



PUBLIC NOTICE

Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC)
Wastewater Discharge Authorization Program/§401 Certification
555 Cordova Street, Anchorage AK 99501-2617
Phone: 907-269-6285 | Email: DEC-401Cert@alaska.gov

Notice of Application for State Water Quality Certification

Public Notice (PN) Date: November 13, 2024
PN Expiration Date: December 15, 2024

PN Reference Number: POA-2024-00505 v1.0
Waterway: Little Eldorado Creek

Any applicant for a federal license or permit to conduct an activity that might result in a discharge into waters of the United States, in accordance with Section 401 of the Clean Water Act (CWA), must also apply for and obtain certification from the Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation that the discharge will comply with the CWA and the Alaska Water Quality Standards (18 AAC 70). The scope of certification is limited to the water quality-related impacts from the activity subject to the Federal license or permit (40 CFR 121.3, 18 AAC 15.180).

Notice is hereby given that a request for a CWA §401 Water Quality Certification of a Department of the Army Permit application, Corps of Engineers' PN Reference Number indicated above has been received¹ for the discharge of dredged and/or fill materials into waters of the United States (WOTUS), including wetlands, as described below, and shown on the project figures/drawings. The public notice and related project figures/drawings are accessible from the DEC website at <https://dec.alaska.gov/water/wastewater/>.

To comment on the project or request for a public hearing with respect to water quality, submit comments via email to the DEC email address: DEC-401Cert@alaska.gov with the subject line referencing Public Notice Reference Number: **POA-2024-00505 v1.0** or via DEC website <https://dec.alaska.gov/commish/public-notices/> on or before the public notice expiration date listed above.

Applicant: Big Sky Exploration LLC, Cary Williams, 2283 Elliot Highway, Fairbanks, AK 99712, (229) 425-3754; cwjconcrete@gmail.com

Project Name: Little Eldorado Placer Mine

Dates of the proposed activity is planned to begin and end: 11/01/2024 to 11/01/2030

Location: The proposed activity is located within Section 28/27, T. 3N, R. 1E, Section 21/28, T. 3N, R. 1E, Section 21/22, T. 3N, R. 1E, Section 16/21, T. 3N, R. 1E, 16, T. 3N, R. 1E, Fairbanks Meridian, in Fairbanks North Star Borough, Alaska. 560219. Project Site (Latitude, Longitude): 65.064207, -147.54166.

Purpose: The applicant's stated purpose is to placer mine for gold.

Description of Proposed Work: The gold deposit is located on the right limit of Little Eldorado Creek facing downstream. The Eldorado Creek drainage has been previously mined since the early days of mining in the Fairbanks Mining District in early 1900s. The gold bearing gravels are approximately 15 feet to 20 feet in depth and are covered by 10 feet to 30 feet of gravel and 15 feet to 50 feet of loess and organic soils. The soils are frozen with the exception of seasonal thaw near the surface.

The overburden vegetation, soil, and rock would be removed with heavy equipment assisted by drilling and blasting. Blasting would occur after the vegetation and soil layers are removed. This material would be hauled by truck to the existing gravel tailings from previous mining activities, and spread over these gravels. Gold bearing gravels would then be hauled from the mine pit and stockpiled on the adjacent dredge tailings. When the weather warms in late

¹ Reference submission number: HQ7-YMCY-XFMN8; Received: 11/8/2024 6:59:43 AM

spring, the thawing gold bearing gravels would be sluiced back into the mine pit, recovering the gold with a simple gravity sluice. The approximate size of a pit would vary but typically would be within an area about 400' wide by 1,000 feet long with organic soil and vegetation stockpiled beside the mine pit. After sluicing the pay material, and freezing conditions return, the overburden from the next mine block downstream would be stripped and this material would be placed into the pit that was just mined. This cycle of mining would continue

downstream for 5 years or more and would be dependent on cost to mine and the price of gold. It is anticipated that approximately 17 acres of wetlands would be impacted per year over a 5-year period during placer mining and reclamation activities. After mining is completed the existing access road would be rebuilt by reusing waste rock from the stockpile areas.

Applicant Proposed Mitigation: 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:** Avoidance of Waters of the United States including wetlands was not proposed by the applicant because wetlands are found throughout the areas planned for mining and in areas interspersed with old mine tailing and drainage channels.
- b. **Minimization:** The applicant proposes to stockpile organic material to be used for site rehabilitation to include natural revegetation and creation of low-lying areas in mined pits to help create conditions for wetland development on the project site following mining activities. Existing previously mined areas would be used when practical for initial stockpile of organic material and gravels, and creation of water recycling/settling ponds.
- c. **Mitigation:** Compensatory mitigation is not proposed by the applicant because the applicant proposes to create areas below the current surface grade to promote the creation of wetlands and shallow ponds. The mixing of overburden gravels with the native organic and loess soils will provide an excellent growth medium for the natural revegetation of wetland and terrestrial vegetation.

