Appendix 7

Plan of Operations: Summaries and Area Maps

(Note) The following narratives are a summary of the proposed Plans of Operations. This narrative is intended to identify mining activities used for internal use for specialist review. The existing conditions, recent, mining activities, and project area maps were developed for general background information and historical context for specialists’ review.
Claim Description

The AC mine is a placer claim located on Cracker Creek. Access is from the south by County Road 553. The legal description for the claim is T. 9 S., R.37 E., Section 20, W.M. The claim is an isolated 40 acre parcel of National Forest System Land.

Existing Condition

The Mining Claim is 40-acre isolated parcel of National Forest System land, surrounded by private land. The operator proposes to mine approximately 11 acres of the claim between Cracker Creek and County Road 553.

In the 1870s and 1880s The Chinese actively placer mined on McCully Fork and lower Cracker Creek. In the early 1900’s bucket dredges were used to mine the Powder River drainage until 1954.1 Tailing piles created by the bucket dredge cover the portion of the AC claim from Cracker Creek to County Road 553. The remains of a bucket dredge are located on the mining claim.

Although the area was heavily mined, there has been some recovery of riparian vegetation and isolated pockets of conifers.

The claim extends west of County Road 553. The area west of the road is covered with Douglas Fir and Ponderosa Pine. Some testing was completed in this area, but no mining is proposed.

Recent Mining Activity

Small scale mining has occurred on the claim as documented in inspection over the last 12 years. The district approved two Plans of Operations authorizing some testing in 2005 and again 2012. In 2012, less than ½ acre was tested, and in 2005 two sites measuring 15’x20’ were tested. Both operations were located between the road and Cracker Creek. In addition to what was approved in these Plans, some prospecting with disturbance limited to what was allowed by regulation (36CFR 228) has occurred.

Proposed Plan of Operation (November 14, 2016)

The proposed duration for this Plan of Operation is seven to ten years.

The operator proposes to mine the existing tailing piles through a wash plant, trailer mounted trommel. The tailing piles will be sorted through a portable course screen or grizzly with the larger boulders or overburden removed from the work site and placed in low areas on the claim. The smaller pay gravel will be removed to bedrock and transported to the wash plant by a medium size wheel loader with a 2 ½ yard bucket. A track hoe with a one-yard bucket will be utilized at startup to open areas of interest. Initially the track hoe will be

1 Gold and Silver in Oregon, Oregon Department of Geology and Mineral Industries (pg. 57)
used for several days than brought back on an as needed basis. The production rate is estimated to be 40 yards per day or 200 yards per week. The active area of operation will be not more than one to two acres per year.

Water for the operation will be recirculated from existing tailing ponds on the claim at a rate of 500 gpm. Water will also be pumped from the active work site to keep the water level down in the pit.

Two travel trailers will be used for occupancy during the operating season and one additional trailer will be used for storage. No permanent structures will be utilized. A chemical toilet will also be on site during operations.

**Mitigation Measures identified by the miner in the Plan**

The operator proposes to avoid disturbance of the old dredge on the claim, maintain any vegetative screening along County Road 553, and restore the tailing piles to the original ground contour. The ponds used in operations will not discharge into Cracker Creek. No land surface disposal of wash plant water.
Amigo

Claim Description

The Amigo mine is placer mine located along an unnamed tributary of Wilson Creek down to Wilson Creek. The legal location is T.10S, R.39E, Section 5 WM.

Access to the claim is from Old Auburn Road to Forest Service Road (FSR) 7225, east on 7225 to FSR 7225-127. The work site lies south of FSR 7225-127.

Existing Condition

The recent mining is the most evident at the site. An excavated bench with a headwall of approximately 10 feet in height and fifty feet in length is located south of Wilson Creek at the point where the confluences of the two drainages meet. A small water source pond sits in the unnamed tributary of Wilson Creek just below the bench and was used for processing (see photo). Further up the tributary and below 7225-125 road 3 more off channel ponds have been constructed. One has been recently improved to hold processing water and a short access road to this pond has been reconstructed. In this area there is also evidence of old exploration pits.

Located below this recent activity, along Wilson Creek, there is an old adit. This adit has collapsed, and trench extends from the remains to just short of Wilson Creek. A this point in Wilson Creek is an old flathead 8-cylinder motor, most likely brought in to support underground operations.

Recent Activity

As early as 1975 the district received mining proposals for prospecting on the Amigo mining claim. Initial prospecting was an effort to determine the location of lode vein following an existing tunnel by digging test pits along the surface above the tunnel. This prospecting would remove and sample a few yards by hand each year and continued at this level until 1982 when a backhoe and trommel were brought in. In the mid 1990’s operations increased, and a Plan was approved to expand both the Lode and Placer exploration. A backhoe and trommel continued excavating both pits and trenches. Material was processed on site with the trommel.

The proposed duration for this Plan of Operation is ten years.

The operations will involve the use of a 580 B backhoe and process 5 to 10 yards daily over an approximate 4-acre area (see note dated 6/26/2017). Operations will begin each spring when the site becomes accessible with annual reclamation/stabilization completed by November 15th each year. A small wash plant will be setup on site above the three existing settling ponds (12’x12’x4’ to 6’ deep). Water for the operation will come from an adit located approximately 150 feet from the processing site. Based on the field review with the operator, the area from Wilson Creek up the draw to old Auburn Ditch will be mined. Sample pits will determine the distance on either side of the draw that will be mined but the disturbance will not exceed 4 acres. Within the mine area all dead and down trees and other debris will be removed and piled.

Mitigation Measures identified by the miner in the Plan

Operator will stockpile material with the topsoil separated from sand and gravel. During site reclamation topsoil will be placed last to enhance revegetation of the site. At the end of each season disturbed sites will be seeded with recommended seed. Mined areas will be re-contoured to match the existing slope.
Anchor #1, Peerless, Old Crow 80

Claim Description

This Plan covers Anchor #1, Peerless, and Old Crow 80 placer claims located on Elk Creek. Access to the mining claims is from County Road 714 (Elk Creek Road) to FSR 7225. The County Road, 714, changes to FSR 7225 at the Forest boundary. A short road runs through the tailings along the north side of Elk Creek between road 7225 and Elk Creek, and a 200ft temporary overland route to the north of Elk Creek Road will also be used as access. The legal description for the claim is T.10 S., R.39E. Section 04, W.M.

Existing Condition

In the mid 80’s, the district authorized a mining operation that involved the construction of ponds, relocation of 300 to 500 feet of Elk Creek, and excavations covering an area 50’x180’ all in the vicinity of the confluence of Wilson and Elk Creek. This later included relocating 450 feet of road and the construction of a 1500-foot temporary bypass road. Equipment used included a backhoe and front-end loader.

In 1997 a 10-year Plan of Operations was approved that continued excavations along Elk Creek, expanded operations up Wilson Creek and on the north side of the 7225-500. At this time the operations increased to 20 yards a day. Equipment approved for this operation included a backhoe, excavator, dump truck, small cat and a trommel.

Evidence of this previous mining is still apparent within this area. This includes terraced ground, piles of overburden, hillside excavations, and constructed features such as ponds and roads. Vegetation is light in the disturbed areas with some riparian vegetation and small conifer reproduction scattered throughout the site.

Recent Activity

Based on annual inspections of the site, there has been no evidence of mining since 2004.

Proposed Plan of Operations December 6, 2016, for no less than a five-year period beginning at the authorization of the plan.
The Plan of Operations describes a placer mining operation with the use of mechanized earthmoving equipment. Initially, testing will be completed on all three claims by excavating 11 test pits 30’x30’ and 8’-10’ deep. If values are discovered during testing, the area will be mined in ¼ acre parcels. During testing operations, 10-25 yards will be processed in a day, and this will increase to 50-60 yards a day if values are discovered.

An excavator or backhoe, 5-yard dump truck, wash plant/trommel, sluices, pumps, generator, 4-wheel drive vehicles and a cat will be used. Self-contained trailers will be used for occupancy during operations.

The processing site is located south of Elk Creek and west of Wilson Creek. Water for processing comes from an off-channel pond and Elk Creek. Three 10’x16’ and 4’ deep processing ponds will be constructed. The ponds will be located near the clean water pond. Both Elk Creek and Wilson Creek will be forded during the operation.

**Mitigation measures identified by the miner in the Plan.**

- Rock spotting, installation of water bars, ditching and out sloping of road surfaces will be done to prevent road damage.
- No ground disturbance from excavations will occur closer than 50 feet from Elk Creek and 20 feet from Wilson creek. In the area between Elk Creek Road and Elk Creek, mining will remain behind tailings or a berm and be as close as 10 feet from Elk Creek.
- All process water will be contained on site with no discharge.
- Any ponds that stay wet will have a shallow shelf and the ground surface will be re-contoured for improved amphibian habitat.
- Only one test hole will remain open at any given time.
- Equipment will be washed before entering the forest to prevent the spread of noxious weeds.
- To control erosion, bare soil resulting from operations will be reseeded, down wood will be placed on reclaimed areas, and roads will be spot rocked, and water barred.
- Settling ponds will be left dry or at normal water table at the end of each season.
- Garbage will be removed regularly from the Forest.
- A funnel will be used during refueling pumps to minimize spills.
Bald Mountain Ponds

Claim Description

The Bald Mountain Ponds Plan of Operations supports mining on a patented mining claim (private land) adjacent to National Forest System lands. Access to Bald Mountain Mine is by Forest System Roads 7395 and 7370-100.

The Plan identifies a road from the 7370-100 to the ponds. This road could not be located when the field inspection was completed on October 11, 2016. In subsequent visits to the site in 2017, attempts to locate the road to the ponds were unsuccessful. The ponds have not been used for several years and this road may be overgrown.

The legal description for the claim is T.9 S., R.36 E., Section 03, W.M.

Existing Condition

As indicated above, these ponds support a lode mining operation on private land. They serve as settling ponds for the processed material from underground operations. The files show they were constructed sometime before 1985.

The ponds sites have recovered with conifers and other native vegetation reestablishing over the entire disturbed area from years of inactivity. The ponds are easily recognizable with the constructed features such as ditches, dams, and berms delineating each pond site clearly visible.

Recent Activity

Inspection of the site going back to the late 1990’s shows no activity on NFS lands related to the ponds. Between 2006 and 2009 work was done on the 7395 road that provides access to the Golden Ibex mine on private land. The road just below and to the south of the private land washed out and the landowner repaired the damage. The ponds are located south and west of the 7395 road, just below the washout.

Proposed Plan of Operations (August 2, 2011) for no less than a five-year period beginning at the authorization of the plan.

Three existing ponds will be used for settling sediment discharged from a Lode mine located on private land. There are a series of 6 ponds used in the operation with only ponds 4 through 6 are on National Forest System lands. Pond 4 is 150’x150’, and 4 feet deep, pond 5 is 150’x100, and 5 feet deep, and pond 6 is 100’x70’, and 3 feet deep. All ponds are stable and have reestablished vegetation. A ditch approximately 50 yards long, 8 feet across and 4 feet deep transports water from private land to pond 4.
Other than settling silt from the mine adit, the only activity addressed in the Plan for National Forest System land is maintaining the ponds and roads. This may include shaping the pond banks, repairing outlets, and seeding. Maintenance may include the use of a backhoe or excavator, loader, 4-wheel drive pickups, and a bulldozer.

Mitigation measures identified by the miner in the Plan.

To control erosion, areas of bare soil around the ponds have been vegetated. The ponds will be reseeded, and wood placed by hand to accelerate revegetation. The Plan lists the following additional mitigations:

- Hazardous materials (petroleum products) are stored out of the floodplain.
- No chemicals are used in the operations.
- Sites are kept neat and orderly, and garbage is regularly removed from National Forest.
- All equipment is checked for fluid leaks before equipment is operated.
- No fueling of equipment or routine maintenance takes place near streams, springs, or wetlands.
- Should there be a spill of petroleum products, the contaminated soil will be removed from the National Forest.
- Roads are treated to prevent significant soil movement, rutting and sedimentation. Treatment may include spot rocking, installation of water bars, ditching and out-sloping of road surfaces where possible.
- All seed and straw used is certified free of noxious weeds.
- Grass, brush, and trees are replanted to current or greater densities.
- Water is contained in ponds with no discharge allowed. All ponds are left dry or at the normal water table during seasonal shutdowns.
- State water quality standards will be met.
- All ground disturbing operations outside this plan will have prior written approval of the Forest Service. Proposals not in this plan will be submitted in writing and will be made an addendum to this plan.
- At the close of operations, all associated mining equipment is removed from National Forest System lands.
**Barbara 1 Lode**

**Claim Description**
The Barbara 1 Lode plan is a Lode mining claim located along the west side of Lake Creek, approximately 1.5 miles north of the confluence with Deer Creek. Access is by existing Forest System Roads 6550 (Deer Creek) and 6540-030. The legal description for the claim is T.9S., R.38E., Section 19, W.M.

