

**PUBLIC PARTICIPATION PLAN
BLUE BIRD AND BLACK JACK MINES
IN CLEAR CREEK**

**Grant County, Oregon
Prepared by the
Umatilla National Forest
2517 S.W. Hailey Avenue
Pendleton, Oregon 97801**

April 6, 2004

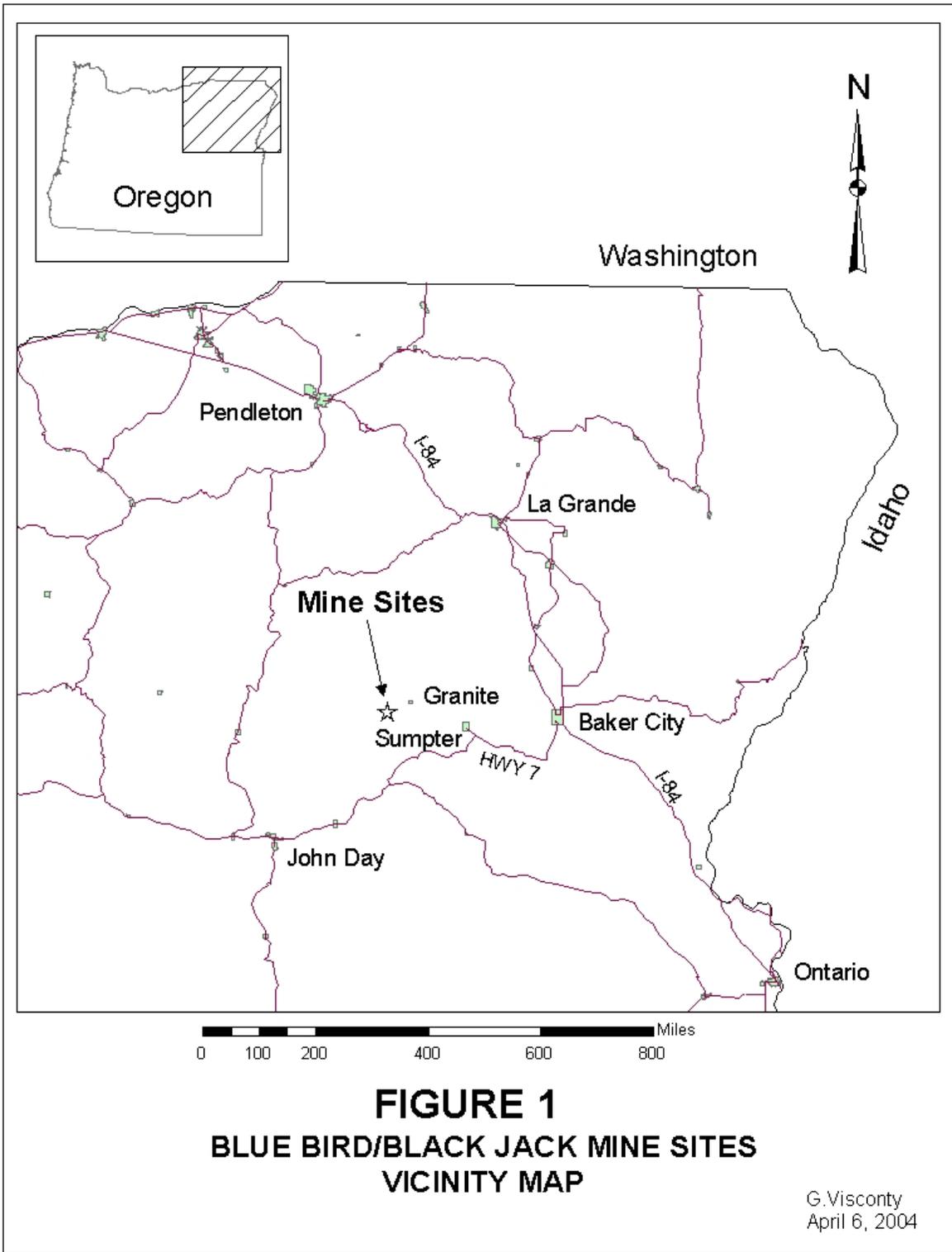
OVERVIEW

This Public Participation Plan (Plan) was designed pursuant to the National Oil and Hazardous Substances Pollution Contingency Plan (NCP) and the Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation, and Liability Act (CERCLA) in order to involve potentially interested members of the public in the vicinity of the Blue Bird and Black Jack Mines (Sites), located on the North Fork John Day District of the Umatilla National Forest, Grant County, Oregon. The purpose of this Plan is to document how the public will be kept informed of proposed Forest Service activities at the Sites, and how the Forest Service will solicit public comments on the proposed investigations and possible clean-up activities at these two Sites.

