

ITEM: 23

SUBJECT: Seneca Gold LLC, Lorrie Preim and David Preim, Seneca Mine, Plumas County

BOARD ACTION: *Consideration of new WDRs*

BACKGROUND: The 19-acre placer mine is in the remote mountains of northern Plumas County, approximately 3 air miles south of the community of Canyon Dam, CA, downstream of Lake Almanor. Mining operations will consist of the excavation of river gravels adjacent to the North Fork Feather River, which transects the property.

The active mining operations are expected to last 12 years. Vegetation will be removed, chipped and stockpiled. Topsoil will then be stripped and stockpiled near the excavation. Excavation of overburden and ore will be completed using a bucket type excavator. Excavated material will be transported by end loader to a portable gold recovery plant. The plant will use mechanical means and process water to separate heavy gold bearing minerals from the placer deposits. Makeup water will be obtained as necessary from an existing reserve pond located immediately south of the property.

No chemicals will be used in the mineral recovery system. The resulting tailings will be stockpiled for reclamation or immediately placed in the open mine pit from the previous phase for reclamation. The Operations Plan estimates that a total of 480,000 cubic yards of material will be excavated over the life of the project.

The site is periodically inaccessible during the winter due to snow. The mine plans to operate from spring to late fall as the weather and access allows, commonly from April through October. At the end of the operating season storm water erosion controls will be put in place.

ISSUES: The tentative WDRs were circulated for public comment and no comments were received during the initial comment period. However, the Board delayed consideration of the tentative WDRs while the owners of the Seneca Mine attempted to resolve a complaint by former lessees who contended that they still had a right to mine the property. Though this controversy has not been fully resolved, whatever remedy may be available to the former lessees rests in a court of law, not in the Board's permitting process.

RECOMMENDATION: Adopt the proposed order.

Mgmt. Review BJS
Legal Review PEP

4/5 June 2015
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