

**File Code:** 1950; 2810  
**Date:** September 7, 2016

Dear Friends and Neighbors of the Coronado National Forest,

The Coronado National Forest (CNF) welcomes your comments on a proposed *Plan of Operations* (Plan) for the Hermosa-Taylor Deposit Drilling Project, submitted by Arizona Minerals, Inc. (AMI). AMI has proposed to develop eight exploratory drill holes at three drill sites (pads), impacting approximately 0.92 acres on National Forest System (NFS) lands in the Patagonia Mountains, Sierra Vista Ranger District. The project area would be located approximately 50 miles southeast of Tucson, and six miles southeast of the town of Patagonia, Arizona in Santa Cruz County. Exploration work is anticipated to be completed within one year. We are inviting you to submit comments to help identify preliminary issues associated with AMI's proposal and refine the proposed action as identified in this letter. The Responsible Official anticipates preparing an environmental assessment for AMI's proposed Plan and needs your assistance to better identify issues, concerns, and opportunities. The proposed Plan is subject to the Project-Level Predecisional Administrative Review Process under *Title 36 Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) Part 218, Subparts A and B*.

### **PROPOSED ACTION**

The Forest Service proposes to process the proposed Plan submitted by AMI to develop eight drill holes from three drill pads located in Sections 4 and 5, Township 23 South, Range 16 East (Figure 1). Total proposed surface disturbance for the project is estimated at 1.54 acres, which includes construction of three drill pads, and two temporary access roads approximately 0.07 miles and 0.25 miles in length (Figure 2). Drill holes would be approximately 3 to 4 inches in diameter and be drilled using a diamond core rig. Drilling operations are proposed to run up to 24 hours per day, seven days per week and are expected to be completed within five months with two drill rigs operating concurrently. Once obtained, samples would be transported offsite for analysis and testing.

Primary access to the proposed Project would be from Harshaw Road (a county road), which connects to Arizona State Route (SR) 82 in the town of Patagonia (Figure 4). During the course of the Project, equipment, materials, and personnel would be initially directed to a staging area located on private land owned by AMI approximately 1 mile southwest of the intersection of Harshaw Road and Forest Road 4686.

The 0.07 mile access road would be located on previously disturbed land and would require vegetation removal only. The 0.25 mile road would be located on undisturbed land, utilize heavy equipment in the construction process and also require vegetation removal.

Three drill pads would be constructed and be approximately 80 feet by 80 feet to accommodate equipment for directional drilling including the drill rig, drill pipe trailer, 5,000 gallon water





tank, support vehicles, a sump (mud pit), portable toilet, and other small equipment. Two drill pads would have two holes and the third drill pad would have four holes (Figure 2). Three sumps would be located at each of the drilling sites and would measure approximately 8 feet wide by up to 15 feet in length and 5 feet deep on average.

Water for the proposed mineral exploration would be obtained from AMI's private land from an existing water well (Figure 3). It would be piped from the private land to the drill sites using 2" diameter pipe placed on FR 5521. Once on site, water would be stored in the 5,000 gallon tanks. Approximately 20,000 gallons of water per week would be used for the duration of active drilling Project (10,000 gallons per rig per week).

Drilling and drill hole abandonment would be conducted in accordance with Arizona Administrative Code (AAC) R12-15 and Arizona Revised Statutes (ARS) Title 45, Chapter 2, Article 10, as administered by the Arizona Department of Water Resources. In accordance with *36 CFR Part 228* and the policies of Forest Service Manual 2840, AMI would stabilize and reseed and place erosion control structures on all temporarily disturbed areas to prevent erosion and to promote vegetation growth. Additional reclamation would occur by rehabilitating drill sites and the two access roads upon completion of drilling activities by regrading and contouring to match surrounding topography and pre-drilling conditions. All materials including equipment, water pipe, water tanks, etc. would be removed from drill pads.

