

CATEGORICAL EXCLUSION DOCUMENTATION

CX No. DOI-BLM-ID-B010-2013-0035-CX

A. BACKGROUND

BLM Office: Four Rivers Field Office, Boise District

Lease/Serial/Case File No.: 1104150 and 1104581

Proposed Action Title/Type: Twin Sisters (00261) Allotment Grazing Preference Transfer

Location of Proposed Action: The Twin Sisters Allotment is located approximately 7 miles south of Indian Valley, Idaho (Map 1).

Description of Proposed Action: The BLM would transfer 313 AUMs of active grazing preference for the Twin Sisters Allotment from Tom Gibbons (Operator #1104150) to Bruce A. Winegar (Operator #1104581). The Terms and Conditions of the new permit would be consistent with the previous permits. On February 1, 2013, Bruce A. Winegar leased (for a term of not less than three years) the Base Property of Record for the 314 AUMs of grazing preference in the Twin Sisters Allotment from Grizzly Creek Ranch, LLC. Grizzly Creek Ranch, LLC is a management corporation set up by Richard J. Nolte and Reynolds Properties, LLC. Richard J. Nolte and Reynolds Properties, LLC, the title holders of the Base Property to which the Grazing Preference for the Twin Sisters Allotment is attached, have mutually, through Grizzly Creek, LLC, leased their individual portions of said Base Property to Winegar for a term of not less than three years. Per CFR 4110.2-3, Bruce A. Winegar has paid the appropriate fee and submitted an application and supportive documentation for the transfer of the 314 AUMs of Grazing Preference for the Twin Sisters Allotment.

B. LAND USE PLAN CONFORMANCE

Land Use Plan Name: Cascade Resource Management Plan

Date Approved or Amended: July 1, 1988

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): Range Program Objectives and Recommendations within the Range Management Section of the Cascade RMP.

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. D. Rangeland Management Category Description: D. Rangeland Management, 1) Approval of transfers of grazing preference. This categorical exclusion is appropriate in this situation because there are no extraordinary circumstances that would introduce potential effects that may significantly affect the environment. The proposed action has been reviewed, and none of the extraordinary circumstances described in 516 DM6 apply.

The following list of Extraordinary Circumstances (516 DM 2, Appendix 2) was considered:

1. Have significant impacts on public health or safety.

Comments/Explanation: This administrative transfer would not have any significant impacts on public health or safety. Livestock grazing is a recognized and authorized use, as identified in the Cascade RMP.

Specialist Signature/Date /s/ Mike Barnum, Rangeland Mgmt. Spec. 12/10/13

2. **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 (Executive Order 11990); floodplains (Executive Order 11988); national monuments; migratory birds; or ecologically significant or critical areas, or is not in compliance with the Fish and Wildlife Coordination Act.**

Comments/Explanation: The allotment supports Preliminary Priority Habitat (PPH) and Preliminary General Habitat for greater sage-grouse, a Candidate Species for listing under the Endangered Species Act and a BLM Type 1 Special Status Species. PPH are areas that have been identified as having the highest conservation value (breeding, nesting, brood-rearing habitat) to maintaining greater sage-grouse populations. PGH are areas outside of breeding habitat that support important seasonal (winter, summer, fall habitat, migration corridors) or year-round habitat for sage-grouse. There are no other unique resources. This administrative action would not affect PPH or PGH sage-grouse habitat.

Specialist Signature/Date: /s/ J. Allen Tarter, Natural Resources Specialist, 1/13/2014

Specialist Signature/Date: /s/ Joseph M. Weldon, Wildlife Biologist, 1/13/2014

Specialist Signature/Date: /s/ Mark E. Steiger Botanist, 1/13/2014

Specialist Signature/Date: /s/ Dean C. Shaw, Archaeologist, 1/13/2014

3. **Have highly controversial environmental effects or involve unresolved conflicts concerning alternative uses of available resources [NEPA Section 102(2) (E)].**

Comments/Explanation: Alternative uses of available resources are set forth in the land use plan. There would be no known unresolved conflicts as a result of the transfer of the grazing preference.

Specialist Signature/Date /s/ Mike Barnum, Rangeland Mgmt. Spec. 12/10/13

4. **Have highly uncertain and potentially significant environmental effects or involve unique or unknown environmental risks.**

Comments/Explanation: An administrative action to continue an existing, managed action under identical terms and conditions would not change or increase existing effects or risks identified in the land use plan.

