

Southern Empire Resources Receives Positive Oro Cruz Plan of Operations Decision from U.S. BLM

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VANCOUVER, Jan. 19, 2021 - [Southern Empire Resources Corp.](#) (Southern Empire) (TSXV: SMP) (Frankfurt: 5RE) (OTC: SMPEF) announces that it has received a positive decision letter from the United States Department of the Interior's Bureau of Land Management (BLM) regarding a Plan of Operations (Plan) for exploration at the Oro Cruz Gold Project located in Imperial County, California.

Dale Wallster, Southern Empire's CEO stated: "Receipt of the BLM's decision letter regarding our Oro Cruz exploration Plan of Operations is a key step forward for us, one that brings us much closer to achieving our goal of drilling the high-grade, oxide gold zone this year."

The BLM determined that Southern Empire's Plan is consistent with U.S. federal surface management regulations and meets the requisite content requirements. Although it does not constitute authorization for Southern Empire to start the operations proposed in the Plan, the BLM decision allows for the initiation of the environmental review process as required by the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA). A public comment period is a component of the NEPA environmental review process and must occur before the BLM makes a final decision regarding the Plan.

Highlights of Oro Cruz Gold Project Surface Exploration as Proposed in the Plan of Operations:

- The establishment of up to 65 drill pads in seven drill target areas
- Reverse Circulation (RC) and/or core drilling of up to 65 drill holes
- Construction of approximately 2.94 kilometres (km; 1.83 miles) of new, permanent access roads, ~9.98 km (6.2 miles) of temporary drill site access roads and ~4.21 km (2.62 miles) of improvements to existing roads
- Creation of a 2.6-acre staging area at the Cross Mine underground portal for infrastructure related to future underground and surface exploration

The Plan, which was initially submitted to the BLM's El Centro Field Office on September 28, 2020, proposes that Southern Empire conduct mining exploration activities in a manner to avoid unnecessary and undue degradation within a 257 hectare (ha; 635 acre) area of the Oro Cruz property that specifically occurs within the 184,500 acre Picacho Area of Critical Environmental Concern (ACEC).

On Oro Cruz Gold Project lands occurring outside of the Picacho ACEC, Southern Empire has previously received notice-level acknowledgement from the BLM for two independent drill projects together with associated permits from Imperial County for road construction, pad preparation and the completion of 27 sonic drill holes on historical heap leach pads of the formerly producing Padre y Madre and American Girl mines. These drill programs are expected to start imminently; please see Southern Empire's news release of January 13, 2021.

Highlights of Oro Cruz Gold Project Permitting:

- Received BLM notice-level acknowledgement for two independent surface drill projects together with associated permits from Imperial County allowing for 27 sonic drill holes on Oro Cruz Gold Project lands outside of the Picacho ACEC
- Exploration Plan of Operations accepted for Oro Cruz Gold Project lands within the Picacho ACEC
- BLM has determined that the environmental review process required by NEPA can begin through the solicitation of public comment on the Plan of Operations
- Baseline biological and archaeological studies to support California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) requirements have started

- Design of a requisite Reclamation Plan for compliance with California's Surface Mining and Reclamation Act (SMARA) has started
- Additional permits for Oro Cruz surface exploration are expected within six months, co-ordinating well with the start of the fall 2021 field season

At a time specified by the BLM, Southern Empire will have to submit a reclamation cost estimate consistent with federal regulations and post environmental bonding.

Southern Empire's environmental, permitting and regulatory team efforts are co-ordinated by Del Fortner Consulting. The team also includes:

- Sespe Consulting, Inc. of Ventura, California; specialists regarding SMARA and CEQA requirements who will provide baseline studies and documents for, and liaise with, the State of California and Imperial County
- Stantec Consulting Services Inc.; an international firm that will conduct baseline environmental studies and provide NEPA documents for, and liaise with, the BLM, the State of California and Imperial County
- WestLand Resources, Inc. of Tucson, Arizona; specialists in environmental permitting and planning, who will perform baseline archaeological and environmental studies and provide documentation necessary to comply with NEPA and CEQA permitting and liaise with the regulatory bodies, including the BLM, California and Imperial County.

Qualified Person

The scientific and technical information contained in this news release has been prepared, reviewed and approved by David Tupper, P.Geo. (British Columbia), Southern Empire's VP Exploration and a Qualified Person (QP) within the context of Canadian Securities Administrators' National Instrument 43-101; Standards of Disclosure for Mineral Projects (NI 43-101).