### **PURPOSE AND NEED**

The purpose of the drilling operations is to collect core samples at various depths up to 4,500 feet to assess potential mineralization. AMI is entitled to conduct operations that are reasonably incidental to exploration and development of mineral deposits on its unpatented mining claims pursuant to U.S. Mining Laws. Under regulations of the U.S. Secretary of Agriculture, AMI must conduct mining operations in accordance with the requirements found at *36 CFR Part 228A* and in accordance with a plan of operations that has been approved by the Forest Service. The need for the proposed Federal action is for compliance with the requirement that the Forest Service respond to a proposed plan of operations to conduct mining operations on National Forest System lands pursuant to U.S. Mining Laws.

The Forest Service is required by regulation to respond to a proposed Plan to conduct operations pursuant to the Mining Law of 1872. Under *36 CFR 228.5*, the Forest Service must determine whether to approve the Plan as proposed, or to require changes or additions deemed necessary to meet the requirements of the regulations for environmental protection set forth in *36 CFR 228.8*.

### **HOW TO COMMENT**

Comments received in response to this solicitation, including names and addresses of those who comment, will be considered part of the public record on these proposed actions and will be available for public inspection. Comments submitted anonymously will be accepted and

considered; however, anonymous comments will not provide the agency with the ability to provide the respondent with subsequent environmental documents.

Specific written comments should be submitted to:

U.S. Mail: Coronado National Forest  
ATTN: Minerals & Geology Staff  
Re: Hermosa-Taylor  
300 W. Congress St. 6<sup>th</sup> Floor  
Tucson, AZ 85701

Facsimile: 520-388-8305  
ATTN: Minerals & Geology Staff  
Re: Hermosa-Taylor

The office business hours for those submitting hand-delivered comments are 8:00 am to 4:30 pm Monday through Friday, excluding holidays. Electronic comments should be submitted in a common digital format (e.g., Word (.doc), rich text format (.rtf), text (.txt), Adobe (.pdf), and hypertext markup language (.html)) to:

<https://cara.ecosystem-management.org/Public//ReadingRoom?Project=50097>

Please state "Hermosa-Taylor Deposit Drilling Project" on the envelope when replying by U.S. mail.

Additional information on Hermosa-Taylor Deposit Drilling Project is also available on the webpage: [http://www.fs.fed.us/nepa/nepa\\_project\\_exp.php?project=50097](http://www.fs.fed.us/nepa/nepa_project_exp.php?project=50097). If you would like more information or have questions relating to this proposal, please contact Rick Goshen, Geologist, at (520) 388-8341 or [rgoshen@fs.fed.us](mailto:rgoshen@fs.fed.us).

Thank you for your interest and participation in the activities proposed on the Sierra Vista Ranger District, Coronado National Forest.

Sincerely,

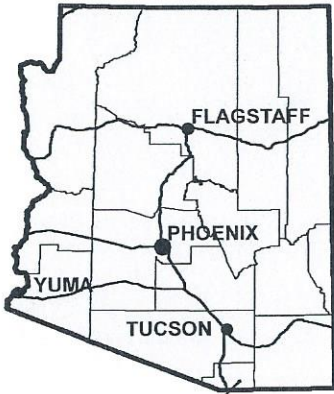


CELESTE KINSEY  
District Ranger

Enclosures: Figures 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5.

