

## SUMMARY

### S.1 Introduction

This Draft Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) discloses the environmental impacts of a proposed action and alternative actions for road maintenance, road construction on unauthorized roads, confirmation sampling on the Golden Hand No. 1 and No. 2 lode mining claims, along with activities/equipment associated with accomplishing the aforementioned on the Krassel Ranger District of the Payette National Forest in Valley and Idaho Counties, Idaho.

This document has been prepared pursuant to the requirements of the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA, 40 CFR 1500-1508), the National Forest Management Act (NFMA implementing regulations of 2005, including transition language at 36 CFR 219.14), the 2003 Payette National Forest Land and Resource Management Plan, as amended (USDA 2003, 2010)(Forest Plan). Formal planning for this project was initiated on November 21, 2008 with a Notice of Intent to prepare an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) appearing in the Federal Register.

The Golden Hand No. 1 and No. 2 Lode Mining Claims Project Area is located in the Big Creek drainage on the Payette National Forest, approximately 19 miles north of Yellow Pine, ID (Figure S-1). 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 (Figure S-2).

Roughly 291 acres of the Frank Church River of No Return Wildness (FC-RONR Wilderness) lie within the Golden Hand No. 1 and No. 2 Lode Mining Claims Project Area. Mining activities, crew housing, storage, and road construction would occur within the FC-RONR Wilderness.

### S.2 Proposed Action

On September 4, 2007 AIMMCO submitted an operating plan for drilling operations, trenching and sampling, and reopening the caved Ella Mine adit. The Forest Service worked with AIMMCO for more than two years to revise the initial proposal. A revised Plan of Operations was submitted to the Forest Service on June 4, 2010 and was further revised by a November 12, 2010 letter. AIMMCO has incorporated additional changes to their proposed plan since that time.

This alternative is based on the proposed plan of operations (operating plan or plan) submitted by American Independence Mines and Minerals Company (AIMMCO) to the Forest Service on June 4, 2010, along with subsequent revisions. It represents a reasonable plan which the Forest Service is required to approve, unless actions are needed to minimize adverse environmental impacts on National Forest System surface resources. The Proposed Action would allow AIMMCO to collect subsurface geologic information in order to prepare for a new mineral examination by the Federal Government. Except for one drill location, the proposed drilling operations, rock chip sampling, and Ella Mine opening would occur on Golden Hand No. 1 and No. 2 lode mining claims (Figure S-3). The project area includes the Golden Hand claims, the connecting temporary roads between the claims and Pueblo Summit, the temporary road to the Werdenhoff, and Forest Service Roads 343, 371, and 373 (Figure S-2).

Because the Proposed Action does not meet Forest Plan standard SCST01 for Visual Quality, a one time, site specific, non-significant amendment to the Forest Plan would be necessary. This is described in section 2.4.2.1.

The following is a summary of the Proposed Action:

- 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 FC-RONR Wilderness. Reconstruct one short approach to a crossing of the North Fork of Smith Creek on FR 373.

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- Repair a ford on a tributary to Coin Cr. and repair a ford on Coin Cr.
- Authorize up to 771 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 will be kept to the minimum necessary.
- Construct 11 drill pads from which 13-18 core holes would be drilled.
- Collect rock chip samples from pits excavated to bedrock at several locations in the temporary roads.
- Reopen and timber a caved mine adit (the “Ella”) to allow access for underground mapping and sampling. 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 on the claims or an adjacent valid lode claim (Golden Hand No. 8).
- Use the Penn Ida plaza for storage, if necessary.
- Use the Golden Hand bunkhouse within the FC-RONR Wilderness as office space.
- Establish a temporary camp at the 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.

A detailed description of the Proposed Action is provided in Section 2.4.2.

