

Regulatory Division (1145) CEPOA-RD Post Office Box 6898 JBER, Alaska 99506-0898

Public Notice of Application for Permit

PUBLIC NOTICE DATE:

May 8, 2025

EXPIRATION DATE:

June 9, 2025

REFERENCE NUMBER:

POA-2025-00030 (APMA 9480)

WATERWAY:

Center Creek

Interested parties are hereby notified that a Department of the Army permit application has been received for work in waters of the United States as described below and shown on the enclosed project drawings.

All comments regarding this public notice should be sent to the address noted above. If you desire to submit your comments by email, you should send it to the project manager's email as listed below or to regpagemaster@usace.army.mil. All comments should include the public notice reference number listed above.

All comments should reach this office no later than the expiration date of this public notice to become part of the record and be considered in the decision. Please contact Tyler Marye at (907) 753-5778, toll free from within Alaska at (800) 478-2712, or by email at tyler.i.marye@usace.army.mil if further information is desired concerning this public notice.

APPLICANT: Shawn Pomrenke, Northwest Golddiggers, P.O. Box 2005 Nome, Alaska 99762

AGENT: Leslie Tose, AK 404 Permits, 1555 Garden St., Anchorage, Alaska 99508

<u>LOCATION</u>: The project site is located within Section 23 and 25, T. 11 S., R. 34 W., Kateel River Meridian; USGS Quad Map Cape Flattery; Latitude 64.5216° N., Longitude 165.3983° W.; in Nome, Alaska.

<u>SPECIAL AREA DESIGNATION</u>: The project's disposal site (Latitude 64.5262° N 165.4099° W) is within a mapped flood zone.

<u>PURPOSE</u>: The applicant's stated purpose is to hydraulic placer mine for gold recovery, and sales of gravel and sand in Nome, Alaska.

PROPOSED WORK: The current proposal involves development of the Northern Queen Gold Mine, encompassing 100.74 acres for mining and a 30.00 acre disposal area. The Mine Area includes 47.73 acres of palustrine wetlands, 49.17 acres of uplands, and 3.84 acres of open water. The Disposal Area consists of 9.70 acres of open water, 6.20 acres of palustrine wetlands, 5.50 acres of uplands, 8.60 acres of lotic riparian wetlands, and 0.20 acres of Center Creek stream channel. Total impacts would involve 130.74 acres of wetlands and uplands. The applicant proposes to hydrologically mine approximately 3,713,364 cubic yards of overburden and 1,125,000 cubic yards of pay material, estimating that 30% of the mined material would be saleable sand and gravel. The project is expected to yield 56,000 ounces of gold and take six years to complete.

Specifically, the breakdown of impacts to waters of the United States (U.S.) includes the proposed discharge of 271,051 cubic yards of organic fill material to conduct mechanized land clearing in 47.73 acres of wetlands and 3.84 acres of open water. Additionally, 15,000 to 75,000 cubic yards of overburden fill would be discharged into 9.70 acres of open water, 8.60 acres of wetlands, and 1,800 linear feet (0.20 acre) of Center Creek to create a disposal area for sand slurry. The open water area would be filled first, followed by the lotic riparian area if needed. A temporary 2,431-linear-foot diversion channel would be constructed to route Center Creek around the disposal area. A total of 577 cubic yards of material would be discharged into wetlands to construct a 150-linear-foot berm for the stream diversion. In total, the project would impact 76.07 acres of waters of the U.S.

Phase 1 involves preparation of the Disposal Area, including construction of the temporary diversion channel and installation of a 650-foot-long, 28-inch diameter culvert beneath the access road. Two safety berms would be built as shown in the enclosed drawings.

Phase 1 of the Northern Queen Mine Pit is 50.07 acres in size, with 37.38 acres of uplands, 3.84 acres of open water, and 9.09-acres of palustrine scrub-shrub/emergent (PSSEM) wetlands. Mining would progress in ten (10) cuts, or slices. Each slice would be an average 4.6 acres in size. Dimensions of each slice would be 1250 to 1600 linear feet long by 120 to 150-feet wide and 35 to 60-feet deep with an average volume to be extracted of 408,173 cubic yards.

Phase 2 encompasses 42.92 acres of PSSEM wetlands and 3.94 acres of uplands. It includes nine (9) mining cuts, each approximately 4.6 acres, with similar dimensions and volumes to Phase 1. This phase contains higher organic soil volume, with 180,700 cubic yards to be mechanically cleared, temporarily stockpiled in two 1-acre berms, and later spread during reclamation. Sand and gravel would continue to be separated and stockpiled in uplands.

Reclamation activities would include restoring at least 13.00 acres of shallow open water ponds (L1UB) and constructing 18.94 acres of shallow mucky littoral shoreline (L2US4) in the southeast portion of Phase 2. The disposal area would take 2 to 3 years to stabilize before it can support heavy equipment for reclamation. Once stabilized, the surface would be

recontoured to construct a new stream channel (1,800 feet long, 0.20 acre) within an 18.30 acre riparian basin. All other disturbed areas would be reclaimed through backfilling and contouring to match the surrounding terrain.

Phase 1 and the North and South Tabs, as shown in the enclosed plan, (totaling 57.82 acres) are expected to remain uplands, unless conditions allow for additional wetland or open water construction. The ponds would intersect the water table, varying in depth from 3 to 20 feet. Wetland fringes would be contoured at a 10:1 slope toward open water, lined with at least 6 inches of organic soil, and are expected to naturally revegetate.

All work would be performed in accordance with the enclosed plan (sheets 1-12), dated April 14, 2025. The mining narrative is also enclosed for complete details.

<u>ADDITIONAL INFORMATION</u>: The Application for Permits to Mine in Alaska (APMA) number is 9480.

<u>APPLICANT PROPOSED MITIGATION:</u> The applicant proposes the following mitigation measures to avoid, minimize, and compensate for impacts to waters of the United States from activities involving discharges of dredged or fill material.

