

2023 Award Winners

Austin Gold Ventures **Inspiration Mine**

The Austin Gold Venture Mine (Inspiration Mine) produced about 175,000 ounces of gold from 1986 to 1989 from a classic Carlin-type deposit. Reclamation and closure activities took place through 2013, when the U.S. Forest Service closed the plan of operations and refunded all bond money. When the Nevada Division of Environmental Protection (NDEP) terminated the water pollution control permit in 2019, the site was 100% regulatory closed.

Reclamation included removing all equipment and infrastructure, re-contouring and covering areas with growth media, and the installation of nine sediment basins and four check dams for drainage control. The area was successfully revegetated with native plants.

Through nearly three decades of persistent collaboration and extensive work between the Forest Service, NDEP, U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service, Nevada Department of Wildlife, Resource Concepts Inc., and the operator, this mine stands out as one of the few in the western U.S. meeting the Forest Service's reclamation goals.

Award Category **Long-Term Mine Closure Reclamation**



View of a portion of the Inspiration Mine after successful reclamation efforts, including revegetation of native plants, Lander Co., Aug. 2023.

Newcrest Resources Inc. **Jarbidge Exploration Project**

Newcrest conducted exploration drilling in an area surrounding the town of Jarbidge, Nev., from 2018 to 2021. The terrain within the project area presents significant challenges, with slopes exceeding 40%, numerous drainages, and large stands of woody shrubs where exploration primarily occurred. Further, streams in the area contain threatened Bull Trout habitat, which is sensitive to erosion.

This project was an astounding example of thorough reclamation pre-planning, which minimized environmental and wildlife impacts while fostering a strong community partnership. Newcrest and Legarza Exploration constructed highly functional, environmentally protective roads and drill pads despite extended construction times and increased costs. These areas were impressively recontoured and tediously hand seeded.

Newcrest also conducted a comprehensive seep and spring monitoring program of five super-turbidity monitoring stations at strategic locations. Water quality data from 2020 to 2022 show the erosion control measures successfully prevented any significant project-related sediment inputs to nearby streams and rivers hosting the threatened trout.

Award Category **Leadership in Exploration Reclamation**



Recontoured and revegetated access roads throughout Newcrest's Jarbidge Exploration Project Area, Elko Co., Aug. 2023.

Liberty Moly (dba Pathfinder Tonopah) **Liberty Mine**

The Liberty Mine was an open pit molybdenum-copper mine operated on-and-off between the early 1980s and 2001. After acquiring the project in 2020, Pathfinder sought to voluntarily correct several legacy reclamation failures, including areas that would be corrected through future mining. This action was not a requirement of their permit.

Remediation efforts included the implementation of site-wide erosion controls, installation of five heap leach pad evaporation basins, placing additional cover material over previously-reclaimed areas with exposed potentially acid-generating rock, and the retention of a dedicated site staff to ensure consistent site monitoring and maintenance.

Pathfinder's voluntary efforts to protect wildlife and the environment is an "above-and-beyond" reclamation approach, setting an example that reclamation managers would like to see on all projects.

Award Category **Addressing Legacy Remediation**



Additional cover material placed over previously reclaimed areas of the mine site having exposed acid generating rock, Nye Co., Aug. 2023.