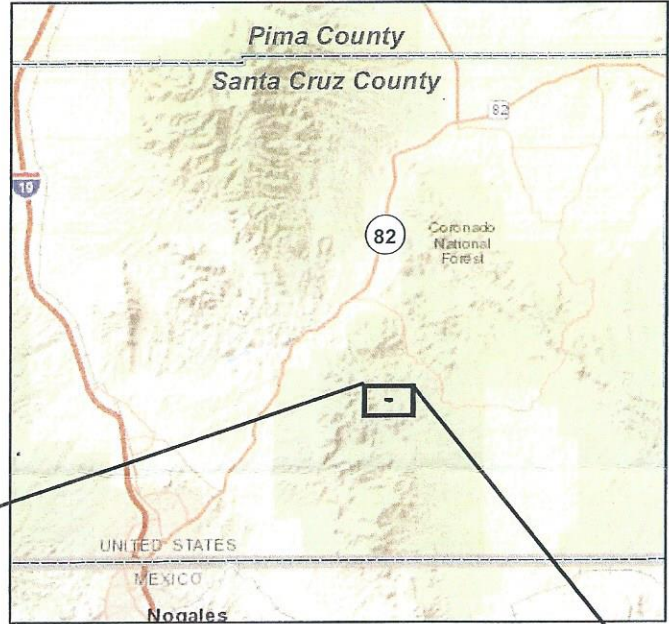


ARIZONA

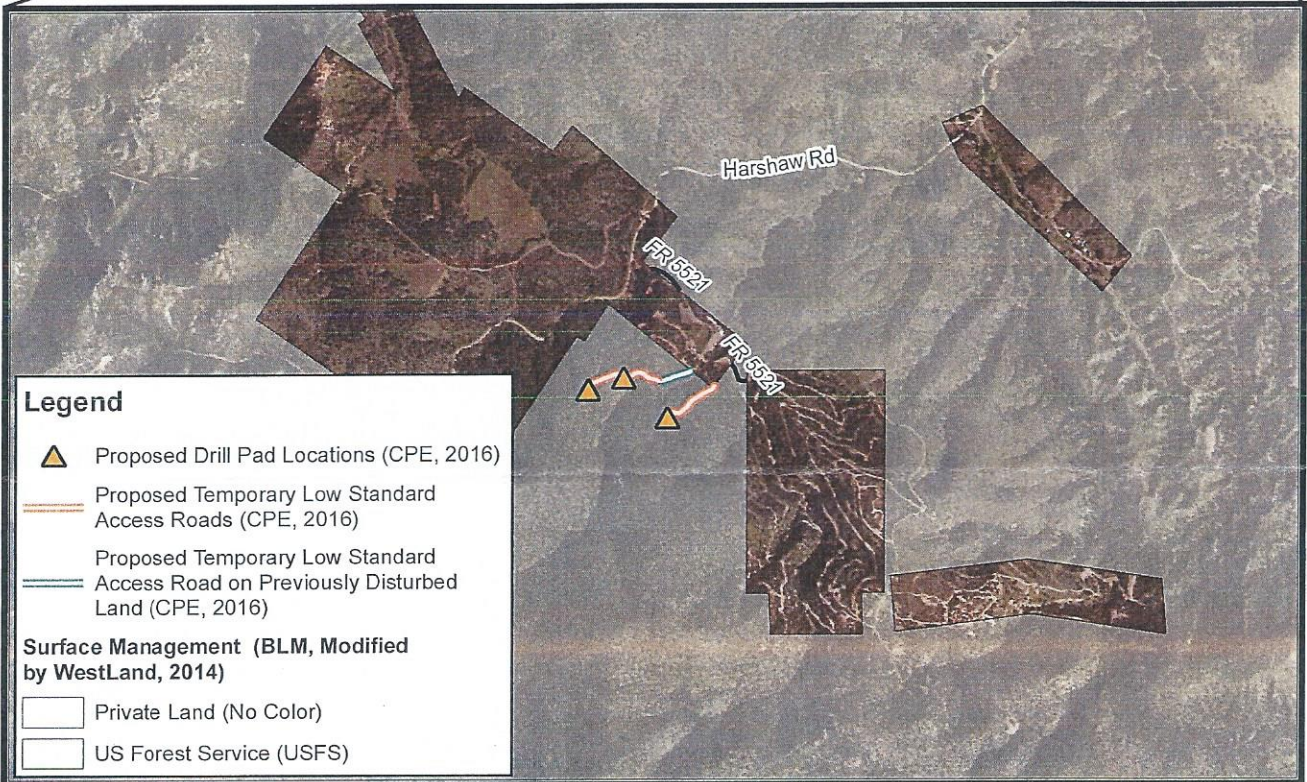


PROJECT LOCATION

SANTA CRUZ COUNTY

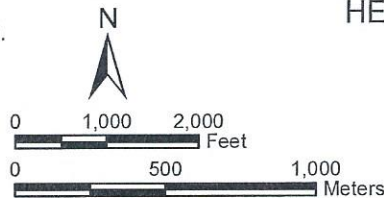


Approximate Scale 1 Inch = 10 Miles



T23S, R16E, Portion of Section 4, (Unsurveyed, Protracted)  
 Santa Cruz County, Arizona,  
 Harshaw (2014) USGS 7.5' Quadrangle  
 Image Source: ArcGIS Online, Street Map and NAIP 2015.

