



# State of California – The Resources Agency DEPARTMENT OF PARKS AND RECREATION

## NOTICE OF PREPARATION

### Empire Mine State Historic Park Site Characterization and Remediation Project

### Draft Program Environmental Impact Report

The California Department of Parks and Recreation (DPR) is the Lead Agency for the Site Characterization and Remediation Project (Project) at Empire Mine State Historic Park (Park), as defined by the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA). DPR is preparing a Draft Program Environmental Impact Report (Draft Program EIR) for the Project. We are inquiring about views of interested persons/agencies as to the scope and environmental requirements relevant to your concerns and/or agency's statutory responsibilities, in connection with the proposed Project. This Notice of Preparation (NOP) includes the Project Location, Project Description, Constituents of Potential Concern Found at the Site, Potential Remediation Activities, and Possible Effects and Mitigations.

#### **Project Location**

The Park is located in Nevada County on the western slope of the north-central Sierra Nevada. It is approximately 50 miles northeast of Sacramento and is adjacent to and southeast of the City of Grass Valley (See Figure 1, Regional Location and Transportation Routes). The Park is operated by DPR's Sierra District. DPR offices for the Park are located at 10556 East Empire Street, Grass Valley, California.

#### **Project Description**

The Project consists of remediation activities required to abate risks in areas of the Park addressed under a Cleanup and Abatement Order and an Imminent and/or Substantial Endangerment Determination and Partial Consent Order that DPR and Newmont USA Ltd. (Newmont) entered into with the Department of Toxic Substance Control and Central Valley Regional Water Quality Control Board. The Draft Program EIR will evaluate potential environmental impacts from anticipated remediation activities in areas of the Park southwest of Highway 174. DPR is preparing a separate document to comply with CEQA to evaluate a remediation implementation plan for the Osborne Hill Trails area.

#### **Constituents of Potential Concern Found at the Site**

Previous evaluations determined that soils in the area below the former cyanide plant contain elevated levels of metals (arsenic, lead, mercury, and cadmium) that are

hazardous substances listed in Title 40, Code of Federal Regulations (40 CFR Section 302.4, Table 302.4). These soils, including the constituents listed above, are defined as “wastes” in Water Code Section 13050. Soils containing elevated metals also occur at other locations within the Park. In addition, the Park contains at least one point source of pollutants, the Magenta Drain, as defined in the federal Clean Water Act to waters of the State and navigable waters of the United States.

### **Site Characterization**

Characterization activities, including previous and on-going work, are directed towards, but not limited to, identifying and characterizing the nature, extent and chemical characteristics of waste materials, impacted soils and surface and subsurface water quality.

### **Potential Remediation Activities**

While the Draft Program EIR will provide a more detailed and specific discussion of the anticipated remediation activities, examples of such activities include (but are not limited to) one or a combination of the following:

#### Buildings:

- **Removal (Selective or Complete) of Dust from Interior Buildings.** Dust containing elevated metals may be removed from selected or entire areas of building interiors.
- **Use of Institutional Controls to Prevent Public Access.** Controls may be constructed to prevent public access to certain interior portions of buildings.
- **Building Removal.** Buildings or structures may be removed. The buildings may be replaced as necessary.

#### Soils:

- **Removal (Either Selective or Complete) of Contaminated Materials.** Selected portions of surface material may be removed and replaced with clean fill.
- **Placement of Covers over Selected Area(s).** An engineered cover containing clean fill and infiltration barriers may be applied on top of contaminated materials.
- **Surface Stabilization.** Areas may be graded, vegetated with native plant species, or stabilized with rock or other materials to reduce erosion of contaminated materials.
- **Storm Water Diversions.** Diversions may be constructed to reduce contact of surface water with contaminated materials.
- **Use of Institutional Controls to Prevent Public Access.** Fences may be constructed around contaminated areas to prevent public access. Signs would be posted warning the public that the area is closed.

