

Staff Report 54

APPLICANT:

American Cheetah Metals Inc.

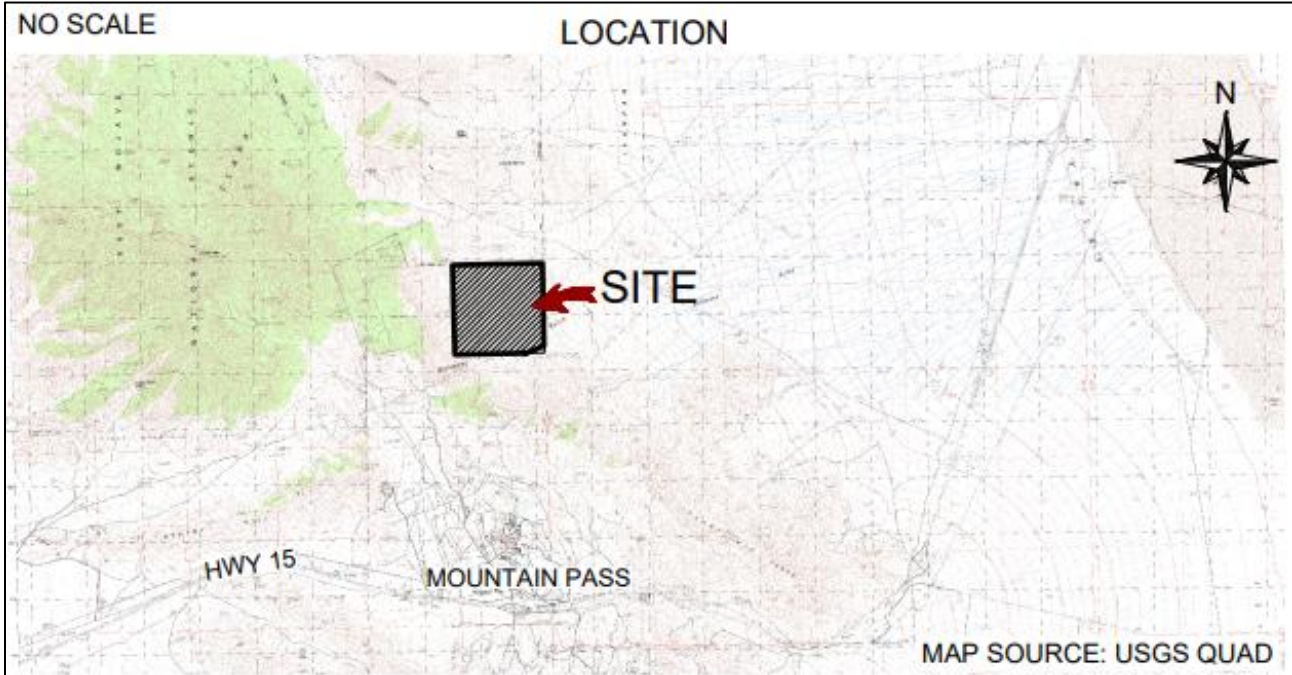
PROPOSED ACTION:

Issuance of a Non-exclusive Geological and Geophysical Survey Permit.

AREA, LAND TYPE, AND LOCATION:

634.58 acres of State-owned school land, Assessor's Parcel Number 0572-111-22, Section 36, Township 17 North, Range 13 East, San Bernardino Baseline & Meridian, located about 2 miles north of Mountain Pass Mine, San Bernardino County (as shown in Figure 1).

