



United States Department of the Interior



BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT

Folsom Field Office
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Folsom, CA 95630
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EA Number: CA-180-07-62

Proposed Action: Little Giant and Jersey Abandoned Mine Lands Hazard Mitigation

Location: SW¼ of Section 27, T.10 N., R.10 E., MDM, El Dorado County

1.0 Purpose of and Need for Action

1.1 Need for Action

In 2005 a concerned citizen informed the BLM Folsom Field Office that children have been exploring an abandoned mine on an isolated parcel of public lands about a mile west of El Dorado. This parcel is surrounded by private lands and residences. A field check conducted by BLM personnel in September of 2005 confirmed the presence of open shafts, an adit, and numerous pits and prospects at the Little Giant and Jersey AML sites located within this parcel as shown in Figure 1. These mine workings are a significant hazard to the general public. This project would abate this hazard.

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

At the Little Giant Mine, the proposed action is to install a bat culvert at the adit portal and to use polyurethane foam to install false bottoms in the shafts that intersect the underground mine workings. The false bottoms to these shafts will reduce the amount of material needed to backfill them. The proposed action includes backfilling several shafts and numerous prospect pits at both the Little Giant and Jersey AML sites. The shafts are 20 to 50 feet deep with portals 4 to 12 feet in diameter. A D-5H Caterpillar bulldozer will be used to backfill the shafts with waste rock and surface materials available on site. The sites are easily accessible by existing paved and dirt roads.

The work would take two to three days to complete and about one acre of surface would be disturbed.

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.

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 and adit 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 this safety hazard were considered. These include using polyurethane foam to plug all of the shafts or constructing fence enclosures around them. 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 by curious adventurers persistent enough to climb over it. Fencing of shafts and adits does 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 areas are located on hillsides north and south of Dry Creek in a mixed gray pine-oak forest. The proposal consists of excavating and moving mine waste rock and surface soil and rock materials using a D-5H Caterpillar bulldozer. The dozer would cause a combined surface disturbance of about one acre. Some vegetation would be removed adjacent to the shafts and prospects. Trees located near the shaft and prospect 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 having a diameter of greater than four inches is anticipated. Up to 1,000 cubic yards of material would be excavated from waste rock piles and from lands adjacent to the shafts and adit. Natural re-vegetation of the disturbed surface would occur within a few growing seasons. Because these sites are located on gentle to moderately steep slopes with little potential for erosion, no increase in sediment load in Dry Creek nearby would result from the proposed action.

Access to the Jersey and Little Giant sites would likely be by an existing dirt road north of the sites. Along this access road a community of *Clarkia biloba* was identified by BLM Botanist Al Franklin. This is BLM-sensitive plant species. The dozer would not be lowering its blade along this route to the Jersey site and can avoid this plant community by walking around it.

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.

Two patches of yellow star thistle have been found along the access route to the AML sites. Care would be taken to avoid walking the dozer through the thistle patches. The proposed action is not expected to contribute to the spread of invasive/nonnative weeds.

Mine workings, terraces, roads, foundations, a small standing wood-frame building and waste rock deposits have been identified within the project area by archaeologist James Barnes in his May 4 and May 10, 2007 cultural resource inventory reports prepared for this project. Although all other features would remain undisturbed, the mine workings and associated roads and waste rock deposits would be damaged during project implementation. However, these mining prospects have been evaluated and determined to be not eligible for inclusion in the National Register of Historic Places.

Use of this public land parcel by equestrians would be temporarily disrupted during the short duration of this project. Any inconvenience would be far outweighed by the benefits of abating the physical safety hazards present, some immediately adjacent to equestrian trails.

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 and Others

- 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
- Gene Dixon, Equestrian Enthusiast
- John Bethel, Resident Owner of adjacent Private Lands
- Richard and Carol Grant, Resident Owner of adjacent Private Lands
- Dale Van Bebber, Resident Owner of land in neighborhood

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.