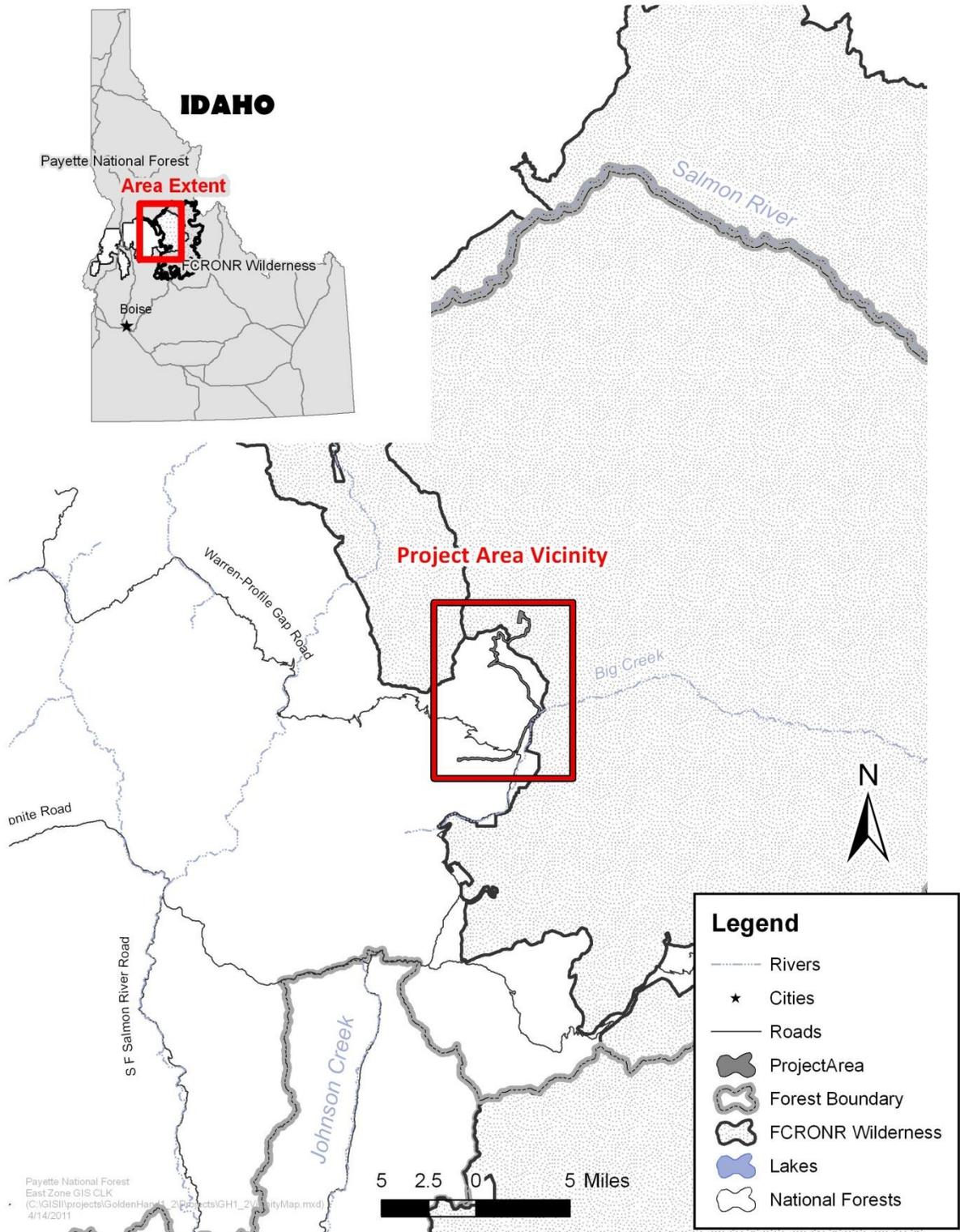


Figure S-1 Vicinity Map

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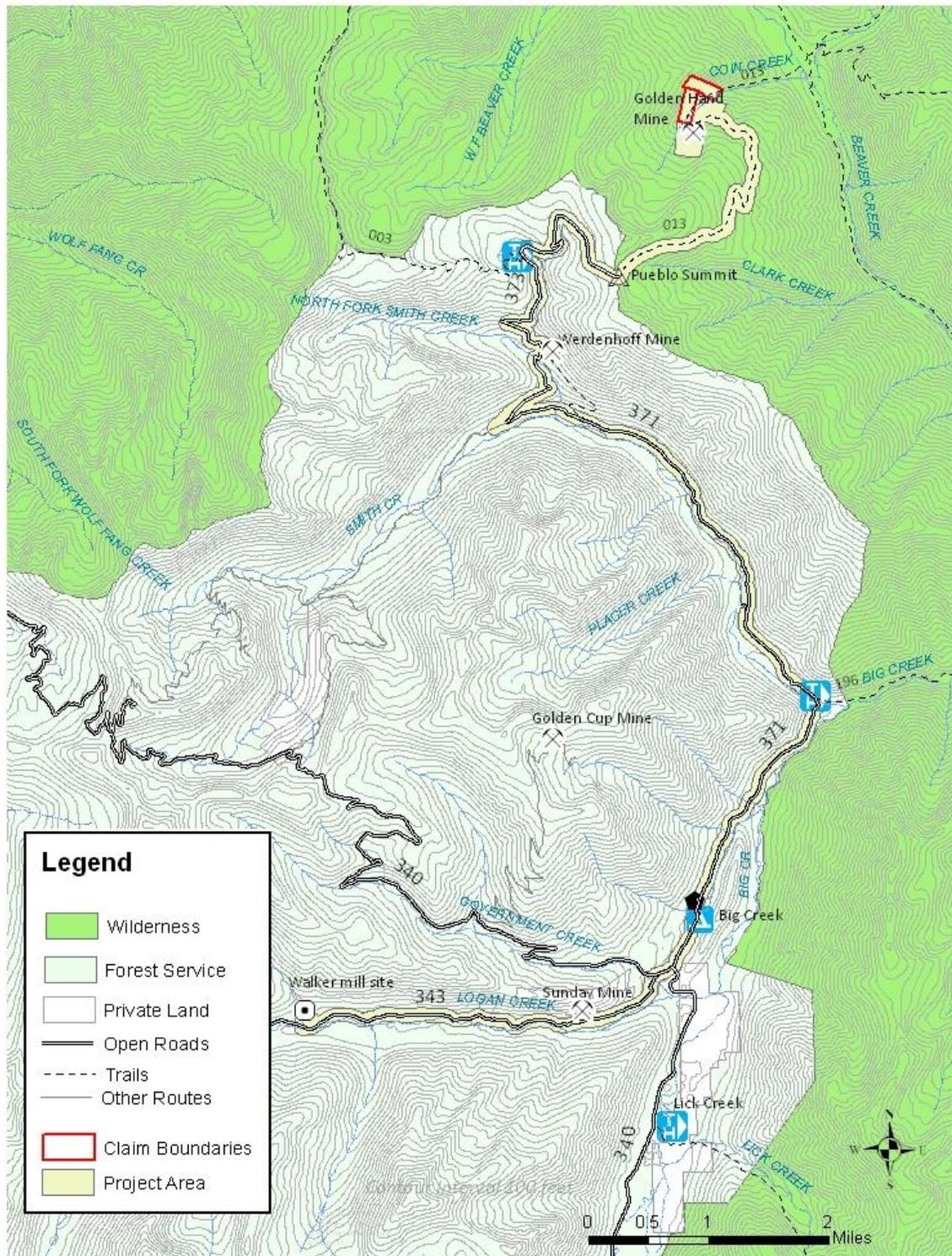


Figure S-2 Golden Hand No. 1 and No. 2 Lode Mining Claims Project Area

### S.3 Purpose and Need for the Proposed Action

Law, regulation, agency policy, and court rulings define the purpose and need for the Forest Service response to AIMMCO's proposed plan of operations. The major laws and regulations governing such responses include the following:

- The 1872 Mining Law as amended (also referred to as the U.S. Mining Law[s]), provides in part that, "...all mineral deposits in land belonging to the United States are free and open to exploration and the lands in which they are found are open to occupation and purchase." This granting of statutory rights to explore, develop, and gain title to the minerals estate of federal lands open to mineral entry, remain in effect today.
- The 1897 the Organic Administration Act (16 USC 478, 551) created the National Forest System, and at the same time opened these lands to entry under the 1872 Mining Law. This law also gives the Secretary of Agriculture authority to regulate activities conducted under the Mining Law.
- The Multiple Use Mining Act of 1955 (30 USC 612) reserved to the United States the right to use the surface of unpatented mining claims providing such use did not endanger or materially interfere with prospecting, mining or processing operations or reasonably incident uses.
- Regulations defining Forest Service authority to manage locatable mineral activities were adopted in 1974, and are codified in 36 CFR 228A. In accordance with these regulations, an approved plan of operation is required for any locatable mineral activity on National Forest System land that would cause a significant disturbance of surface resources. These regulations also require the Forest Service to conduct an analysis that meets the requirements of the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) for each plan of operation received. Forest Service responses to a proposed plan of operation are defined by regulation at 36 CFR 228.5. The overall purpose of these regulations as stated in 36 CFR 228.1, is to manage operations so as to minimize adverse environmental impacts on National Forest System surface resources.

