



Public Notice

US Army Corps Of Engineers

Walla Walla District
201 North Third Avenue
Walla Walla, WA 99362-1876

SUBJECT: Final Environmental Impact Statement
Emerald Creek Garnet, Ltd., NWW No. 981101710

DATE OF NOTICE: October 7, 2004

We are pleased to announce the availability of the Emerald Creek Garnet Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS) evaluating the discharge of dredged and fill material into approximately 133 acres of wetlands associated with the mining of alluvial garnet deposits on 327.5 acres within the St. Maries River floodplain by Emerald Creek Garnet, Ltd. The project is located near Fernwood, Idaho in Benewah and Shoshone Counties. The Notice of Availability will be published in the Federal Register on October 7, 2004.

The FEIS consists of two volumes with Volume 1 (the main text) and Volume 2 (Technical Appendices). This FEIS was prepared pursuant to ER 200-2-2, Procedures for Implementing NEPA, and 33 CFR Part 325, Appendix B, NEPA Implementation Procedures for the Regulatory Program.

Copies of the FEIS are being mailed to agencies, tribes, and individuals who commented on the Draft EIS. Volume I is being provided in hard copy, with Volume II included as a compact disc. A full set of appendices will be available for review at the Corps' Regulatory Field Office in Coeur d'Alene in the Idaho Panhandle National Forest building, 3815 Schreiber Way, Coeur d'Alene, Idaho. Both volumes will be available in limited quantities and may be requested by calling the Corps of Engineers Regulatory Office in Walla Walla, Washington at 509-527-7150. Volumes 1 and 2 will also be available on line for review on the Walla Walla District home page at <http://www.nww.usace.army.mil/html/offices/op/rf/rfhome.htm> under Hot Topics. We encourage you to view the documents on line to conserve valuable natural resources.

Emerald Creek Garnet, Ltd. applied to the Walla Walla District, Corps of Engineers, on September 30, 1998 for a Department of the Army permit required under Section 404 of the Clean Water Act to place dredged or fill material into up to 160 acres of wetlands during the mining of an approximately 416-acre site along the St. Maries River in Benewah and Shoshone Counties, Idaho. The project was later revised downward to a 327.5-acre project site that includes 133 acres of wetlands. An average of about 16 acres of land would be mined each year during the anticipated 20-year life of the project. From 3 to 8 acres of wetlands of the 16-acre total would be mined each year, depending on the garnet density and the depth and location of the mining activity. Wetlands that would be impacted include 17.6 acres of forested wetlands, 36.1 acres of scrub-shrub wetlands, and 79.3 acres of wet meadow wetlands with varying water regimes. Restoration of the 133 acres of wetlands would be on-going as mining is completed. Mitigation of wetland impacts would be accomplished using a variety of techniques including creation of 29.4 additional acres of wetlands on the project site.

The Notice of Intent to prepare the EIS appeared in the Federal Register on October 30, 1998. The Draft EIS was issued for public review on November 14, 2003. A public meeting was held on December 9, 2003 at the Emerald Creek Garnet Mine Office. A public hearing was held on December 10, 2003 at the Idaho Panhandle National Forest building to receive agency and public comments on the DEIS.

We will use this FEIS, along with other relevant analyses, to prepare our Record of Decision to issue or deny the application for a Department of the Army permit. We cannot make this decision until at least 30 days after notice of the FEIS is published in the Federal Register, which is anticipated on October 7, 2004.

Any questions concerning the FEIS or any aspects of the proposal may be directed to Ms. Barbara C. Bengel at the letterhead address or telephone 509-527-7153.

Sincerely,

/signed/
A. Bradley Daly
Chief, Regulatory Branch