

**DECISION RECORD  
and  
FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT**

I. Decision:

It is my decision to authorize the Proposed Action. The action involves survey work and test drilling on the public lands to determine whether the site has the potential to be a tailing and waste rock collection area. This will involve survey for and access to four monitoring wells and up to 30 condemnation holes in Sections 5, 6, 7, 8, 17, and 18, T. 22 N., R. 48 W. and Sections 1, 12, and 13 of T. 22 N., R. 49 W., Seward Meridian. The approximate acreage disturbance totals 41.1 acres. The mitigation measures adopted from the EA are listed below as stipulations and attached to the permit.

II. Rationale for the Decision:

The decision was made in support of the need to identify tailing and waste rock collection sites of the proposed Donlin Creek Gold Mine. The decision affects lands included in the Southwest Planning Area Management Framework Plan (MFP), signed November 1981. The Southwest MFP Mineral Objective, M-2, states the BLM will “provide opportunities for development of locatable minerals throughout the planning area.”

III. Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI):

Based on the analysis of potential environmental impacts contained in the attached environmental assessment, I have determined that impacts are not expected to be significant and an environmental impact statement is not required.

IV. ANILCA Section 810 Compliance:

The decision will not significantly restrict subsistence uses, decrease the abundance of subsistence resources, alter the distribution of subsistence resources, or limit subsistence user access from currently existing conditions. No further analysis is necessary at this time.

V. Adverse Energy Impact Compliance:

This action has been analyzed as required by Washington Office Instruction Memorandum 2002-053 to determine if it will cause an adverse impact on energy development. The action will not have an adverse direct or indirect impact on energy development, production or distribution. The preparation of a Statement of Adverse Energy Impact is not required.

Clinton E. Hanson, Acting  
Anchorage Field Manager

12-19-03  
Date

Stipulations

1. On survey lines, minimize tree and brush cutting by merely limbing or detouring around trees and brush to obtain the sight lines necessary for survey; limiting clearing to the least extent possible. Cut brush shall be scattered throughout the project area.
2. On slopes 30% or steeper or in areas of thick vegetation, foot travel shall be used instead of ATV/tracked vehicles.
3. For access to monitoring wells throughout all seasons, fire arresters are required on vehicle exhaust systems and fire fighting equipment (shovel, bucket, and ax) shall be present on the vehicle during fire seasons.
4. Drill pad clearings shall be limited to 70 feet in diameter, as proposed. Minimal removal of vegetation and blading of soil shall occur on the pads.
5. Only one main access route to and from each exploration site will be developed and vehicular traffic shall be kept to a minimum, using only the established routes. These routes shall be closed for all purposes other than this project. Contractors and employees of the mining operation are not allowed to sport or subsistence hunt in the area or access to the adjacent hunting areas from through this project area.
6. Where feasible, access roads are to be located on ridge tops where vegetation is less.
7. Stream crossings with drilling equipment and other vehicles, including ATV's, requires a State permit. Stream crossings should be avoided with all vehicles, however, if a stream must be crossed with vehicles, sufficient snow cover and the soils in the riparian zone must be frozen to a depth that will support the weight of the vehicle and keep the vehicle out of and above the stream bottom. Streams should not be crossed in summer months or when the ground has less than sufficient snow cover and is not frozen to a sufficient depth.
8. For the entire project area, BLM requires the ground to be frozen deep enough to support all vehicles (heavy and light) from breaking through.
9. Heavy equipment travel on slopes over 30% is prohibited.
10. No cut and fill activities are allowed.
11. No surface disturbance, other than the act of drilling the condemnation holes and monitoring wells shall occur.
12. To avoid increased damage to soil and the vegetative mat, tracked vehicles shall make

gradual turns instead of locking one track and spinning the vehicle around in one spot.

13. Placer Dome U.S. Inc. should prepare and follow a spill prevention and response plan, to include a Spill Prevention, Control, and Countermeasure Plan (SPCCP), if required. Each vehicle traversing the area should carry an adequate spill response kit, and each work site should also have appropriate spill response kits on hand. Workers should be trained to the worker protection standards described in 29 CFR 1910.120(q), be trained to properly maintain the equipment to prevent spills from happening to the maximum extent possible, and to properly cleanup spills that do accidentally occur. Human waste should be either bagged and backhauled to a proper disposal point, or pit privies established in accordance with State of Alaska regulations should be constructed on-site. Trash/refuse should be collected and backhauled to a proper disposal point.

Wastewater disposal must comply with Title 18 Alaska Administrative Code, Chapter 72 (18 AAC 72, excerpts attached); fuel discharge or releasing must comply with Title 18 Alaska Administrative Code, Chapter 75 (18 AAC 75, excerpts attached).

14. Where feasible, drill cuttings shall be placed back into the condemnation holes. Where this is not feasible at certain condemnation holes and at the monitoring wells, the cuttings shall be spread along the drill path, access roads, and adjacent areas to no more than 1½ inches in depth.
15. The disturbed areas may require seeding to reestablish vegetation. Determination for seeding would be made upon inspection of the completed project.
16. BLM requests data concerning monitoring wells on public lands, including but not limited to, well driller field notes, inspecting technician field notes, and laboratory results of water quality analysis. BLM also reserves the right to conduct field surveys utilizing monitoring wells on public lands by BLM officials. This information will be available to the public on request as per The Freedom of Information Act, 5 U.S.C. § 552, As Amended by Public Law No. 104-231, 110 Stat. 3048.
17. Alaska Statute 41.08, Alaska Department of Natural Resources, Alaska Hydrologic Survey is specifically charged with the collection, recording, evaluation, and distribution of data on the quantity, location, and quality of water of the State in the ground and surface of the ground. This statute also requires water well drilling contractors to file basic water and aquifer data, including but not limited to well location, estimated elevation, well drillers logs, pumping test and flow measurements, and water quality determinations.

