

## **FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT**

Hansonburg Mining District Safeguarding Project  
eAMLIS Key NM-935053 (Bingham)

The Office of Surface Mining Reclamation and Enforcement (OSMRE) has reviewed the Hansonburg Mining District Safeguarding Project Environmental Assessment (EA) prepared by Sites Southwest, LLC (Albuquerque, NM) on behalf of the New Mexico Abandoned Mine Land Program (AMLP). OSMRE has determined the EA and supporting documentation discuss potential environmental issues and impacts sufficiently for us to authorize the expenditure of federal funds in support of the project. Based on the analysis in the EA and supporting documentation, OSMRE finds that AMLP's reclamation activities in the Hansonburg Mining District Safeguarding Project area will not have significant effects on the quality of the human environment. We therefore conclude that a detailed Environmental Impact Statement is not necessary.

### **Information reviewed to support this Finding includes:**

- An EA prepared by Sites Southwest, LLC, dated November, 2017.
- A Decision Record with stipulations and Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) issued by the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) Socorro Field Office, dated January 30, 2018.
- A paleontology analysis report.
- A summary of the Class III cultural resource inventory of the total Area of Potential Effect (1,752.38 acres), conducted by Tierra Right-of-Way. The inventory included a records review, archival research, and pedestrian field inventory.
- A Biological Assessment / Biological Evaluation (BA/BE) prepared by Sites Southwest, LLC, dated March, 2016 (rev. August, 2017).
- Bat survey results and closure method recommendations based on field investigations conducted by Bat Conservation International (BCI) in January and November, 2015.
- A public meeting summary prepared by Sites Southwest, LLC, dated August, 2017. The summary includes the public meeting notice published in the *El Defensor Chieftan* on May 25 and June 1, 2017 and mailed to interested parties; agenda, comment sheet, and sign-in sheet from the June 8, 2017 meeting; project area display board; and slide presentation.
- Photographs of the abandoned mine land (AML) hazard-features proposed for closure and maps of the project areas.
- A consultation letter (code: 02ENNM00-2016-SLI-0318) from the United States Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS), New Mexico Ecological Services Field Office dated February 9, 2016.
- Problem Area Description NM-935053 (Bingham) in OSMRE's electronic Abandoned Mine Land Inventory System (eAMLIS).
- A list of agencies and Native American groups contacted during the development of the EA.

### **OSMRE's specific reasons for making this Finding are as follows:**

- The proposed action will enhance public health and wellbeing by safeguarding approximately 68 high-priority AML problem-types including shafts, adits, subsidence areas, and other physical openings throughout the project areas.
- The BA/BE concluded the proposed action will have No Effect on federal endangered, threatened, or proposed species due to lack of critical habitat, general habitat, or occurrence in the project area. Of

the three state-listed species (American peregrine falcon, spotted bat, gray vireo) with the potential to occur in the project areas, none were observed during the biological survey. Impacts to these species will be temporary, localized, and are not likely to lead towards federal listing or loss of viability. Disrupted individuals can relocate to adjacent, undisturbed habitat.

- There are no Areas of Critical Environmental Concern, Special Recreation Management Areas, or Wilderness Study Areas within or directly adjacent to the project areas.
- No hydrologic impacts are anticipated.
- Existing roads will be utilized to the extent possible to minimize surface disturbances to herbaceous and shrub species. The areas surrounding mine features are previously disturbed by historic mining operations. Post-closure earthwork will restore surface contours to resemble natural drainage patterns, reducing erosion. Previously stockpiled topsoil will be evenly distributed and project areas will be revegetated with a native seed mix specified by the BLM.
- The paleontology analysis report concluded the project will have minimal impacts to fossil resources and included the requirement to halt construction and contact the BLM-permitted paleontologist to determine appropriate next steps, should a discovery be made.
- Air quality impacts, including equipment emissions and fugitive dust, will be minor, temporary, and in compliance with local and federal standards. Dust-control will be required as necessary.
- To minimize impacts to the historic viewshed, structural closures will be built onsite in conformance with BLM Visual Resource Management specifications. Highly visible waste piles will be retained where feasible. Mining features filled with existing waste rock or polyurethane foam will remain visible as shallow depressions. Impacts to the viewshed are not significant in context or intensity.
- To avoid negative impacts to sensitive wildlife species, construction will occur outside the maternity and hibernation periods for bats, as recommended by BCI. Preconstruction nest clearance surveys will be conducted to avoid disturbing active nests of protected migratory birds, including raptors.
- By letter dated May 12, 2017, the New Mexico Department of Cultural Affairs, Historic Preservation Division concurred with AMLP's No Adverse Effect to Historic Properties finding. AMLP will designate and avoid any remaining mine-related features and precontact Native American sites during construction. If previously unidentified sites or artifacts are encountered, AMLP will immediately terminate area operations until the proper agencies and Native American groups have been contacted and offered the opportunity to assess the discovery site.



Tom Medlin  
Environmental Protection Specialist  
Denver Field Branch

Date 4/3/2018



Howard E. Strand  
Manager  
Denver Field Branch

Date 4/3/2018