



File Code: 1950

Date: December 11, 2008

Dear Friends of Chugach National Forest,

Hope Mining Company (HMC) has submitted a supplemental mining plan of operations for Areas 5A, 19 and 20A along Resurrection Creek on the Seward Ranger District near Hope, AK. The Forest Service, Chugach National Forest, Seward Ranger District is conducting environmental analyses for the proposed action and is providing an opportunity to comment.

Background

The Forest Service has a regulatory obligation to process, and modify and/or approve the operator's use of surface resources in the supplemental mining plan of operations (36 CFR § 228.5). In addition, the Forest Service has a responsibility to approve or require modifications to the supplemental mining plan of operations in accordance with federal and state laws and regulations.

Mining claim holders on National Forest System Lands have certain rights related to their claims. Mining claim holders generally have the right to:

- (1) occupancy and the use necessary for prospecting, mining, and processing;
- (2) reasonable access for purposes of prospecting, locating, and mining; and,
- (3) use timber from the claims for mining purposes and necessary clearing

Proposed Action

The Proposed Action is the supplemental mining plan of operations submitted for mining operations in Areas 5A, 19 and 20A and a proposed area for interpreting mining history. The proposed mining activities are separate from those proposed in conjunction with the Resurrection Creek Restoration Project Phase II.

Location

The project area is located on the west side of Resurrection Creek Road at approximately milepost three. The legal land description of the project area is Sections 9 and 16, Township 9 North, Range 2 West, Seward Meridian. Access to the mining claims would be from Resurrection Creek Road and from the existing roads within the mining claims. No new roads will be constructed. See the attached map for more details.

Claims

Proposed mining operations would occur in the following areas and claims:

- Area 5A: Frances Jane, Bonanza, Little Nell, Whitestocking
- Area 19: Cottonwood, Bob Mathison, Independence, and Hope Mining Company No. 1
- Area 20A: Bonanza, Frances Jane



Operations

- **Area 5A (11.1 acres):** In a 1986 decision, 3.5 acres of mechanized placer mining was approved in area 5 and is currently being mined. The proposed action would increase the acreage by 11.1 acres for a total of 14.6 acres. The operator prepared most of the 11.1 acres for mining, but further activities have been suspended pending analysis and issuance of a new decision.

Operations consist of mechanized placer mining including use of a D-8 or D-9 dozer, excavator, loader, wash/shaker or trammel plant with sluice, pickups and ATV's. Larger trees and boulders would be stockpiled for reclamation or future restoration projects. Gravels would be excavated in successive parallel cuts with tailings filling in the previous cut so a maximum of ½ acre would be an open trench at any one time. Dimensions of an open trench would be 15 feet deep, 50 feet wide and up to 500 feet in length. At the end of mining this area, tailings would be re-contoured and stockpiled tree trunks, stumps, and soil would be redistributed.

Area 19 (8.5 acres): Area 19 is located adjacent to Resurrection Creek Road. The operator proposes a 20 foot buffer of trees and brush left along Resurrection Creek Road to obscure mining operations. Operations consist of mechanized placer mining including use of a D-8 or D-9 dozer, excavator, loader, wash/shaker or trammel plant with sluice, pickups and ATV's. Prior to mining, brush and larger trees would be cleared using an excavator and dozer. Larger trees and boulders would be stockpiled for reclamation or future restoration projects. Gravels would be excavated in successive parallel cuts with tailings filling in the previous cut so a maximum of ½ acre would be an open trench at any one time. Dimensions of an open trench would be 15 feet deep, 50 feet wide and up to 500 feet in length. At the end of mining this area, tailings would be re-contoured and stockpiled tree trunks, stumps, and soil would be redistributed. A new settling pond would be constructed for re-circulating water used in operations. The new pond would connect with a new ditch which would run the length of the mining area and would join with the existing ditch and settling pond system down stream on other HMC claims.

- **Area 20A (1 acre):** Operations consist of manual placer mining with some use of mechanized equipment, such as an excavator, dozer and Bobcat, for spreading tailings, cleaning ditches and moving boulders. Manual mining operations will include use of hand tools such as shovels, hoes, rakes, gold pans, sluice box and highbanker; as well as the use of pickups and ATV's for access. Gravels would be excavated 8 feet in depth, 100 feet in width and 200 feet in length. At the end of mining this area, tailings would be re-contoured and stockpiled tree trunks, stumps, and soil would be redistributed.

Structures

Proposed use of structures includes three existing camps and an existing cabin located along Resurrection Creek Road. In addition, temporary structures such as mobile homes or trailers would be used for housing mine personnel and will be removed after operations are complete.

Duration

The proposed action is to allow surface use of these areas for a duration of five to twenty years.

Proposed Interpretive Site

An interpretive site is proposed north of Resurrection Pass Trailhead. The purpose of this site is to interpret the mining history of the area and preserve remnants of the historic tailing piles that were left by the hydraulic mining era in the early 1900's. This site would consist of a small foot path from Resurrection Pass Trailhead winding north through the tailings piles with historic mining equipment (riveted pipe, remnant pieces of hydraulic giants, etc) placed at various locations and interpretive signing.

Decision to Be Made

The Forest Service is initiating environmental review of the proposed mining plan of operations with this scoping notice. The purpose of this scoping notice is to determine whether there are any environmental issues and concerns that warrant further analysis before any decisions are made regarding the proposed action.

Comments

The purpose of this comment period is to provide an opportunity for the public to provide meaningful input on a proposed action implementing a land and resource management plan prior to a decision by the Responsible Official. Individuals or non-federal organizations who submit written comments or otherwise express interest in this particular action during the comment period specified at 36CFR 215.6 have standing to appeal this decision.

Written, oral and electronic comments concerning this action will be accepted for 30 calendar days following the publications of a legal notice in the Anchorage Daily News, the newspaper of record for the Chugach National Forest. The publication date in this newspaper is the exclusive means for calculating the comment period for this analysis. Publication is scheduled for December 10, 2008. Those wishing to comment should not rely upon dates or timeframe information provided by any other source.

It is the responsibility of persons providing comments to submit them by the close of the comment period. Persons submitting comments must provide the following information:

1. Name and Address, (telephone number if possible);
2. Title of the proposed action: Hope Mining Co Area 5a, 19, 20A Mining Plan of Operations;
3. Substantive comments on the proposed action, along with supporting reasons that the Responsible Official should consider in reaching a decision (36 CFR 215.2), and
4. Signature or other verification of identity upon request; identification of the individual or organization who authored the comment(s) is necessary for appeal eligibility. An electronic username is insufficient for electronic comment submittals. Scanned electronic signatures will be accepted.

Comments must be sent to the Responsible Official at the following address:

Seward Ranger District
Attn: Seward District Ranger
P.O. Box 390, Seward, Alaska 99664

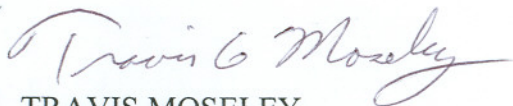
Comments may also be submitted electronically to the following e-mail address:
avillwock@fs.fed.us

Electronic comments shall be in a format that is compatible with the current version of Microsoft Word.

Hand delivered written comments will be accepted at the Seward Ranger District during normal business hours Monday through Friday, excluding holidays.

For more information please contact **Sherry Nelson at (907) 224-4114.**

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Travis C. Moseley".

TRAVIS MOSELEY
Acting Seward District Ranger

Enclosure

Proposed Mining Operation Areas