- a. Avoidance: The applicant states that drill records from 1940 and 1943 have been reviewed to outline location of recoverable mineral resources and areas not economically viable that would not be mined. Using upland areas for mine support activities, such as use of existing access roads and pads, storage of equipment, discharge of overburden, processing gold, and stockpiling saleable gravel.
- b. Minimization: The applicant states that the project would be minimized by preparation of a mine plan, stripping and stockpiling organic soils, and conducting mining with concurrent backfilling and reclamation. Organic topsoil would be separated and stockpiled apart from overburden to further reduce impacts. The site contains 47.73 acres of palustrine wetlands. with an estimated 271,051 cubic yards of organic soils intended for use in reclamation. For water quality purposes, a temporary diversion of Center Creek would be constructed through existing uplands around the disposal area, and the creek would be relocated back into the area following mining. The proposed fill volume for the disposal area has been reduced from 220,590 cubic yards to an estimated 15,000 to 75,000 cubic yards by recovering saleable sand and gravel and placing some material in uplands. The applicant states approximately 18 acres of Lotic Riparian (RP1) wetlands is expected to regenerate naturally in the disposal area. Best Management Practices for water management would include constructing surface water ditches as needed and maintaining a 75- to 150-foot buffer adjacent to Bourbon Creek. Recovery of saleable sand and gravel during mining Phases 1 and 2 will help balance materials for reclaiming shallow open water ponds in Phase 2. At least 13.00 acres of Shallow Open Water Ponds (L1UB) and 15.64 acres of Shallow Mucky Littoral Shoreline (L2US4) would be constructed in the southeast corner of Phase 2.
- c. Compensatory Mitigation: The applicant states that compensatory mitigation is not proposed for the project because the avoidance and minimization measures described are

appropriate and practicable to the scope and degree of the environmental impacts of the project.

WATER QUALITY CERTIFICATION: A permit for the described work will not be issued until a certification or waiver of certification, as required under Section 401 of the Clean Water Act (Public Law 95-217), has been received from the Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation.

CULTURAL RESOURCES: The latest published version of the Alaska Heritage Resources Survey (AHRS) has been consulted for the presence or absence of historic properties, including those listed in or eligible for inclusion in the National Register of Historic Places. There are no known cultural resources in the permit area or within the vicinity of the permit area. The permit area has been determined to be the footprint of fill to be discharged into waters of the U.S. and the adjacent uplands for the operation of project specific equipment and stockpiles. Consultation of the AHRS constitutes the extent of cultural resource investigations by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (Corps) at this time, and we are otherwise unaware of the presence of such resources. The Corps has made a No Historic Properties Affected (No Effect) determination for the proposed project. This application is being coordinated with the State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO), Federally recognized Tribes, and other consulting parties. Any comments SHPO, Federally recognized Tribes, and other consulting parties may have concerning presently unknown archeological or historic data that may be lost or destroyed by work under the requested permit will be considered in our final assessment of the described work. The Corps is requesting the SHPO's concurrence with this determination.

<u>ENDANGERED SPECIES</u>: The project area is within the known or historic range of the polar bear (*Ursus maritimus*), spectacled eider (*Somateria fischerii*), and Steller's eider (*Polistica stellari*).

We are currently gathering information regarding these species and have yet to make a determination of effect. Should we find that the described activity may affect the species listed above, we will follow the appropriate consultation procedures under section 7 of the Endangered Species Act of 1973 (87 Stat. 844). Any comments the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service or the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) may have concerning endangered or threatened wildlife or plants or their critical habitat will be considered in our final assessment of the described work.

<u>ESSENTIAL FISH HABITAT</u>: The Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act (Magnuson-Stevens Act), as amended by the Sustainable Fisheries Act of 1996, requires all Federal agencies to consult with the NMFS on all actions, or proposed actions, permitted, funded, or undertaken by the agency, that may adversely affect Essential Fish Habitat (EFH).

The project area is not within mapped EFH.

We have determined the described activity would not adversely affect EFH in the project area.

TRIBAL CONSULTATION: The Corps fully supports tribal self-governance and government-to-government relations between Federally recognized Tribes and the Federal government. Tribes with protected rights or resources that could be significantly affected by a proposed Federal action (e.g., a permit decision) have the right to consult with the Corps, Alaska District, on a government-to-government basis. Views of each Tribe regarding protected rights and resources will be accorded due consideration in this process. This public notice serves as notification to the Tribes within the area potentially affected by the proposed work and invites their participation in the Federal decision-making process regarding the protected Tribal rights or resources. Consultation may be initiated by the affected Tribe upon written request to the District Commander. This application is being coordinated with federally recognized tribes and other consulting parties. Any comments federal recognized tribes and other consulting parties may have concerning presently unknown archeological or historic data that may be lost or destroyed by the work under the requested permit will be considered in the Corps final assessment of the described work.

<u>PUBLIC HEARING</u>: Any person may request, in writing, within the comment period specified in this notice, that a public hearing be held to consider this application. Requests for public hearings shall state, with particularity, reasons for holding a public hearing.

EVALUATION: The decision whether to issue a permit will be based on an evaluation of the probable impacts, including cumulative impacts of the proposed activity and its intended use on the public interest. Evaluation of the probable impacts, which the proposed activity may have on the public interest, requires a careful weighing of all the factors that become relevant in each particular case. The benefits, which reasonably may be expected to accrue from the proposal, must be balanced against its reasonably foreseeable detriments. The outcome of the general balancing process would determine whether to authorize a proposal, and if so, the conditions under which it will be allowed to occur. The decision should reflect the national concern for both protection and utilization of important resources. All factors, which may be relevant to the proposal, must be considered including the cumulative effects thereof. Among those are conservation, economics, aesthetics, general environmental concerns, wetlands, cultural values, fish and wildlife values, flood hazards, floodplain values, land use, navigation, shore erosion and accretion, recreation, water supply and conservation, water quality, energy needs, safety, food and fiber production, mineral needs, considerations of property ownership, and, in general, the needs and welfare of the people. For activities involving 404 discharges, a permit will be denied if the discharge that would be authorized by such permit would not comply with the Environmental Protection Agency's 404(b)(1) guidelines. Subject to the preceding sentence and any other applicable guidelines or criteria (see Sections 320.2 and 320.3), a permit will be granted unless the District Commander determines that it would be contrary to the public interest.

The Corps is soliciting comments from the public; Federal, State, and local agencies and officials; Indian Tribes; and other interested parties in order to consider and evaluate the impacts of this proposed activity. Any comments received will be considered by the Corps to determine whether to issue, modify, condition, or deny a permit for this proposal. To make this decision, comments are used to assess impacts on endangered species, historic properties, water quality, general environmental effects, and the other public interest factors listed above.

Comments are used in the preparation of an Environmental Assessment and/or an Environmental Impact Statement pursuant to the National Environmental Policy Act. Comments are also used to determine the need for a public hearing and to determine the overall public interest of the proposed activity.

