

BLM News

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR, BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT
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RECLAMATION WORK COMPLETED

Reclamation work was recently completed on an old gold mining exploration hole which began flowing water sometime after it was abandoned in the late 1980s. The work took place near the Buckhorn Mine about 65 miles south of Carlin, Nevada, in Pine Valley.

The exploration hole water flow was discovered in late 2002 during a compliance check by BLM Elko Geologist Frank Bergwall.

“The old exploration hole was flowing reddish-colored water at nearly one gallon per minute,” said Bergwall. “We’re concerned about this sort of artesian flow because it can affect the water table and also allow surface water to drain back into the water table. It can have consequences to wildlife habitat, vegetation, and water quality.”

“It turned out the 6-inch, 260-foot-deep hole was drilled and abandoned in 1988 by Cominco American Incorporated. When we contacted the company, they researched their records, and gave us an action plan which included fixing the hole and reclaiming the drilling roads associated with the 1988 exploration project.”

In late September/early October, local crews supervised by SRK Consulting of Elko, re-drilled the hole, plugged it with cement, and the entire area was broadcast seeded. About one mile of access road associated with the drill site was re-contoured to its original shape and also re-seeded.

“This is an excellent example of first-class, responsible environmental ethics in Nevada’s mining industry,” said Dave Vandenberg BLM Elko Assistant District Manager for Non-Renewable Resources. “It’s not every day that environmental problems such as this flowing exploration hole are fixed so rapidly, especially for a problem that cropped up more than a decade after the activity was completed. The company invested more than \$30,000 re-plugging the hole and reclaiming the roads.”

Greg Schoen, Environmental Affairs Manager for Tech Cominco commented, “Next spring we’ll visit the site and the re-seeded roads to make sure the seed worked. If not, we’ll

seed again and we may possibly plant sage brush from the Duckwater nursery as well. We're proud of the work we do and we are committed to sound environmental management.”

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