**Existing Condition**
This claim was located in 1973 with underground mining operations authorized since at least 1988. Notes in the file indicate the adits may have already existed by that time.

On the surface there are two portals located above and below FSR 6540-030 (Lake Creek Road). At each portal there is a terraced landing used for storage of ore, waste rock, campsite, and at the lower portal a generator shed. Each portal has metal locked doors and access roads to each portal have locked gates. At the lower portal there is an air tank with air lines extending into the portal. The lower portal is terraced with the downhill side supported by cribbing. All surface disturbances and structures at the lower portal are less than 300 feet from Lake Fork creek.

**Recent Activity**
According to past inspections and correspondences from the operator, there has been no activity on this claim in the last 15 years. No reclamation has been completed since mining stopped, and improvements still occupy the site.

**Proposed Plan of Operations (May 26, 2009)**
The proposed duration for this Plan of Operation is 30 years.

Mining takes place underground with ore hauled to the surface to be milled on private land. Waste rock is also brought to the surface and placed on existing mine dumps. The mining operation has two distinct working areas separated by Forest Road 6540-030. The upper workings have an adit with a locked steel portal door, a rock waste dump, an ore stockpile area, an equipment area, and a gated access road. A powder magazine will be brought on site as needed.

The lower workings have a gated access road, a 16’x24’ structure, a locked steel portal door, an equipment area, a 100’ long retaining wall, a waste rock dump site, and a 500-gallon air surge tank. A series of small ponds are located at this site to catch any sediment.
Approximately 5 GPM or less of water will be used in drilling underground. This water is collected from underground and pumped to a storage tank.

Equipment identified in the plan include a backhoe, small bulldozer, skid mounted jaw crusher, 4-wheel drive pickups, 5yd dump truck, mucker, air trammer, one ton ore car, air compressor, and a generator. During fire season a water pump and a trailer mounted water truck will be on site. A campsite will be located at the lower workings and self-contained trailers will be used or a chemical toilet will be located on site.

The plan proposes a seasonal operation of 100 days annually with the work beginning each year after the snow melts and the site is accessible. No work will take place in the winter. 10-20 tons of ore will be mined each day and hauled to a mill on private land with about 2000 tons hauled off National Forest Lands annually for milling. The operator proposes an estimated 2½ -5 tons of waste rock will be dumped at one of the two waste disposal sites each day of operation (see waste rock sites on POO map). The estimated capacity for waste rock at the two dump sites should support operations for the next 13+ years. The operator anticipates a mine life of at least 30 years.

**Mitigation measures identified by the miner in the Plan.**

- Chemical outhouse or self-contained trailers are used.
- Hazardous materials (petroleum products) are stored out of the floodplain.
- No chemicals are used in the operations, and no milling takes place on site.
- Sites are kept neat and orderly, and garbage is regularly removed from National Forest.
- Where on-site fuel storage is approved, operators are required to have a lined containment vat and a spill prevention plan is made part of the operating plan.
- All equipment is checked for fluid leaks before equipment is operated.
- No fueling of equipment or routine maintenance takes place near streams, springs, or wetlands.
- Should there be a spill of petroleum products, the contaminated soil will be removed from the National Forest.
- Roads are treated to prevent significant soil movement, rutting and sedimentation. Treatment may include spot rocking, installation of water bars, ditching and out-sloping of road surfaces where possible.
- Forest Service roads are protected from damage.
- If dust or rutting is a problem to the operators, roads will be rocked.
- All seed and straw used is certified free of noxious weeds.
- Snags which must be removed are recreated in areas adjacent to the disturbed area.
- Areas of bare soil created by the operation are seeded using Forest Service approved mix.
- Grass, brush, and trees are replanted to current or greater densities.
- All mined areas are stabilized prior to seasonal shutdowns or extended equipment maintenance and before equipment removal.
- Areas are reclaimed to pre-mining condition or better.
- Piles of wood are available in case of erosion caused by storm events.
- Water is contained in ponds with no discharge allowed. All ponds are left dry or at the normal water table during seasonal shutdowns.
- Drill water will not be discharged.
- State water quality standards will be met.
- No waste storage occurs in riparian areas, floodplains, or spring areas.
- The operator will avoid and/or protect any known or discovered threatened and endangered plant or habitat of threatened and endangered animal species.
• All ground disturbing operations outside this plan will have prior written approval of the Forest Service. Proposals not in this plan will be submitted in writing and will be made an addendum to this plan.
• No milling takes place on-site.
• During close out reclamation, mine access roads which are not needed for further mining will be seeded, covered with wood, and closed to vehicles.
• At the close of operations, all vehicles, trailers, structures, and associated mining equipment are removed from National Forest System lands.
Blue Jay

Claim Description
The Blue Jay plan covers two placer claims, Blue Jay 1 and 2, located on Cracker Creek north of the town of Sumpter on the west side of Baker County Road 533. Access is from County Road 533. The legal location for the claims is T09 S., R.37 E., Section 17, W.M.

Existing Condition
The south end of Blue Jay Placer is located at the furthest upstream point of the historic dredging that occurred on Cracker Creek in the early 1900’s through 1953. The Cracker Creek drainage narrows at this point and conifers are well established over the remaining proposed work sites.

Upstream from the Blue Jay is the town site of Bourne, established soon after gold was discovered in 1888. Mines in the Cracker creek district near Bourne tapped into what was known as the great motherlode of the Blue Mountains. The lode mines in this area were eventually patented. Up to 1500 people lived at Bourne and mining around the area continued until the mid-1920. Between 1900 and 1908 the Sumpter area produced $20,000,000 in gold; $12,000,000 came from 53 quartz mines. (treasurenet.com). Placer mining continues today with small operations using a hi-banker or suction dredge. Open pits, dredge tailings, adits, mine dumps, and structures provide evidence of this historic mining and can be seen throughout this area.

Recent Activity
A Plan of Operations was approved in 1987 that allowed the use of heavy equipment. This Plan described working the old tailing piles and side banks adjacent to the piles. Significant excavating occurred along Cracker and Pole creek with excavators, backhoes, and a small dozer. In 2016 the current operator worked on a site about 50 yards west of Cracker Creek by hand, excavating a pit into the hillside (see map). The pit is open to ground level on the south side with a headwall of approximately 15 to 20 feet on the north side. The base is open allowing water to drain from the work area. A small trench is located just west of the worksite that is used as a settling pond from processing water and drain water from the worksite. A pump was located on Cracker Creek that supplied water to a high banker the operator fed by hand.

Proposed Plan of Operations (November 12, 2015)
The proposed duration for this Plan of Operation is nine years.
Operations will be across Cracker Creek on Blue Jay 1 and between County Road 533 and Cracker Creek on Blue Jay 2, located
downstream of Blue Jay 1. No mechanized earth moving equipment will be used in the operation. All excavations will be by hand using shovels, picks, and pry bars. Processing will utilize gas powdered water pumps, high bankers, suction dredges, electric panners/dry washers, and a mini trommel. Operating season is weather dependent when snow melts from access road, usually April through October.

Processing water (33 gpm/2000 gallons per hour) will come from Cracker creek and ground water at work site.

Exploration activities include the use of a metal detector and geochemical surveying.

During operations the operator will use up to three campsites, and have an ATV, 4x4 vehicle, an ATV trailer, and a cargo trailer on site. Fuel will be stored in one-gallon cans and removed from operating area daily.

Mitigation measures identified by the miner in the Plan.

- Rocks and boulders from the high-water line to 1” below the water line will be left undisturbed.
- No mining in Cracker Creek from May 1st through June 30th.
Buster 1

Claim Description
Two claims, Buster 1 and Buster 3, are owned by the same operator. The operator submitted a separate Plan of Operations for each claim. These operating areas are adjacent to each other. The two operating areas are located on small tributaries of Blue Canyon Creek. Access is by County Road 722 (Old Auburn Road) which turns into FSR 7220. From FSR 7220 access is via 7220-40, 42, and 43. The legal description for Buster 1 operating area is T.10 S., R.39 E., Sections 17 and 18, W.M.

Existing Condition
Buster 1 has a well, landing, and evidence of excavations completed by heavy equipment. Some constructed ponds are in the ravine just below the proposed worksite along the 7220-042 road. Just to the north of and at the end of the 7220-043 is a pond fed by an old ditch that draws water from Blue Canyon Creek.

Recent Activity
There is no evidence or any documented field inspections of the site that indicates any mining activity has occurred at Buster 1 since 2008.

Proposed Plan of Operations, (December 16, 2015)
The proposed duration for this Plan of Operation is ten years.
The operator has proposed mining and testing 10 acres following a draw that parallels FSR 7220-043. Initially, 6 test holes, approximately 10’x20’x 4’-11’ deep, will be excavated. All vegetation, including Trees up to 14” DBH will be removed and stockpiled. About 6” to 15” of topsoil will also be removed. Once testing is completed, and areas of gold recovery have been identified, small parcels, approximately 30’ x 50’ x 6’ deep in size, will be mined. Up to 222 cubic yards of gravel will be processed from each parcel at 50-100 cubic yards per day. About 1500 yards of material will be processed annually, with seasonal close out on October 31st. When mechanized earthmoving equipment is unavailable operations will continue by hand at a rate of 5-10 yards per day. Testing will continue up the draw into the Northeast corner of Section 18 in the same method as previously described. Above the processing area the draw narrows and samples may also be excavated from the sides of the draw. Each test pit or mining parcel will be reclaimed prior to moving to the next area.

Pay gravel will be hauled by backhoe bucket or by a dump truck/dump trailer. When equipment is not available, and work is done by hand, pickups and ATV’s will be used to haul buckets to the processing area.

A small trommel capable of using 80-100 gpm of water will be set up at the processing area located at the end of FSR 7220-043. The source of water for processing is spring runoff, a seasonal spring, an on-site well, and a ditch that draws water from Blue Canyon Creek. There is a holding pond (30’x15’x8”) at the end of the ditch in Section 7 just above the processing area. No more than 5000 gallons will be pumped per day from groundwater sources. Water will be recycled from two 25’x15’x10’ settling ponds to the trommel.
Equipment to be operated on the claims includes a trommel, backhoe, track hoe, skid-steer, dump truck/dump trailer, bulldozer, high bankers and sluices, generators, ATV’s, 4-wheel drive pickup truck, and hand tools.

During the mining operations a self-contained travel trailer or motorhome will be used for occupancy.

Petroleum products used to operate machinery will be kept in the bed of a pickup in approved containers. Gas and diesel may be in either approved containers such as 1-5 gal cans or a tank in the back of a pickup holding up to 50 gallons. Absorbent material or drip pans will be placed under stationary equipment.

Mitigation measures identified by the miner in the Plan.

- All processing ponds will be pit type ponds without dams and the ponds will be sloped for safety.
- Down wood will be scattered over reclaimed sites to help hold the soil and minimize erosion.
- Reclamation to Forest Service standards will be ongoing so as the first area is reclaimed, the next area will be open.
- All processing water will be recycled and there will be no discharge.
- Silt and sand from the settling ponds will be stockpiled in a location where water will drain back into the pond.
- Test holes will be refilled to normal land contours.
- No overtopping from test pits of ground water will occur.
- No trees over 20” will be cut down unless they are a hazard to operators.
- Equipment will be washed before it is brought on NFS lands.
- Surface water will be directed around mine and processing sites.
- Bare soil resulting from operations will be seeded.
- Roads will be water-barred and rocked where needed.
- Settling ponds will be left dry or at normal water table at the close of operation.
- Garbage will be removed regularly from NFS lands.
- All mining areas will be kept neat and orderly.
- The area will be monitored for noxious weeds.
- No hazardous substances or chemicals other than petroleum products will be used.
- Waste petroleum products will be removed and disposed of off NFS lands.
- A funnel will be used for fueling pumps.
- Absorbent material or drip pans will be placed under stationary equipment.
- Absorbent material will be kept onsite for cleanup of small leaks or spills of petroleum products and contaminated soil and rock will be removed from NFS lands.
Buster 3

Claim Description

Two claims, Buster 1 and Buster 3, are owned by the same operator. The operator submitted a separate Plan of Operations for each claim. However, these operating areas are adjacent to each other. The two operating areas are located on small tributaries of Blue Canyon Creek. Access is by County Road 722 (Old Auburn Road) which turns into FSR 7220. From FSR 7220 access is via 7220-40, 42, and 43. The legal description for Buster 3 operating area is T.10 S., R.39 E., Sections 17.

