

## CATEGORICAL EXCLUSION

Project Name: Patterson Creek Quartzite Community Pit

Applicant(s): Jeri and Kirk Hansen; U.S. Forest Service, Salmon-Challis National Forest;  
Bureau of Land Management, Challis Field Office

Project Lead: Ken Gardner

Project/Case File Number: IDI-35138

CE Number: ID-330-2007-CE-3567

### DESCRIPTION OF PROPOSED ACTION

The Bureau of Land Management [BLM], Challis Field Office proposes to designate the SW $\frac{1}{4}$ SW $\frac{1}{4}$  sec. 23, T. 14 N., R. 23 E., B.M. as a community pit for quartzite rock (Patterson Creek Quartzite Community Pit). The BLM would authorize the disposal of up to 50,000 bank cubic yards of quartzite from the toe of a talus slide adjacent to Patterson Creek road. The site would be used for the foreseeable future (~40 years), and could have up to 5 acres of surface disturbance. The site has had both previous authorized use (talus was used in the Patterson mine rehabilitation project) and mineral material trespass, and multiple parties have requested to obtain material from the site. To offer maximum protection to fish, wintering mule deer and bighorn sheep, the disposals would occur only from 01 June to 14 September.

The project site is in southern Lemhi County, Idaho on public land administered by the Challis Field Office (figures 1-2, photos 1-4). The site is approximately 20 miles southeast of Ellis, Idaho, and is reached from Ellis by traveling 23 miles southeast on Pahsimeroi road, and then 0.2 miles east on Patterson Creek road. The material consists of the toe of a talus slide composed of angular, quartzite cobbles and small boulders (~6-24 inches in diameter) and would be used primarily as rip rap or decorative landscape rock (photo 5). Patterson Creek road would be used to access the material.

The proposed action consists of excavating and loading quartzite rock by hand or heavy equipment (front-end loader, excavator, backhoe, bulldozer, etc). The rock would be hauled from the site by pick-up trucks, dump trucks, trailers, or similar equipment. No material would be excavated below the level of Patterson Creek road to protect a telephone line buried next to the road to a depth of as few as 6 inches. A shallow drainage ditch would be maintained between the project site and the road. The cost to maintain and reclaim the pit would be approximately \$12,000, which would be collected from the operators at the rate of \$0.24 per bank cubic yard. At the discretion of the BLM, an operator could perform reclamation in lieu of paying the reclamation fee.

The project site is not visible from any residences, the closest of which is approximately 1000 feet west of the site, and is shielded from the site by topography. The visual impacts would be vehicles driving to and from the site, people loading rocks, pits developing within the talus (e.g., comparable to those that have developed along Morgan Creek road), and the signs marking the perimeter of the pit.

The BLM would be responsible for the eradication of all weeds at the site. The BLM also would be responsible for site reclamation, which would consist of re-contouring the toe of the talus field to blend with adjacent topography (i.e., that portion that could be reached with a hydraulic excavator); construction of a drainage ditch at the base of the talus slide; sloping the base of the pit floor to drain to the ditch; and removing any non-native items from the site (e.g., signs, trash). The reclamation would result in the section of Patterson Creek road adjacent to the project site being widened by approximately 15 feet, which would enhance traffic safety and-or provide waste storage areas for road maintenance. Permits to remove material from the site would contain the following stipulations:

- 1) The operator shall cause no undue or unnecessary degradation, and shall minimize surface disturbance as much as practicable.
- 2) Sedimentation and-or erosion control structures shall be installed and maintained as necessary to prevent excessive sediment loss from the site.
- 3) The operator shall conduct all operations in a safe and prudent manner. In particular, the operator shall ensure that the operations do not pose any hazards to people, animals, roads or power lines, e.g., no unstable slopes shall be left unattended. At the conclusion of the operations, all highwalls shall be reduced to a stable angle and-or bermed (above and below as necessary) to protect wildlife and people from the highwall.
- 4) No materials or equipment shall be stored at the site except during active work periods.
- 5) The operator shall maintain the site in an orderly manner, and promptly remove all operational solid waste from the site.
- 6) Weed control measures shall include washing all heavy equipment and vehicles that have been off of maintained roads before their use at the site. In addition, the operator shall make all reasonable efforts to ensure that material utilized from the pit does not introduce weeds into other locations, e.g., if necessary, strip all vegetation and the upper 1 foot of rock from the work area and stockpile such at the site.
- 7) The operator shall take all reasonable precautions to prevent, control, or suppress fire at the site, including compliance with any fire restrictions in place.
- 8) The operator shall not damage any highway or bridge (49 IS 1006), e.g., unloading heavy equipment on asphalt surfaces.

