



File Code: 1950; 2800
Date: August 19, 2019

SCOPING NOTICE

Dear Friends and Neighbors of the Coronado National Forest:

This letter is to invite your participation in the scoping process of the Sierra Vista Ranger District environmental analysis for the proposed Sunnyside Exploration Drilling (SED) Project. This is in accordance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA; 40 CFR 1501.7). The proposed project is an activity implementing a land management plan and is subject to pre-decisional objection process (36 CFR 218 Subparts A and B).

The proposed Sunnyside Exploration Drilling Project area is located south of the Town of Patagonia, Santa Cruz County, Arizona in all or portions of Sections 31-32, Township 22S, Range 16E, and Sections 4-6, Township 23S, Range 16E, Gila and Salt River Baseline and Meridian (see Exhibit 1). The proposed Plan of Operations, summarized in the Proposed Action section below, and project area maps are available online at:

http://www.fs.fed.us/nepa/nepa_project_exp.php?project=55719

Regulations at 36 CFR 220.7 require that an Environmental Assessment (EA) be prepared for proposals as described in 36 CFR 220.4(a) that are not categorically excluded from documentation (36 CFR 220.6) and for which the need of an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) has not been determined (36 CFR 220.5). The SED Project proposal does not meet the criteria set forth in a Categorical Exclusion (CE) at 36 CFR 220.6, and the project will require further NEPA review, which the Coronado anticipates will be an EA. Based on the environmental analysis and disclosure documented in the EA, the Responsible Official would decide: 1) whether to prepare an Environmental Impact Statement, 2) whether to select the Proposed Action as proposed or modified, or as described in an alternative; 3) what mitigation measures, if needed, would be required; and 4) what monitoring, if any, would be required.

Purpose and Need for Project

The purpose of this proposed action is to authorize mineral exploration activities consistent with the statutory right of the proponent to explore for mineral resources on federally-administered lands under the General Mining Law of 1872 as amended, and with other laws and regulations and the Coronado National Forest Land and Resource Management Plan (LRMP). The Forest Service is required to respond to the proponent's submittal of a Plan of Operations (36 CFR 228.4) and to ensure operations would be conducted so as to minimize adverse environmental impacts on National Forest System surface resources (36 CFR 228.8) where feasible.

Proposed Action

Arizona Standard's proposed Sunnyside Exploration Drilling Project (SED Project) is designed to identify, locate, and delineate locatable mineral deposits, specifically by exploration drilling on National Forest System lands. The Proposed Action is for exploration work only, including drilling. No mining, milling, or permanent facilities are being proposed. Up to 30 individual drill



sites and associated sumps are proposed within three primary drill areas. During the exploration drilling, no more than two drill pads at a time would be active. Drilling would be undertaken on a 24/7 rotational work schedule with intermittent breaks, seven days a week requiring approximately 36 people per day for up to seven years. Drilling would consist of a conventional 6-inch diameter hole and would conform to Arizona Department of Water Quality (R 12-15-811, 816 and 817) regulations. Drill holes would have a maximum depth of approximately 6,500 feet from the surface.

A typical drill site would be constructed perpendicular to the road and measure approximately 100 feet long by 40 feet wide, including the area within the road prism. It is anticipated that drilling would proceed sequentially from one drill area to another rather than drilling in multiple drill areas concurrently. Access to the exploration drill areas would be from Flux Canyon Road, Forest Road 215 (FR 215), FR 812, FR 4701, and Harshaw Road. Approximately 7.8 miles of FR 215 and FR 4701 would require additional improvements including minor widening, grading and blading, and placement of road rock to armor soft areas or to fix areas with protruding rocks or large potholes that cannot be practically fixed with cut/fill from the existing road. These road segments would be upgraded to an average width of 18 feet to provide a safe travel-way surface and safely accommodate drill rigs and support vehicles. The SED Project would construct up to 0.81 miles of new temporary low standard non-system access roads using Forest Service standard road construction specifications. The total estimated area of disturbance from the construction of new roads would be approximately 1.77 acres, and the total disturbance for the entire project would be approximately 11.55 acres (see Exhibit 2).

Traffic control near each of the drill sites would include a visitor introduction sign warning of heavy equipment posted at both ends of the drill site. In addition, a safety fence would be built to separate the drill site from the traffic lane where public access is preserved and roads are not closed. For safety reasons, public access to drill sites in the project area would be limited during active drilling through the use of one or more temporary locked gates. All equipment, when not in use, would either be parked at one of the two proposed laydown yards or parked along existing roads that are locked beyond the access gate.