Existing Condition

Evidence of past mining is visible at and adjacent to the Buster 3 mine site. Hillside excavations, in-channel ponds, landings, and access roads are all visible ground disturbance. There has been some natural site restoration occurring, however, there are several areas of disturbed sites with little or no vegetation.

Recent Activity

Inspections documented at Buster 3 site indicate that placer operations have occurred using equipment since 2000. At that time the mining claim covering the area was named Three Coins. Plans of Operations approved in the late 80’s for Three Coins authorized the use of a bobcat that hauled material to a sluice box. Due to water availability, work usually occurred in the spring, and when the water source dried up midsummer, operations stopped for the season. The level of operations increased over the years and by 2003 a Plan of Operations was approved for 10 years. The 2003 Plan authorized the use of a backhoe, wash plant, the removal of trees, and excavating several test pits. The Plan currently under review is a resubmittal of the 2003 Plan of Operations.


The proposed duration for this Plan of Operation is ten years.

Buster 3 will be limited to 4 test pits 10’x20’x4’-11’ deep. Testing will be conducted so only one test pit area is open at any given time. Additional test sites will be tested for values, marked on the ground, and reclaimed until the first pit is mined out and reclaimed. At that time, a second pit may remain open for mining.

A small trommel will be set up at the in-channel ponds near the campsite. Water used for processing is collected in existing in-channel ponds from spring snow melt limiting processing at this site to early spring. Pond sizes are 10’x12’x6’ and will be lined with bentonite clay to help retain water. When there is no water, the gravel may be hauled to another site for processing.

Equipment to be operated on the claims includes a small wash plant, backhoe, pickup truck, and hand tools. There is an existing outhouse onsite.

During the mining operations a self-contained travel trailer or motorhome will be used for occupancy.
Mitigation measures identified by the miner in the Plan.

Listed in VI A. of the Operating Plan:

- Outhouses are constructed to DEQ standards or trailers are self-contained.
- Hazardous materials are stored out of the floodplain.
- No chemicals are used in the operations.
- Sites are kept neat and orderly, and garbage is regularly removed from National Forest.
- Where on-site fuel storage is approved, operators are required to have a lined containment vat and a spill prevention plan is made part of the operating plan.
- All equipment is checked for fluid leaks.
- No fueling of equipment or routine maintenance takes place near streams, springs, or wetlands.
- Should there be a spill of petroleum products, the contaminated soil will be removed from the National Forest.
- During ongoing mining activities all disturbed sites (road cut and fill slopes, camp site, ponds, dumps, and stockpiles) are maintained in stable condition.
- Roads are treated to prevent significant soil movement, rutting and sedimentation. Treatment may include spot rocking, installation of water bars, ditching and out-sloping of road surfaces where possible.
- Forest Service roads are protected from damage.
- If dust or rutting is a problem to the operators, roads will be rocked.
- All seed and straw used is certified free of noxious weeds.
- Topsoil is scraped off the test/mining locations and replaced after test/mining is completed. Washed gravel is returned to the mining excavation before topsoil is replaced.
- Where tree removal is approved, trees are spread over the reclaimed ground after reclamation. Snags that must be removed are replaced.
- Areas of bare soil created by the operation are seeded using Forest Service approved mix.
- Grass, brush, and trees are replanted to current or greater densities.
- All mined areas are returned to normal or near normal contours.
- All mined areas are stabilized prior to seasonal shutdowns or extended equipment maintenance and before equipment removal.
- All stockpiled topsoil and/or other suitable fines such as silt from the settling ponds, are evenly spread back over disturbed areas on completion of the operation and/or in an ongoing restoration program. Areas are reclaimed to the pre-mining condition or better.
- Piles of wood are available in case of erosion caused by storm events.
- Water is contained in ponds with no discharge allowed. All ponds are left dry or at the normal water table during seasonal shutdowns.
- All mining excavations in annual floodplain are reclaimed before winter shutdown.
- Restoration activities, if approved in the plan, take place throughout the mining season as the operator has time and funding allows.
- If sediment is visible in the stream below the mining site, the operation will cease work, the cause of the sediment determined, and the problem corrected before further mining or processing takes place.
- Process water will not be discharged.
- State water quality standards will be met.
- No trees or brush providing essential shade to the stream are to be removed.
- The streams will not be dried up when makeup water is taken from the creek.
- There is no damming of water in the streams.
- A zero-discharge settling/recycling system is utilized.
• No waste storage occurs in riparian areas, floodplains, or spring areas.
• Surface run-off water is ditched around the operating site to ensure this run-off water does not become process water.

**Listed in the Plan:**
• Access roads will be maintained with surface drainage dips.
• Where the stream runs down the roadbed, the channel will be deepened so that spring run-off flows down the channel and not down the road.
• Spillways will be rocked so there is no danger of ponds breaking and washing out.
• Test pits will be located at least 20’ from ponds or the stream channel.
• Topsoil, if any, will be scraped off each area to be tested and stockpiled beside the hole and separate from substrate material.
• Topsoil will be placed on top after testing is completed and surface will be contoured to approximately the natural lay of the land.
• Areas of bare soil will be seeded with seed mix certified free of noxious weeds.
• Garbage will be hauled off to a sanitary landfill off the National Forest.
• Petroleum products will be stored in original containers in the back of pickups or on trailers.
• No fuel storage onsite.
• If petroleum products spill onto the ground, the soil will be excavated and removed from National Forest.
• Absorbent material will be available onsite in case of small spills of petroleum products.

*Note: Additional mitigations were attached to the Plan as a second Section VI, “Forest Service Evaluation of Plan of Operations” (two Section VI’s in the Plan). Please refer to the Plan for these additional mitigations.*
California Gulch

Claim Description

California Gulch mining claim is owned by Eastern Oregon Miners and Prospectors (EOMP), a mining club where members are interested in the recreational aspects of gold mining. Groups of miners may occupy the site at any given time during when the area becomes accessible in the spring until October 31st each year.

Access is from County Road 722 that changes to FSR 7220 at the forest boundary. Access continues on the 7220 road to FSR 7220-300 south to a non-system road that intersects the 300 road. This non-system road heads east into the claim. An ATV trail that follows California Gulch also is used for access.

The legal description for the claim is T.10 S., R.39 E., Section 18, W.M.

Existing Condition

California Gulch is located within the historic Auburn mining district. Large placer mines were developed in the Auburn area beginning in 1862 and by 1863 Auburn had a population of 5000. Old tailing piles from this historic mining are visible throughout the area.

The proposed mining area extends from FSR 7220-300 down to California Gulch. Most of the work site is on a hillside covered by pine and fir trees with understory of grass and a variety of shrubs. Evidence of past mining is scattered along the lower part of the slope and the valley bottom. Pits, water source ponds, trenches, access road, and piles of over burden are clearly visible.

Recent Mining Activity

Significant mining has been authorized at this site starting in the early 80’s. In 1988 a Plan of Operations was approved for 6 years that authorized the construction of ponds, a stream diversion, excavations of several pits up to a quarter acre in size, and onsite processing. Equipment used at this time included a backhoe, trommel, water pumps, and an excavator. In 1995 a new Plan of operations was approved for 10 years, however, inspections during that time showed very little work until 2004 when EOMP began operating at this site. The 1995 Plan was extended for EOMP annually while their new Plan of Operations was pending approval and completion of the environmental review. Work continued at the site off and on for the next 5 years, but very little mining has been documented in inspections since 2008.
Proposed Plan of Operations (Received May 1, 2009)
The proposed duration for this Plan of Operation is ten years.
The plan is to use a backhoe/trackhoe to periodically mine 2 acre deposits on the west side of California Gulch. Test excavations will be approximately 10’x 20’ and where values are present a 30’x 50’x 8’-10’ deep pit will be excavated. Vegetation and 6” of topsoil will be removed from each pit site. Each pit will be reclaimed before moving to a new area. Pay gravel will be transported to a trommel by either by ATV’s with buckets filled by hand, or a small backhoe one bucket at a time. Some pay gravel may be processed by hand using a highbanker or suction dredge. A five yard dump truck may be used to haul material to a processing site located off the claim. Processing site will be determined prior to plan authorization.

Water for processing will be drawn from the California Gulch pond and two off channel settling ponds 30’x 15’ x 10’ will be constructed.

Equipment will include 4-wheel drive pickups, ATV’s, trommel, backhoe, trackhoe, skid steer, highbankers and sluices, bulldozer, generators, pumps, and hand tools will be used in the operation.

Several self contained travel trailers may be on site at any given time during the operating season and used as living quarters by club members.

Mitigation measures identified by the miner in the Plan:

- Mining with equipment will take place 50’ from the channel.
- The fence along the riparian area will be protected.
- Vegetation and trees along the channel will not be removed.
- The pits will be sloped to prevent animals from being trapped.
- Trees, not to exceed 14” DBH, removed during operations will be stockpiled to use as mulch for reclamation.
- Wood will be scattered over the reclaimed site to help hold soil and minimize erosion.
- Vegetation around pond will not be impacted.
- All water is recycled with no discharge into streams.
- Equipment will be washed before entering the National Forest.
- All equipment will be removed at the end of each mining season.
- Roads will be water barred and rocked where needed and in stable condition.
- Settling ponds will be left dry or at normal water table at the close of the operation.
- There will be no land application of water.
- Garbage will be removed regularly from the National Forest.
- Tailings will be returned to excavations and re-contoured in an ongoing manner.
• The area will be monitored for noxious weeds
• The remains of the old cabin on the claim will be avoided and not impacted by operations. Cabin location will be identified prior to plan authorization for avoidance.

Note: Additional mitigations were attached to the Plan. This included a Fire Plan, a Hazardous Substances Plan, and a document with a list of terms and conditions for the control of noxious that was copied from the North Fork Burnt River EIS (2004) Chapter II. Please refer to the Plan for these additional mitigations.
David #1 Placer

Claim Description
Cracker Creek, Pole Creek, and Slim Creek all are located on David #1 Placer. Access is from the south by County Road 553. FSR 5536 and 5530-058 also are located on the claim. The legal description is T. 9 S., R.37 E., Section 17, W.M.

Existing Condition
David 1 Gold Placer is located upstream of the historic dredging that occurred on Cracker Creek in the early 1900’s through 1953. The Cracker Creek drainage width extends at this point and minimal conifers are established over the proposed work sites. Tailings are located within the proposed work site at the confluence of pole Creek and Cracker Creek to the north end of the claim.

Upstream from the David 1 Gold Placer is the town site of Hanover and Bourne, established soon after gold was discovered in 1888. Mines in the Cracker creek district near Bourne tapped into what was known as the great motherlode of the Blue Mountains. The lode mines in this area were eventually patented. Up to 1500 people lived at Bourne and mining around the area continued until the mid-1920. Between 1900 and 1908 the Sumpter area produced $20,000,000 in gold; $12,000,000 came from 53 quartz mines. (treasurenet.com). Placer mining continues today with small operations using a hi-banker or suction dredge. Open pits, dredge tailings, adits, mine dumps, and structures provide evidence of this historic mining and can be seen throughout this area.

Recent Activity
For the past 10 years, only minimal mining activity has occurred at this site. Operations have been limited by what is allowed by regulations, such as work by hand, gold panning, metal detecting, or other activity that would not otherwise cause a significant disturbance of surface.
Proposed Plan of Operations (March 8, 200)

The proposed duration for this Plan of Operation is ten years.

The Plan proposes to rework previously mined tailing piles, pits, and cut banks. Each test pit will be less than ½ acre open before backfilling. Two existing ponds will be used for processing water and settling ponds. Only trees that pose a safety hazard will be removed. Some suction dredging will take place during the instream work period. Access to worksites on west side of the creek will require fording the streams.

Processing will include a 24”X 86” trommel with 12 yard per hour running capacity. Operator indicates periodically mining, just enough to keep busy. The plan is to use a backhoe/mini excavator to periodically mine 3 acres of deposits on the east and west side of Cracker Creek. Only one work area on the west side of cracker creek, at the south end of the claim will be disturbed. When testing for placers deposits, small test holes will be excavated and refilled with processed material and top soil. Where placer deposits are defined excavations will be up to one half (1/2) acre. Vegetation and topsoil will be removed from each pit site, each pit will be reclaimed before moving to a new area. Processing water will be recycled and settled through two ponds 60’x 30’x 4’ and 180’x70’x4’ with the larger pond at the north end of the claim. Water will be drawn from cracker creek to fill the two existing ponds at the beginning of the season if the ponds have not filled through winter run-off, no discharge from ponds or operations is anticipated. Pay gravels will be transfer to processing area and returned to extraction area via back-hoe, only one processing area is identified. Ongoing reclamation is anticipated, sediment from the ponds will be utilized for reclamation for faster re-vegetation. No new roads or new stream crossing will be developed. Suction dredging (3”) will take place during the in-stream work window. A twenty-foot buffer will be maintained between mining operations and Cracker creek.