The Wilderness Act of 1964 requires the Forest Service to ensure that valid rights exist prior to approving locatable mineral activities inside a congressionally designated Wilderness area. To establish valid existing rights, mining claimants must show they have made a discovery of a valuable mineral deposit on the claim(s) prior to the withdrawal date, and have maintained that discovery. 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 (U.S. Congress 1964, Section 4[d-3]). The mining activities described may be implemented if such activity is carried on in a manner compatible with the preservation of the wilderness environment (U.S. Congress 1964, Section 4[d-2]). 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 mean which have been or are being customarily enjoyed with respect to other such areas similarly situated (U.S. Congress 1964, Section 5[b]). The Wilderness Act also states that mineral leases, permits, and licenses covering lands within National Forest Wilderness, shall contain reasonable stipulations as may be prescribed by the Secretary of Agriculture for the protection of the wilderness character and consistent with the use of the land for the purposes for which they are leased, permitted, or licensed.

The Forest Service response is also guided by the following rulings:

- AIMMCO and Jim Collord located Golden Hand No's. 1-5 lode mining claims in 1979. In 1983, AIMMCO located Golden Hand No's. 6-8. Mr. Collord subsequently deeded his interest in claims No. 1-5 to AIMMCO. On December 31, 1983 the FC-RONR was withdrawn from entry under the mining law. Prior to any further mineral development activity on the claims a determination of the validity of the claims was required. Following a validity examination, a hearing before the Department of Interior- Office of Hearings and Appeals, and subsequent appeals by both parties, the Interior Board of Land Appeals (IBLA) ruled in 1992 that the Golden Hand No's. 3 and 4 lode mining claims within the FC-RONR Wilderness were valid. Claim No. 8 is also valid because the

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government withdrew its contest against claim No. 8 in 1999. In summary, Golden Hand No's. 3, 4, and 8 lode mining claims have valid existing rights.

- On August 12, 2002, the U.S. District Court in Idaho ordered the Forest Service to complete the Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) on AIMMCO's proposed operating plan for Golden Hand No. 3 and No. 4 lode mining claims. That decision was signed on May 1, 2003 and was vacated on March 14, 2011. The court also 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."

Other state and federal laws and regulations may apply to plans submitted under 36 CFR 228A, depending on the nature of the proposal and resources affected. Such laws include the Clean Water Act, Clean Air Act, Endangered Species Act, National Historic Preservation Act, and others. Forest Service planning direction also defines the purpose to be achieved by the Forest Service action.

AIMMCO has the legal right to develop the mineral resources on their Wilderness claims where valid existing rights have been established, and the Forest Service has the legal authority to manage those activities to minimize, where feasible, environmental impacts on surface resources, including Wilderness. AIMMCO's right to develop is limited to activities that are reasonably incident to mining and not needlessly destructive, and by the obligation to comply with applicable state and federal laws. The Forest Service's right to manage AIMMCO's activity is limited in that it may not deny a plan of operation for development of such resources provided that it is reasonably incident and not needlessly destructive, and complies with applicable federal mining laws and regulations, and applicable state and federal laws and regulations related to air, water, and solid waste.

The **Purpose** of the Forest Service in proposing this action is to minimize adverse environmental impacts to surface resources by regulating the functions, work, and activities connected with the miner's plan to remove locatable minerals from National Forest System lands. The compelling **Need** for the Forest Service to take this action is to comply with the legal requirements to respond to the claimant's reasonable Plan of Operations (36 CFR 228.4), and to ensure that "operations are conducted so as, where feasible, to minimize adverse environmental impacts on National Forest surface resources" (36 CFR 228.8).

### S.4 Decisions to be Made

Based on the analysis documented in the Final EIS the Forest Supervisor will make decisions on this project. The decisions to be made include:

- ◆ Should the mining proponent be notified of changes or additions to the plan necessary to minimize, where feasible, adverse environmental impacts on National Forest surface resources?
- ◆ Should minor amendments to the Forest Plan be made at this time; and if so, what amendments?
- ◆ What monitoring should be applied to the project?

### S.5 Issues and Concerns

Identification of issues included review of written and verbal comments, input from Forest Service resource specialists, review of the Forest Plan, and comments from state and other federal agencies. Comments identified during scoping were evaluated against the following criteria to determine whether or not the issue would be a major factor in the analysis process.

- ◆ Has the concern been addressed in a previous site-specific analysis, such as in a previous Environmental Impact Statement or through legislative action?
- ◆ Is the concern relevant to and within the scope of the decision being made and does it pertain directly to the Proposed Action?
- ◆ Can the concern be resolved through mitigation (avoiding, minimizing, rectifying, reducing or eliminating, or compensating for the proposed impact) in all alternatives?

- ◆ Can the issue be resolved through project design in all alternatives?

### **S.5.1 Issues**

The Responsible Official identified three issues. These issues are points of unresolved conflict with the Proposed Action (Alternative B) identified during internal and external scoping efforts. Issues are used in environmental analysis to formulate alternatives, prescribe mitigation measures, and focus the analysis of environmental effects. Summaries of detailed analyses associated with these issues are presented in Chapter 3 of this document. Following each issue, indicators are listed for use in comparing how the different alternatives affect that issue.

#### **S.5.1.1 Wilderness Character**

Activities associated with the Proposed Action could result in a degradation of wilderness character.