SITE DESCRIPTION

The Granite Creek watershed has a rich history of lode and placer mining dating back to 1862, and mining in the Granite Creek area was a significant part of Oregon's mineral industry prior to World War II. In the late 1880s, lode mining became the most profitable form of mining with the advent of large-scale drilling and crushing equipment and chemical extraction methods (to extract the gold from its alloys). In the 1920s, dredging for gold in the rivers again became profitable using large-scale equipment. Numerous dredge tailings piles are still visible along these creeks. Mining activities have reduced in scale since World War II, mostly due to increased cost of operations and the increased difficulty in processing the lower grade deposits left after the high grading of the pre-World War II era. Although the price of gold and other precious metals has increased significantly since then, the current level of mining in this watershed has reduced to small placer and lode operations.

The Sites are located on Clear Creek approximately four miles southwest of the town of Granite, in Township 9 South, Range 35 East, Sections 11 and 14, Willamette Meridian (Figures 1 and 2). Clear Creek is a tributary to Granite Creek, and flows into Granite Creek about 1 ½ miles west of, and downstream from the town of Granite. Granite Creek then flows west into the North Fork John Day River, eventually flowing into the Columbia River about 100 miles east of Portland, Oregon. Access to the mines from Granite is by Forest Service Road 10 to the Blue Bird Mine on the east side of Clear Creek, and then south on Forest Service Road 13 to the Black Jack Mine on the west side of Clear Creek. Both mines are located on opposite sides of Clear Creek from the Forest roads, and final access to the mines is accomplished by crossing Clear Creek on foot.



