

**U.S. Department of the Interior
Bureau of Land Management (BLM)**

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

**Worksheet
Determination of NEPA Adequacy (DNA)**

NEPA No. DOI-BLM-ID-T020-2014-0009-DNA

BLM Office: Burley Field Office. **Lease/Serial/Case File No.:** IDI-25940-04.

Proposed Action Title/Type: Hillsdale Highway District Buckhorn Pit Free Use Permit

Location of Proposed Action: The project is located approximately 17 miles southwest of Burley, ID and 10 miles southeast of Murtaugh, ID in Cassia County. The legal description is Boise Meridian, T. 12 S., R. 20 E., Section 24, SWNWNE and SENWNE.

Applicant (if any): Hillsdale Highway District

A. Description of the Proposed Action

The BLM is considering issuing a Free Use Permit (FUP) to the Hillsdale Highway District (HHD) for the mining of pit run gravel from the Buckhorn Pit. The FUP would be issued for a length of ten years and would allow the quarrying of 10,000 cubic yards of material. This is an existing 22 acre gravel pit and the Proposed Action would disturb approximately two additional acres over a ten year period. Previously, an Environmental Assessment (EA) analyzed expanding the gravel pit to a total size of 40 acres. Demand for materials slowed and the HHD has not expanded to occupy the full 40 acres. HHD is also reclaiming depleted portions of the pit; currently, approximately 15 acres of the pit area have been reclaimed.

The gravel would be mined with a 966 front end loader that would dig material directly from the pit and load it into trucks with trailers. HHD is also planning additional reclamation including sloping and seeding the north side of the pit and seeding more of the pit floor.

B. Land Use Plan (LUP) Conformance

Land Use Plan Name: Cassia RMP Date Approved/Amended: 1985

The Proposed Action is in conformance with the Cassia RMP because it is specifically provided for in the following LUP decision(s):

- “BLM will manage geological, energy and minerals resources on public lands. Geological resources will be managed so that significant scientific, recreational and educational values will be maintained or enhanced. Generally, the public lands are available for exploration and development subject to applicable regulations and Federal and State Law.” (Cassia RMP, p. 6.)
- The project is in Management Area 2, Foothills, and is, “Open to Mining and mineral leasing/sale.” (Cassia RMP, p. 14)

C. Identify the applicable National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) document(s) and other related documents that cover the proposed action.

Cassia RMP Environmental Impact Statement (EIS), May 1984.
Environmental Assessment # ID-077-2002-0039, the Hillsdale Highway District Gravel Pit Expansion EA was written and a FONSI and Decision Record were issued May 21, 2002.

D. NEPA Adequacy Criteria

1. Is the new Proposed Action a feature of, or essentially similar to, an alternative analyzed in the existing NEPA document(s)? Is the project within the same analysis area, or if the project location is different, are the geographic and resource conditions sufficiently similar to those analyzed in the existing NEPA document(s)? If there are differences, can you explain why they are not substantial?

Yes, the previous EA analyzed mining a total of 40 acres. Since then, an additional two acres have been disturbed, and approximately 15 acres have been reclaimed. The methods for mining the pit run gravel are exactly the same as were analyzed in the original EA. The geographic area of the Proposed Action is the exact same as was analyzed in the previous EA.

2. Is the range of alternatives analyzed in the existing NEPA document(s) appropriate with respect to the current Proposed Action, given current environmental concerns, interests, resource values, and circumstances?

Yes, the EA analyzed utilizing other sources but there were no sources of pit run material north of the Snake River. The geology north of the river near Hazleton, where the HHD operates is comprised of outcrops of basalt, and areas south of Burley where pit run gravel is plentiful were too far to haul material.

3. Is the existing analysis valid in light of any new information or circumstances (such as rangeland health standard assessment, recent endangered species listings, or updated lists of BLM-sensitive species)? Can you reasonably conclude that new information and new circumstances would not substantially change the analysis of the new proposed action?

Yes, previous surveys of the area included cultural, wildlife, and botanical. The BLM Special Status species list (including, threatened, endangered, and sensitive plant and animal species) was utilized in development of the original EA and the United States Fish and Wildlife Service has not added any new species which could potentially be affected by the project. Subsequent field visits have verified the validity of the previous clearances.

4. Are the direct, indirect, and cumulative effects that would result from implementation of the new Proposed Action similar (both quantitatively and qualitatively) to those analyzed in the existing NEPA document?

Yes, the original EA analyzed a disturbance of 40 acres, and the proposed action will disturb no more than 40 acres. The methods of mining are similar, using an excavator, bulldozer, and haul trucks. At the end of the life of the pit, it would be reclaimed, contoured, and re-vegetated as described in the mining and reclamation plan. Concurrent reclamation has and would continue to be conducted as areas of the pit are depleted of usable material.