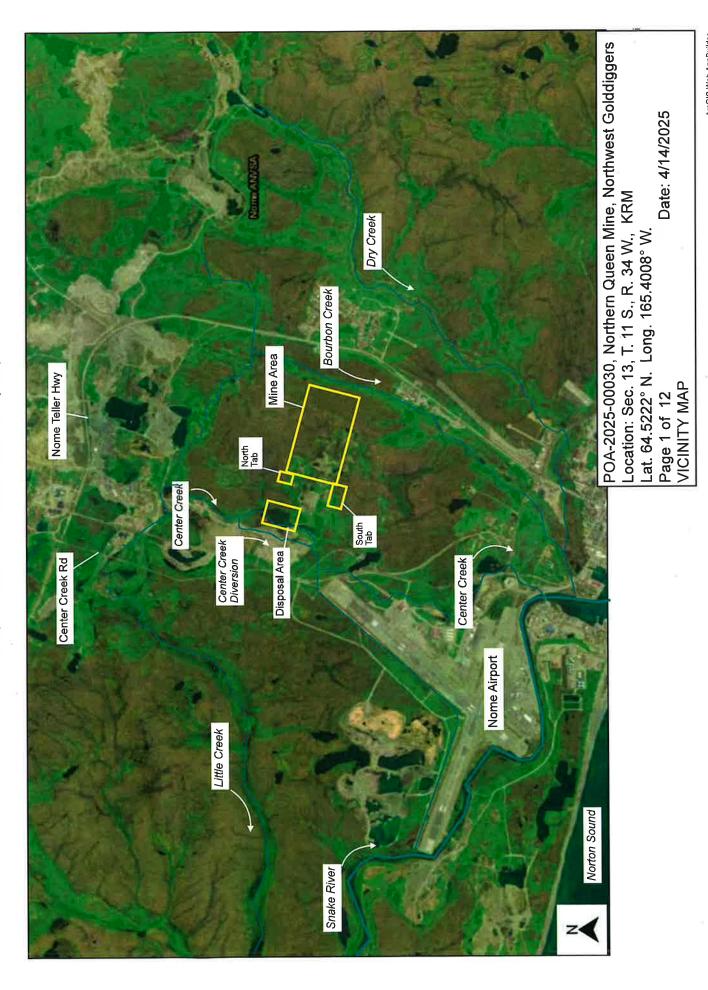
<u>AUTHORITY</u>: This permit will be issued or denied under the following authority:

(X) Discharge dredged or fill material into waters of the United States – Section 404 Clean Water Act (33 U.S.C. 1344). Therefore, our public interest review will consider the guidelines set forth under Section 404(b) of the Clean Water Act (40 CFR 230).

Project drawings are enclosed with this public notice.

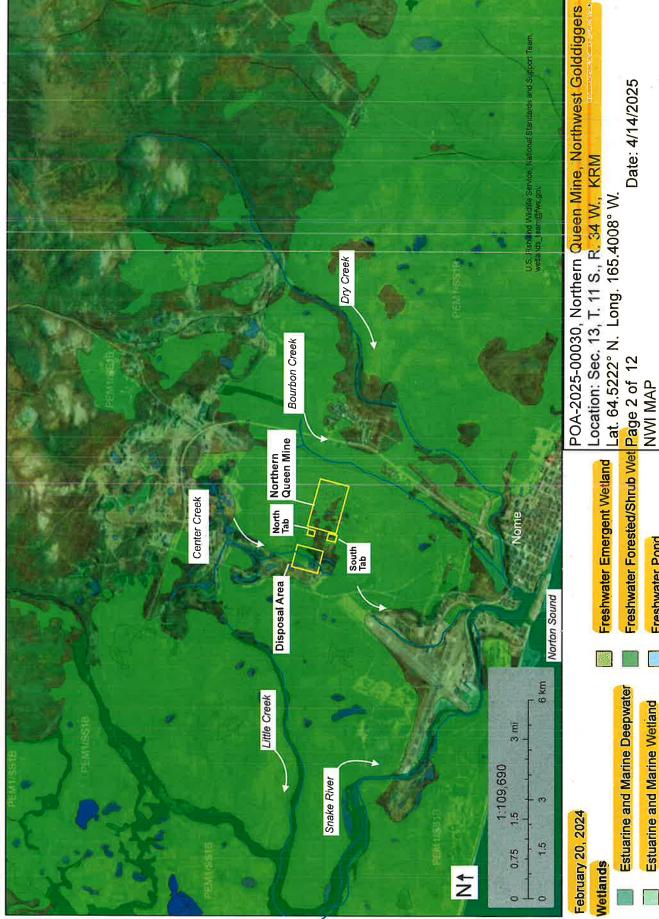
District Commander U.S. Army, Corps of Engineers

Enclosures



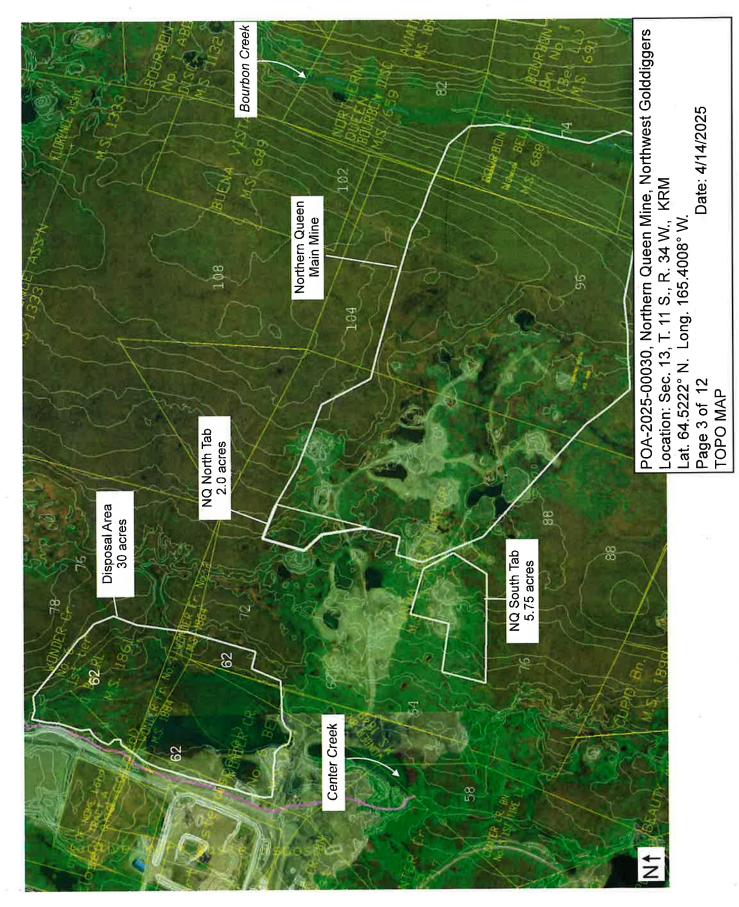
ArcGIS Web AppBuilder
Earthstar Geographics | EFH 2018 Alaska Fisheries NOAA | Deparmine tof Natural Resource, DMLW, Public Assertion and Defense | Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation – Standards, Assessment, and Restoration | ADFG SF GIS | Alaska Department