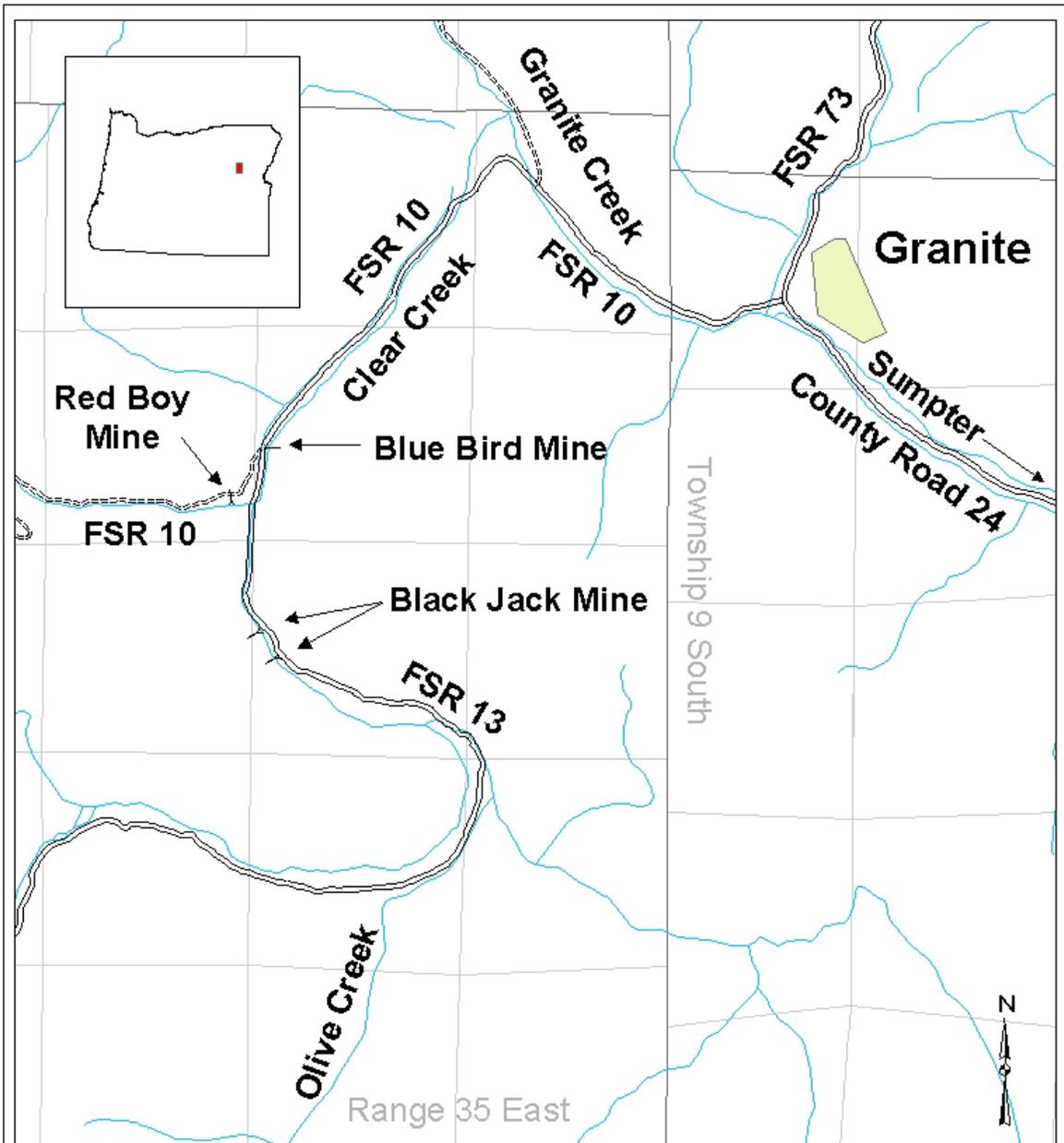


FIGURE 2

**Blue Bird/Black Jack Vicinity Map
T 9 S, R 35 E, Willamette Meridian**

G.Visconty
April 6, 2004

Blue Bird Mine Site

The Blue Bird Mine Site covers approximately 12 acres, and includes two portals, mine waste rock piles, tailings settling pond, and a pipeline from the lower portal to a mine discharge water settling pond and man-made wetland area across Clear Creek and the Forest access road. Only the lower portal is intact, however, it is currently closed with a wooden bulkhead. The upper portal is collapsed and inaccessible. The tailings settling pond is located just north of and below the mine waste rock pile, adjacent to the Clear Creek floodplain, and serves as a temporary safety catch basin if the mine water discharge pipe system fails. The current discharge pipe was installed in 2003, is buried approximately four feet below surface, and extends from the portal, down the face of the mine waste rock pile, under the floodplain, Clear Creek, and Forest Road 10, and discharges into a series of man-made settling ponds and wetland area for natural metals removal. This water eventually filters through the floodplain gravels and enters Clear Creek further downstream (north of the Site).

This mine was initially started in 1898, and operated up until 1907 when it shut down. A small stamp mill was erected on site, both chloride and gravity circuits were used, but only about 1,500 tons of mine materials were run through the mill. A small tailings impoundment was constructed, and a small amount of tailings were deposited in it. All production ceased in 1907. The mine was maintained intermittently until the early 1950s. There are no further mining records for this site. The area was withdrawn from mineral entry in 1963 to protect salmon habitat in Clear Creek, and there are no mining claims located at the Site.

Black Jack Mine Site

The Black Jack Mine Site covers approximately 8 acres, and includes two portals, mine waste rock pile, a settling pond just to the south of the upper portal, and 1,100 foot pipeline from the upper portal to a mine discharge water settling pond and man-made wetland area across Clear Creek and the Forest access road, similar to that of the Blue Bird. The upper portal is the main mine, and is currently sealed with a concrete dam to channel the mine discharge water to the settling ponds and wetland areas. This portal is up on the slope at the top of the visible mine waste rock pile. The lower portal is collapsed; however, mine water still discharges from this portal. The pipeline was installed in 1988, and is buried approximately three feet below ground. The wetland ponds extend almost $\frac{1}{4}$ mile below the pipe discharge before the water enters Clear Creek.

This mine was started at the same time as the Blue Bird, and experienced the same fate. No production was ever recorded at this site. There also are no mining claims at this site.

FOREST SERVICE ACTIONS TAKEN TO DATE

Preliminary Assessments

The Forest Service performed Abbreviated Preliminary Assessments for the two Sites during the summer of 2002 to determine the need for further site characterization. A Niton XRF field unit was used for in-situ field screening of the waste pile for any potential contaminants. Water and sediment samples were not collected at that time.

Arsenic and other metal concentrations in the mine dumps at both Sites exceed EPA Region IX Preliminary Remediation Goals (PRG) as to acceptable industrial levels in soil.

Based on the metals concentrations and proximity of both Sites to Clear Creek, a Site Investigation (SI) to cover both Sites was recommended.

Repair/Replacement of Existing Blue Bird Mine Pipe System

In the spring of 2002 it was determined that the existing pipe systems at both the Blue Bird and Black Jack mines were in need of repair or replacement. Federal funds were secured to replace the Blue Bird pipe and portal bulkhead in 2003, as this system was in greater need than the Black Jack. The Blue Bird pipe system was replaced by contract under a Time-Critical CERCLA removal action in the summer of 2003 (refer to the Administrative File at the North Fork John Day District Office in Ukiah, or the Wallowa Whitman Supervisor's Office in Baker City – this Administrative file is not available on the Umatilla National Forest website). The pipe system was re-routed further north from the original system, and the design was improved to allow easier access to cleaning the pipes, and to improve the efficiency of the system. The project was successfully completed in October of 2003. The buried portal was excavated under this contract so that a more efficient bulkhead could be designed and installed during the 2004 season.

