

Scoping Information Package

Proposed Use Authorization to Allow Sunroc® Corporation to Extract Material from the Alpine Bear Pit near Alpine, Wyoming

This information package summarizes the proposal from Sunroc® Corporation (Sunroc) for a 5-year land use authorization to utilize approximately 240 acres of Federal lands managed by the Bureau of Reclamation for the extraction of approximately 200,000 cubic yards of material per year and the operation of a material crushing site within Palisades Reservoir. The new extraction and crushing area would be a part of the existing Alpine Bear Pit.

Federal actions must be analyzed in accordance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and other relevant Federal and State laws and regulations to determine potential environmental consequences. Reclamation is asking for comment to better identify issues and concerns associated with this proposal.

Purpose and Need for Action

Reclamation's purpose and need for this action is to respond to Sunroc's mineral extraction application in accordance with:

- Act of Congress approved June 17, 1902 (32 Stat. 388; 43 U.S.C. § 391), and
- Federal Reclamation Laws, and the regulations promulgated at 43 CFR Part 429.

The applicant's need for this action is to have continued business operations at a reliable material source and crushing site that takes advantage of an already existing mining site.

Proposed Action

Sunroc is proposing to access and extract approximately 200,000 cubic yards of borrow and crushing material per year from the Alpine Bear Pit. The gravel pit will be expanding previous mining operations from a 76.5-acre pit, with a 5-acre stockpile area, to add an additional 158.3-acres, a total of 239.8 acres. Additionally, Sunroc proposes to continue to operate and maintain a material crushing operation on Federal lands managed by Reclamation located within the Palisades Reservoir as described below:

6th Principal Meridian, Lincoln County, Wyoming

Township 37 North, Range 118 West

Section 30: a portion of the NESW, a portion of the SESW, and Lots 4, 9, and 10

Section 31: a portion of the SW¹/₄NE¹/₄, the SE¹/₄NW¹/₄, and Lots 1 & 2

Boise Meridian, Bonneville County, Idaho

Township 3 South, Range 46 East

Section 15: A portion of Lots 1, 3, 4 & 9

Section 10: Lot 10

The impacted area encompasses about 240 acres and is more particularly depicted on Exhibit A.

Material would be extracted during the low water season, loaded and removed to an upland site above the reservoir high water line. Access to the site and extraction of materials would only take place when the reservoir level is low enough to expose the site, and only as long as the water level is below the site. Materials would not be allowed to be stockpiled below the reservoir high water line. No excavation nor disturbance to vegetation would be allowed within thirty (30) feet of the existing road located along the reservoir edge. Groundwater would not be allowed to be pumped from the site. A safety fence would be installed around the perimeter of the gravel pit and removed during times when no extraction is occurring.

Existing Condition

The Alpine Bear Pit is approximately 0.5 miles southwest of Alpine, Wyoming. It straddles the Idaho and Wyoming border and is on the east edge of Palisades Reservoir, west of U.S. Highway 89. The Palisades Reservoir takes in the Greys River and allows the continuing flows of the Snake River through its facilities. Sitting at 5,694 feet elevation, the climate of the area is classified as a humid continental climate. This means that there is a large range between summer and winter temperatures and levels of humidity but a fairly consistent amount of precipitation year-round. The proposed project area is entirely federally owned, managed by Reclamation. The entire gravel pit includes the proposed project area and an adjacent, current Alpine Bear Pit, originally operated by Alota Sand and Gravel authorized under use authorization 11-07-14-LA705, which is now operated by Sunroc. The 240-acre Alpine Bear Pit is located in an area that is partially under water for most of the year. This area is normally dry during September and October of each year as the reservoir is drawn down during the summer months. A small amount of vegetation, including *Bromus inermis* (smooth brome) and other upland species, grows in and adjacent to the impacted area; however, it is mostly mud flats. An environmental assessment and finding of no significant impact were signed in 2017 for the original gravel pit.

Preliminary Alternative Development

The environmental assessment would include consideration of the Proposed Action Alternative and the No Action Alternative, which includes denial of Sunroc's application. Additional alternatives would be developed commensurate with the identified issues throughout the NEPA process.

Exhibits

A. Alpine Bear Pit Location Map

