

**UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT**

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

Finding of No Significant Impact

**Northern Stone Granite Quarry
NEPA No. DOI-BLM-ID-T020-2015-0008-EA**

FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT:

I have determined that the Proposed Action, approving the Plan of Operations (POO) serial number IDI-33978, as described in the Environmental Assessment for the Northern Stone Granite Quarry (EA) will not have any significant impact, individually or cumulatively, on the quality of the human environment. Because there would not be any significant impact, an environmental impact statement is not required.

In making this determination, I considered the following factors:

1. The activities described in the proposed action do not include any significant beneficial or adverse impacts (40 CFR 1508.27(b)(1)).

The EA includes a description of the expected environmental consequences of authorizing a granite quarry on the west flank of Middle Mountain. The authorization would include mining, processing, stockpiling, and transportation of locatable granite building stone from the quarry and to off-site locations. These operations are described in detail in Chapter 2 of the EA. Chapter 4 of the EA discloses all anticipated environmental impacts; there are no significant impacts resulting from the proposed action.

2. The activities included in the proposed action would not significantly affect public health or safety (40 CFR 1508.27(b)(2)).

The project would not have any appreciable effects to public health and safety. Safety considerations and features are described in Chapter 2 of the EA.

3. The proposed activities would not significantly affect any unique characteristics (40 CFR 1508.27(b)(3)) of the geographic area such as prime and unique farmlands, caves, wild and scenic rivers, designated wilderness areas, wilderness study areas, or areas of critical concern.

The project area does not contain any unique characteristics.

4. The activities described in the proposed action do not involve effects on the human environment that are likely to be highly controversial (40 CFR 1508.27(b)(4)).

The proposed action would result in the authorization of one quarry that would result in an additional disturbance of 3 acres over the life of the quarry. Additional impacts resulting from the operations of this quarry are discussed in Chapter 4 of the EA. The impacts are well understood and are not significant.

5. The activities described in the proposed action do not involve effects that are highly uncertain or involve unique or unknown risks (40 CFR 1508.27(b)(5)).

Building Stone has been quarried on Middle Mountain for over 50 years and the effects of authorizing and expanding these quarries are known. Other quarries have been authorized on BLM lands on Middle Mountain and effects have been observed. This site has been mined for at least 15 years.

6. My decision to implement these activities does not establish a precedent for future actions with significant effects or represent a decision in principle about a future consideration (40 CFR 1508.27(b)(6)).

The action analyzed in the EA is a common practice that has been successfully implemented in the area. The proposed action would not set a precedent for future actions that have significant effects. The action would be consistent with decisions and direction established in the 1985 Cassia Resource Management Plan as stated on Pages 2-3 of the EA.

7. The effects of mining and processing Oakley Stone from these two quarries would not be significant, individually or cumulatively, when considered with the effects of other actions (40 CFR 1508.27(b)(7)). The EA discloses that there are no other connected or cumulative actions that would cause significant cumulative impacts.

The EA discloses that there are no other connected or cumulative actions that would cause significant cumulative impacts. Other actions in the foreseeable future include use of existing gravel pits, other mining operations, wildland fires, livestock grazing, range development for livestock, fire suppression, right of way maintenance, and the Burley Landscape juniper removal project. Cumulatively, these actions would not cause significant impacts.

8. I have determined that the activities described in the proposed action will not adversely affect or cause loss or destruction of scientific, cultural, or historical resources, including those listed in or eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places (40 CFR 1508.27(b)(8)).

Cultural resource surveys were completed and no Historic Properties were located within the project area.

9. The proposed activities are not likely to adversely affect any endangered or threatened species or its habitat that has been determined to be critical under the Endangered Species Act (40 CFR 1508.27(b)(9)).

The proposed activities would not have any measurable effect on any BLM sensitive species. Effects to sensitive species are discussed on pages 16-19 of the EA. Based on the analysis, the following COA's were added that would benefit BLM sensitive species.

- Quarry activities that would involve disturbance to the vegetation at the Project Area would be limited to the time-frame between July 15 and February 28 as a mitigation measure to prevent impacts to BLM sensitive birds and other migratory birds that may nest and/or forage within the Project Area.
- Blasting and crushing operations would be limited to the time frame between July 1 and March 15 as a mitigation measure to prevent impacts to lekking or nesting sage-grouse.
- No repeated or sustained behavioral disturbance (e.g., visual, noise over 10 dbA at lek, etc.) to lekking birds from 6:00 pm to 9:00 am within 2 miles (3.2 km) of leks during the lekking season, from March 15 to April 30.
- Land disturbance associated with the Proposed Action could be conducive to infestation of non-native invasive noxious weeds. Noxious weeds would be treated a minimum of once per year by pulling or with a BLM approved herbicide or as often as necessary to control them. For Scotch Thistle, herbicide should be applied in the summer months between the rosette and pre-bud stages.
- Apply the identified Inland Native Fish Strategy (INFISH) Riparian Conservation Area (RCA) buffers for perennial non-fish bearing streams (USDA 1995) to the tributaries to Cold Creek and Cold Creek, respectively to the quarry, material stockpile areas, and equipment and material staging areas. Ground disturbing activities cannot occur within 150 feet of the perennial riparian area.
- BLM approved seed stocks should be applied to the side casted road fill materials at the culvert crossing near the entrance to the quarry. Avoid side casting additional materials in the vicinity of the culvert crossing and consider the use of erosion fencing to reduce the potential for additional surface erosion from entering the perennial non-fish bearing stream at the culvert (Spring Creek). Erosion control structures (water bars) should be constructed to divert runoff away from streams, and if runoff into the spring creek cannot be avoided using this method, a small settling basin could be constructed near the culvert to capture surface erosion from the road and prevent it from being deposited into Spring Creek.
- All Simpson's hedgehog cacti present in areas to be disturbed would be transplanted and saved for use during reclamation of this or other projects.
- An appropriate seed mix to re-establish vegetation is included in the reclamation plan.

10. The proposed activities will not threaten any violation of Federal, State, or local law or requirements imposed for the protection of the environment (40 CFR 1508.27(b)(10)).

The proposed action was developed in accordance with applicable Federal, State, and local laws for the protection of the environment. The EA disclosed the effects of the proposed action on all critical and non-critical elements, and it was determined that the proposed action would not violate any laws or requirements.

APPROVED:

/s/Kenneth Crane

Kenneth Crane
Burley Field Manager

9/17/2015

Date