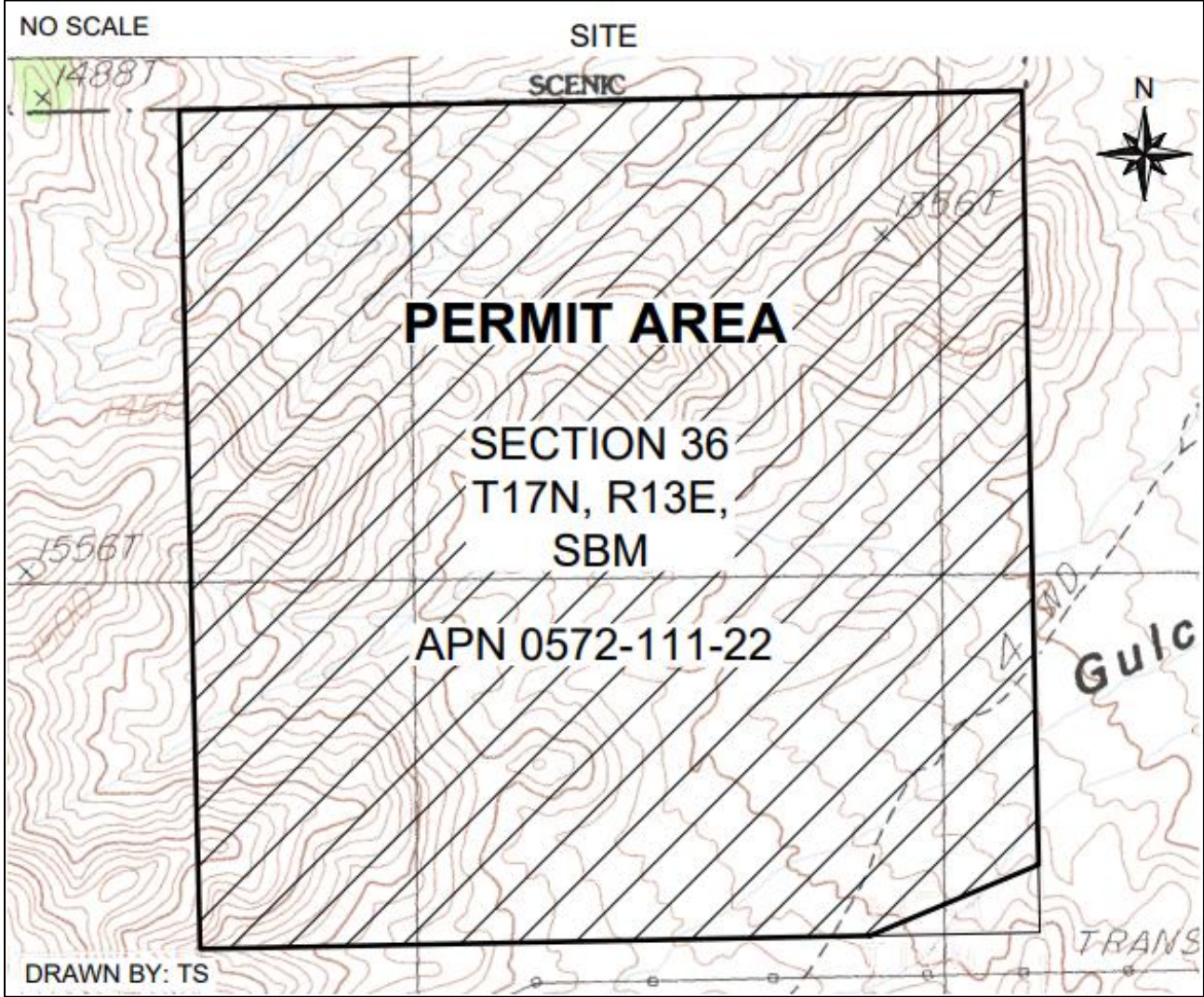
Figure 1. Location



AUTHORIZED USE:

Geological information collection: Mapping and sampling, and surficial geophysical surveys (as shown in Figure 2).

Figure 2. Site Map



NOTE: This depiction of the permit premises is based on unverified information provided by the Applicant or other parties and is not a waiver or limitation of any State interest in the subject or any other property.

TERM:

1-year, beginning July 1, 2026.

SPECIFIC PERMIT PROVISIONS:

1. The general terms of this geological/geophysical survey permit require the Permittee to provide staff with advance notification of the exploration activities. Staff may obtain copies of all geological and geophysical data derived from surveys under this permit upon request.
2. Permittee will minimize the number of vehicles on location, to be used only on established roads, and observe a 15 mile per hour speed limit. Permittee shall not cut down or alter any foliage in the permit area.
3. The State land is known to be inhabited by threatened desert tortoise. Permittee shall not touch or handle any tortoises. If any tortoise or tortoise burrow is spotted on State land, permittee shall not pursue activities within a 25-foot radius of the animal or burrow, and Permittee must follow all procedures of any permits or agency direction received outside of this permit, and adhere to the procedures outlined in the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Desert Tortoise Field Manual¹.
4. Permittee shall contain all trash, litter, and debris and remove them from the site to avoid attracting predators such as ravens or coyotes. Additionally, Permittee shall not leave on the site any rope, cord, twine, or other material that may entangle tortoises.
5. Permittee shall notify the Commission's Tribal Liaison immediately upon any inadvertent discovery of artifacts, cremation sites, or human remains, and shall direct sampling activities away from any such discovery to ensure it is left undisturbed.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION:

The Applicant is applying for a 1-year permit to collect geological information (rock sampling) and to conduct geophysical surveys on State-owned school land.

