



US Army Corps
of Engineers
Alaska District

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

Public Notice of Application for Permit

PUBLIC NOTICE DATE: July 10, 2017
EXPIRATION DATE: August 8, 2017
REFERENCE NUMBER: POA-2013-286
WATERWAY: Tok 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 as described below and shown on the enclosed project drawings.

Comments on the described work, with the reference number, should reach this office no later than the expiration date of this Public Notice to become part of the record and be considered in the decision. Please contact John Sargent at (907) 474-2166, by fax at (907) 753-5567, or by email at John.C.Sargent@usace.army.mil if further information is desired concerning this notice.

APPLICANT: Peak Gold, LLC, Attention: Mark Isto, 1660 Wynkook, Suite 1000, Denver, Colorado, 80202

AGENT: SRK Consulting Incorporated, Attention: Bill Jeffress, 4700 Business Park Blvd, Suite E-12, Anchorage, Alaska 99503

LOCATION: The project site is located within Section 7, T. 16 N., R. 13 E., Copper River Meridian; USGS Quad Map Tanacross A-4; Latitude 63.18259° N., Longitude 142.8923° W.; near Tok, Alaska.

PURPOSE: The applicant's stated purpose is to define the potential extent of mineralization and associated economic value of that mineralization, on lands predominantly owned by the Tetlin Tribal Council. The duration of the project is dependent on drilling results and delineation of economic mineral resources and is anticipated to continue for about 5 years.

PROPOSED WORK: Discharge of fill material into approximately 5 acres of scrub-shrub and wetlands for the construction of permanent and temporary access roads and drill pads for mineral exploration. The project boundary encompasses over 32,000 acres with about 76 percent of the areas classified as uplands; the majority of wetlands occurring in valley bottoms or north-facing slopes with permafrost. The majority of the drilling areas are proposed in uplands. Some drilling pads would require access through wetlands typically on north-facing slopes. Construction of access roads and drill pads in wetlands would be done during the winter months to minimize disturbance. Generally, reclamation on wetland sites would be initiated immediately following exploration drilling and the ground is still frozen.

All work would be performed in accordance with the enclosed plan (sheets 1-8), dated June 22, 2017.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION: Alaska Department of Natural Resources Temporary Water Use permit, and Miscellaneous Land permit.

APPLICANT PROPOSED MITIGATION: The applicant proposes the following mitigation measures to avoid and minimize 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 would not be practicable because wetlands are located in areas where exploration drilling is planned.
- b. **Minimization:** The project would site access routes largely within areas outside of waters of the United States such as on ridge tops to the maximum extent practicable. Construction in wetland areas would be done in winter months to minimize effects to wetlands and downstream waters. Access routes and drill pads would be restored by recontouring to pre-existing conditions, and replacing mineral and organic soils and vegetation to facilitate revegetation and minimize soil erosion.
- c. **Compensatory Mitigation:** Compensatory mitigation has not been proposed for the project because the project would be anticipated to have low individual and cumulative impact to waters of the United States including wetlands in the Tok River watershed.

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 within the areas of wetland fill and uplands immediately adjacent to these areas. Consultation of the AHRs constitutes the extent of cultural resource investigations by the Corps of Engineers at this time, and we are otherwise unaware of the presence of such resources. The Corps of Engineers 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) with this public notice. 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 of Engineers 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).

No EFH species are known to use the project area.

We have determined the described activity would have no affect EFH.

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 Public Notice 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 of Engineers 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 of Engineers 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 United States – 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

