

**NOTICE OF INTENT
TO ADOPT A MITIGATED NEGATIVE DECLARATION FOR THE PROPOSED SUPER
CREEK QUARRY EXPANSION REVISED BLM PLAN OF OPERATIONS AND AMENDED
RECLAMATION PLAN NO. 137
AND
NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING BEFORE THE STATE MINING AND GEOLOGY BOARD**

Public notice is hereby given that an Environmental Assessment and Initial Study/Mitigated Negative Declaration (EA-IS/MND) has been prepared in accordance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) and is available for public review for the Super Creek Quarry Expansion Revised BLM Plan of Operations and Amended Reclamation Plan No. 137 Project (proposed project).

Project Description and Location: Painted Hills Mining Company currently mines decorative rock known as “Palm Springs Gold” at its Super Creek Quarry under an approved U.S. Department of the Interior Bureau of Land Management (BLM) Plan of Operations and Reclamation Plan No. 137 approved by Riverside County. The site is within the corporate boundary of the City of Desert Hot Springs, approximately 2 miles north of Interstate 10 at Whitewater. The site is surrounded by undeveloped land on the west, north, and east, and on the south by a wind energy project. The mine has been operating since the 1950s. Current mining and on-site processing operations are located on approximately 23.8 acres, with inactive waste material slopes covering approximately 27 acres on the east side of the site (50.8 acres total). The proposed project would add approximately 33.4 acres to the active quarry site, including two new waste placement areas and additional sediment basins. The new quarry areas would be mined approximately 130 to 150 feet deep, and would remove the top portion of two small hills adjacent to existing quarry operations. An additional 21 acres along the west and south boundaries would be added to the quarry site but would remain undisturbed. In total, the expanded quarry site would cover 105.2 acres. The methods of extraction and processing would not change compared to current quarry operations. No expansion of annual production is proposed, and there would be no change in the amount of material hauled off-site on a private haul road to Painted Hills’ retail facility along I-10. Approval of the proposed project would allow extraction, processing, and transport of rock from the quarry site to continue for an estimated 25 years. The proposed project includes specific drainage, erosion, and sediment control features to minimize potential effects on Super Creek and the Whitewater River, and would continue to operate in accordance with applicable NDPEs Industrial Permit requirements. Reclamation activities would include grading and revegetation to stabilize soils. The proposed project is within the planning area for the California Desert Conservation Area Plan and Coachella Valley Multiple Species Habitat Conservation Plan. The proposed project would continue an existing mining operation and would not result in any land use conflicts or land use incompatibilities, and would not remove any land protected in those plans for species or habitat. Continued mining operations and reclamation would be consistent with the City of Desert Hot Springs General Plan. The proposed project will require BLM approval. The amended reclamation plan requires approval by the State Mining and Geology Board (SMGB).

Document Review and Availability: The public comment period for the EA-IS/MND is from **July 1, 2014 to July 30, 2014**. Copies of the EA-IS/MND are available for public review at:

State Mining and Geology Board
801 K Street, Suite 2015
Sacramento, CA 95814-3528
(916) 322-1082

U.S. Department of the Interior
Bureau of Land Management
Palm Springs-South Coast Field Office
1201 Bird Center Drive
Palm Springs, CA 92262
(760) 833-7100

The EA-IS/MND can also be reviewed and/or downloaded from the SMGB or BLM web sites at:

<http://www.conservation.ca.gov/smgb/Pages/Index.aspx> (SMGB)
http://www.blm.gov/ca/st/en/fo/palmsprings/national_environmental.html (BLM)

During the public review period, written comments on the EA-IS/MND may be provided to:

Will Arcand, Senior Engineering Geologist
State Mining and Geology Board
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Sacramento, CA 95814-3528
Will.Arcand@conservation.ca.gov

Jeffrey Johnston, Field Office Geologist
U.S. Department of the Interior
Bureau of Land Management
Palm Springs-South Coast Field Office
1201 Bird Center Drive
Palm Springs, CA 92262
jjohnston@blm.gov

Written comments must be submitted by 5:00PM July 30, 2014.

Public Hearing/Meeting: Notice is hereby given that a public hearing will be held before the State Mining and Geology Board for the purpose of considering public comment on the proposed project and EA-IS/MND. The hearing will be held at a regular meeting of the State Mining and Geology Board on Thursday, August 14, 2014, at 10:00 AM at Assembly Hearing Room #444, State Capitol, Sacramento, California. Interested parties should consult the SMGB web site to confirm the meeting agenda, time, and date, or call (916) 322-1082.