1. Geological Survey: Collect up to 100 surface rock grab samples, consisting of about 500 grams per sample, from either the ground surface or by digging down up to 6 inches.
2. Geophysical Survey: Conduct an Induced Polarization Survey performed over the course of 1 week. The field crew will conduct three surveys each requiring a 1-kilometer-long survey line along the ground with metal rod electrodes every

¹ <https://www.fws.gov/media/desert-tortoise-field-manual>

100 - 200 meters. Each one of the three survey lines includes 6 to 11 electrodes consisting of 2-foot-long, 1-inch diameter steel rod hammered into the ground. The electrodes are connected by a narrow-gauge wire and strung out along the ground. Each electrode will be moistened slightly with saline water, not to exceed a total of 45 gallons over the course of the project, to improve data collection results. An electrical transmitter, powered by a small generator, emits a weak electrical charge into the subsurface down to 300 - 500 meters. Meanwhile, a receiver that is attached to all electrodes measures how each electrode responds to the charge. The data are later processed to create an image based on the resistivity of the soil. The work takes a five-person field crew who will be transported by 1 - 2 Off Highway Vehicles to and from the permit site.

STAFF ANALYSIS AND RECOMMENDATION:

The data collected under this permit will be used to provide insight into the geological and geophysical characteristics of the site to evaluate the potential for economic recovery of minerals such as gold, silver, copper, and rare earth elements on the State parcel.

AUTHORITY:

Public Resources Code sections 6005, 6212.2, 6216, 6401, and 8705.

STATE'S BEST INTERESTS:

The proposed permit contains restrictions that protect public rights and environmental resources; for example, the permit is non-exclusive and is limited to 1 year. In addition, the permit does not grant any preferential right to a lease, and any future consideration of a lease must meet statutory requirements and compliance with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) and must be presented to the Commission for consideration. Given the Commission's fiduciary role to utilize school lands in support of the California State Teacher's Retirement System, the State benefits by exploration of its lands to determine possible future commercial uses. The surveying activities are conducted in a manner that not only protects the environment but also public health and safety. To ensure the surveying will not have any effect on the threatened desert tortoise, which are known to inhabit the State parcel and the surrounding area, the Applicant must adhere strictly to the desert tortoise best management practices included in the special provisions of the permit. The proposed permit will allow the Applicant to conduct

geological and geophysical surveys on the parcel in a safe and efficient manner with no disturbance to any vegetation, wildlife, or items of historical or archeological significance.

The State parcel is located within a sensitive biological area within the Ivanpah Valley. The Bureau of Land Management considers the federal lands within the Ivanpah Valley region to be an Area of Critical Environmental Concern (ACEC). Because the ACEC is a federal classification of lands, this classification does not apply to the State's parcel, but the State parcel appears to have similar biological characteristics to the adjacent ACEC lands. In the future, if more intensive exploration is proposed, the Commission will consider the surrounding activities and the project's cumulative impacts, as applicable.

CONCLUSION:

For all the reasons above, staff believes the issuance of this permit is in the best interests of the State and recommends approval.

OTHER PERTINENT INFORMATION:

1. Approval or denial of the application is a discretionary action by the Commission. Each time the Commission approves or rejects the use of State school land, it exercises legislatively delegated authority and responsibility as trustee of the State's lands as authorized by law. If the Commission denies the application, the Applicant will not be authorized to conduct geological or geophysical surveys on State school land. Upon expiration or prior termination of the permit, the Applicant has no right to a new permit or automatic renewal of this permit. The subject parcel is currently not known to contain commercially valuable mineral deposits.
2. This action is consistent with addressing the challenges and opportunities described in the Commission's 2021-25 Strategic Plan to "Embrace and safeguard multi-benefit School Lands and resource management stewardship that equitably balances responsible local and regional economic development, supports living wages, environmental protection, and revenue generation."
3. The Applicant paid a \$5,000 Geological and Geophysical Survey Permit fee on December 10, 2025.
4. Staff recommends that the Commission find that this activity is exempt from the requirements of CEQA as a categorically exempt project. The project is exempt

under Class 6, Information Collection; California Code of Regulations, title 14, section 15306.

Authority: Public Resources Code section 21084 and California Code of Regulations, title 14, section 15061.

EXHIBITS:

- A. Land Description
- B. Geological and Geophysical Survey Permit

RECOMMENDED ACTION:

It is recommended that the Commission:

CEQA FINDING:

Find that the activity is exempt from the requirements of CEQA pursuant to California Code of Regulations, title 14, section 15061 as a categorically exempt project, Class 6, Information Collection; California Code of Regulations, title 14, section 15306.

