

Worksheet
Determination of NEPA Adequacy (DNA)
U.S. Department of the Interior
Bureau of Land Management

OFFICE: Upper Snake Field Office

TRACKING NUMBER: DOI-BLM-ID-I010-2014-0041-DNA

CASEFILE/PROJECT NUMBER: IDI-36978

PROPOSED ACTION TITLE/TYPE: Herman (Henry) Winterfeld Conservation Easement Acquisition

LOCATION/LEGAL DESCRIPTION:

T. 2 N., R. 43 E., section 8, SE¹/₄, Section 17 NE¹/₄, NE¹/₄NW¹/₄, Boise Meridian, Bonneville County Idaho.

The property is located on the Pine Creek Bench near Swan Valley.

APPLICANT (if any): Bureau of Land Management

A. Description of the Proposed Action and any applicable mitigation measures

The proposed action is to acquire a conservation easement on an approximately 240 acre property located on the eastern rim of the Snake River Canyon (see attachment) on Pine Creek Bench using pending Land and Water Conservation Funds (LWCF) appropriations for the Upper Snake/South Fork Snake River Area of Critical Environmental Concern (ACEC) project. This property is a private inholding within the Snake River ACEC, an area that contains one of the most unique and biologically diverse ecosystems in Idaho, and an active water-based recreation program.

A portion of the H. Winterfeld property is used for dry land farming. Wildflower seed and grass are the primary crops raised on the property. The majority of the property is enrolled in the Conservation Reserve Program and is seeded to a permanent grass cover. An agricultural building envelope reservation of about two (2) acres is in the north east corner of the property. An old agricultural shed is the only structure on the property. The property is accessed from a county road to the north by an easement that crosses the Delbert and June Winterfeld conservation easement.

Sagebrush and rabbitbrush are encroaching onto the CRP portion of the property. The property is part of Pine Creek Bench located between the Pine Creek Canyon and the South Fork Snake River's Conant Valley. This Bench connects summer range in the high mountains with lower elevation winter range along the South Fork Snake River for elk, moose and mule deer, and the predators that follow them. Along the Bench lie privately protected parcels of land, protected under permanent conservation easements held by the BLM, the Teton Regional Land Trust and the Idaho Department of Fish and Game.

Landowners, agencies and land trusts have worked together to protect over 3,900 acres in this landscape. Protecting this landscape ensures connectivity for elk moving to and from the mountains and the river and

helps implement long-range plans by the Idaho Department of Fish and Game to encourage elk to winter downstream from Swan Valley away from more settled areas. Conserving this landscape also protects important breeding, nesting and brood-rearing habitat for Columbian sharp-tailed grouse, identified as a sensitive species by federal agencies and a species of greatest conservation need in Idaho's Comprehensive Wildlife Management Strategy. The property lies within the Pine Creek bald eagle nesting territory.

Acquisition of this property meets BLM's management goals of maintaining open space, protecting crucial wildlife habitat, and promoting outdoor recreation opportunities and access along the South Fork Snake River.

B. Land Use Plan (LUP) Conformance

LUP Name: Medicine Lodge RMP and EIS, Approved: 1985

Other document: Snake River Activity/Operations Plan and Environmental Assessment #ID-030-036
Approved: 1991

Other document: Snake River Activity/Operations Plan Revision and Environmental Assessment EA# ID-310-2006-EA-3398, Approved: 2008

Although not specifically provided for, the proposed action is in conformance with the Medicine Lodge RMP Management Area 9 (Snake River) decision (#10) to create the Snake River ACEC and develop an associated management plan for the purpose of protecting the unique natural resources that the river system provides.

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

Medicine Lodge RMP and EIS (1985)

Snake River Activity/Operations Plan and Environmental Assessment (1991)

Snake River Activity/Operations Plan Revision and Environmental Assessment EA# ID-310-2006-EA-3398 (2008)

List by name and date other documentation relevant to the proposed action (e.g., biological assessment, biological opinion, watershed assessment, allotment evaluation, and monitoring report).

Pre-acquisition Liability Survey (PALS) (2012 and 2013)

Mineral Potential Report Memo to the Idaho State Office (2013)

Deed of Conservation Easement (2014)

Title Commitment (2014)

Biological Assessment for the BLM Upper Snake Field Office US Forest Service Caribou-Targhee Palisades Ranger District Snake River Activity/Operations Plan #1004.1000 and USFWS Letter of Concurrence (2008)

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 new proposed action is within the same analysis area and is a component of all of the alternatives analyzed in the Snake River Activity/Operations Plan Revision and Environmental Assessment EA# ID-310-2006-EA-3398 (see Issue 4: Land Ownership).

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

Yes, the range of alternatives analyzed in Snake River Activity/Operations Plan Revision and Environmental Assessment are appropriate with respect to the new proposed action because they were developed as a result of an extensive internal and external scoping and public review process. Since the plan was recently approved, environmental concerns, interests and resources values have remained essentially the same.

3. Is the existing analysis valid in light of any new information or circumstances (such as, rangeland health standard assessment, recent endangered species listings, 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, the existing analysis remains valid because environmental conditions and public sentiment have not changed since the approval of the plan. New information and new circumstances are not likely to change the analysis since the BLM and the public are committed to acquiring lands in this area for the protection of natural resource values.

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 direct, indirect, and cumulative effects that would result from the new proposed action would be quantitatively and qualitatively identical to those described in the existing NEPA document.

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

Yes, the Snake River Activity/Operations Plan Revision and Environmental Assessment was developed through an extensive internal and external scoping and public review process involving the U.S. Forest Service (USFS), Idaho Department of Fish and Game (IDFG), U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS), the Shoshone–Bannock Tribes, Bonneville County and many private individuals.

E. Persons/Agencies /BLM Staff Consulted

BLM Staff:

Joe Kraayenbrink, Idaho Falls District Manager
Karen Rice, Idaho Falls Associate District Manager
Jeremy Casterson, Upper Snake Field Manager
David Beaver, BLM Washington Office LWCF Coordinator
Richard Todd, BLM Idaho State Office Realty Specialist
Anne Wilkenson-Renaud , Office of Valuation Services
Dan Kotansky, Environmental Protection Specialist
Brandy Janzen, Natural Resource Specialist
Monica Zimmerman, Outdoor Recreation Planner
Joe Larson, Geologist

Agencies/organizations contacted or consulted:

Anne Briggs, Department of Interior Solicitor
The Conservation Fund
Teton Regional Land Trust
Idaho Department of Fish and Game
Bonneville County
Farm Services Agency
Natural Resources Conservation Service
Shoshone-Bannock Tribes

Individuals contacted or consulted:

Henry Winterfeld, Land owner
Hal Peterson, Trustee
Delbert Winterfeld, adjacent land owner
John and Kim From, appraisers

Conclusion: Based on the review documented above, I conclude that this proposal conforms to the applicable land use plan and that the NEPA documentation fully covers the proposed action and constitutes BLM's compliance with the requirements of the NEPA.

Signature of Project Lead: /s/ Karen Rice

Date: 9/16/2014

Signature of NEPA Coordinator: /s/ Gloria Jakovac

Date: 9/16/2014

Signature of the Responsible Official: /s/ Jeremy Casterson

Date: 9/16/2014