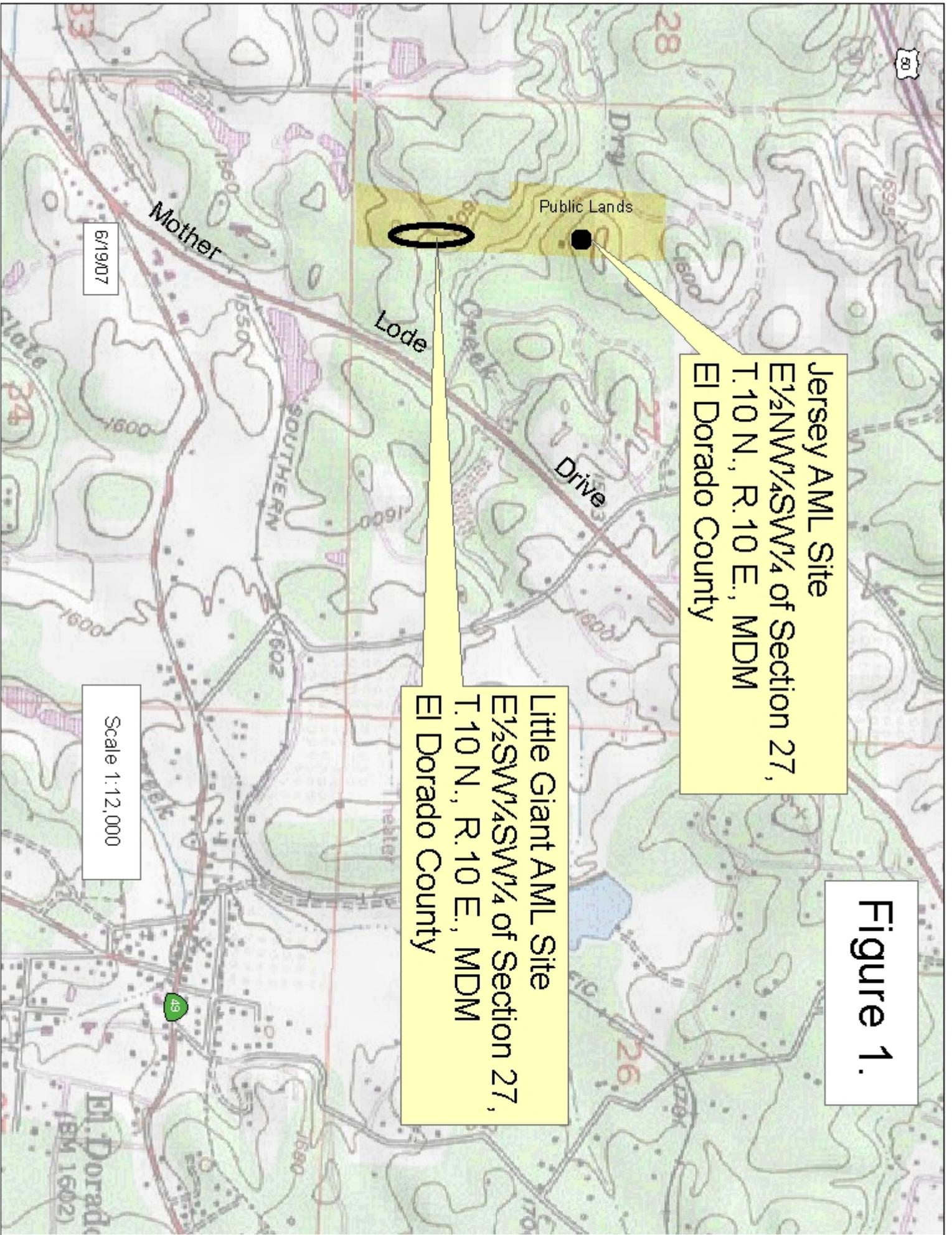


Figure 1.