BILL WALKER, GOVERNOR

STATE OF ALASKA

DEPT. OF ENVIRONMENTAL CONSERVATION

DIVISION OF WATER

401 Certification Program

Non-Point Source Water Pollution Control Program

ANCHORAGE

DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL CONSERVATION

WQM/401 CERTIFICATION

555 CORDOVA STREET

ANCHORAGE, ALASKA 99501-2617

PHONE: (907) 269-7564/FAX: (907) 334-2415

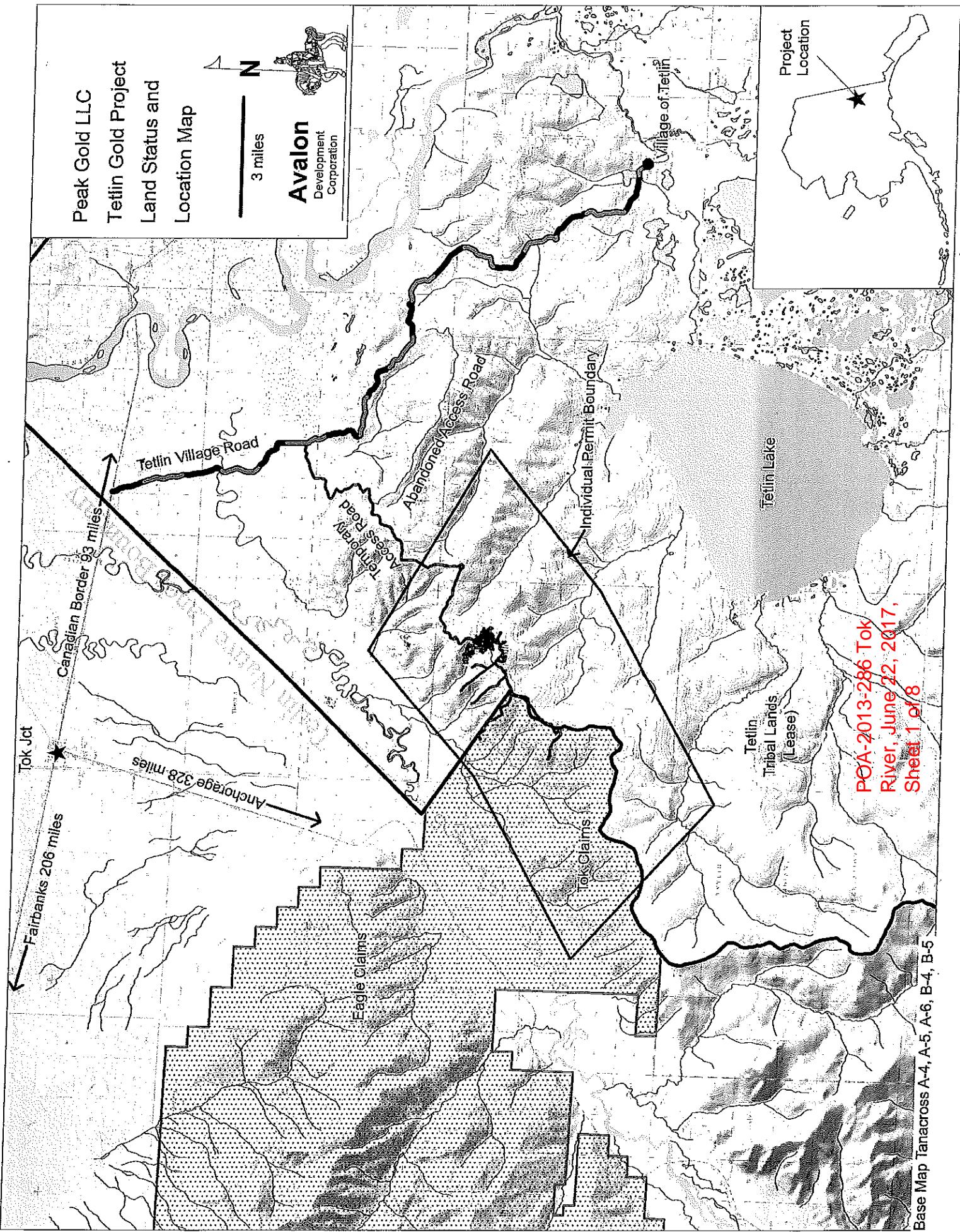
NOTICE OF APPLICATION FOR STATE WATER QUALITY CERTIFICATION

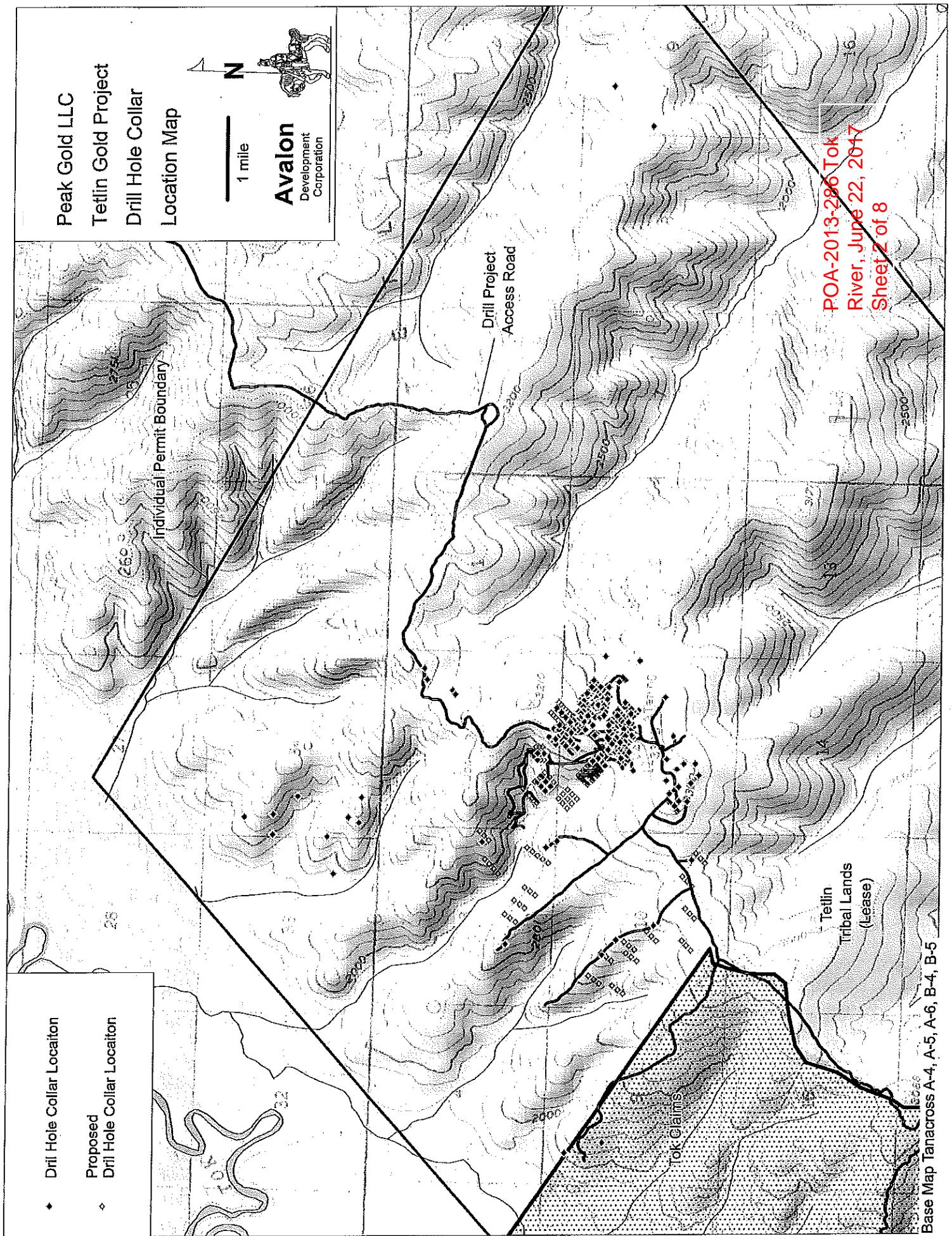
Any applicant for a federal license or permit to conduct an activity that might result in a discharge into navigable waters, in accordance with Section 401 of the Clean Water Act of 1977 (PL95-217), also must apply for and obtain certification from the Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation 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 No. **POA-2013-286, Tok River, APMA 2626** serves as application for State Water Quality Certification from the Department of Environmental Conservation.

