

U.S. Department of the Interior  
Bureau of Land Management  
San Luis Valley Field Office  
1313 E. Hwy 160  
Monte Vista, CO 81144

## CATEGORICAL EXCLUSION

NUMBER: DOI-BLM-CO-F03-2015-0012 CX

CASEFILE/PROJECT NUMBER (optional):

PROJECT NAME: Soda Springs Abandoned Mine Closure

PLANNING UNIT:

LEGAL DESCRIPTION:

New Mexico Principal Meridian, Colorado

**HS01:** T. 46 N., R. 9 E., sec. 22.

**HS02, HS03, HS03a, HS04, HS05:** T. 46 N., R. 11 E., sec .31.

**HS07:** T. 47 N., R. 7 E., sec. 36.

**Soda Springs:** T. 46 N., R. 8 E., sec. 22.

APPLICANT: BLM

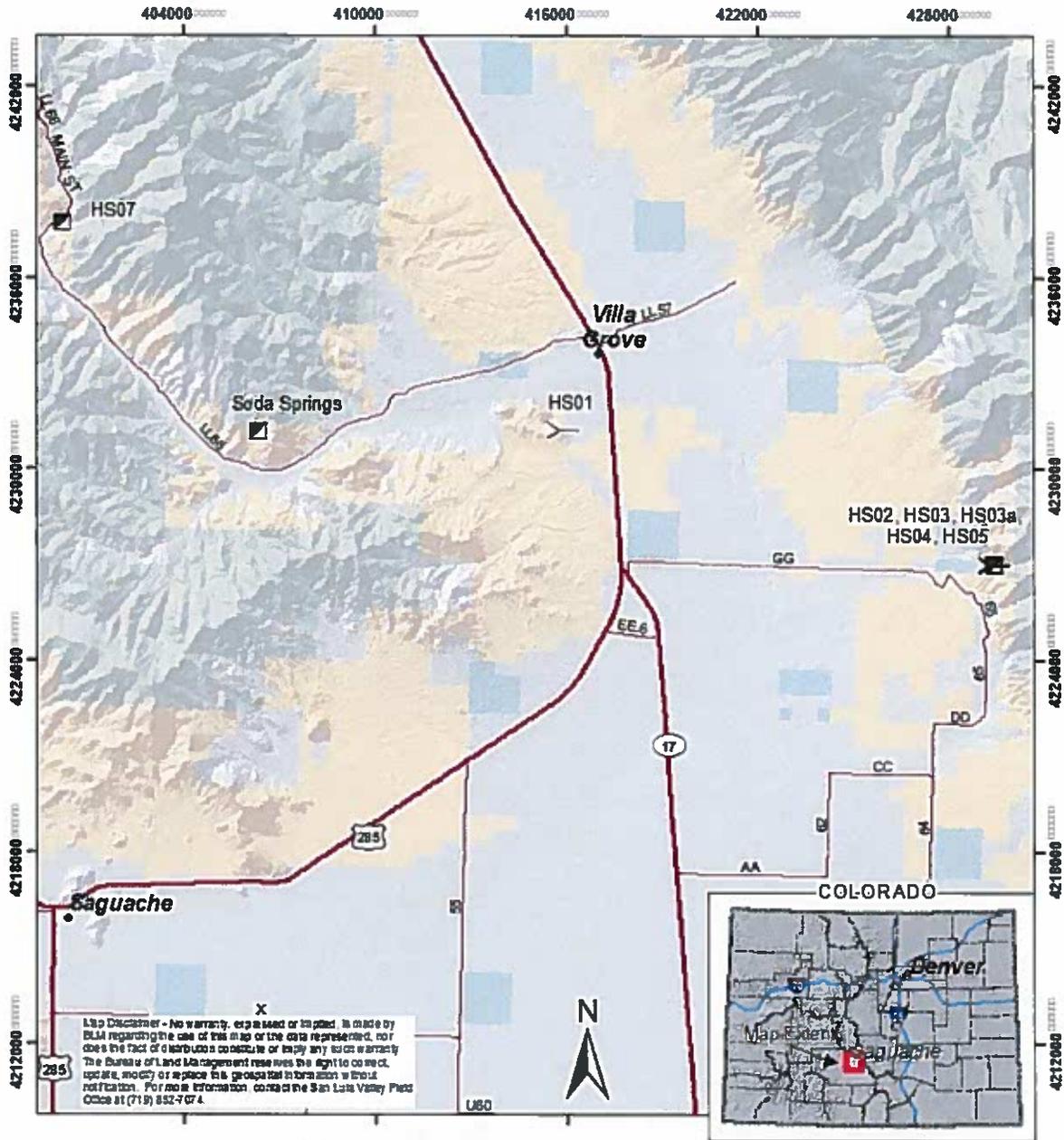
DESCRIPTION OF PROPOSED ACTION: The Colorado Division of Reclamation, Mining and Safety (DRMS) will mitigate physical safety hazards at four shafts (HS04, HS05, HS07, Soda Springs) and four adits (HS01, HS02, HS03, HS03a) as part of the Hot Springs Canyon AML project first initiated in 2010. All four shafts will be backfilled, two bat gates will be installed on two of the adits, HS02, and HS03 and an air gate will be installed on HS03a. A tracked backhoe or similar will be used to access and close these safety hazards. All tracks will be reclaimed by operator.

