

**U.S. Department of the Interior
Bureau of Land Management
Little Snake Field Office
455 Emerson Street
Craig, CO 81625-1129**

CATEGORICAL EXCLUSION

NUMBER: DOI-BLM-CO-N010-2015-0045-CX

CASEFILE/PROJECT NUMBER (optional): COC76731

PROJECT NAME: LSFO Paleontological Resource Management

LEGAL DESCRIPTION: Moffat County, Sixth P. M., T.5N., R.93W.

APPLICANT: BLM

DESCRIPTION OF PROPOSED ACTION:

Partially exposed, fossilized bones were discovered on BLM-managed Duffy Mountain. The bones are at high risk of being damaged due to their location. In order to protect scientifically significant paleontological resources on public lands as mandated by the Paleontological Resources Preservation Act of 2009, it will be necessary to excavate the fossilized bones.

BLM issues resource use permits to licensed paleontologists for fossil excavation, lab work, and storage. These fossils would be excavated by Colorado Northwest Community College (CNCC) and stored in their repository. The CNCC Craig campus is an approved BLM paleontology repository and also holds BLM Paleontological Resources Use Permit COC76731. By law, vertebrate fossils may only be collected with a paleontological resources use permit and, because they remain the property of the federal government, the fossils must be preserved in an approved repository where they will be available for scientific and educational use.

The site would be accessed by existing roads. Site excavation would be one square meter or less into bedrock. The fossils would be excavated using hand tools to expose the bone. Then the bone would be jacketed in plaster and lifted by hand. No heavy equipment is expected to be needed. During the excavation, a BLM representative would monitor the disturbance, as required by the permit. Once the excavation is complete, the terrain will be restored to as close to current topography as possible without bringing in fill material. Disturbance of the site would draw public attention and therefore, it would need to be monitored 24 hours a day during excavation. This would require overnight camping of workers near the site. This area may also need to be monitored regularly after excavation because of an increased probability of attempted illegal collections.

LAND USE PLAN (LUP) CONFORMANCE REVIEW: The proposed action was reviewed for conformance (43 CFR 1610.5, BLM 1617.3) with the following plan:

Name of Plan: Little Snake Record of Decision and Resource Management Plan

Date Approved: October 2011

Results: The Proposed Action is in conformance with the LUP because it is specifically provided for in the following LUP goals, objectives, and management decisions:

Section/Page: RMP-30

Decision Language: To Identify and protect the paleontological resources within the LSFO. Objectives for achieving these goals include:

- Expand paleontological support activities, such as data gathering, GIS integration, and Class I surveys.
- Provide opportunities for education about and interpretation of paleontological resources.
- Improve law enforcement.

CATEGORICAL EXCLUSION REVIEW: The Proposed Action is categorically excluded from further documentation under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) in accordance with 43 CFR Part 46.210 and qualifies as a categorical exclusion under 516 DM 11.9(I). This categorical exclusion is appropriate in this situation because there are no extraordinary circumstances potentially having effects that may significantly affect the environment. The proposed action has been reviewed, and none of the extraordinary circumstances described in 43 CFR Part 46.215 applies:

Extraordinary Circumstances	YES	NO
1. Have significant adverse effects on public health and safety.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
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.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
3. Have highly controversial environmental effects or involve unresolved conflicts concerning alternative uses of available resources [NEPA Section 102(2)(E)].	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
4. Have highly uncertain and potentially significant environmental effects or involve unique or unknown environmental risks.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
5. Establish a precedent for future action or represent a decision in principle about future actions with potentially significant environmental effects.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
6. Have a direct relationship to other actions with individually	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Contact Person

For additional information concerning this decision, contact Jennifer Maiolo, Mining Engineer, Little Snake Field Office, 455 Emerson Street, Craig, CO 81625, Phone (970) 826-5077.