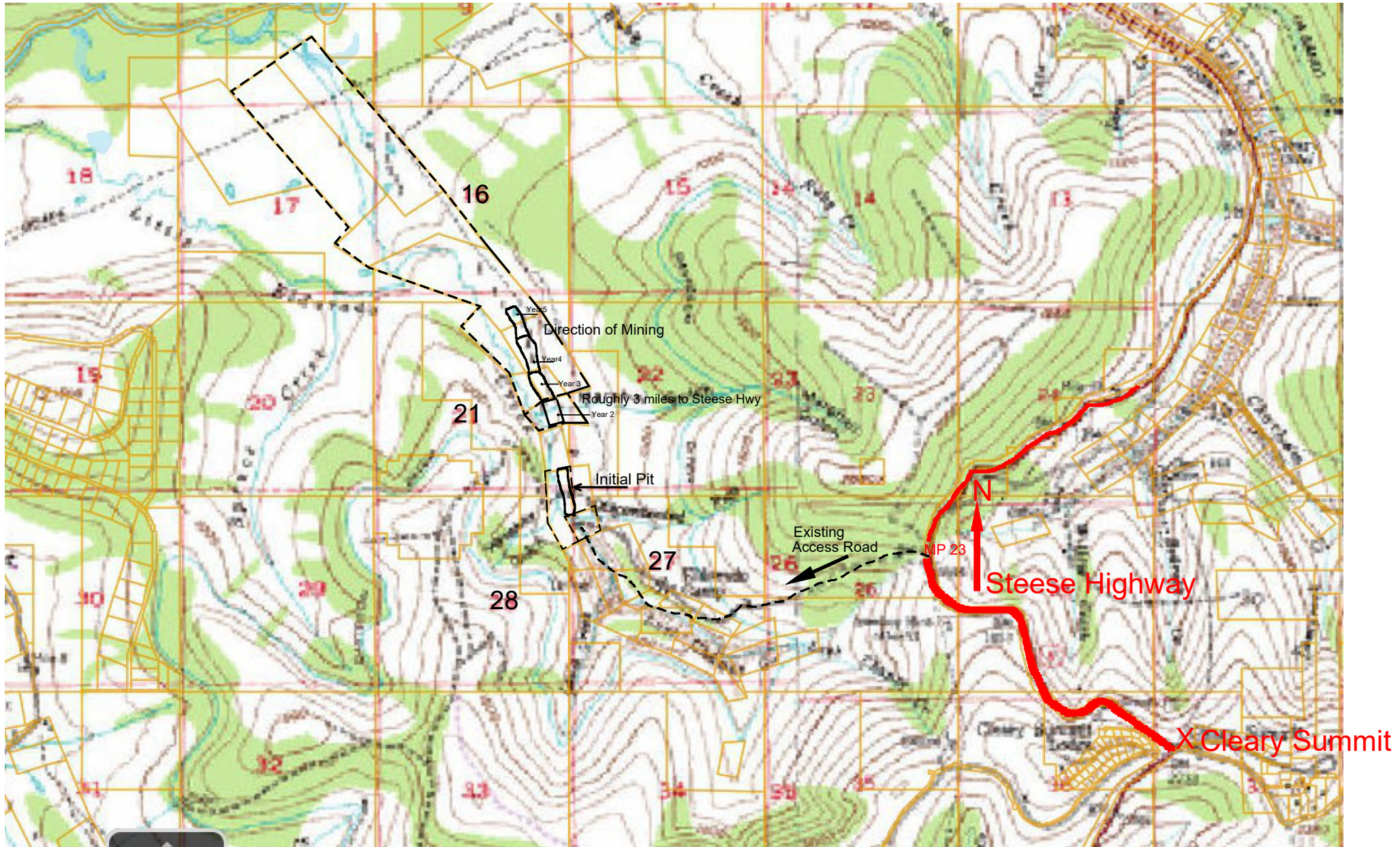
After reviewing the application, the Department will evaluate whether the activity will comply with applicable water quality requirements (any limitation, standard, or other requirement under sections 301, 302, 306, and 307 of the CWA, any Federal and state laws or regulations implementing those sections, and any other water quality-related requirement of state law). The Department may certify (or certify with conditions) with reasonable assurance the activity and any discharge that might result will comply with water quality requirements. The Department also may deny or waive certification.

The permit application and associated documents are available for review. For inquiries or to request copies of the documents, contact dec-401cert@alaska.gov, or call 907-269-6285.