Indicators:

- ◆ Would Activities Adversely Affect Natural Integrity?
- ◆ Would Activities Adversely Affect Untrammelled Condition?
- ◆ Would Activities Adversely Affect Solitude?
- ◆ Would Activities Adversely Affect Primitive Recreation?
- ◆ Authorized Use of Penn Ida for Storage?
- ◆ Number of Annual Authorized Motorized Trips into The FC-RONR Wilderness Expected During 100 Day Operating Season.
- ◆ Authorized Use of the Golden Hand Bunkhouse for Office Space.

#### **S.5.1.2 Scenic Environment**

Activities associated with the Proposed Action could result in undesirable impacts to the scenic environment.

Indicators:

- ◆ Would Activities Comply with Visual Quality Objectives (VQOs) Standards?
- ◆ Would Activities Allow the Use of the Golden Hand Bunkhouse within the FC-RONR Wilderness?

#### **S.5.1.3 Water, Soil, and Fisheries**

Activities associated with the Proposed Action could result in undesirable impacts to soil, water, and fishery resources.

Indicators:

- ◆ Modeled Interstitial Sediment Delivery (Pounds)
- ◆ Would Activities Result in Changes to Peak/Base Flow?
- ◆ Number of Annual Authorized Motorized Trips into The FC-RONR Wilderness Expected During 100 Day Operating Season.

## **S.6 Alternative Development**

### **S.6.1 Alternative A - No Action**

The National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) requires consideration of a “No Action” alternative. The No Action Alternative serves as a baseline to analyze the environmental effects of the action alternatives. However, under Forest Service mining regulations at Title 36 Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) 228 Subpart A, this option can only be considered as an intermediate step in processing a plan of operation, provided that it has been properly submitted under the authority of the U.S. Mining Laws.

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For example, some proposed plans or parts of proposed plans of operation may not represent logical and sequential development of mineral property, may not be feasible, may not comply with applicable state or federal laws, or may not be reasonably incident to mining. In such cases, the Forest Service may not simply deny approval of the plan, but has the obligation to notify the operator as required under 36 CFR 228.5, of changes to be made that are necessary for its approval. Ultimately, in accordance with law and regulation, holders of valid mining claims have a legal right to develop their claims and a reasonable plan of operations must be identified and approved.

### S.6.2 Alternative B - Proposed Action

On September 4, 2007 AIMMCO submitted an operating plan for drilling operations, trenching and sampling, and reopening the caved Ella Mine adit. The Forest Service worked with AIMMCO for more than two years to revise the initial proposal. A revised Plan of Operations was submitted to the Forest Service on June 4, 2010 and was further revised by a November 12, 2010 letter. AIMMCO has incorporated additional changes to their proposed plan since that time.

This alternative is based on the proposed plan of operations (operating plan or plan) submitted by American Independence Mines and Minerals Company (AIMMCO) to the Forest Service on June 4, 2010, along with subsequent revisions. It represents a reasonable plan which the Forest Service is required to approve, unless actions are needed to minimize adverse environmental impacts on National Forest System surface resources. The Proposed Action would allow AIMMCO to collect subsurface geologic information in order to prepare for a new mineral examination by the Federal Government. The 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. Except for one drill location, the proposed drilling operations, rock chip sampling, and Ella Mine opening would occur on Golden Hand No. 1 and No. 2 lode mining claims (Figure S-3). The project area includes the Golden Hand claims, the connecting temporary roads between the claims and Pueblo Summit, the temporary road to the Werdenhoff, and Forest Service Roads 343, 371, and 373 (Figure S-2).

Because the Proposed Action does not meet Forest Plan standard SCST01 for Visual Quality, a one time, site specific, non-significant amendment to the Forest Plan would be necessary. This is described in section 2.4.2.1.

The following is a summary of the Proposed Action:

- 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 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.
- Authorize up to 771 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.
- Construct 11 drill pads from which 13-18 core holes would be drilled.
- Collect rock chip samples from pits excavated to bedrock at several locations in the temporary roads.
- Reopen and timber a caved mine adit (the “Ella”) to allow access for underground mapping and sampling. 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 on the claims or an adjacent valid lode claim (Golden Hand No. 8).
- Use the Penn Ida plaza for storage, if necessary.
- Use the Golden Hand bunkhouse within the FC-RONR Wilderness as office space.
- Establish a temporary camp at the 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.

### **S.6.2 Alternative C**

This alternative was developed to identify any terms and conditions to ensure that mining activities are conducted in a manner that minimizes adverse environmental impacts to National Forest surface resources. Additionally, this Alternative responds to issues identified during internal and external scoping. This alternative would allow AIMMCO to collect subsurface geologic information in order to prepare for a new mineral examination by the Federal Government. The 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. Except for one drill location, the proposed drilling operations, rock chip sampling, and Ella Mine opening would occur on Golden Hand No. 1 and No. 2 lode mining claims (Figure S-3). The project area includes the Golden Hand claims, the connecting temporary roads between the claims and Pueblo Summit, the temporary road to the Werdenhoff, and Forest Service Roads 343, 371, and 373 (Figure S-2).

Because this alternative does not meet Forest Plan standard SCST01 for Visual Quality, a one time, site specific, non-significant amendment to the Forest Plan would be necessary. This is described in section 2.4.3.1.

The following is a summary of 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 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.
- 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.
- Construct 11 drill pads from which 13-18 core holes would be drilled.

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- Collect rock chip samples from pits excavated to bedrock at several locations in the temporary roads.
- Reopen and timber a caved mine adit (the “Ella”) to allow access for underground mapping and sampling. 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.