STATE'S BEST INTERESTS:

Find that the proposed permit is in the best interests of the State.

AUTHORIZATION:

Authorize issuance of a non-exclusive geological and geophysical survey permit to American Cheetah Metals Inc. to conduct geological information collection for the period starting July 1, 2026, through June 30, 2027, on State-owned school land, for all minerals other than oil, gas, geothermal resources or sand and gravel on the parcel described in Exhibit A attached, and shown on Figures 1 and 2 (for reference purposes only), in accordance with the specific terms of the geological and geophysical survey permit in substantially the same form as set forth in the attached Exhibit B.

EXHIBIT A

A 5457

LAND DESCRIPTION

That certain parcel of State School Land in San Bernardino County, State of California, more particularly described as follows:

Section 36, Township 17 North, Range 13 East, San Bernardino Meridian, as shown on the Official U.S. Government Township Plat approved June 12, 1945.

EXCEPTING THEREFROM those parcels of land as described in EXHIBIT "A" of State of California Patent recorded on February 27, 1994, in Document Number 94-097317 in Official Records of San Bernardino County.

END OF DESCRIPTION

Prepared 02/09/2026 by the California State Lands Commission Boundary Unit.



Exhibit B

File No. _____

STATE OF CALIFORNIA CALIFORNIA STATE LANDS COMMISSION SURVEY PERMIT

GENERAL PERMIT TO CONDUCT GEOLOGICAL AND GEOPHYSICAL SURVEYS

Pursuant to Division 6 of the California Public Resources Code and Title 2 of the California Code of Regulations, the State of California, acting by and through the California State Lands Commission (State or Commission) hereby issues to American Cheetah Metals Inc. (Permittee) a non-exclusive geological and geophysical survey permit subject to the following terms and conditions:

TERMS AND CONDITIONS

1. **Permit Area:** 634.58 acres of State fee-owned school land (State land), located in Section 36, Township 17 North, Range 13 East, San Bernardino Baseline & Meridian as described in Exhibit A attached and by this reference made a part hereof.
2. **Terms of Permit:** This permit shall commence on July 1, 2026, and shall continue for 1-year, expiring on June 30, 2027, unless terminated sooner as provided in this permit.
3. **Scope of Activities and Equipment:**
 - a. Geologic Survey – Collect up to 100 surface rock grab samples, consisting of about 500 grams per sample, from either the ground surface or by digging with a shovel up to 6 inches deep.
 - b. Geophysical Survey – Conduct an Induced Polarization Survey performed over the course of 1 week. The field crew will conduct three surveys each requiring a 1-kilometer-long survey line along the ground with metal rod electrodes every 100-200 meters. Each one of the three survey lines includes 6 to 11 electrodes consisting of 2-foot-long, 1-inch diameter steel rod hammered into the ground. The electrodes are connected by a narrow-gauge wire and strung out along the ground. Each electrode will be moistened slightly with saline water, not to exceed a total of 45 gallons over the course of the project, to improve data collection results. An electrical transmitter, powered by a small generator, emits a weak electrical charge into the subsurface down to 300-500 meters. Meanwhile, a receiver that is attached to all electrodes measures how each electrode responds to the

Exhibit B

charge. The data are later processed to create an image based on the resistivity of the soil. The work takes a 5-person field crew who will be transported by 1-2 Off Highway Vehicles to and from the permit site.

