



Golden Hand No. 1 and No.2 Lode Mining Claims DEIS

Payette National Forest



July 2012

Highlights

On June 29, 2012, Payette National Forest Supervisor Keith Lannom released a Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) for the Golden Hand No. 1 and No. 2 Lode Mining Claims Project.

This document describes the environmental impacts from a proposed action and two alternatives for a mineral project in the Big Creek drainage on the Krassel Ranger District of the Payette National Forest (PNF) for a period of up to 3 years. The project would involve core drilling, excavation of sample pits, and the re-opening of a collapsed mine adit approximately 19 miles north of Yellow Pine, Idaho and would take place primarily in Section 23 & 26, T22N, R9E inside the Frank Church - River of No Return (FC-RONR) Wilderness. Roughly 291 acres of the FC-RONR Wilderness are within the project area. Project activities, including authorization of temporary roads, the use of mechanized equipment, mining activities, crew housing, and storage would occur within the FC-RONR Wilderness.

The drilling would take place to facilitate the subsurface collection of geologic information in order to prepare for a new mineral examination by the Federal Government. The actual claims encompass approximately 20 acres each and are located near Coin Creek, a tributary of Beaver Creek, which flows into Big Creek, a tributary of the Middle Fork Salmon River. The project area includes 1,309 acres of National Forest System lands.

Key Features of the Preferred Alternative (Alternative C)

- Maintain portions of Forest Roads (FR) 371 and 373 between the Big Creek Trailhead and Pueblo Summit and maintain approximately 4.1 miles of temporary road, including 4.0 miles within the Frank Church - River of No Return (FC-RONR) Wilderness. Reconstruct one short approach to a crossing of the North Fork of Smith Creek on FR 373.
- Repair a ford on a tributary to Coin Cr. and repair a ford on Coin Cr within the FC-RONR Wilderness.
- Authorize up to 571 motorized trips into the FC-RONR Wilderness annually during a 100 day operating season. Motorized trips within the Wilderness claim operating area to transport needed items from the storage area to work sites would be kept to the minimum necessary.

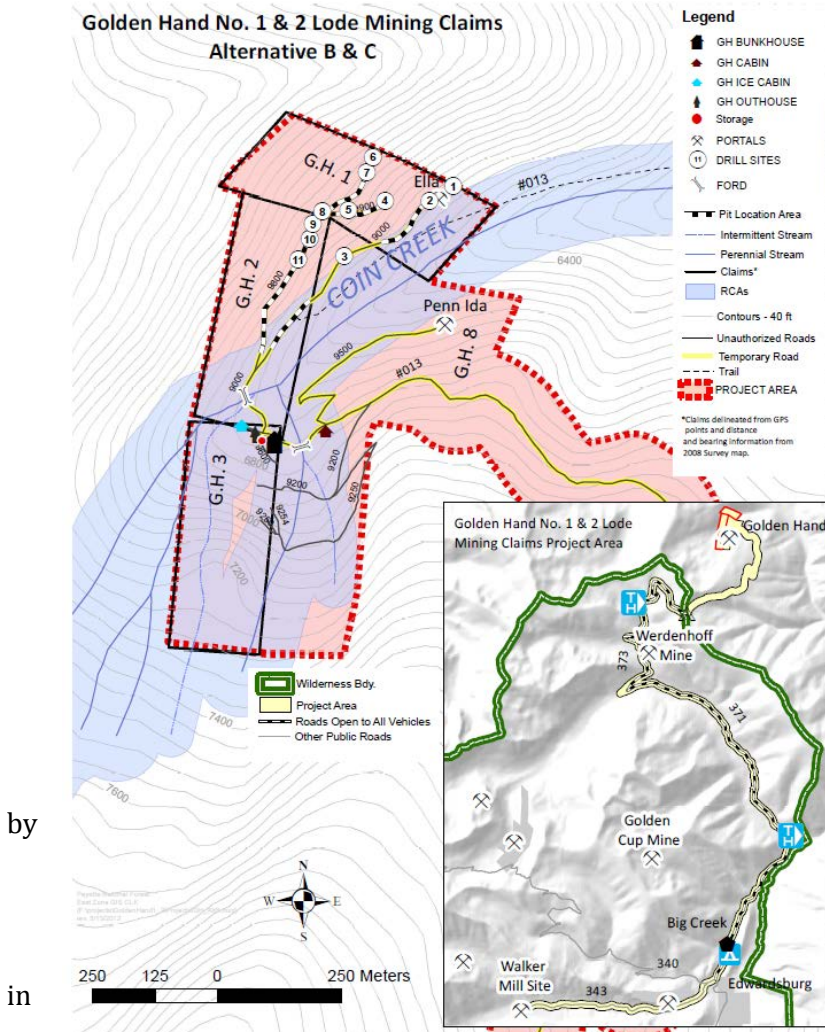


Old road that would be authorized for motorized access within the FC-RONR Wilderness.

- Construct 11 drill pads from which 13-18 core holes would be drilled within the FC-RONR Wilderness.
- Collect rock chip samples from pits excavated to bedrock at several locations in the temporary roads within the FC-RONR Wilderness.

- Reopen and timber a caved mine adit (the "Ella") to allow access for underground mapping and sampling within the FC-RONR Wilderness. Excavated material would be placed on the existing flat disturbed area in front of the portal location.

- Use a variety of vehicles and equipment including, but not limited to, four-wheel-drive pickup trucks, a 7 cubic yard dump truck, flatbed truck, D-8 (or equivalent) bulldozer, 3-cubic yard loader or small excavator, a track or skid-mounted drill rig, air compressor, small jackhammer, and generator.
- Store fuel at Werdenhoff.
- Establish a temporary camp at Werdenhoff.
- Obtain water from Coin Creek in accordance with the water right, which would not exceed 25,000 gallons per day. The water would be obtained and used in accordance with a temporary water right issued by the Idaho Department of Water Resources.



- Conduct defined reclamation activities at the end of each season.
- Implement design features and/or mitigation to reduce or prevent undesirable effects resulting from proposed management activities.

Background of Mining within Wilderness and Golden Hand Claims

The Wilderness Act allows for surface disturbing activities that are reasonably incident to mining or processing operations when valid rights have been found to exist. The mining activities described above may be implemented if they are conducted in a manner compatible with the preservation of the wilderness environment. In the case of valid mining claims or other valid occupancies the Secretary of Agriculture shall permit ingress and egress to such surrounded areas by means which have been or are being customarily enjoyed with respect to other such areas similarly situated.

J.M. Hand discovered the Golden Hand deposit 1889. It is located in the Edwardsburg Mining District. By 1933, ownership had passed to

Golden Hand, Inc. Claude Elliott relocated the claims in 1963. Golden Hand No's. 1-5 lode mining claims were located by Jim Collord and American Independence Mines and Minerals, Inc. (AIMMCO) in 1979.

On August 12, 2002, the U.S. District Court in Idaho directed that in regards to Golden Hand No. 1 and No. 2 lode mining claims “the Forest Service must recognize AIMMCO’s right to prepare for (a) validity hearing, and allow work to that end, while requiring adherence to all applicable rules and regulations.”

The Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) describing the environmental effects of this proposal can be found at <http://www.fs.fed.us/nepa/fs-usda-pop.php/?project=27442> , or by calling project leader Jeff Huntman at 208-634-0434.