Note: Symbol size for drill pads and line width for temporary low standard roads are for illustration purposes and not representative of the actual area of disturbance.



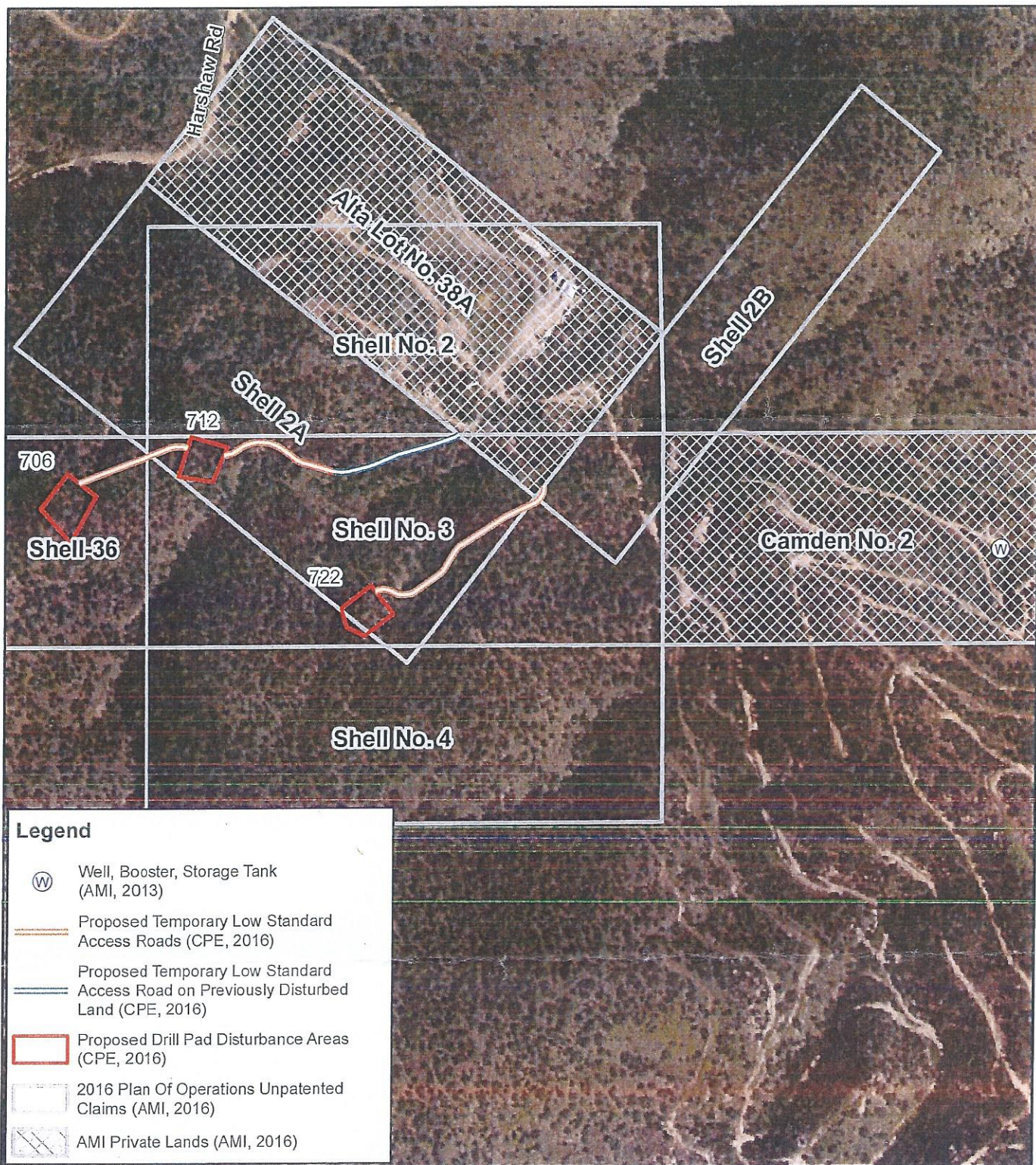
**ARIZONA MINERALS, INC.  
 HERMOSA TAYLOR DEPOSIT  
 DRILLING PROJECT**

Plan of Operations

VICINITY MAP

Figure 1



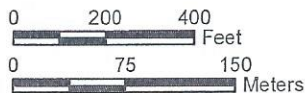


**Legend**

- Ⓜ Well, Booster, Storage Tank (AMI, 2013)
- Proposed Temporary Low Standard Access Roads (CPE, 2016)
- Proposed Temporary Low Standard Access Road on Previously Disturbed Land (CPE, 2016)
- ▭ Proposed Drill Pad Disturbance Areas (CPE, 2016)
- ▭ 2016 Plan Of Operations Unpatented Claims (AMI, 2016)
- ▭ AMI Private Lands (AMI, 2016)

T23S, R16E, Portion of Section 4, (Unsurveyed, Protracted)  
 Santa Cruz County, Arizona,  
 Image Source: NAIP 2015.

Note: Line width for temporary low standard roads are for illustration purposes and not representative of the actual area of disturbance.



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CLAIMS MAP  
 Figure 2



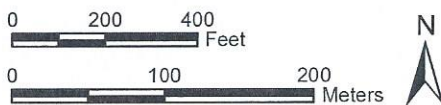
**Legend**

- Ⓜ Well, Booster, Storage Tank (AMI, 2013)
- Proposed Temporary Low Standard Access Roads (CPE, 2016)
- Proposed Temporary Low Standard Access Road on Previously Disturbed Land (CPE, 2016)
- Forest Service Road
- Proposed Drill Pad Disturbance Areas (CPE, 2016)
- Surface Management (BLM, Modified by WestLand, 2014)**
- Private Land (No Color)
- US Forest Service (USFS)



T23S, R16E, Portion of Section 4, (Unsurveyed, Protracted)  
Santa Cruz County, Arizona,  
Image Source: NAIP 2015.

Note: Line width for temporary low standard roads are for illustration purposes and not representative of the actual area of disturbance.



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HERMOSA TAYLOR DEPOSIT  
DRILLING PROJECT  
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PROJECT AREA  
Figure 3