Excerpts: Title 18 Alaska Administrative Code, Chapter 72  
and  
Title 18 Alaska Administrative Code, Chapter 75

18 AAC 72.030. PIT PRIVIES. A person may install a pit privy if the pit privy meets the separation distance requirements in 18 AAC 72.020(b), (c), and (i). A person may not dispose of gray water in a pit privy. (Eff.4/1/99, Register 149)

18 AAC 72.020. SEPARATION DISTANCES

(b) The minimum separation distance between the mean annual high water level of a lake, river, stream, spring, or slough, or the mean higher high water level of coastal waters, and a lift station, holding tank, septic tank, soil absorption system, seepage pit, pit privy, or other wastewater collection, treatment, or disposal system is 100 feet, measured horizontally.

I. Except as otherwise provided in this section, the minimum separation distance between the source of the drinking water for a private water system and a

(1) domestic wastewater treatment works, onsite disposal system, pit privy, sewer manhole and lift station, or sewer cleanout is 100 feet, measured from the nearest edge of the treatment works, disposal system, pit privy, manhole, lift station, or cleanout to the private drinking water source;

(2) community sewer line, holding tank, sanitary landfill, industrial discharge line, or other potential source of contamination, such as domestic animal or agricultural waste, is 75 feet, measured from the nearest edge of the community sewer line, holding tank, sanitary landfill, industrial discharge line, or other potential source of contamination to the private drinking water source; or

(3) private sewer line, petroleum lines and storage tanks, or drinking water treatment wastes, such as backwash water from filters and water softeners and reject water from reverse osmosis units, is 25 feet; the minimum separation distance for petroleum storage tanks does not apply to

(A) tanks that contain propane; or

(B) above-ground storage tanks or drums that, in the aggregate, have a storage capacity of less than 500 gallons of petroleum products, and that store only petroleum products necessary for the operation and maintenance of pumps, power generation systems, or heating systems associated with a potable water well or other potable water source; for purposes of this subparagraph, "petroleum products" refers to fuel and lubricants.

(i) A person may not install a pit privy in an area subject to flooding. The vertical separation between the lowest point of a pit privy and the water table, measured during the season of the year with maximum water table elevation, must be at least four feet.

18 AAC 75.300. DISCHARGE OR RELEASE NOTIFICATION; REPORTING REQUIREMENTS.

(a) Subject to (b) of this section, a person in charge of a facility or operation shall notify the department by telephone, and immediately afterwards send the department a written notice by facsimile, hand delivery, or first class mail, informing the department about a discharge or release of a hazardous substance at or from the facility or operation as follows:

- (1) as soon as the person has knowledge of a
  - (A) discharge or release of a hazardous substance other than oil;
  - (B) discharge or release of oil to water; or
  - (C) discharge or release, including a cumulative discharge or release, of oil in excess of 55 gallons solely to land outside an impermeable secondary containment area or structure; and

- (2) within 48 hours after the person has knowledge of a discharge or release, including a cumulative discharge, of oil solely to land

- (A) in excess of 10 gallons, but 55 gallons or less; or
- (B) in excess of 55 gallons, if the discharge or release is the result of the escape or release of oil from its original storage tank, pipeline, or other immediate container into an impermeable secondary containment area or structure.

(b) A person in charge of a facility or operation shall maintain, and provide to the department monthly, a written record of each discharge or release, including a cumulative discharge or release, of one gallon to 10 gallons of oil solely to land.

(c) If a person in charge of a facility or operation has entered into an agreement with the department, as provided under AS 46.03.755(b) or AS 46.09.010(b), for the periodic reporting of a discharge or release of a hazardous substance, the terms of the agreement replace the applicable requirements of this section for the hazardous substance.

(d) After receiving notice of a discharge or release under (a) of this section, and until containment and cleanup are completed, the department will require interim reports as the department considers necessary to ascertain any threat to human health, safety, or welfare, or to the environment.

(e) Unless the department determines that a written report is not needed for the department to ascertain any threat to human health, safety, or welfare, or to the environment, a written report must be submitted to the department within 15 days after containment and cleanup are completed or, if no cleanup occurs, within 15 days after the discharge or release. The report must be submitted to the department's Anchorage, Fairbanks, or Juneau office, whichever is nearest to the location of the discharge, unless the department specifies otherwise. The report must contain the information specified in (f) of this section.

- (f) A report, record, or notification required by this section must contain, as applicable,
- (1) the date and time of the discharge or release;
  - (2) the location of the discharge or release;
  - (3) the name of the facility or operation;
  - (4) the name, mailing address, and telephone number of
    - (A) each responsible person; and
    - (B) the owner and the operator of the facility or operation;
  - (5) the type and amount of each hazardous substance discharged or released;
  - (6) factors that caused or contributed to the discharge or release;
  - (7) a description of any environmental effects of the discharge or release, or the containment and cleanup, to the extent those effects can be identified;
  - (8) a description of the containment or cleanup action taken;
  - (9) the estimated amount of
    - (A) hazardous substance cleaned up; and
    - (B) hazardous waste generated;
  - (10) the date and method of disposal or treatment of the hazardous substance, contaminated equipment, contaminated materials, contaminated soil, and contaminated water;
  - (11) a description of actions being taken to prevent another discharge or release; and
  - (12) other information that the department requires to fully assess the cause and impact of the discharge or release, including any sampling reports and a description and estimate of any remaining contamination.