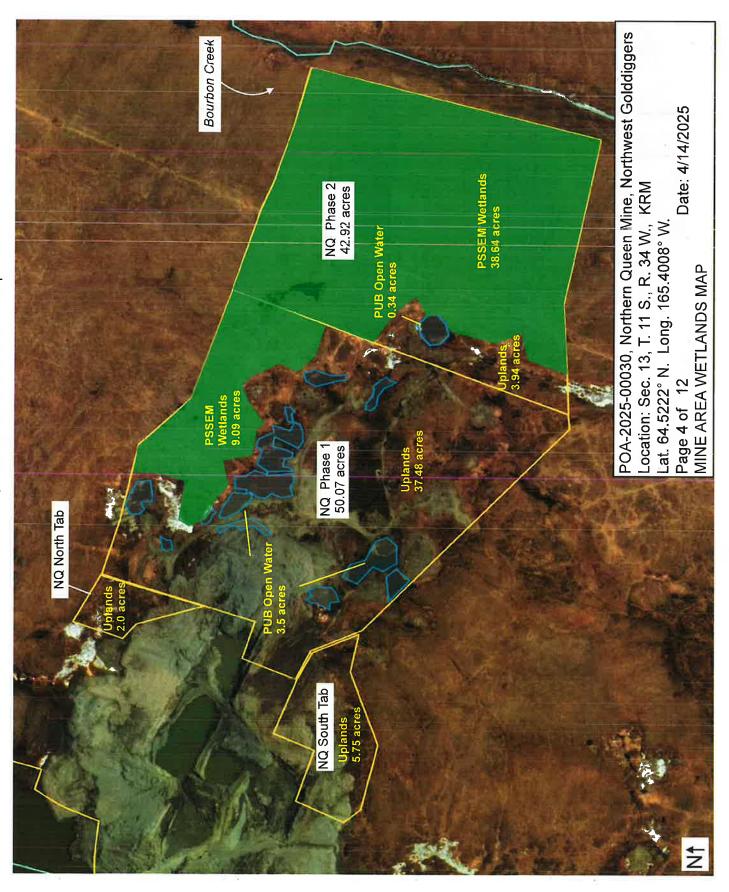




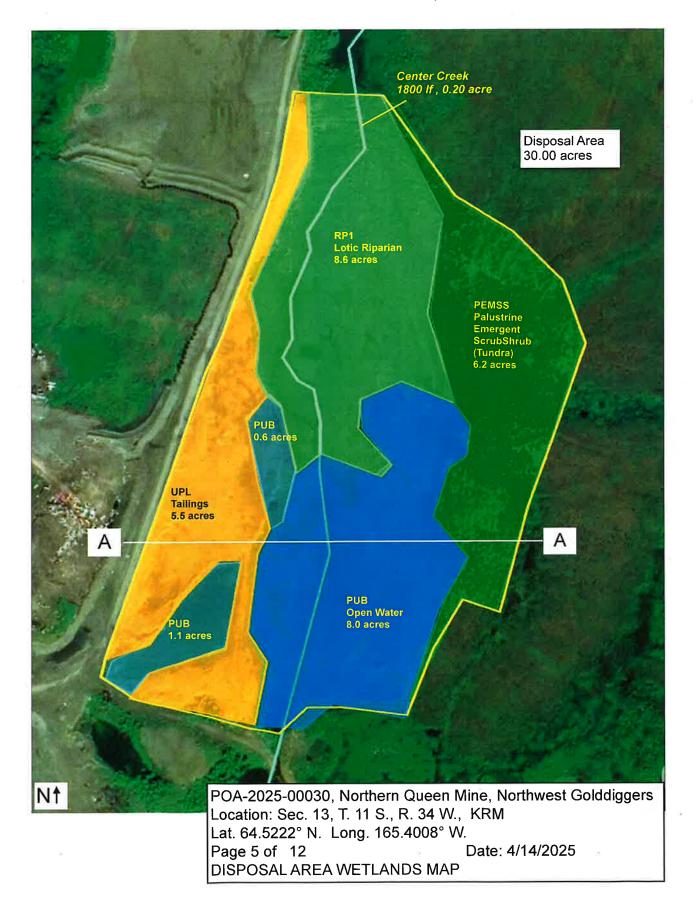
National Wetlands Inventory (NWt) This page was produced by the NWI mapper

