



US Army Corps
of Engineers
Alaska District

Public Notice of Application for Permit

FAIRBANKS FIELD OFFICE
Regulatory Division (1145)
CEPOA-RD
2175 University Avenue, Suite 201E
Fairbanks, Alaska 99709-4927

| | |
|----------------------------|-------------------------|
| PUBLIC NOTICE DATE: | June 1, 2020 |
| EXPIRATION DATE: | July 1, 2020 |
| REFERENCE NUMBER: | POA-1996-00211 |
| WATERWAY: | Goodpaster River |

Interested parties are hereby notified that a Department of the Army permit application has been received for work in waters of the United States (U.S.) as described below and shown on the enclosed project drawings.

All comments regarding this Public Notice (PN) should be sent to the address noted above. If you desire to submit your comments by email, you should send it to the Project Manager's email as listed below or to regpagemaster@usace.army.mil. All comments should include the PN reference number listed above.

All comments should reach this office no later than the expiration date of this PN to become part of the record and be considered in the decision. Please contact Lindsey McCord at (907) 458-1605 or by email at: Lindsey.N.McCord@usace.army.mil if further information is desired concerning this notice.

APPLICANT: Northern Star (Pogo) LLC (Attention: Jilian Ladegard)

LOCATION: The project site is located within Sections 23, 26, 27, 34 and 35, T. 5 S., R. 14 E., Fairbanks Meridian; USGS Quad Map Big Delta B-2; Latitude 64.4485° N., Longitude 144.9445° W.; near Delta Junction, Alaska.

PURPOSE: The applicant's stated purpose is to "improve operational safety at the existing Pogo Mine while maintaining NSR operational efficiencies. The mine requires additional access to underground resources to continue to maintain mine output to the mill.

Surface area increases include road construction to reduce surface truck congestion; changing haul road locations to reduce adverse grades; reduce access road turns; provide additional stopping distances for loaded haul trucks; improve sight distances; increase surface storage space for equipment, increase housing, and increase surface rock storage. The additional space is required to reduce congestion, improve safety, and provide space for required mine equipment to dispose of non-mineralized underground rock in surface rock dumps. The airport portal is a new underground access to provide additional access to underground gold resources. The portal pad requires equipment storage space, laydown area, ventilation support, safety equipment storage, and equipment turnaround and work area to allow haul trucks and mine workers in and out of the underground workings.”

PROPOSED WORK: The applicant proposes to fill 43.3 acres of Waters of the U.S. (WOUS) (wetlands and ponds) with approximately 1,184,000 cubic yards of clean non-mineralized rock to complete nine operational changes within the Pogo Mine operation for the improvement of infrastructure and safety. All of the proposed work sites and details of wetland impacts per site are listed on sheets 1-2 of the attached project plans “Table 1: NSR Pogo Project Overviews”. The applicant is also proposing to culvert 1,550 feet of Liese Creek at the 1875 Bench project area. The applicant has included that fill material will come from underground sources and no surface material sites are required for fill material. All work would be performed in accordance with the enclosed plan (sheets 1-9), dated May 18, 2020.

APPLICANT PROPOSED MITIGATION: The applicant proposes the following mitigation measures to avoid, minimize, and compensate for impacts to waters of the U.S. from activities involving discharges of dredged or fill material.

a. Avoidance: The applicant provided this statement in regards to avoidance. “To maximize avoidance each area was reviewed with upland mapping overlays to ensure that only WOUS that had to be filled were included in the design for each site. The goal of each project area was to maximize the use of existing disturbance and uplands within the design. If WOUS were identified for fill in the project area the design was reviewed again against the wetland mapping and the existing footprint layers. Existing fills were expanded in uplands and disturbed areas to avoid wetlands. The toes of existing fills were connected to proposed pads to avoid new pad acreage. All roads were designed based on traffic volume, required safety width, and grade. Road upgrades were keyed into existing fills and uplands as practicable. Road upgrades were connected to all facilities by the safest and shortest connection through uplands and only through wetlands when no other practicable alternative existed. Existing access roads will be widened and used where safe to do so, avoiding the construction of new roads. Access was confirmed to each facility (portal or building on site) to reduce congestion and ensure truck traffic flow. Dead ended routes, blind corners and adverse grades were avoided by design. All proposed pads are within the existing mine footprint. All surface drainage is contained within the existing surface drainage controls. No fill is proposed in areas requiring drainage plan modifications. Further WOUS loss are avoided by using the existing pads and roads within the mine site footprint. Ponds 1 & 2 will be filled within a work pad that is congested both summer and winter. Using these ponds today avoids filling additional functional wetlands surrounding the existing camp. This also preserves and maintains the wetland buffer around the camp facility.”

b. Minimization: The applicant provided this statement in regards to minimization. "NSR recognizes that work near the Goodpaster River could have potential impacts to anadromous fish and water quality. Therefore, all work will be done outside of the current forested buffer zone adjacent to the river. The camp access road and airstrip are east of the river and forest buffers. The Goodpaster River is protected from erosion and sedimentation by this natural buffer. This buffer minimizes impacts potential impacts to WOUS. There will be no sediment release to flowing open water. The proposed project areas are connected to existing access roads or to existing pads. The applicant plans to maintain and upgrade existing roads; using the existing roads and connections to the proposed project areas to minimize wetland impacts. Vegetation clearing for the proposed work areas will be scheduled to occur outside the migratory bird nesting season, or bird nesting surveys will be conducted to ensure nests are not disturbed, consistent with the United States Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) guidance. Clearing will not be conducted outside the established boundaries. Between 1997 and 1999 the Pogo Project area was investigated for archaeological evidence by Cultural Resource Consultants, LLC (CRC). The reconnaissance level surveys were conducted to gauge the archaeological potential of the general project area, exploration areas, and specific possible development sites. As stated previously, all projects are adjacent to pre-existing disturbance areas and the potential for unearthing historically significant artifacts is low. Erosion control and construction methods will be described in the Stormwater Pollution Prevention Plan (SWPPP) required by the State of Alaska. BMPs for embankment stabilization, including contouring and seeding will be employed. The project will comply with the State's Water Quality Standards (WQS). Surface drainage will be culverted to ensure flow connectivity. Water will not pond on upstream fills. Surface drainage will not be adversely impeded. Existing surface and sediment controls will be maintained in the mine site."