Equipment utilized will include Pick-up, Case 580 back-hoe, mini excavator and D-4/5 dozer, high banker, trommel and hand tools. One self contained trailer or tent may be on site at any given time during the operating season. All equipment, and associated mining materials will be removed at the end of season.

Mitigation measures identified by the miner in the Plan.

- Mining with equipment will take place 20’ from the channel.
- Vegetation and trees along the channel will not be removed.
- No trees will be cut
- All water is recycled with no discharge into streams.
- All equipment will be removed at the end of each mining season.
- Settling ponds will be left dry or at normal water table at the close of the operation.
- Garbage will be removed regularly from the National Forest.
- Tailings will be returned to excavations and re-contoured in an ongoing manner.
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Dead Horse Placer

Claim Description

Dead Horse Placer is located on a tributary of Buck Gulch Creek. Access is via the Sumpter Granite Highway (County Road 520) to Forest System Roads 7390-300 and 337. The legal description for the claim is T.9S, R.36E, Section 26, W.M.

Existing Condition

Dead Horse is located in Buck Gulch, part of the Sumpter Mining District. Placer deposits were discovered in the area in 1862 and work was active in the district through the 1950’s, primarily in the Sumpter Valley with bucket dredges. The Buck Gulch Mine, located below Dead Horse, constructed a 900-foot tunnel following an old, buried stream. A ditch provided water to a dam built across Buck Gulch providing water for processing the placer gravels from this mine. Work at this mine continued into the late 1930’s early 1940’s. Records indicate that a new operator was active beginning in the 1980’s and continuing through 2011. Evidence of mining is visible from both the historic mining and more recent activities. Water source ponds, settling ponds, access roads, tailing piles (both from historic and recent mining), excavations from heavy equipment, and old hydraulic workings are all apparent at the site.

Recent Activity

A review of the files indicate mining has been ongoing at this site since 1988. Operations included the construction of ponds, processing with a trommel onsite, removal of vegetation including trees, and excavations 1/8 acre in size and 3-4 feet deep covering 2-5 acres a year. Equipment used in operations included a wash plant, small cat, and backhoe. From 1997 to 2005 very little activity occurred at the mine. In 2005 operations resumed and after 2006 no mining has been authorized. All mining stopped by 2006 although the equipment remained onsite until 2010.
Proposed Plan of Operations (November 21, 2015)

The proposed duration for this Plan of Operation is ten years.

Initially, the operator proposes to test placer gravels using a small trommel and work primarily by hand. Occasionally a backhoe will be brought in to remove overburden. As the operations progress the backhoe will remain on site and a larger trommel will be brought in to process 10-20 yards per day. Only one test hole 10’x 20’x 6’-10’ deep will be open at any given time. Vegetation will be removed from work sites including a few small trees less than 14” DBH. Small quantities of water, NTE 5000 gallons a day, will be drawn from a spring fed reservoir above the processing ponds by a gravity fed pipe. Processing water will be settled and recycled through two ponds 10’x 20’x 4’. Each pond holds about 11,000 gallons. Ponds will be left dry or nearly dry at the end of each season.

Equipment will include a 4-wheel drive pickup, an ATV, backhoe, and a trommel. Travel trailer will be used for living quarters during the season and removed each year. A chemical toilet may also be used on site during operations.

Mitigation measures identified by the miner in the Plan.

- No discharge of water from ponds
- Topsoil will be stockpiled for reclamation adjacent to each test hole and placed over the surface.
- Down wood will be used as mulch to help hold soil after each test hole is reclaimed.
- Refuse and garbage left from previous operators will be removed to a landfill.
- Mined areas will be returned to near normal land contours and seeded using a seed mix free of noxious weeds.
- During seasonal closures, the ponds will be left dry or nearly dry.
- Access roads will be water barred and spot rocked if needed.
- Washed gravel from processing or like material from old rock tailings will be placed on mine access roads where needed.
- The area will be monitored for noxious weeds.
- Waste petroleum products will be removed in original containers and disposed of at an appropriate dump site off NFS lands.
- Absorbent material will be kept onsite in case of small leaks or spills. Contaminated soil will be removed from NFS lands.

*Note: Additional mitigations were attached to the Plan. This included a Fire Plan, and a Hazardous Substances Plan. Please refer to the Plan of Operations for these additional mitigations.*
Dead Horse Placer
**Fine Gold Placer**

**Claim Description**

The Fine Gold Placer mine is a placer claim located on Cracker Creek. Access is from the south by County Road 553. The legal description for the claim is T. 9 S., R.37 E., Section 5, W.M.

**Existing Condition**

Fine Gold Placer is located upstream of the historic dredging that occurred on Cracker Creek in the early 1900’s through 1953. The Cracker Creek drainage is narrow at this point and conifers are well established over the proposed work sites. Some tailings are located within the proposed work site at the confluence of an unnamed stream and Cracker Creek on the north end of the claim.

Upstream from the Fine Gold Placer is the town site of Hanover and Bourne, established soon after gold was discovered in 1888. Mines in the Cracker creek district near Bourne tapped into what was known as the great motherlode of the Blue Mountains. The lode mines in this area were eventually patented. Up to 1500 people lived at Bourne and mining around the area continued until the mid-1920. Between 1900 and 1908 the Sumpter area produced $20,000,000 in gold; $12,000,000 came from 53 quartz mines. (treasurenet.com). Placer mining continues today with small operations using a hi-banker or suction dredge. Open pits, dredge tailings, adits, mine dumps, and structures provide evidence of this historic mining and can be seen throughout this area.

**Recent Activity**

A review of the files indicated some prospecting on the east bank of Cracker Creek occurred between 2011 and 2013. This was sampling material by hand to determine values. No other activity was noted since 2011.

**Proposed Plan of Operations (August 9, 2017)**

The proposed duration for this Plan of Operation is ten years.

Initially, the operator proposes to test placer gravels using a high banker and work primarily by hand once a month for two to three days at a time. Occasionally a backhoe will be brought in to remove overburden. As the operations progress (total disturbance area of 3 acres) the backhoe will remain on site and the high banker will be used to process 3-5 yards per day. Only one test hole, not to exceed one half acre (1/2) will be open at any given time. Building a trail/road is proposed to access the east side of Cracker creek (250-300ft in length) to two (2) designated work sites, where processing will also take
place. Vegetation will be removed from work sites, but no trees of marketable size will be removed unless they pose a safety hazard. Reclamation will take place in an ongoing manner, areas will be re-shaped to the lay of the land, excavations will be filled with tailings and covered with topsoil from pond clean out. Small quantities of water, NTE 600-800 gallons a day, will be drawn from existing ponds. Ponds will be filled by drawing from Cracker Creek to initially fill existing ponds if not filled through winter run-off. Processing water will be settled and recycled through two ponds 20’x 20’x 6’, the south pond may be enlarged to 20’x 40’x 6’. Ponds will be left dry or nearly dry at the end of each season.

Cracker creek will not be forded by equipment.

3” suction dredge will be utilized during in-stream work windows.

Equipment will include a 4-wheel drive pickup, an ATV, backhoe, Mini excavator, D4/5 dozer, and a trommel/High banker. Travel trailer or tent will be used for living quarters during the season and removed each year.

Mitigation measures identified by the miner in the Plan:

- No discharge of water from ponds
- Topsoil will be stockpiled for reclamation adjacent to each test hole and placed over the surface.
- Mined areas will be returned to near normal land contours.
Hi Bar #1

Claim Description
The Hi Bar #1 Placer plan is located on Cracker Creek north of the town of Sumpter on the east side of Baker County Road 533. Access is from County Road 533. The legal location for the claims is T09 S., R.37 E., Sections 9 and 16, W.M.

Existing Condition
The Hi Bar is located adjacent to Blue Jay Placer and is located at the furthest upstream point of the historic dredging that occurred on Cracker Creek in the early 1900’s through 1953. The Cracker Creek drainage narrows at this point and conifers are well established over the remaining proposed work sites.

Upstream is the town site of Bourne, established soon after gold was discovered in 1888. Mines in the Cracker creek district near Bourne tapped into what was known as the great motherlode of the Blue Mountains. The lode mines in this area were eventually patented. Up to 1500 people lived at Bourne and mining around the area continued until the mid-1920. Between 1900 and 1908 the Sumpter area produced $20,000,000 in gold; $12,000,000 came from 53 quartz mines. (treasurenet.com).

Placer mining continues today with small operations using a hi-banker or suction dredge. Open pits, dredge tailings, adits, mine dumps, and structures provide evidence of this historic mining and can be seen throughout this area.

Recent Activity
A review of the files indicate mining has been ongoing at this site from 2005 through 2009. Operations included the construction of ponds and the use of existing ponds, processing with a trommel onsite, removal of vegetation including trees, and excavations 10’x6’x5’ into a headwall of an existing pit. Equipment used in operations included a wash plant, and a backhoe.

From 2009 to 2017 very little activity occurred at the mine. The claimant reported unauthorized work in the pit with an excavator occurred in 2008.
Proposed Plan of Operations (June 26, 2017)

The proposed duration for this Plan of Operation is ten years.

The operator proposes to test/mine placer gravels using a portable trommel and a small excavator. Mine areas will be approximately 30’x50’x15’ and may be increased to ¼ acre in size. Trees and other vegetation will be removed from work areas. The operator proposes removal of existing tailing piles from work areas to expose the previously undisturbed placer deposits. There will be two processing sites, one on the north end of the claim and the other on the south end. Two existing 20’x12’x6’ settling ponds will be excavated and a new pond the same size will be constructed. The cleared area where the trommel will be located is approximately 100’x100’.

Additionally, where the sluice box discharges from the trommel, a small sediment trap pond will be constructed. Each processing site is located over 100’ from Cracker and Pole Creeks. When work is completed on the north end, the processing site will move to the south end. Other than suction dredging in Cracker Creek, mining will take place in early spring when water is available and be no closer than 66 feet from the break in slope of Cracker Creek.

Water for processing will be drawn from existing off channel ponds located on both the north and south end of the claim.

Equipment will include a 4-wheel drive pickup, an ATV, excavator, and a trommel. Two travel trailers will be used for living quarters. Trailers and all equipment will be removed at the end of each mining season.

Mitigation measures identified by the miner in the Plan.

- Trees removed from work areas will be used in reclamation to help hold the soil and to prevent the public from driving on reclaimed areas.
- Topsoil will be stockpiled for reclamation adjacent to each test hole and placed over the surface.
- Washed gravel will be placed in excavation sites in an ongoing manner.
- There will be no impact to the riparian vegetation around the storage ponds.
- The material cleaned from the sediment trap pond will be stockpiled and used as topsoil.
- Storm water will be routed around mining areas into well vegetated areas, and storm water within the processing site will be routed to the settling ponds.
- Mine access roads will be maintained to assure adequate drainage which may include installing water bars.
- Sediment will be contained on site.
- Berms will be placed at the base of topsoil piles.
- Areas of bare soil will be seeded or covered with mulch, wood, and/or straw
- Equipment will be washed before it is taken on to NFS lands.
- Access roads will be spot rocked where needed.
- Work will cease if there is evidence of sediment discharge from mining related activities.
- Settling ponds will be left dry, or nearly dry at the end of each season.
- The visual screening provided by roadside vegetation will not be removed.
- No work will take place in the winter or early spring when ground is wet.
• No trees or brush providing essential shade to the stream will be removed
• A funnel will be used during refueling pumps.
• Absorbent material will be kept onsite in case of small leaks or spills. Contaminated soil will be removed from NFS lands.
• Seed that is free of noxious weeds will be used.

Note: Additional mitigations were attached to the Plan. This included a Fire Plan, and a Hazardous Substances Plan. Please refer to the Plan of Operations for these additional mitigations.
Hi Bar #1 Placer


**J & J**

**Claim Description**

The J & J Placer Plan of Operations is for one mining claim located along a tributary that feeds into Blue Canyon Creek. Access is by Old Auburn Road (FSR 7220) to FSR 7225 and FSR 7225-020. The legal description for the claim is T.10 S., R.39 E., Section, W.M.

