, Section 34, T. 4 S., R. 18 E., MDM; Mariposa County

Applicant: County of Mariposa, Department of Public Works

1.0 Purpose of and Need for Action

1.1 Need for Action

The applicant needs the subject right-of-way (R/W) in order to construct improvements to Colorado Road. For many years Colorado Road, a county road in the Midpines area that connects Whitlock Road to S.R. 140, was operated and maintained by the County under a RS 2477 authorization. In 2003 the County proposed widening the road and applied to BLM for a FLPMA R/W that would authorize the additional width. BLM R/W CACA 45469 was issued on 8/11/03, for a term of 30 years, granting a 60' uniform width. The County is now preparing to put the job out for bid and has discovered that additional width will be needed in one area. Toward the southern part of the R/W, the roadway needs more elevation in order to drain properly, and the county wants achieve this by shifting the alignment about 15' to the west. In this same area, they want to straighten a curve, and to have temporary use of a truck turnaround area during the period of construction. Without a turnaround area, truck traffic would have to travel all the way to S.R. 140 to return from the job site.

The applicant has legal and physical access to the subject BLM land by virtue of the county road running through it.

1.2 Conformance with Applicable Land Use Plans

The proposed action is subject to the 1988 Sierra Planning Area Management Framework Plan (MFP) Amendment. This plan has been reviewed to determine that the proposed action conforms to the land use plan terms and conditions as required by 43 CFR 1610.5. The objective of the MFP Amendment was to augment land tenure decisions (land disposal/retention) of the original 1983 MFP; it also modified decisions of the SYU-15 Timber Management Plan. The proposed action is in the Merced River Management Area.

2.0 Proposed Action and Alternatives

2.1 Proposed Action

The proposed action is to construct improvements to Colorado Road, which is a two-lane paved road at the southern end of the R/W area, and is dirt surface north of that. Within the proposed amendment

area, where there is paving, the paving would be removed, the base would be stabilized, the R/W would be re-graded, and a new roadway would be compacted and paved, with the centerline being shifted about 15' to the west.

The proposed amendment to the permanent right-of-way would be 1400' long by 15' wide, encompassing approximately 0.48 acres of public land. The proposed amendment would also authorize temporary use of a 150'x150' area off the west side of the road, to be used only during the period of construction, for turning around trucks.

This right-of-way term would be unchanged and would still be subject to applicable policy or program requirements and prior existing rights.

2.2 Project Design Features

Road construction and slash disposal will conform to BLM standards. The truck turn-around would be located in an area that was used for a similar purpose during the construction of the Saxon Creek water pipeline in the early 1990s. Prior to construction, temporary fencing, whose location is to be inspected and verified by BLM, will be installed to protect vegetative resources. After use, the turn-around area will be rehabilitated. See the attached "Exhibit B, Stipulations".

2.3 No Action

The no action alternative would be to not issue a R/W amendment or allow the proposed road reconstruction. In this case, the applicant would not be able to construct a road that would drain properly and there would be ongoing maintenance problems. Without a turn-around, trucks would have to increase their haul distance by something like eight miles.

3.0 Affected Environment

The proposed right-of-way is in the Sierra Foothills at an elevation of 3250' on flat to gently rolling upland. Water resources are not present in the R/W area. Soils and the plant community are detailed on the attached "Botanical Resources Report ". There are no rare plants or species of interest within the amendment area. Rangeland resources are negligible. Forestry resources are not present. Scenic qualities and visual resources have been compromised by the presence of the existing road and the residences along the east side of the road. Recreational values are low due to the proximity of these residences.

A survey for cultural resources was conducted and nothing was found within the amendment area. There is a known group of historic graves outside the APE that will not be affected. Native Americans have been notified and their comments have been solicited (see attached Cultural Resources report).

4.0 Environmental Effects

The following critical elements have been considered for this environmental assessment, and unless specifically mention 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 justices.

4.1 Impacts from the No Action Alternative

Impacts to resources described above would not be expected from the no action alternative.

4.2 Impacts from the Proposed Action

Approximately 0.48 acres of native vegetation (brush and ground cover) would be removed during road construction/improvement. Five blue oaks would also be removed. The western limit of the alignment for new construction was selected specifically to minimize impact to blue oaks, as was the layout of the traffic lane within the turn-around area. Bringing Colorado Road up to county standards would reduce erosion and enhance watershed protection. It will also reduce the long-term maintenance burden for the county and will improve safety on the road. There are a number of BLM survey monuments within the area to be disturbed, and the county will replace these as directed by Cadastral Survey.