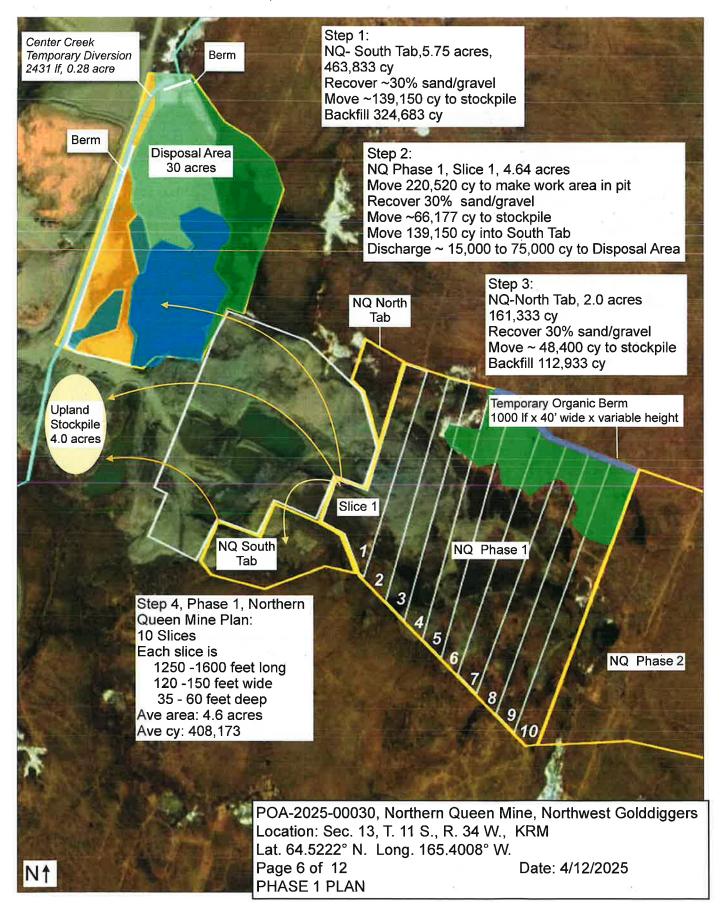
Freshwater Pond

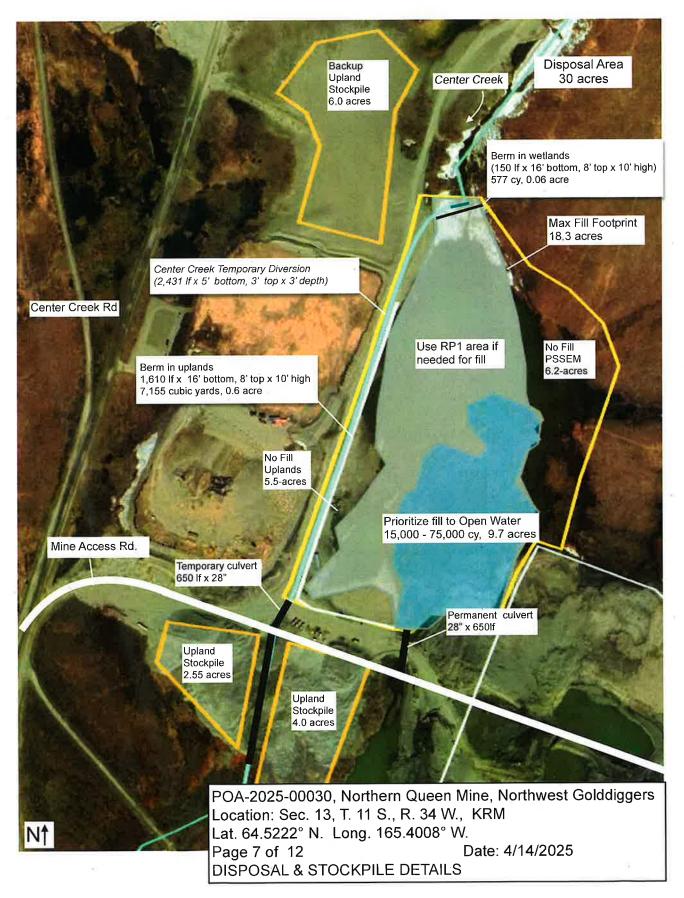


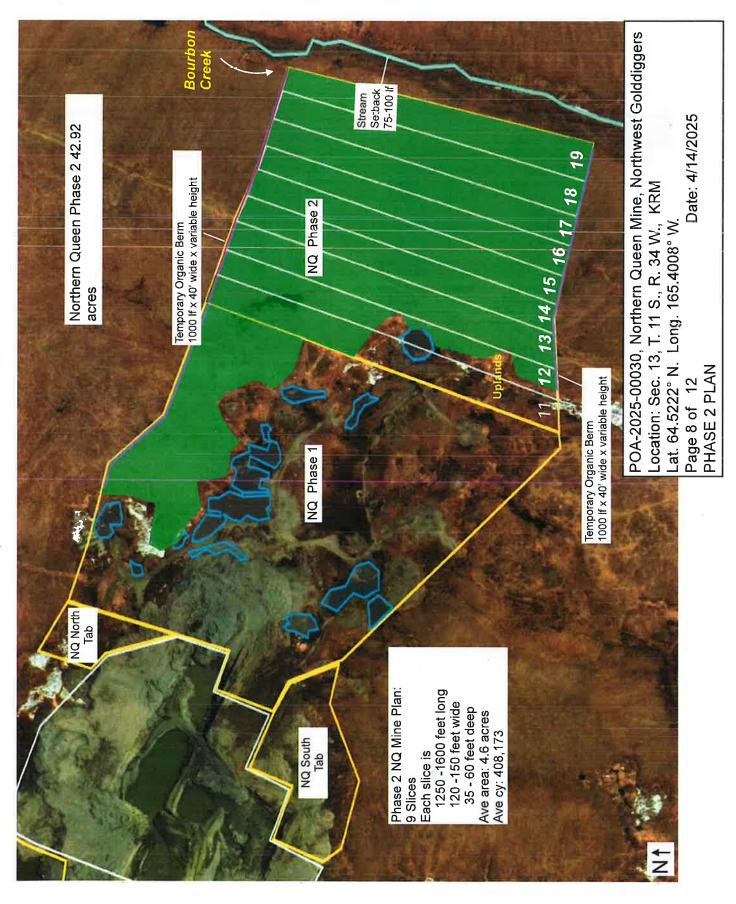


POA-2025-00030, Northern Queen Mine, Disposal Area Wetlands