c. Compensatory Mitigation: The applicant provided this statement regarding compensatory mitigation. "Ponds 1 & 2 (6.6 acres) will be returned to wetlands or waters at the end of the mine life. These ponds are former material sites (portions of the ponds were excavated in uplands) that have filled with groundwater and are not connected by surface water to the Goodpaster River. The ponds are steep sided and have no littoral or wetland edges. The ponds will be reclaimed and returned to wetlands as defined by the State of Alaska in the 2018 Pogo Reclamation and Closure Plan. A performance bond is in place with the State of Alaska to ensure this action. No compensatory mitigation credits are proposed for the temporary loss of these ponds. NSR proposes to purchase credits from the Tanana Valley Mitigation Bank (TVMB) for the remaining wetlands filled. Credits will be purchased prior to construction in 2020 and 2021. Credit calculations will be completed using the Functional Assessment methodology for the TVMB. Final compensatory mitigation credit payments will be based on the final wetland impact acreage."

WATER QUALITY CERTIFICATION: A permit for the described work will not be issued until a certification or waiver of certification, as required under Section 401 of the Clean Water Act (Public Law 95-217), has been received from the Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation.

CULTURAL RESOURCES: The latest published version of the Alaska Heritage Resources Survey (AHRs) has been consulted for the presence or absence of historic properties, including those listed in or eligible for inclusion in the National Register of Historic Places.

There are no cultural resources in the permit area or within the vicinity of the permit area. The permit area has been determined to be the wetlands being impacted by the permit as well as the construction staging areas and the existing access roads. All impacts and fill associated with the permit are adjacent to existing fill. Consultation of the AHRs constitutes the extent of cultural resource investigations by the Corps of Engineers (Corps) at this time, and we are otherwise unaware of the presence of such resources. The Corps has made a No Historic Properties Affected (No Effect) determination for the proposed project. This application is being coordinated with the State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO). Any comments SHPO may have concerning presently unknown archeological or historic data that may be lost or destroyed by work under the requested permit will be considered in our final assessment of the described work. The Corps is requesting the SHPO's concurrence with this determination.

ENDANGERED SPECIES: No threatened or endangered species are known to use the project area. We have determined the described activity would have no effect on any listed or proposed threatened or endangered species and would have no effect on any designated or proposed critical habitat, under the Endangered Species Act of 1973 (87 Stat. 844). Therefore, no consultation with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service or the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) is required. However, any comments they may have concerning endangered or threatened wildlife or plants or their critical habitat will be considered in our final assessment of the described work.

ESSENTIAL FISH HABITAT: The Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act, as amended by the Sustainable Fisheries Act of 1996, requires all Federal agencies to consult with the NMFS on all actions, or proposed actions, permitted, funded, or undertaken by the agency, that may adversely affect Essential Fish Habitat (EFH).

The project area is within the known range of the Chinook salmon (*Oncorhynchus tshawytscha*) and Chum salmon (*Oncorhynchus keta*) present in Goodpaster River. The applicant has stated that all work will be done outside of the current forested buffer zone adjacent to Goodpaster River and no sediment will be released into flowing open water.

We have determined the described activity would not adversely affect EFH in the project area.

TRIBAL CONSULTATION: The Alaska District fully supports tribal self-governance and government-to-government relations between federally recognized Tribes and the Federal government. Tribes with protected rights or resources that could be significantly affected by a proposed Federal action (e.g., a permit decision) have the right to consult with the Alaska District on a government-to-government basis. Views of each Tribe regarding protected rights and resources will be accorded due consideration in this process. This PN serves as notification to the Tribes within the area potentially affected by the proposed work and invites their participation in the Federal decision-making process regarding the protected Tribal right or resource. Consultation may be initiated by the affected Tribe upon written request to the District Commander during the public comment period.

PUBLIC HEARING: Any person may request, in writing, within the comment period specified in this notice, that a public hearing be held to consider this application. Requests for public hearings shall state, with particularity, reasons for holding a public hearing.

EVALUATION: The decision whether to issue a permit will be based on an evaluation of the probable impacts, including cumulative impacts of the proposed activity and its intended use on the public interest. Evaluation of the probable impacts, which the proposed activity may have on the public interest, requires a careful weighing of all the factors that become relevant in each particular case. The benefits, which reasonably may be expected to accrue from the proposal, must be balanced against its reasonably foreseeable detriments. The outcome of the general balancing process would determine whether to authorize a proposal, and if so, the conditions under which it will be allowed to occur. The decision should reflect the national concern for both protection and utilization of important resources. All factors, which may be relevant to the proposal, must be considered including the cumulative effects thereof. Among those are conservation, economics, aesthetics, general environmental concerns, wetlands, cultural values, fish and wildlife values, flood hazards, floodplain values, land use, navigation, shore erosion and accretion, recreation, water supply and conservation, water quality, energy needs, safety, food and fiber production, mineral needs, considerations of property ownership, and, in general, the needs and welfare of the people. For activities involving 404 discharges, a permit will be denied if the discharge that would be authorized by such permit would not comply with the Environmental Protection Agency's 404(b)(1) guidelines. Subject to the preceding sentence and any other applicable guidelines or criteria (see Sections 320.2 and 320.3), a permit will be granted unless the District Commander determines that it would be contrary to the public interest.