Three residences along the east side of the road are near enough to be affected by the temporary dust and noise of road construction and improvement, but the effects would be far greater if the amendment was not granted and the road work occurred closer to the houses. There should be no increase in the amount of traffic on Colorado Road generated by the improvements.

4.3 Cumulative Impacts

Rare plants and cultural resources are not expected to be impacted at the site specific scale. Therefore, cumulative impacts at a larger scale are not expected. The project is not expected to cumulatively contribute to dust and noise because these road construction-related impacts would be very short term and there are no other known similar activities expected to occur at the same time in the nearby vicinity that could conceivably combine to constitute a considerable cumulative impact.

5.0 Agencies and Persons Consulted

5.1 BLM Interdisciplinary Team

- Dean Decker, Rights-of-Way and EA Writer
- Jeff Babcock, Engineering
- Al Franklin, Biological Resources
- James Barnes, Cultural Resources
- Brian Mikelson, Cadastral Surveyor

5.2 Availability of Document and Comment Procedures

The EA, posted on Folsom Field Office's website (www.blm.gov/ca/folsom) under Planning (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.

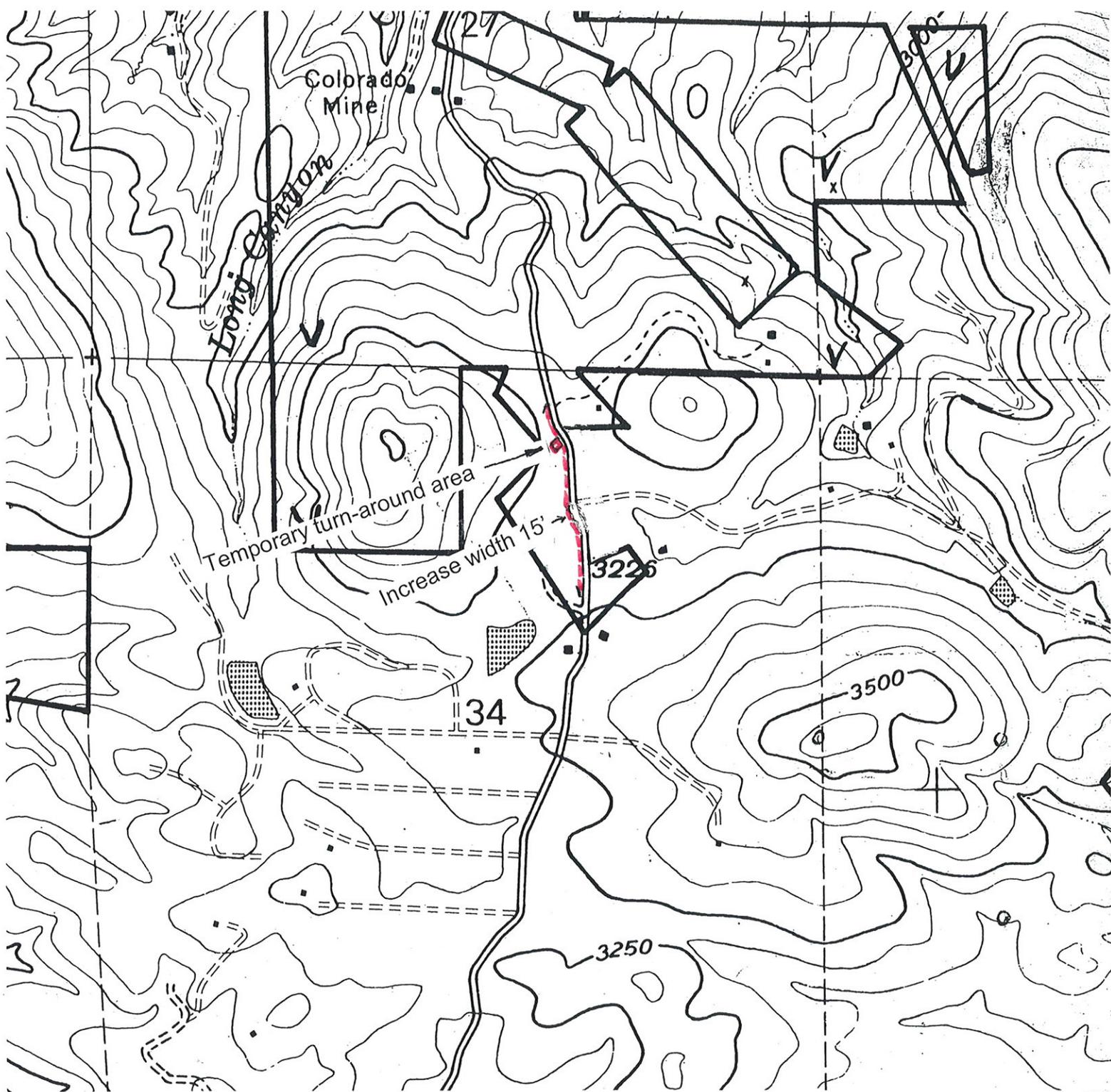


EXHIBIT A

Date:

CACA 45469 Amendment 1. Subject RW Amendment area, increasing the width of the permanent RW by 15' over a length of +/- 1400 feet, and authorizing temporary use of a 150'x150' turn-around area, located in Section 34, T. 4 S., R. 18 E., MDM. Map is copy of Feliciano Mountain 7.5' USGS quad enlarged to approximate scale of 1" = 1000'.

EXHIBIT B

CACA 45469 Amendment 1 (2800)

Date:

STIPULATIONS

1. Prior to any ground disturbance, the holder will install construction fencing (a) along both sides of the traveled route within the turn-around area, and (b) along the western boundary of the R/W amendment area. The fencing will be located no closer to the trunks of oak trees than the outer limits of the canopy extension. BLM will be given the opportunity to inspect the layout of the fencing before construction is initiated.
2. No construction or maintenance activities shall be performed when the soil is too wet to adequately support construction equipment.