Site Investigations

An SI was conducted to cover both sites in June, 2003, and documented in a final report in January, 2004. The purpose of the SI was to assess the immediate or potential threat that mine related wastes at the Sites may pose to human health and the environment. In addition, information was collected in support of a decision to be made regarding the need for further action under CERCLA and the Superfund Amendments and Reauthorization Act (SARA). Potential contaminant sources identified at the Blue Bird and Black Jack Mine Sites included waste rock and mine water discharge. The results of this investigation indicate that arsenic is the primary contaminant of concern in the waste rock, and that a suite of other metals of concern, including cobalt, lead, mercury, and zinc, is present in the mine waste rock and mine discharge water. These metals were also detected in the settling ponds associated with each mine, however, a recent spill from the Black Jack mine overshadowed test results from Clear Creek. Based on these results, an Engineering Evaluation/Cost Assessment (EE/CA) was recommended for these Sites.

FOREST SERVICE ACTIONS TO BE COMPLETED

Pipe Systems

The Blue Bird portal bulkhead will be replaced during the 2004 field season. The Black Jack pipe systems, and if needed the portal bulkhead, are scheduled to be replaced during the 2005 field season.

Engineering Evaluation/Cost Assessment (EE/CA)

An Engineering Evaluation/Cost Assessment (EE/CA) will be completed to cover both Sites during the 2004 field season. This evaluation will address concerns raised in the SI, and will present a determination if removal or remedial actions are necessary at the Sites. This evaluation

will include a Forest Service proposed removal or remedial action, and alternatives to that proposed action based on public and internal comments and concerns solicited during a 30 day public scoping period. When the draft document is complete, public notices will be published indicating its availability for further public comments. Based on those public and internal comments, an alternative will be selected and a Decision made by the Regional Forester, to be implemented at the Sites.

Removal/Remedial Actions

Based on the EE/CA, removal or remedial actions will be implemented at the Sites if necessary. They will be designed to address the potential contaminants found at the Sites to prevent any further degradation indicated in the EE/CA. Public notifications will be made in the event that these actions become necessary.

PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT

The North Fork John Day District Office in Ukiah, Oregon maintains a current mailing list of all of the members of the public, and other State and Federal agencies who have expressed interest in Forest Service activities on that District. They also maintain mailing addresses of the landowners in the vicinity Granite and the mine Sites. From these lists, a comprehensive list of potentially interested members of the public was developed, and will be maintained for the duration of this project. The complete list is included at the end of this Plan.

The spokesperson for this project is Greg Visconty, Area Mining Geologist, located in the Wallowa Whitman National Forest Supervisor's Office at:

1550 Dewey Ave.
P.O. Box 907
Baker City, Oregon 97814
541-523-1251

Also available for public questions concerning this project is Caty Clifton, Umatilla Forest Hydrologist at:

2517 SW Hailey Ave
Pendleton, OR 97801
541-278-3822

Craig Smith Dixon, District Ranger at the North Fork John Day District will also be available to respond to public concerns, at:

P.O. Box 158
Ukiah, Oregon 97880
541-427-3231

An Administrative Record File will be maintained at the Wallowa-Whitman Supervisor's Office and at the North Fork John Day District Office for public viewing and copying. A copy of the pertinent documents will also be available for viewing on the Umatilla's internet website at

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<http://www.fs.fed.us/r6/uma/projects/readroom/bluebird-blackjack/>, for those who have internet services.

PUBLIC NOTICES

Public notices of upcoming Forest Service actions associated with this project will be placed in the local newspapers. These notices will briefly describe the activity and expected duration, list the responsible official and where comments can be sent, and describe where additional information can be obtained. Public comment periods usually run for 30 days following the publication in the local newspaper.

PUBLIC MAILING LIST

ALLIANCE FOR THE WILD ROCKIES
ECOSYSTEM DEFENSE
PO BOX 8731
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CONFEDERATED TRIBES OF THE UMATILLA
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JAMES P BAILEY
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BILL CAMERON
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CHRIS BURFORD
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SPRINGS RESERVATION
NATURAL RESOURCES DEPARTMENT
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GRANT SWCD
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OREGON DEPT OF FISH & WILDLIFE
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JOHN DAY OR 97845

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AND MINERAL INDUSTRIES
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