

**Permit M-1980-244**  
**Cresson Project Amendment 14**

**Exhibit H**  
**Wildlife Information**

## **1 INTRODUCTION**

This Exhibit H was developed in conformance to Part 6.4.8 of the Mineral Rules and Regulations for Hard Rock, Metal, and Designated Mining Operations. This Exhibit provides a description of and impacts to significant wildlife resources on the affected land and specifically in the area where the Valley Leach Facility Expansions will be constructed. More details on wildlife resources in the affected lands boundary may be found in the Baseline Technical Report for Soils and Biological Resources (Arcadis 2011 and 2015) found in Appendix 5. Details on wildlife protection measures may be found in Cripple Creek and Victor Gold Mining Company's (CC&V's) Wildlife Protection Plan (WPP), which is included in Appendix 8 of this Amendment 14.

## **2 GENERAL WILDLIFE**

The portions of the area affected by Amendment 14 activities were permitted as affected lands as part of the Mine Life Extension 2 (MLE2) - Amendment 10. The post-mining land use for Permit M-1980-244 has been established and approved as wildlife habitat and livestock grazing (rangeland). This post-mining land use is also consistent with Teller County land use plans. Revegetation and general reclamation have been conducted to create useful and contributing land for livestock grazing and wildlife habitat.

Typical wildlife species observed to be present, showing signs such as scat, or known to exist in the habitat are listed in the Baseline Technical Report for Soils and Biological Resources (Arcadis 2011 and 2015), found in Appendix 5. Typical species include Rocky Mountain elk, mule deer, moose, bighorn sheep, black bear, red-tailed hawk, turkey vultures, American kestrel, Swainson's hawk, great horned owl, gray jay, common raven, black-billed magpie, northern flicker, downy woodpecker, dark-eyed junco, mountain chickadee, mountain bluebird, chipping sparrow, Clark's nutcracker, American robin, white-breasted nuthatch, red-breasted nuthatch, mourning dove, steller's jay, barn swallow, garter snake, coyote, red fox, raccoon, striped skunk, mountain lion, ground squirrels, Gunnison's prairie dog, pocket gophers, meadow vole, cottontail rabbit, deer mouse, and pine squirrel.

Wildlife usage of the affected land is considered to be minimal due to the limited quantity and quality of vegetation in the area of the Valley Leach Facility Expansion. However, reclamation activities in the area, which have created large open grassed spaces interspersed with tree-covered slopes, have led to an increase in deer and elk usage. Areas peripheral to the Cresson Project and undisturbed and reclaimed sites between the active mining areas provide wildlife habitat where vegetation is prevalent. In addition, since public hunting is not allowed on the private property of the Cresson Project, the permit area provides a refuge from hunting pressures on surrounding lands.

Colorado Parks and Wildlife (CPW) typically has commented, during previous reviews of mine operations plans, that a continuation of mining activities and other processing-related disturbances would be expected to have a minimal impact on wildlife. CC&V will continue to work with CPW to improve post-mining wildlife habitat. CC&V has prepared and implemented the WPP as part of standard operating procedures for the Cresson Project. The WPP is included in Appendix 8.

### **3 SPECIAL STATUS SPECIES**

CC&V retained the services of Arcadis, who queried the websites of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, the CPW, and the Colorado Natural Heritage Program for a current list of Special Status Species that have potential to occur in the Cripple Creek Mining District (District) and Teller County. The Special Status Species list is provided in the Baseline Technical Report for Soils and Biological Resources (Arcadis 2011 and 2015), found in Appendix 5 and was reviewed and determined to be current at the time of this Amendment 14 submittal. Arcadis based the potential for any Special Status Species to occur in the survey area on habitat suitability in the survey area.

The Special Status Species with the potential to occur within the affected area as listed in the Baseline Technical Report for Soils, Vegetation, and Wildlife (Arcadis 2011 and 2015) include:

- American Peregrine Falcon
- Bald Eagle
- Burrowing Owl
- Ferruginous Hawk
- Mexican Spotted Owl
- Botta's Pocket Gopher
- Preble's Meadow Jumping Mouse
- Townsend's Big-eared Bat
- Pawnee Montane Skipper
- Pale Moonwort
- Reflected Moonwort; and
- Rocky Mountain Columbine

Of the Special Status Species identified as part of the study, only the Botta's pocket gopher and the Townsend's big-eared bat have the potential to be present in the Study Area as defined in the Baseline Technical Report for Soils, Vegetation, and Wildlife (Arcadis 2011 and 2015). The Botta's pocket gopher is not afforded specific protections under State or Federal laws, and the area expected to be disturbed as part of Amendment 14 activities is already largely disturbed as a result of prior permitting activities. The Townsend's big-eared bat was identified as a Special Status Species that may exist in historic underground mine workings although none have been observed.

#### **4 WILDLIFE PROTECTION**

A description of the measures to protect wildlife from encountering designated chemicals is provided in the WPP included as Appendix 8. The designated chemicals are principally contained in the internal pregnant solution storage areas (PSSAs) at the Valley Leach Facilities (VLFs), in the adsorption, desorption and recovery (ADR) facilities, in the mill facilities, or in the permitted Overburden Storage Areas (OSAs). New designated chemicals are not anticipated over what was approved in prior permit amendments.

## **5 REFERENCE(S)**

“Baseline Technical Report for Soils and Biological Resources”, Arcadis, Highlands Ranch, CO, Tech. Rep. Cresson Project M-1980-244, Mine Life Extension 2 Project Area, November 2011.

“Baseline Technical Report for Soils and Biological Resources”, Arcadis, Highlands Ranch, CO, Tech. Rep. Cresson Project M-1980-244, Amendment No. 11. October 2015.

Colorado Mined Land Reclamation Board, Colorado Mined Land Reclamation Act, 34-32-101 et seq., C.R.S. 1973 as amended.

Cripple Creek & Victor Gold Mining Company, Wildlife Protection Plan, September 2019.