PLAN CONFORMANCE REVIEW:

Name of Plan: San Luis Resource Management Plan

Date Approved: December 18, 1991

Decision Number: Hazards Management, page 12 in the Record Of Decision San Luis Resource Area ○



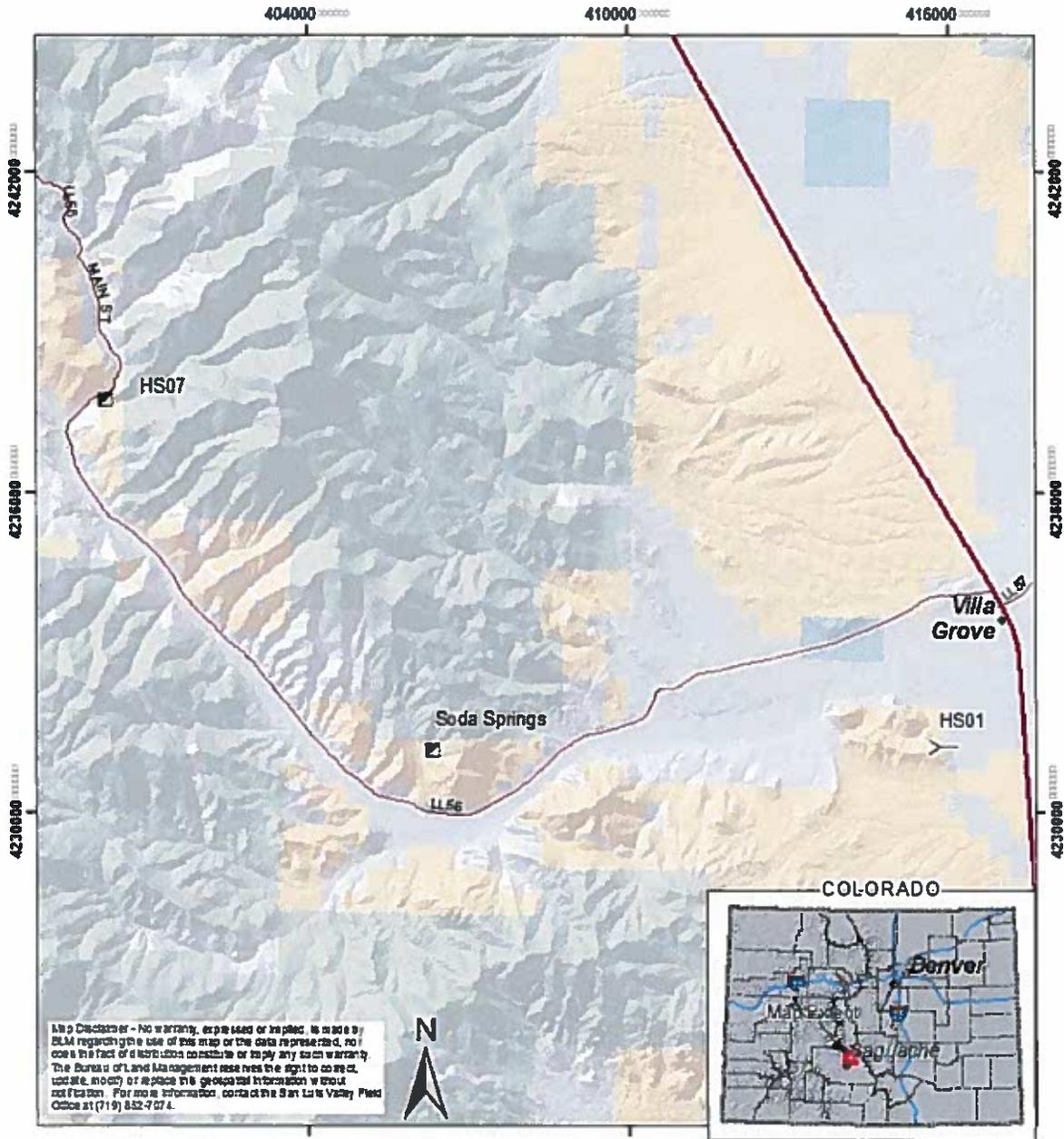
# Hot Springs Canyon

DOI-BLM-CO-F03-2015-012-CX  
 Saguache County, CO  
 San Luis Valley Field Office



- AML points
- adit
- shaft
- Bureau of Land Management
- State
- US Forest Service





