

**U.S. Department of the Interior  
Bureau of Land Management**

---

**Finding of No Significant Impact**

**Cowhead Free-Use Permit Renewal  
DOI-BLM-CA-N070-2012-0206-EA**

**April 2nd, 2013**

**PREPARING OFFICE**

U.S. Department of the Interior  
Bureau of Land Management  
Surpris Field Office  
602 Cressler Street  
Cedarville, CA 96104  
530-279-6101  
530-279-2171





**Finding of No Significant Impact**  
**Cowhead Free-Use Permit Renewal**  
**DOI-BLM-CA-N070-2012-0206-EA**

**April 2nd, 2013**

This page intentionally  
left blank

# Table of Contents

<b>1. Finding of No Significant Impact .....</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>1.1. Introduction .....</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>1.2. Proposed Action .....</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>1.3. PLAN CONFORMANCE AND CONSISTENCY .....</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>1.4. FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT DETERMINATION .....</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>1.5. Signatures: .....</b>	<b>3</b>

This page intentionally  
left blank

# **Chapter 1. Finding of No Significant Impact**

*Cowhead Gravel Pit Renewal*

This page intentionally  
left blank

**DOI-BLM-CA-N070-2012-0206-EA****1.1. Introduction**

Based on the analysis of potential environmental impacts brought forward through the Environmental Assessment, DOI-BLM-CA-N070-2012-0206-EA, I have selected the proposed action with the mitigation measures described below. This action will not result in significant impacts to the quality of the human environment and an environmental impact statement is not required.

**1.2. Proposed Action**

The proposed action is to issue a Free-Use Permit to Modoc County for the use of the Cowhead Gravel Pit on BLM lands in T. 47N., R. 17 E., section 19, SW1/4. The Free-Use Permit would allow the county to mine and extract material from the Cowhead pit on six acres for a 10-year term. Cowhead is currently operated by the BLM as a community pit. Modoc County has held a free use permit for the past 30 years but the current permit is expired.

Future mining operation in the pit is scheduled for 10 years. Total projected extraction is 50,000 yards over the next 10 years. All hauling will occur on County maintained roads. The mining plan is to continually remove material from stockpiles located within the pit boundaries. Replenishment of the stockpiles will occur throughout the year as needed, generally between the months of April and November. The pits will be mined by processing material from the walls of the pit, generally working in a north and easterly direction. Excavation at this pit will remain at least 75 feet from the intermittent drainage that lies to the northwest of the pit. Prior to expansion, the topsoil will be removed and stored on the pit boundaries. As excavation continues, the sides of the pits will be sloped at not greater than 3:1 horizontal to vertical.

The material will be processed by excavating the material in place in the pit, and when necessary, passing it through a portable crusher and screen to produce road base gravel or chips, after which it will be stockpiled. There will be no explosives used at this pit.

The pit would be renewed for the existing five acres under the previous free-use permit that Modoc County held. The pit would also expand south one acre for future mining. (See Map)

**1.3. PLAN CONFORMANCE AND CONSISTENCY**

This proposed action is subject to the following use plan(s): Surprise Resource Management Plan (RMP) and Record of Decision (ROD), approved on April 17, 2008. The proposed action has been determined to be in conformance with this plan as required by regulation (43 CFR 1610.5-3(a)).

**1.4. FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT DETERMINATION**

It is my determination that the proposed action will not result in significant impacts to the quality of the human environment. Thus, the project does not constitute a major federal action having a significant effect on the human environment. Therefore, an environmental impact statement (EIS) is not necessary and will not be prepared. This conclusion is based on my consideration of

the Council on Environmental Quality's criteria for significance (40 CFR §1508.27) regarding the context and intensity of the impacts described in the Cowhead Gravel Permit Renewal Environmental Assessment (EA). The criteria include:

**1. Impacts may be both beneficial and adverse. A significant effect may exist even if the Federal agency believes that on balance the effect will be beneficial.**

I have determined that none of the direct, indirect or cumulative impacts are significant individually or combined.

**2. The degree to which the selected alternative will affect public health or safety.**

The proposed action is located within a rural setting. There are no actions that are proposed that would affect public health or safety.

**3. Unique characteristics of the geographic area such as proximity to historic or cultural resources, park lands, prime farm lands, wetlands, wilderness, wild and scenic rivers, or ecologically critical areas.**

A discussion of cultural resources is located in chapter 3 of the EA. Adequate measures have been taken to identify any potential resources and implement protective measures prior to treatments.

**4. The degree to which the effects on the quality of the human environment are likely to be highly controversial.**

An interdisciplinary team reviewed the proposed action and the impacts that would result on the identified issues/resources. No anticipated effects have been identified that are controversial.

**5. The degree to which the possible effects on the human environment are highly uncertain or involve unique or unknown risks.**

The actions that would be implemented do not involve unique or unknown risks. The BLM has experience implementing similar actions in similar areas. Based on the attached EA, there are no predicted effects on the human environment that are considered to be highly uncertain or involve unique or unknown risks.

**6. The degree to which the action may establish a precedent for future actions with significant effects or represents a decision in principle about a future consideration.**

The alternatives described in the EA are not precedent setting and are limited in scope to existing Washoe Counties Gravel Pits.

**7. Whether the action is related to other actions with individually insignificant but cumulatively significant impacts – which include connected actions regardless of land ownership.**

The actions considered in the selected alternative were considered by the interdisciplinary team within the context of past, present, and reasonably foreseeable future actions. Significant cumulative effects are not predicted on the identified issues. An analysis of the cumulative effects of the selected alternative and all other alternatives is described in chapter 4 of the EA.

**8. The degree to which the action may adversely affect districts, sites, highways, structures, or other objects listed in or eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places or may cause loss or destruction of significant scientific, cultural, or historical resources.**

The gravel pit encompass 6 BLM managed acres of which approximately 60 acres have been surveyed for cultural resources around the pit. In general, the pit is considered to have low sensitivity due to the relative lack of water and previous disturbance.

**9. The degree to which the action may adversely affect an endangered or threatened species or its habitat that has been determined to be critical under the Endangered Species Act of 1973, or the degree to which the action may adversely affect: 1) a proposed to be listed endangered or threatened species or its habitat, or 2) a species on BLM's sensitive species list.**

There are no threatened or endangered species occurring within the Project Areas that would be affected by the selected alternative.

**10. Whether the action threatens a violation of a federal, state, local, or tribal law, regulation or policy imposed for the protection of the environment, where nonfederal requirements are consistent with federal requirements.**

The project does not violate any known federal, state, local or tribal law or requirement imposed for the protection of the environment. Local tribes were contacted and are listed in the EA. In addition, the project is consistent with applicable land management plans, policies, and programs.

## **1.5. Signatures:**

Approved by:

---

Tim Burke  
Field Manager

Date