

**UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT
UPPER SNAKE FIELD OFFICE
Categorical Exclusion
DOI- BLM-ID-I010-2014-0025-CX**

Applicant: Rocky Mountain Research Station
Project/Serial No.: Bluebunch Exclosure
Project Lead: Glen Guenther

Proposed Action: The proposed action is to create a test garden for growing bluebunch wheatgrass to determine how plants from different areas grow in different environments. The proposal would include constructing an exclosure fence around a two acre area and planting approximately 1,100 bluebunch seedlings inside the exclosure. Fence construction would take place in the summer of 2014 and the planting would take place in the fall of 2014. The proposed location is within an area that has recently burned and current vegetation is sparse. The study would take place for approximately 5 to 10 years.

Proposed location is at T 1N, R 31E, NE1/4 NW1/4 of Sec. 18 (Figure 1) approximately 3 miles west of Atomic City, Idaho .

Consultation and Coordination: On April 14th 2014, the project was brought before the Upper Snake Field Office interdisciplinary team. A description of the proposed action was posted to the online NEPA register. This is available to members of the public through the Idaho Upper Snake Field Office webpage. No issues or conflicts have been identified concerning the project.

Land Use Plan Conformance Statement:

Land Use Plan Name: Medicine Lodge RMP Date Approved/Amended: 4/85

The proposed action is in conformance with the LUP, even though it is not specifically provided for, because it is clearly consistent with the LUP.

Finding or Recommendation:

The proposed action is categorically excluded as outlined in 516 DM 11.5 (**BLM CX J. Other - 9. Construction of small protective enclosures, including those to protect reservoirs and springs and those to protect small study areas.**) None of the extraordinary circumstances described in 516 DM 2, Appendix 2 apply.

Preparer: /s/ Glen Guenther
Date: 06/03/2014

NEPA Reviewer: /s/ Marissa Guenther
Date: 06/03/2014

Decision and Rationale for the Decision:

It is my decision to authorize the construction of the Bluebunch Exclosure and the planting of bluebunch seedlings inside the exclosure. This study will further the understanding of bluebunch ecology.

Field Manager: /s/ Jeremy Casterson

Date: 06/04/2014

Appeals Information:

Any person who wishes to appeal to the Interior Board of Land Appeals must do so under 43 CFR 4.411 and must file in the office of the authorized officer, as noted above. A person served with the decision being appealed must transmit the notice of appeal in time to be filed in the office where it is required to be filed within thirty (30) days after the date of service.

Extraordinary Circumstances Requiring Preparation of an EA or EIS

The action described in categorical exclusion DOI- BLM-ID-I010-2014-0025-CX

has been reviewed to determine if any of the following extraordinary circumstances listed below apply, as listed in the Departmental NEPA regulations (43 CFR 46.215). A rationale for why the circumstance does not apply is included below:

Extraordinary Circumstance	
1.	Have significant impacts on public health or safety. <i>The proposed action will have no significant impacts on health or safety of the public.</i>
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; and other ecologically significant or critical areas. <i>-No wilderness, wilderness study areas and wild and scenic rivers are present near the project area. The proposal would not impede opportunities for recreation. This project is not located within a riparian-wetland area, Area of Critical Environmental Concern (ACEC) or Research Natural Area (RNA), therefore, no impacts would occur.</i> <i>-This project is not expected to have any significant impacts to migratory birds.</i> <i>-This undertaking is exempted from Class III inventory under the 2014 State Protocol Agreement between BLM and Idaho State Historic Preservation Office.</i>
3.	Have highly controversial environmental effects or involve unresolved conflicts concerning alternative uses of available resources [NEPA section 102(2)(E)]. <i>Action will not have highly controversial environmental effects or involve unresolved conflicts concerning alternative uses of available resources.</i>
4.	Have highly uncertain and potentially significant environmental effects or involve unique or unknown environmental risks. <i>No known highly uncertain and potentially significant environmental effects or unique or unknown environmental risks are anticipated as a result of this project.</i>
5.	Establish a precedent for future action or represent a decision in principle about future actions with potentially significant environmental effects. <i>The proposed action would not establish a precedent for future actions.</i>
6.	Have a direct relationship to other actions with individually insignificant but cumulatively significant environmental effects. <i>The proposed action would not have a direct relationship to other actions with individually insignificant but cumulatively significant environmental effects. No cumulatively significant effects are anticipated.</i>
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. <i>As there are no known historic properties listed or eligible for listing on the NRHP located in the project area, the proposed action would have no significant impacts.</i>
8.	Have significant impacts on species listed or proposed to be listed on the List of Endangered or Threatened Species, or have significant impacts on designated critical habitat for these species.

Extraordinary Circumstance

	<i>As there are no T&E or Proposed species, or critical habitat present within the project area, no significant impacts to these species would be expected.</i>
9.	Violate a Federal law, or a State, local, or tribal law or requirement imposed for the protection of the environment. <i>The proposed action does not violate any federal law or a State, local, or tribal law or requirement imposed for the protection of the environment. No cumulatively significant effects anticipated.</i>
10.	Have a disproportionately high and adverse effect on low income or minority populations (Executive Order 12898). <i>The proposed action would have no adverse effects on low income or minority populations.</i>
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). <i>There are no known sacred sites in the project area. The project will not limit access, and would have no known effects on traditional resource use of the area.</i>
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). <i>The proposed action is not anticipated to contribute to the introduction, continued existence, or spread of noxious weeds or non-native invasive species.</i>

Figure 1.

