

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

**CATEGORICAL EXCLUSION
ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW AND APPROVAL**

Project Creator: Dan Westermeyer, ORP

Field Office: Stillwater

Lead Office: Stillwater

Case File/Project Number: N/A

Applicable Categorical Exclusion

516 DM 11.9, Appendix 4. C.4: Pre-commercial thinning and brush control using small mechanical devices and 516 DM 11.9 Appendix 4.D.10: Vegetation management activities such as seeding, planting, invasive plant removal....when the activity is necessary for the management of vegetation on public lands.

NEPA Number: DOI-BLM-NV-C010_2012-0033-CX

Project Name: Cold Springs Historic Complex (Pony Express Station, Old Stage Station, Old Telegraph Station and Overland Stage Station at New Pass) Fuels Reduction Project

Project Description:

The proposed action is a retreatment activity that was last completed in Fall of 2005 and includes the removal of encroaching brush and grasses from interpretive sites. It is anticipated that work will be accomplished by BLM fire crews utilizing chainsaws, weed eaters, and hand tools. At no time will heavy equipment be used to remove brush nor will fire be set for vegetation clearing. The treatment will protect the Cold Springs Historic Complex including the Overland Stage Station at New Pass, by reducing the fuel loading which will modify fire behavior and enhance fire suppression capabilities. The majority of the hazard will be mitigated. Due to natural vegetation growth, hazardous fuel load would continue post treatment.

Cold Springs Pony Express Station and Access Trail: The station is heavily choked by sagebrush, rabbit brush and Great Basin rye in and around the walls of the building. The fuels reduction will remove all vegetation in walls, within the fence perimeter, and approximately three feet outside the fence. Vegetation will be cleared on the access trail to the station removing branches and where necessary bushes. The trail will be cleared to the established trail width, no wider than three feet. Vegetation removed from the station will be disposed of by loading it into a truck (utilizing the two-track road and minimizing trips as much as possible) and transported

away from the station, to be disposed of or burned off site in a safe manner per BLM guidelines. Vegetation removed from the access trail will be disposed of in select drainages to use as erosion control adjacent to the access trail or burned off site in a safe manner per BLM guidelines.

Cold Springs Complex, Old Stage Station and Old Telegraph Station: These stations are located adjacent to Highway 50 and are fenced and locked. Both locations are choked with mustard grass and some rabbit brush. The fuels reduction will remove all vegetation from within the fenced area and beyond the fence to the right of way fence line. A two track road (Overland Trail) connects these two stations. The road would be cleared to a six foot road bed. Vegetation removed from the stations and the connecting road will be disposed of or burned off site in a safe manner per BLM guidelines.

Overland Stage Station at New Pass: The station is adjacent to Highway 50 fenced with a locked gate and a paved road encircling the station. The interior of the fence is choked with sagebrush in and around the walls of the building. The fuels reduction will remove all vegetation from within the fenced area. Vegetation will be disposed of or burned off site in a safe manner per BLM guidelines. A BLM archaeologist would be on site and provide information on cultural resources to the BLM fire crews prior to on-the-ground activities and provide instruction on vegetation when located in the walls of the buildings. Vegetation removed would be disposed of according to the location and instructions per station but will include the removal by truck off site, disposal in a responsible manner for erosion control in select drainages and or burning in a safe manner per BLM guidelines.

Applicant Name: Bureau of Land Management, Stillwater Field Office, 5665 Morgan Mill Road, Carson City, NV 89701

Project Location: Township 18 North, Range 37 East, Pony Express Station Section 33, Trail to the Pony Express Station, Section 30, 32, and 33, Old Stage Station and Old Telegraph Station, Section 30 Mount Diablo Meridian, U.S.G.S. Cold Springs, Nevada Quadrangle 7.5 minute series (1969, Photorevised 1982). Township 20 North, Range 40 East, Sec 29, Overland Station at New Pass, Mount Diablo Meridian, U.S.G.S. New Pass, Nevada Quadrangle 7.5 minute series (1990).

BLM Acres for the Project Area: Less than 3 acres total

Land Use Plan Conformance: Carson City Field Office Consolidated Resource Management Plan (2001) The proposed action described below is consistent with National Policy regarding cultural resources (BLM Manual 8100 Cultural Resource Management 12/06/89) in that “the BLM manages cultural resources under its jurisdiction or control according to their relative importance, protecting against inadvertent loss, destruction, or impairment and accommodating the uses determined appropriate through planning and public participation.” Under the Carson City Field Office Consolidated Resource Management Plan the desired outcomes are that

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)

Stillwater Field Office

<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? (Range-Jill Devaurs)		JD
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? (Archeology, Recreation, Wilderness, Wildlife, Range by allotment, Water Quality)		JD la CF JMC
3. Would the Proposed Action have highly controversial environmental effects or involve unresolved conflicts concerning alternative uses of available resources [NEPA 102(2)(E)]? (PEC)		JMC
4. Would the Proposed Action have highly uncertain and potentially significant environmental effects or involve unique or unknown environmental risks? (PEC)		JMC
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? (PEC)		JMC
6. Would the Proposed Action have a direct relationship to other actions with individually insignificant but cumulatively significant environmental effects? (PEC)		JMC
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? (Archeology)		JMC
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? (Wildlife)		JD
9. Would the Proposed Action violate federal law, or a State, local or tribal law or requirement imposed for the protection of the environment? (PEC and Archeology)		JMC JMC
10. Would the Proposed Action have a disproportionately high and adverse effect on low income or minority populations (EA 12898)? ((PEC)		JMC
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)? (Archeology)		JMC
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)? (Range-Jill Devaurs)		JD

SPECIALISTS' REVIEW:

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

Stillwater Field Office

Planning Environmental Coordinator, Steve Kramer: *SKZ 01/13/2012*
Public Health and Safety/Grazing/Noxious Weeds, Jill Devaurs: *JD 2-13-12*
Recreation/Wilderness/VRM/LWC, Dan Westermeyer: *DW 2/13/12*
Wildlife/T&E (BLM Sensitive Species), John Wilson: *JW 2-13-12*
Archeology, Susan McCabe: *SMC 3/1/12 APF, L, S(1)*
Water Quality, Gabe Venegas: *GV 2-22-12*
Soils, Jill Devaurs/Linda Appel/Chelsy Simerson: *LA 12/27/12*

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 3/5/2012
Teresa J. Knutson (date)
Field Manager
Stillwater Field Office