4. **Desert Tortoises:** The State land is known to be inhabited by threatened desert tortoise. Permittee shall not touch or handle any tortoises. If any tortoise or burrow is spotted on State land, permittee shall not pursue activities within a 25-foot radius of the animal or burrow and permittee shall immediately contact the California Department of Fish and Wildlife. Permittee shall contain all trash, litter, and debris and remove them from the site to avoid attracting predators such as ravens or coyotes. Additionally, Permittee shall not leave on the site any rope, cord, twine, or other material that may entangle tortoises.
5. **Multiple Use:** This permit is non-exclusive and is issued subject to all existing valid rights at the date of this permit and such rights shall not be affected by the issuance of this permit. The Commission shall have the right to issue additional non-exclusive survey permits and leases or other entitlements for use, which are not inconsistent with this permit.
6. **Operations:** Permittee shall perform all work with due regard for the preservation of the property covered by this permit, potential environmental impacts, and with due caution to minimize damage to third parties. Permittee will minimize the number of vehicles on location, to be used only on established roads, and observe a 15 mile per hour speed limit. The vehicles and generators used on State land shall be in proper working order and free of any fluid leaks to ensure tortoise do not ingest harmful fluids. Permittee shall not cut down or alter any foliage in the permit area.
7. **Cultural Resources:** Permittee shall notify the Commission's Tribal Liaison immediately, Tribal.Liaison@slc.ca.gov, upon any inadvertent discovery of artifacts, cremation sites, or human remains, and shall direct sampling activities away from any such discovery to ensure it is left undisturbed.
8. **Observers:** Staff may observe or inspect all operations or activities conducted pursuant to this permit. If staff notes permit violations or determines that adverse effects are being caused or are imminent, the staff may recommend suspension of activities to the Executive Officer. Upon approval of the Executive Officer, the Representative may carry out suspension of the activities allowed under this permit pursuant to Paragraph 12, Suspension, Modification, or Revocation.
9. **Notification Procedure:** The general terms of this geological and geophysical survey permit require the Permittee to provide staff with notification of the prospecting activities at least 7 calendar days in advance. Email notifications shall be sent to SchoolLands.Public@slc.ca.gov with the file reference number. Staff may obtain copies of all geological and geophysical data derived from surveys under this permit upon request.

Exhibit B

10. **Indemnity and Third-Party Damage Claims:** Permittee shall be solely responsible for any third-party damage claims arising out of Permittee's operations. Permittee agrees to indemnify, save harmless, and, at the option of the State, defend the State of California, its officers, agents, and employees against any and all claims, demands, causes of action, or liability of any kind which may be asserted against or imposed upon the State of California or any of its officers, agents, or employees by any third person or entity arising out of or connected with Permittee's operations hereunder.
11. **Insurance:** At the option of the Commission, the Permittee shall submit a certificate of self-insurance or procure and maintain liability, property damage, or other insurance for the benefit of the State in the amount of \$1,000,000.
12. **Suspension, Modification, or Revocation:** The activities provided for in this permit may be suspended, in whole or in part, upon a finding by the Executive Officer of the State Lands Commission, or other person designated by the Executive Officer, that suspension of the activity authorized by this permit would be in the public interest. Such suspension shall be effective upon receipt by Permittee of a written or oral (to be confirmed in writing) notice thereof which shall indicate (1) the extent of the suspension, (2) the reasons for this action, and (3) any corrective or preventive measures to be taken by Permittee which are deemed necessary by the Executive Officer, or other person designated by the Executive Officer to meet the general public interest. Permittee may not resume activities under this permit until the Executive Officer or other designated person has approved the resumption in writing.
13. Permittee shall take immediate action to comply with the provisions of the suspension. Permittee may request a hearing before the State in order to present information relevant to a decision as to whether the permit should be reinstated, modified, or revoked.
14. This permit may be modified or revoked by the State upon 30 days' notice. Any suspension, modification, or revocation of this permit shall not be a basis for any claim for damages against the State of California.
15. **Permits:** Permittee shall obtain all necessary and applicable permits and obey all laws and regulations applicable to the conduct of operations under this permit.
16. **Assignment:** Permittee may not assign, sublease, or transfer this permit or any interest therein without prior approval by the State. However, Permittee may subcontract part or all the work to be performed. Any such subcontractor shall be the agent of the Permittee and Permittee shall remain responsible to the State under the terms of this permit.
17. **Successors:** If for any reason this permit is transferred by operation of law or otherwise, it shall apply to and bind the heirs, successors, executors,

Exhibit B

administrators, and assigns of all of the parties to this permit. All parties to this permit shall be jointly and severally liable under the terms of this permit.

18. **Section 504 Federal Rehabilitation Act of 1973 Compliance Statement:** "The Permittee and the Commission will not discriminate against any person or entity, in regard to the administration or operation of this agreement, on the basis of race, color, creed, national origin, sex, marital status, religious or political affiliation, ancestry, disability, age or sexual orientation."

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, the parties hereto have executed this permit as of the date entered below.

PERMITTEE*

**STATE OF CALIFORNIA
STATE LANDS COMMISSION**

By: _____

By: _____

Title: _____

PETER REGAN
Division Chief, Mineral
Resources Management Division

Date: _____

Date: _____

*In executing this document, the following is required:

Corporations: Certificate of Corporate Secretary providing that the Board of Directors authorized execution of this permit specifically or authority to execute documents of this type generally.

Individuals: Acknowledgment of signature is required.

EXHIBIT A

Project Area Map