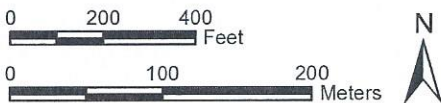
**Legend**

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- Proposed Temporary Low Standard Access Roads (CPE, 2016)
- Proposed Temporary Low Standard Access Road on Previously Disturbed Land (CPE, 2016)
- Forest Service Road
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- Surface Management (BLM, Modified by WestLand, 2014)**
- Private Land (No Color)
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T23S, R16E, Portion of Section 4, (Unsurveyed, Protracted)  
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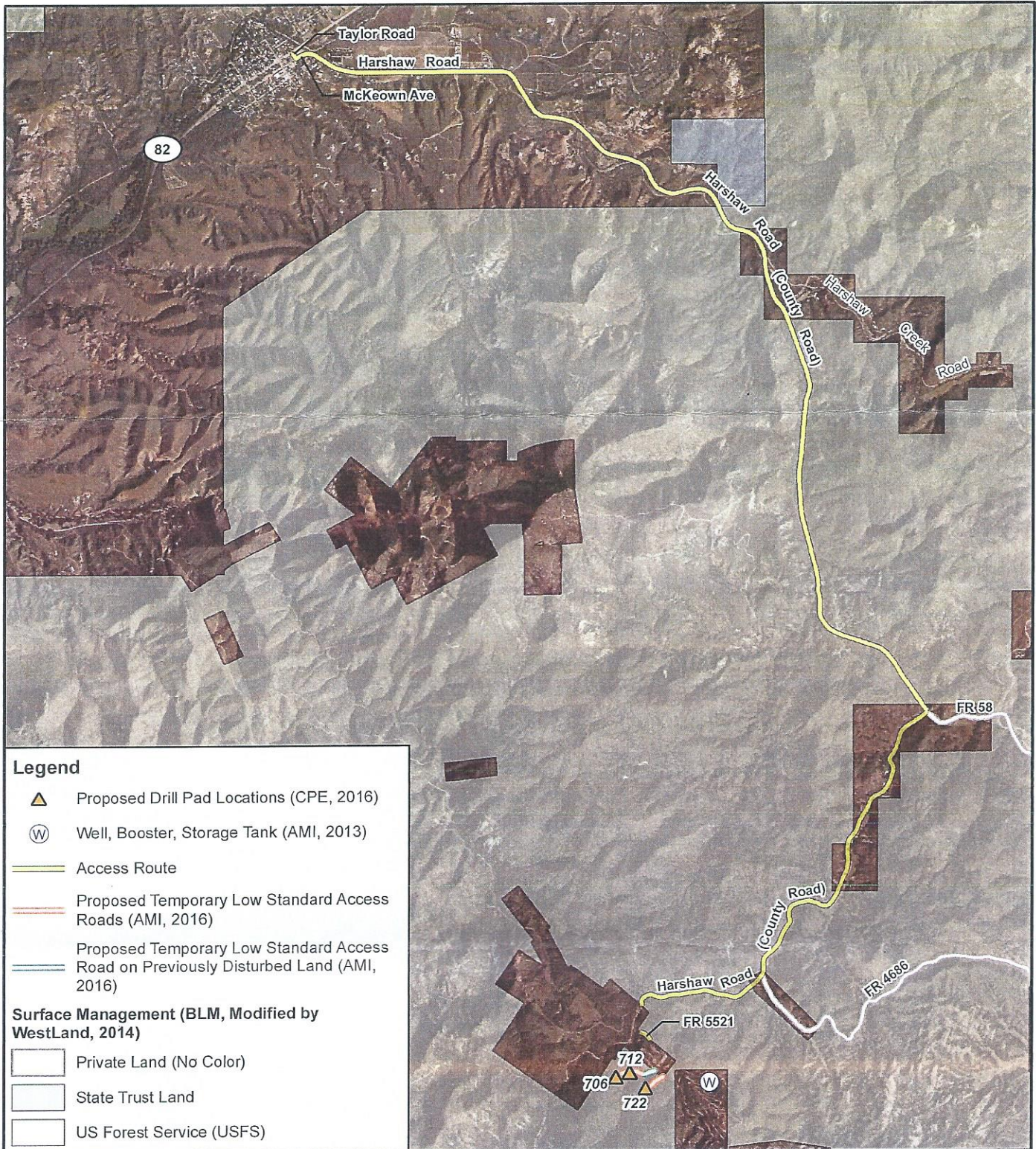
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PROJECT AREA  
Figure 3





**Legend**

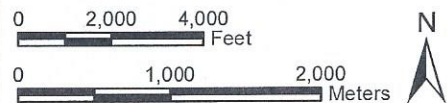
- Proposed Drill Pad Locations (CPE, 2016)
- Well, Booster, Storage Tank (AMI, 2013)
- Access Route
- Proposed Temporary Low Standard Access Roads (AMI, 2016)
- Proposed Temporary Low Standard Access Road on Previously Disturbed Land (AMI, 2016)

**Surface Management (BLM, Modified by WestLand, 2014)**

- Private Land (No Color)
- State Trust Land
- US Forest Service (USFS)

T23S, R16E, Portion of Section 4, (Unsurveyed, Protracted)  
 Santa Cruz County, Arizona,  
 Image Source: NAIP 2015