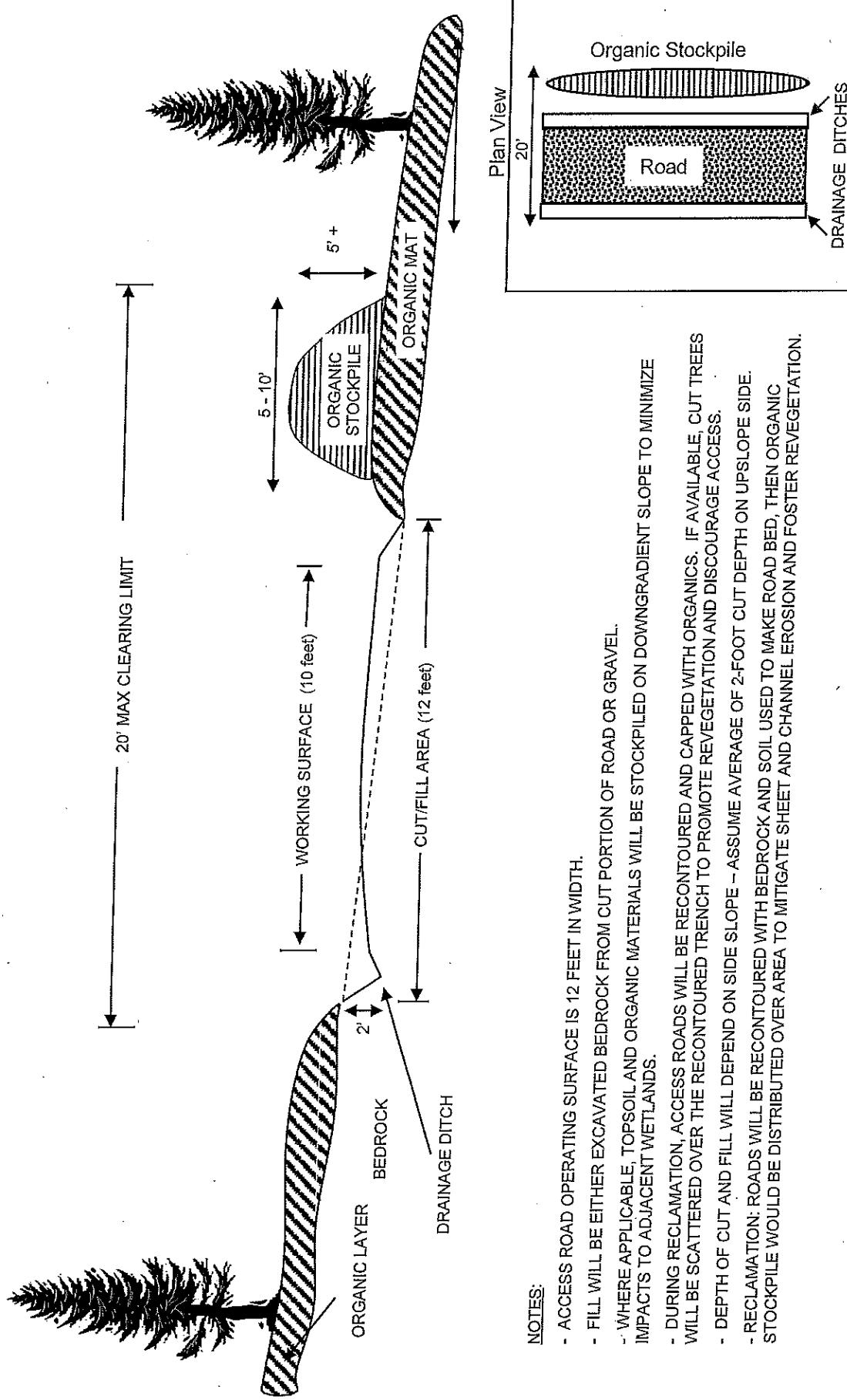
After reviewing the application, the Department may certify there is reasonable assurance the activity, and any discharge that might result, will comply with the Clean Water Act, the Alaska Water Quality Standards, and other applicable State laws. The Department also may deny or waive certification.

Any person desiring to comment on the project, with respect to Water Quality Certification, may submit written comments to the address above by the expiration date of the Corps of Engineer's Public Notice.