**Existing Condition**

J&J Placer is located within the historic Auburn mining district. Large placer mines were developed in the Auburn area beginning in 1862 and by 1863 Auburn had a population of 5000. Old tailing piles from this historic mining are visible throughout the area. Additionally, roads, ditches, and ponds were all constructed to support the placer mining. Many of these constructed features remain in use today. The most notable is the Auburn Ditch that was constructed in the late 1800’s and continues to provide water to Baker City.

Excavations, roads, campsites, ponds, and waste piles from recent mining beginning in the 1990’s are still evident at this site.

**Recent Activity**

On August 18, 1995, a ten-year Plan of Operations was approved that allowed excavations of up to 50’x50’ with two test holes worked each year. Processing was on site with a trommel and both water source ponds and settling ponds constructed at the processing site. Equipment used included a backhoe, water pumps and hand tools. This Plan was extended in 2006 for one year. Based on a review of documented inspection at the site, some mining continued after 2006 but this was limited to the activities allowed by regulations that did not result in a significant disturbance of surface resources.

**Proposed Plan of Operations (January 14, 2016)**

The proposed duration of this Plan of Operation is ten years.

The operator proposes to test and mine placer deposits along a dry stream channel and tailing piles along the tributary stream to a point near the confluence with Blue Canyon Creek. Two additional sites will also be tested/mined north of FSR 7225-020. Initially, a backhoe will transport 3-5 cubic yards of material a day to the processing site. Stockpiled material will be processed by hand using high bankers, a small trommel or sluices. If values prove economic, mining will take place in increments of up to ¼ acre in size. Each site will be reclaimed before moving to the next ¼ acre mine site. Up to 50 cubic yards per day will be run through the wash plant. A dump truck and a larger trommel will be brought on site to process material. Suction dredges will also be used in the streams from July 1st through October 31st each year, and the dredges will also be used to clean bedrock in the mining excavations.

Equipment proposed for use in the operation includes a backhoe, 4-wheel drive pickups, 5-yard dump truck, washing plant/trommel, pumps and hand tools. Self-contained travel trailers will be used each season for living quarters and a horse trailer may be used to store equipment. All equipment and trailers will be removed at the end of each season.
Process water comes from an off-channel pond that will provide up to 100 gpm. Processed water and sediment will be discharged into two settling ponds each approximately 10’x 12’x 6’ deep in size. Water from processing will be recycled with no discharge from the ponds.

Mitigation measures identified by the miner in the Plan:

- Seeding of disturbed areas annually in the fall.
- Stockpiles of topsoil left over the winter will be seeded using a seed mix free of noxious weeds.
- Equipment will be washed before entering NFS lands.
- Spring runoff and storm water will be routed around the mine area.
- No excavations in the annual floodplain
- Roads will be in a stable drivable condition, and ponds will be left dry or at normal water table level during winter closure.
- There will be no land application of water.
- An undisturbed riparian buffer of 20 will be maintained along streams.
- Absorbent material will be kept on site in case of small leaks or spills. Contaminated soil will be excavated to the depth of penetration and removed from NFS lands.
- If down wood is available, it will be placed over the reclaimed areas to help hold the soil.
- Where the road runs through the meadow, the surface will be rocked.
- No discharge of process water.
- Excavations will be approximately 20 feet or more from a tributary stream, and 300 feet or more from Blue Canyon Creek.
- Fueling will be done at least 30 feet from the tributary and a funnel will be used to minimize spills.
Medic Placer Group

Claim Description
Medic 1, 2, and 3, Irishman’s Folly, and Irishman’s Folly II are the mining claims included in the Medic Placer Group. These claims are located at the confluence of O’Farrell Gulch and McCully Fork Creek. Access is by the Sumpter Granite Highway (County Road 520) to Forest System Road 2200-900, and 7300-950. A non-system road that runs north and crosses O’Farrell Gulch at a ford also provides access. A bridge will be constructed at this ford. The legal description for these claims is T.09 S., R.36 E., Sections 13 and 14, W.M.

Existing Condition
In the 1870s and 1880s the Chinese actively placer mined on McCully Fork and lower Cracker Creek. In the early 1900’s bucket dredges were used to mine the Powder River drainage until 1953.

Medic Placer is located in the McCully Fork drainage within the Sumpter City Watershed that provides domestic water for the city. Upstream of the mine site the city has a water collection facility.

The existing ponds proposed as sediment ponds for Medic Placer may have been constructed to support the Bald Mountain Lode Mine located above Medic Placer in the upper elevations of McCully Fork. A Preliminary Assessment Report for the Bald Mountain Mine completed for EPA in December 2000 indicated that tailings from the mine were transported to these ponds where they were treated with cyanide.

Evidence of past mining including ditches, ponds, roads, and pits from previous exploration is visible at and around the proposed mine site.

Recent Mining Activity
A review of the inspections documented for this site indicates no mining has occurred for the last 17 years.

Proposed Plan of Operations (November 24, 2015)

The proposed duration of this Plan of Operation is ten years.

All testing/mining will take place south of O’Farrell Gulch along FSR 7300-950 where gravel is exposed in the cut bank of the road, and along an old mine road that intersects the 950 road just prior to where the 950 road crosses O’Farrell Gulch. These sites are 70 to 100 feet from O’Farrell Gulch. Initially, test/mining excavations will be approximately 30’x 50’ and up to 12 feet deep. Vegetation, including trees, will be removed from all mine areas. As operations progress, the mining areas may increase to 1/8 acre with another 1/8 acre for stockpiling excavated material. The total area of disturbance will be ¼ acre at each mine site at any given time. Additional mining activity will include suction dredging in McCully Fork.

Water for processing will be pumped from O’Farrell Gulch at a point where the mine access road accesses the stream. Approximately 150-250 gpm of water will be pumped approximately 250 feet through a 3” pipe to fill settling/recycling ponds. Once the ponds are full, only makeup water will be needed to replace the water lost from evaporation and seepage. A wash plant will be set up at the processing site and will occupy the claim year around. Approximately 20-40 cubic yards of gravel will be washed each day during the operating season.
Initially, three small ponds will be constructed at the site of the existing old ponds located on claim. Each pond will be approximately 7’x 12’x 6’ deep. These ponds hold about 9780 gallons. Water from these ponds will be recycled back to the trommel. At the time the operation expands, the settling ponds will be expanded to 15’x 20’x 8’ deep with a capacity of 58,650 gallons.

Equipment proposed in the Plan include a backhoe with a one-yard bucket, 5-yard dump truck, wash plant, feeder, pumps, sluices, and 4-wheel drive pickups. Two self-contained travel trailers will be on site for living quarters during operations. There may also be a chemical toilet.

**Mitigation measures identified by the miner in the Plan.**

- Water will be recycled in the ponds with no discharge.
- Ponds will be maintained with one foot of freeboard.
- Ponds will be located 120 feet from the break in slope on the O’Farrell Gulch streambanks.
- Ponds are pit type and located within the confines of the old Bald Mountain ponds.
- Ponds will be lined with bentonite clay.
- Topsoil will be stockpiled on the side of excavations farthest from the stream.
- At the end of the mining season, excavations will be refilled, and topsoil spread over the site, reseeded, and mulched with down wood.
- The stream will not be forded.
- 50’ vegetated buffer will be maintained between the mining areas and O’Farrell Gulch.
- A 100’ buffer will be maintained between the processing ponds and the streams.
- The access roads will be water barred and spot rocked in areas where rock is needed.
- Surface water will be routed around the processing plant into vegetated ground.
- There will be no discharge from off-channel settling/recycling ponds.
- Reclamation and seeding will be kept current.
- An unmined 70’ vegetated buffer will be between any excavations and the break in slope/high water mark of O’Farrel Gulch. No mining will take place within this buffer (except suction dredging).
- If necessary, down wood, washed tailings, and/or straw certified free of noxious will be used to create a sediment barrier.
- Garbage will be removed regularly from NFS lands.
- Reclamation of each small area that is mined will take place in an ongoing manner.
- Trees that provide essential shade to the stream (i.e., if removal of these trees will increase stream temperature .5 degrees) will not be removed.
- The operator will avoid and/or protect any newly discovered threatened and endangered plant or habitat of threatened and endangered animal species.
- If any cultural sites are discovered, they will be protected.
- All equipment will be checked for fuel leaks before equipment is operated.
- No fueling of equipment or routine maintenance will take place closer than 50 feet from the streams.
- Waste petroleum products will be removed from NFS lands in the original containers.
- No onsite storage of fuel except in the bed of pickups.
- Absorbent material will be kept on site in case of small leaks or spills. Contaminated soil will be removed from NFS lands.
Native Spirt

Claim Description

The Native Spirt plan consists of a placer claim located on McCully Fork, about 2 miles from its confluence with Cracker Creek. The legal description for the claim is T.9S., R.36E., Section 24, and T.9S., R.37E., Section 19, W.M.

Existing Condition

In the 1870s and 1880s the Chinese actively placer mined on McCully Fork and lower Cracker Creek. In the early 1900’s bucket dredges were used to mine the Powder River drainage until 1953.

On the upper end of the proposed operating area there is a cut bank, approximately 100’ x 200’ that may have been the result of hydraulic mining. Tailing piles are located throughout the work site on both sides of the access road on the south side of McCully fork. Ponds, a gated road, some recent excavated pits from previous mining are located in the work site. Private land and an old cabin site are located west of the claim boundary.

Recent Mining Activity

A review of the files indicates some mining occurred at this site during the 2002, 2003, 2004 and 2005 operating seasons. Improvement to existing roads, and water source ponds were completed along with excavating test pits with a backhoe. After 2005 no activity has occurred at this site.

Proposed Plan of Operations (September 19, 2016)

The proposed duration of this Plan of Operation is ten years or longer.

The operator has proposed to excavate placer gravels with a backhoe and transport the pay gravel to a wash plant. The loader bucket on the backhoe will be used to move the placer gravels. Vegetation from the work area will be removed including some trees (less than 14”). Additional trees that are a safety concern will also be removed.

Initially, several 20’ x 30’ x 8’-12’ deep test pits will be constructed with only one pit opened at a given time. If values prove economic, mining areas will be expanded to 1/8 acre in size.

Two 5’ x 12’ x 4’ settling ponds will be constructed at the processing site at the east end of the claim and two additional 20’ x 30’ x 4’-6’ foot deep ponds will be constructed at west side of the claim. Two off channel water source ponds are located on the claim, one on the east end will be deepened to approximately 10’ x 20’ x 4 feet deep, and on west of the claim there is an existing pond that collects ground water. Each pond provides 5000 gal. of process water per day. A trommel will be located at one of the two processing sites and moved as needed. The trommel uses 60-80 gpm of water not to exceed 5000 gallons a day for processing. Water from the settling ponds will be recycled through the trommel. (the trommel can run between an hour to an hour and a half a day at this rate)

Equipment proposed for use by the operator includes a backhoe, wash plant (trommel), pumps, 4-wheel drive pickup, and a bulldozer. Trailers and tents are used for living quarters, no permanent structures proposed.
Mitigation measures identified by the miner in the Plan.

