

**UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT**

Shoshone Field Office  
400 West F Street  
Shoshone, ID 83352

**FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT**

Ketchum Land Exchange  
NEPA # DOI-BLM-ID-T030-2012-0008-EA

**INTRODUCTION**

The Bureau of Land Management (BLM), Shoshone Field Office (SFO) has conducted an environmental assessment (EA, DOI-BLM-ID-T030-2012-0008-EA) to analyze the environmental effects and document the findings of a proposed land exchange.. The land exchange proposal was submitted to the BLM by the Blue Canyon Corporation, an Idaho Corporation (Blue Canyon) and supported by the Wood River Land Trust, an Idaho Nonprofit Corporation (WRLT).

Sections 205 and 206 of the Federal Land Policy and Management Act of 1976 (FLPMA), as amended, provide authority to the Secretary of the Interior to acquire lands or interests in lands by purchase, exchange, or donation as well as to dispose of Federal land or interests in land by exchange when a determination is made that the public interest would be well served. When considering the public interest, the authorized BLM officer shall give full consideration to: 1) the opportunity to achieve better management of Federal lands; 2) the needs of the state and local residents and their economies; and 3) securing important resource management objectives including, but not limited to, protection of fish and wildlife habitat, riparian habitat, enhancement of recreational opportunities and public access, accommodation of land use authorizations, and fulfillment of public needs.

The EA, describing a proposed action and alternatives, is available at the following website: <http://www.blm.gov/id/st/en/info/nepa.html> or at the SFO, and is incorporated by reference for this Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI).

**PLAN CONFORMANCE AND CONSISTENCY:**

The proposed action and alternatives have been reviewed and found to be in conformance with the approved Sun Valley (1981) and Magic (1975) Management Framework Plans (MFP's), as amended. The two MFPs were amended collectively in 2003 by the *Amendments to Shoshone Field Office Land Use Plans for Land Tenure Adjustment and Areas of Critical Environmental Concern* ("2003 Amendment") to identify land management strategies and land ownership adjustment criteria for land tenure adjustment proposals. The 2003 Amendment identifies five zones (Zones 1 through 5), each with different management strategies where BLM-administered Federal lands are emphasized for retention or can be considered for disposal.

The parcels involved with the proposed action and alternatives are located within two land management zones – Zone 2 (Square Lake parcels, inclusive of the 80-acre retained parcel) and Zone 5 (Blue Canyon and Sheep Bridge parcels). The priorities for Zone 2 are to retain the existing large blocks of high-value public lands within the zone, consolidate public land ownership within high-priority watersheds by seeking to acquire non-Federal and state

inholdings in those watersheds, and acquire additional high resource value lands within lower priority watersheds. Acquired lands also have to improve efficiencies in public lands management. The general land tenure management strategy of Zone 5 is to: consolidate ownership; maintain the total amount of public land within the zone; and “acquire, primarily through exchange, additional high resource value lands that improve the manageability of public lands” which “would result in disposal of lower resource value and difficult to manage tracts of Zone 5 public lands” (2003 Amendment, p. 10).

Disposal of the Federal lands provides an opportunity to consolidate Federal ownership, improve management in areas of high resource values, and resolve long-standing unauthorized uses. , Acquisition of the non-Federal lands will: consolidate land ownership patterns for more effective and efficient management; increase the amount of Federally owned wildlife habitat, including preliminary priority habitat for the greater sage-grouse, key habitat for pygmy rabbits, crucial mule deer winter range, and mule deer, pronghorn and elk migration routes; increase the amount of Federally owned wetland and riparian habitat; and provide a net gain of BLM-administered Federal lands within the BLM SFO land tenure zone 5.

Both, the proposed action and Alternative A meet the objectives outlined in the Sun Valley and Magic MFPs, as amended, to resolve long-standing unauthorized uses, consolidate Federal lands, and improve management in areas of high resource values. The no action alternative only meets the objectives outlined in the MFPs, as amended, to resolve a long-standing unauthorized use.

#### **FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT DETERMINATION:**

I have reviewed the direct, indirect and cumulative effects of the proposed action and alternatives documented in the Ketchum Land Exchange EA, DOI-BLM-ID-T030-2012-0008-EA. I have also reviewed the project record for this analysis and the impacts of the proposed action and alternatives as disclosed in the alternatives and environmental impacts sections of the EA. Based upon a review of the EA and the supporting documents, I have determined that the project is not a major federal action and will not significantly affect the quality of the human environment, individually or cumulatively with other actions in the general area. Because there would not be any significant impact, an environmental impact statement is not required.

This finding and conclusion is based on my consideration of the Council on Environmental Quality’s (CEQ) criteria for significance (40 CFR 1508.27), both with regard to context and the intensity of impacts described in the EA.