### Surface and Sub-Surface Water:

- **Water Treatment.** Water treatment using implementation of Best Management Practices (BMPs), active treatment (e.g., water treatment plant), passive treatment (e.g., constructed wetlands), or a combination thereof would be implemented, as necessary.
- **Hydrologic Controls.** Water management controls, such as storm water diversions or BMPs may be constructed to reduce contact with and erosion of contaminated materials.
- **Sediment Removal.** Contaminated sediment may be removed from water courses.

Contaminated materials would be managed either on-site or at one or more off-site facilities, depending on the material and metal characteristics.

### **Possible Effects and Reduction Techniques**

The Draft Program EIR will evaluate the potential environmental impacts of the proposed remediation actions in this Project. The anticipated remediation activities may affect visual/aesthetic, biological, surface and sub-surface water, air quality, noise, transportation, and cultural resources. The Project will incorporate standard reduction techniques to reduce potential impacts. Where appropriate and feasible, BMPs will be used to minimize surface water impacts, reduce emissions and fugitive dust levels, minimize short-term impacts to transportation routes, reduce noise, and minimize visual impacts. The Draft Program EIR's Project Description and impact evaluations will provide a detailed discussion of these techniques, but for purposes of this NOP, the following are some, but not all, possible effects, reduction techniques, and mitigations:

Surface Water: Grading and excavation during remediation may release surface material into Little Wolf Creek. Reduction techniques will be provided in the Draft Program EIR.

Biological Resources: Grading and excavation activities may temporarily impact sensitive plant and wildlife species. Reduction techniques may include identification and monitoring to avoid sensitive species and habitats.

Visual/Aesthetics: Fence and sign installation could impact the landscape qualities of the Park. Reduction techniques will be provided in the Draft Program EIR.

Air Quality: Grading and excavation activities may temporarily impact local air quality through creation of fugitive dust and equipment emissions. Reduction techniques may include watering, limitation of activities during windy days, and freeboard limitations.

Noise: Construction activities (e.g., grading and excavation) may temporarily impact noise levels. Reduction techniques may include restricting activities to 8:00 - 5:00 p.m., Monday through Friday, unless there is an emergency.

Transportation and Traffic: Contaminated material removal to appropriate off-site waste facilities, as well as importing clean fill materials, labor and equipment may temporarily impact local transportation and traffic (See Figure 2, Local Transportation Network).

Reduction techniques may include limiting lane closures, developing a Traffic Control Plan, scheduling trips to avoid peak traffic times, posting notices of pending construction, and alerting emergency service providers.

Cultural Resources: Remediation could impact cultural resources. Reduction techniques may include identification and recordation, capping, signage and monitoring for avoidance of cultural resources.

### **Responses to this NOP**

Due to the time limits mandated by State law, responses must be submitted to the address provided below no later than thirty (30) calendar days after this notice is filed with the Governor's Office of Planning and Research/State Clearinghouse (August 15)

