

Dated: March 25, 1996.

Annetta L. Cheek,

*Chief, Regulatory Management Team.*

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[CA-065-06-1990-01]

### **Environmental Statements; California Desert Conservation Area, CA**

**AGENCY:** Bureau of Land Management, Interior.

**ACTION:** Notice of intent to prepare an Environmental Impact Statement for an open pit, heap leach gold mine on portions of public lands in the California Desert Conservation Area, Kern County, CA; and notice of scoping period and public meetings.

**SUMMARY:** Pursuant to section 102(2)(c) of the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969, the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) will be preparing a joint Environmental Impact Statement/Environmental Impact Report (EIS/EIR) for addressing impacts of the proposed gold mine development in Kern County, CA. The BLM invites comments and suggestions on the scope of the analysis. **DATES:** Public scoping meetings will be held on:

Date: April 16, 1996—Tuesday

Time: 6:30 p.m.—10:00 p.m.

Place: Rosamond High School,  
2925 Rosamond Blvd,  
Rosamond, CA 93560,  
Glennan Gymnasium

Date: April 17, 1996—Wednesday

Time: 6:30 p.m.—10:00 p.m.

Place: Mojave High School,  
15732 "O" St.,  
Mojave, CA 93501,  
Mustang Gymnasium

**ADDRESSES:** Scoping comments may be sent to: BLM Ridgecrest Resource Area Manager, 300 S. Richmond, Ridgecrest, CA 93555, Attn: Ahmed Mohsen, EIS Coordinator.

**SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:** Golden Queen is proposing to construct and operate the Soledad Mountain Project, an open pit precious metals (gold and silver) mining and cyanide leaching processing operation at the Soledad Mountain project area located approximately five miles southwest of the town of Mojave in Kern County, California.

The proposed action includes: construction of facilities; mining and processing of precious metals ores at the rate of three to four million tons per year for a period of ten to sixteen years; stockpiling of overburden materials; sales of overburden materials as aggregate and construction materials; and reclamation of the project site.

The project area is approximately 1,228 acres, of which 959 acres are private land and 269 acres are unpatented mining claims on public lands administered by BLM. The proposed surface disturbance is approximately 782 acres on private lands and 153 acres on public lands. The proposed mining operation includes twelve interconnected open pit mining areas within the ultimate pit boundary of the proposed open pit.

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:**

Ahmed Mohsen, BLM EIS Coordinator at (619) 384-5421.

Dated: March 21, 1996.

Lee Delaney,

*Area Manager.*

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[OR-015-96-1610-00: G6-0088]

### **Management Framework Plans; Oregon**

**AGENCY:** Bureau of Land Management, Interior.

**ACTION:** High Desert Management Framework Proposed Plan Amendment and Final Environmental Impact Statement for Lake Abert Area of Critical Environmental Concern, Notice of Availability.

**SUMMARY:** Pursuant to section 102(2)(c) of the National Environmental Policy Act, section 202(f) of the Federal Land Policy and Management Act, and 43 CFR Part 1610, the Lakeview District has completed a proposed plan amendment and final environmental impact statement (PA/FEIS) covering a proposal to designate the Lake Abert and the surrounding vicinity as an area of critical environmental concern (ACEC).

The proposed PA/FEIS addresses the management of resources within approximately 123,000 acres of public land and 101,700 acres of reserved mineral estate administered by the BLM located approximately 30 miles north of the town of Lakeview in central Lake County, Oregon. The proposed ACEC includes approximately 49,900 acres of public lands administered by the BLM.

**DATES:** The public review/protest period for the proposed PA/FEIS will officially begin when the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency publishes its Notice of Availability of the proposed PA/FEIS in the Federal Register, which is expected on or about March 29, 1996.

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:** Paul Whitman, BLM, Lakeview District Office, P.O. Box 151, Lakeview, Oregon

97630 (Telephone: 541-947-6110).

Those wishing to provide comments should submit them in writing to Scott Florence at the above address.

**SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:** The document presents management goals, objectives, and seven management alternatives for BLM-administered lands within the planning area. The alternatives range from no action (no change in present management), to designating portions of the planning area as an ACEC with somewhat restrictive management, to designating the entire planning area as an ACEC with very restrictive management. Alternative 7 is the agency preferred plan and involves designating about 49,900 acres of public lands as an ACEC. The area was evaluated and found to meet the ACEC designation criteria and require special management for four resource values: wildlife, visual, cultural, and ecological processes. Off-highway vehicle (OHV) use, mining location, and rights-of-way location would be restricted within the ACEC. Livestock grazing would be restricted within that portion of Abert Rim wilderness study area (WSA) falling within the ACEC, as well as within most riparian zones, and ecologically sensitive areas. Mineral leasing would be closed within approximately 18,000 acres of the ACEC with the remainder of the area being restricted.

A draft plan amendment and environmental impact statement was issued for a 90-day review period in May 1995. The review period ended on August 16, 1995. A total of 37 comment letters were received during the review period. An interdisciplinary planning team assessed these comments and utilized them in making changes in the proposed PA/FEIS. The final document has been prepared in an abbreviated format. Major sections of the draft are not repeated in the final. Copies of the draft are available for reference by contacting the point of contact listed above.

Those individuals, organizations, native American tribes, and agencies with a known interest in the plan have been sent a copy of the proposed PA/FEIS. Persons desiring a copy of the document should contact the point of contact listed above. Reading copies of the document are available at the Lake, Klamath, and Harney County, Oregon, libraries and at the following BLM locations: Office of External Affairs, Main Interior Building, Room 5600, 18th and C Streets, NW, Washington DC 20240, and Public Room, Oregon State Office, 1515 SW 5th, Portland, Oregon 97201.