Twitter Thread by Eric Lipton



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JUST POSTED: The Trump administration is rushing to approve a final wave of large-scale mining and energy projects on federal lands, encouraged by investors who want to try to ensure the projects move ahead even after President-elect Biden takes office

Let's take a look at some of these projects awaiting actions in the remaining weeks of Trump's tenure. MASSIVE mining projects on federal lands. First stop, ARIZONA. Sacred Native American lands now in a national forest are targeted for destruction to make way for a copper mine

United States Department of Agriculture
Tonto National Forest

Resolution Copper Project and Land Exchange Environmental Impact Statement

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Current Status (as of Dec. 10, 2020)

Both federal and non-federal appraisals of land exchange parcels currently are being conducted. Once completed, they will be reviewed by the regional appraiser. After appraisals are accepted, the information will be made available to the public for review. The final EIS and draft record of decision presently are scheduled to be published in the Federal Register in January 2021.

The Tonto National Forest's Schedule of Proposed Actions (SOPA) is an estimate for publication of the final EIS and draft ROD. It is based on several variables involving stakeholders and entities from the public and private sectors. These variables include current project progress and the amount of work remaining, reliance on external factors such as cooperating agencies to maintain regulatory compliance, and the land exchange appraisal process.

In spring 2020, the estimated publication of the documents was adjusted on the SOPA to December 2020. This was an update from the estimated December 2021 publication, which in turn was an adjustment from the original proposed publication of July 2020. Adjustments reflect the difference between the estimated timeline and the actual time it took to complete the necessary steps. **The latest adjustment - January 2021 - does not reflect an acceleration of the NEPA process or the SOPA.**

Project Information

On behalf of the Secretary of Agriculture, the Tonto National Forest is preparing a single Environmental Impact Statement for two related federal actions:

- Approving a general plan of operations submitted by Resolution Copper Mining, LLC, which would govern surface disturbance on National Forest System (NFS) lands from mining operations that are reasonably incident to extraction, transportation, and processing of copper and molybdenum.
  - The mine proposal would create one of the largest copper mines in the United States, with an estimated surface disturbance of 6,951 acres (approximately 11 square miles).



A northerly view of the Oak Flat Federal parcel. (Photo courtesy of SWCA)

Project Timeline Update

The final EIS and draft Record of Decision (ROD) presently are scheduled to be published in the Federal Register in January 2021.

Visit Resolution Copper Timeline for more information.

Mailing List

If you would like to receive updates from the Tonto National Forest regarding the Resolution Copper Project and Land Exchange final EIS, sign up for our mailing list.

Resolution Copper Mailing List

Forest Service Point of Contact

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Apache Leap Special Management Area
Apache Leap SMA website

Next stop SOUTH DAKOTA. Area near Black Hills planned for massive new uranium mine, on land also historically held by Native American tribe. Groundwater would be contaminated to extract the radioactive uranium.

