

**Administrative Determination (AD)**  
**Documentation of Land Use Plan Conformance and NEPA Adequacy (DNA)**  
U.S. Department of the Interior - Bureau of Land Management  
Anchorage Field Office

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**A. BLM Office:** Anchorage Field Office      **Lease/Serial Case File No.:** AA-079947

**Proposed Action Title/Type:** Mining Plan of Operations

**Location of Proposed Action:** Nixon Fork Mine – T. 26 N., R. 21 E., Sections 12, 13, 24 and 25, and T. 26 S., R. 22 E., Sections 7, 8, 17, 18, 19 and 20, K.R.M.

**Description of the Proposed Action**

The operator plans to conduct exploration work above and below ground. The above ground work consists of core drilling and trenching, and road and trail building affecting approximately 6.8 acres. Underground exploration consists of approximately 450 meters of developmental tunneling to connect the two underground mines and an additional 60 meters of tunneling for drill stations to be used for exploration and developmental drilling.

**Applicant (if any):** Mystery Creek Resources Inc.

**B. Conformance with the Land Use Plan (LUP) and Consistency with Related Subordinate Implementation Plans**

This proposal is consistent with the Southwest Management Framework Plan Objective M-2 - "Provide opportunities for the development of locatable minerals throughout the planning area."

**C. Identify applicable NEPA documents and other related documents that cover the Proposed Action.**

The environmental assessment (EA - 040-0012) prepared on March 13, 1990 analyzed the impacts of exploratory drilling and trenching at the Nixon Fork Mine in 1990. A copy of this E.A. is available for review in mining case file AA-079947, Nixon Fork Mine.

**D. NEPA Adequacy Criteria**

**1. Is the current Proposed Action substantially the same action (or is a part of that action) as previously analyzed? Is the current Proposed Action located at a site specifically analyzed in an existing document?**

The 2003 proposed action is almost identical in scope and location to the 1990 proposed action analyzed in EA - 040-0012.

2. **Is the range of alternatives analyzed in the existing NEPA document(s) appropriate with respect to the current Proposed Action, given current environmental concerns, interests, and resource values?**

Yes, the range of alternatives is essentially the same. However, increasing the length of the airstrip and constructing a base camp, as proposed in the 1990 EA is no longer an alternative to be analyzed since the airstrip and camp have already been constructed to support mining operations since 1990.

3. **Is the existing analysis valid in light of any new information or circumstances?**

Yes, it is valid because nothing new is being proposed with the exception of some underground work, which will have no affect on surface management concerns. Critical elements that did not require review in the 1990 EA or were otherwise not addressed have been reviewed, analyzed and found to be unaffected by the 2003 proposed action. These include Wetland/Riparian Zones, Native American Religious Concerns, Areas of Critical Environmental Concern, Air Quality, Invasive, Non-Native Species, Environmental Justice and Floodplains.

4. **Do the methodology and analytical approach used in the existing NEPA document(s) continue to be appropriate for the current Proposed Action?**

Yes, the methodology and analytical approach continue to be appropriate since the exploration program for 2003 is nearly identical to the exploration portion of the 1990 EA.

5. **Are the direct and indirect impacts of the current Proposed Action substantially unchanged from those identified in the existing NEPA document(s)? Does the existing NEPA document analyze site-specific impacts related to the current Proposed Action?**

Yes, direct and indirect impacts will be the same because the camp and airstrip construction proposed in the 1990 EA is now in place. Even though an additional 7.1 acres will be disturbed in 2003, the final impacts will be the same. The existing EA does analyze site-specific impacts in the area of surface drilling, trenching and road construction.

6. **Are the cumulative impacts that would result from implementation of the current Proposed Action substantially unchanged from those analyzed in the existing NEPA document(s)?**

Yes, the cumulative impacts will be essentially unchanged even though an additional 7.1 acres are being disturbed. Acres disturbed in 1990 have been reclaimed and offset the additional acreage disturbed in 2003.



### Conditions of Operation

#### General Conditions

1. All operations will be conducted under the requirements of State and/or Federal laws and regulations pertaining to solid waste management; domestic waste water treatment and discharge; hazardous material management; protection of cultural resources and values; fish, game and material use, and surface reclamation.
2. The applicant will maintain the operations area in a clean and orderly fashion at all times.
3. Only the minimum amount of land necessary for the exploration activities will be disturbed at any one time. Any affected land unnecessary to support the exploration program will be reclaimed within the season of disturbance.
4. All trench overburden stockpiles will be stabilized and steps taken to minimize material loss through erosion.
5. The applicant will restrict its overland operations of heavy equipment to those necessary to support the exploration program. Equipment transported to trench and drill sites will be operated in a 'blades up' configuration. No road or trail construction, or blading of drill sites, will be permitted except as detailed in the plan of explorations (APMA 90941). Any long distance cross country moves of heavy equipment will require approval by the Authorized Officer.
6. Timber use will be restricted to that necessary to support the exploration program and temporary occupancy.
7. Residence is restricted to the period of active exploration. Residency will not be used to support recreational or commercial use of resources by the applicant or the general public without further permitting by BLM.
8. Reclamation will be designed to reintegrate disturbed sites into the surrounding environment. Artificial seeding and fertilization will be used to speed revegetation and disturbed sites.
9. Complete reclamation of all disturbed areas, including camps and support facilities will be required at the conclusion of all exploration activities. Seasonal clean ups and the closing and winterizing of the camp will be required.
10. No equipment necessary for the final reclamation of disturbed sites will be removed from the area of the claims until reclamation work receives the final written approval of the authorized representatives.

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11. The operation site and all support facilities will be open for inspection by the Authorized Officer or his/her representative.

Program Specific Conditions

1. Topography - Any modification to relief or topography due to exploration will be leveled and reshaped to a natural contour during the reclamation process.
2. Soils - All stripped vegetation and topsoil will be segregated and retained for reclamation during trenching operations. Soils will be returned to their natural state of productivity by resspreading topsoil and the organic mat over disturbance sites upon reclamation and reseeded and fertilizing disturbance sites to speed revegetation.
3. Hydrology and water resources - Trenching operations will be conducted to prevent excessive channeling of surface water flow or discharge of erosion sediment into streams or natural channels.
4. Visual Resources - Reclamation will be designed to minimize visual impacts of disturbed areas. Revegetation will be required as soon as possible following disturbance.
5. Vegetation - Artificial seeding will be applied to hasten revegetation. Species composition will conform to that recommended by the USDA Plant Material Center in Palmer, Alaska.
6. Wildlife - The applicant will not harass or entice wildlife, including feeding. Any conflicts with wildlife will be immediately reported to the Wildlife Protection Officer in McGrath, and BLM in Anchorage.
7. Fish - Federal and State water quality standards will be complied with concerning exploration activities and camp operations.
8. Threatened and Endangered Species - No special conditions required.
9. Recreation and Access - No special conditions required.
10. Subsistence - No restrictions on subsistence use will be permitted.
11. Cultural/paleontological Resources - If any significant resources are discovered during operations, BLM will be immediately notified and appropriate measures will be taken to avoid or mitigate impacts to such resources.
12. Socioeconomic Resource - No specific conditions are required.