Disability Reasonable Accommodation Notice

The State of Alaska, Department of Environmental Conservation complies with Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) of 1990. If you are a person with a disability who may need special accommodation in order to participate in this public process, please contact ADA Coordinator Mike Kruzinski at 907-334-0884, Mike.Kruzinski@alaska.gov or TDD Relay Service 1-800-770-8973/TTY or dial 711 prior to the expiration date of this public notice to ensure that any necessary accommodations can be provided.

Block 17 Access Map



Location of Claims T3NR1E Section 21,16,27,28

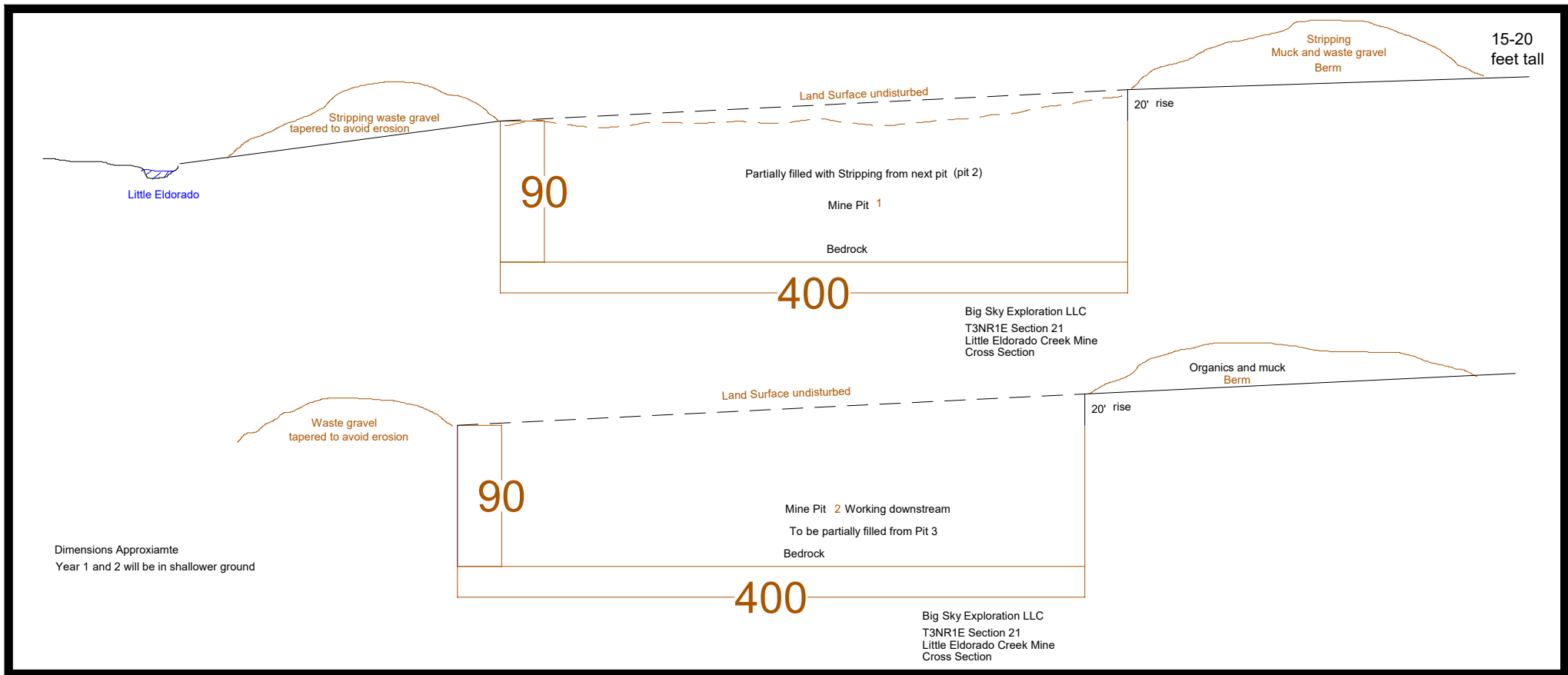
Big Sky Exploration LLC Access Map Claims outlined with black dashed line

