

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:**  
Glen Miller (760) 337-4400.

**SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:** This document is a supplement to the analysis of biological resources in the November 1997 Draft Environmental Impact Statement/Environmental Impact Report ("EIS/EIR") for the proposed Imperial Project ("Project"). As discussed in the Draft EIS/EIR, the Project is a proposal by Glamis Imperial Corporation to develop an open-pit, precious metal mining operation utilizing heap leach processes which is located entirely on public lands administered by the BLM in eastern Imperial County, California. In response to a recent decision by the San Diego County Superior Court, this supplement adds a new, lower threshold of significance to assess the significance of Project-related impacts under CEQA on "endangered, rare or threatened species" listed under the state or federal Endangered Species Acts. This change affects only the assessment of the significance of impacts under CEQA; BLM's threshold of significance to assess the significance of Project-related impact on these same biological resources under NEPA remains as described in the Draft EIS/EIR. This supplement explicitly relies on and incorporates by reference the underlying data, biological surveys, and other relevant information in the Draft EIS/EIR regarding biological resources; no new factual information is included in this supplement. Based upon this new, lower threshold of significance under CEQA, this supplement finds significant and unavoidable under CEQA the impacts resulting from the loss of on-site habitat for the desert tortoise, Gila woodpecker and peregrine falcon; the loss of individual desert tortoise; and the cumulative effects of the identified cumulative projects on habitat for listed species and on individual desert tortoise. BLM's assessment of these same effects under NEPA remains unchanged from that presented in the Draft EIS/EIR; that these effects can and will be mitigated below the level of significance. Written comments regarding this supplement will be received during a 60-day public review period, but only comments received which are within the scope of this supplement will be addressed in the Final EIS/EIR.

Comments, including names and street addresses of respondents, will be available for public review. Individual respondents may request confidentially. If you wish to withhold your name or street address from public review or from disclosure under the Freedom of

Information Act, you must state this prominently at the beginning of your written comment. Such requests will be honored to the extent allowed by law. All submissions from organizations or businesses, and from individuals identifying themselves as representatives or officials of organizations or businesses, will be made available for public inspection in their entirety.

Dated: March 12, 1999.

**Thomas Zale,**

*Acting Field Manager, El Centro Resource Area.*

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## DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

### Bureau of Land Management

[ID-040-1610-00]

#### **Notice of Availability of the Record of Decision (ROD) for the Thompson Creek Mine Final Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement (Final SEIS)**

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

**SUMMARY:** The Bureau of Land Management is a cooperating agency with the USDA Forest Service, Intermountain Region (lead agency) in considering the Thompson Creek Mining Company's proposed Supplemental Plan of Operations to address concerns about potential acid rock drainage from the Thompson Creek Mine.

Since 1983 the Thompson Creek Mine (Mine) has produced molybdenum from its operation on public and private lands in Custer County, about 30 miles southwest of Challis, Idaho. The Mine employs about 200 people and has proven ore reserves for an estimated 15 more years of molybdenum production. The Mine is administered by an Interagency Task Force consisting of State and Federal permitting agencies.

The Bureau of Land Management's Acting Idaho State Director, Elena Daly, and the Forest Service's Regional Forester, Jack A. Blackwell, have issued a Record of Decision (ROD) to approve operations of the Thompson Creek Mine for the 1999 operating season in accordance with Alternative 2 of the Final Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement (Final SEIS). Alternative 2 allows operation of a pyrite reduction circuit and modifications to the treatment of tailings and waste rock.

This decision is an interim measure to minimize adverse environmental impacts which could result from the potential for acid rock drainage from the Mine's tailings facility and waste rock dumps. This interim decision will ensure that the tailings embankment can be built with non-pyritic sands in 1999, to minimize the potential for acid rock drainage. This decision will allow the pyrite reduction circuit to continue without interruption or shutdown, and provide time needed to complete consultation under the Endangered Species Act before a long term decision is made. This decision is based on the current determination that short term operation of the pyrite reduction circuit and modifications to the treatment of tailings and waste rock are not an irreversible or irretrievable commitment of resources that have the effect of foreclosing the formulation or implementation of any reasonable and prudent alternative measures which may be included in the final biological opinions that result from consultation. This interim decision will remain in effect in 1999 until a long term decision can be implemented. The BLM and USES anticipate making the long term decision by the fall of 1999.

Formal consultation with the National Fisheries Service (NMFS) and US Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) has been initiated. Discussion with these agencies and other State and Federal agencies with authority over the Mine's operation has taken place, and all agree that implementation of Alternative 2 during the 1999 construction season (estimated to start as early as May 1) is desirable to prevent potential adverse impacts resulting from acid rock drainage potential in the tailings and waste rock facilities.

**DATES:** Those actions pertaining to the public lands administered by the BLM may be appealed under BLM administrative appeal rights (43 CFR part 4). If an appeal is taken, the notice of appeal (and, if also submitted, the petition for stay) must be postmarked or received at the address stated below within 30 days of publication of this notice.

**ADDRESSES:** Copies of the Record of Decision for the Thompson Creek Mine Final Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement may be obtained by contacting Wallace Evans at BLM—Idaho State Office, 1387 South Vinnell Way, Boise, ID 83709-1657, (208) 373-3803, or Tom Buchta at the USDA Forest Service Intermountain Region, Federal Building, 324 25<sup>th</sup> Street, Ogden, UT 84401, (801) 625-5663. Written appeal of actions pertaining to

the public lands administered by the BLM must conform to the procedures described on page 16 of the Record of Decision, and be filed with the Bureau of Land Management, Idaho State Office, 1387 S. Vinnell Way, Boise, Idaho 83709-1657, with copies submitted to each party named in the decision, to the Interior Board of Land Appeals, and to the appropriate Office of the Solicitor.

