

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

**CATEGORICAL EXCLUSION
ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW AND APPROVAL**

Project Lead: Arthur Callan

Field Office: Sierra Front

Lead Office: Sierra Front

Case File/Project Number: LLNVC02000-12505

Applicable Categorical Exclusion: 516 DM 11.9(H) : Recreation Management (1): Issuance of SRP's for day use or overnight use up to 14 consecutive nights; that impacts no more than 3 staging area acres; and/or for recreational travel along roads, trails, or in areas authorized in a land use plan.

NEPA Number: DOI-BLM-NV-2012-C020-0026-CX

Project Name: Washoe Valley Horse Endurance Ride

Project Description: Connie Creech has submitted a five year permit renewal to conduct an annual horse endurance ride on the east side of Washoe Lake. Creech previously operated this event under a five year permit and maintained a good record of permit compliance. The two day event is typically held in late April or early May. This year the proposed event date is scheduled for May 5-6, 2012. Endurance courses are generally 25-50 miles long with a combination of various loops that accumulate the ride mileage. The proposed event would utilize approximately 52 miles of established dirt roads. Of the estimated 52 miles of proposed course, approximately 39% is located on "other" lands (18% private land; 21% Washoe Lake State Park). Up to seven water stops utilizing portable 50 gallon "Rubbermaid" type tanks would be stationed along the course (see map). Course loops are flagged in different colors and directional arrows are drawn using white flour on the ground. Flagging is removed immediately following the event. All camping, parking and the start/finish are located on lands managed by Washoe Lake State Park. The event typically draws 50 - 100 participants and up to 20 spectators.

Applicant Name: Connie Creech

Project Location: Storey and Lyon Counties. T. 16 N., R. 20 E., S. 1-4, 9-11, 12-13, 15-17, 20-22, 25, 27-30, 34-36; T. 16 N., R. 21 E., S. 18-19, 30; T. 17 N., R. 20 E., S. 21-22, 26-28, 33, 35.

BLM Acres for the Project Area: Area of proposed course is estimated at 50 acres (52 miles @ 8' wide). Proposed water stops total less than 1 acre. Proposed staging is located on state land.

Land Use Plan Conformance: Section 8 – REC-2: Desired Outcomes, 1: "Provide a wide variety of recreation opportunities on public land under the administration of the Carson City Field Office."

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? (project lead/P&EC)		BJS
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? (wildlife biologist, hydrologist, outdoor recreation planner, archeologist)		KBB, PZ AC RL mc
3. Would the Proposed Action have highly controversial environmental effects or involve unresolved conflicts concerning alternative uses of available resources [NEPA 102(2)(E)]? (project lead/P&EC)		AC
4. Would the Proposed Action have highly uncertain and potentially significant environmental effects or involve unique or unknown environmental risks? (project lead/P&EC)		AC
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? (project lead/P&EC)		AC
6. Would the Proposed Action have a direct relationship to other actions with individually insignificant but cumulatively significant environmental effects? (project lead/P&EC)		AC
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? (archeologist)		RL
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 biologist, botanist)		KBB, PZ KBB, DT
9. Would the Proposed Action violate federal law, or a State, local or tribal law or requirement imposed for the protection of the environment? (project lead/P&EC)		AC
10. Would the Proposed Action have a disproportionately high and adverse effect on low income or minority populations (EA 12898)? (project lead/P&EC)		AC
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)? (archeologist)		RL
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)? (botanist)		KBB, DT

SPECIALISTS' REVIEW: During ID Team consideration of the above Proposed Action and extraordinary circumstances, the following specialists reviewed this CX:

Jo Ann Hufnagle, Realty Specialist
Arthur Callan, Outdoor Recreation Planner
Niki Cutler, Hydrologist
Rachel Crews, Archaeologist
Pilar Ziegler, Wildlife Biologist/BLM Sensitive Species - Wildlife
Dean Tonenna, Botanist - Natural Resource Specialist/BLM Sensitive Species - Plants
Brian Buttazoni, Planning & Environmental Coordinator

Although BLM Sensitive Species is not described in one of the 12 extraordinary circumstances question, review of the applicability of this CX has taken them into consideration.

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:



Alan Bittner
Acting Field Manager
Sierra Front Field Office

4/20/12
(date)