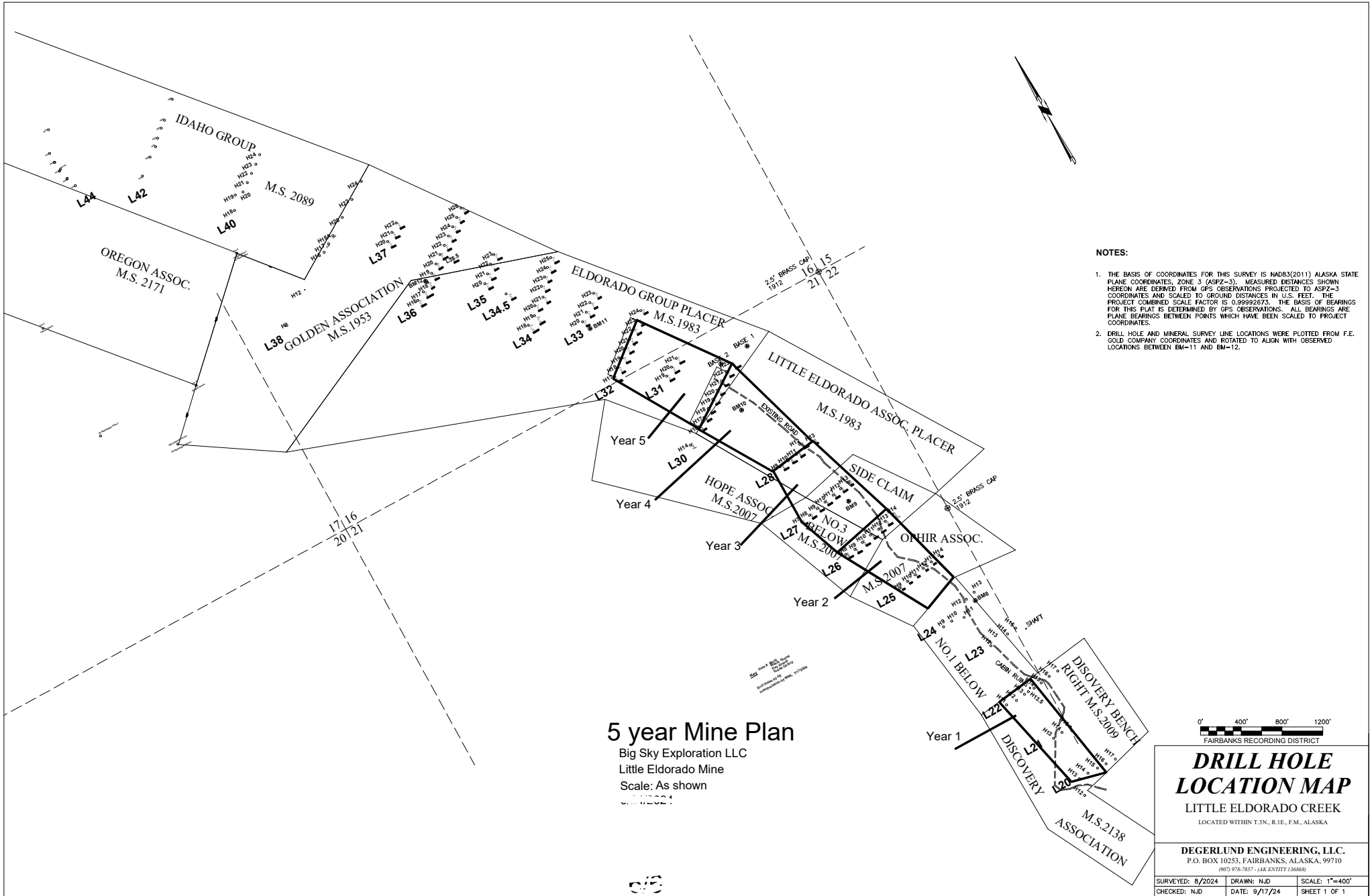
Latitude 65.067394° N., Longitude 47.543074° W.; Milepost 23 Steese Highway,
approximately 2 miles north of Cleary Summit., near Chatanika, Alaska.