**Context - This requirement means that the significance of an action must be analyzed in several contexts such as society as a whole (human, national), the affected region, the affected interests, and the locality. Significance varies with the setting of the proposed action. For instance, in the case of a site-specific action, significance would usually depend upon the effects in the locale rather than in the world as a whole. Both short- and long-term effects are relevant (40 CFR 1508.27):**

The disclosure of effects in the EA found the actions limited in context. The planning area is limited in size and the activities limited in potential. Effects are local in nature and are not likely to significantly affect regional or national resources.

**Intensity - This requirement refers to the severity of impact. Responsible officials must bear in mind that more than one agency may make decisions about partial aspects of a major action. The following are considered in evaluating intensity (40 CFR 1508.27):**

*1. Impacts that may be both beneficial and adverse.*

The beneficial, adverse, direct, indirect, and cumulative impacts discussed in the EA have been disclosed. The EA documents that the proposed action and alternative A will benefit the public by resolving a long-standing inadvertent trespass; consolidating land ownership patterns for more effective and efficient management; increasing the amount of Federally owned wildlife habitat, including preliminary priority habitat for the greater sage-grouse, key habitat for pygmy rabbits, crucial mule deer winter range, and mule deer, pronghorn and elk migration routes; increasing the amount of Federally owned wetland and riparian habitat; and providing a net gain of BLM-administered Federal lands within the BLM SFO land tenure zone 5. The no action is documented as benefiting the public by resolving a long-standing inadvertent trespass; however the BLM would not acquire lands with higher resource values.

*2. The degree to which the proposed action affects public health or safety.*

The proposed activities will not significantly affect public health or safety. Environmental Site Assessments were prepared for the Federal and non-Federal lands involved, and there were no major concerns associated with the proposed action or alternatives.

*3. Unique characteristics of the geographic area such as proximity to historic or cultural resources, park lands, prime farmlands, wetlands, wild and scenic rivers, or ecologically critical areas.*

There are no unique historic or cultural resources, park lands, prime farmlands, wild and scenic rivers, Wilderness Study Areas, or Areas of Critical Environmental Concern located on the parcels involved in the proposed action and alternatives. The non-Federal parcels (both land exchange and donation) contain wetland and riparian habitat; as well as preliminary priority habitat for the greater sage-grouse, key habitat for pygmy rabbits, crucial mule deer winter range, and mule deer, pronghorn and elk migration routes.

*4. The degree to which the effects on the quality of the human environment are likely to be highly controversial.*

None of the effects associated with the proposed action or alternatives are expected to be highly controversial. There has not been any controversy regarding the proposed action and alternatives in response to the scoping efforts described in the EA.

*5. The degree to which the possible effects on the human environment are highly uncertain or involve unique or unknown risks.*

There are no known effects that are highly uncertain or involve unique or unknown risk.

*6. The degree to which the action may establish a precedent for future actions with significant effects or represents a decision in principle about a future consideration.*

Neither the proposed action, nor any of the alternatives sets precedent or represents a decision in principle about a future management consideration.

7. *Whether the action is related to other actions with individually insignificant but cumulatively significant impacts.*

The EA analyzes all connected and cumulative actions within the scope of the analysis. The cumulative effects of past, present, and reasonably foreseeable actions are considered and disclosed in Chapter 3 of the EA. No cumulative impacts related to other actions that would have a significant impact were identified nor are any anticipated.

8. *The degree to which the action may adversely affect districts, sites, highways, structures, or objects listed in or eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places or may cause loss or destruction of significant scientific, cultural, or historical resources.*

The proposed action or alternatives will not adversely affect districts, sites, highways, structures, or objects in or eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places. It also will not cause loss or destruction of significant, cultural, or historical resources. A cultural resource inventory was conducted for the Federal lands, which revealed no listed properties or properties eligible for listing within the parcel.

9. *The degree to which the action may adversely affect an endangered or threatened species or its habitat that has been determined to be critical under the Endangered Species Act of 1973.*

As summarized in the EA (section 3.9, Vegetation BLM Special Status Species, including Threatened, Endangered, and Candidate Species; and 3.12, Wildlife BLM Special Status Species, including Threatened, Endangered, and Candidate Species), the proposed action or alternatives will not affect any endangered or threatened species or their habitats.

10. *Whether the action threatens a violation of Federal, State, or local law or requirements imposed for the protection of the environment.*

The proposed action and alternatives are consistent and compatible with all known Federal, State, and local laws, regulations, or requirements imposed for protection of the environment. A property inspection will be completed prior to title closing to ensure that any non-conforming improvements have been removed from the properties.

**Conclusion:**

Based upon the review of the context and intensity factors and the environmental analyses conducted, I have determined that the proposed action and alternatives analyzed in the Ketchum Land Exchange EA, DOI-BLM-ID-T030-2012-0008-EA are not a major federal action and that implementation will not significantly affect the quality of the human environment. Accordingly, I have determined that an Environmental Impact Statement need not be prepared for this project.

/s/ Holly Hampton  
Holly Hampton, Assistant Shoshone Field Manager/  
Monument Manager

4 October 2012  
Date