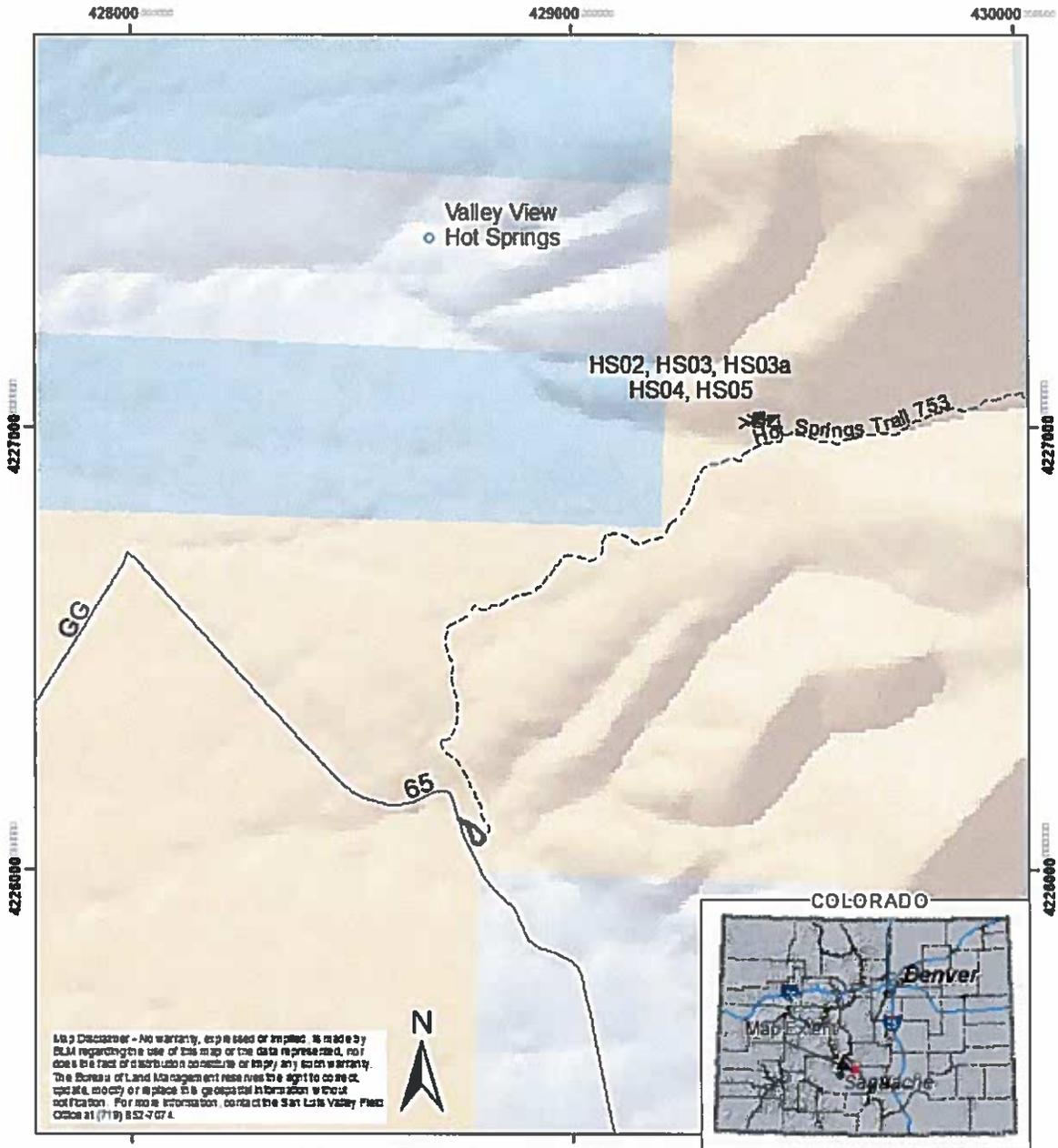
# Hot Springs Canyon

DOI-BLM-CO-F03-2015-012-CX  
Saguache County, CO  
San Luis Valley Field Office



- |             |  |                           |
|-------------|--|---------------------------|
| AML feature |  | Bureau of Land Management |
|             |  | State                     |
|             |  | US Forest Service         |
|             |  | adit                      |
|             |  | shaft                     |





# Hot Springs Canyon

DOI-BLM-CO-F03-2015-012-CX  
Saguache County, CO  
San Luis Valley Field Office



- AML feature
- Bureau of Land Management
  - State
  - US Forest Service
- adit  
 shaft



1:11,855

**CATEGORICAL EXCLUSION REVIEW:** This proposed action is listed as a Categorical Exclusion in DOI Departmental Manual Part 516 Chapter 11 J (8). None of the following exceptions in 516 DM 2, Appendix 2, apply.

Exclusion Criteria	YES	NO
1. Have significant impacts on public health or safety.		x
2. Have significant impacts on such natural resources and unique geographic characteristics as historic or cultural resources; park, recreation, or refuge lands; wilderness areas; lands with wilderness characteristics; wild or scenic rivers; national natural landmarks; sole or principal drinking water aquifers; prime farmlands; wetlands; floodplains; national monuments; migratory birds; and other ecologically significant or critical areas.		x
3. Have highly controversial environmental effects or involve unresolved conflicts concerning alternative uses of available resources.		x
4. Have highly uncertain and potentially significant environmental effects or involve unique or unknown environmental risks.		x
5. Establish a precedent for future action or represent a decision in principle about future actions with potentially significant environmental effects.		x
6. Have a direct relationship to other actions with individually insignificant but cumulatively significant environmental effects.		x