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:** Renee Snyder, Area Manager, Bureau of Land Management, Challis Resource Area, Route 2, Box 610, Salmon, Idaho 83467 (208) 756-5400, or Leon Jadowski, Salmon-Challis National Forest, Challis Ranger District, HC 63, Box 1669, Challis, Idaho 83226 (208) 879-4400.

Dated: March 11, 1999.

**Jenifer Arnold,**

*Acting District Manager, Upper Columbia Salmon-Clearwater Districts, Bureau of Land Management.*

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## DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

### Bureau of Land Management

[UT-99-940-1610-00]

#### Notice of Intent To Prepare a Statewide Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) and Multiple Plan Amendments To Consider Establishment of New Wilderness Study Areas (WSAs) on Selected Public Lands in Utah, and Call for Information

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

**SUMMARY:** The Bureau of Land Management (BLM) announces a plan amendment process for up to 136 wilderness inventory areas on approximately 2.6 million acres of Federal land throughout Utah. The planning process may designate new WSAs under the authority of Section 202 of the Federal Land Policy and Management Act (FLPMA). The 2.6 million acres have been inventoried by BLM and have been found to have wilderness characteristics.

Establishment of WSAs would be an administrative action resulting in the application of interim management policy (IMP) for a temporary period until they are released from further consideration or Congress acts to designate them as part of the National Wilderness Preservation System.

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:** Thomas F. Slater, Resource Manager (Phone: 801-539-4063 or E-mail:

tslater@ut.blm.gov) or Holly Roberts, Planning Coordinator (Phone 801-539-4272 or E-mail h1robert@ut.blm.gov), BLM Utah State Office (Attention: Wilderness Project), P.O. Box 45155, Salt Lake City, Utah 84145.

**DATES:** The BLM is requesting public input and involvement in two venues: (1) Submission of written information by regular mail in response to scoping materials soon to be distributed, and (2) submission of written scoping comments by electronic mail via Internet access at: HTTP://WWW.UT.BLM.GOV/WILDERNESS. All scoping comments regarding this FLPMA Section 202 WSA activity must be received in writing by the BLM Utah State Office no later than May 19, 1999.

In order to facilitate the identification of issues and the submission of pertinent comments, BLM has scheduled eleven open house meetings at various locations in Utah. At these sessions, BLM personnel will be available to explain the inventory procedures and findings, make file material pertinent to each location available for inspection, and respond to questions regarding the EIS/plan amendment process. This will provide an opportunity for commentors to become fully informed prior to their submission of written comments. The location, date, and time for each open house are as follows:

Kanab, Utah, Holiday Inn Express, April 21—5:00PM-8:00PM

St. George, Utah, Abbey Inn, 1129 South Bluff Street, April 22—3:00PM-8:00PM

Escalante, Utah, Escalante High School, 800 East Highway 12, April 23—5:00PM-8:00PM

Castle Dale, Utah, Museum of the San Rafael, 96 North 100 East, May 3—3:00PM-8:00PM,

Salt Lake City, Utah, Department of Natural Resources, 1594 West North Temple, Suite 1060—May 7—3:00PM-8:00PM

Tooele, Utah, Tooele City Recreation Complex, 350 West 400 North, May 4—3:00PM-8:00PM

Vernal, Utah, Western Park, 302 East 200 South, May 4—3:00PM-8:00PM

Richfield, Utah, Weston Inn, 647 South Main, Basement, May 5—3:00PM-8:00 PM

Moab, Utah, Senior Citizen Center, 450 East 100 North, May 5—3:00PM-8:00PM

Monticello, Utah, Monticello High School Gymnasium, 190 South 200 West, May 6—4:00PM-8:00PM

Fillmore BLM Office, 35 East 500 North, May 6—3:00PM-8:00PM

**SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:** The BLM recently completed an inventory of

wilderness characteristics on Federal lands in many locations in the State of Utah. This evaluation identified approximately 2.6 million acres in 136 areas with wilderness characteristics. These wilderness characteristics are size, roadlessness, naturalness, outstanding opportunities for solitude, or primitive and unconfined recreation. Some areas also have supplemental values.

In accordance with the Section 202 of FLPMA, and 43 Code of Federal Regulations, § 1610.5-5 (Amendment), land use plans may be changed through amendments based on the need to consider new data or changing circumstances. Based on the inventory findings, the current situation warrants individual plan review with the possibility of amending numerous affected planning documents. The following land use plans are to be reviewed and potentially amended:

St. George Field Office Resource Management Plan

Vermillion Management Framework Plan

Zion Management Framework Plan  
Paria Management Framework Plan  
Grand Staircase-Escalante National Monument Plan

San Juan Resource Management Plan  
Grand Resource Management Plan  
Henry Mountain Management Framework Plan

Pinyon Management Framework Plan  
Warm Springs Resource Management Plan

House Range Resource Management Plan

Pony Express Resource Management Plan

Box Elder Resource Management Plan  
Book Cliffs Resource Management Plan  
Diamond Mountain Resource Management Plan

San Rafael Resource Management Plan  
Price River Management Framework Plan

Cedar Beaver Garfield Antimony Resource Management Plan

Issue identification is considered integral to the Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) and planning processes. Issues are used to identify the scope of information and analysis in the EIS and to focus the process on relevant environmental concerns. Generally, an issue is a matter of controversy or dispute over resource management activities or land uses that is well defined or topically discrete and entails alternatives among which to choose or decide.

Planning issues may have two or more of the following characteristics; (1) concern expressed by the public, State,