- Operations where mechanized equipment is used all have reclamation bonds, operating plans and reclamation plans as required by INFISH.
- Hazardous materials (petroleum products) are stored out of the floodplain.
- No chemicals are used in the operations.
- Sites are kept neat and orderly, and garbage is regularly removed from National Forest.
- All equipment is checked for fluid leaks before equipment is operated.
- No fueling of equipment or routine maintenance takes place near streams, springs, or wetlands.
- During ongoing mining activities all disturbed sites (road cut and fill slopes, camp site, ponds, dumps, and stockpiles) are maintained in stable condition.
- Roads are treated to prevent significant soil movement, rutting and sedimentation. Treatment may include spot rocking, installation of water bars, ditching and out-sloping of road surfaces where possible.
- County roads are protected from damage.
- Topsoil is removed from the test/mining locations and replaced after test/mining is complete. Gravel is returned to the mining excavation before topsoil is replaced.
- Where tree removal is approved, trees are spread over the reclaimed ground after reclamation.
- Areas of bare soil created by the operation are seeded using Forest Service approved seed mix.
- All mined areas are stabilized prior to seasonal shutdowns or extended equipment maintenance and before equipment removal.
- All stockpiled topsoil and/or other suitable fines such as silt from the settling ponds are evenly spread back over disturbed areas on completion of the operation and/or in an ongoing restoration program. Areas are reclaimed to the pre-mining condition or better.
- Piles of wood or straw bales are available in case of erosion caused by storm events.
- State water quality standards will be met.
- No waste storage occurs in riparian areas, floodplains, or spring areas.
- The operator will avoid and/or protect any known or discovered threatened and endangered plant or habitat of threatened and endangered animal species.
- All ground disturbing operations outside this plan will have prior written approval of the Forest Service. Proposals not in this plan will be submitted in writing and will be made an addendum to this plan.
- During close out reclamation, mine access roads which are not needed by recreationists or other mine operators, are seeded, covered with wood, and closed to vehicles.
- An approximately 50-foot vegetated buffer will be maintained between the mining excavations and the high-water mark of the stream.
- No trees shading the stream will be removed.
- Topsoil, where it is available, will be stockpiled for reclamation.
- Riparian brush species along the stream will not be impacted.
- No work will take place in the winter or early spring.
- Waste petroleum products will be removed in original containers and disposed of at an appropriate dump site off NFS lands.
- There will be no on-site storage of fuel other than in the tank in the pickup.
- Seed that is certified free of noxious weeds will be used.
- Absorbent material will be kept on site in case of small leaks or spills. Contaminated soil will be removed from NFS lands.
Claim Description

The Pardners Group consists of three placer and lode mining claims. It is located on just west of the Old Auburn Town Site. The placer worksite is on Poker Gulch, an ephemeral stream that feeds into Blue Canyon Creek. The load operation is on a ridge west of Forest System Road 7220 (County Road 722) between 7220 and Poker Gulch. Access is from County Road 722 that changes to FSR 7220 at the forest boundary. Access continues on the 7220 road to FSR 7220-020 south to where it intersects the 7220-021 road. The legal description for the claim is T.10 S., R.39 E., Sections 8 and 17, W.M.

Existing Condition

Pardners Placer/Load is located within the historic Auburn mining district. Large placer mines were developed in the Auburn area beginning in 1862 and by 1863 Auburn had a population of 5000. Old tailing piles from this historic mining are visible throughout the area. Additionally, roads, ditches, and ponds were all constructed to support the placer mining. Many of these constructed features remain in use today. The most notable is the Auburn Ditch that was constructed in the late 1800’s and continues to provide water to Baker City.

A review of the operating file for the Pardners mining claims indicate mining was approved for the use of earthmoving equipment as early as 1983. Structures at the site were constructed to support underground mining. Work at the site included opening portals and the construction of new portals, construction of roads and ponds, test trenches for sampling of placer deposits, removal of trees for mine timbers that were cut and milled on site with a portable mill, use of existing structures and travel trailers, and suction dredging. The surface impacts from underground mining included the dumping of waste material at or near portal entrances.

Recent Activity

Mining at this site has been active from the 1980’s through 2008. In a 2008 inspection new excavations of placer deposits with equipment were noted and a wash plant was on site near the excavations. In the early 1980’s, some low-level operations were conducted in Poker Creek that were reviewed and documented in the files, but no Plan of Operations was required. At that time the name of the claim was Tough Luck Charley. Inspections documented from 2009 through 2017 noted some underground operations but no surface activity.
Proposed Plan of Operations (October 30, 2015)

The proposed duration of this Plan of Operation is ten years.

The miner is proposing to continue mining an existing underground shaft and drift, and a placer operation on Poker Gulch. The underground operation will be year around with the placer operation planned for spring and fall. The plan also proposes a core drilling operation that the operator decided to omit (see email in folder dated 10/24/2016).

The operator proposes to tunnel at a rate of 6 feet per day with explosives. Explosives will be stored onsite. Five Douglas Fir trees no larger than 21’ will be removed for timbers in the tunnel. Both the cabin and metal shed on the claim will be used for storage.

Surface activity associated with the underground mining include depositing waste rock by filling in old mine works and holes and spreading the rest of the material on the surface. Waste disposal sites will be seeded with approved grass.

Surface disturbance includes the waste rock disposal, mining shafts, drift entrances, and exploratory trenches. Surface disturbance associated with the placer operation will include the construction of ponds, and the excavations of mine tailings. Milling will be done off site.

Placer operations will primarily in old tailings. Test holes will be dug in the tailings area (about 200’x 1000’). No more than ¼ acre will be open at any one time (100x 100’x 3’-4’). Water is seasonal in the ponds and water will be recirculated for processing up to 50 yards per day. Estimated yardage per year between 300 and 1000 yards at an estimated 20-day work cycle. Testing will also be done with a 4” suction dredge.

Proposed equipment for the operation includes a D4 dozer, wash plant, 4’ suction dredge and pumps, power plant, air compressor, holding tanks, rental dozers and excavators. Living quarters used in operations are located off NFS lands on the adjacent State land. Other structures proposed for storage are existing buildings on the claim. One unserviceable structure will be repaired for use.

Note: Operator believed that trailer and all the equipment, vehicles etc. was located on state land, not NFS lands. The boundary has been recently marked and this property appears to be on NFS lands. This should be added to the Plan or removed. Its present disposition is a permanent improvement on NFS lands.

Mitigation & Monitoring identified by the miner in the Plan

- Waste rock will be leveled and spread out and approved grass will be planted as needed.
- If topsoil is removed from mine sites, it will be stockpiled for reclamation.
- Holes from placer operations will be filled in with washed gravel, then fines and seeding on top.
- If solid waste is produced during operations, it will be transported offsite to an approved waste handling facility.
- Reclamation will be ongoing before moving to the next grid.
- Containment kits for spills of petroleum products will be available during operations.
Return Placer Group

Claim Description
The proposed Return Placer Group Plan of Operation covers mining activities on four placer claims, Return, Golden Eagle #1, Prize, and Lady Dragon. All proposed operations are located along Deer Creek. Access is from FSR 7240 to 7240-400 and 416. Access will also include the use of existing decommissioned roads that are closed and the construction of three temporary roads. Two of the temporary roads will cross Deer Creek. A bridge is proposed at one crossing and a ford at the second. The legal description for the claims is T.9 S., R.38 E., Sections 31 and 32, W.M.

Existing Condition
The nearest historic mine area to Return Placer Group was an old placer camp known as Minersville. Minersville was located on Miners Creek southeast of the Return Placer. This area was mined in the 1860’s about the same time period as the Auburn area. Miner’s creek is a tributary of Deer Creek.

The area of the Return Placer group shows considerable evidence of past mining. On the eastern boundary of Golden Eagle is evidence of hydraulic mining. The pit from this mining still exists with a headwall of approximately 50 feet high and 150-200 feet wide. A hand stacked rock dam sits just below the pit in the draw. Placer tailing deposits extend down the draw towards Deer Creek. Placer tailings are also present on the west side of Deer Creek on the Return, Prize, Golden Eagle Claims. Existing off channel water source ponds are located on Return and Prize Claims on the east side of Deer Creek. Several hydraulic trenches are located on the hillside east of Deer Creek.

Recent Mining Activity
In review of the project files for the Return Group, mining at this site has been ongoing, with previous Plan of Operations approved in 1994 as well as a one-year exploration plan approved in 2006. Mining activity included the use of a backhoe and excavator, excavations of test pits, processing onsite with a trommel, use of settling ponds, suction dredging, vegetation removal, and reclamation. Little to no activity has been conducted since 2006 pending the approval of the EIS.


The proposed duration of this Plan of Operation is 11-35 years.
Based on the letter dated November 18, 2015, responding to a request to provide clarification on operations, the operator referenced “sections” and refers to page R16 of the Plan. Each section will be mined in 100’x200’ parcels with 6000 yards of minable placer materials. The operator expects to mine a minimum of 2 of the sections per season for 12,000 yards of material processed. If the season is favorable, more material may be mined and/or another section will be added.

**Return Placer**

Mining at sites #1 and #2 take place on the southeast corner of the Return mining claim. The Plan describes mining at Site #1 as an area 200’ long and 80’ wide on a bench at the toe of the slope where the plant was previously set up during testing. This bench is located generally just above the valley floor northwest of the draw (old trench) which is Site #2. This area is 200’ long and 80’ wide. Bedrock is estimated to be 8’-10’ deep. An estimated 6000 cubic yards of material will be processed from this site. All the material excavated will be processed (see June 4, 2007, letter from Jan Alexander) through the trommel at a rate of up to 200 cubic yards a day. Process water for this site will be pumped from the existing ground water pond and 3 to 4 settling ponds, three exist and one will be constructed to catch sediment from the wash plant. These ponds are identified on the map as the stationary processing site on the Return Placer claim. Ponds will be cleaned when 2/3 full of silt. Total surface disturbance at this site is approximately ½ acre.

*Note: Ponds proposed for settling used throughout the operations range from 10’x20’x4’ and 12’x 14’x 4’ to 150’x 200’x 4’ deep. Ponds are pit type ponds with no dams and the static level of the ponds is 1’-2’ lower than the top of the bank. Some ponds already exist and are holding water, others will be constructed. The Plan references “mobile ponds” at two mining sites described in the operation. These mobile ponds will move with the mining excavations and as the mining progresses new ponds will be constructed from the mining excavations and the old ponds reclaimed. The wash plant will move with the ponds as mining progresses. This procedure will be repeated at all the locations identified as having mobile ponds.*

Mining site #2 is in the draw located in the southeast corner of Return Placer. An existing trench that heads up this draw in a northeasterly direction from the valley bottom will be widened. The bottom of the trench will follow bedrock and be 100 feet wide as it extends up the hill. On each side of the trench, the hillside will be terraced with a series of benches constructed on both sides in increments of 20’ rise and run. The top bench will be 60’ wide and 600’ long. This top bench will start at the northeast end of the trench and contour along the northwest hillside back towards Deer Creek. After the first bench is completed two more benches will be constructed working downslope from the first bench. When the benches are completed on the northwest hillside, benches will be constructed on the south hillside in much the same manner as the northwest hillside, starting from the top and working downslope to the trench. All vegetation, including trees, will be removed from the hillside before the bench is established. Total surface disturbance at this site is approximately 3-4 acres.

Mining at Site #6 will be in ½ acre parcels in the flat area west and east of the cattle guard, south of the 400 road. Vegetation will be removed along with the topsoil. Placer gravels will be hauled in a dump truck to the wash plant and washed gravel will be hauled back to refill excavations. Excavations may be as deep as 30 feet.

**Prize Placer**

Mining on the west side of Deer Creek (Westside mining area on map) will be on the valley bottom in parcels of 100’x 200’x 8’-10’, except directly adjacent to Deer Creek. Excavations that are within 28’ of Deer Creek will be in narrow strips that parallel the creek, 200’ long and 20’-30’ wide. A 25’ unmined buffer will be maintained between mine excavations and Deer Creek. Mining will start on the Return Claim and extend north into the Prize claim a total distance of approximately 1500 feet. Initially, when mining the strips near Deer Creek, settling ponds will be constructed approximately 100’ west of the creek and water
from the mining excavations will be pumped to these ponds. When mining the strips closest to Deer Creek is completed, excavations will proceed north from the ponds. The ponds will be reclaimed as work progresses north and the mining excavations will be used as new settling ponds for the next excavated mine site. These settling ponds will be no closer than 100 feet from the Deer Creek. A bridge will be constructed across Deer Creek to access the west side. Some trees may be removed from mined areas. Total surface disturbance at this site is approximately 12 acres.

Adjacent to Site #4 on the Prize Placer, mining will follow FSR 7240-415 from the junction with FSR 7240-416 up the draw 800 feet where the road crosses the draw. The draw bottom will be mined to a depth of 8’ to 10’.

**FSR 7240-415** will be moved to the north side of the drainage and reestablished back to its original location after mining is completed and the area reclaimed. Mobile ponds, as described above, will be used at this location. Total surface disturbance at this site is approximately 4 acres.

At Site #3, the plan proposes mining the trench located at the lower switchback in road 415. Cut banks along the trench will be tested to the claim boundary approximately 500-600 feet. Following testing the trench will be widened to approximately 100 feet and the west hillside will be benched. The bench will start at the placer shaft (marked on map) and extend down to the main road. Following reclamation of the west side of the trench, benching along the east side of the trench will begin the same manner as the west side and end at the fence.

At Site #4, along FSR 7240-415, there is an exposure of placer gravels in the cut bank. This will be mined in benches similar to what is described above. The site starts at the junction of the 415 road and the 7240-400 road and extends down the 415 road approximately 500 feet. The 400 road sits just above the 415 road in this area and may have to be relocated if the placer deposit extends through the road. Total surface disturbance at this site is approximately 1-2 acres.

Site #5, the existing trench will be widened to approximately 100 feet up to where it hits the east claim boundary, 400 feet in length. The northwest and southwest hillsides will be benched, mined, and reclaimed in a manner similar to what is described for sites #2–#4. The trench extends south of the main road and will also be mined in benches.