7. Have significant impacts on properties listed, or eligible for listing, on the National Register of Historic Places as determined by either the bureau or office.		x
8. Have significant impacts on species listed, or proposed to be listed, on the List of Endangered or Threatened Species, or have significant impacts on designated Critical Habitat for these species.		x
9. Violate a Federal law, or a State, local or tribal law or requirement imposed for the protection of the environment.		x
10. Have a disproportionately high and adverse effect on low income or minority populations.		x
11. Limit access to and ceremonial use of Indian sacred sites on Federal lands by Indian religious practitioners or significantly adversely affect the physical integrity of such sacred sites.		x
12. Contribute to the introduction, continued existence, or spread of noxious weeds or non-native invasive species known to occur in the area or actions that may promote the introduction, growth, or expansion of the range of such species.		x

<b>INTERDISCIPLINARY TEAM REVIEW</b>			
<b>NAME</b>	<b>TITLE</b>	<b>AREA OF RESPONSIBILITY</b>	<b>Initials/date</b>
Joel Humphries	Wildlife Biologist	Terrestrial Wildlife, T&E, Migratory Birds, Fisheries	JTH, 4/23/2015
Jeff Williams	Range Management Spec.	Range, Vegetation	JW, 3/30/15
Eduardo Duran	NRS	Riparian, T&E Plant species, Invasive/Noxious plants, Prime/Unique Farmlands	END 4/16/15
Rebecca Morris	Geologist	Minerals, Paleontology, Waste Hazardous or Solid	RM 3/27/15
Negussie Tedela	Hydrologist	Hydrology, Water Quality/Rights, Soils, Air Quality	NHT 4/3/2015
Sean Hines	Cadastral Surveyor	Cadastral Survey	SJH 04/15/2015
Sean Noonan	Outdoor Recreation Planner	Recreation, Wilderness, LWCs, Visual, ACEC, W&S Rivers,	STN 3/30/15
Jill Lucero/Sue Swift Miller	Wetland Biologist	Wetlands	SSM 4/10/15
Martin Weimer	NEPA Coordinator	Environmental Justice, Noise, SocioEconomics	MW 4/16/14
Brian Fredericks	Archaeologist	Cultural, Native American	BAF 4/5/2015
Leon Montoya	Realty Specialist	Realty	LM 04-01-2015