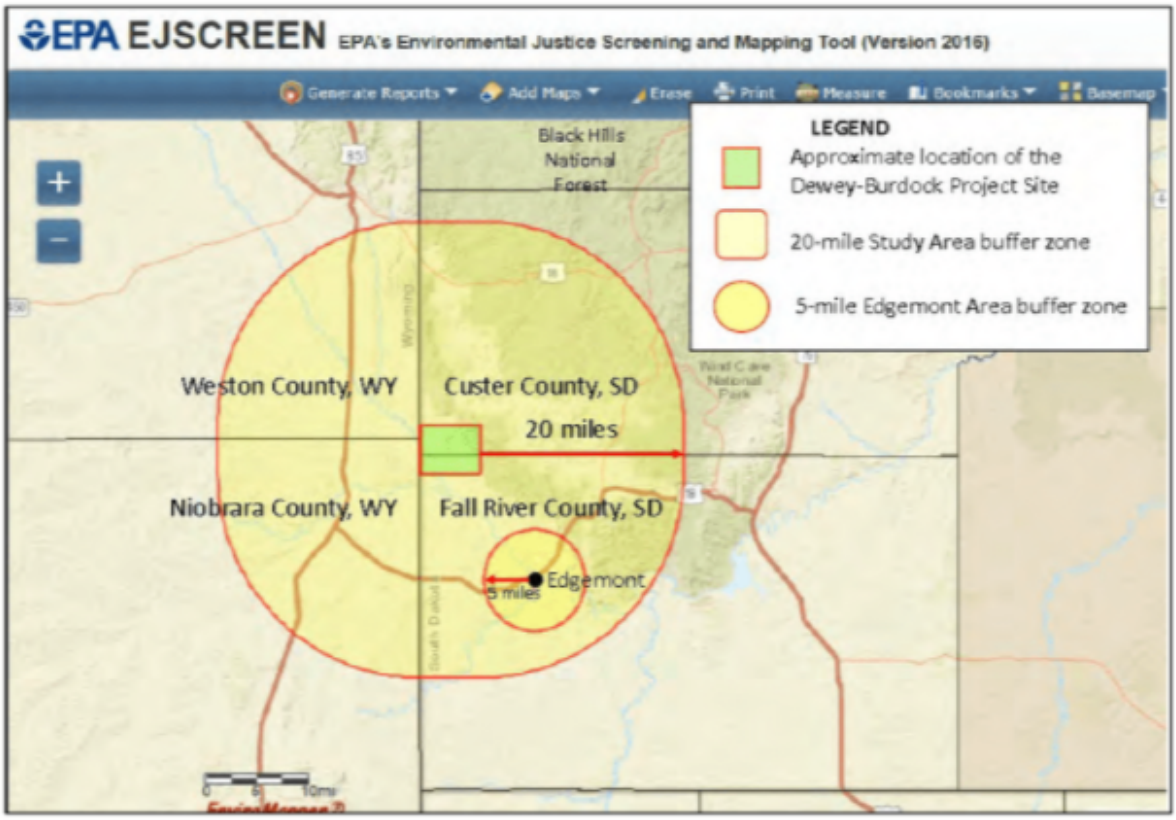
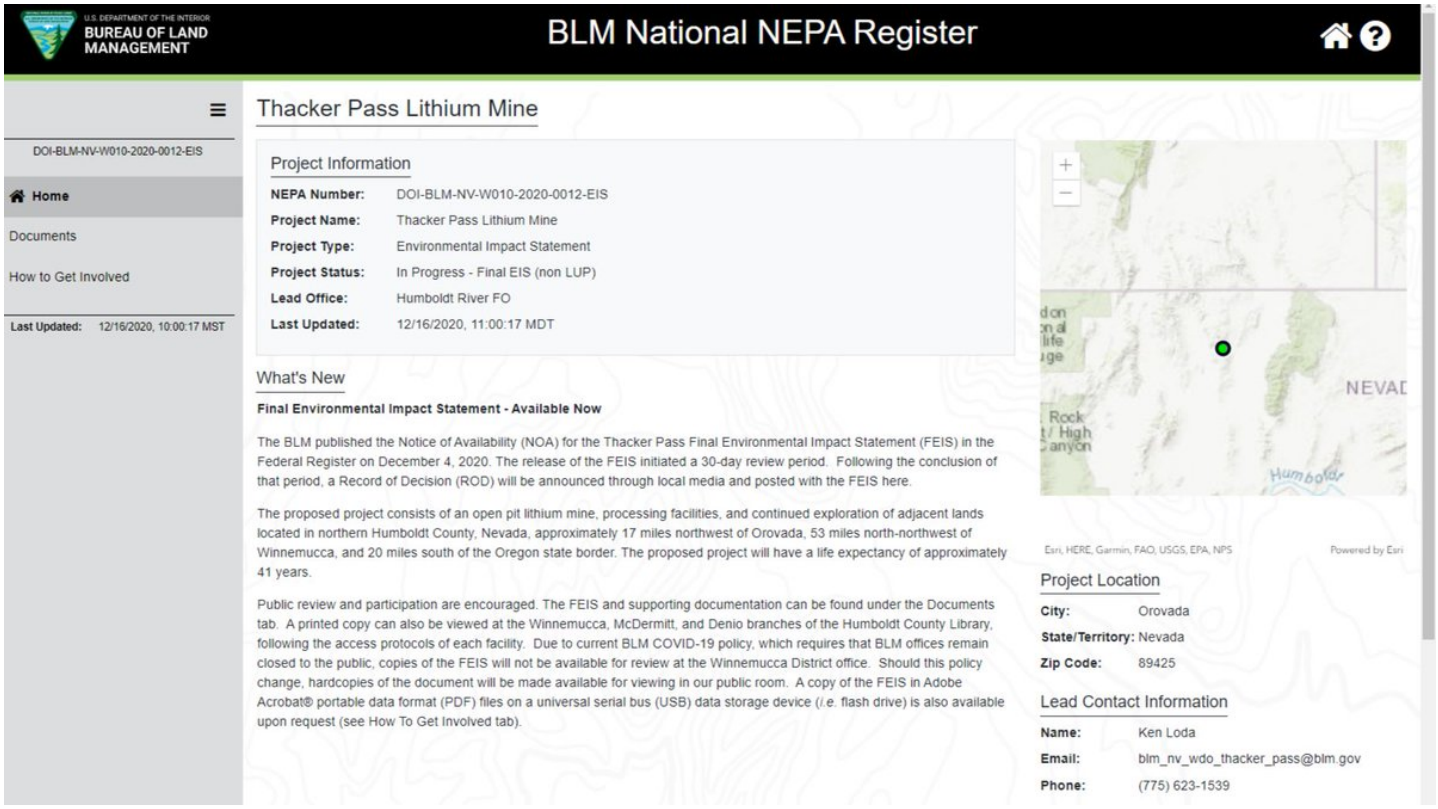