### **Review Period: August 15-September 13, 2008**

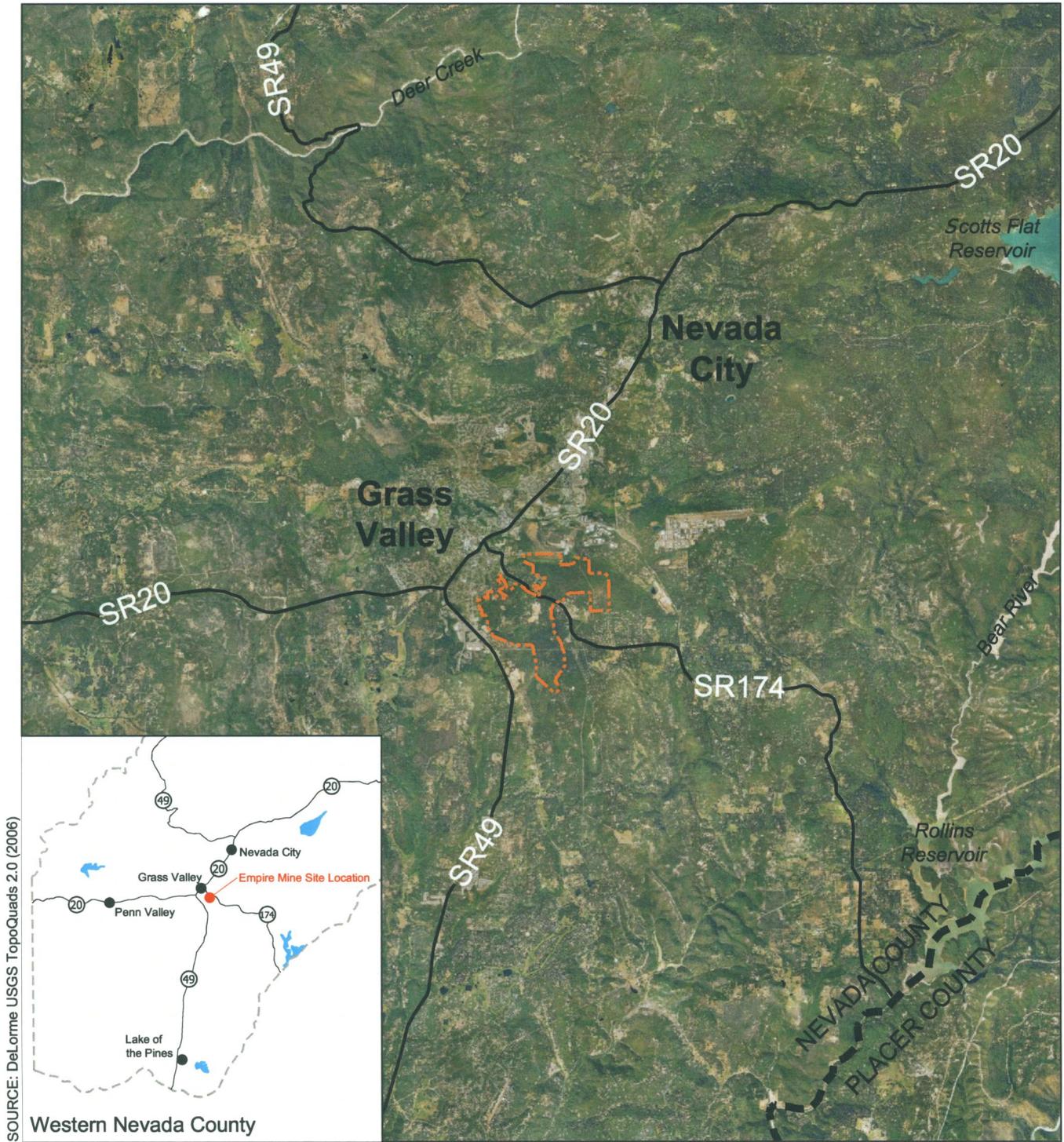
Please include the full name, telephone number with area code, and email address of a contact person with each submittal.

### **Submit Comments To:**

Resource Design Technology, Inc.  
Attn: Therese M. Schmidt, AICP – Project Manager  
4990 Hillside Circle, Suite 400  
El Dorado Hills, CA 95762  
Telephone: (916) 983-9193 Fax: (916) 983-9194  
Email: [tschmidt@resourcedesign.biz](mailto:tschmidt@resourcedesign.biz) (Subject Line: Empire Mine State Historic Park)

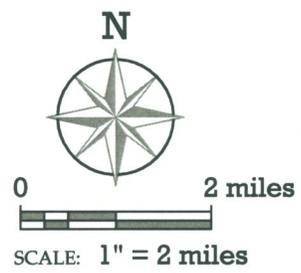
Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

