



UNITED STATES ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY
REGION IX
75 Hawthorne Street
San Francisco, CA 94105-3901

October 20, 2021

Gay Baxter
Salmon River Ranger District
Klamath National Forest
11263 N. Highway 3
Fort Jones, California 96032

Subject: EPA Comments on the Draft Environmental Assessment for the Discovery Day Mine, Siskiyou County, California

Dear Gay Baxter:

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency has reviewed the above-referenced document pursuant to the National Environmental Policy Act, Council on Environmental Quality regulations (40 CFR Parts 1500-1508), and our NEPA review authority under Section 309 of the Clean Air Act.

Discovery Day Mine, LLC proposes modifications to an approved Plan of Operations as an exploratory effort that would expand upon known areas of gold mineralization and reactivate mining at the established mine site on National Forest Service land approximately 3 miles east of Forks of Salmon in Siskiyou County, California. While the proposed activities would utilize existing infrastructure and remain within the existing disturbance footprint, the proposed project would be located within lands that contain Late Successional Reserves and Key Watershed designations and are proximal to the South Fork of the Salmon River, a designated recreational segment of the Wild and Scenic Rivers System (p. 4). The Draft Environmental Assessment analyzes the potential environmental impacts that would result from reinitiation of mining over 10 years and evaluates a no action and the proposed action.

The EPA appreciates that additional development at any of the exploration sites analyzed in the Draft EA is dependent upon exploratory findings and may be in initial planning stages (p. 12). As such, we encourage the Forest Service to involve the EPA in early NEPA coordination for additional project permitting and review processes.

The Draft EA also states that the Forest Service consulted with Federal, State, tribal and local agencies during the development of the Draft EA, but does not indicate which tribes were contacted, when contact was initiated, or if any responses were received (Appendix A, p. 6). We encourage the Forest Service to attempt further engagement with regional and local tribes prior to the determination of a FONSI and summarize the results of tribal consultation, identify the main concerns expressed by tribes (if any), and how those concerns were addressed. The EPA is available to help identify tribal contacts, if needed.

Thank you for the opportunity to review this Draft EA. When the Final EA and Finding of No Significant Impact are available, please email the documents to dailey.hannah@epa.gov. If you have any questions, please contact me at 415-947-4167, or Hannah Dailey, the lead reviewer for this project at 415-972-3832

Sincerely,

Jean Prijatel
Manager, Environmental Review Branch