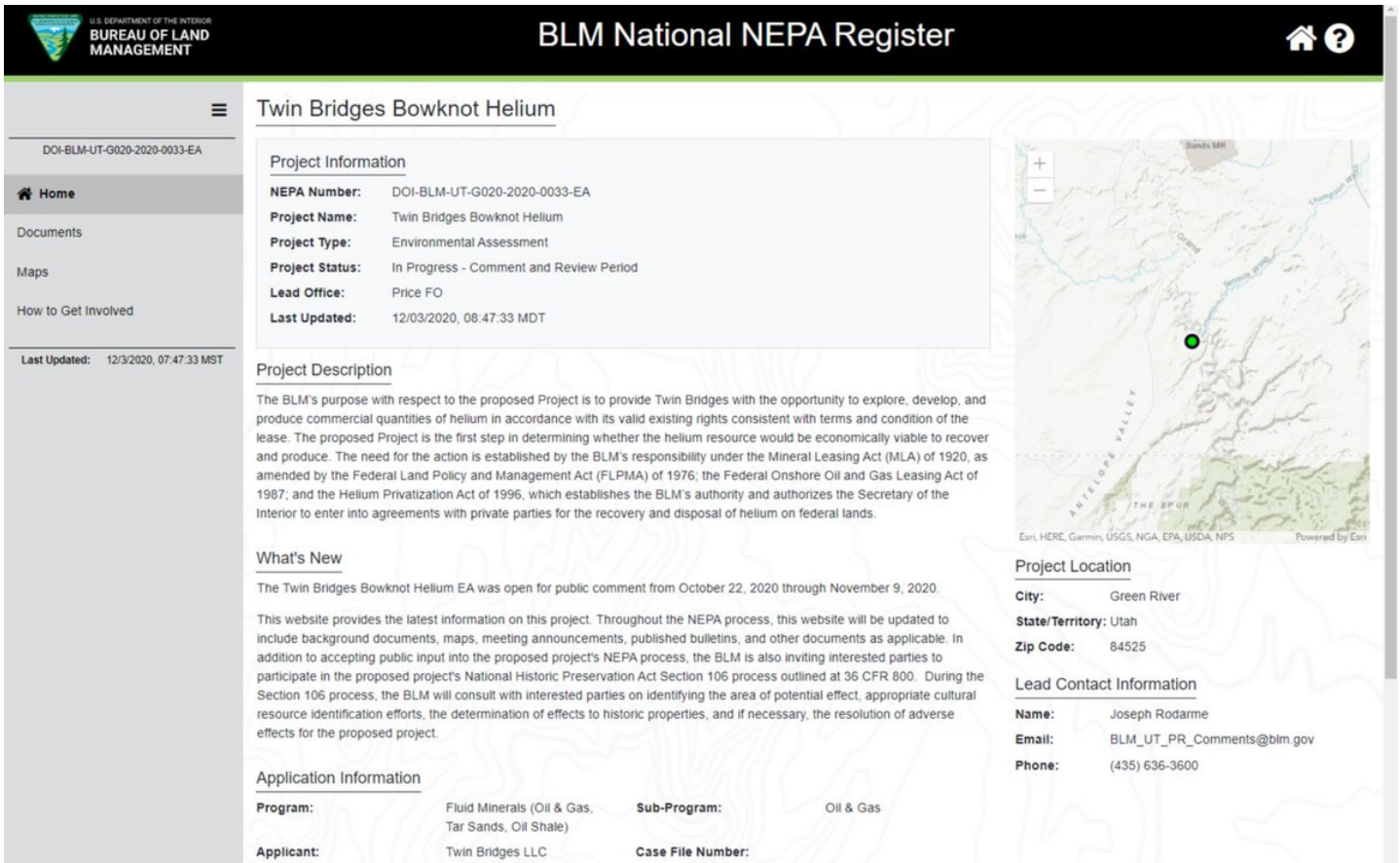
Figure 2. Location of the Study Area, which includes the Dewey-Burdock Project Area and a 20-mile buffer measured from the approximate Project Area Boundary, and the Edgemont Area, which includes a 5-mile buffer around the City of Edgemont.