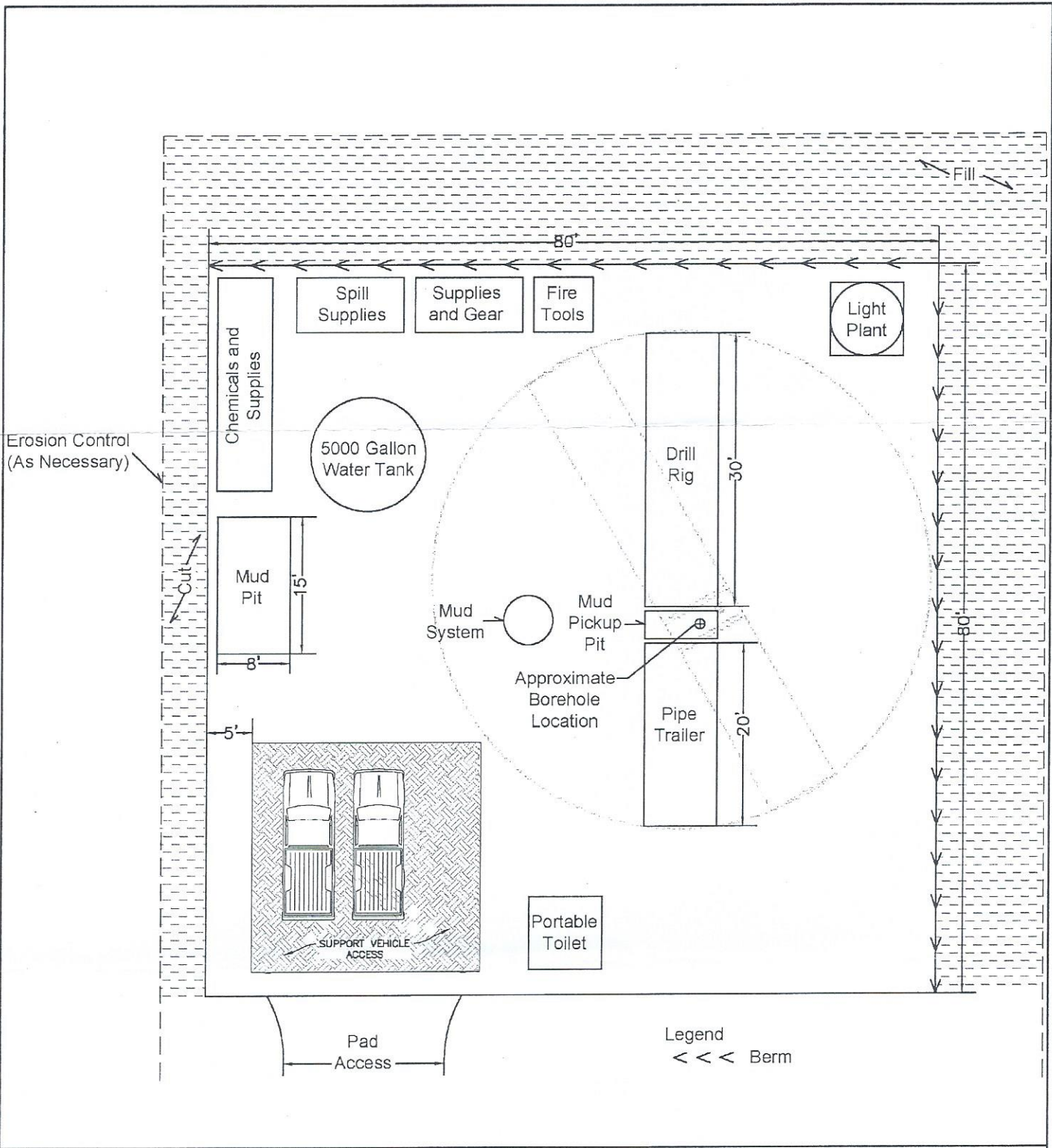
Note: Symbol size for drill pads and line width for temporary low standard roads are for illustration purposes and not representative of the actual area of disturbance.



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ACCESS ROUTE  
 Figure 4





**NOTES:**

1. Size of equipment and materials are approximate.
2. Orientation of equipment and materials will be adjusted onsite within the pad area.
3. Erosion control measures to be placed on the downgradient side(s) of the pad in accordance with the SWPPP.
4. Location of cut/fill slopes depending on terrain.
5. Mud Pit typically located on cut side.
6. Drill Rig will be repositioned to drill multiple holes on each pad. As needed, supplies will be repositioned to accommodate this movement and is why an 80' x 80' working area is needed.
7. A safety berm is constructed on the pad where necessary.

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REPRESENTATIVE DRILL PAD LAYOUT

Figure 5