3. The holder shall protect the location of all survey monuments found within the right-of-way. Survey monuments include, but are not limited to, General Land Office and Bureau of Land Management Cadastral Survey Corners, reference corners, witness points, U.S. Coastal and Geodetic benchmarks and triangulation stations, military control monuments, and recognizable civil (both public and private) survey monuments. In the event of obliteration or disturbance of any of the above, the holder shall immediately report the incident, in writing, to the authorized officer and the respective installing authority if known. Where General Land Office or Bureau of Land Management right-of-way monuments or references are obliterated during operations, the holder shall secure the services of a registered land surveyor or a Bureau cadastral surveyor to restore the disturbed monuments and references using surveying procedures found in the Manual of Surveying Instructions for the Survey of the Public Lands of the United States, latest edition. The holder shall record such survey in the appropriate county and send a copy to the authorized officer. If the Bureau cadastral surveyors or other Federal surveyors are used to restore the disturbed survey monument, the holder shall be responsible for the survey cost.
4. When construction is complete and use of the turn-around area is terminated, the disturbed area will be rehabilitated as specified by the Authorized Officer.

**Bureau of Land Management
Bakersfield District
Folsom Resource Area**

Botanical Resource Inventory Report

Project name: Colorado Road realignment

Project description: Pull up existing pavement, add soil additive for stability and replace pavement for a portion of Colorado Road. The road will be realigned approximately 10' further west, to provide better drainage and more room between pavement and improvements at the homes on the east side of the road. The pavement may also be extended for approximately 150' to the north of where the pavement ends now. A turn-around loop west of the road, for the trucks involved in construction of the new roadway, will be used during construction.

Size of disturbance: 0.5 acre.

Project location: T. 4S, R. 18E, NE1/4 of section 34.

USGS Quads: Feliciana Mountain

County: Mariposa

Geographic area: Sierra foothills

Elevation range: 3250'

Geology/soils: Boomer loam, 2% to 15% slopes; Trabuco clay loam, 2% to 15% slopes, eroded.

Land form: Saddle.

Plant community/vegetation: Blue oak savannah/woodland. Associated woody species include ponderosa pine, gray pine, interior live oak, buckbrush, toyon, whiteleaf manzanita, snowberry.