As set forth in more detail in Section 9.1, consistent with the federal government's trust responsibility to federally-recognized tribes and the EPA Policy on Consultation and Coordination with Indian Tribes, the EPA Region 8 has engaged in consultation outreach and discussions with Indian Tribes that may be potentially affected by the EPA's UIC permitting and aquifer exemption actions for the Dewey-Burdock In-Situ Uranium Recovery Site. The Region has conducted outreach to Tribal governments at all stages of its process, including specifically inviting input on the 2019 Draft Revised EJ Analysis and on Tribal interests in the Black Hills as a sacred site.

Next stop, NEVADA, were one of world's largest lithium mines slated to be built starting soon on federal land. Final "Record of Decision" on project by Interior Department expected in EARLY January.



Next stop, UTAH, where Interior as soon as NEXT week, slated to give approval to what could soon be one of the large helium drilling operations in the United States on land in and around an iconic federal WILDERNESSS area.



NEXT STOP, WEST VIRGINIA/VIRGINIA where Forest Service slated to give final approval before mid January to a new natural gas pipeline that will be built across a national forest and the Appalachian Trial.

USDA Forest Service
U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Region 8, Jefferson National Forest | R8 MB-158 | December 2020

Mountain Valley Pipeline and Equitrans Expansion Project

Final Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement



Forest Service | Bureau of Land Management

There are many others. Picked these as examples. Illustrates an intentional effort by President Trump and his Cabinet to open up public lands to mining/drilling, despite protests from Native Americans and environmentalists.

What is interesting is that many of these projects are sponsored by foreign investors, such as Rio Tinto, an Australian-based mining giant, which directly lobbied Commerce Sec. Wilbur Ross to speed up the project. Here is Ross discussing it during a visit to mine site in October

The U.S. has a special appreciation for global enterprises like Rio Tinto, that choose to engage in projects like this one on our shores. I well remember when your company met with me in 2017 and explained the 10-year challenge you already had endured as you sought the permits to enable you to make this huge investment.

That was one of the major reasons why President Trump moved so aggressively to reduce the red tape involved in such projects. We are grateful for your $2 billion dollar investment in the project here to date, and for your forthcoming $11 billion investment in the mine's construction.

Thanks in large part to the President's pro-growth policies, the United States is home to more foreign direct investment than any other country in the world. Believe it or not, it totals $4.34 trillion. That's trillion with a big T. That's a lot, even by Washington's standards.

Please give the story a read (and a share). Will be doing tweet threads drilling down on individual projects. Collected thousands of pages of fed documents, detailing environmental consequences anticipated from these projects. Many r linked in story. https://t.co/hARCFWtqph

FYI, here is the area in Utah near what could soon be one of the largest helium drilling operations in United States, pending approval as soon as next week by Department of Interior. Construction slated to start immediately. Photos by Southern Utah Wilderness Alliance/Ray Bloxham