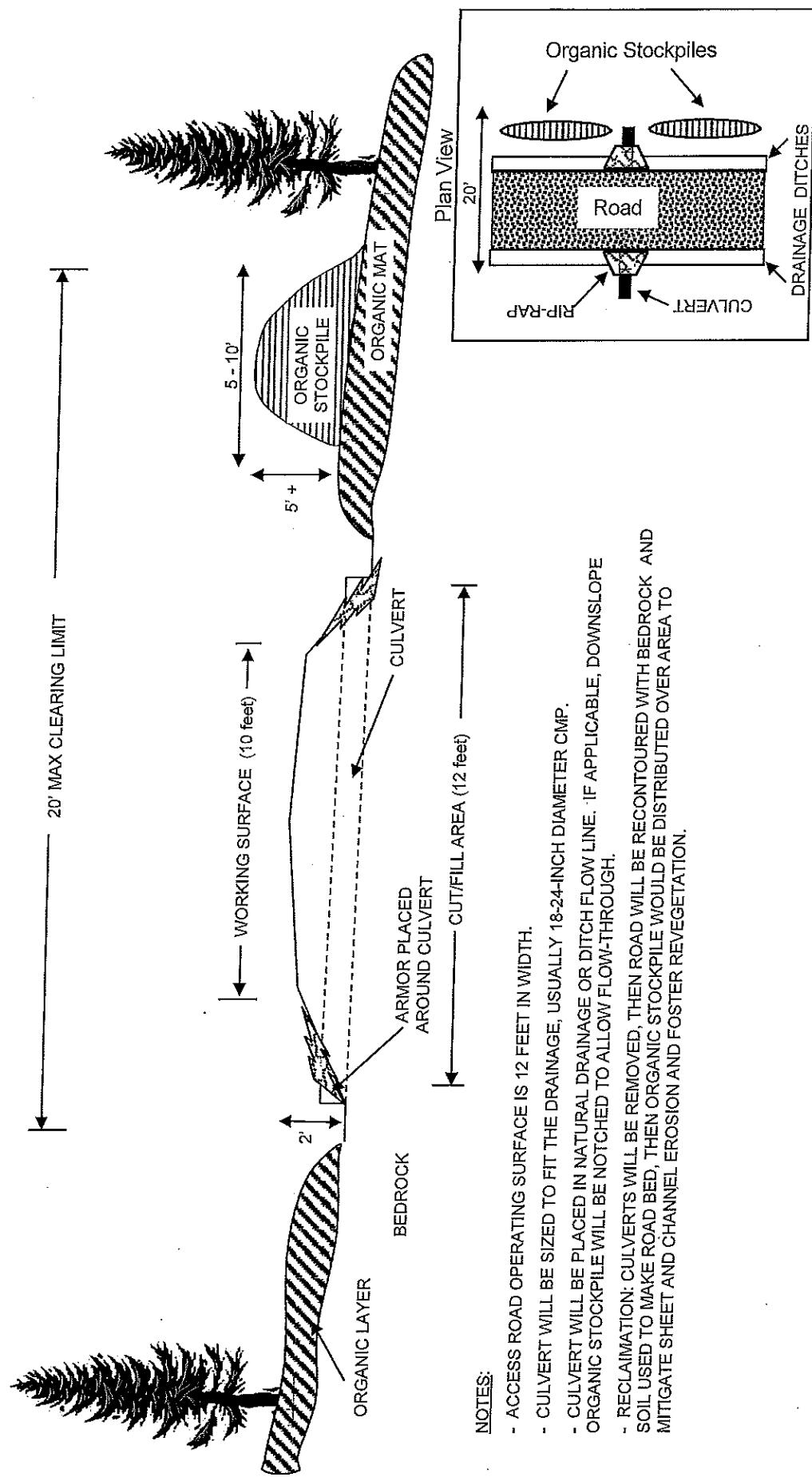




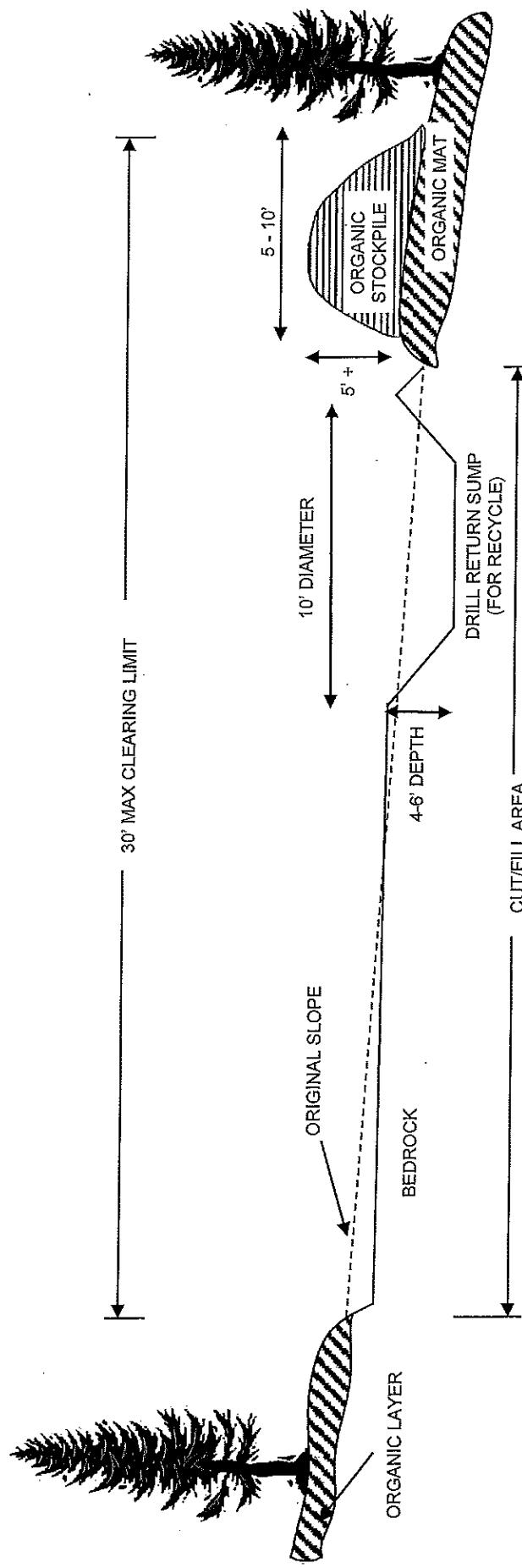
Temporary Access Road Typical Section



Culvert Typical Section

