United States Department of the Interior
Bureau of Land Management
Northeastern States Field Office
LLES003410

Categorical Exclusion

NEPA #: DOI-BLM-ES-0030-2013-0028-CX

Twin Metals Minnesota Small Pit Samples

Date:	September 2013
Type of Action:	Hardrock
Serial Number:	MNES 001352
Location:	Superior National Forest, Lake County, Minnesota: UTM coordinates 5295248.6 meters north, 593,379.5 meters east from Minnesota Highway 1 on Forest Route 1900.
Project Acreage:	1.4 acres
Proponent Address:	Twin Metals Minnesota 380 St. Peter Street Suite 705 St. Paul, MN 55102

Bureau of Land Management
Northeastern States Field Office
626 E. Wisconsin Ave., Suite 200
Milwaukee, WI 53202
414-297-4400 (phone)
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MISSION STATEMENT

It is the mission of the Bureau of Land Management to sustain the health, diversity, and productivity of the public lands for the use and enjoyment of present and future generations.

Approval and Decision

Based on a review of the project, staff recommendations, and in accordance with 516 DM 11.9, I have determined that the proposed activity – the sampling of 15 pit sites on the Superior National Forest adjacent to the INCO shaft site in Lake County, Minnesota – is in conformance with the Minnesota Management Framework Plan (MFP), dated September 1, 1982 and re-evaluated and approved on September 4, 2004.

It is my decision to approve the action as proposed.

Approved by: _____ Date: 9/6/2013

Dean Gettinger, Manager (Acting)
Northeastern States Field Office

NEPA Categorical Exclusion Documentation

A. Background
BLM Office: ES – NSFO

Lease No.: MNES 001352

NEPA #: DOI-BLM-ES-0030-2013-0028-CX

Proposed Action Title/Type: Small Pit Sampling/Hardrock

Location of Proposed Action: Superior National Forest, Lake County, Minnesota: UTM coordinates 5295248.6 meters north, 593,379.5 meters east from Minnesota Highway 1 on Forest Route 1900.

Description of Proposed Action: Small Pit sampling of a maximum of fifteen sites for mineralogical character study.

Twin Metals Minnesota (TMM), has proposed a study of the historical materials from the Inco Shaft. This study will involve a maximum of 15 random sites across 1.4 acres adjacent to the INCO Shaft on Forest Road 1900 in the Superior National Forest. This sampling is undertaken to better understand the rock properties and rock characteristics of the strata extracted from the subsurface in the INCO Shaft. A backhoe will be used to dig the test pits to a maximum depth of 4 feet of the native soil layer. A five-gallon bucket will be filled to approximately two-thirds height with rock and rock materials at or near the bottom of the pit. The rock materials will be analyzed offsite for mineral characteristic studies. Water and soil samples at the base or near the base of the pit will also be obtained from each location for chemical analysis. During the construction of the pits, the top overburden will be placed on plastic tarps to avoid interaction with other soils. The rock below the overburden will be extracted onto a second tarp. Upon completion of the sampling, the rock from the second tarp will be placed back into the pit and then the pit will be covered with the overburden materials from the first tarp. The proposed activities are located on uplands and will have no wetland disturbance.

Copies of the proposal and the technical background material have been attached. Details of the proposal are shown in the attached draft Materials Characterization Scope document emailed from Gregory A. Fontaine of Leonard, Street and Deinard, agent for TMM, dated August 12, 2013 with supporting information from Golder Associates.

A BLM employee will be on site during the proposed activities. TMM must furnish the BLM with copies of any and all reports obtained from this activity.

B. Land Use Plan Conformance
Land Use Plan Name: Minnesota Management Framework Plan (MFP), September 1, 1982
Approved/Evaluated: September 4, 2004

The proposed action is in conformance with the Minnesota MFP, because it is clearly consistent with the following MFP objective(s): Minnesota MFP Objective M – 1 "Make available for mineral exploration, development, and extraction the Federally-owned mineral estate not presently open."

C. Compliance with NEPA
The Proposed Action is categorically excluded from further documentation under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) in accordance with 516 DM 11.9 F. 9: "Digging of exploratory trenches for mineral materials, except in riparian areas."