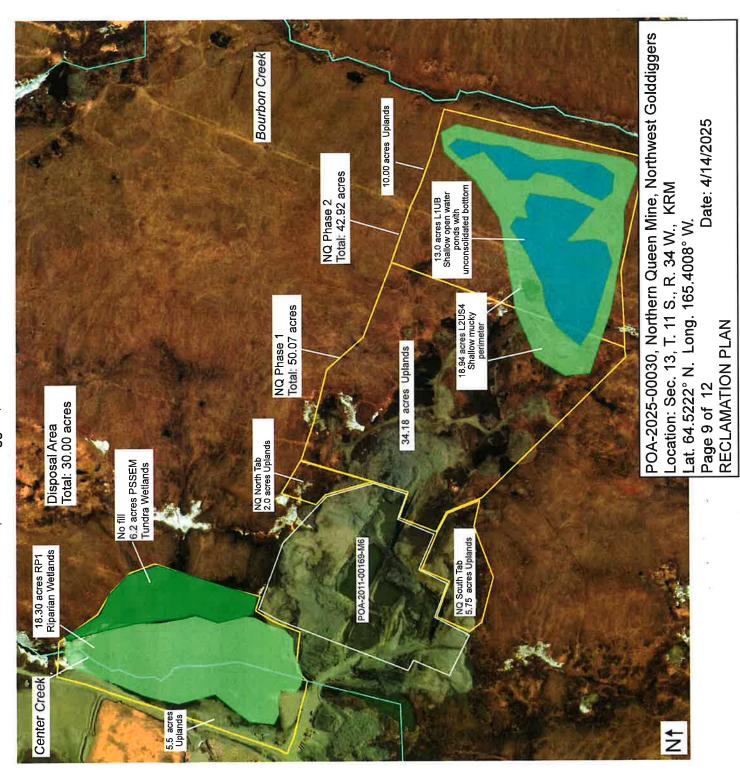




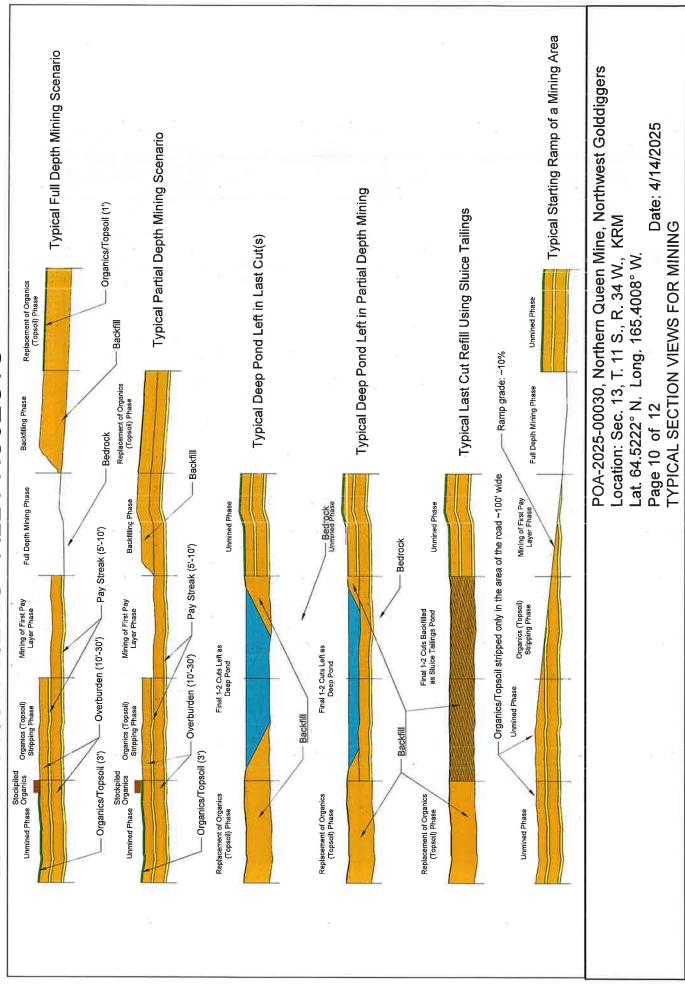


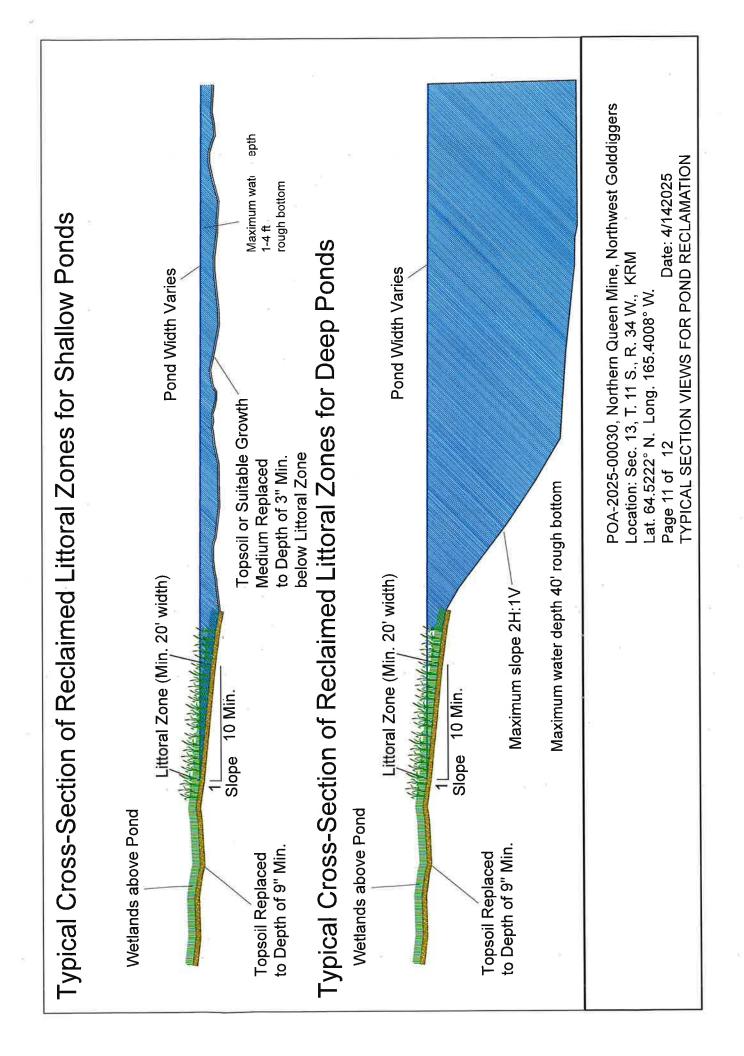


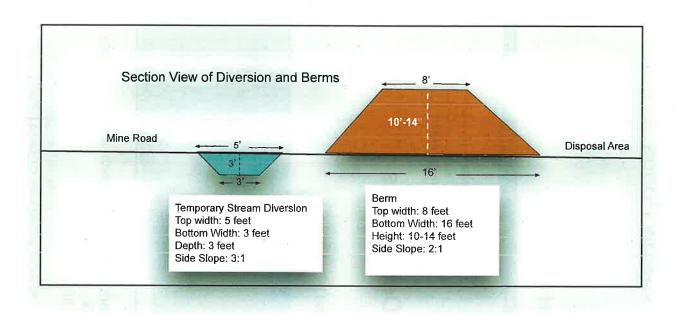
POA-2025-00030, NW Golddiggers, Northern Queen Mine Reclamation Plan