POA-2024-00505 APMA 9497

October 18, 2024
Sheet 1 of 10

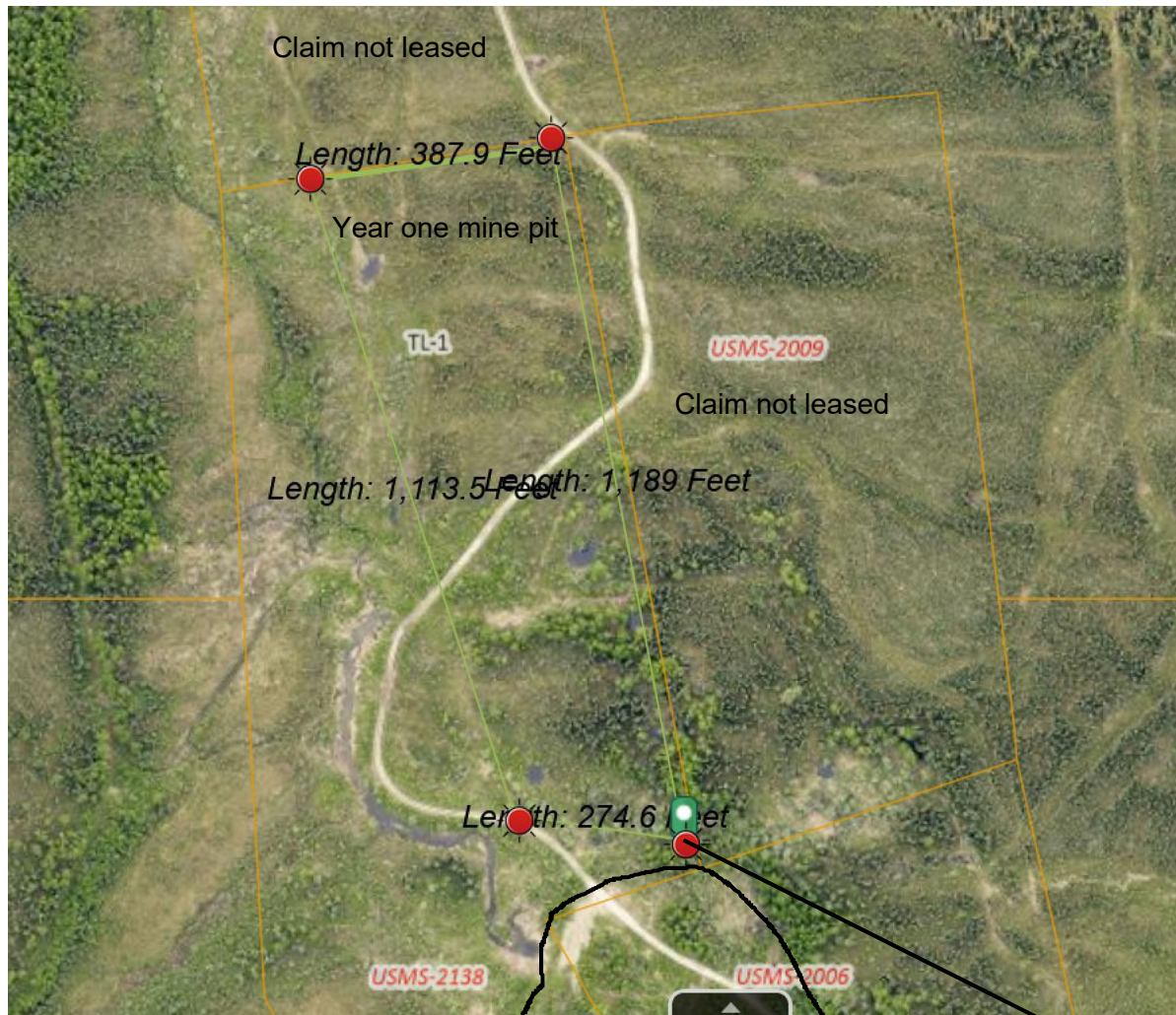
Typical Cross Section of Mining and Backfill





- NOTES:**
1. THE BASIS OF COORDINATES FOR THIS SURVEY IS NAD83(2011) ALASKA STATE PLANE COORDINATES, ZONE 3 (ASPFZ-3). MEASURED DISTANCES SHOWN HEREON ARE DERIVED FROM GPS OBSERVATIONS PROJECTED TO ASPFZ-3 COORDINATES AND SCALED TO GROUND DISTANCES IN U.S. FEET. THE PROJECT COMBINED SCALE FACTOR IS 0.99992673. THE BASIS OF BEARINGS FOR THIS PLAT IS DETERMINED BY GPS OBSERVATIONS. ALL BEARINGS ARE PLANE BEARINGS BETWEEN POINTS WHICH HAVE BEEN SCALED TO PROJECT COORDINATES.
 2. DRILL HOLE AND MINERAL SURVEY LINE LOCATIONS WERE PLOTTED FROM F.E. GOLD COMPANY COORDINATES AND ROTATED TO ALIGN WITH OBSERVED LOCATIONS BETWEEN BM-11 AND BM-12.