5. Are the public involvement and interagency review associated with existing NEPA document(s) adequate for the current proposed action?

The original EA was scoped internally and externally, the previous public review was adequate for the current Proposed Action.

E. Persons/Agencies/BLM Staff Consulted

Name	Title	Resource/Agency Represented
Steve Lubinski	Geologist	BLM
Jesse Rawson	Wildlife Biologist	BLM
Jason Theodozio	Para-Botanist	BLM
Suzann Henrikson	Archaeologist	BLM

F. Stipulations

1. The submitted mining and reclamation plan is hereby made a part of the Free Use Permit.
2. The Hillsdale Highway District shall be responsible for weed control on disturbed areas within the limits of the permit area. The holder is responsible for consultation with the authorized officer and/or local authorities for acceptable weed control methods.
3. Migratory birds may now or hereafter be found to utilize habitats within and adjacent to the Buckhorn gravel pit. To avoid the potential take of migratory birds, no vegetation

disturbing activities are to occur during the migratory bird nesting season from March 15 to July 31. Additionally, migratory birds have been observed nesting in overburden piles and highwalls. If occupied migratory bird nests, cavities, or burrows are found within the project area, operations must immediately cease and the authorized officer notified. The authorized officer will coordinate with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and notify the operator how to resolve the issue. Avoiding vertical escarpments would minimize the potential for migratory birds to initiate nesting.

4. The project area may now or in the future contain threatened, endangered, or special-status plants and/or animals, or their habitats. BLM may require modifications to, or disapproval of, ongoing and/or proposed activities that may harm such species or their habitat. Project specific studies may be required to inventory special status species prior to activities that have the potential to harm these species or their habitat. BLM will not approve ground-disturbing activities that may affect such species or critical habitat until it completes its consultation obligations under applicable requirements of the Endangered Species Act as amended, 16 USC 1531 et seq., including implementation of additional mitigation requirements necessary to avoid impacts to special status species.
5. Hillsdale Highway District will be responsible for the clean-up of all waste and prompt disposal at an appropriate waste disposal site. "Waste" means all discarded matter including, but not limited to, human waste, trash, garbage, refuse, oil drums, petroleum products, ashes, old asphalt, and equipment.
6. Topsoil and/or overburden must be stripped prior to disturbing new ground. It should be stockpiled separately, to be saved for final reclamation of the site. The topsoil stockpile should be seeded with the seed mix below, to prevent weed germination and soil erosion.
7. For the safety of the public and livestock, no high, steep banks conducive to cave-in shall be left in the pit area after any gravel removal operation. A slope ratio of 3:1 is recommended.
8. Should any archaeological artifacts be uncovered during the gravel removal operation, the Hillsdale Highway District will cease operation immediately and notify the authorized officer.
9. Excavation shall take place no closer than 50 feet to any fence line or boundary of the permit.
10. In areas where the gravel resource has been depleted and no further work is anticipated, the disturbed area will be shaped to blend into the surrounding land contours and adequate drainage provided for. Stockpiled topsoil will be replaced, and the area will be revegetated by the Hillsdale Highway District, using the following seed mixture. Seed shall be planted and buried using a harrow if possible. The seeding shall be repeated until a satisfactory stand is established as determined by the authorized officer.

<u>Seed Mixture</u>	<u>Pounds/Acre PLS</u>
Crested Wheatgrass	10 lbs/acre
Yellow or white clover	1 lb/acre
Native rabbit brush	½ lb/acre
<u>Native sage brush</u>	<u>½ lb/acre</u>
Total	12 lb/acre

CONCLUSION

Based on the review documented above, I conclude that this proposal conforms to the Cassia RMP and that the existing NEPA documentation fully covers the Proposed Action and constitutes BLM's compliance with the requirements of NEPA.

/s/Steven Lubinski 5/12/2014
Steven Lubinski, Project Lead Date

/s/Michael Courtney 5/12/2014
Michael Courtney, Burley Field Manager Date

Note: The signed Conclusion on this Worksheet is part of an interim step in the BLM's internal decision process and does not constitute an appealable decision. However, the lease, permit, or other authorization based on this DNA is subject to protest or appeal under 43 CFR Part 4 and the program-specific regulations.



Hillsdale Highway District's
Current Authorized Area

Murtaugh Highway District's
Current Operating Area

Currently
Disturbed
7 Acres

Reclaimed

Murtaugh/Oakley HD
Current Operating Area

T 12 S, R 21 E

19

18

13

T 12 S, R 20 E

24