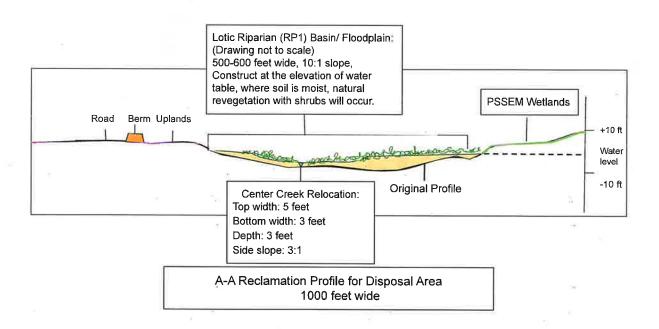


TYPICAL SECTION VIEWS - ALL PROJECTS









POA-2025-00030, Northern Queen Mine, Northwest Golddiggers

Location: Sec. 13, T. 11 S., R. 34 W., KRM

Lat. 64.5222° N. Long. 165.4008° W. Page 12 of 12

DISPOSAL AREA PROFILES

Date: 4/14/2025

POA-2025-00030, Northwest Golddiggers, Northern Queen Mine Mine Narrative

- 1. The applicant proposes to hydraulically mining the Northern Queen Gold Mine, 130.74-acres, with a 30.00-acre Disposal Area, while also recovering sand and gravel for local and regional use.
- 2. The Mine Area would contain 47.73-acres of palustrine wetlands, 49.17-acres of uplands and 3.84-acres of open water. The Disposal Area would contain 9.70-acres of open water, 6.20-acres of palustrine wetlands, 5.50-acres of uplands, 8.6-acres of lotic riparian wetlands, and the 0.20-acre stream channel of Center Creek.
- 3. The applicant conservatively estimates that 30% of the material that would be removed during mining is saleable sand and gravel. He proposes to recover and stockpile salable materials in a designated upland storage location.
- 4. The project would have two phases. Phase 1 includes several preparatory steps, then mining would proceed in Slices 2 through 10. Phase 2 includes mining Slices 11 through 19. Approximately three slices per year would be mined.
- 5. Phase 1: The first step would be preparation of the Disposal Area. A temporary diversion channel would be constructed in uplands (Dimensions: 2,431-linear feet (If) x 5-foot bottom width, 3-foot top width x 3-foot depth, 0.28-acre, 360 cubic yards side cast) to route the creek around the Disposal Area. A culvert (Dimensions 650-If x 28-inches diameter) would be installed below the Disposal Area, to route the creek across the access road, and out of the work area. Two safety berms would be constructed, to separate the temporary diversion from the Disposal Area. One berm would be constructed in wetlands (Dimensions: 150-If x 16-foot bottom width, 8-foot top width x 10-feet high), 577 cubic yards, 0.06-acre impact), and one berm would be constructed in uplands (Dimensions: 1,610-If x 6-foot bottom width, 8-foot top width x 10-foot high, 5,724 cubic yards, 0.42-acre impact).
- 6. The next step would be preparation for mining Slice 1 of the pit. To minimize the volume of material from Slice 1 that goes to the Disposal Area, the applicant has proposed alternate locations for fill. The mine footprint contains two small auxiliary mining areas in uplands, on the west boundary. The 5.75-acre parcel to the south is known as the Northern Queen South Tab; the 2.0-acre parcel to the north is called the Northern Queen North Tab. In the South Tab, 463,833 cubic yards of overburden and pay would be removed from uplands; ~30% volume (139,150 cubic yards) sand/

gravel would be stockpile for future sales in uplands. The remainder (324,683 cubic yards) would be backfilled into the South Tab, leaving space for some of the fill that will come from Slice 1 of the Main Pit.

- 7. In Slice 1 of the Main Pit, 220,590 cubic yards of overburden and pay would be hydraulically removed in order to construct a 5.0-acre working area on the bottom of the pit, for processing gold. The working area is designed to be used, backfilled and moved forward as the mining operation progresses. Pay material would be removed by hydraulicking the advancing cut, preliminarily processing gold in the bottom of the pit, discharging waste into the settling pond located on the pit floor and pay concentrate moved to a processing plant in an upland location. Concurrently, ~30% volume (66,177 cubic yards) sand/gravel would be recovered and stockpiled in uplands for future sales. 139,150 cubic yards would be discharged into the remaining hole int the South Tab. The remainder, ~15,000 cubic yards 75,000 cubic yards would be discharged into the Disposal Area.
- 8. In the Disposal Area, the 9.70-acre open water area would be filled first, moving into the 8.6 lotic riparian area, only if needed.
- 9. The 2.0-acre upland North Tab, would be mined next, with removal of 161,333 cubic yards of material, then ~30% recovery and stockpile of sand and gravel (43,400 cubic yards), and then backfill (117,933 cubic yards)
- 10. Phase 1 of the Northern Queen Mine Pit is 50.07-acres in size, with 37.38-acres of uplands, 3.84-acres of open water, and 9.09-acres of PSSEM wetlands. Mining would progress in 10 cuts, or slices. Each slice would be an average 4.6-acres in size. (Dimensions: 1250 to 1600 linear feet x 120 to 150-feet wide and 35 to 60-feet deep, average volume 408,173 cubic yards).

Phase 1 contains 9.09-acres of PSSEM wetlands with 90,350 cubic yards of organic soils, which would be mechanically cleared prior to mining, and temporarily stockpiled in a berm (Total Dimensions: ~ 1,000' long x 40' wide x variable height, 1.0 acres) in wetlands along the north boundary of the project area. The organic soils contain 3 to 5-feet of organic material. Mechanical clearing would occur annually, as far as anticipated mining would progress for the following year. Ditches would be constructed along the outside edge of the berms to control runoff from thawing organics as well as to intercept overland flow from adjacent areas during breakup and storm events. Following mining, organic material would be discharged back onto contoured land surface to encourage revegetation.

- 11. Phase 2 of the operation contains 42.92-acres of PSSEM wetlands and 3.94-acres of uplands. There would be 9 cuts and like Phase 1, the cuts would be approximately 4.6-acres per cut, with similar dimensions and volumes. Phase 2 contains more PSSEM wetlands and a higher volume of organic soil, with 180,700 cubic yards to be mechanically cleared, temporarily stockpiled in two 1-acre berms along the north and south boundaries of the project, and spread onto recontoured land surfaces area during reclamation. During mining of Phase 2, sand and gravel would continue to be separated and stockpiled in uplands.
- 12. All areas of the mine would be reclaimed by concurrent backfill and contouring of the land surface to match the surrounding land. Phase 1, and the North and South Tabs (57.82-acres) are anticipated to remain uplands, unless conditions are suitable for construction of additional wetlands or open water areas. In the south eastern corner of the Phase 2 area, shallow ponds (L1UB) would be constructed. The ponds would be 13.00-acres in size with 15.64-acres of a mucky littoral wetland fringe (L2US4). 10.00-acres of then Phase 2 area would be uplands. The ponds would intersect the water table, and may vary in depth between 3 and 20-feet. The wetland fringe would intersect the water table, and be contoured gradually at a 10:1 slope, towards the open water area. At least 6-inches of organic soil would be used to line the pond basin and the surface of the wetland fringe. Natural revegetation is anticipated.
- 13. The Disposal Area lies at or below 62-feet in elevation. It has 9.70-acres of open water, and variable depth, up to 10-feet deep. Adding 15,000 cubic yards of projected fill from Slice 1 would add about a foot of fill to the open water area. The overburden that would be discharged into the Disposal Area is sandy and would be distributed by hose as a slurry. It would take two to three years to stabilize in order to support heavy equipment for reclamation. Once stabilization has occurred, the surface would be recontoured to construct a new stream channel (Dimensions: 1800 If x 5-foot bottom width, 3-foot top width, 3-foot depth, 0.20-acre) within an 18.30-acre lotic riparian basin at or near water table elevation. The 5.5-acres of uplands along the west margin would remain uplands. Fill would be avoided in the 6.20-acres of PSSEM tundra on the east margin, resulting in continued thawing, slumping and natural revegetation.