Specialist Signature/Date: /s/ Mike Barnum, Rangeland Mgmt. Spec. 12/10/13

5. **Establish a precedent for future actions or represent a decision in principle about future actions with potentially significant environmental effects.**

Comments/Explanation: Livestock grazing under the current terms and conditions (kind, dates, AUMs) was analyzed in the land use plan. A grazing preference transfer, without changes to the

permit, is considered an administrative action. Further, the conditions for transfer of the current grazing preference are in conformance with CFR 4110.1, 4110.2, 4110.2-3 and 4120. The transfer would not preclude subsequent changes in management.

Specialist Signature/Date: /s/ Mike Barnum, Rangeland Mgmt. Spec. 12/10/13

6. Have a direct relationship to other actions with individually insignificant, but cumulatively significant environmental effects.

Comments/Explanation: A grazing preference transfer would neither add to nor detract from current grazing practices in the allotment or adjacent areas. Therefore, cumulative impacts to the area would remain unchanged.

Specialist Signature/Date: /s/ Mike Barnum, Rangeland Mgmt. Spec. 12/10/13

7. Have significant impacts on properties listed or eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places as determined by either the bureau or office.

Comments/Explanation: This administrative action would not impact any listed or eligible sites.

Specialist Signature/Date: /s/ Dean C. Shaw, Archaeologist, 1/13/2014

8. Have significant impacts on species listed or proposed to be listed on the List of Endangered or Threatened Species, or on designated Critical Habitat for these species.

Comments/Explanation: No federally listed, candidate, or BLM special status plant species occur on public lands in the allotment. Tolmei's onion (Type 3) has been documented on private lands in the allotment. This administrative action would not affect special status plant species.

Plants Specialist Signature/Date: /s/ Mark E. Steiger, Botanist, 1/13/2014

Comments/Explanation: In addition to greater sage-grouse habitat, the allotment supports potential habitat for sagebrush steppe/grassland associated special status wildlife species. This administrative action would not affect special status wildlife species.

Wildlife Specialist Signature/Date: /s/ Joseph M. Weldon, Wildlife Biologist, 1/13/2014

Comments/Explanation: Aquatic – Two perennial streams (Grizzly Creek and Mill Creek) support redband trout (Type 2). No federally listed or candidate special status aquatic species occur in the allotment. This administrative action would not affect special status aquatic species.

Aquatics Specialist Signature/Date: /s/ J. Allen Tarter, Nat. Resource Spec. 1/13/2014

9. Violate a Federal, State, local or tribal law or requirement imposed for the protection of the environment.

Comments/Explanation: This administrative action would be consistent and compatible with all known Federal, State, local and Tribal laws or requirements imposed for protection of the environment.

Specialist Signature/Date: /s/ Dean C. Shaw, Archaeologist, 1/13/2014

10. Have a disproportionately high and adverse effect on low income or minority populations (Executive Order 12898).

Comments/Explanation: There are no known low income or minority populations in the area of the proposed action. However, if low income or minority populations do exist, the transfer of existing grazing preference would not be expected to have a disproportionately high or adverse effect on these populations.

Specialist Signature/Date: /s/ Mike Barnum, Rangeland Mgmt. Spec. 12/10/13

11. 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 (Executive Order 13007).

Comments/Explanation: The proposed action would not limit access to, or ceremonial use of, Indian sacred sites on Federal lands, or adversely affect the physical integrity of such sites.

Specialist Signature/Date: /s/ Dean C. Shaw, Archaeologist, 1/13/2014

12. Contribute to the introduction, continued existence, or spread of noxious weeds or non-native, invasive 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 Executive Order 13112).

Comments/Explanation: Transferring grazing preference, for the continuation of current authorized grazing, would not cause additional influences to existing noxious weeds or non-native invasive species.

Specialist Signature/Date: /s/ Louie R. Huter, Weed Mgmt. Spec. 1/13/2014

D: SIGNATURE

I certify that none of the Departmental exceptions (Extraordinary Circumstances) listed in the above Part II (516 DM 2, Appendix 2) apply to this action; therefore, this categorical exclusion is appropriate for this situation.