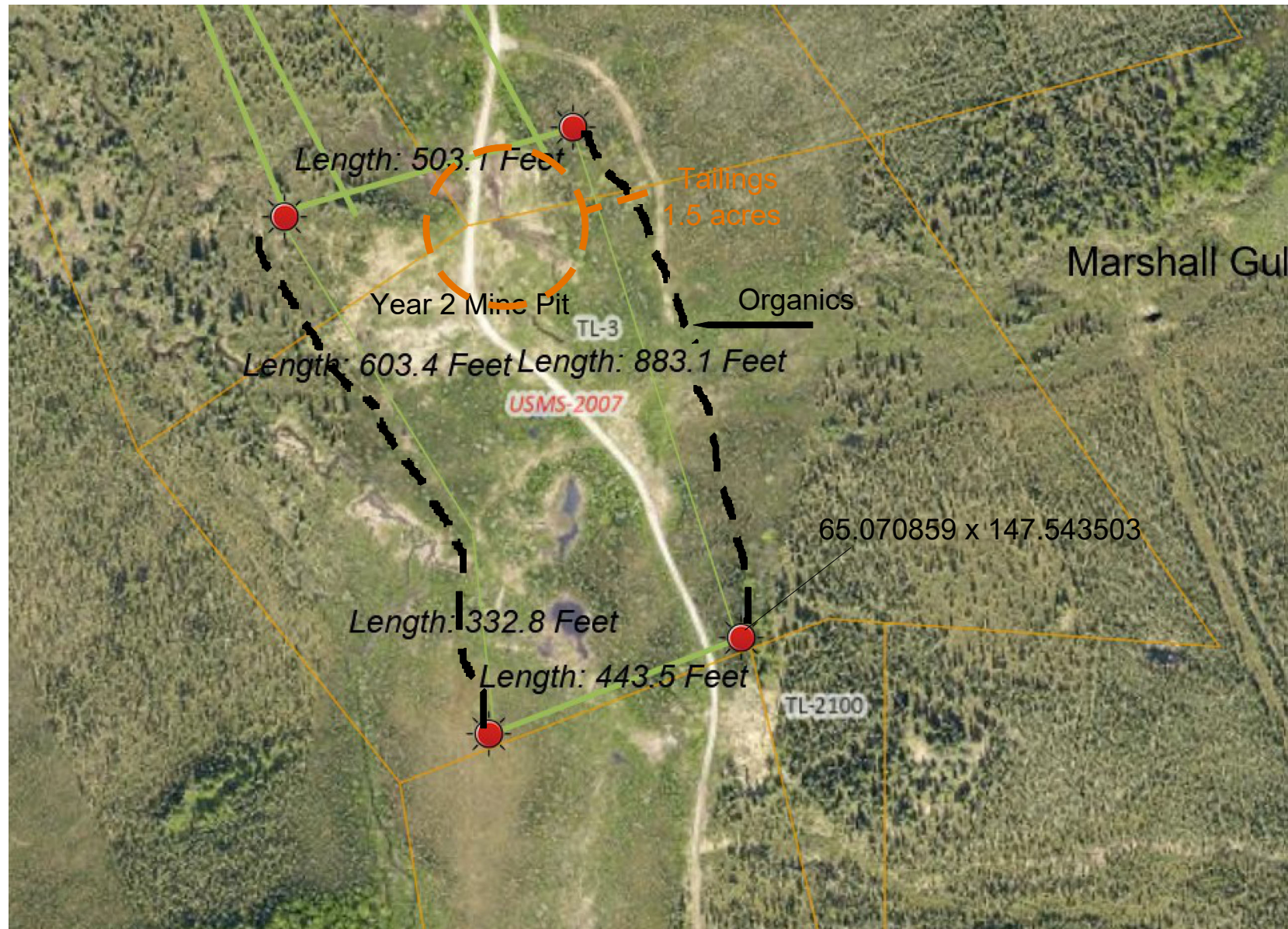
Big Sky Exploration LLC
Year One mine Pit
Little Eldorado Creek



65.064428 x 147.541079

Lower end of dredge tailings
Stripping spread on old dredge tailings
Tailings from sluicing pit 1 are back into the pit