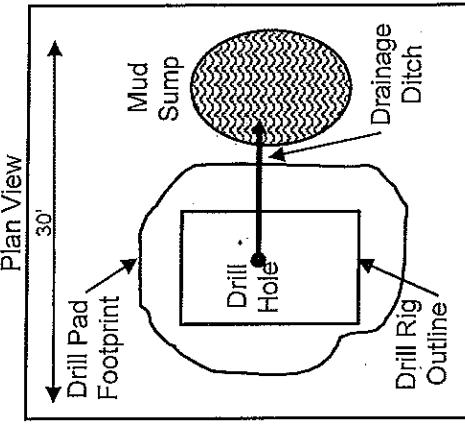


Bulldozer Supported Drill Pad Typical Section

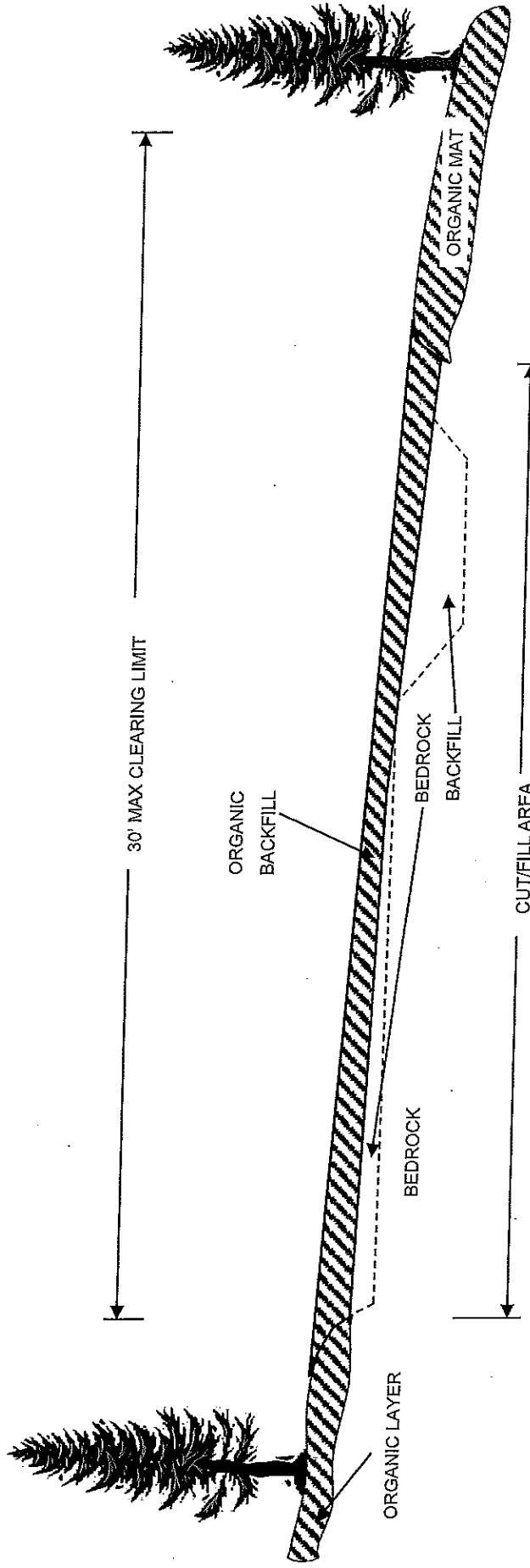


NOTES:

