

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

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

**Categorical Exclusion Documentation Format When Using Categorical Exclusions Not
Established by Statute**

NEPA No. DOI-BLM-ID-T020-2013-0003-CX

A. Background

BLM Office: Burley Field Office. Lease/Serial/Case File No.: IDI-37320

Proposed Action Title/Type: Agua Caliente Seismic Survey

Location of Proposed Action: T. 15 S., R. 26 E. and 27 E., Various Sections

Description of Proposed Action: Agua Caliente and Optim have applied to conduct a geophysical (seismic) survey on approximately 1100 acres of public land. This would involve the placement of receivers, or geophones, that are laid out in a grid on the surface of the Earth. The geophones are spikes about 6” long with receivers that will be connected via seismic lines that transmit the recorded data. The data is gathered as vibroseis trucks vibrate the ground at pre-determined surface locations to generate seismic signals. The seismic signals are composed of ground vibrations that the geophones record.

B. Land Use Plan Conformance

Land Use Plan Name: Cassia Resource Management Plan (RMP) Date Approved/Amended: 1985

 X The proposed action is in conformance with the applicable LUP because it is specifically provided for in the following LUP decision(s): Page 32, section A of the Cassia RMP states,

“Energy Resources

Open to leasing, subject to the following stipulation: Protect ferruginous hawks between March 1 and July 15 by prohibiting activity within the shorter of the following two distances – 2,000 feet or the visible range of active nesting sites. No exploration/development work in sage grouse strutting/brood-rearing habitat from April 1 through June 15.”

 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:

C. Compliance with NEPA:

The Proposed Action is categorically excluded from further documentation under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) in accordance with Oil Gas and Geothermal Energy CX number

6, "Approval of Notices of Intent to conduct geophysical exploration of oil, gas, or geothermal pursuant to 43 CFR 3250, when no temporary or new road construction is proposed.

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 43 CFR 46.215 apply.

I have considered the timing of this proposed action (three to five weeks in fall/winter of 2012) and the cultural resource, special status plant, and sensitive animal clearances provided by our archeologist and biologists. I have found that there is no potential for significant impacts if the terms and conditions of the Notice filed and the following stipulations are observed:

- 1) Avoid driving ATV's and vibroseis trucks overland in wet conditions to prevent excessive tracks/ruts on the surface.
- 2) Exploration should only occur from between July 15 and March 1 to avoid potential effects to BLM sensitive birds.
- 3) The undercarriage of all ATV's and vibroseis trucks will be washed clean of all soil and plant material prior to beginning work in the project area to minimize any potential transfer of noxious weed seeds or plants.
- 4) Should any future or inadvertent historic, cultural or paleontological property discoveries, or American Indian human remains, unassociated funerary objects, or grave goods be encountered during project implementation, project activities will immediately cease and the Burley Field Manager will be notified to coordinate further investigation.
- 5) All resource protection areas will be avoided by vehicles, ATV's, and vibroseis trucks.

D. Signature

Authorizing Official: /s/ Jim Tharp for Mike Courtney Date: 10-21-2012
Name: Michael C. Courtney
Title: Burley Field Manager

Contact Person

For additional information concerning this CX review, contact Steve Lubinski, Geologist, (208) 677-6667, or at the Burley Field Office, 15 East, 200 South, Burley, ID 83318.