Big Sky Exploration LLC
Year 2 Mine Pit
Little Eldorado Creek

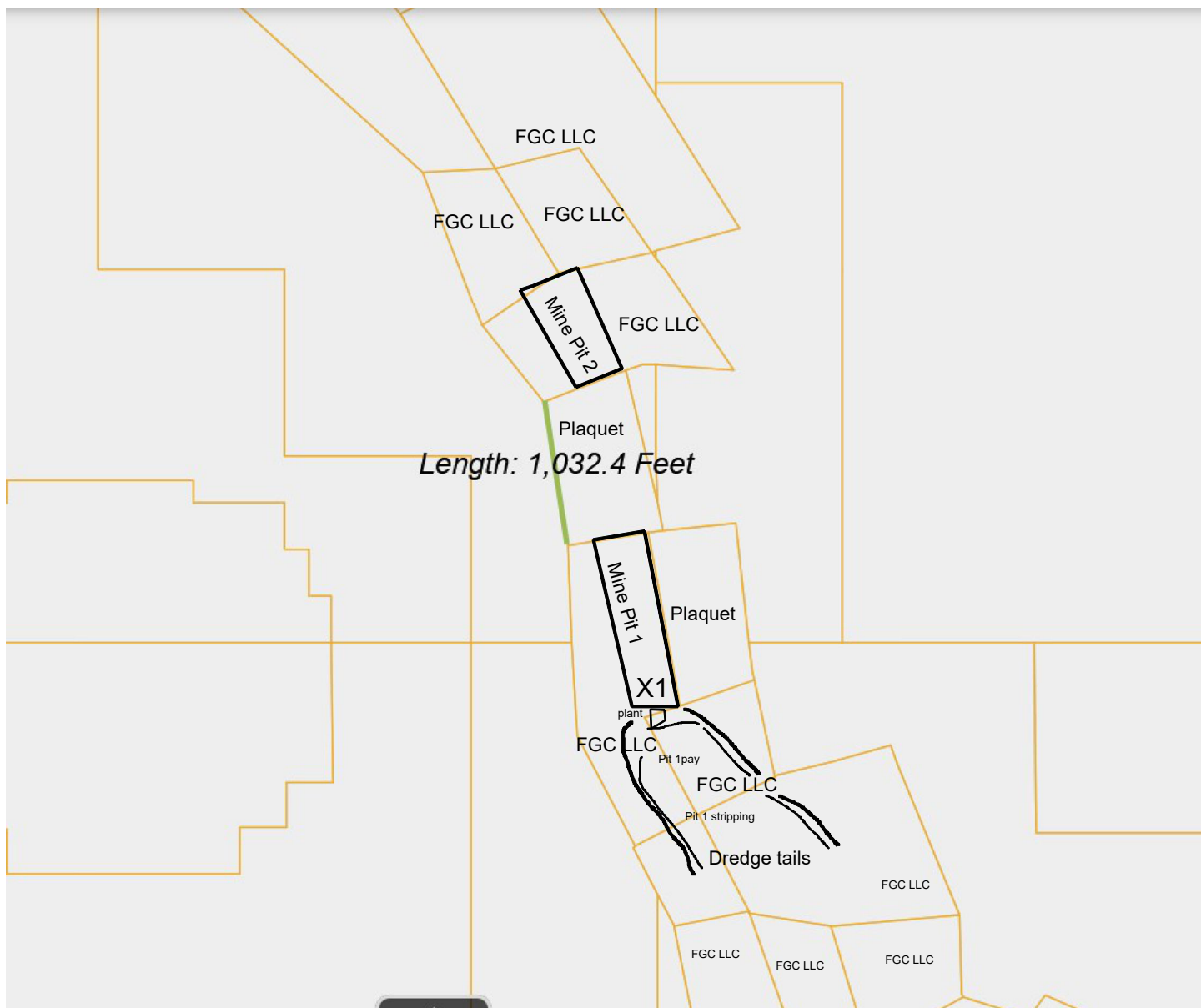


Big Sky Exploration, LLC
Year 3 Mine Pit
Eldorado Creek

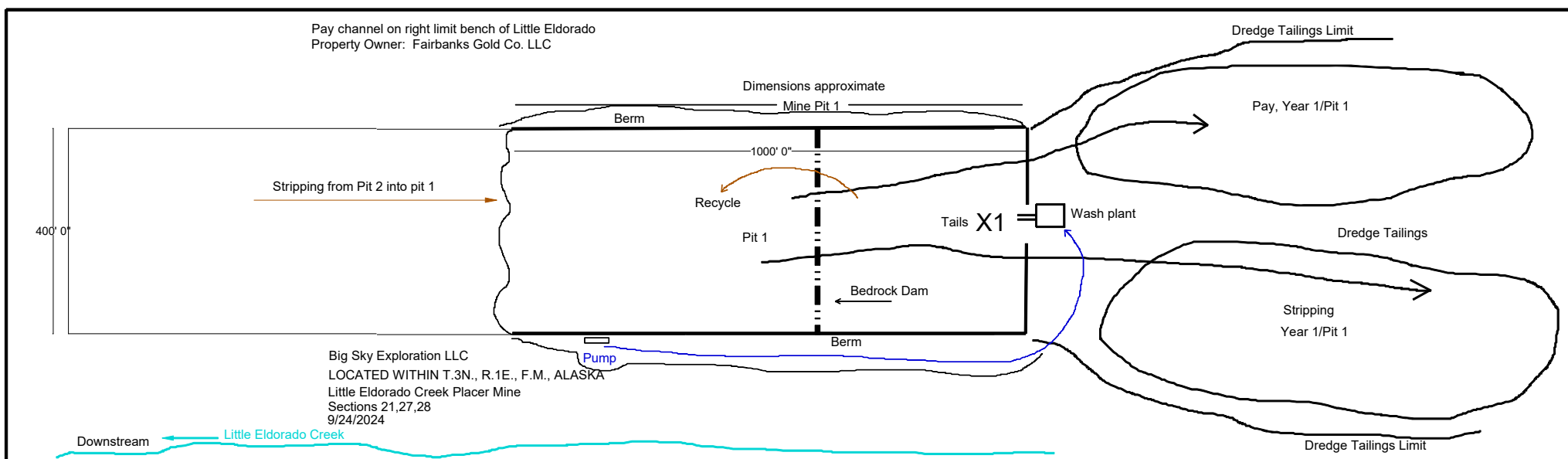


Big Sky Exploration LLC
Year 4 mine pit
Little Eldorado Creek





Big Sky Exploration LLC
Little Eldorado Creek Placer Mine
T3NR1E Fairbanks Meridian
Sections 16,21,27,28

