

**DRAFT ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT
BALD MOUNTAIN MINE
NORTH OPERATIONS AREA PROJECT**

LEAD AGENCY: U.S. Department of the Interior, Bureau of Land Management

COOPERATING AGENCIES: Nevada Department of Wildlife

JURISDICTION: White Pine County, Nevada

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This Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) was filed with the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency. The date by which comments on this DEIS must be received to be considered in the Final EIS is: _____

ABSTRACT

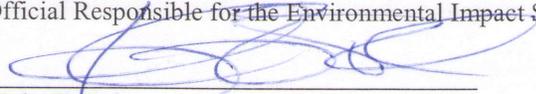
This DEIS evaluates the impacts on the environment that would result from the expansion of current mining operations at the Bald Mountain Mine (BMM). The proposed project would be located on public land located in White Pine County, Nevada, approximately 65 miles northwest of Ely, Nevada. The Proposed Action would include expansion of open pits, rock disposal facilities, heap leach facilities, and haul roads, and development of one new pit and waste rock facility, a truck shop, and growth medium stockpiles. In addition, the Proposed Action would combine the existing BMM Plan of Operations boundary and the Mooney Basin Operations Area boundary into one Plan of Operations, called the BMM North Operations Area Project. This combined boundary would encompass 16,464 acres (approximately 16,391 acres are public land and approximately 73 acres are private land). The Proposed Action would result in an additional 3,920 acres of disturbance for a total of 8,080 acres of disturbance within the new Plan of Operations boundary.

The Proposed Action is an expansion of previously permitted mine activities that will extend the life of mining by approximately 10 years. This DEIS addresses the continuation of resources concerns for mining at BMM that were analyzed in the 1995 EIS. Internal and external scoping brought up a variety of concerns and potential issues that were considered through the NEPA process. Issues from scoping that required analysis in this DEIS are the potential changes to groundwater quality and quantity, change in water discharge and recharge that may affect seeps and springs, loss of cultural resources, the potential for increased mercury and particulate pollutants in the air, the potential for spread of noxious and invasive weeds, the potential effect on pygmy rabbit and sage grouse habitat, the reduction of transitional wildlife habitat, specifically mule deer, and the potential for mine activities and structures to adversely affect migratory deer movement.

Three alternatives were carried through in the analysis and include the No Action Alternative, Partial Backfill Alternative, and Mooney Basin Heap Leach Pad Alternative.

The BLM is responsible for administering mineral rights access on certain federal lands as authorized by the General Mining Law of 1872. The BLM Egan Field Office has the responsibility and authority to manage the surface and subsurface resources on public lands located within the, Egan Resource Area. The BLM must review the Plan of Operations to ensure use of public land in the Egan Resource Area is in conformance with BLM's Surface Management Regulations (43 Code of Federal Regulations 3809) and other applicable statutes, including the Mining and Mineral Policy Act of 1970 (as amended) and Federal Land Policy Management Act of 1976 (as amended). This DEIS satisfied the National Environmental Policy Act, which mandates that federal agencies analyze the environmental consequences of major undertakings.

Official Responsible for the Environmental Impact Statement:



John F. Ruhs
Ely District Manager

3 November 2008
Date