About Southern Empire Resources Corp.

Southern Empire is focused on the acquisition, exploration and development of gold deposits in North America.

In the Cargo Muchacho mountains of Imperial County, California, Southern Empire owns 100 per cent of the historical gold-producing American Girl mine property and also holds options to acquire a 100-per-cent interest in the adjacent 2,160-hectare (5,338-acre) Oro Cruz property located approximately 22.5 kilometres (km; 14 miles) southeast of the operating Mesquite gold mine of Equinox Gold Corp.

At Oro Cruz, extensive historical drilling and large-scale open-pit and underground mining of the American Girl, Padre y Madre, Queen and Cross oxide gold deposits by the AGMJV (ultimately owned 53 per cent by MK Gold Company and 47 per cent by [Hecla Mining Company](#)) occurred between 1987 and 1996. At that time, gold was recovered by either heap leaching of lower-grade or milling of higher-grade ores until AGMJV operations ceased in late 1996 because of declining gold prices leaving the Oro Cruz Gold Project with many gold exploration targets in addition to the historical inferred resource estimate, reported In 2011 by Lincoln Mining Corp., totalling 341,800 ounces gold based on 4,386,000 tonnes averaging 2.2 grams gold per tonne at a cut-off grade of 0.68 g/t Au (4,835,000 tons at 0.07 ounce gold per ton; please refer to the Cautionary Notice Regarding Historical Resource Estimate below).

Southern Empire is well financed, having completed two oversubscribed, non-brokered private placement financings during 2020; see Southern Empire's news releases dated March 18 and June 12, 2020, for details. With its strong working capital position, which also includes a significant equity holding in Bullfrog Gold Corp., Southern Empire has the financial resources to continue exploration and development programs at Oro Cruz and consider new opportunities.

On behalf of the Board of Directors of [Southern Empire Resources Corp.](#),
Dale Wallster, CEO and Director

Cautionary Notice on Forward-Looking Information

Information provided in this news release may contain forward-looking information or forward-looking statements that are based on assumptions as of the date of this news release. These statements reflect management's current estimates, beliefs, intentions and expectations. They are not guarantees of future performance. Southern Empire cautions that all forward-looking statements are inherently uncertain and that actual performance may be affected by a number of material factors, many of which are beyond its respective control. Such factors include, among other things: risks and uncertainties relating to Southern Empire limited operating history, the need to comply with environmental and governmental regulations, results of exploration programs on its projects and those risks and uncertainties identified in its annual and interim financial statements and management discussion and analysis. Accordingly, actual and future events, conditions and results may differ materially from the estimates, beliefs, intentions and expectations expressed or implied in the forward-looking information. Except as required under applicable securities legislation, Southern Empire undertakes no obligation to publicly update or revise forward-looking information.

Cautionary Notice Regarding Historical Resource Estimate

The historical resource estimate is disclosed in a technical report dated April 29, 2011, prepared for Lincoln Mining Corp. by Tetra Tech, Inc. and filed on SEDAR and is termed inferred mineral resource, which is a category set out in NI 43-101. It was based on historical reverse circulation and core drill hole sample, underground channel sample, and blasthole sample assay results and calculated using ordinary kriging to estimate gold grades in 10-foot-by-10-foot-by-five-foot blocks. Accordingly, Southern Empire considers this historical estimate reliable as well as relevant as it represents key targets for future exploration work. However, a QP has not done sufficient work to verify or classify the historical estimate as a current mineral resource and Southern Empire is not treating this historical estimate as current mineral resources.

Work Programs During the COVID-19 Pandemic

Timing of Southern Empire's exploration programs will be contingent on governmental regulations regarding the COVID-19 pandemic and also the availability of exploration-related personnel, drill contractors, equipment, lodging, et cetera. Southern Empire will adhere to COVID-19 directives regarding safe working practices putting worker, community and national safety first and will proceed with exploration and development work programs only if potential COVID-19 risks can be effectively managed.

Neither the TSX Venture Exchange nor its Regulation Services Provider (as that term is defined in the policies of the Exchange) accepts responsibility for the adequacy or accuracy of this release.

SOURCE [Southern Empire Resources Corp.](#)

Contact

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