CNDDDB records:

Inventory description (methodology, problems, reliability, coverage): Survey occurred in January. Only woody species and plants with well preserved skeletons could be fully identified. The vicinity was surveyed for rare plants in the course of the Saxon Creek project. None were found at that time.

Sensitive species particularly searched for: *Clarkia* species. This January survey would not be able to make distinctions among the species of this genus, but could detect skeletons of the genus by fruits.

Sensitive species or other botanical resources at site: None. The only *Clarkia* skeletons observed had morphology akin to the morphology of *Clarkia purpurea* and unlike the morphology of the rare *Clarkia* species that occur in the vicinity of the Merced River.

Weeds at site:

Project impacts: None to sensitive species.

Recommendations: The native vegetation of the site includes a stand of blue oak and a robust native perennial bunchgrass stand (neither of which are common on BLM land in the area). Ground disturbance should be kept to the minimum amount that will still allow execution of the project.

These stipulations should be incorporated in the grant:

- 1) The turn-around will be delineated by construction fence on both sides of the traveled route.
- 2) Construction fence will be used to indicate the oaks west of the road that are not to be disturbed by equipment use. (During the joint BLM/Mariposa County field visit to the site 1/10/08, 5 oaks adjacent to the road that could be removed were agreed upon.)
- 3) For stipulations #1 and #2 above, oak canopies will be used as the minimum buffer around the

oaks to be protected, i.e., the construction fence will be no closer to the trunks of the oaks than the canopy extension.

4) Before construction begins, BLM will have the opportunity to assess the condition of the turn-around area, i.e., whether it has dried sufficiently to prevent soil damage from compaction; and the placement of construction fence.

Date of inventory: 1/10/08

Date of report: 1/11/08

Signature:

Albert Frankson

Title: Botanist

United States Department of the Interior
Bureau of Land Management
Folsom Field Office
63 Natoma Street
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January 10, 2008

MEMORANDUM

To: Field Manager

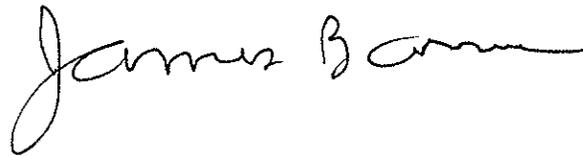
From: James Barnes, Archaeologist

Re: Section 106 compliance for Colorado Road improvement project, Mariposa County
(case # CA-018-S-TM-08/03)

The Folsom Field Office (BLM) is planning to authorize Mariposa County's Department of Public Works to make improvements to a portion of Colorado Road on BLM-administered land. The improvements would include widening the road (by about 15 ft) and, in one area, realigning the road. The county would also create a temporary turnaround for trucks on BLM-administered land. On January 10, 2008 BLM realty specialist/archaeologist Dean Decker, BLM botanist Al Franklin, and I met with county engineers Matt Freeman and Kent Keyser. The engineers went over their plans with us, and I intensively inventoried the area potentially affected by the proposed road work. I found no cultural properties within the area of potential effects (APE).

We have already begun consultations regarding this undertaking with American Indian Council of Mariposa County, which has mining claims in the area. It has been reported that the American Indian Council is connected in some way to the Landrum cemetery (TM-159) located on BLM-administered land nearby. Of note, we showed the county engineers the cemetery and it is clearly outside of the APE. The American Indian Council has told us via e-mail that there may be historic-era round house, known from oral history, in the area. I recommend that we continue to consult with them and other tribes in the following weeks to identify cultural properties that could be affected by the undertaking.

Pending the outcome of Native American consultations, I believe that the undertaking, as proposed, would not affect significant cultural properties, and the finding of "no properties" would complete BLM's obligations under Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act, pursuant to our statewide Protocol Agreement.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "James Bann". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, looping initial "J" and a long, horizontal flourish at the end.