- 9) The operator shall properly secure all loads, and shall not deposit any substance upon any highway likely to injure any person, animal or vehicle upon the highway (49 IS 613).
- 10) The operator shall not interfere with any improvements or rights-of-ways at the site, e.g., Patterson Creek road (IDI-8406), a buried telephone line (IDI-16925), and an overhead power line (IDI-20734). In particular, to protect the buried telephone line, the operator shall not remove material below the level of Patterson Creek road.
- 11) The operator shall not excavate, remove, damage or otherwise alter or deface any cultural, archaeological and-or paleontological resource on public land. The operator shall immediately bring to the attention of the BLM Challis Field Manager any such resources that might be altered or destroyed on public land by the operations, and shall leave such discovery intact until notified in writing by the authorized officer that the operations may proceed.
- 12) The operator shall obey all applicable laws and regulations, e.g., Mine Safety and Health Administration regulations regarding training plans, required levels of training, and occupational noise exposure (30 CFR 46, 62).
- 13) The operator shall utilize Idaho Best Mining Practices, e.g., stripping only the minimum amount of area necessary for immediate use.
- 14) Disposals would occur from the site only between 01 June to 14 September.

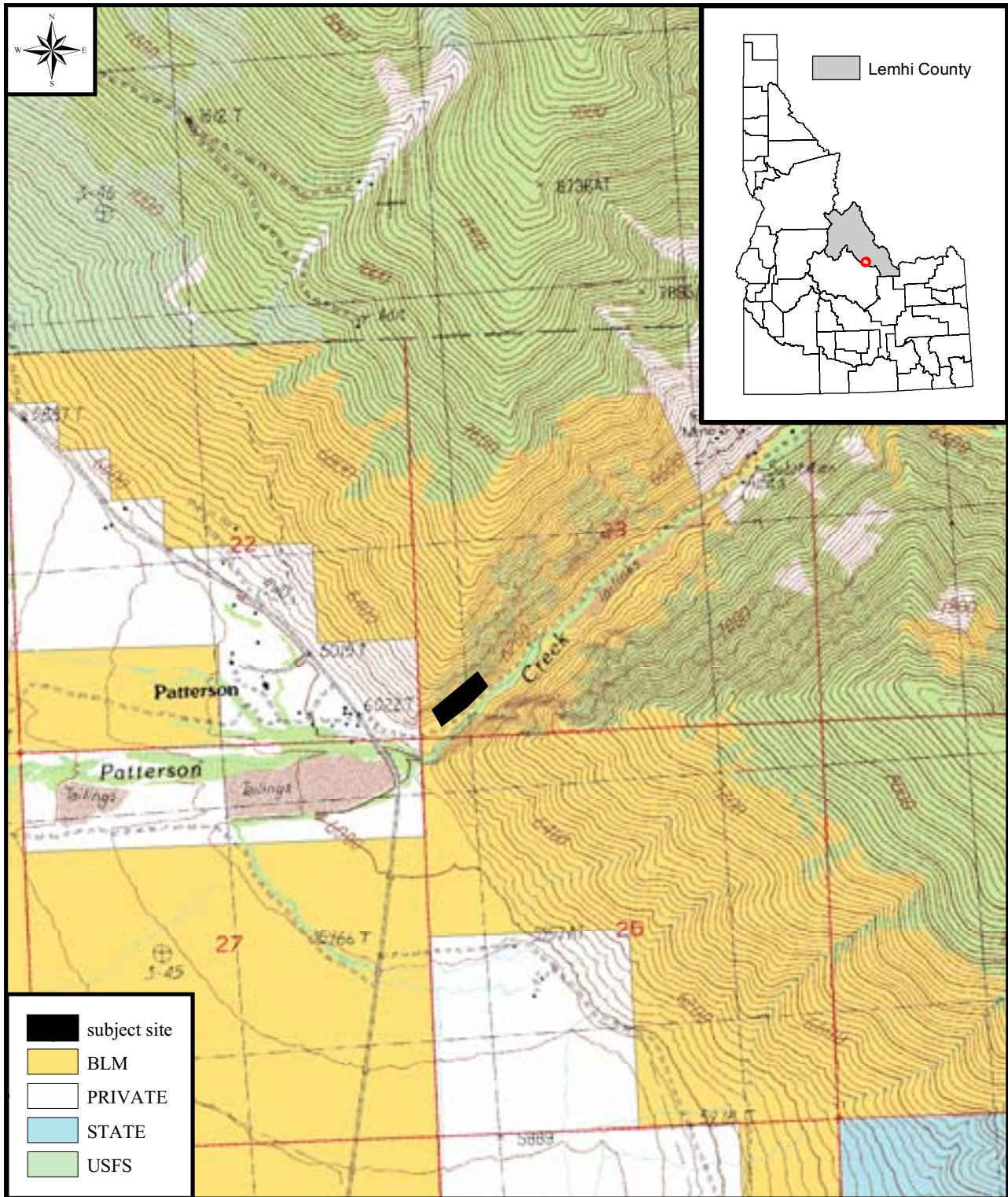


Figure 1. Patterson Creek Community Pit,  
Patterson U.S. Geological Survey  
7.5 minute topographic quadrangle.

