

## CATEGORICAL EXCLUSION DOCUMENTATION

CX No. DOI-BLM-ID-B010-2013-0038-CX

### A. BACKGROUND

**BLM Office:** Four Rivers Field Office, Boise District

**Lease/Serial/Case File No.:** 1101060 and 1104582

**Proposed Action Title/Type:** West Crane Common (00060), East Riley Butte (00080), and Spring Creek (00284) Allotments Grazing Preference Transfer

**Location of Proposed Action:** The West Crane Common, East Riley Butte, and Spring Creek allotments, respectively, are located approximately 15, 13, and 12 miles south of Indian Valley, Idaho (Map 1).

**Description of Proposed Action:** Transfer 216, 144, and 495 AUMs of active grazing preference, respectively, for the West Crane Common, East Riley Butte, and Spring Creek allotments from James Amstutz (Operator #1101060 to Silver Sage Ranch Hay and Livestock, LLC. (Operator #1104582). The Terms and Conditions of the new permit would be consistent with the previous permits. On May 17, 2013, Silver Sage Ranch, LLC, purchased the Base Property of Record for 216, 144, and 495 Preference AUMs, respectively, for the West Crane Common, East Riley Butte, and Spring Creek allotments from James C. Amstutz. Subsequently, Silver Sage Ranch, LLC leased the Base Property leases for the grazing preference in the West Crane, East Riley Butte, and Spring Creek allotments to Silver Sage Ranch Hay & Livestock, LLC. Per CFR 4110.2-3, Silver Sage Ranch Hay & Livestock, LLC has paid the appropriate fee and submitted an application and supportive documentation for the transfer of the 216, 144, and 495 AUMs of Grazing Preference, respectively, for the West Crane Common, East Riley Butte, and Spring Creek allotments.

### 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 allotments support Preliminary Priority Habitat (PPH) and Preliminary General Habitat (PGH) 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/PGH sage-grouse habitat.

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

Specialist Signature/Date: /s/ Joseph M. Weldon, Wildlife Biologist, 1/8/2014

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:* Indian Valley sedge (Type 2) and downingia bacigalupi (Type 4) are present in the West Crane Common Allotment. No federally listed or candidate plant species occur in the allotments. This administrative action would not affect BLM 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, 1/8/2014

*Comments/Explanation:* Spring Creek (perennial) in the Spring Creek Allotment does not support special status aquatic species. No federally listed, candidate, or BLM special status aquatic species occur in the allotments.

Aquatics Specialist Signature/Date: /s/ J. Allen Zarter, Nat. Resource Spec. 1/8/2014

**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/ Louise R. Huter, Weed Mgmt. Spec. 12/10/13

**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

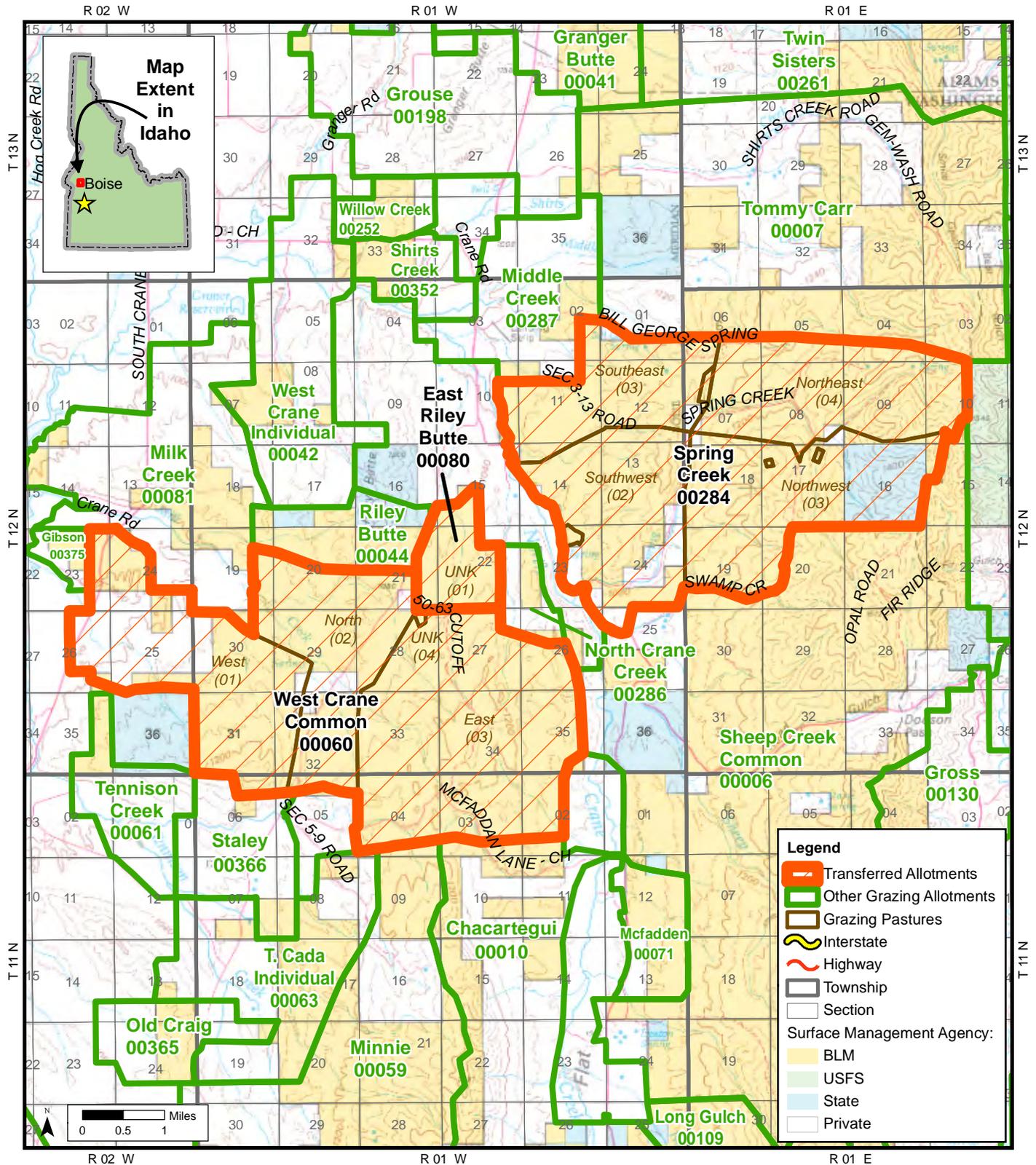
\_\_\_\_\_  
Name

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

Matthew McCoy  
Assistant Field Manager  
Four Rivers Field Office

**Prepared By/Contact Person:** J.M. (Mike) Barnum – 208-384-3218

**West Crane Common (00060), East Riley Butte (00080), and Spring Creek (00284) Allotments  
Grazing Preference Transfer: James Amstutz to Silver Sage Ranch Hay and Livestock, LLC.**



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



No warranty is made by the Bureau of Land Management. The accuracy, reliability, or completeness of these data for individual use or aggregate use with other data is not guaranteed. This map cannot be made Section 508 compliant. For help with its data or information, please contact the BLM Idaho State Office webmaster at (208) 373-4000.