United States Department of the Interior
Bureau of Land Management
Folsom Field Office
63 Natoma Street
Folsom, California 95630

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January 11, 2008

LETTER TO FILE

SUBJECT: Section 106 compliance for Colorado Road improvement project,
Mariposa County

PROJECT: Colorado Road improvement project

REPORT #: CA-018-S-TM-08/03

DATE(S) COMPLETED: January 11, 2008

TYPE OF SURVEY: Class III

CULTURAL PPROPERTIES PRESENT: 0

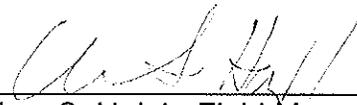
ELIGIBLE PROPERTIES: None

DETERMINATION OF EFFECT: No properties

SHPO CONSULTATION/SECTION 106 STEPS COMPLETED: all

DISCUSSION: This letter to the file documents that I have reviewed the above listed Cultural Resource Inventory Report. Pursuant to the Protocol Agreement (2007) between BLM California and the State Historic Preservation Officer, I affirm that all necessary steps have been taken to identify, record, and determine effects on cultural properties with the undertaking's area of potential effects. This report has been completed by an approved staff specialist and is in accordance with all standards and guidelines as outlined in the Protocol Agreement (2007).

I concur with the findings of this analysis.



William S. Haigh, Field Manager (CA-180)

1-14-08

Date

CULTURAL RESOURCE INVENTORY REPORT

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT
FOLSOM FIELD OFFICE

1. **PROJECT NAME & CASE NUMBER:** Colorado Road improvement project, case # CA-018-S-TM-08/03
2. **PROJECT SPONSOR/DEVELOPMENT COMPANY:** Bureau of Land Management-Folsom Field Office, Folsom, CA.
3. **REPORT DATE:** January 10, 2008
4. **DATE(S) OF SURVEY:** January 11, 2008
5. **COUNTY:** Mariposa
6. **FIELDWORK LOCATION:** The area of potential effects (APE) is located along Colorado Road. The APE is administered by the Bureau of Land Management-Folsom Field Office (BLM). See the APE location map (attached).

MAP: USGS 7.5-minute quadrangle Feliciano Mtn. Calif. (1947)

LEGAL DESCRIPTION: MDM, T 4 S, R 18 E, Sec 27

7. **PROJECT DESCRIPTION:** BLM is planning to authorize Mariposa County's Department of Public Works to make improvements to a portion of Colorado Road on BLM-administered land. The improvements would include widening the road (by about 15 ft) and, in one area, realigning the road. The county would also create a temporary turnaround for trucks on BLM-administered land.
8. **PROJECT AREA DESCRIPTION:** The APE is located at approximately 3250 ft above sea level in the central Sierra Nevada. The vegetation consists of a mixed oak and ponderosa pine woodland. The understory is sparse, consisting mainly of annual and bunch grasses.
9. **DESCRIPTION OF EXAMINATION PROCEDURES:** I intensively inventoried the APE, on foot, for about 1 hour. I followed BLM 8100 manual Class III guidelines. Portions of the APE have been intensively inventoried previously, as part of other projects. In 1991 BLM-administered land along Colorado Road was inventoried by archaeologists with California State University Stanislaus for the Saxon Creek water pipeline (see BLM case # CA-018-S-TM-91/11). No cultural resources were found within the area now part of the APE for Colorado Road improvement project. In 2003 I inventoried the area adjacent to the APE as part of a cultural

resource study for a mining action under the federal regulation at 43 CFR 3809 (see BLM case # CA-018-S-TM-04/03). I found no cultural resources near the APE for the Colorado Road improvement project. The closest resource is TM-159 the Landrum cemetery. The cemetery is located well away from the APE and would not be affected by the project.

10. **INVENTORY TYPE:** Class III. See the inventory coverage map (attached).
11. **CONSULTATION:** See BLM central files.
12. **LEGALLY DEFINABLE ACRES SURVEYED:** 1 acre
13. **NUMBER OF PROPERTIES FOUND:** 0
14. **COLLECTION:** N/A
15. **HISTORIC CONTEXT:** N/A
16. **DESCRIPTION OF FINDINGS:** N/A
17. **EVALUATION:** N/A
18. **ACTUAL/POTENTIAL NATIONAL REGISTER PROPERTIES AFFECTED:**
No properties
19. **LITERATURE SEARCH:**

