

Sec. 7, lots 5 thru 7, lot 8 (N<sup>1</sup>/<sub>2</sub>), lots 9 thru 12, lot 13 (N<sup>1</sup>/<sub>2</sub> and SE<sup>1</sup>/<sub>4</sub>), and lot 19 (NE<sup>1</sup>/<sub>4</sub>);

Sec. 8, lots 1 thru 16;

Sec. 9, lots 3 thru 6 and 11 thru 14;

T. 43 N., R. 71 W., 6th P.M., Wyoming,

Sec. 1, lots 5 thru 15, lot 16(N<sup>1</sup>/<sub>2</sub>), lots 17 thru 19, and SE<sup>1</sup>/<sub>4</sub>NE<sup>1</sup>/<sub>4</sub>;

Sec. 12, lot 1, and lot 2 (NE<sup>1</sup>/<sub>4</sub>).

The acreage applied for in Kerr McGee's application is known as the Thundercloud tract. It is part of the Thundercloud tract described in a 1983 BLM document entitled "Powder River Coal Region Tract Summaries," which was prepared in anticipation of a Federal coal sale proposed for 1984 that did not take place.

The Jacobs Ranch Mine has an air quality permit approved by the WDEQ/AQD to mine up to 35 million tons of coal per year. According to Kerr-McGee, the additional coal reserves would extend the life of the current mining operations at the Jacobs Ranch Mine.

Kerr-McGee was previously the successful bidder on a maintenance coal lease (WYW117924, issued effective October 1, 1992) containing approximately 1,709 acres adjacent to the Jacobs Ranch Mine using the LBA process.

The Powder River Regional Coal Team reviewed both competitive lease applications at their meeting on April 23, 1996, in Cheyenne, Wyoming, and recommended that both be processed.

The FEIS analyzes three alternatives. Under the Proposed Action, the BLM would hold a separate competitive sale for each tract as applied for, and issue a lease for each tract to the successful high bidder at each sale whose bid meets or exceeds the fair market value of the Federal coal as determined by BLM. The second alternative, Alternative 1 is the No Action Alternative, which assumes that neither maintenance tract would be leased, but that existing operations at the three mines adjacent to the LBA tracts would proceed as currently permitted. Under the third alternative, Alternative 2, BLM would hold a separate competitive sale for each tract as modified by the BLM, and issue a lease for each tract to the successful high bidder at each sale whose bid meets or exceeds the fair market value of the Federal coal as determined by BLM. Alternative 2 is the preferred alternative of the BLM.

The U.S. Forest Service (USFS) is a cooperating agency in the preparation of the EIS because the surface of some of the land included in both tracts is owned by the Federal Government and administered by the USFS as part of the Thunder Basin National Grasslands. The

Office of Surface Mining Reclamation and Enforcement is also a cooperating agency in the preparation of the EIS because it is the Federal agency that would review the mining plans for the two tracts if they are leased, and recommend approval or disapproval of the mining plans to the Secretary of the Interior.

The DEIS was mailed to the public in August 1997, and the DEIS comment period extended though October 28, 1997. A public hearing was held on October 8, 1997, at the Holiday Inn in Gillette, Wyoming, pursuant to 43 CFR 3425.4. The purpose of the hearing was to receive comments on the DEIS, and on the fair market value, the maximum economic recovery, and the proposed separate competitive sales of coal from the two tracts. The ten comment letters that were received on the DEIS are included, with responses, in the FEIS.

Dated: February 5, 1998.

**Alan L. Kesterke,**

*Associate State Director.*

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## DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

### Bureau of Land Management

[NV-020-1990-01]

#### Trenton Canyon Mine Project Draft Environmental Impact Statement

**AGENCY:** Bureau of Land Management, Interior.

**ACTION:** Notice of availability of the Draft Environmental Impact Statement and the initiation of a 60-day comment period.

**SUMMARY:** Pursuant to section 102 (2) (c) of the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969, notice is given that the Winnemucca Field Office of the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) has prepared, by third party contractor, a Draft Environmental Impact Statement on Newmont Gold Company's Trenton Canyon Project. This document became available February 13, 1998, and public comment will be accepted for a 60 day period beginning then.

**DATES AND ADDRESSES:** Written comments on the Draft Environmental Impact Statement must be received by the close of business April 14, 1998, to ensure consideration. Public meetings to receive oral and written comments have been scheduled for the following dates, times, and places: March 19, 1998 at 7 p.m. at the Winnemucca Field Office, 5100 East Winnemucca Boulevard,

Winnemucca, Nevada; March 18, 1998 at 7 p.m. at the Battle Mountain Field Office, 50 Bastian Road, Battle Mountain, Nevada.

A copy of the Draft Environmental Impact Statement can be obtained from: Bureau of Land Management, Winnemucca Field Office, ATTN: Rod Herrick, Project Coordinator, 5100 E. Winnemucca Boulevard, Winnemucca, Nevada 89445.

The Draft Environmental Impact Statement is also available for inspection at the following additional locations: Bureau of Land Management, Nevada State Office, 850 Harvard Way, Reno, Nevada; Humboldt County Library, Winnemucca, Nevada; Pershing County Library, Lovelock, Nevada; Lander County Library, Battle Mountain, Nevada; and the University of Nevada Library in Reno, Nevada.

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:** Rod Herrick, Project Coordinator at the above Winnemucca Field Office address or telephone (702) 623-1500.

**SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:** The Draft Environmental Impact Statement analyzes the potential environmental impacts that could result from the implementation of the proposed mine expansion. Alternatives analyzed are partial pit backfilling, reconfiguration of waste rock disposal areas, and the no action alternative.

The mine is located on public and private lands south of Interstate Highway 80, approximately 35 miles southeast of Winnemucca, Nevada and 18 miles northwest of Battle Mountain, Nevada. Approximately 1,480 acres would be disturbed by the proposed mine expansion, of which 633 are public and 847 private. The proposed project would include expansion of the existing open pits and waste rock storage areas; development of new open pits and waste rock storage areas; development of one or two new heap leach facilities, haul roads, solution ponds, diversion channels, growth media stockpiles, exploration roads and drill sites, and other ancillary facilities; and realignment of the primary access road. Approval would extend the life of the mine to 2005 plus 3 years reclamation.

Dated: January 24, 1997.

**Ron Wenker,**

*District Manager.*

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