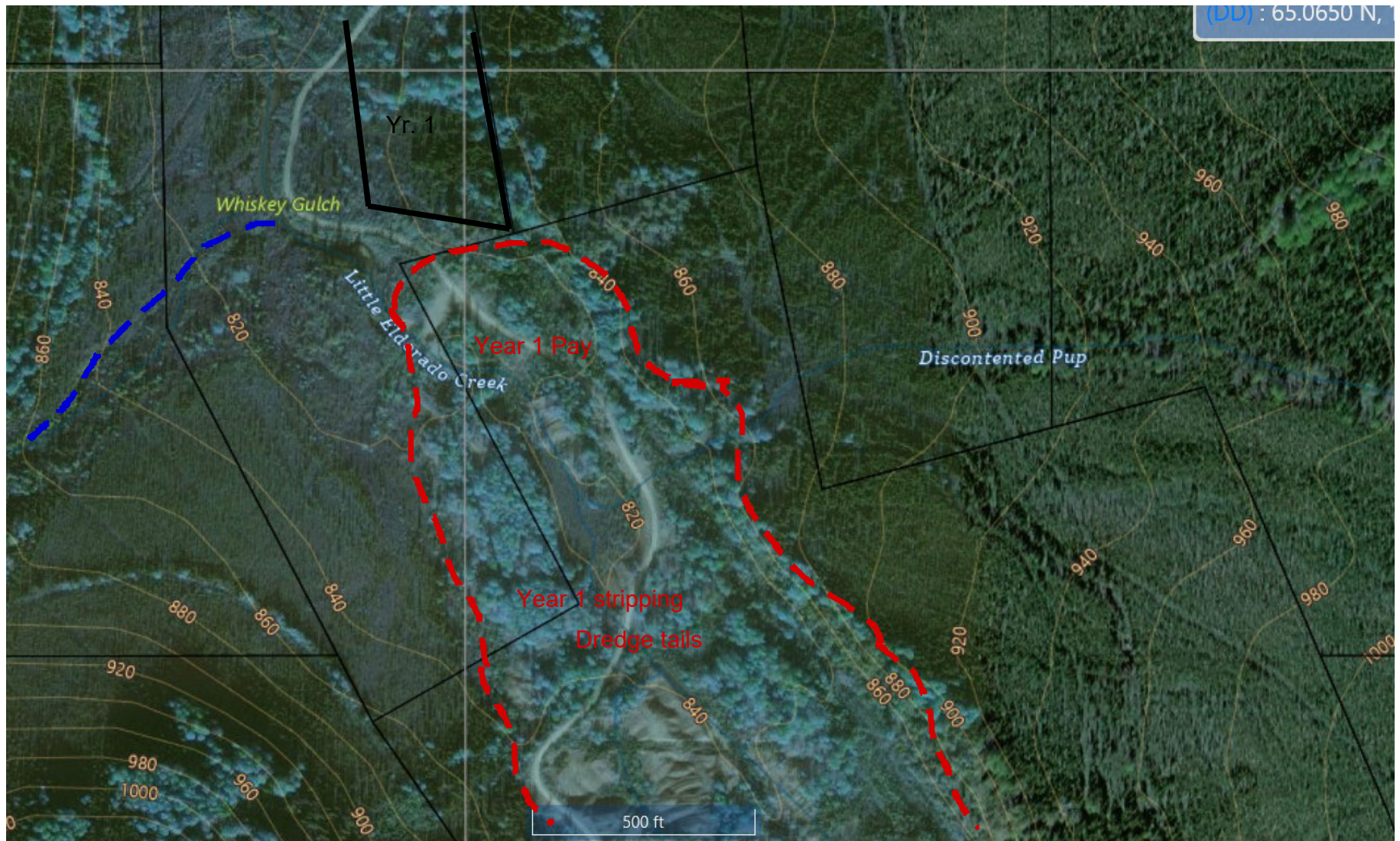


POA-2024-00505 APMA 9497
October 18, 2024

Sheet 9 of 10

Big Sky Exploration LLC

Whiskey Gulch
Discontented Pup



From: FNSB GIS

POA-2024-00505 APMA 9497
October 18, 2024

Sheet 10 of 10