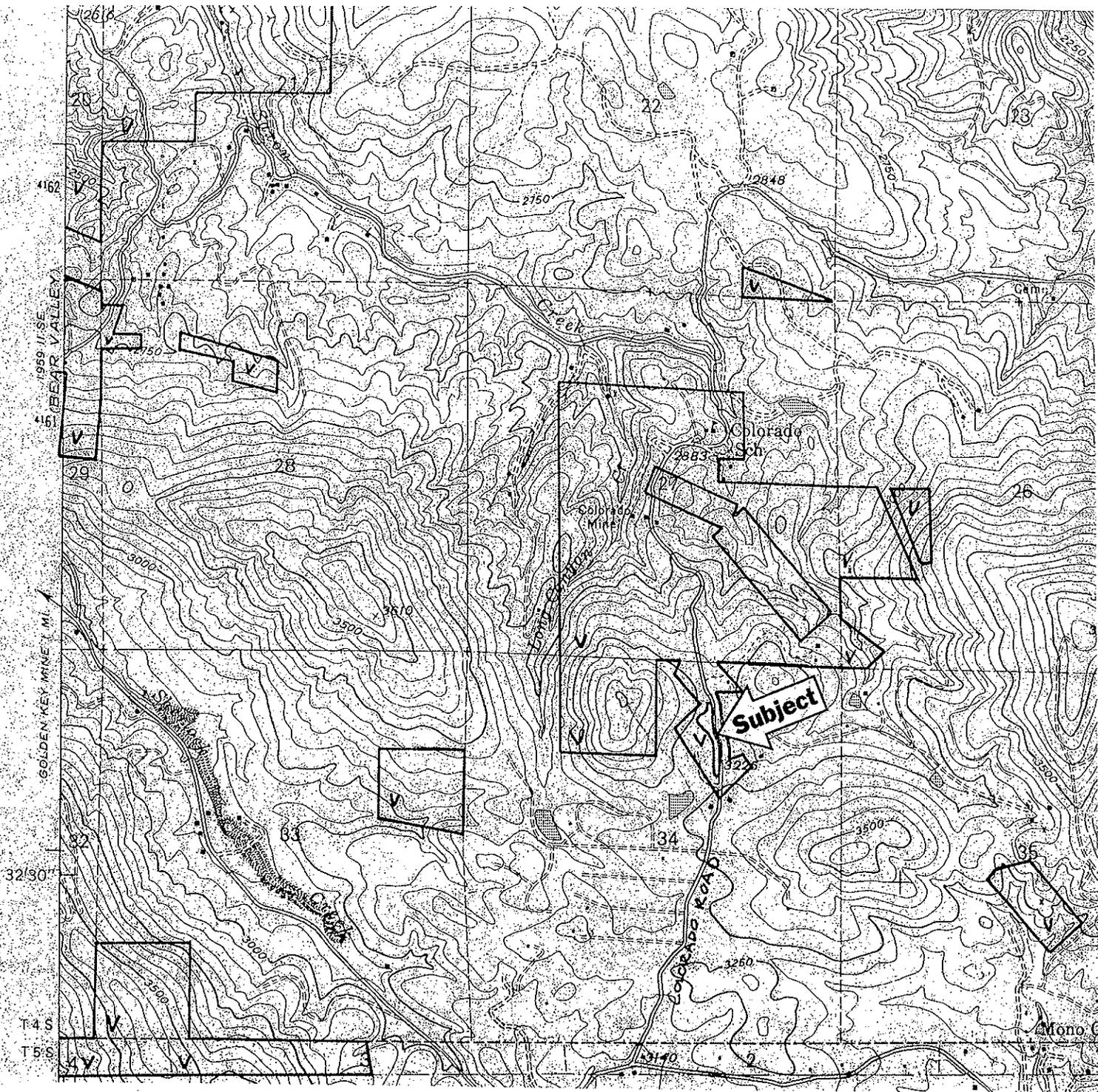
BY WHOM: James Barnes, BLM Archaeologist

WHERE: Bureau of Land Management cultural resources and land records, on file at the Folsom Field Office, 63 Natoma Street, Folsom, CA

DATE: January 9, 2008
20. **LITERATURE CITED:** None.
21. **CONCLUSIONS/RECOMMENDATIONS:** The undertaking, as proposed, would not affect historic properties.
22. **FIELD SUPERVISOR/PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATORS:**


