

**SITE INSPECTION OF MINING OPERATION**  
**Bitterroot National Forest**  
West Fork District

Inspection Date: 07/31/2025 Inspector(s): Heather Weldon, Kristin Troop, Blakely White

Plan **Notice** Neither (circle one)

Location: Township 4 S Range 22 W Sections (protracted blocks) PB39 and PB40

Claimant or Operator(s): U.S. Critical Materials Claim/Operation Name: Sheep Creek REE Exploration

**Exploration** or Mining (circle one) Open adits and sampling with handtools

Currently bonded No; If yes, is bond amount adequate: yes no **N/A** (circle one)

Note: Provide detailed explanation under remarks. N/A = not any or not applicable

Checklist	Y	N	N/A	Checklist	Y	N	N/A
Active operation	x			Road construction and maintenance			x
Following approved plan/notice	x			Construction in accordance w/ plan?			x
Erosion control			x	Maintenance adequate?	x		
Stream protection			x	Culvert outlets open & armored?			x
Waste Dumps			x	Proper drainage?			x
Stable?	x			Public Safety			
Signs of erosion, gullies, rilling, etc		x		Any visible hazards?		x	
Excavations		x		Warning signs?		x	
Open? type & size in remarks		x		Other?			
Adits (size and number)	x			Equipment onsite? If yes, describe		x	
Discharging?		x		Operable?			x
Reclamation complete?		x		Hazardous Material		x	
Is vegetation adequate?	x			Anything present? (barrels, batteries)		x	
Reclamation needed?		x		Garbage or debris present?	x		
Weeds present?	x			Fuel tanks?		x	
Structures/Occupancy?		x		Propane?		x	

Does the notice or plan reflect the current site condition: **Yes** No If no, describe differences under remarks.

**REMARKS** (Describe all discrepancies from plan or notice, deficiencies, items needing attention, non-compliance.)

Active mining claims within the Sheep Creek area have been held by U.S. Critical Materials (USCM) since 2022. Access to the area is via Forest Service (FS) Roads 5677 and 13862. claimants were not present. There are 3 historic adits where sampling and surveying are occurring under the claimant's current Notice of Intent (NOI). Closeout of NOI work is expected on or before October 24, 2025. Two adits are currently open, the third has not been reopened to date although there's been interest from USCM to reopen adit #2 with hand tools if possible. Adits remain stable and sites were clear of garbage however adit #3 had a blue tarp laying in the entrance. Previous discussions (05/24/2023) with USCM's consultant Peter Meistrick contemplated the need for bat gates on the adits once a Plan of Operations has been submitted. None of the adits are visible from open FS roads.



*Above Image 2: Open adit #1, Approximately 2ft high, 3 ft wide opening, dry.*



*Above Image 1: Unopened adit #2, completely caved in.*



*Above Image 3: Entrance to open adit #3.*



*Above Image 4: Entrance to adit #3. Approximately 3ft high, 3ft wide, dry.*