**REMARKS:**

**Cultural Resources:** In 2010, the BLM conducted the “CLASS III HERITAGE RESOURCE INVENTORY REPORT FOR THE PROPOSED SODA SPRINGS, ELKHORN GULCH, HOT SPRINGS CANYON, MAJOR CREEK AND CLAYTON CONE MINE CLOSURE PROJECTS.” This project identified SODA SPRINGS ABANDONED MINE as an isolated find, which by definition is *not eligible* for listing on the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP). The closure of this abandoned mine will have *no effect* to historic properties. Closure may proceed and no further work is required.

**Native American Religious Concerns:** No Native American concerns.

**Terrestrial Wildlife:**

The HSO2, HSO3, HSO3A, HSO4, and HSO5 mine shafts are within an elk winter concentration area, severe winter range, and winter range; a mule deer winter concentration area, severe winter range, and winter range. Closures of the mine shafts should not occur from November 15 to March 1.

The Soda Springs mine shaft is within elk winter range; mule deer winter concentration area, severe winter range, and winter range. Closures of the mine shafts should not occur from November 15 to March 1.

Thirteen of Colorado's 19 species of bats are known to use abandoned mines as roost sites, the potential of WNS transfer is significant, and AML programs are important factors in this issue. The

ongoing Abandoned Mine Lands closure programs, administered by the Colorado Division of Reclamation, Mining, and Safety (DRMS), the BLM and USFS, are intended to render inactive mines safe to the public. The efforts of Colorado Parks and Wildlife (CPW) and DRMS have provided protection of roosting habitat for local bat populations by the construction of bat gates; alternative closure methods that provide continued access for bats, while providing for public safety. Surveys were conducted in June 2014 to determine the potential for bat in the project area, and Table 1 has the recommendations made by Navo (2014). No survey was completed for the Soda Springs mine feature, without any data, a bat gate should be installed unless a survey is completed and shows no potential for bats to use the feature.

Table1. Bat Mitigation for Mine Shaft Closures

Feature	Bat Habitat Potential	Recommendation
HS01	Low potential	Close
HS02	Potential habitat	Bat gate
HS03	Documented bats	Bat gate
HS03a	Potential habitat	Air grate
HS04	Shallow shaft	Close
HS05	Shallow shaft	Close
HS07	Shallow shaft	Close
Soda Springs	Unknown	Bat gate

**Threatened and Endangered Species:**

**Threatened and Endangered Species (Plants):** There are no known threatened, endangered, candidate, proposed, special status, sensitive, or other plant species of concern that would be affected by the abandoned mine closure activities of this project.

**Noxious Weeds/Invasive Plants:** During abandoned mine closure activities of this project, ground disturbed areas could increase the likelihood of noxious weeds/invasive plants becoming established in the abandoned mine closure sites. Prior to arriving on project site and starting work, all equipment will be washed. Any sites within the project areas heavily disturbed by abandoned mine closure activities will need to be reseeded with native, weed-free seed mix within two weeks after completion of project.

**Cadastral Survey:** All of the above listed locations are near public/private boundaries that have not been surveyed or investigated by Cadastral Survey. It is recommended that a thorough search be conducted for evidence of these boundaries before proceeding.

COMPLIANCE PLAN (optional):

LITERATURE CITED

Navo2014 AML Gate Evaluations for Project Manager Steve Renner. Colorado Natural Heritage Program. Colorado State University. Fort Collins, CO., Kirk. 2014.

NAME OF PREPARER: Rebecca Morris

NAME OF ENVIRONMENTAL COORDINATOR: Martin Weimer

DATE:

DECISION AND RATIONALE: I have reviewed this Categorical Exclusion and have decided to implement the Proposed Action.

This action is listed in the Department Manual as an action that may be categorically excluded. I have evaluated the action relative to the 10 criteria listed above and have determined that it does not represent an exception and is, therefore, categorically excluded from further environmental analysis.

SIGNATURE OF AUTHORIZED OFFICIAL:



Andrew Archuleta, Field Manager

DATE SIGNED:

4/28/2015