

U.S. Department of the Interior
Bureau of Land Management
Carson City District Office

**CATEGORICAL EXCLUSION
ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW AND APPROVAL**

Project Creator: Carla James, Supervisory Geologist

Field Office: Stillwater Field Office

Lead Office: Stillwater Field Office

Case File/Project Number: NVN-89739

Applicable Categorical Exclusion (cite section): Bureau of Land Management, 516 DM 11.9 (cite eligible action): B: Oil, Gas, Geothermal Energy, 6. Approval of Notices of Intent to conduct geophysical exploration of oil, gas, or geothermal, pursuant to 43 CFR 3250, when no temporary or new road construction is proposed.

NEPA Number: DOI-BLM-NV-2011-C010-0504-CX

Project Name: Patua Seismic In-Fill

Project Description: Gradient Resources Inc is proposing to conduct a 2D seismic survey with 4 lines oriented NE to SW and 3 lines in a W to E fashion, totaling approximately 19 miles, to assist in the geothermal resource characterization of the Patua II geothermal lease area located near Hazen in Churchill and Lyon Counties. This seismic survey method will utilize small UTV sized equipment to minimize surface disturbance. Photos of this equipment and a project map is attached to this CX.

The seismic survey will use a vibrator UTV mounted and a field crew of less than 10 people (generally fewer) to conduct the survey. Support vehicles including 4 wheel drive trucks and/or ATVs will be used to transport equipment and personnel. Site mobilization is located on private lands in the project area. All wastes will be hauled out of the area for proper disposal.

The general location for conducting this survey is T20N, R26E Sections 16, 18, 20, 28, 30, 32 (within). See the seismic survey figure for specific survey lines. Gradient holds federal geothermal leases NVN-85705, NVN-75005, and NVN-76139 in the project area and the surface management agency is US Bureau of Reclamation. Gradient plans to start this survey as weather permits.

Applicant Name: Gradient Resources Inc.

Project Location: T20N R26E Sections 16, 18, 20, 28, 30, 32 (within) see project map for seismic line locations.

BLM Acres for the Project Area: approximately 19 miles of survey lines.

Land Use Plan Conformance (cite reference/page number): MIN-1, 1. Encourage development of energy and mineral resources in a timely manner to meet national, regional and local needs consistent with the objectives for other public land uses.

Name of Plan: NV – Carson City RMP.

Screening of Extraordinary Circumstances: The following extraordinary circumstances apply to individual actions within categorical exclusions (43 CFR 46.215). The BLM has considered the following criteria:

(Specialist review: initial in appropriate box)

<i>If any question is answered 'yes' an EA or EIS must be prepared.</i>	YES	NO
1. Would the Proposed Action have significant impacts on public health or safety?		PR
2. Would the Proposed Action have significant impacts on such natural resources and unique geographic characteristics as historic or cultural resources; park, recreation or refuge lands; wilderness areas; wild or scenic rivers; national natural landmarks; sole or principal drinking water aquifers; prime farmlands; wetlands (EO 11990); floodplains (EO 11988); national monuments; migratory birds (EO 13186); and other ecologically significant or critical areas?		PR
3. Would the Proposed Action have highly controversial environmental effects or involve unresolved conflicts concerning alternative uses of available resources [NEPA 102(2)(E)]?		PR
4. Would the Proposed Action have highly uncertain and potentially significant environmental effects or involve unique or unknown environmental risks?		PR
5. Would the Proposed Action establish a precedent for future action or represent a decision in principle about future actions with potentially significant environmental effects?		PR
6. Would the Proposed Action have a direct relationship to other actions with individually insignificant but cumulatively significant environmental effects?		PR
7. Would the Proposed Action have significant impacts on properties listed, or eligible for listing, on the NRHP as determined by the bureau or office?		PR
8. Would the Proposed Action have significant impacts on species listed, or proposed to be listed, on the list of Endangered or Threatened Species, or have significant impacts on designated Critical Habitat for these species?		PR
9. Would the Proposed Action violate federal law, or a State, local or tribal law or requirement imposed for the protection of the environment?		PR
10. Would the Proposed Action have a disproportionately high and adverse effect on low income or minority populations (EA 12898)?		PR
11. Would the Proposed Action limit access to and ceremonial use of Indian sacred sites on federal lands by Indian religious practitioners or significantly adversely affect the physical integrity of such sacred sites (EO 13007)?		PR
12. Would the Proposed Action contribute to the introduction, continued existence, or spread of noxious weeds or non-native species known to occur in the area or actions that may promote the introduction, growth, or expansion of the range of such species (Federal Noxious Weed Control Act and EO 13112)?		PR

SPECIALISTS' REVIEW:

During ID Team review of the above Proposed Action and extraordinary circumstances, the following specialists reviewed this CX:

- ✓ Planning Environmental Coordinator, Steve Kramer: *SK 5/16/11*
- Public Health and Safety/Grazing/Noxious Weeds, Jill Devaurs:
- ✓ Recreation/Wilderness/VRM/LWC, Dan Westermeyer: *DW 5/16/11*
- ✓ Wildlife/T&E (BLM Sensitive Species), John Wilson: *JW 5-16-11*
- ✓ Archeology, Jason Wright: *JRW 5/24/11*
- Water Quality, Gabe Venegas:
- Soils, Jill Devaurs/Linda Appel/Chelsey Simerson:

CONCLUSION: Based upon the review of this Proposed Action, I have determined that the above-described project is a categorical exclusion, in conformance with the LUP, and does not require an EA or EIS. A categorical exclusion is not subject to protest or appeal.

Approved by:

Teresa J. Knutson

Teresa J. Knutson
Field Manager
Field Office

05/24/2011

(date)