

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

Twin Falls District
Shoshone Field Office
400 West F Street
Shoshone, Idaho 83352

CATEGORICAL EXCLUSION

NEPA No. DOI-BLM-ID-T030-2012-0025-CX

A. Background

BLM Office: Shoshone Field Office. Lease/Serial/Case File No.: IDI-28657

Proposed Action Title/Type: Department of Energy Seismic Station Right-of-Way Renewal

Location of Proposed Action: Boise Meridian, Blaine and Butte Counties, Idaho; Township 2 North, Range 24 East, Section 31: A portion of the E $\frac{1}{2}$ SE $\frac{1}{4}$; Section 32: A portion of the SW $\frac{1}{4}$ SW $\frac{1}{4}$, A portion of the E $\frac{1}{2}$ SE $\frac{1}{4}$; Section 33: A portion of the SW $\frac{1}{4}$ NE $\frac{1}{4}$, A portion of the SE $\frac{1}{4}$ NW $\frac{1}{4}$, A portion of the SW $\frac{1}{4}$, A portion of the NW $\frac{1}{4}$ SE $\frac{1}{4}$, A portion of Lots 2, 3; Township 1 North, Range 24 East, Section 5: A portion of the S $\frac{1}{2}$ NW $\frac{1}{4}$, A portion of the E $\frac{1}{2}$ SW $\frac{1}{4}$, A portion of the W $\frac{1}{2}$ SE $\frac{1}{4}$, A portion of Lots 3, 4; Section 8: A portion of the W $\frac{1}{2}$ NE $\frac{1}{4}$, A portion of the NE $\frac{1}{4}$ NW $\frac{1}{4}$.

Description of Proposed Action: The Bureau of Land Management, Shoshone Field Office (BLM) has received an application from the Department of Energy (DOE) to renew a right-of-way (IDI-28657) to access and authorize a seismic monitoring station on public lands in Butte County, Idaho near the Craters of the Moon National Monument and Preserve Visitor Center. The seismic monitoring station is part of the Idaho National Laboratory (INL) Seismic Monitoring Program (supported by DOE) which maintains and operates 27 seismic monitoring stations for the purpose of documenting earthquake activity on and around the eastern Snake River Plain. The INL seismic network is used to acquire information on earthquake sources (such as locations, magnitudes, depths, faulting styles, stress parameters, and recurrence rates), crustal structure, rock properties, and attenuation characteristics of the subsurface. The INL seismic network also serves as an early warning system for potential future basal volcanism in the eastern Snake River Plain.

The original right-of-way was issued on April 17, 1992, for a period of 20 years. The infrastructure associated with the seismic station includes the following:

- a small concrete pad (approx.. 3 x 3 x 3 ft) to support a 10 ft high antenna tower;
- solar panels and one or more antennas attached to the tower;
- a 3 x 3 x ft fiberglass box attached to the tower that houses some seismic instrumentation;
- seismic instrumentation that includes a NetDAS (an embedded LINUX computer with a GPS clock), symmetric research 24 bit digitizer, and in some cases a Trimble GPS dual frequency receiver;

- freewave technologies 900 MHz wireless modem that transmit digital signals continuously to another location;
- a 3 x 3 x 3 ft fiberglass box buried in the ground nearby the tower to house two or more sealed 12 volt, 100 amp/hr gel cell batteries; and
- one to three seismometers housed in shallow buried ½-55 gallon drums located near the antenna tower.

Access to the seismic monitoring station would utilize existing designated roads, no cross-country mechanized or motorized travel would be authorized. The application to renew the right-of-way does not include any new improvements, modifications, or surface disturbance. See Attachment A, Department of Energy Seismic Station Right-of-Way Renewal Location Map.

B. Land Use Plan Conformance

Land Use Plan Name: Craters of the Moon National Monument and Preserve Management Plan (Management Plan)

Date Approved/Amended: 2006

The proposed action is specifically provided for in the Management Plan as identified in the following management actions: VEG-11 (pg. 27) and WLIFE-7 (pg. 33), which state “Actions and stipulations necessary to protect special status species and their habitats will be made part of land use authorizations (e.g. limiting fragmentation of special status species populations when considering road maintenance) and fire planning”; LANDS-4 (pg. 49) “Action on applications for new discretionary land use authorizations will be guided by existing National Park Service and BLM policies”; RSEAR-3 “Varying means, including interdisciplinary and interagency research projects, will emphasize the use of the Monument as a productive outdoor laboratory.”

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 E(9). 516 DM 11.9 E(9) states: “Renewals and assignments of leases, permits, or rights-of-way where no additional rights are conveyed beyond those granted by the original authorizations.” The proposed renewal of the right-of-way for the seismic monitoring station does not include any new improvements, modifications, or surface disturbance nor does it include any additional rights beyond those granted by the original authorization. Therefore, the proposed action qualifies to be processed as a categorical exclusion.

This categorical exclusion is appropriate in this situation because there are no extraordinary circumstances potentially having effects that may significantly affect the environment. The proposed action has been reviewed, and none of the extraordinary circumstances described in 516 DM 2 apply. See Attachment B, Department of Energy Seismic Station Right-of-Way Renewal Categorical Exclusion Review Sheet.

Based on my review of the project described above and field office staff recommendations, I have determined that the project is in conformance with the applicable land use plan and is categorically excluded from further environmental analysis. I have decided to approve the action as proposed. A renewed right-of-way will be offered to DOE to operate and maintain a seismic

monitoring station, including access, on public land in Butte County, Idaho. See Attachment C, Draft Department of Energy Renewed Right-of-Way, IDI-28657.

D. Signature

Authorizing Official: /s/ Codie Martin Date: September 28, 2012
Name: Codie Martin
Title: Acting Field Manager

E. Contact Person

For additional information concerning this Categorical Exclusion, contact Tara Hagen, Realty Specialist, at 400 West F Street, Shoshone, Idaho; (208) 732-7205; or via email at thagen@blm.gov.

F. Attachments

Attachment A, Department of Energy Seismic Station Right-of-Way Renewal Location Map
Attachment B, Department of Energy Seismic Station Right-of-Way Renewal Categorical Exclusion Review Sheet.
Attachment C, Draft Department of Energy Renewed Right-of-Way, IDI-28657