**While covered below in detail in the descriptions the principle differences between Alternative B and Alternative C are: Fuel Storage would occur at Werdenhoff rather than within the FC-RONR Wilderness under Alternative C; the use of Penn Ida for storage would not occur under Alternative C; Alternative C would further restrict the number of daily motor vehicle trips into the FC-RONR Wilderness; and, the bunkhouse would not be used as an office under Alternative C.**

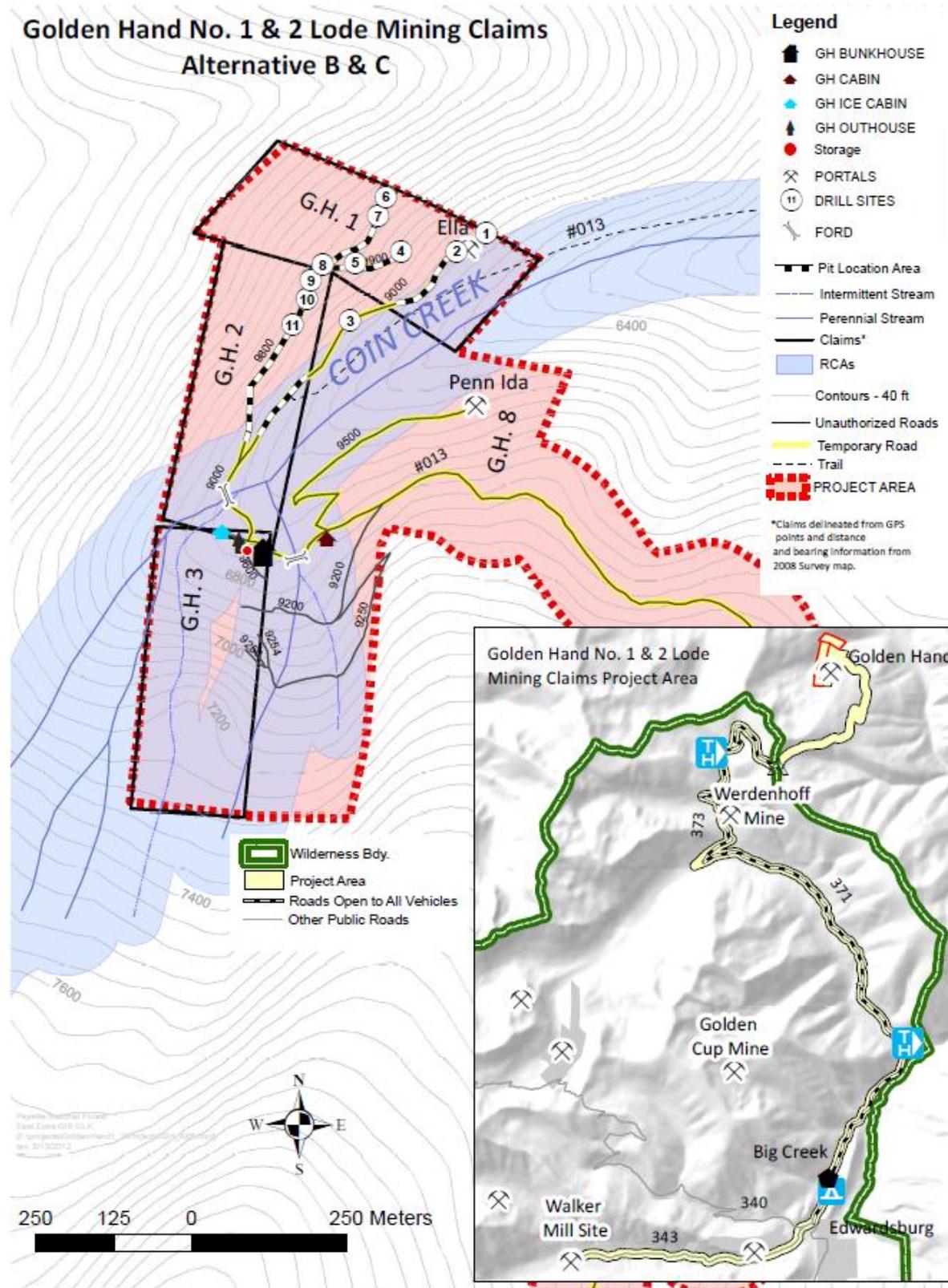


Figure S-3 Alternative B, Proposed Action, and Alternative C

### S.7 Summary Comparison of Alternatives

Table S-1 presents a comparative summary of principle activities and the environmental effects for the alternatives being considered in detail. The summary is limited to the effects on project objectives, significant issues or concerns, Forest Plan standards, and other resources the Interdisciplinary Team deemed important for an informed decision. A brief discussion of the similarities and differences between the alternatives follows the table. More detailed information is available in the descriptions of the alternatives in Chapter 2 and in Chapter 3.

#### S.7.1 Project Objective Indicators

##### S.7.1.1 Confirmation Activities

Alternative A would not provide the proposed confirmation activities. Both Alternative B and C would authorize the proposed confirmation activities to meet the legal rights of the claim holder.

##### S.7.1.2 Access

Alternative A would not provide the needed access to conduct proposed activities. Current access in the project area would remain as is with only Forest Roads #371 and #373 being open to motorized travel.

Alternative B and C would both authorize the use of temporary roads to access the claims. Approximately 8.0 miles of National Forest system roads would be maintained. Approximately 4.1 miles of temporary road would be authorized to provide needed access; of which, 4.0 miles would be authorized in the FC-RONR Wilderness.

##### S.7.1.3 Fuel Storage

Alternative A would not authorize the storage of any fuel on National Forest System lands.

Under Alternative B, a 1,320 gallon tank would be transported empty and placed in lined containment at either the Penn Ida adit or outside of RCAs within the FC-RONR Wilderness. The diesel would be transferred as needed for each shift in truck mounted tanks.

Under Alternative C, a 1,320 gallon tank would be transported empty and placed in lined containment at Werdenhoff. The diesel would be transferred as needed for each shift in truck mounted tanks.

##### S.7.1.3 Crew Housing

Alternative A would not authorize crew housing or staging on National Forest System lands.

Under both Alternative B and C crews would be housed at Werdenhoff. Travel trailers and/or platform tents would be used to house crews and provide needed cooking and sanitation facilities. Werdenhoff would also serve as a staging area for needed equipment and supplies being transported in and out of the FC-RONR Wilderness.