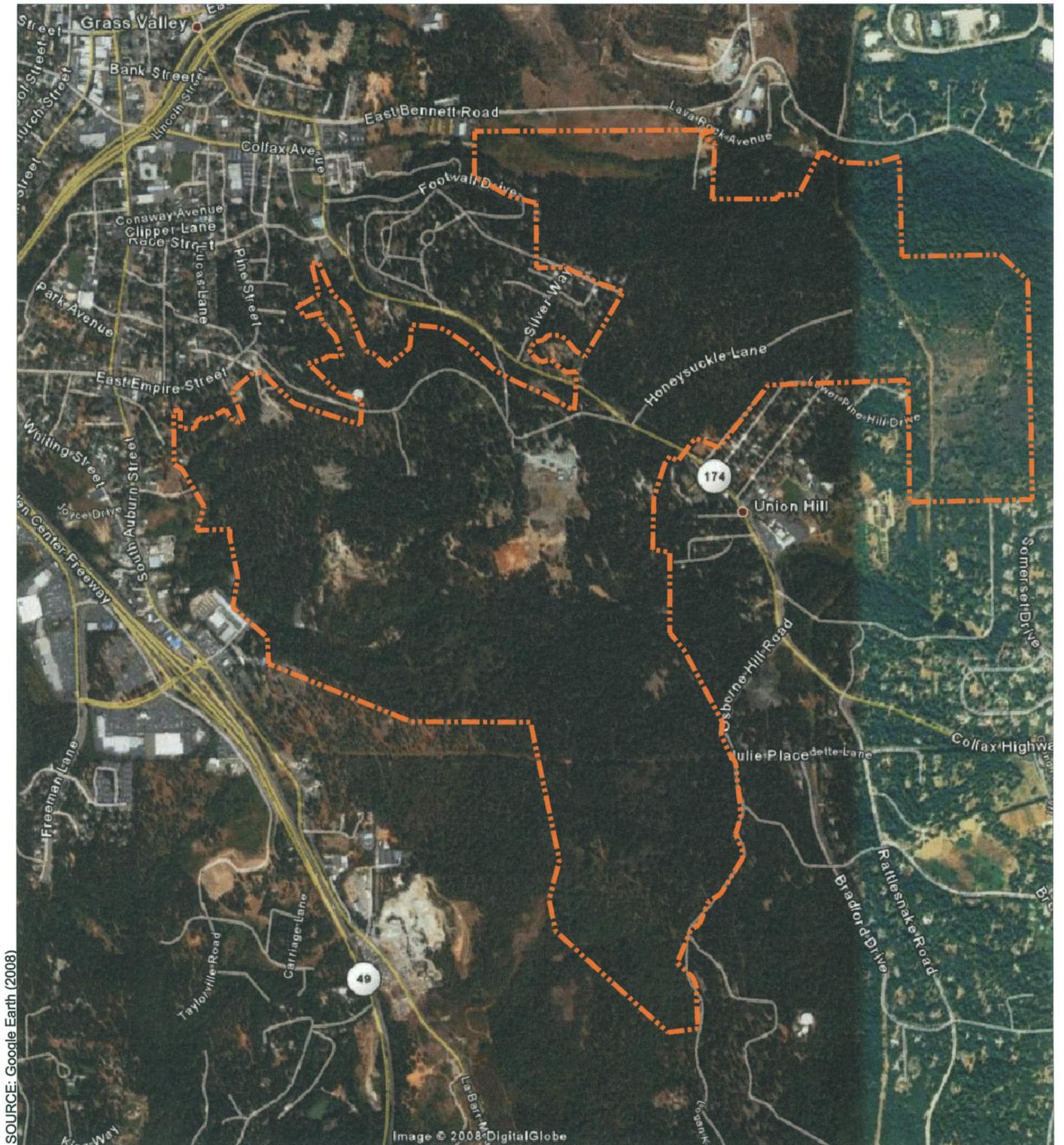
  
R. Bruce Steubing



----- Empire Mine  
 ----- State Historic Park Boundary

**Figure 1**  
**Regional Location**  
**and Transportation Routes**  
 EMPIRE MINE  
 STATE HISTORIC PARK





----- Empire Mine  
State Historic Park Boundary

**Figure 2**  
**Local Transportation Network**  
**EMPIRE MINE**  
**STATE HISTORIC PARK**



0 1500'  
SCALE: 1" = 1500'-0"

**RESOURCE DESIGN**  
TECHNOLOGY, INC.