James Barnes, Archaeologist

1/11/08
Date

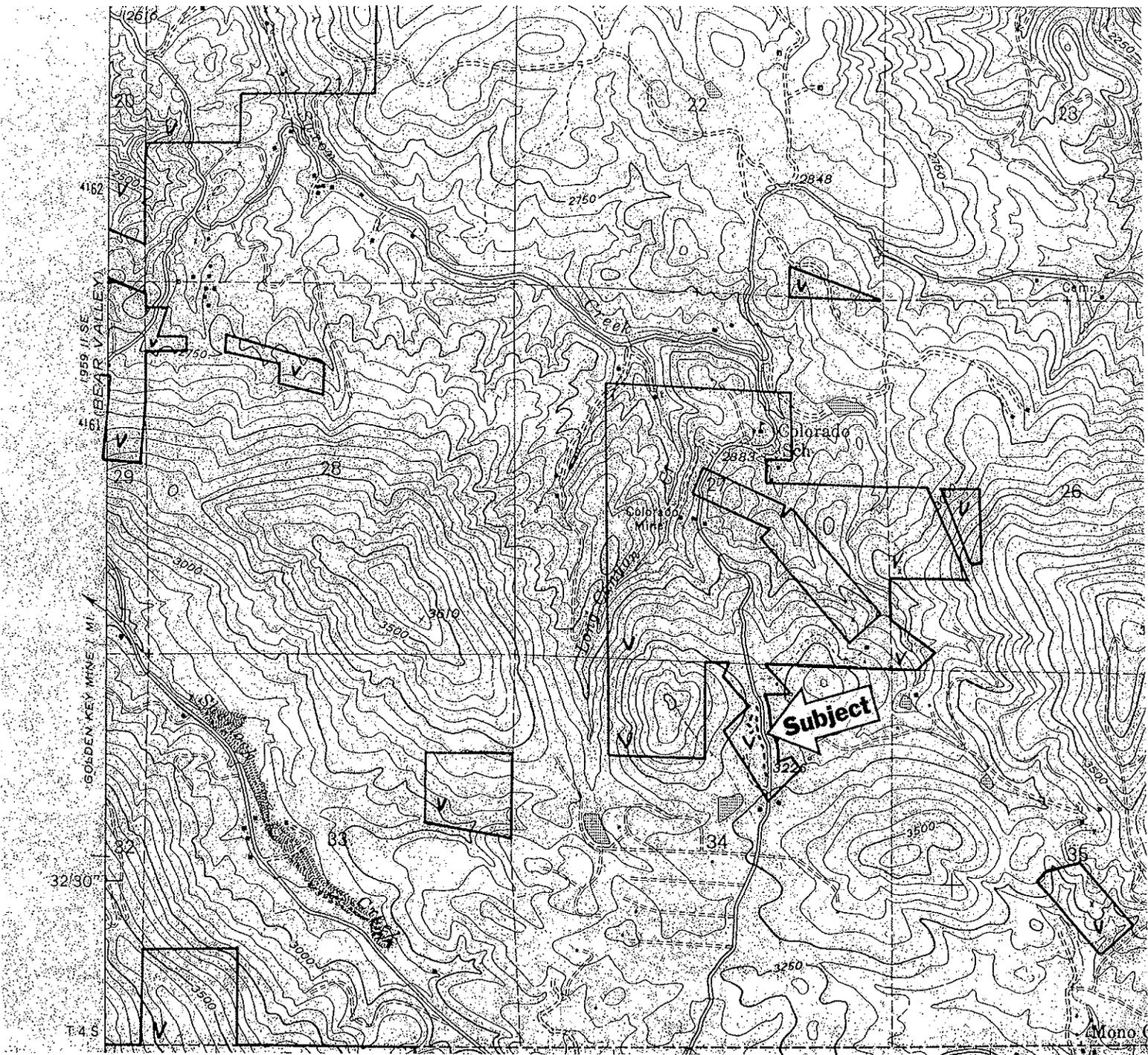


**AREA OF POTENTIAL EFFECTS LOCATION MAP FOR THE
COLORADO ROAD IMPROVEMENT PROJECT**

MDM, T 4 S, R 18 E, SEC 27

**USGS 7.5-MINUTE QUADRANGLE: FELICIANA MTN., CALIF.
(1947)**

DRAWN POLYGON = AREA OF POTENTIAL EFFECTS



INVENTORY COVERAGE MAP FOR THE COLORADO ROAD IMPROVEMENT PROJECT

MDM, T 4 S, R 18 E, SEC 27

USGS 7.5-MINUTE QUADRANGLE: FELICIANA MTN., CALIF. (1947)

DASHED LINE = WHERE I WALKED