

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

Twin Falls District
Burley Field Office
15 East 200 South
Burley, ID 83318

Finding of No Significant Impact

**Middle Mountain Plans of Operations
NEPA No. DOI-BLM-ID-T020-2012-0015-EA**

FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT:

I have determined that the proposed action, as described in the Environmental Assessment for the Middle Mountain Plans of Operations (EA) will not have any significant impact, individually or cumulatively, on the quality of the human environment. Due to the fact there would not be any significant impact, an environmental impact statement is not required.

In making this determination, I considered the following factors:

1. The activities described in the proposed action do not include any significant beneficial or adverse impacts (40 CFR 1508.27(b)(1)).

The EA includes a description of the expected environmental consequences of authorizing two Oakley Stone quarries and one millsite for the processing of Oakley Stone on the west flank of Middle Mountain. The authorization would include mining, processing, stockpiling, and transportation of Oakley Stone from the quarries and millsite to off-site locations. These operations are described in detail in Chapter 2 of the EA. Chapter 4 of the EA discloses all anticipated environmental impacts; there are no significant impacts resulting from the proposed action.

2. The activities included in the proposed action would not significantly affect public health or safety (40 CFR 1508.27(b)(2)).

The project would not have any appreciable effects to public health and safety. Safety considerations and features are described in Chapter 2 of the EA.

3. The proposed activities would not significantly affect any unique characteristics (40 CFR 1508.27(b)(3)) of the geographic area such as prime and unique farmlands, caves, wild and scenic rivers, designated wilderness areas, wilderness study areas, or areas of critical concern.

The project area does not contain any unique characteristics.

4. The activities described in the proposed action do not involve effects on the human environment that are likely to be highly controversial (40 CFR 1508.27(b)(4)).

The proposed action would result in the authorization of two quarries and one mill-site that would result in an additional disturbance of 15.4 acres over the life of the quarries. Additional impacts resulting from the operations of these quarries and the mill-site are discussed in Chapter 4 of the EA. The impacts are well understood and are not significant.

5. The activities described in the proposed action do not involve effects that are highly uncertain or involve unique or unknown risks (40 CFR 1508.27(b)(5)).

Oakley Stone has been quarried on Middle Mountain for over 50 years and the effects of authorizing and expanding these quarries are known. Other quarries have been authorized on BLM lands on Middle Mountain and effects have been observed. This site has been mined since 1974.

6. My decision to implement these activities does not establish a precedent for future actions with significant effects or represent a decision in principle about a future consideration (40 CFR 1508.27(b)(6)).

The action analyzed in the EA is a common practice that has been successfully implemented in the area. The proposed action would not set a precedent for future actions that have significant effects. The action would be consistent with decisions and direction established in the 1985 Cassia Resource Management Plan as stated on Pages 2-3 of the EA.

7. The effects of mining and processing Oakley Stone from these two quarries would not be significant, individually or cumulatively, when considered with the effects of other actions (40 CFR 1508.27(b)(7)). The EA discloses that there are no other connected or cumulative actions that would cause significant cumulative impacts.

The EA discloses that there are no other connected or cumulative actions that would cause significant cumulative impacts. Other actions in the foreseeable future include use of existing gravel pits, other mining operations, wildland fires, livestock grazing, range development for livestock, fire suppression, right of way maintenance, and the Burley Landscape juniper removal project. Cumulatively, these actions would not cause significant impacts.

8. I have determined that the activities described in the proposed action will not adversely affect or cause loss or destruction of scientific, cultural, or historical resources, including those listed in or eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places (40 CFR 1508.27(b)(8)).

Cultural resource surveys were completed and no Historic Properties were located within the project area.

9. The proposed activities are not likely to adversely affect any endangered or threatened species or its habitat that has been determined to be critical under the Endangered Species Act (40 CFR 1508.27(b)(9)).

The proposed activities would not have any effect on any measurable BLM sensitive species. Effects to sensitive species are discussed on pages 18-20 of the EA. Based on the analysis, a stipulation will be applied that will limit additional disturbance to a time frame between July 15 and February 28 to avoid disturbance of migratory birds. Also, blasting would be limited to the time frame between July 1 and March 15 as a mitigation measure to prevent impacts to lekking and nesting sage-grouse.

10. The proposed activities will not threaten any violation of Federal, State, or local law or requirements imposed for the protection of the environment (40 CFR 1508.27(b)(10)).

The proposed action was developed in accordance with applicable federal, state, and local laws for the protection of the environment. The EQ disclosed the effects of the proposed action on all critical and non-critical elements, and it was determined that the proposed action would not violate any laws or requirements.

APPROVED:

/s/Jim Tharp for

Michael C. Courtney
Field Manager
Burley Field Office

1/23/2013

Date