The Corps is soliciting comments from the public; Federal, State, and local agencies and officials; Indian Tribes; and other interested parties in order to consider and evaluate the impacts of this proposed activity. Any comments received will be considered by the Corps to determine whether to issue, modify, condition or deny a permit for this proposal. To make this decision, comments are used to assess impacts on endangered species, historic properties, water quality, general environmental effects, and the other public interest factors listed above. Comments are used in the preparation of an Environmental Assessment and/or an Environmental Impact Statement pursuant to the National Environmental Policy Act. Comments are also used to determine the need for a public hearing and to determine the overall public interest of the proposed activity.

AUTHORITY: This permit will be issued or denied under the following authorities:

(X) Discharge dredged or fill material into waters of the U.S. – Section 404 Clean Water Act (33 U.S.C. 1344). Therefore, our public interest review will consider the guidelines set forth under Section 404(b) of the Clean Water Act (40 CFR 230).

Project drawings and a Notice of Application for State Water Quality Certification are enclosed with this Public Notice.

District Commander
U.S. Army, Corps of Engineers

Enclosures

STATE OF ALASKA

DEPT. OF ENVIRONMENTAL CONSERVATION
DIVISION OF WATER

Wastewater Discharge Authorization Program (WDAP) / 401 Certification

DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL CONSERVATION
WDAP/401 CERTIFICATION
555 CORDOVA STREET
ANCHORAGE, ALASKA 99501-2617
PHONE: (907) 269-6285 | EMAIL: dec-401cert@alaska.gov

NOTICE OF APPLICATION FOR STATE WATER QUALITY CERTIFICATION

Any applicant for a federal license or permit to conduct an activity that might result in a discharge into navigable waters, in accordance with Section 401 of the Clean Water Act of 1977 (PL95-217), also must apply for and obtain certification from the Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation that the discharge will comply with the Clean Water Act, the Alaska Water Quality Standards, and other applicable State laws. By agreement between the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and the Department of Environmental Conservation, application for a Department of the Army permit to discharge dredged or fill material into navigable waters under Section 404 of the Clean Water Act also may serve as application for State Water Quality Certification.

Notice is hereby given that the application for a Department of the Army Permit described in the Corps of Engineers' Public Notice (PN) Reference Number **POA-1996-00211, Goodpaster River**, serves as application for State Water Quality Certification from the Department of Environmental Conservation.

After reviewing the application, the Department may certify there is reasonable assurance the activity, and any discharge that might result, will comply with the Clean Water Act, the Alaska Water Quality Standards, and other applicable State laws. The Department also may deny or waive certification.

Any person desiring to comment on the project with respect to Water Quality Certification, may submit written comments to the address above or via email to dec-401cert@alaska.gov by the expiration date of the Corps of Engineer's Public Notice. All comments should include the PN reference number listed above. Mailed comments must be postmarked on or before the expiration date of the public notice.

Disability Reasonable Accommodation Notice

The State of Alaska, Department of Environmental Conservation complies with Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act 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 Kate Orozco at 907-465-6171 or TDD Relay Service 1-800-770-8973/TTY or dial 711 within 5 days of the expiration date of this public notice to ensure that any necessary accommodations can be provided.

Table 1: NSR Pogo Project Overviews¹

| 1875 Bench | | | | | | | |
|--|--|--------------------|-------------------|---------------------|---|---|-------------------------|
| Project Area | Project Coordinates | Total Acres | WOUS Acres | Upland Acres | Wetland Fill Material Estimates (CY) | Purpose | Timeline - Start |
| 1875 Portal ² | Latitude: 64.4531 N Longitude: 144.9076 W | 13.9 | 1.3 | 12.6 | ~212,000 CY | Expand road bench to relieve congestion and provide safer access into and out of portal. | July 2020 |
| Airstrip Area | | | | | | | |
| New Laydown Area and Airport Portal Area | Latitude: 64.4628 N Longitude: 144.9229 W | 23.6 | 15.1 | 8.5 | ~304,000 CY | New portal for production, laydown area, ventilation, safety equipment, turnaround and work area to relieve congestion safely. | May 2021 |
| Lower Camp | | | | | | | |
| Road 8 – Portal and Road Upgrades ³ | Latitude: 64.4474 N Longitude: 144.9341 W | 14.8 | 9.0 | 5.8 | ~441,000 CY | Expansion of Road 8 to relieve congestion and provide space at portal pad by moving the road up hill to provide a safer, wider road surface for larger, and a higher volume of vehicles into portal. Portal and water treatment pad expanded. The original configuration was designed for fewer and smaller vehicles. | July 2020 |
| Pond 1 | Latitude: 64.4508 N Longitude: 144.9413 W | 2.4 | 2.4 | 0 | ~43,000 CY | Work area in the 1525 area is congested, will improve safety, camp is out of flat storage space. Congested with winter snow removal. | Aug 2020 |
| Pond 2 | Latitude: 64.4492 N Longitude: 144.9408 W | 4.2 | 4.2 | 0 | ~77,000 CY | Work area in the 1525 area is congested, will improve safety, camp is out of space. Congested with winter snow removal. | Aug 2020 |

¹ All NWP's that have been applied for and/or completed, that are adjacent to the project areas in this application, have been deducted from the overall WOUS acreage in the table above.