05 May 2005 - Ken Gardner

0 1,000 2,000 4,000  
Feet

NAD 1983, UTM Zone 11 N

1:24,000 1 inch equals 2,000 feet



Original data was compiled at various scales from various sources.  
Spatial information may not meet National Mapping Accuracy  
Standards. The information may be updated without notification.  
No warranty is made by the Bureau of Land Management as to  
the accuracy, reliability or completeness of the data.



Figure 2. Patterson Creek Community Pit,  
SWSW sec. 23, T. 14 N., R. 23 E., B.M.

0 250 500 1,000  
 Feet

NAD 1983, UTM Zone 11 N

1:6,004 1 inch equals 500 feet

05 May 2005 - Ken Gardner



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Photo 1. Southwest portion of subject site. View to northeast.



Photo 2. Northeast portion of subject site. View to northeast.



Photo 3. Central portion of subject site with areas of previous rock removal. View to southwest.



Photo 4. Areas of previous rock removal within the subject site. View to northwest.





Photo 5. Angular quartzite cobbles and boulders. View to northwest.

#### CONSULTATION AND COORDINATION:

The proposed action was added on 24 August 2007 to the BLM Idaho NEPA database: “<http://www.id.blm.gov/planning/nepa/databases/index.php>”. The Idaho Department of Fish and Game also was consulted by letter dated 02 November 2007 regarding the proposed action. No external comments were received by the BLM regarding the proposed action.

## DECISION:

It is my decision to authorize the disposal of mineral materials from the Patterson Creek community pit as described above. The disposal is authorized under the authority of 43 CFR 3600.

## LAND USE PLAN CONFORMANCE STATEMENT AND RATIONALE FOR DECISION:

The proposed action is categorically excluded as outlined in 516 DM 11.9, F.10. (Disposal of mineral materials such as sand, stone, gravel, pumice, pumicite, cinders and clay in amounts not exceeding 50,000 cubic yards or disturbing more than 5 acres, except in riparian areas), and none of the extraordinary circumstances described in 516 DM 2, Appendix 2 apply. I have determined that the proposed action will conform with the Challis Resource Management Plan, approved July 29, 1999 - "Goal 2: Provide saleable and non-energy minerals to meet local demand, while minimizing adverse impacts to other resource values (p. 43). The proposed action meets the criteria for categorical exclusion in 516 DM 11.9, F.10., and none of the extraordinary circumstances in 516 DM 2, Appendix 2 apply.

I have carefully reviewed the administrative record for the proposed action, which documents a variety of potential impacts. In particular, I have considered visual impacts to landowners and recreationists in the locality. The community pit will be used infrequently during the term of the permit, and probably for durations of a few weeks or less. There will be increased truck traffic in the locality during such times. The proposed action will cause only minor changes to the topography of a relatively small area of talus, but no meaningful changes to the overall landscape. The proposed action will not contribute meaningfully to the spread of non-native, invasive plant species in the locality, and will not cause any meaningful levels of dust, noise, erosion or vehicle traffic. These impacts, when considered cumulatively with other actions in the Pahsimeroi Valley that cause such impacts (particularly other mineral material sites), will not cause any significant impacts.

There are no readily available sources of quartzite talus on private or public land in the Pahsimeroi Valley apart from the Patterson Creek community pit. The closest source is the Morgan Creek community pit, which is more than 30 miles from the project site. The Furey Lane, Grouse Creek, and Goldburg Creek are at least 6 miles from the project site, and supply only sand and gravel. The direct economic impacts of the proposed action include supplying the locality with material with a royalty value of \$10,000s. The indirect benefits will be many times that amount, and include the amount saved by reduced haul distances. For example, hauling 100 10-cubic yard loads a round-trip of 20 miles instead of 80 miles will save approximately \$24,000. The dramatic increase in transportation costs since early 2005 requires that, more than ever, mineral material sites must be available relatively close to where such minerals are used.

The site has had previous mineral material trespass, which demonstrates the need for a source of such materials and is cause to consider authorizing the disposal of materials from the site (BLM Handbook 9235-1, p. 16). The reclamation cost for the pit has been appropriately calculated, and will be adjusted in the future to account for inflation. A community pit designation is the best manner to manage the disposal of mineral material from the site.

Preparer: Ken Gardner  
(signature)

Date: 10 September 2006  
(updated 01 November 2007)

Name: Ken Gardner  
Title: geologist

NEPA reviewer: Dana Perkins  
(signature)

Date: March 6, 2008

Name: Dana Perkins  
Title: ecologist

Authorizing Official: David Rosenkrance  
(signature)

Date: 12 April 2008

Name: David Rosenkrance  
Title: Field Manager

#### APPEALS INFORMATION:

The regulations governing appeals of this matter are 43 CFR 4.