### Golden Eagle Placer

The area east of FSR 7240-415, along the hill side just south of the private property, will be mined in increments of 20-30 feet back into the slope to the vertical

West of Deer Creek and just south of the private property, one strip 200’x 20’-30’ and 8’-10’ deep will be mined 28’ from the creek on the valley bottom. The entire site is 1 ½ acres in size and will be mined in ½ acre parcels in the same manner as described on the west side of the creek for Prize Placer. Settling ponds will be constructed and a small wash plant will be setup for processing at this site. A ford will be used to cross the creek and a short temporary road will be constructed. Total surface disturbance at this site is approximately 1 ½ acres.

At the southeast corner of the Golden Eagle Placer, there is an existing pit from previous mining. This pit is 150’x 200’ in size. Existing headwalls on the pit range from 30’-50’ on the east side of the pit to 10’-15’ in height on the west and north sides. The operator proposes to mine the west end of the pit with a bulldozer starting from the top, benching terraces, and dumping pay gravel into the pit to be transported to the processing site. A ford will be used to cross the creek and additional surface area will be needed adjacent to the pit to stockpile overburden. The pit would be expanded to the northeast. Mining would also take place in a draw west of the pit and a temporary access road will need to be constructed to this site. Estimated depth of excavations is 8’-10’. Mining will be
in ½ acre increments. All trees will be removed from each ½ acre mined parcel and during testing. The pond located behind the rock dam in the draw below the pit will be lined with bentonite to hold snow melt and the water used for test runs of material. Total surface disturbance at this site is approximately 5 acres.

Equipment proposed in the Plan include an excavator, backhoe, a 5 and a 10 yard dump truck, an excavator (cat 300 or smaller), front end loader (Cat 950 or smaller), bulldozer (Cat D8 or smaller) up to two wash plants (larger plant processing about 40 yards per hour and a smaller plant at 10 yards/hour), sluices, water truck, and a dozer. Up to 4 self-contained travel trailers will be used for living quarters and one RV will be used as an office during operating periods. A chemical toilet may be brought on site.

All water for mining will be drawn from several off-channel ponds; some already existing and others will be constructed. These ponds are recharged by ground water. Settling ponds used in the operation will be filled from these ground water ponds, and the water will be recycled from the settling ponds back through the wash plants during processing of the pay gravel.

Mitigation & Monitoring identified by the miner in the Plan

- After mining and the 7240-415 is returned to its original alignment, a drainage ditch will be constructed to divert the water off the road that currently runs down the road.
- Topsoil and substrate will be stockpiled on the side of excavations furthest from the stream when topography allows.
- Hillside benches and trenches will be refilled to normal land contours.
- Trees that have been removed during operations will be spread back over the surface of disturbed areas.
- Benches will be in-sloped.
- The trenches will be left with humps and dips to provide wildlife habitat, and to stabilize the soil.
- Disturbed areas will be seeded with a seed mix recommended by the Forest Service.
- Reclamation of mine sites will be ongoing with the operation.
- A protective berm of rock and gravel will be constructed along the stream leaving at least a 25’ unmined buffer. Filter fabric will also be utilized.
- Overburden from mine trenches next to the 25’ unmined buffer will be stockpiled on the side of the trench away from the creek.
- Settling ponds will always be 100’ from the stream.
- Excavations will be in increments of ½ acre open at any given time, with ongoing reclamation of mined areas. Further clarification on size was provided in the letter of November 18, 2015. The operator described each section to be mined as 100’x200’ parcels.
- Mining excavations will be returned to normal land contours, topsoil will be spread over the site and the area will be reseeded with a Forest Service recommended seed mix.
- Trees that are removed will be placed back over reclaimed ground.
- Boggy areas on the east side of Deer Creek will not be impacted.
- The irrigation ditch diversion downstream of the proposed bridge will be protected.
- Ford will only be used from July 1st to August 31st.
- Mining trenches near the creek will not take place until July when stream flow is minimal.
- Areas of bare soil resulting from operations will be reseeded.
- Down wood will be placed on reclaimed areas to help hold soil.
- Access roads will be spot rocked where needed.
- Deer creek will be monitored for turbidity during processing operations.
- Roads will be water barred.
- Reclamation will be kept current.
- Settling ponds will be left dry or at normal water table at the close of the season.
- Garbage will be removed regularly from NFS lands.
- Absorbent material will be kept onsite in case of small leaks or spills. Contaminated soil will be removed from NFS lands.
- Only one area will be mined at a given time.
Salmon Creek

Claim Description
Salmon Creek Placers mining claims are owned by Eastern Oregon Miners and Prospectors, a mining club where members are interested in the recreational aspects of gold mining. Groups of miners may occupy the site at any given time during when the area becomes accessible in the spring until October 31st each year.

The proposed Salmon Creek Placer Plan of Operation covers mining activities on one placer claim. All proposed operations are located along Salmon Creek. Access is from County Road 918 (Salmon Creek Road) to FSR 9180 to 9180-210. The legal description for the claims is T.9 S., R.39 E., Sections 7, 8, and 18, W.M.

Existing Condition
Mining began in this area in 1862, shortly after the discovery of gold at Griffin Gulch. Accounts documented at the time stated that prospectors spread out from the Auburn area to all the surrounding drainages and specifically mentioned Salmon Creek. Tailing piles from past mining is evident throughout the area. Placer mining continues today as people continue to search through the rocks and stream bed. Evidence of recent mining such as access roads, landings, ponds, excavations from both hand work and equipment are also within the proposed work areas. Just upstream of the mining claim, on private land, is a cabin. Roads proposed for mining access are also used by the private landowner for access. Just below the claim FSR 9180-010 fords Salmon Creek.

Recent Activity
In reviewing of the Salmon Creek Placer project files, operations at this site have been ongoing from at least 1940 to 2002, with activity occurring within the same general area of the current mining proposal. In 1985 a Plan of Operations was approved, and work continued on the claim through 1994. Then in 1995 a new Plan was approved for 10 years. Heavy equipment such as backhoes, excavators, bulldozers, trommel, suction dredges, and a permanent residence with several outbuildings were located onsite up to 2002. Photos taken at the time indicated ground disturbance from excavations with equipment, some appear to be in the creek. The Plan authorized mining to within 5 feet from Salmon Creek. After 2002 mining was limited to hand work with picks and shovels, high bankers, sluices, and suction dredges. During this same period the area was reclaimed including removing all structures and equipment.
Proposed Plan of Operations (October 2016, received on October 17, 2016)

The proposed duration of this Plan of Operation is 10 years.

The plan proposes to use a backhoe to mine placer deposits on the north side of Salmon Creek. No mechanized or motorized equipment will be used on the south side of the creek. The mining area will be kept to ¼ acre size or less.

During mining a few small trees and brush will be removed, however, no trees or snags over 20” will be removed, unless these are hazards to the operator. A trommel will be setup at the processing site and two settling ponds 20' x 15' x 8’ will be constructed. The ponds are pits without dams and located 25’ from Salmon Creek. The trommel uses 80-100 gpm of water that will be recycled from the settling ponds. Vegetation, including trees, will be removed from the mine/test sites along with 6'-12” of topsoil.

Pay gravel from mine sites will either be hauled by backhoe to the wash plant or by hand with buckets.

Equipment proposed for use during the operation include a backhoe or excavator with up to a 16’ reach, a D4 cat or equivalent, a 6-yard dump truck, a 10 yards per hour trommel, pickup trucks and ATVs, pumps, generators, high bankers, pick shovels and other hand tools. Self-contained travel trailers will be used as living quarters during mining operations. These trailers will be located 80 feet from the stream.

Water used for processing will come from off channel old mine pits that tap ground water. No more than 5000 gallons of water will be pumped per day.

Mitigation & Monitoring identified by the miner in the Plan

- Trees along the road will be limbed where needed.
- At least a 20’ buffer will be maintained between operating sites and Salmon Creek.
- Stream shade along Salmon Creek (mainly thick brush) will be maintained.
- All processed water will be recycled and there is no discharge.
- Silt and sand from settling ponds will be stockpiled in a location where the water will drain back into the ponds.
- Topsoil and substrate will be stockpiled adjacent to mining site.
- The wood will be scattered over reclaimed sites.
- Mining excavations or like material from historic mining will be used to backfill mine sites to normal land contours.
- When the excavation has been filled, topsoil, silt and sand will be spread over the top.
- Surface water will be ditched around mining site and work areas.
- Areas of bare soil resulting from the operation will be seeded.
- Down wood, when available, will be placed on reclaimed areas.
- The wet area in the access road will be rocked.
- Daily mining and processing will be monitored to ensure there is no discharge of sediments into Salmon Creek.
- Roads will be water barred and rocked where needed. Roads will be in a stable, drivable condition.
- Settling ponds will be left dry or at normal water table at the close of operation.
- No land application of water.
- Garbage will be removed regularly from NFS lands.
- All areas proposed for mining activities will be kept neat and orderly.
- The area will be monitored for noxious weeds.
- Waste petroleum products will be removed in original containers and disposed of at an appropriate dump site off NFS lands.
- Absorbent material and drip pans will be placed under stationary equipment.
- Trailers, chemical toilets, and all machinery will be removed at the end of each mining season.
**Slow Poke Group**

**Claim Description**

The Slow Poke Group Plan of Operations outlines mining on 5 placer mining claims, Slow Pokes #1-#4 and the Willy Rigs. It is located northeast of Buck Gulch Creek, a tributary of McCully Fork Creek. Access is by County Road 520 (Sumpter-Granite Highway), to FSR 7390-340. From 7390-340 to 345 and 341. The operator installed a gate on FSR 7390-345 restricting public access. FSR 9300-990 also provides access to the operating area off the Granite-Sumpter highway and to other operating areas. The legal description for the claim is T.9 S., R.36 E., Sections 26 and 27, W.M.

**Existing Condition**

The historic Weaver mine property is located in the same area of the proposed operations for Slow Poke. A small hydraulic plant operated at the site. Water was supplied through a ditch about 6 miles long that diverts the flow of Gray’s gulch, a tributary of McCully Fork. Water in sufficient amount for mining purposes is had only during part of the spring and summer. Evidence of this past hydraulic mining is clearly visible with trenches and tailing piles predominant land features located throughout the claim and proposed work area. Existing roads provide access to mine sites within the work area, some are Forest System Roads, and others were developed during past mining activity. A gate was installed on FSR 7390-345 limiting access to the proposed processing site. There are two existing water source ponds that the operator will use as part of the proposed operation.

**Recent Activity**

In review of the project files for Slow Poke, mining at this site has been ongoing since 1964 (originally the Weaver mine was located in this area). Mining activity included the use of a backhoe, excavations of test pits, processing onsite with a trommel, construction of ponds, the use of a ball mill, removal of vegetation including trees, construction and use of a cabin, and suction dredging. In the late 1990’s early 2000, mining no longer involved the use of earth moving equipment. Work by hand with picks and shovels and processing onsite with a small trommel has continued at this site seasonally through 2016.

**Proposed Plan of Operations (October 30, 2016)**

The proposed duration of this Plan of Operation is 10 years or longer.

The Plan identifies two proposed areas for mining; the first is referred to as “Three Pines” and the second as “Weaver”. The two mine areas cover approximately 15 acres with mining to take place in two phases. During the first phase excavations will 30’ x 50’ x 12’ in size and will increase to 200’ x 100’ x 20’ deep in phase two. No more than one excavated (approximately ½ acre) area will be open at any given time. Processing will be 40-50 cubic yards in a day during phase one increasing to 60-100 cubic yards a day in

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3 Mineral Resources of Oregon, Published by the Oregon Bureau of Mines and Geology (1916)
phase two. Vegetation, including trees, in the path of operations will be removed. Testing at Weaver will take place during the time that the Three Pines site is being mined.

The operation is seasonal, beginning in the spring after the snow melts with seasonal close out scheduled for October 31st each year.

Two sites will be used for processing, one at each mine site. The processing site at Three Pines is located below the water source pond along FSR 7390-345, near the proposed campsite. The Weaver processing site is located in Section 27 at the end of a non-system road that is an extension of FSR 7390-341.

The Three Pines site has existing settling ponds that will be reclaimed, and two new settling ponds will be constructed 50 feet east of the existing ponds. These settling ponds will be 20’x 35’ and 20’x 30’, each 4 feet deep. Processing is with a wash plant/trommel that uses 150-250 gpm. The trommel will be moved to the Weaver processing site after mining at the Three Pines is completed. The existing settling ponds will be enlarged at the Weaver processing site to approximately the same size described for the Three Pines site. Water in settling ponds is recycled through the wash plant and only make-up water is needed from the water source ponds.