² NWP 39 Permit approved on May 13, 2020 for 0.49 acres of wetland disturbance

³ NWP 39 approved on May 15, 2019 for 0.099 acres of wetland disturbance

| Project Area | Project Coordinates | Total Acres | WOUS Acres | Upland Acres | Wetland Fill Material Estimates (CY) | Purpose | Timeline - Start |
|------------------------------------|--|-------------|-------------|--------------|--------------------------------------|--|------------------|
| Lower Camp | | | | | | | |
| D Wing Housing ⁴ | Latitude: 64.4539 N Longitude: 144.9373 W | 0.8 | 0.2 | .6 | ~2,000 CY | Expansion of D Wing Facilities to relieve congestion and improve safety. Congested with winter snow removal. | May 2020 |
| Blue Tube Bench Expansion | Latitude: 64.4584 N Longitude: 144.9149 W | 12.8 | 0.7 | 12.1 | ~46,000 CY | Facility expansion to relieve congestion, improve safety, eliminate large vehicle haulage near the camp facilities, and supply additional space for equipment. | May 2020 |
| Warehouse Laydown 1 | Latitude: 64.4510 N Longitude: 144.9371 W | 9.4 | 6.7 | 2.7 | ~ 41,000 CY | Facility expansion to relieve congestion and to improve safety. | May 2020 |
| Exploration Laydown 2 ⁵ | Latitude: 64.4488 N Longitude: 144.9380 W | 5.6 | 3.7 | 1.9 | ~18,000 CY | Exploration department requires facility expansion to relieve congestion and improve safety. | May 2020 |
| Total Acres | | 87.5 | 43.3 | 44.2 | Total CY = ~ 1,184,000 | | |

A total of 43.3 acres of wetlands and ponds and 44.2 acres of uplands filled for a total and complete project impact of 87.5 acres by implementing all nine operational changes. Liese Creek, an intermittent non-fish bearing stream, will have 1,550 feet of stream length culverted in the 1875 Bench project area.

The areas shown in the attached sheets will be filled with nonmineralized rock (clean fill) and graded to drain to the existing onsite stormwater conveyance system. The fill material will come from underground sources. No surface material sites are required for fill material.

⁴ NWP 39 approved on 12/2/2019 – work has been completed; 0.09 acres of wetlands were disturbed

⁵ NWP 18 approved on 8/23/2018 – work has been completed; 0.01 acres of wetlands were disturbed

Northern Star (Pogo) LLC
Pogo Mine Location Map

POA-1996-00211
Northern Star (Pogo) LLC
Goodpaster River
May 18, 2020
Sheet 3 of 9

Goodpaster River

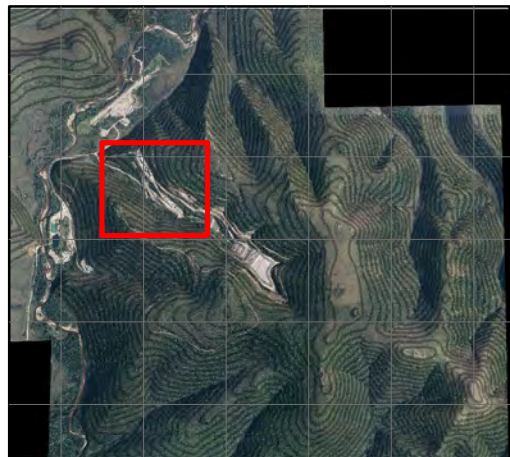
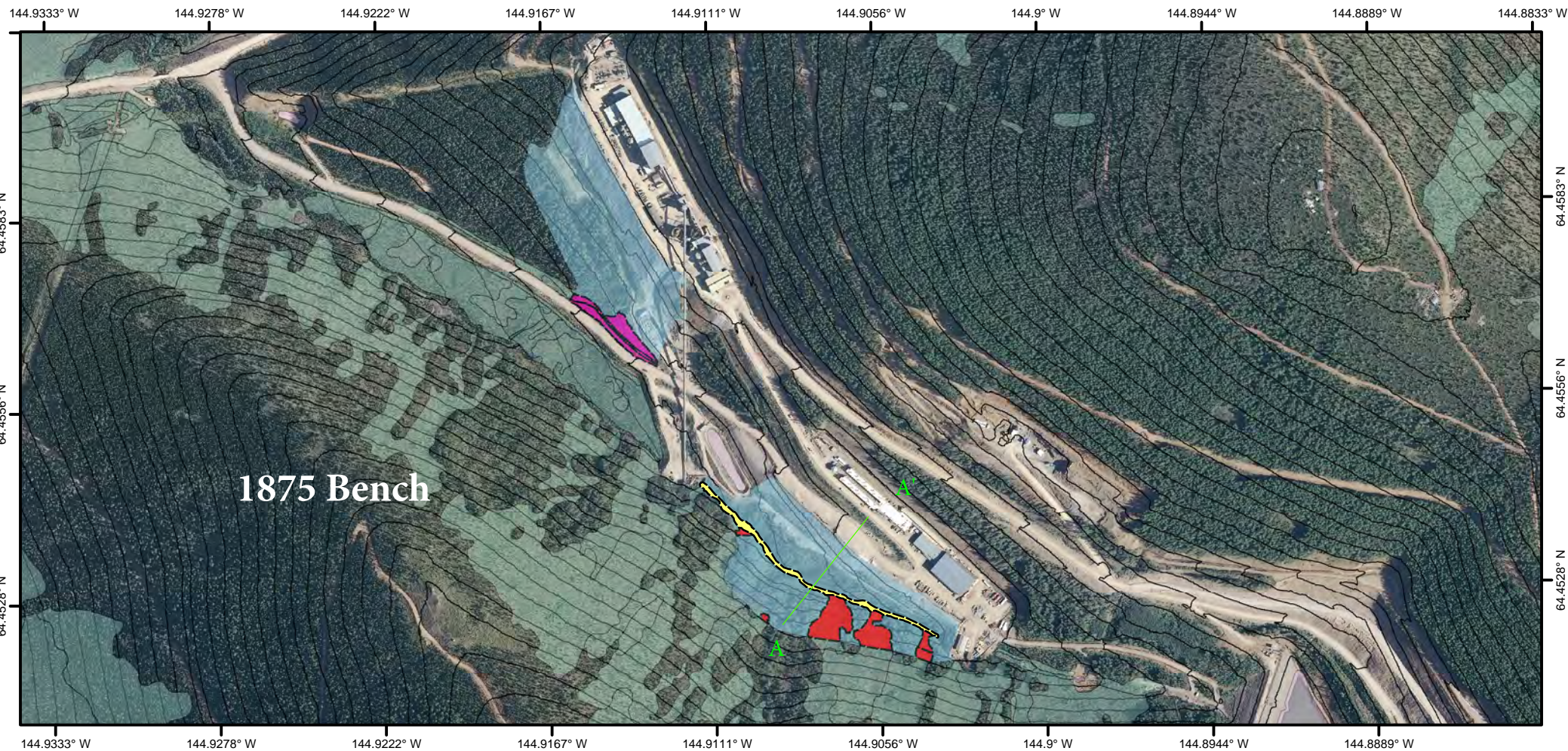
Airstrip Area