**Table S-1 Comparison of Activities and Effects**

<b>Project Objective Indicators</b>	<b>Alt. A</b>	<b>Alt. B</b>	<b>Alt. C</b>
Number of Drill Sites	0	11	11
Number of Trench Sites	0	3	3
Mine Portals Opened for Sampling	0	1	1
Access Needs Met?	No	Yes	Yes
Fuel Storage Needs Met?	No	Yes	Yes
Crew Housing Suitable to Conduct Activities?	No	Yes	Yes
Equipment and Vehicle Needs Met	No	Yes	Yes
Water Needs Met?	No	Yes	Yes
Mine Timbers Provided?	No	Yes	Yes
<b>Wilderness Project Issue Indicators</b>	<b>Alt. A</b>	<b>Alt. B</b>	<b>Alt. C</b>
Would Activities Adversely Affect Natural Integrity?	No	Yes	Yes
Would Activities Adversely Affect Untrammeled Condition?	No	Yes	Yes
Would Activities Adversely Affect Solitude?	No	Yes	Yes
Would Activities Adversely Affect Primitive Recreation?	No	Yes	Yes
Authorized Use of Penn Ida for Storage?	No	Yes	No
Number of Annual Authorized Motorized Trips into The FC-RONR Wilderness Expected During 100 Day Operating Season.	0	771	571
Authorized Use of the Golden Hand Bunkhouse for Office Space?	No	Yes	No
<b>Scenic Project Issue Indicators</b>	<b>Alt. A</b>	<b>Alt. B</b>	<b>Alt. C</b>
Would Activities Comply with Visual Quality Objectives (VQOs) Standards?	Yes	No	No
Would Activities Allow the Use of the Golden Hand Bunkhouse within the FC-RONR Wilderness?	No	Yes	No
<b>Watershed, Soil, and Fisheries Project Issue Indicators</b>	<b>Alt. A</b>	<b>Alt. B</b>	<b>Alt. C</b>
Modeled Interstitial Sediment Delivery (Pounds)	6,200	182	182
Would Activities Result in Changes to Peak/Base Flow?	No	Yes	Yes
Number of Annual Authorized Motorized Trips into The FC-RONR Wilderness Expected During 100 Day Operating Season.	0	771	571
<b>Forest Plan Consistency/Other Key Items</b>	<b>Alt. A</b>	<b>Alt. B</b>	<b>Alt. C</b>
Activities Result in Forest Plan Amendment?	No	Yes	Yes
Activities Result in the Development of any IRA?	No	No	No
Activities Consistent with the Idaho Roadless Rule?	Yes	Yes	Yes
Activities Increase Potential Spread of Noxious Weeds?	No	Yes	Yes
Activities Compliant with National Historic Preservation Act and Archaeological Resources Protection Act?	Yes	Yes	Yes
Activities Result in Measureable Effects to any Class I Area or Monitoring Site for Air Quality?	No	No	No
Activities Consistent with ROS Designations?	Yes	Yes	Yes
<b>Threatened, Endangered, and Proposed Species</b>	<b>Alt. A</b>	<b>Alt. B</b>	<b>Alt. C</b>
Wildlife Species	NE	NE/NLAA	NE/NLAA
Plant Species	NE	NE	NE
Potential Negative Effects to Fish Species?	No	Yes	Yes
<b>Sensitive Species</b>	<b>Alt. B</b>	<b>Alt. B</b>	<b>Alt. C</b>
Wildlife Species	NI	NI/MIIH	NI/MIIH
Plant Species	NI	NI/MIIH	NI/MIIH
Fish Species	NI	MIIH	MIIH
<b>Management Indicator Species</b>	<b>Alt. A</b>	<b>Alt. B</b>	<b>Alt. C</b>
Pileated Woodpecker Population Trend	Maintained	Maintained	Maintained
Bull Trout Population Trend	Maintained	Maintained	Maintained

NE = No Effect; LLA = May affect, likely to adversely affect, NLAA = May affect, not likely to adversely affect; NI = No Impact; BI = Beneficial Impact; MIIH = May impact individuals or habitat but would not likely contribute to a trend towards Federal listing or a loss of viability. Reference discussions below and in Chapter 3 for detailed information.

**S.7.1.4 Equipment**

Alternative A would not authorize the use of any equipment or vehicles to conduct project activities. The following table lists the known facilities, equipment, and vehicles to facilitate operations proposed under Alternative B and C within the FC-RONR Wilderness:

**Table S-2 Equipment Needs in the FC-RONR Wilderness**

Equipment/Vehicle Needs Alternative B	Equipment/Vehicle Needs Alternative C
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 1940 era International Harvester 6x6 Truck with 7 Cubic Yard Dump</li> <li>• 1940 era GMC 6x6 Truck with Flatbed</li> <li>• Dodge Ram 3500 Quad-Cab 4x4 with 8 foot box or Equivalents, Multiple, including DOT approved truck mounted tank</li> <li>• ATV and/or UTV, including DOT approved truck mounted tank</li> <li>• Bulldozer, Cat D-8 or Smaller</li> <li>• Air Compressor (≤600 cfm)</li> <li>• Light Plant</li> <li>• 3 Yard Loader Tracked or Rubber Tire</li> <li>• Excavator</li> <li>• Skid Mounted Core Drill</li> <li>• Telescopic Forklift, 10,000 lb. Capacity</li> <li>• Drill Rod Baskets</li> <li>• Mud Trailer</li> <li>• Service Trailer</li> <li>• 50 Gallon Hydraulic Oil Storage</li> <li>• Bean Supply Pump</li> <li>• Drilling Fluid Storage</li> <li>• Saws</li> <li>• Generators</li> <li>• Small Jackhammer</li> <li>• Toilets at worksite</li> <li>• Water pump, water storage tanks, water pipe</li> <li>• Bunkhouse</li> <li>• Fuel Truck (500 gallon)</li> <li>• 1,320 Gallon Diesel Storage</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 1940 era International Harvester 6x6 Truck with 7 Cubic Yard Dump</li> <li>• 1940 era GMC 6x6 Truck with Flatbed</li> <li>• Dodge Ram 3500 Quad-Cab 4x4 with 8 foot box or Equivalents, Multiple, including DOT approved truck mounted tank</li> <li>• ATV and/or UTV, including DOT approved truck mounted tank</li> <li>• Bulldozer, Cat D-8 or Smaller</li> <li>• Air Compressor (≤600 cfm)</li> <li>• Light Plant</li> <li>• 3 Yard Loader Tracked or Rubber Tire</li> <li>• Excavator</li> <li>• Skid Mounted Core Drill</li> <li>• Telescopic Forklift, 10,000 lb. Capacity</li> <li>• Drill Rod Baskets</li> <li>• Mud Trailer</li> <li>• Service Trailer</li> <li>• 50 Gallon Hydraulic Oil Storage</li> <li>• Bean Supply Pump</li> <li>• Drilling Fluid Storage</li> <li>• Saws</li> <li>• Generators</li> <li>• Small Jackhammer</li> <li>• Toilets at worksite</li> <li>• Water pump, water storage tanks, water pipe</li> </ul>

**S.7.1.5 Water**

Alternative A would not authorize needed access to water, water storage, or water pipes to supply water for drilling operations.

