

Categorical Exclusion Documentation

U.S. Department of the Interior
Bureau of Land Management, Spokane District
Wenatchee Field Office
915 Walla Walla Avenue
Wenatchee, WA 98801

A. Background

BLM Office: Wenatchee Field Office

Lease/Serial/Case File No.: WAOR-67505

NEPA Log Number: DOI-BLM-OR-134-2015-0025-CX

Proposed Action Title: Swauk Valley Ranch Access Road

Location of Proposed Action: T. 19 N., R., 17 E., section 20: SW¹/₄NW¹/₄NE¹/₄.

Proposed Action:

BLM is proposing to issue a right-of-way authorizing a private landowner to use an existing road across BLM land for access to his property under Title V of the Federal Land Policy and Management Act of October 21, 1976 (90 Stat. 2776; 43 U.S.C 1761). The right-of-way would be 40-feet in width and 400-feet in length for a total of 0.367 acres on public land. The term of the grant would be for 30 years. The BLM proposes to include Term and Conditions (Exhibit B) within the grant.

B. Land Use Plan Conformance

Land Use Plan Name: Spokane Resource Management Plan (RMP)

Date Approved/Amended: Approved 1987/Amended 1992

The proposed action is in conformance with the Spokane RMP, even though it is not specifically provided for, because it is clearly consistent with the following RMP objectives, terms and conditions: Keep public lands open for exploration/development of mineral resources, rights-of-way, access, and other public purposes with consideration to mitigate designated resource concerns (BLM 1987, p. 12).

C. Compliance with NEPA

The proposed action is categorically excluded from documentation in an environmental assessment or environmental impact statement. The proposed action is a kind of action that has been determined to fit within a category of actions which do not individually or cumulatively have significant effects on the human environment. The proposed action falls within category:



516 DM 11.9.E(16) Acquisition of easements for an existing road or issuance of leases, permits, or rights-of-way for the use of existing facilities, improvements, or sites for the same or similar purposes.

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 46.215 apply, as described below:

a. The proposed action would not have significant impacts on public health or safety.

The proposed right-of-way would authorize use of an existing road; no new construction is proposed or permitted.

b. The proposed action would not 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.

No wetlands, area with unique characteristics, or ecological critical areas are located within or adjacent to the project area. No new construction is proposed or authorized. The proposed action is not expected to result in any significant impacts on the aforementioned resources because it simply authorizes use of an existing road.

c. The proposed action would not have highly controversial environmental effects or involve unresolved conflicts concerning alternative uses of available resources [NEPA Section 102(2)(E)].

The proposed authorization to allow use of this existing road is a common realty action, negligible effects which are well understood. Other similar projects have been routinely implemented on BLM managed land and the proposed action does not involve any unresolved conflicts over alternative uses of resource or any highly controversial environmental effects.

d. The proposed action would not have highly uncertain and potentially significant environmental effects or involve unique or unknown environmental risks.

The proposed right-of-way authorizes use of an existing access road. The effects of issuing similar rights-of-way have not been demonstrated to have highly uncertain or potentially significant effects, or involve unique or unknown risks, and none are expected with this proposal.

e. The proposed action would not establish a precedent for future actions or represent a decision in principle about future actions with potentially significant environmental effects.

Authorization for a right-of-way for an existing road is a common realty action that is evaluated on a case-by-case basis, therefore would not set a precedence for any future actions.

f. The proposed action would not have a direct relationship to other actions with individually insignificant but cumulatively significant environmental effects.

The existing access road is associated with other proposed actions or ground disturbance (i.e. wind turbines) located on private ground. The combined actions would not be a significant impact (see SEPA and Determination of Non-Significance (WAC 197-11-355) signed on October 13, 2011).

g. The proposed action would not have significant impacts on properties listed, or eligible for listing, on the National Register of Historic Places as determined by the bureau.

No properties listed or eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places as determined by cultural resource inventories, are associated with the approval of a right-of-way for this existing road. State Environmental Policy Act (SEPA) and Mitigated Determination of Non-Significance were signed on October 13, 2011.

h. The proposed action would not 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.

No impacts to threatened, endangered, or proposed species were identified for this project. The proposed action would not change the amount or suitability of wildlife habitat in the project area as it merely grants a right-of-way for an existing road and no new activities are being proposed or authorized.

i. The proposed action would not violate a Federal law, or a State, local, or tribal law or requirement imposed for the protection of the environment.

Any right-of-way authorization would include standard stipulations for protection of the environment.

j. The proposed action would not have a disproportionately high and adverse effect on low income or minority populations (Executive Order 12898).

Authorizing use of an existing road would not result in any disproportionate impacts and would not change any existing access.

k. The proposed action would not 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).

The proposed right-of-way would authorize use of an existing road; it would not restrict any existing uses or limit access.

l. The proposed action would not 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).

Approval of the right-of-way for the existing access road will entail no new ground disturbance. The right-of-way would include standard stipulations to address the control of noxious weeds or invasive plant species.

D. Signature

/s/ Linda Coates-Markle 10/28/15
Linda Coates-Markle Date
Field Manager

E. Contact Person & Reviewers

For additional information concerning this Categorical Review, contact Brenda Woods, Realty Specialist, at 509-665-2116.

Reviewers	Resource	Initials	Date
J.A. Vacca	Wildlife, Special Status Wildlife	JAV	9/10/15
Molly Boyter	Botany, Special Status Plants	mjb	9/14/15
Kat Russell	Historic/Cultural	klr	8/5/2015
K. Farrell	NEPA	Kf	10/27/15

Note: A separate decision document has been prepared for the action covered by this CX.