Lower Camp

1875 Bench



0 1,000 2,000 4,000 6,000 Feet 1:22,000



- Cut Area
- Liese Creek Culvert Mitigation Area
- Liese Valley Wetland Disturbance Area
- Mill Bench Extension Wetland Disturbance Area
- Mill Bench Upland Disturbance Area
- 1875 Upland Disturbance
- Ponds
- Relatively Permanent Water
- Wetland



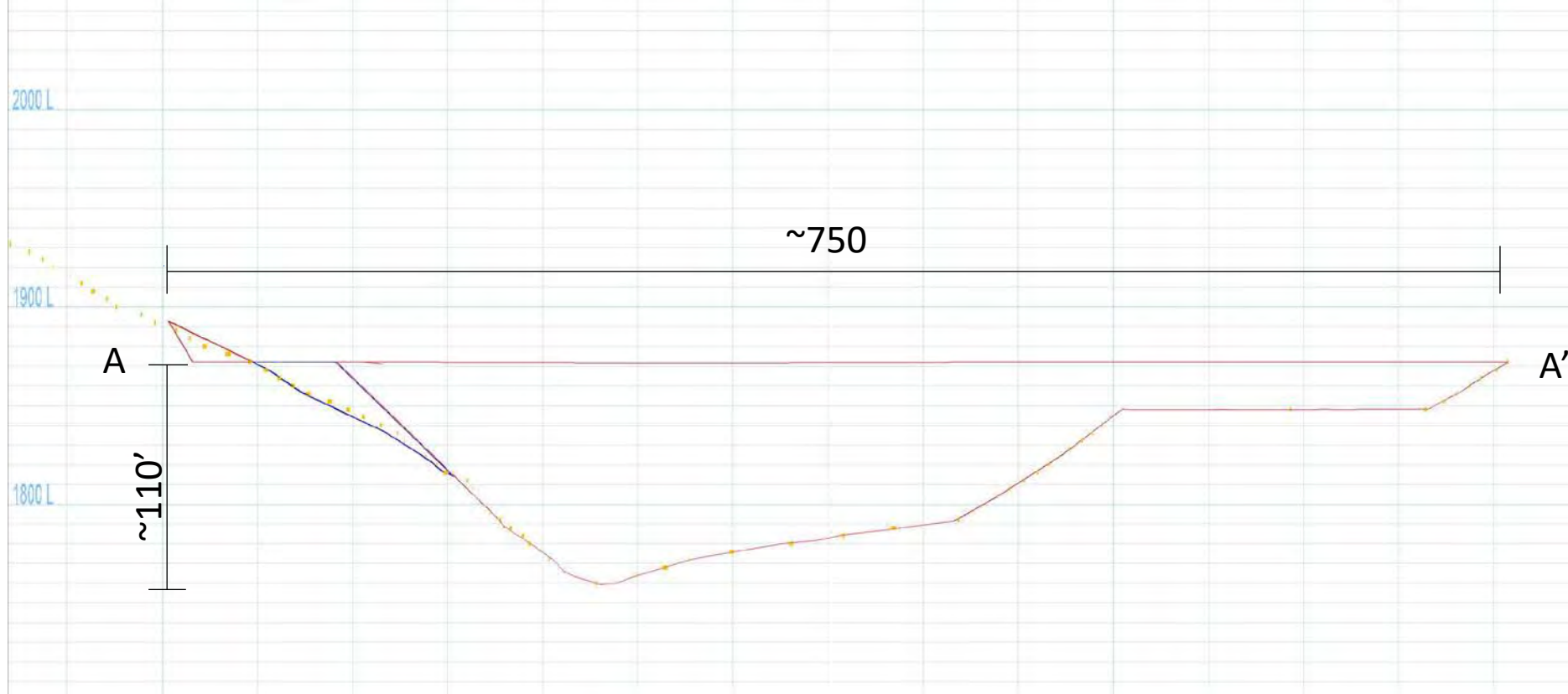
NORTHERN STAR
RESOURCES LIMITED

0 0.5 1 2 3 Miles
1 inch = 1.76 miles 1:111,648

1875 Bench

Applicant: Nothern Star (Pogo) LLC
3204 International Street
Fairbanks, AK 99701

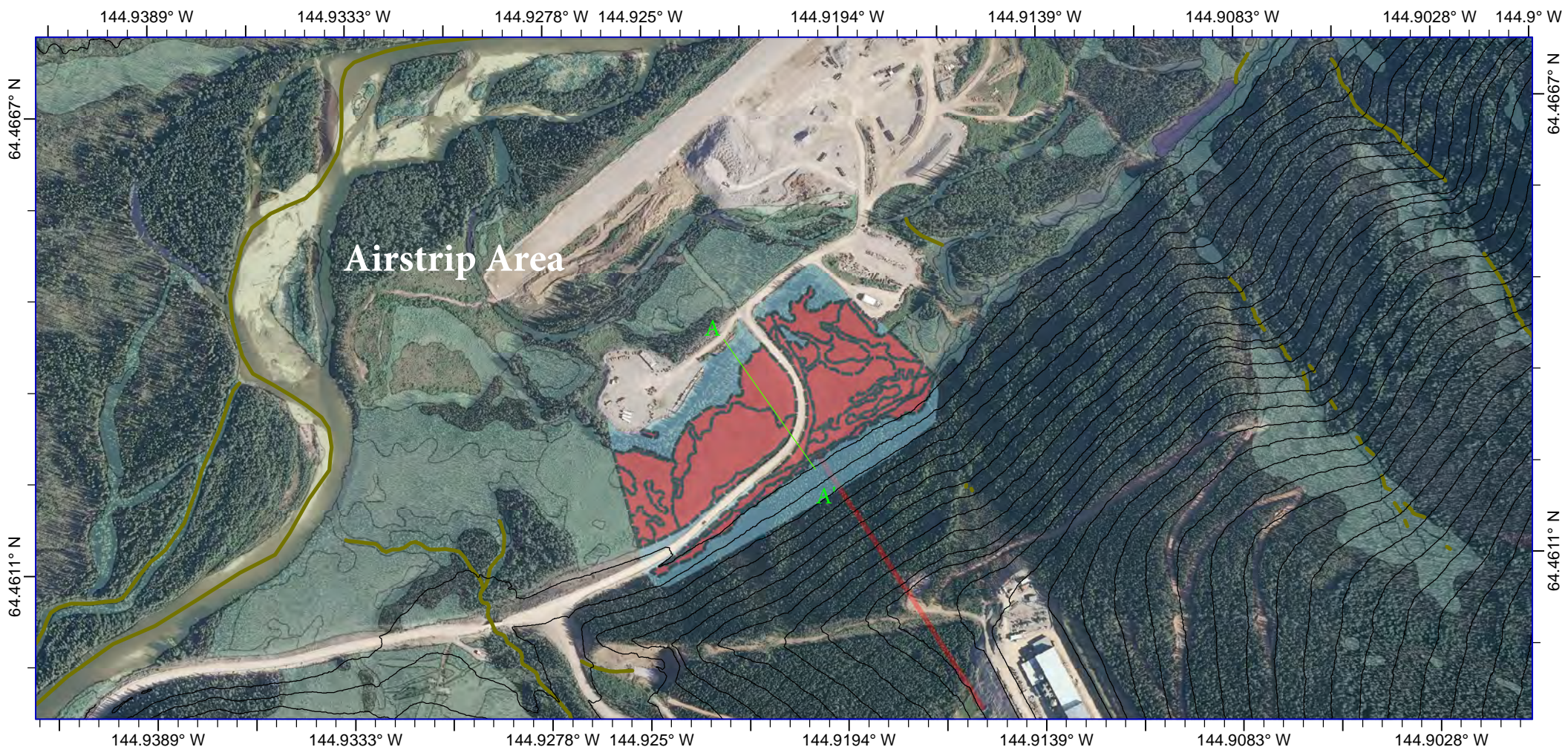
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Northern Star (Pogo) LLC
Goodpastor River
May 18, 2020
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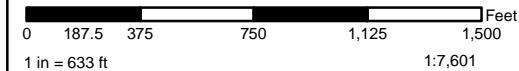
1875 Bench