Two laydown yards and up to five water storage areas would need to be constructed at various locations along the proposed access roads (see Exhibit 2). A stationary pump would transport water from five 3,500-gallon central reserve storage tanks at each laydown yard to nearby drill pads and secondary storage tanks at higher elevations. Water from these secondary tanks would flow under gravity to individual drill sites via a system of water distribution hoses. The SED Project would use up to 12,500 gallons of water per day per drill rig when drilling and an estimated 2,000 gallons of additional water each day for dust control on access roads. Water needed for use in drilling the exploration drill holes would be obtained from one or more municipal water sources located outside of the Coronado National Forest and be transported in water trucks by licensed haulers to central reserve storage tanks located at each of the laydown yards.

Reclamation would include plugging and sealing drill holes in a manner consistent with State of Arizona regulation requirements (Arizona Administrative Code R12-15 and Arizona Revised Statutes Title 45, Chapter 2, Article 10) and additional surface reclamation requirements incorporated into the plan of operations (36 CFR 228.8(g)). All equipment, materials, and supplies would be removed. Disturbed areas would be re-contoured to the approximate original

contour of ground surfaces and would be seeded with a Forest Service approved certified weed-free native seed mix.

How to Comment

The Sierra Vista Ranger District is seeking public comments specific to the proposed SED Project during a 45-day scoping period starting on September 04, 2019 and ending on October 21, 2019. Your comments and concerns received during scoping will be considered during our effects analysis of the project, and help define the scope of the EA. Please make your comments as specific as possible. Comments should be within the scope of the Proposed Action, have a direct relationship to the Proposed Action, and must include supporting reasons for the Responsible Official to consider (36 CFR 218.2).

Two public scoping meetings will be hosted by the Forest Service on September 4th and 5th, 2019, using an open house forum to provide the opportunity for public involvement and input on the proposed project. The public scoping open houses will be held:

- Wednesday, September 4, 2019
5:00 p.m. – 7:30 p.m.; brief presentation at 5:30 p.m. and again at 6:30 p.m.
Patagonia Union High School Multipurpose Room
200 Naugle Ave., Patagonia, AZ 85624
- Thursday, September 5, 2019
5:00 p.m. – 7:30 p.m.; brief presentation at 5:30 p.m. and again at 6:30 p.m.
Sonoita Fairgrounds Pioneer Hall
3142 S. Highway 83, Sonoita, AZ 85637

Written comments, including attachments, may be submitted electronically using the Public Comment Form at:

<https://cara.ecosystem-management.org/Public//CommentInput?Project=55719>

Attachments should be submitted in a format such as pdf, plain text (.txt), rich text format (.rtf), or Word (.doc or .docx). Comments may also be submitted via mail or in person (Monday – Friday, 8:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., excluding Federal holidays) to:

Sierra Vista Ranger District
District Ranger, c/o Rick Goshen
4070 S. Avenida Saracino
Hereford, AZ 85615

Please state “Sunnyside Exploration Drilling” in the subject line when providing electronic comments, or on the outside of the envelope when submitting comments by mail.

Only individuals or entities (as defined by 36 CFR 218.2) who submit timely and specific written comments (as defined by 36 CFR 218.2) about this proposed project or activity, during this or another public comment period established by the Responsible Official, will be eligible to file an

objection. Other requirements to be eligible to submit an objection are defined by CFR 218.25(a)(3) and include name, postal address, title of the project, signature or other verification of identity upon request, and the identity of the individual or entity who authored the comments. Individual members of an entity must submit their own individual comments in order to have eligibility to object as an individual. A timely submission will be determined as outlined in 36 CFR 218.25(a)(4). It is the responsibility of the sender to ensure timely receipt of any comments submitted.

Comments received in response to this solicitation, including names and addresses of those who comment, will be considered part of the public record for this project and will be available for public inspection and will be released if requested, under the Freedom of Information Act. If you do not want to include personal information, you may comment anonymously, but if you do so, you will not be eligible to object to a decision.

Contact

For additional information please contact Rick Goshen, Geologist, at (520) 388-8341, richard.goshen@usda.gov.

Thank you for your interest in the Sierra Vista Ranger District.