- DRILL PAD VARIES (APPROXIMATELY 30 FEET X 40 FEET).
- WHERE APPLICABLE, TOPSOIL AND ORGANIC MATERIALS WILL BE STOCKPILED ON DOWNGRADIENT SLOPE TO MINIMIZE IMPACTS TO ADJACENT WETLANDS.
- DURING RECLAMATION, DRILL PAD WILL BE RECONTOURED AND CAPPED WITH ORGANICS. IF AVAILABLE, CUT TREES WILL BE SCATTERED OVER THE RECONTOURED TRENCH TO PROMOTE REVEGETATION AND DISCOURAGE ACCESS.
- DEPTH OF CUT AND FILL WILL DEPEND ON SIDE SLOPE – ASSUME AVERAGE OF 2 FOOT CUT DEPTH ON UPSLOPE SIDE
- AVERAGE PAD SIZE 30 FEET X 40 FEET AND COVERING 0.03 ACRES
- DRILL WATER RECYCLE SUMP IS UNLINED AND AVERAGES 10 FEET IN DIAMETER AND 4-6 FEET DEEP, CONTAINING 34 CUBIC YARDS
- DIESEL FUEL FOR DRILL RIG AND SUPPORT EQUIPMENT IS STORED IN EACH UNIT'S ON-BOARD FUEL TANK AND EITHER 55-GAL DRUMS OR 110-GAL TANKS IN COMMERCIAL FUEL CONTAINMENT. THIS FUEL IS REPLENISHED FROM 100 GALLON TANKS IN DRILL SUPPORT PICKUP TRUCKS. MAXIMUM OF 330 GALLONS FUEL STORAGE ON-SITE.
- RECLAMATION: DRILL PADS AND SUMP WILL BE RECONTOURED WITH BEDROCK AND SOIL USED TO MAKE PAD, THEN ORGANIC STOCKPILE WOULD BE DISTRIBUTED OVER AREA TO MITIGATE SHEET AND CHANNEL EROSION AND FOSTER REVEGETATION.

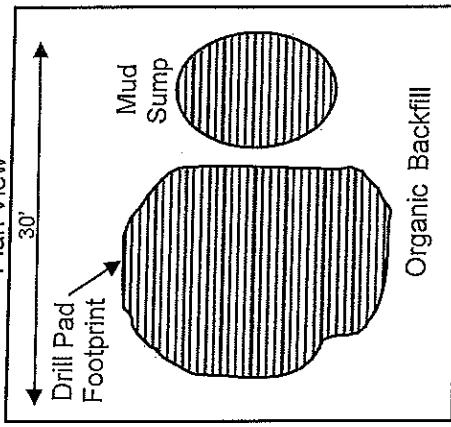


Reclaimed Bulldozer Supported Drill Pad Typical Section

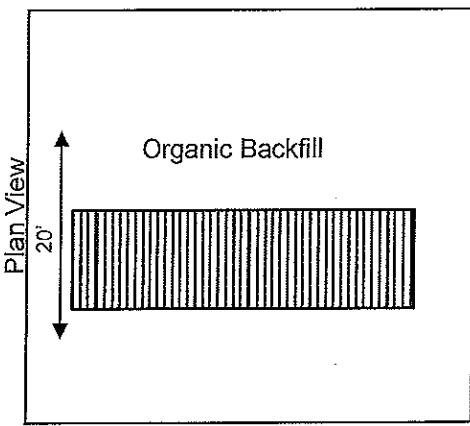
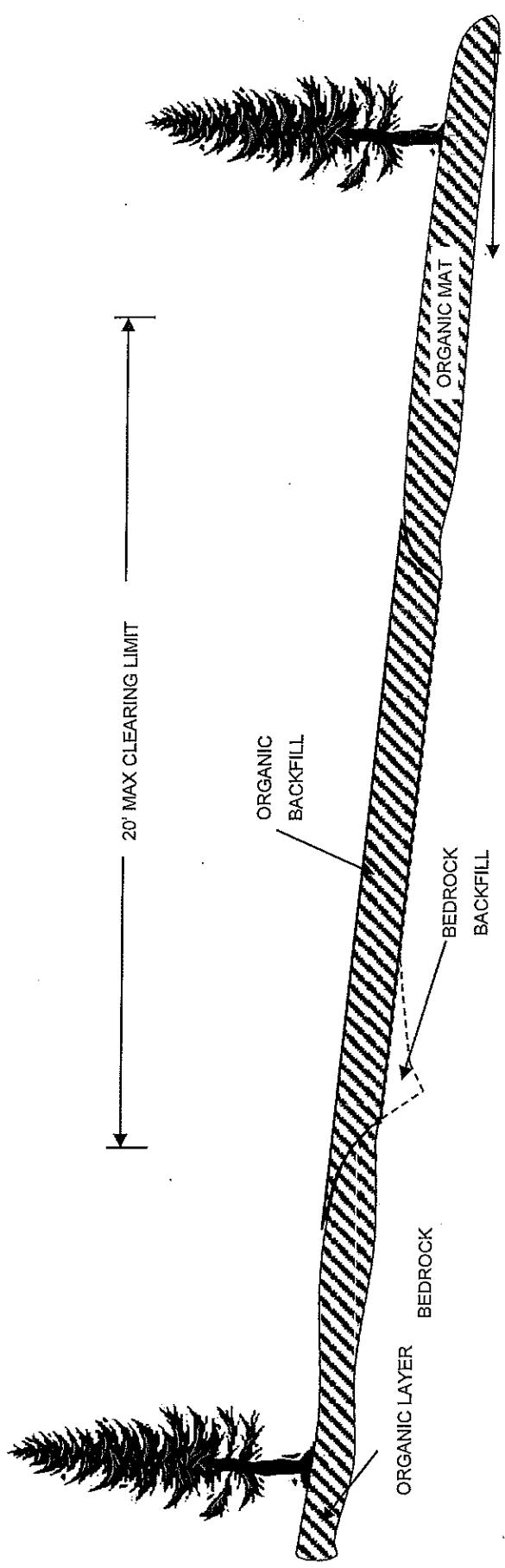


