

## Resource Protection Actions

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These actions would be taken to minimize potential negative impacts that may occur as a result of implementation of the Proposed Action. All exploration activities would be required to follow the Health and Safety Radiation Protection Guidelines for Forest Service Personnel Involved with the Administration of Uranium Exploration Operations. (The “guidelines” are currently in final review as Proposed Health and Safety Plan Amendment to Forest Service Health and Safety Handbook, FSH 6709.11, Chapter 20, Section 22.8 Minerals and Geology). Further mitigation measures may be developed to address issues raised during the analysis and/or the public involvement process. They are:

1. Project sites are to be kept clean at all times. Operators shall comply with applicable federal and state standards for the disposal and treatment of solid wastes. All garbage, refuse, or waste shall either be removed from NFS lands or disposed of or treated in order to minimize, so far as practicable, its impact to the environment and forest surface resources. All tailings, dumps, deleterious materials, or substances and other waste produced by operations shall be deployed, arranged, disposed of, or treated in order to minimize adverse impacts to the environment and forest surface resources.
2. In the event that fuel or waste fluids are spilled, the Forest Service will be notified and the affected soil will be removed for disposal off-site.
3. Vehicles will stay on designated driving routes to avoid excessive soil and vegetation disturbance.
4. Work will be suspended during poor weather conditions or when soils are wet and saturated.
5. Drilling fluid and cuttings would be confined to fluid pits or portable tanks.
6. Portable tanks will be used in place of fluid pits in areas of shallow soils, and in areas where suitable sites (5% slope or less) cannot be located. In areas with highly erosive soils, certified weed-free straw wattles will be placed around the fluid pit and secured with rebar stakes to prevent water from running into the pit while in use. After filling the pit, certified weed-free mulch (e.g., straw) will be spread across the disturbed soil, and the area will be reseeded with native plants. The straw wattles will be kept around the pit to prevent runoff from eroding the soil or removing the mulch and seed from the reclaimed area.
7. Mud pits will be covered with a minimum of 3 feet of topsoil so that radioactivity levels are returned to background levels.
8. Operators shall take all practicable measures to maintain and protect wildlife and wildlife habitat that may be affected by the operations. Fencing is to be placed around fluid/mud pits to protect wildlife and livestock. Open fluid pits will be not only fenced but netted to prevent access into the pit by birds and bats.
9. Operators shall maintain all roads in order to ensure adequate drainage and minimize or, where practicable, eliminate damage to soil, water, and other resource values.
10. To prevent fire, all equipment, including small gas engines for generators and water pumps, will have spark arresters. All equipment that is on-site or entering or exiting the site will have chemical fire extinguishers which are to be readily accessible during drilling operations. Drill rigs and water pumps will have hoses with nozzles with pressure suitable for use in the event of a fire. Seasonal fire restrictions (if implemented) will be followed by the operator.
11. To prevent the importation and/or spread of noxious and invasive exotic weed species, all heavy equipment will be washed before being taken into project areas. To avoid the spread of weeds, vehicles must be cleaned of all plant material when moving from an area of infestation. (Note: no noxious or invasive exotic weed populations were found during surveys of the drilling sites in 2007.)
12. New locations of noxious or invasive exotic weed populations will be documented. Existing weed populations will be treated at each project site before drilling. Ground disturbance at project sites will be minimized in order to prevent new weed populations.

13. Surveys will be conducted during the appropriate season for detection and identification of noxious or invasive exotic weeds for at least 3 years following project completion. New weed populations will be controlled as necessary.
14. VANE will notify the Forest Service when uranium ore deposits are located so that interested tribal communities can be notified by the Forest Service.
15. Archaeological surveys will be conducted in advance of all project activities to identify heritage properties that may be affected by the project. Site specific mitigation measures for the protection of heritage properties will be developed according to the Section 106 process of the National Historic Preservation Act.
16. Operators will permanently mark individual claim boundary corners with a T-post and 4-inch × 4-foot piece of white plastic pipe. Each corner will be identified with the claim number, name, and description (i.e., CP 3, NE corner).
17. Seasonal restrictions will be imposed at certain drill sites if it is determined that exploratory drilling operations could negatively affect sensitive wildlife species.
18. If condors are sighted at a drill site, the Forest Service will be contacted immediately and any project-related activity likely to harm the condor will halt immediately until the condor flies away or is driven away by permitted personnel (U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service or Peregrine Fund personnel). Project personnel will be instructed to avoid interfering with condors.



**Drill site (VANE, CP 8) during drilling operations.**



**Drill site (VANE, CP 8) post-reclamation.**



**Drill site during drilling operations.**



**Exploratory drill hole post-reclamation.**