

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

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Sage Grouse and Grazing Research Temporary Electric Fence Project
CATEGORICAL EXCLUSION REVIEW SHEET
NEPA No. DOI-BLM-ID-T020-2016-0004-CX

Project Description

BLM and the University of Idaho are working cooperatively to study spring livestock grazing and its effects on Greater sage-grouse (GRSG) during the breeding/nesting season. Additional collaborating partners in the research study include Idaho Department of Fish and Game, Idaho Office of Species Conservation, Idaho Cooperative Fish and Wildlife Research Unit, United States Geological Survey, Public Lands Council, Idaho Cattle Association, Permittees, Idaho Conservation League, and the Idaho Sage-grouse Advisory Committee. Temporary fences are needed to create temporary enclosures within and/or to exclude livestock from GRSG nesting habitat to study the effects of grazing on GRSG.

Consideration of Extraordinary Circumstances:

This CER Sheet documents the review of the proposed action to determine if any of the extraordinary circumstances described in 43 Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) 46.215 apply. If any of the extraordinary circumstances apply to the proposed action, then an EA or EIS must be prepared. Any evidence or concerns that one or more of the exceptions may apply must be brought to the attention of the manager who is authorized to approve the proposed action.

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

The Proposed Action would not have significant impacts on public health or safety since there is no chemical, biological or physical hazard associated with the project.

2. 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.

- *The area lies outside Nationally designated Parks, Recreation Areas, Refuges, Wilderness Areas, Wild and Scenic Areas, Monuments and Natural Landmarks.*
- *There are no unique geographic characteristics, or floodplains present.*
- *The undertaking will have no effect on historic properties.*
- *The project site is not a sole or principal drinking water aquifer.*
- *The project area is not prime farmland.*
- *The project area does not include wetland habitats.*
- *Migratory birds will not be negatively affected by the proposed action (see #9 below).*

3. 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 effects of temporary electric fencing and vegetation/wildlife research are common practices, and are not highly controversial.

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

Temporary electric fencing and vegetation/wildlife research are common practices, the effects of which are well understood.

5. 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.

This proposed action does not establish a precedent for any future actions. All future actions will be analyzed for significant environmental effects individually and without regard to this action.

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

This action does not have a direct relationship with other actions that would cumulatively result in significant environmental effects.

7. 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.

The undertaking will have no effect on historic properties.

8. 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.

There are no listed or proposed to be listed species (on the List of Endangered or Threatened Species), nor their habitat, occurring in the project area or potentially affected by this project.

9. 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.

The proposed action would not violate any laws or requirements imposed for the protection of the environment. Migratory birds could be present in the area, however, the fences would be highly visible, therefore collisions of migratory birds are not expected.

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

Low income or minority populations, either those who live in the area or those who may visit the area would not be affected any differently or disproportionately higher than any other individuals by the proposed action.

11. 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).

Temporary fences would not limit the access to and ceremonial use of Indian sacred sites on Federal lands by religious practitioners or significantly adversely affect the physical integrity of such sacred sites. Gates will be placed at all road crossings to allow for continued access of public lands.

12. 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).

There is no known likelihood for the introduction or spread of noxious weeds or non-native invasives due to the proposed action. Minimal ground disturbance is expected and the vegetative community is healthy.