



DIRECTOR AND SECRETARY
TO THE COMMISSION
Michael B. Sloane

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DEPARTMENT OF GAME & FISH

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30 May 2024

Kevin Barnes, Permit Lead
Mining Act Reclamation Program
Mining and Minerals Division (MMD)
1220 South St. Francis Drive
Santa Fe, NM 87505

RE: *New Minimal Impact Mining Permit Application, Chloride North Face Placer No. 1, Permit No. SI060EM; NMDGF No. NMERT-3453.*

Dear Mr. Barnes,

The New Mexico Department of Game and Fish (Department) has reviewed the above referenced minimal impact mining permit, submitted by Mitchell Vokaty (Operator). The proposed project site is in Sierra County in Section 19, Township 11S, Range 8W. The Operator will excavate all material to be processed from the dry sediment bed of Chloride Creek and will not disturb any riparian vegetation. Excavated sediment will be separated using water in a recirculating, closed loop system utilizing a 20 X 20 foot, lined pond. The total area that will be disturbed by the proposed mining activities is approximately 0.5 acres. Staff from the Department, MMD, U.S. Forest Service (USFS), and the Operator conducted a site inspection on 22 May 2024.

During the site inspection, Department staff scanned nearby cliffs for active raptor nests that could potentially be disturbed by mining activities; none were observed. Provided that the Operator adheres to the best management practices stipulated in the Plan of Operations and those discussed during the site inspection regarding potential monsoon flood events, the Department does not anticipate any significant adverse impacts to wildlife or associated riparian habitat.

The Department requests that the Mining and Energy Habitat Specialist be given an opportunity to review the finally approved MMD/USFS native seed mix that will be used to reclaim the camping and equipment lay down areas. The Department also recommends that any alternate seeds used to substitute for primary plant species that are unavailable at the time of reclamation should also be native. When possible, the Department recommends using seeds that are sourced from the same region and habitat type as the reclamation site and suggests including seeds from a region that represents potential future climatic conditions at the site.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the proposed minimal impact mining permit. If you have any questions, please contact Ron Kellermueller, Mining and Energy Habitat Specialist, at (505) 270-6612 or ronald.kellermueller@dof.nm.gov.

Sincerely,

Virginia Seamster, Ph.D.
Assistant Chief for Technical Guidance

cc: USFWS NMES Field Office