

## **Idaho Cobalt Project History**

Formation Capital Corporation U.S. (FCC) submitted a proposed Plan of Operations for the Idaho Cobalt Project (Project) to the Salmon-Challis National Forest (Forest) on January 22, 2001. The Forest Supervisor subsequently determined that the preparation of an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) would be required to assure Forest compliance with the provisions of the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) regarding Project approval decisions to be made by the Forest.

The Forest held an initial public meeting to provide information on the Idaho Cobalt Project on July 20, 2001, at the City Center in Salmon, Idaho. The Forest issued a Notice of Intent (NOI) to prepare an EIS for the proposed mining project in the Federal Register on September 10, 2001 and held public scoping meetings on October 10, 2001, in Challis, Idaho and October 11, 2001 in Salmon, Idaho.

In spring of 2001 the Forest Service and FCC developed Plans of Study and began baseline data collection. FCC continued data collection for some disciplines such as water quality through 2006. In 2002 FCC notified the Forest that the proposed Project planning was being placed in an interim status to review issues, collect supplemental environmental baseline information, prepare a Modified Plan of Operations and obtain adequate funding to carry the project forward.

In 2004 FCC reinitiated active work on the project including additional environmental data collection and analysis. FCC's technical consultants prepared final Technical Reports and evaluations in support of a Modified Plan of Operations. A Modified Plan of Operations was submitted in February 2005; further modifications were submitted in April and June 2006.

In May 2006 Formation submitted an application for a NPDES (National Pollution Discharge Elimination System) permit to discharge treated water to Big Deer Creek and submitted additional revisions to their Plan of Operations. With the submittal of the NPDES application, the US EPA has chosen to enter the NEPA process as an official cooperating agency. Idaho Department of Environmental Quality is also a cooperating agency. A revised NOI was published in the Federal Register on November 1, 2006 indicating EPA's involvement as a cooperating agency and projected DEIS distribution in 1<sup>st</sup> Quarter 2007.

The Forest Service, the EIS contractor and participating agencies have been involved with review of FCC Plan of Operations and supporting documents, analysis of effects, development of alternatives and preparation of the Draft EIS. In February 2007 a Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) was completed and distributed to the public for review and comment.