A categorical exclusion is appropriate in this situation because the proposed activities are the construction of small pits or trenches for mineral material characterization studies. The review of the planned activities indicates no extraordinary circumstances, as described in 516 DM 2, potentially having effects that may significantly affect the human environment.

I considered the reduction of surface disturbance on Federal lease MNES 001352, and the proposed activities. The width and depth of these small (less than four foot) test pits will have nominal surface disturbance.

D: Signature

Authorizing Official: _____ 9/6/2013
Dean Gettinger, Manager (Acting) — Date
Northeastern States Field Office (NSFO)

Contact Person
For additional information concerning this CX review, contact Theresa Bodus, Associate Field Manager of Minerals at (414) 297-4420, tbodus@blm.gov or by mail at:
Bureau of Land Management
Northeastern States Field Office
626 East Wisconsin Avenue, Suite 200
Milwaukee, WI 53202-4617

Attachment: Twin Metals Minnesota – Draft Historical Characterization Scope

CATEGORICAL EXCLUSION REVIEW

Extraordinary Circumstances Checklist

Review the proposed action against each of the 12 "extraordinary circumstances" listed below. Any action that is normally categorically excluded must be subjected to sufficient environmental review to determine whether it meets any of the extraordinary circumstances, in which case, further analysis and environmental documents must be prepared for the action. If the criterion does not apply, indicate "Not Applicable." Any mitigation measures (such as contract stipulations or terms and conditions on permits) necessary to ensure that the proposed action qualifies as a categorical exclusion should be identified at the bottom of the page.

	Extraordinary Circumstances	Comments
1.	Have significant impacts on public health or safety.	Not Applicable
2.	Have significant impacts on such natural resources and unique geographic characteristics as historic or cultural resources; park, recreation or refuge lands; wilderness areas; wild or scenic rivers; national natural landmarks; sole or principal drinking water aquifers; prime farmlands; wetlands (Executive Order 11990); floodplains (Executive Order 11988); national monuments; migratory birds; and other ecologically significant or critical areas.	Not Applicable
3.	Have highly controversial environmental effects or involve unresolved conflicts concerning alternative uses of available resources [National Environmental Policy Act Section 102(2)(E)].	Not Applicable
4.	Have highly uncertain and potentially significant environmental effects or involve unique or unknown environmental risks.	Not Applicable
5.	Establish a precedent for future action or represent a decision in principle about future actions with potentially significant environmental effects.	Not Applicable
6.	Have a direct relationship to other actions with individually insignificant but cumulatively significant environmental effects.	Not Applicable
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.	Not Applicable
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.	Not Applicable
9.	Violate a Federal law, or a state, local, or tribal law or requirement imposed for the protection of the environment.	Not Applicable
10.	Have a disproportionately high and adverse effect on low income or minority populations (Executive Order 12898).	Not Applicable
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 (Executive Order 13007).	Not Applicable
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 (Federal Noxious Weed Control Act and Executive Order 13112). (note – attachment nomenclature follows that of the source document – 516 DM 2	Not Applicable
Mitigation Measures: None		

Categorical Exclusion Review Record

Resource	Yes/No*	Assigned Specialist Signature	Date
Air Quality	Yes		9/9/2013
Areas of Critical Environmental Concern	Yes		9/9/2013
Cultural Resources	Yes	J. Kellogg	9/9/13
Environmental Justice	Yes	Kurt J. Wadyn	9/9/2013
Farm Lands (prime or unique)	Yes		9/9/2013
Floodplains	Yes		9/9/2013
Invasive Species/Noxious Weeds	Yes		9/9/2013
Migratory Birds	Yes		9/9/2013
Native American Religious Concerns	Yes	J. Kellogg	9/9/13
Threatened, Endangered, or Candidate Species	Yes		9/9/2013
Wastes (hazardous or solid)	Yes		9/9/2013
Water Quality (drinking or ground)	Yes		9/9/2013
Wetlands / Riparian Zones	Yes		9/9/2013
Wild and Scenic Rivers	Yes		9/9/2013
Wilderness	Yes		9/9/2013
Other: None	Yes	Kurt J. Wadyn	9/9/2013

*Extraordinary Circumstances apply.

Environmental Coordinator: Kurt J. Wadyn Date: SEPT. 9, 2013