Both Alternative B and C would provide the needed access to AIMMCO’s water right. Additionally, multiple water tanks for storage along with the needed pipes and pumps to transport water to drilling operations would be authorized for use.

**S.7.1.5 Mine Timbers**

Alternative A would not authorize the cutting of needed mine timbers.

Both Alternative B and C would authorize the cutting of trees for mine timbers outside the FC-RONR Wilderness. All processing of timbers would be conducted prior to transport inside wilderness.

## **S.7.2 Project Issue Indicators**

### **S.7.2.1 Wilderness**

Alternative A would have no effects to Wilderness Character and Experience (Section 3.3).

Under Alternative B, the Wilderness user would see physical impacts to the land, motorized and mechanized equipment, and hear noise and could see dust from these machines from July to November for up to 3 years. This type and amount of development would adversely affect the Wilderness users' sense of solitude and remoteness and enjoyment of a primitive recreation experience in the Beaver Creek and Hand (Coin) Creek drainages, and the surrounding ridge tops that encompass the project area. The activities under this alternative involve use of motorized and mechanized equipment and vehicle support both on claims and associated off claim roads in the Wilderness. The actual use and the knowledge of these activities would adversely impact the Wilderness character by compromising the natural integrity and untrammelled conditions of the FC-RONR Wilderness (Section 3.3).

Alternative B would authorize the use of Penn Ida plaza for storage of fuel and supplies if needed along with a use for a rock source. Rock to repair fords within the FC-RONR Wilderness would be obtained from this site. This would potentially add to the miles of motorized travel within the wilderness by authorizing travel on additional 0.3 miles of temporary road on a daily basis. This additional road usage would apply to the 771 round trips as needed to acquire stored items at the Penn Ida plaza.

Assuming a 100 day operating season, it would be expected that approximately 771 round trips would be authorized annually to conduct project activities under Alternative B. The Golden Hand bunkhouse would be authorized for use as an office, thereby adding to amount of activities (refurbish of the cabin and general office use) and improving the condition of the building. The effects of these activities are captured in the effects to natural integrity, untrammelled condition, solitude, and primitive recreation (Section 3.3).

While not measurable, there would be slightly less impacts to wilderness character and experience from Alternative C because the alternative would authorize fewer motorized trips, the use of the bunkhouse for an office would be prohibited, and no motorized travel to the Penn Ida site for general storage would occur. (Section 3.3).

Alternative C would not authorize the use of the Penn Ida plaza for storage, but would authorize travel to the plaza to source rock. The only use of the site would be to obtain rock to repair fords within the FC-RONR Wilderness would be obtained from this site. No daily trips to obtain stored items would be authorized along the 0.3 miles of road.

Since fuel storage would occur at Werdenhoff, core removal would occur with shift change, and miscellaneous trips would be restricted to every other day on average, it would be expected that approximately 571 round trips would be authorized annually to conduct project activities under Alternative C. The bunkhouse and its associated activities and improvements would not be authorized. The effects of these activities at the bunkhouse are captured in the effects to natural integrity, untrammelled condition, solitude, and primitive recreation (Section 3.3).

### **S.7.2.2 Scenic**

Alternative A would have no effects to wilderness character and experience (Section 3.11).

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Alternatives B and C would require one amendment to the Forest Plan as disclosed in this chapter. This would be a one time, site specific, non-significant amendments that would not change overall Forest Plan goals, objectives, desired future conditions, or associated outputs. Both Alternatives would meet a maximum modification VQO within the FC-RONR wilderness (Section 3.11).

The principle difference in Alternatives is the use of the Golden Hand bunkhouse as an office. Alternative B would need to restore the bunkhouse to facilitate its use as an office. Restoration and occupation of the Golden Hand bunkhouse would be evident to casual observer within the FC-RONR Wilderness. The installation of such features as roofing, stove pipes, new logs, windows, porch posts/flooring would appear evident. These activities would appear as a deviation from the rustic and rundown appearance the observer expects of most structures in the wilderness. These activities would meet a VQO of maximum modification. It is expected that activities to improve the condition of the bunkhouse would not meet a VQO of preservation until the long term when the bunkhouse again takes on a more 'run downed' and weathered quality that the observer would expect to see (Section 3.11).

### **S.7.2.3 Water, Soil, and Fisheries**

Alternative A would not alter the baseline condition for watershed, soils, or fisheries resources.

Alternative B and C would reduce the modeled interstitial sediment from approximately 6,200 pounds to roughly 182 pounds (Section 3.4 and 3.5). Fewer motorized trips within the FC-RONR Wilderness in Alternative C would result in less temporary and short term sediment delivery and turbidity, but there would be no difference in the long term reductions related to road improvements. Installation of stream crossing structure would result in temporary to long term benefits in North Fork Smith Creek.

Under Alternative B and C, the diversion of water would result in a minor temporary to short term degrade of base flow in Coin Creek that would not move the peak/base flow indicator for the Beaver Creek 6th HU from Functioning Acceptable to Functioning at Risk (Section 3.4.3.2).

### **S.7.3 Forest Plan Consistency/Other Key Items**

The Forest Plan Consistency Checklist, contained in the project's planning record, lists all applicable standards and guidelines and discloses that all action alternatives would comply with those standards and guidelines with the exception of one standard requiring an amendment. In addition, the Interdisciplinary Team identified other items considered important in making an informed decision. The following discussions summarize the effects of the alternatives relative to those standards and/or guidelines and other items identified by the Interdisciplinary Team as key in this assessment.