NOTES:

- DRILL PAD VARIES (APPROXIMATELY 30 FEET X 40 FEET).
- WHERE APPLICABLE, TOPSOIL AND ORGANIC MATERIALS WILL BE STOCKPILED ON DOWNGRADIENT SLOPE TO MINIMIZE IMPACTS TO ADJACENT WETLANDS.
- DURING RECLAMATION, DRILL PAD WILL BE RECONToured AND CAPPED WITH ORGANICS. IF AVAILABLE, CUT TREES WILL BE SCATTERED OVER THE RECONToured TRENCH TO PROMOTE REVEGETATION AND DISCOURAGE ACCESS.
- DEPTH OF CUT AND FILL WILL DEPEND ON SIDE SLOPE - ASSUME AVERAGE OF 2-FOOT CUT DEPTH ON UPSLOPE SIDE
- AVERAGE PAD SIZE 30 FEET X 40 FEET AND COVERING 0.03 ACRES
- DRILL WATER RECYCLE SUMP IS UNLINED AND AVERAGES 10 FEET IN DIAMETER AND 4-6 FEET DEEP, CONTAINING 34 CUBIC YARDS
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- RECLAMATION: DRILL PADS AND SUMP WILL BE RECONToured WITH BEDROCK AND SOIL USED TO MAKE PAD, THEN ORGANIC STOCKPILE WOULD BE DISTRIBUTED OVER AREA TO MITIGATE SHEET AND CHANNEL EROSION AND FOSTER REVEGETATION.



Reclaimed Temporary Access Road Typical Section



NOTES:

- ACCESS ROAD OPERATING SURFACE IS 12 FEET IN WIDTH.
- FILL WILL BE EITHER EXCAVATED BEDROCK FROM CUT PORTION OF ROAD OR GRAVEL.
- WHERE APPLICABLE, TOPSOIL AND ORGANIC MATERIALS WILL BE STOCKPILED ON DOWNGRADIENT SLOPE TO MINIMIZE IMPACTS TO ADJACENT WETLANDS.
- DURING RECLAMATION, ACCESS ROADS WILL BE RECONTOURED AND CAPPED WITH ORGANICS. IF AVAILABLE, CUT TREES WILL BE SCATTERED OVER THE RECONTOURED TRENCH TO PROMOTE REVEGETATION AND DISCOURAGE ACCESS.
- DEPTH OF CUT AND FILL WILL DEPEND ON SIDE SLOPE - ASSUME AVERAGE OF 2-FOOT CUT DEPTH ON UPSLOPE SIDE.
- RECLAMATION: ROADS WILL BE RECONTOURED WITH BEDROCK AND SOIL USED TO MAKE ROAD BED, THEN ORGANIC STOCKPILE WOULD BE DISTRIBUTED OVER AREA TO MITIGATE SHEET AND CHANNEL EROSION AND FOSTER REVEGETATION.

Reclaimed Culvert Typical Section

