

CATEGORICAL EXCLUSION DOCUMENTATION

CX No. DOI-BLM-ID-B020-2012-0009-CX

A. BACKGROUND

BLM Office: Bruneau Field Office

Lease/Serial/Case File No.: 1104240

Proposed Action Title/Type: Hall Family Trust to Tom Buckingham grazing preference transfer

Location of Proposed Action: Blackstone Allotment 00941 - see attached map.

Description of Proposed Action: Approve the transfer of Hall Family Trust's grazing preference of 380 AUMs in the Blackstone Allotment 00941 to Tom and Carmen Buckingham.

B. LAND USE PLAN CONFORMANCE

Land Use Plan Name: Bruneau MFP (1983)

Date Approved or Amended: Same

The proposed action is in conformance with the LUP, even though it is not specifically provided for, because it is clearly consistent with the following LUP decision(s) (objectives, terms, and conditions): This categorical exclusion (CX) is in conformance with the Bruneau –Kuna MFP 1983 MFP, and categorical exclusions (CXs) pursuant to 516 DM 11.9, Appendix 4 (D)(1).

This CX addresses the application filed by Tom and Carmen Buckingham and Hall Family Trust – trustee Chuck Hall to transfer Hall Family Trust's grazing preference of 380 AUMs from Hall Family Trust's base property to Tom and Carmen Buckingham's base property. The 380 AUMs are located in Blackstone Allotment 00941. This CX complies with the grazing regulations (43 CFR 4110.2-3) and the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA).

Additionally, EA ID010006 Permit Renewal (2001) sufficiently addressed resource concerns in what was known as Big Lake and Nit Creek Allotments and is now known as Blackstone Allotment.

C: COMPLIANCE WITH NEPA:

The proposed action is categorically excluded from further documentation under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) in accordance with 516 DM 11.9 BLANK (BLANK)

Category Description:

This categorical exclusion is appropriate in this situation because there are no extraordinary circumstances that would introduce potential effects that may significantly affect the environment. The proposed action has been reviewed, and none of the extraordinary circumstances described in 516 DM6 apply.

The following list of Extraordinary Circumstances (516 DM 2, Appendix 2) was considered:

1. Have significant impacts on public health or safety.

Yes No

Comments/Explanation: This administrative transfer would not have any significant impacts on public health or safety. Livestock grazing is a recognized and authorized use, as identified in the Bruneau MFP (1983).

Specialist Signature/Date: Jon Haupt 4/4/2012

2. **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 (Executive Order 11990); floodplains (Executive Order 11988); national monuments; migratory birds; or ecologically significant or critical areas, or is not in compliance with the Fish and Wildlife Coordination Act.**

Yes No

Comments/Explanation (Wildlife):

There will be no changes in management, so previous assessments specifying no significant impacts or omission of significant impacts are still valid (migratory birds, ecologically significant critical areas).

Specialist Signature/Date: Bruce C. Schoeberl, Wildlife Biologist, 3/28/2012

Comments/Explanation (Fisheries and Riparian):

The 2001 EA analyzed the potential impacts and mitigation on springs, wetlands, and riparian areas/floodplains. This transfer will require that all mitigations, cattle management methods, enclosure fences, and any required terms and conditions from the 2001 EA continue to be followed and implemented under the transferred permit.

Specialist Signature/Date: Dave Mays, Fisheries Biologist, 4/3/12

Comments/Explanation: The 2001 EA and SHPO/BLM Cultural Report 01-O-18 analyzed the potential impacts to cultural resources. This transfer will require that all stipulations to protect cultural resources would continue to be followed and implemented under the transferred permit.

Specialist Signature/Date: Lois Palmgren, Archaeologist, 4/4/2012

Comments/Explanation (recreation, wilderness, wild & scenic rivers)

As the timing, duration, and intensity of grazing use would not change, there would be no new impacts from this action to recreation, wilderness, or wild & scenic rivers.

Specialist Signature/Date: David Draheim, Outdoor Recreation Planner, 4/4/12

3. **Have highly controversial environmental effects or involve unresolved conflicts concerning alternative uses of available resources [NEPA Section 102(2)(E)].**

Yes No

Comments/Explanation: This administrative action would not have highly controversial environmental effects or involve unresolved conflicts concerning alternative uses of available resources [NEPA Section 102(2) (E)]. All known conflicts and controversial effects (such as climate change and OHV/livestock grazing) are managed under the Bruneau MFP and the grazing permit terms and conditions.

Specialist Signature/Date: Jon Haupt /s/ 4/4/2012

4. Have highly uncertain and potentially significant environmental effects or involve unique or unknown environmental risks.

Yes No

Comments/Explanation: This administrative action would not have highly uncertain and potentially significant environmental effects or involve unique or unknown environmental risks. Environmental effects such as climate change, and potential listing of candidate species, would be addressed in the future as scientific literature and studies indicate and would be implemented specific to the actions being proposed. An administrative action to continue an existing, managed action under identical terms and conditions would not change or increase existing effects or risks identified in the existing Bruneau MFP or the 2001 EA.

Specialist Signature/Date: *Kari Koleini* 4/4/12

5. Establish a precedent for future actions or represent a decision in principle about future actions with potentially significant environmental effects.