#### **S.7.3.1 Forest Plan Amendments**

Alternative A would have no effects to wilderness character and experience.

Alternatives would B and C would require one amendment to the Forest Plan as discussed in this chapter. This would be a one time, site specific, non-significant amendments that would not change overall Forest Plan goals, objectives, Desired Future Conditions (DFC), or associated outputs.

#### **S.7.3.2 Roadless Areas**

Alternative A would have no effect on any IRA (Section 3.7).

The principle difference between Alternative B and C would be the potential for impacts on solitude. Assuming a 100 day operating season, it would be expected that approximately 771 round trips would be authorized annually to conduct project activities under Alternative B without prior approval from Werdenhoff to the mining site, while Alternative C would authorize approximately

571 trips annually to the mine site. It would still be expected that many of the trips described in Alternative B would still occur in Alternative C within or immediately adjacent to IRAs with the exception of fuel which would not be transported in bulk past Werdenhoff. Regardless, Alternative B could represent a slight increase when compared to Alternative C in noise and the associated impacts to solitude while the project is ongoing (Section 3.7).

Neither Alternative B or C would result in the development of any IRA. IRAs within the project area would remain suitable for wilderness designation by Congress. Both Alternatives are consistent with the Idaho Roadless Rule (36 CFR 294).

### **S.7.3.3 Noxious Weeds**

Alternative A would have no effect on the potential introduction and distribution of noxious weeds.

Proposed activities and design features associated with Alternative B and C would not be expected to introduce noxious weeds into the analysis area. Alternative B and C may however contribute to the distribution of noxious weeds already present as vehicles pass along Forest Road #371 while completing project activities. Existing noxious weed populations would be addressed through the District's and the FC-RONR Wilderness noxious weed program (Section 3.9).

### **S.7.3.4 Air Quality**

Alternative A would have no effect on air quality.

Based on estimates and assumptions it was calculated that Alternative B would annually produce approximately 5,500 pounds of PM-10 particulate matter, 700 pounds of PM-2.5 particulate matter, 23,500 pounds of nitrogen dioxide, and 1,600 pounds of sulfur dioxide.

Based on estimates and assumptions it was calculated that Alternative C would annually produce approximately 4,900 pounds of PM-10 particulate matter, 630 pounds of PM-2.5 particulate matter, 20,100 pounds of nitrogen dioxide, and 1,400 pounds of sulfur dioxide.

While Alternative B and C would increase pollutants from dust, vehicle, and other emissions in the project area, it would not likely have measurable effects on air quality in any Class I Area, the FC-RONR Wilderness, or at monitoring sites, given the distance and dilution that would occur as particles and air mix over distance.

### **S.7.3.5 Recreation Opportunity Spectrum (ROS)**

Recreation Opportunity Spectrum classifications would remain unchanged with any Alternative.

Within the FC-RONR Wilderness activities would not be consistent the ROS classification due to impacts on wilderness characteristics (Section 3.3) and increased likelihood of frequent encounters with users expecting a primitive setting. However, the activities within the primitive setting are considered to be a setting inconsistency and being conducted pursuant the 1872 Mining Law (Section 1.5). Following project activities, the portion of analysis area in a primitive ROS setting would return to conditions indicative and consistent with the setting. The area would remain classified as a primitive ROS setting.

## **S.7.4 Threatened and Endangered Species**

Determinations disclosed in Chapter 3 and documented in biological assessments and evaluations for threatened, endangered, proposed, and candidate species concluded that:

Alternative A does not propose any federal action that could affect listed species.

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Alternative B and C would have no effect to any threatened or endangered plant species. No habitat for any threatened or endangered plant species occurs in the project analysis area (Section 3.8).

Alternative B and C could have temporary to short term negative effects to individual steelhead, bull trout and the associated designated critical habitat (Section 3.4). Effects to Chinook salmon and designated critical habitat would likely be negligible. Installation of stream crossing structure would result in temporary to short term benefits to steelhead.

Alternative B and C would have no effect on Northern Idaho Ground Squirrel and may affect, not likely to adversely affect Canada Lynx (Section 3.6).

Consultation with the USFWS and National Oceanic and Administration (NOAA) is ongoing for threatened and endangered species and any effect determination would be preliminary until consultation is completed.

### S.7.5 Sensitive Species, Including Candidate Species

Alternative A would have no impact on any sensitive species

Alternative B and C may impact individuals but would not likely contribute to a trend toward Federal Listing or cause a loss of viability to the population or species of whitebark pine, (*Pinus albicaulis*), a candidate and sensitive species. Alternative B and C would have no impact on any other candidate, proposed, or sensitive plant species.

Alternative Band C may impact individuals but would not likely contribute to a trend towards Federal Listing or cause a loss of viability to the population or species of westslope cutthroat trout.

Alternative B and C may impact individuals but would not likely contribute to a trend toward Federal Listing or cause a loss of viability to the population or species of boreal owl, fisher, northern goshawk, pileated woodpecker, wolverine, gray wolf, Townsend's big-eared bat, or Columbia spotted-frog. Alternative B and C would have no impact on white-headed woodpecker, American three-toed woodpecker, flammulated owl, great gray owl, mountain quail, rocky mountain bighorn sheep, peregrine falcon, spotted bat, greater sage grouse, southern Idaho ground squirrel, Columbian sharp-tailed grouse, bald eagle, yellow-billed cuckoo, or common loon.

### S.7.6 Management Indicator Species (MIS)

Alternative A would have no direct or indirect effects on any MIS species or their habitat and would maintain the current population trend.

Alternative B and C may disturb individual pileated woodpecker during implementation (Section 3.6); however, both alternatives are expected to maintain the current population trend of this species at the Forest and Ecogroup scale.

Alternatives B and C could negatively affect bull trout individuals in the temporary to short term, followed by long term minor beneficial effects. However, the few occurrences of disturbance or mortality of individuals from increased fording are not likely to result in measurable population level effects (Section 3.4.3.1), and long term beneficial effects would be minor. Therefore, Alternative B and C would maintain the current population trend of the species at the Forest and Ecogroup scale.

## S.8 Identification of the Preferred Alternative

Alternative C is the Responsible Official's preferred alternative.