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Northern Star (Pogo) LLC
Goodpaster River
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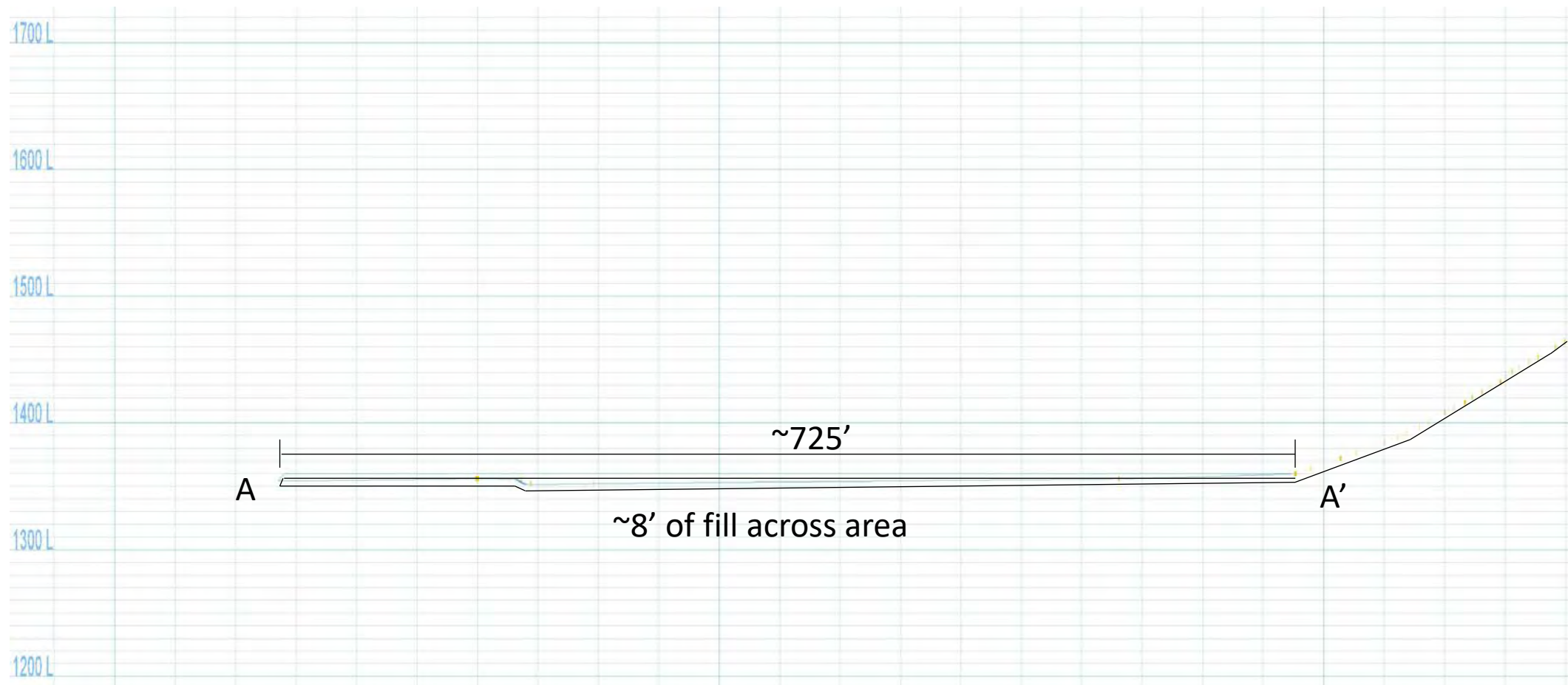
- Cut Area
- Streams_Pogo_Consolidated_2019
- New Portal Wetland Disturbance
- Upland Disturbance
- Ponds
- Relatively Permanent Water
- Wetland



Airstrip Area