Authorizing Official:

/s/ *Matthew McCoy*

1/15/2014

Name

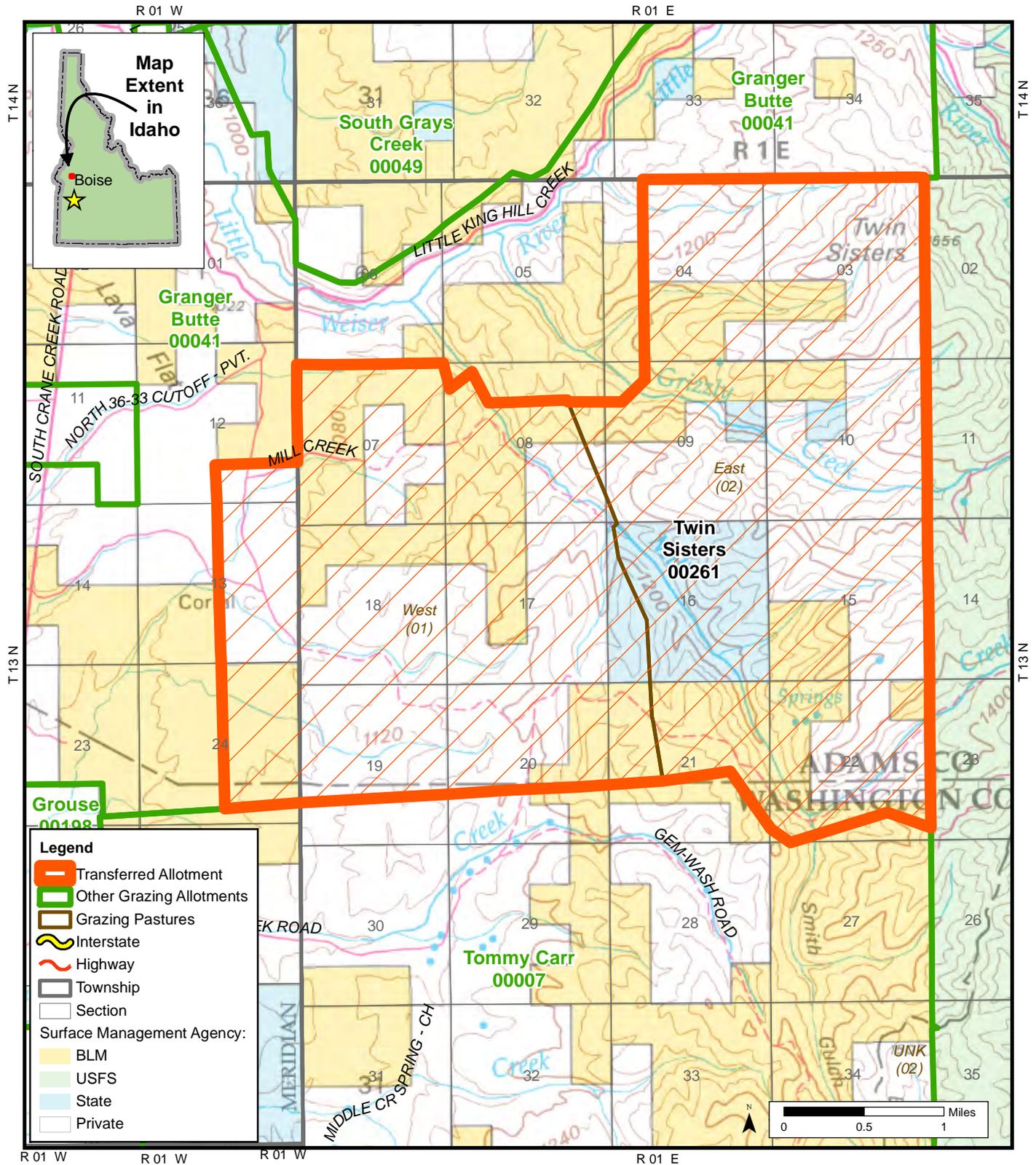
Date

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Twin Sisters (00261) Allotment

Grazing Preference Transfer: Tom Gibbons to Bruce A. Winegar



U.S. Department of the Interior
 Bureau of Land Management, Idaho
 Boise District, Four Rivers Field Office
 Map date: January 8, 2014



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