POA-2025-00030, Northwest Golddiggers, Northern Queen Mine Project Corners

Disposal Area

A: Lat 64.5292, Long -165.4108 B: Lat 64.5278 Long -165.4063 C: Lat 64.5249, Long -165.4140 D: Lat 64.5246 Long -165.4090

Northern Queen Mine

E: Lat 64.5246, Long -165.4015 F: Lat 64.5220 Long -165.3863 G: Lat 64.5221 Long -165.4047 H: Lat 64.5186 Long -165.3972 I: Lat 64.5182 Long -165.3884

Northern Queen Mine, North Tab

M: Lat. 64.5250 Long -165.4029 E: Lat 64.5246, Long -165.4015 N: Lat 64.5244, Long -165.4034 O: Lat. 64.5244 Long. -165.4035

Northern Queen Mine, South Tab

J: Lat 64.5222 Long -165.4083
G: Lat 64.5221 Long -165.4047
K: Lat 64.5213 Long -165.4086
L: Lat 64.5213 Long 64.5213

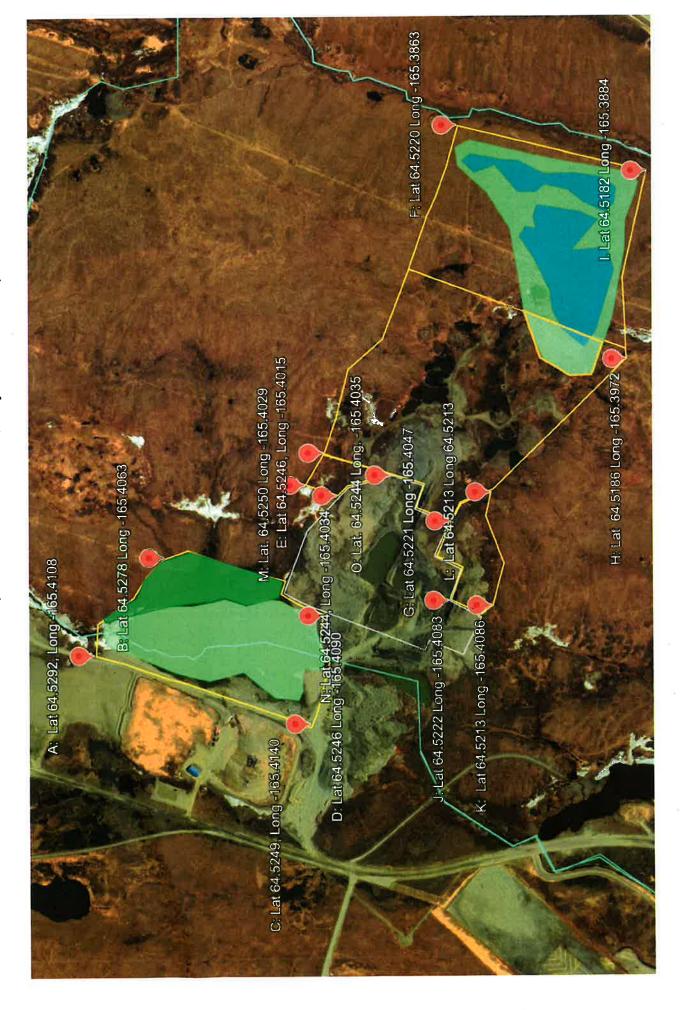


Table 1: POA-2025-00030, Northern Queen Mine Impacts

Feature	Total Area Acres	Uplands Acres	PSS/EM Acres	Mechanical Clearing Acres	PUB Acres	RP1 Acres	Stream Channel	Temporary Impacts Acres	Temporary Diversion	
Phase 1		37.48	9.09	9.09	3.50			1.0	NST IV	
North Tab	2.0	2.0								
South Tab	5.75	5.75								
Subtotal	57.82	45.23						ar in		
Phase 2	42.92	3.94	38.64	38.64	0.34			2.0		
MINE TOTAL	100.74	49.17	47.73	47.73	3.84			3.0		
Disposal Area	30.00	5.50	6.20		9.70	8.60	0.2	a la la maria	0.28	
TOTAL IMPACTS	130.74	54.67	53.93	47.73	13.54	8.60	0.2	0.06		
TEMPORARY IMPACTS					Des la			3.06	0.28	

Table 2: POA-2025-00030, Northern Queen, Reclamation Conversions

Feature		Uplands		PUB Conversions		PSS/EM Conversions					RP1		Channel Impacts			
	Area	Initial UPL	To L2US4	Final UPL	Initial PUB	To UPL	To RP1	Initial PSS EM	To UPL	To L1UB	To L2US4	Final PSS EM	Initial RP1	Final RP1	Initial	Re- Located
Phase 1	50.07	37.48	3.3	34.18	3.50	3.50		9.09	9.09					prive.		THE STATE OF
North Tab	2.0	2.0		2.0												-
South Tab	5.75	5.75		5.75								5.8				
Subtotal	57.82	45.23		45.23		N PA					142					
Phase 2	42.92	3.94		3.94	0.34	0.34		38.64	10.00	13.00	15.64		F.			
Disposal Area	30.0	5.50		5.50	9.70		9.70	6.20				6.20	8.6		0.2	0.2
RECLAMATION SUMMARY	130.74		3.3		11/1/6503	3.84	9.70	53.93	19.09	13.00	15.64	6.20	8.6	8.6	0.2	0.2

PUB: Palestine Open Water Unconsolidated Bottom

PSS/EM: Palestine Scrub Shrub Emergent

L1UB: Lacustrine Limnetic Unconsolidated Bottom (Open Water Pond Area)

L2US4: Lacustrine Littoral Unconsolidated Shore Organic (Mucky Shoreline

RP1: Lotic, Riparian

UPL: Upland