Applicant: Northern Star (Pogo) LLC
 3204 International Street
 Fairbanks, AK 99701

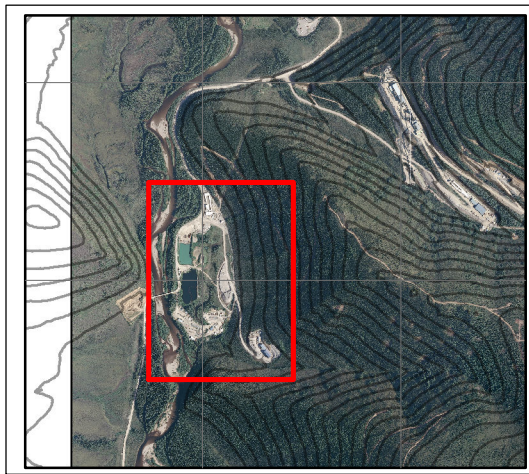
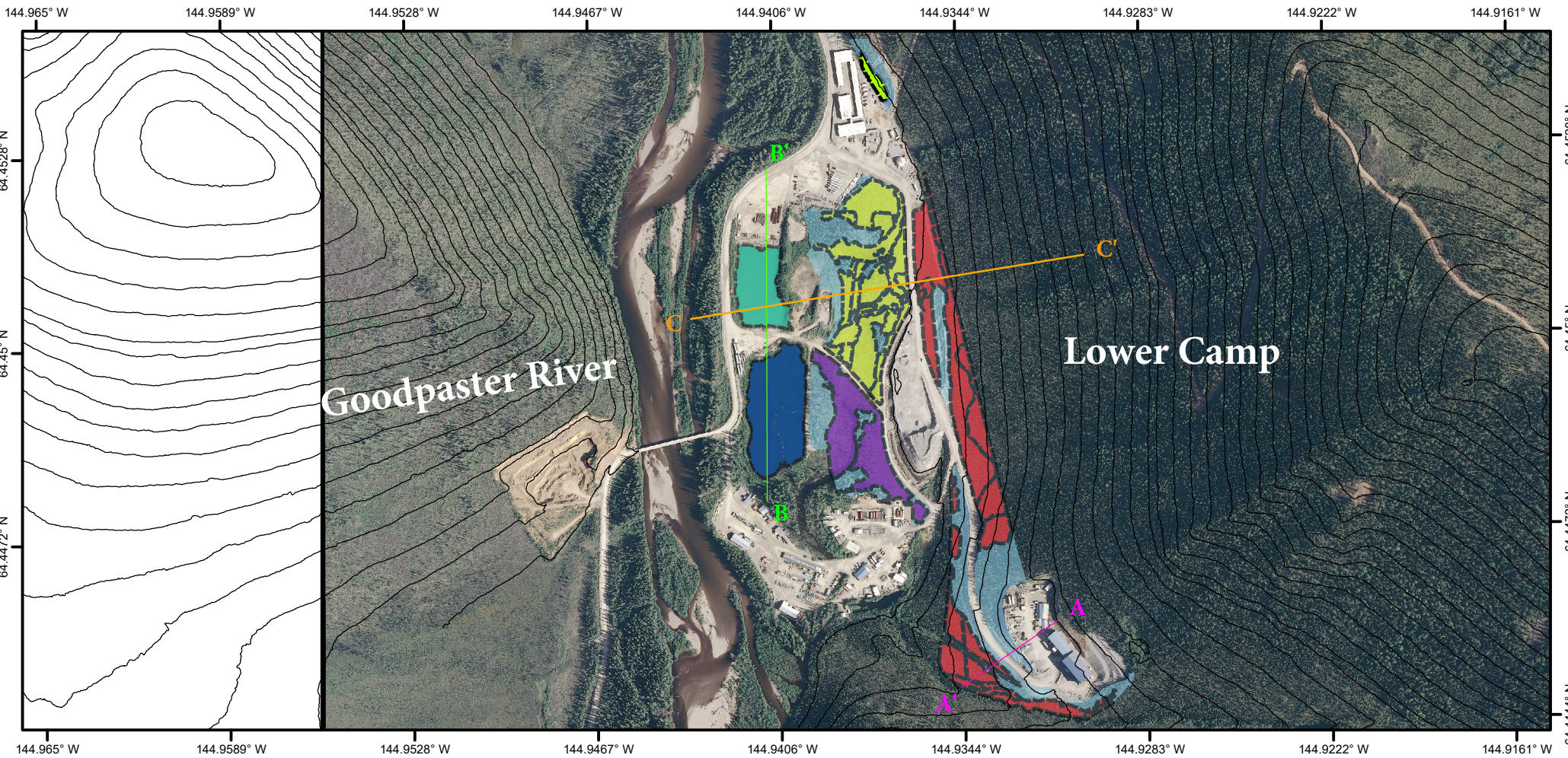
POA-1996-00211
Northern Star (Pogo) LLC
Goodpaster River
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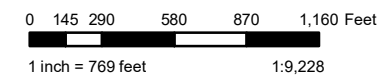
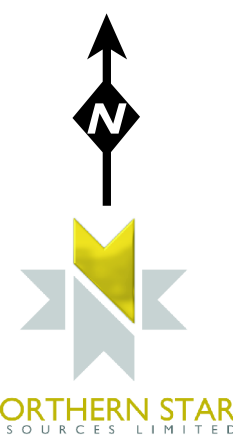
Airstrip Area