Sincerely,



CELESTE KINSEY
District Ranger

Enclosure:

Exhibit 1 - Regional Access Road Map

Exhibit 2 - Local Access Road and Drill Areas Map

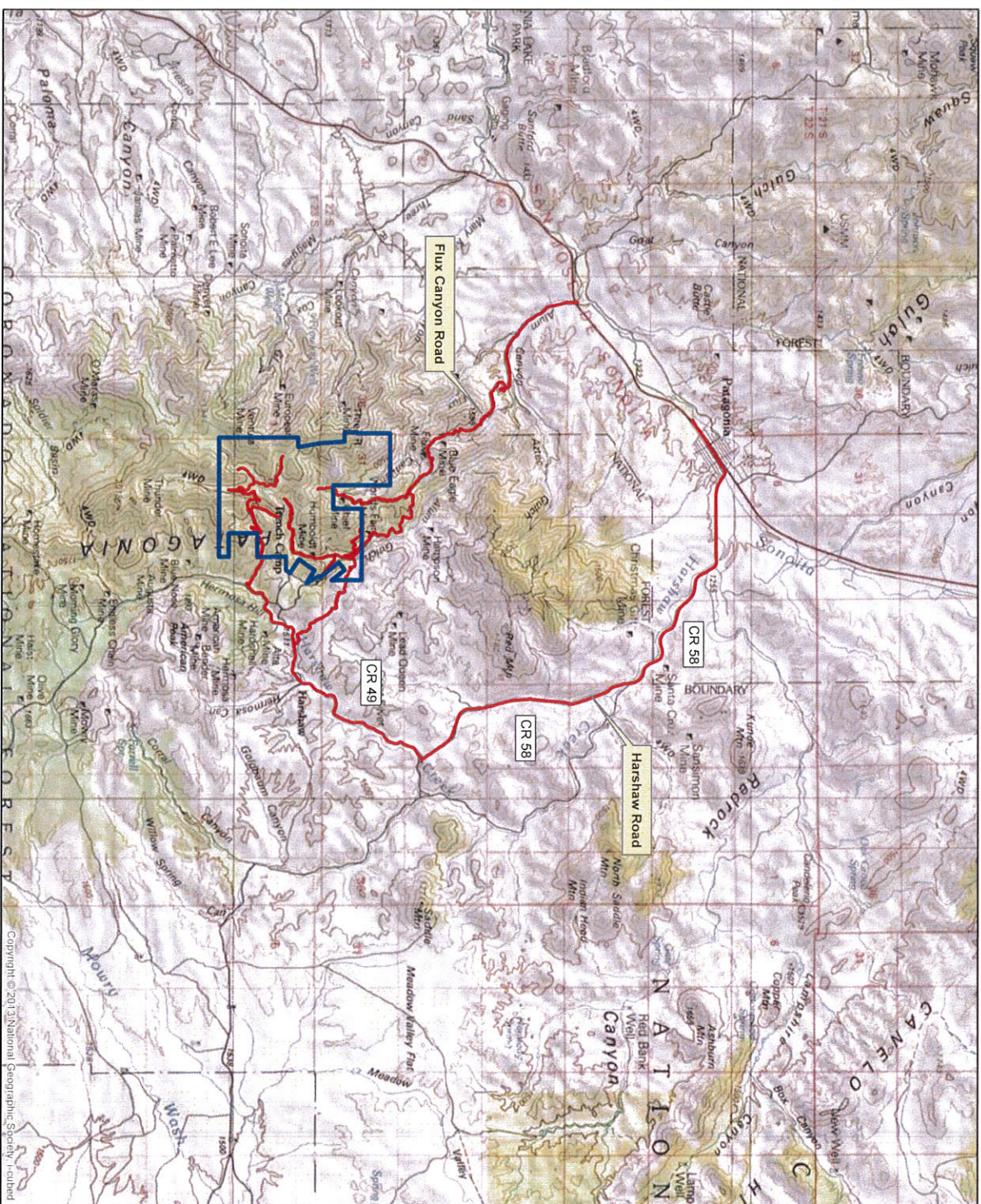


Exhibit 1: Regional Access Road Map

**Sunnyside Mineral
Exploration Project**

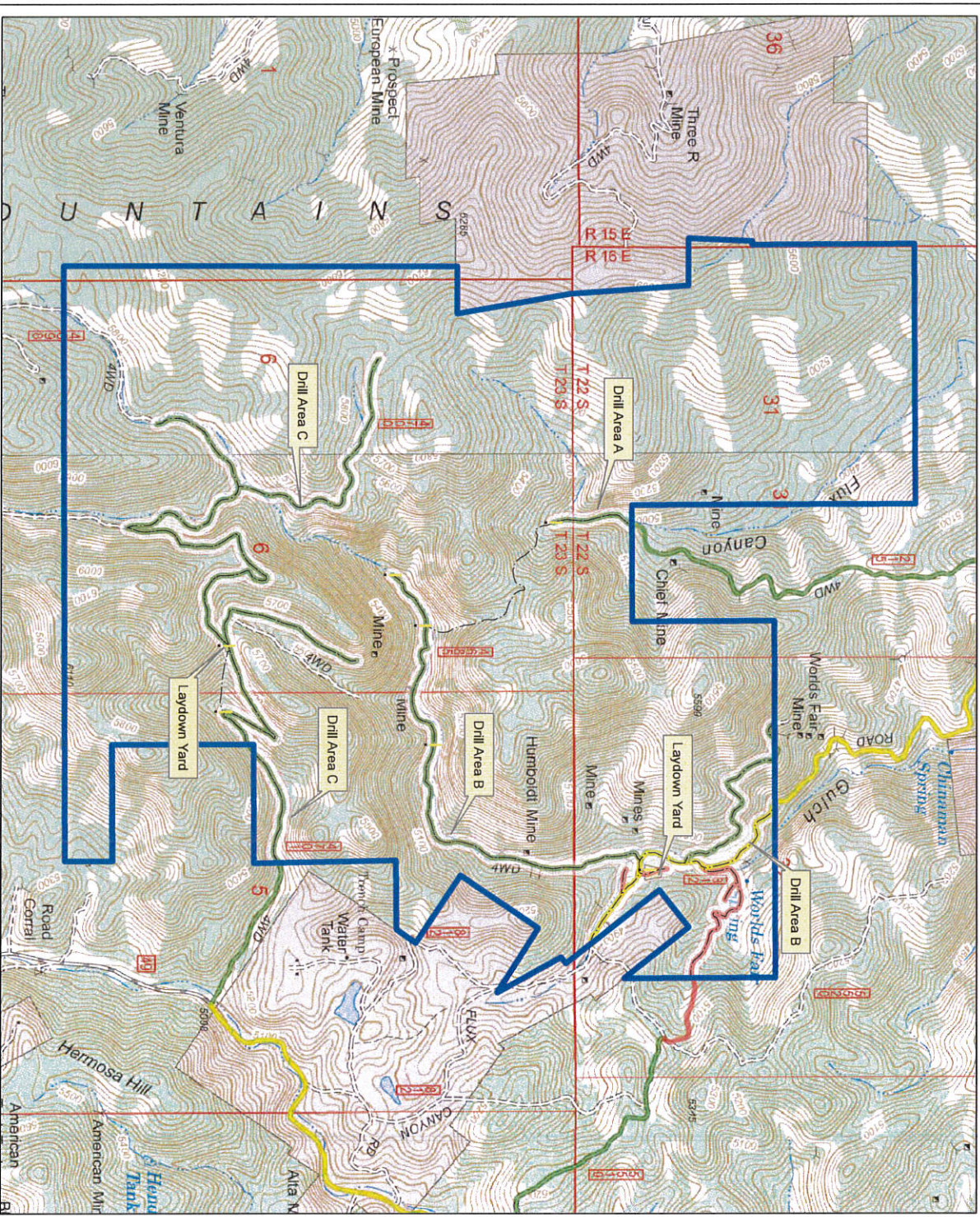
Exhibit 3

Regional Access Road Map

Source: Arizona Standard LLC, Plan of Operations
dated 9-16-2018 (revision 4)

07/28/2018

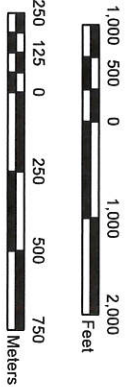
Sheet 1 of 1



LEGEND

- Claim Area Boundary
- Drill Areas
- Existing Road (No Upgrades)
- Upgraded Road
- Newly Constructed Road
- Water Tanks
- Water Lines

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Sunnyside Mineral Exploration Project

Exhibit 4

Local Access Road and Drill Areas Map
Source: Arizona Standard L.L.C. Plan of Operations
dated 5-16-2019 (revision 4)

08/03/2018

Sheet 1 of 1

Exhibit 2: Local Access and Drill Areas Map