Yes No

Comments/Explanation: This administrative action would not establish a precedent for future actions or represent a decision in principle about future actions with potentially significant environmental effects. The proposed action would allow for the continued use as identified in the Bruneau MFP, and the existing permit terms and conditions. The transfer would be implemented as authorized by currently existing Federal Regulations (43 CFR) for livestock grazing/management. Future actions would not be affected or set by this action, as it is already in place and no changes to current actions are being proposed or implemented.

Specialist Signature/Date: *Jon Haupt* 4/4/2012

6. Have a direct relationship to other actions with individually insignificant, but cumulatively significant environmental effects.

Yes No

Comments/Explanation: This administrative action does not have a direct relationship to other actions with individually insignificant, but cumulatively significant, environmental effects. The impacts of livestock grazing in conjunction or cumulatively with other on-the-ground activities are already occurring and would continue at the current rate and intensity as existing permitted actions.

Specialist Signature/Date: *Jon Haupt* 4/4/2012

7. Have significant impacts on properties listed or eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places as determined by either the bureau or office.

Yes No

Comments/Explanation: The 2001 EA and SHPO/BLM Cultural Report 01-O-18 analyzed the potential impacts to cultural resources. This transfer will require that all stipulations to protect cultural resources would continue to be followed and implemented under the transferred permit.

Specialist Signature/Date: *Lois Palmgren, Archaeologist*, 4/4/2012

8. Have significant impacts on species listed or proposed to be listed on the List of Endangered or Threatened Species, or on designated Critical Habitat for these species.

Yes No

Comments/Explanation (Special Status Plants):

No special status plant species would be adversely impacted by this action. Any impacts to special status plants are evaluated and mitigated during the permit renewal process for the allotment. No change in management is expected as a result of this action.

Plants Specialist Signature/Date: *Felley Beck*, 3/13/03

Comments/Explanation(Wildlife):

The status of greater sage-grouse changed recently from Type 2 to Type 1 (Candidate for Federal Listing; 2010), and no other changes have occurred to Special Status wildlife species found in this allotment. However, there will be no changes in management associated with this transfer, and the Blackstone Allotment falls under the extension of grazing permits granted by the Continuing Appropriations Act (2012). Grazing management in the Blackstone Allotment will be analyzed during an upcoming permit renewal and is not part of the action associated with this CE. The administrative action itself of transferring grazing preferences to another party would translate into the same mandatory and other terms and conditions for the current authorization and would result in no change in any effects on threatened, endangered, proposed, or candidate species under ESA, as well as other Special Status wildlife species analyzed in the 1997 Final Decision that included an assessment of impacts to greater sage-grouse.

Wildlife Specialist Signature/Date: *Bruce C. Schoeberl*, Wildlife Biologist, 3/28/2012

Comments/Explanation (Fisheries and Riparian):

The main stem of the Bruneau River from the confluence of the Jarbidge and W Fork Bruneau Rivers downstream to the Buckaroo Ditch Dam was designated as Critical Habitat for Columbia River Bull Trout (Jarbidge River Distinct Population Segment) in October 2010. Part of the boundary of the northeast section of the Blackstone Allotment follows the top of the Bruneau Canyon rim. Cattle do not have access below the rim to the river and would not affect bull trout critical habitat. No other fish species designated as threatened, endangered, or proposed for listing or their critical habitat are found on the allotment. The administrative action of transferring grazing preferences to another party would require that the same mandatory terms and conditions and all other requirements with no changes be followed by the new party.

Aquatics Specialist Signature/Date: *Dave Mays*, Fisheries Biologist, 4/3/2012

9. Violate a Federal, State, local, or tribal law or requirement imposed for the protection of the environment.

Yes No

Comments/Explanation: This administrative action does not violate any Federal, State, local, or tribal laws or requirements imposed for the protection of the environment.

Specialist Signature/Date: *Arnold L. Pike* 4/4/2012

10. Have a disproportionately high and adverse effect on low income or minority populations (Executive Order 12898).

Yes No

Comments/Explanation: This administrative action would not have a disproportionately high and adverse effect on low income or minority populations (Executive Order 12898). There are not any low income or minority populations living in the allotment. Low income or minority visitors to the area would not be affected any differently by the proposed activity than any other visitor.

Specialist Signature/Date: Jon Haupt 4/4/2012

11. 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 (Executive Order 13007).

Yes No

Comments/Explanation: This administrative action does not 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 (Executive Order 13007) because grazing does not restrict access to public land.

Specialist Signature/Date: Arnold L. Pike 4/4/2012

12. Contribute to the introduction, continued existence, or spread of noxious weeds or non-native invasive 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 Executive Order 13112).

Yes No

Comments/Explanation: Transferring grazing privileges, for the continuation of current authorized grazing, would not cause additional influences to existing noxious weeds or non-native invasive species.

Specialist Signature/Date: Kari Koleini 4/4/12

D: SIGNATURE

I certify that none of the Departmental exceptions (Extraordinary Circumstances) listed in the above Part II (516 DM 2, Appendix 2) apply to this action; therefore, this categorical exclusion is appropriate for this situation.

Authorizing Official: Arnold L. Pike Date: 4/9/12
(Signature)

Arnold L. Pike
Field Manager
Bruneau Field Office

Prepared By/Contact Person: Jon Haupt