POA-1996-00211
Northern Star (Pogo) LLC
Goodpaster River
May 18, 2020
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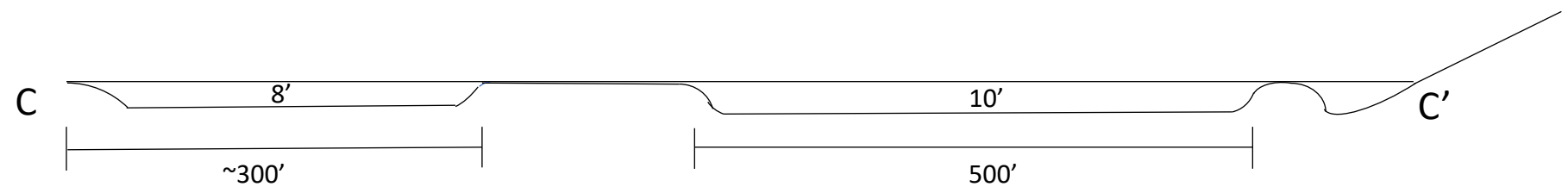
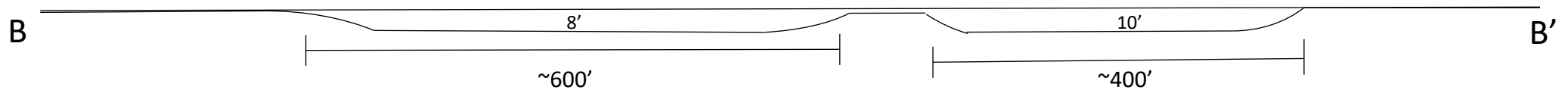
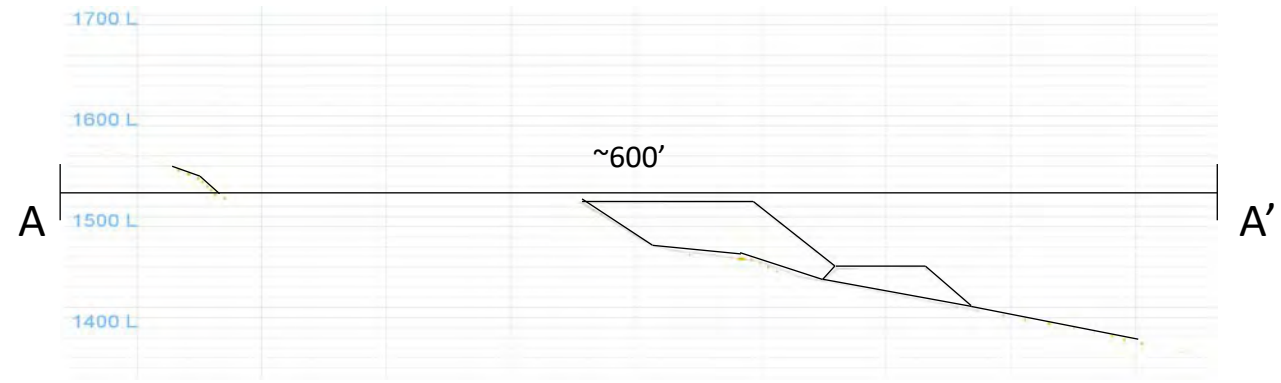
- Cut A
- Cut B
- Cut C
- Exploration Dept Laydown Yard
- Warehouse Laydown Yard Disturbance
- Road 8 Disturbance
- Gravel Pond 1 Disturbance
- Gravel Pond 2 Disturbance
- D Wing Wetland Pad Disturbance
- D Wing Upland Disturbance
- Road 8 Upland Disturbance
- Laydown Extension 1 Upland Disturbance
- Laydown Extension 2 Upland Disturbance



Lower Camp

Applicant: Northern Star (Pogo) LLC
 3204 International Street
 Fairbanks, AK 99701

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Goodpaster River
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Lower Camp

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 Northern Star (Pogo) LLC
 Goodpaster River
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