Water for processing comes from two ponds, one at each mine site. These water sources are in drainages, one along the 345 road and the other along the 341 road. Both ponds tap into ground water for most of the season. Water drawn from the ponds for processing will not to exceed 5000 gallons a day. If water is not sufficient, a well will be drilled for a water source. Early in the season water collects in an existing depression at the Weaver mine site and will be used for processing until it dries up.

Equipment proposed for use during the operation include a backhoe, wash plant, ATV, suction dredge, 5-yard dump truck, bulldozer, excavator, loader, pickup trucks, and a water pump. Travel trailers and tents will be used as living quarters.

Mitigation & Monitoring identified by the miner in the Plan

- Silt from settling ponds will be used as a growth medium and used for reclaiming disturbed mine sites.
- Topsoil where it exists will be stockpiled for reclamation.
- Wash gravels from processing, or like material from existing tailing piles, will be returned to excavated mine pits.
- Water is recycled between off channel ponds with no discharge.
- Areas of bare soil resulting from operations will be seeded each fall.
- Down wood will be placed on reclaimed areas to help hold soil.
• Access road will be spot rocked, and water barred where needed. Roads will be in a stable, drivable condition.
• Reclamation will be kept current.
• Settling ponds will be kept dry or at the normal water table level at the end of the season.
• Garbage will be removed regularly from NFS lands.
• Mining areas will be kept neat and orderly, and reclamation will be ongoing.
• No work will take place in the winter or early spring.
• The area will be monitored for noxious weeds.
• No hazardous substances or chemicals will be used other than petroleum products.
• Waste petroleum products will be removed in original containers and disposed of at an appropriate dumpsite off NFS lands.
• Absorbent materials will be kept onsite in case of small leaks or spills. Contaminated soil will be removed from NFS lands.
• Spring runoff water from hillsides will be directed around the mining sites and processing areas.

Note: Additional mitigations were attached to the Plan. This included a Fire Plan, and a Hazardous Substances Plan. Please refer to the Plan of Operations for these additional mitigations.
Struggler Lode & French Gulch

Claim Description

The Struggler, White Tunnel, and High Hope #1, & #2 are lode claims within the proposed operating area. French Gulch is noted in BLM records as a closed lode mining claim.

The operating area is located on French Gulch just north of the Old Auburn townsite. Access to the operating areas identified in the Plan of Operations is by County Road 722 (Auburn Road) to a private road through Section 10, T.10S, R39E. On entering NFS lands the private road changes to FSR 7225-215. From FSR 7225-215 the 200, 210, and 220 roads are used to access various worksites. The operator also proposes the use of non-system roads on the claim and construction of 600 feet of road at the end of the 7225-220. The legal description for the lode claims is T.10S. R.39E. Section 9 of the W.M.

Existing Condition

The Struggler claim has no known specific history of mining. The Gold Bug mine located ½ mile north of Struggler is the only lode mine in the vicinity for which past production was reported. The earliest location date for a mine in the vicinity of the proposed operations is 1957 for White Tunnel (relocated in 1996). The best estimate based on the progression of mining in the area, lode mining began between 1870 and the early 1900’s. Active development of lode mines was limited until the country was made assessable by the construction of the transcontinental railroad in 1885.

In addition to the portals, and shafts associated with the lode mines, several structures, roads, ponds, equipment, and a variety of material (pipes, lumber, metal, etc.) still remains on the site from past mining. The current operator maintains a trailer, and various gear used to support occupancy at the site. The operator has also completed some repairs to the log cabin and currently uses this as living quarters.

Recent Activity

A review of the project file for Struggler and French Gulch mines shows mining activity at this site dating back to 1972. Plans of Operations approved first in 1986 and again in 1989 allowed the use of mechanized

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5 BLM LR2000 records
6 The Gold Belt of the Blue Mountains of Oregon, Waldemar Lindgren (1901), pages 563-566.
earth moving equipment, the removal of vegetation, reconstruction of ponds, use and maintenance of roads, and the removal of trees for mining timbers. This level of operation was authorized through 1999.

Inspection documented in the file indicates no mining activity has occurred at this site since 2000.

Proposed Plan of Operations (October 25, 2016)

The proposed duration of this Plan of Operation is 20 years.

The operator is proposing both placer and lode operations along with test sampling for placer deposits. The proposed placer mining includes processing the free gold from the mouth of portals, Oxidized ore from dumps, pay gravel from surrounding claims, small scale placer mining around the four existing ponds on the south side of the claim, and processing test samples from the ridge west of the existing ponds.

Lode operations will be underground or on existing mine dumps. Waste rock will be disposed on existing dump sites and ore will be brought to the mill for processing. The proposed production rate is five tons per day mining and milling.

Wash water for processing at the mill will be pulled from ponds that are located at the White Tunnel portal. Water from this portal discharges into the pond. The first pond is 20’ x 20’ x 4’ and the second is 80’ x 65’ x 7’. These ponds will be lined to retain water. An existing off channel pond near the mill will be used to contain mill tailings and two additional ponds will be constructed for placer operations to collect silt and sand.

Equipment to be used will include a backhoe, wash plant, hard rock mill, 5-yard dump truck, hand tools, small placer plant, sluices, pumps, generators, 4x4 pickups, and a bulldozer. The existing cabin and self-contained travel trailers will be used for living quarters. Two additional existing structures (shed and outhouse) will be used to support the operations along with the existing mill structure.

Reclamation will be done on a continuing basis and the site stabilized annually before close out. Grass seeding will be done as needed and topsoil will be stockpiled for use in reclamation.

Mitigation & Monitoring identified by the miner in the Plan

- Equipment and trailers will be removed at the end of each mining season. (except for the ball mill)
- All mine access roads will be maintained, and the road surface will be rocked and waterbarred as needed.
- All cut and fill surfaces will be seeded with weed free seed.
- Silt and sand from the ponds will be used to reclaim mine sites that do not have topsoil.
- The mine shaft in French Gulch will be filled in using tailings from milling operations.
- Additional tailings will be disposed of in an open cut near the Microgold mine site.
- No hazardous substances or chemicals are used in the operation, other than petroleum products.
• All drill fluids will be contained underground on the Struggler portal.
• Dump slopes will be maintained at about 2:1.
• No toxic materials will be used in the operations.
• All fuel will be hauled in using tanks in the back of pickups.
• Equipment will be washed prior entering NFS lands.
• Areas of bare soil resulting from operations will be seeded.
• Down wood will be placed on reclaimed areas to help hold the soil.
• Monitoring will occur while mining activity takes place to ensure no process water leaves the site.
• Reclamation will be kept current and ongoing.
• Settling ponds will be left dry or at normal watertable.
• There will be no land application of water.
• During storm events the existing ponds will contain all surface water.
• Washed placer tailings will be returned to mining areas or used on access roads.
• Mining area and campsite will be kept neat and orderly.
• Trees which do not need to be removed for mining purpose will be left.
• The area will be monitored to be sure that noxious weeds do not become established.
• Identified cultural sites will be protected.
• Waste petroleum products will removed in original containers and disposed of at an appropriate dump site off NFS lands.
• Absorbent material will be kept onsite in case of small leaks or spills.
• Contaminated soil will be excavated to the saturation level, then removed from NFS lands.

Note: Additional mitigations were attached to the Plan. This included a Fire Plan, and a Hazardous Substances Plan. Please refer to the Plan of Operations for these additional mitigations.
Struggling Lode
and
French Gulch Placer/Lode
**Tough Luck Charley**

**Claim Description**

The Tough Luck Charlie placer Plan of Operations proposes placer operations on two mining claims, Tough Luck Charlie and Tough Luck Charlie #2. The operation is located along Bridge Creek, approximately two miles northeast of Phillips Reservoir.

Access is by County Road 722 (Old Auburn Road) which changes to FSR 7220 at the forest boundary. Continue west on FSR 7220 to the intersection of FSR 7240, just east of Bridge Creek. At Bridge Creek FSR 7240-080 intersects 7240. The 080 road heads north and enters the claim boundary just off the 7240 road and the proposed operations will be on both sides of the 080 road. A decommissioned road on the east side of 080 road will be reopened and two fords (one new) will be used access the west side of Bridge Creek.

Access to the mining area west of Bridge Creek on the north end of the operating area is across a ford and will require cross country travel from processing area.

A new road will be constructed to access the south processing site between the 080 road and Bridge Creek.

The legal location of the operation is T.10S, 38 E, and Sections 2 and 11 of the WM.

**Existing Condition**

There is very little evidence of past mining within the proposed work area for Tough Luck Charley. A trench that may be the result of historic hydraulic mining is located near the North Processing site and a small (10’x10’) dry pond is also at this site. One existing road, 7240-080, runs through the center of the operating area and a few road templates from previous logging are evident. These road templates have restored themselves naturally, pine and fir trees have reestablished over the footprint of the road. The 080 road fords Bridge Creek within the work area.
Recent Activity

Other than recent exploratory activity completed in 2017 where two test sites were excavated, there has been no activity within the proposed work area. BLM records (LR2000) indicate a mining claim (Leftovers #2) was filed in this area in 1982 but there is no record of any mining activity proposed or authorized for this claim. The claim was abandoned and closed in 1988.

Plan of Operations (November 9, 2016)

The proposed duration of this Plan of Operation is 10 years.

The operator is proposing to test/mine 20 acres of placer gravels. Initially, testing will involve excavations 10’x 20’-30’ and 6’-10’ deep. Only two test holes will be open at any given time. The areas where values are not economic will be reclaimed and no further disturbance will take place. If this testing indicates a minable deposit, mine areas will be expanded to ¼ acre. Only one of these ¼ acre parcels will be open at any given time.

A backhoe or mini excavator will be used periodically to excavate placer gravels for processing using a small wash plant. As the operations progress, a larger trommel will be utilized which can be fed using the backhoe or excavator at the rate of approximately 5-10 yards an hour. Pay gravel will be hauled either by backhoe or a 5-ton dump truck to the wash plant.

Two processing sites will be constructed along the 080 road, one on the north end of the operations and the other on the south end. At the north processing site one existing settling pond will be used and another new pond will be constructed. Each new pond constructed for the two process sites will be 20’x 12’x 4’-5’ deep. A clean water holding pond will also be constructed 15’x 25’x 8’ off channel and supply 5000 gal per day at each site. Processing water will be pumped into the processing ponds. Vegetation (including trees less than 14”) will be removed from work sites, the south processing site, and the decommissioned road that accesses work area east of the 080 road.

Equipment proposed in the operations includes 4-wheel drive pickups, ATV’s, backhoe, mini-excavator, trommel, water pumps, and a 5-yard dump truck. Self-contained travel trailers will be used as living quarters during the operating season.

Mitigation & Monitoring identified by the miner in the Plan

- All mining sites will be at least 25 feet from the top of the Bridge Creek stream bank.
- Washed gravel, or like material from old tailing piles, will be returned to excavations on a continuous basis.
- Slimes from settling ponds will be dried, stockpiled next to settling ponds, and used as a growth medium for areas without topsoil.
- Process water will be recycled with no discharge.
- Topsoil or growth medium will be retained onsite and placed over the surface of excavations after washed gravel is placed in the hole.
- Only two test holes will be open at any given time.
- On the west side of Bridge Creek, just south of the north processing site, only one test hole will be open at a time and reclaimed before moving to the next site.
- Refuse and garbage left from previous operations will be removed to a land fill.
• Mined areas will be returned to near normal contours and seeded using a seed mix free of noxious weeds.
• During seasonal closures, settling ponds will be left dry or nearly dry.
• Garbage will be removed regularly from NFS lands.
• Washed gravel, or like material from old tailing piles, will be placed on mine access roads as needed.
• The camp site, test/mining sites, and processing sites will be kept neat and orderly.
• The new ford constructed near the north processing site will have the approaches rocked.
• The area will be monitored for noxious weeds.
• Areas of cultural resources will be protected.
• No hazardous substances or chemicals will be used other than petroleum products.
• Waste petroleum products will be removed in original containers and disposed of at an appropriate dump site off NFS lands.
• Absorbent material will be kept onsite in case of small leaks or spills. Contaminated soil will be removed from NFS lands.
• If down wood is available, it will be placed over the reclaimed test/mining sites to help hold the soil.
• All trailers and equipment will be removed at the end of each season. Nothing will be left onsite over the winter.
• At the end of operations, off channel ponds that hold water year around will be left.
• Settling ponds will be reclaimed to normal land contours.
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