



DIRECTOR AND SECRETARY
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DEPARTMENT OF GAME & FISH

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3 September 2024

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

RE: Minimal Impact Exploration Application, Creek Tunnel Mine, Taos County, New Mexico, Permit No. TA029EM; NMDGF Project No. NMERT-3722.

Dear Ms. Osimowicz,

The New Mexico Department of Game and Fish (Department) has reviewed the above referenced minimal impact exploration project. Steven Jackman (Operator) is proposing to excavate an old mine adit and conduct gold exploration activities. The project activities are not anticipated to create more than one acre of disturbance. Staff from the Department, MMD, New Mexico Environment Department (NMED), and U.S. Forest Service and the Operator conducted a site inspection on 27 August 2024.

Department staff observed that the old mine adit had been excavated and a stable entranceway had been constructed with heavy timbers. Recent landslides above the mine adit have created a nearly-vertical wall of topsoil that is approximately 15-20 feet in height. This wall of topsoil will continue to pose a landslide hazard over time. The Department recommends that this landslide hazard be addressed through the use of an appropriate method of slope stabilization to prevent further erosion of the topsoil above the mine adit.

Water was observed flowing out of the mine adit. The Operator produced a water quality test that had been performed but these test results were very limited in scope. Iron was the only metal analyte for which tests were conducted. The Department recommends that the Operator have the mine drainage water tested for the full suite of dissolved metals for which there are applicable New Mexico Water Quality Control Commission standards, which are stipulated and approved by NMED, and that could potentially exceed such standards at the site. If the mine drainage water quality is determined to be safe for wildlife, the Department does not anticipate any significant impacts to wildlife or wildlife habitat from the proposed exploration project.

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

Sincerely,

Virginia Seamster, Ph.D.
Assistant Chief for Technical Guidance, Ecological and Environmental Planning Section
cc: USFWS NMES Field Office