CATEGORICAL EXCLUSION DOCUMENTATION

A. Background

BLM Office: Prineville District – Central Oregon Resource Area
National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) register #: DOI-BLM-ORWA-P040-2016-0003-CX
Project/lease/serial/case file #: Ed Sturza. (RAS: 3602532), Little Sparrow Ranch, LLC (RAS: 3602533)
Proposed action title: Transfer of grazing preference on the Cow Creek Allotment (04352) from Ed Sturza to Little Sparrow Ranch LLC.
Location: The Cow Creek Allotment is approximately 6 miles northwest of Izee, Oregon. See attached map.
Description: Transfer of an existing grazing lease (16 cattle, 10 AUMs, 4/1 – 11/30) preference on the Cow Creek Allotment from Ed Sturza to Little Sparrow Ranch LLC. The existing grazing management and Terms and Conditions of the lease would remain unchanged.
Background: On February 18, 2014, this office received a transfer application from Little Sparrow Ranch, LLC. transferring the grazing preference associated with the Cow Creek Allotment from Ed Sturza to Little Sparrow Ranch, LLC. Little Sparrow Ranch, LLC. submitted a base property deed with the transfer application showing they own the deeded base property (1475.23 acres) attached to the grazing preference (10 AUMs) for the Cow Creek Allotment. After reviewing the application submitted by Little Sparrow Ranch, LLC., and reviewing their past performance record, they meet all the qualifications to graze on public lands.

B. Land use plan conformance

Land use plan name: John Day Basin Record of Decision and Resource Management Plan, April 2015

The proposed action is in conformance with the above plan because it is specifically provided for in the following land use plan decisions:

Page 86, Objective L2; "Maintain forage production and livestock use at levels sufficient to provide a sustained flow of local economic benefits and to protect non-market values."
Page 86, Management Actions #1; "Allow permitted/leased livestock grazing at the use levels (AUM) described in Appendix K."
Page 87, Objective L3; "Meet multiple use objectives as stated in the John Day Basin RMP...."
Page 325, Appendix K; "[Allotment] # 4352...Cow Creek...BLM acres 149, BLM AUMs 10, Grazing Period Begin- End 04/01 – 11/30..."

The RMP is available at the BLM office or on the internet at http://www.blm.gov/or/districts/prineville/plans/files/pdo_rodrrmp_John_Day_Basin_ROD-RMP_06102015.pdf

C. Compliance with NEPA

The Proposed Action is categorically excluded from further documentation under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) in accordance with 516 DM 11.5D, effective August 14, 2007, "Approval of transfers of grazing preference." 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 apply as described in 516 DM 2, Appendix 2, and effective June 21, 2005. See attached CX Extraordinary Circumstances Documentation checklist beginning on page 3.

D. Signature

I considered the above Proposed Action, land use plan, compliance with 516 DM 11.5D (1), and the lack of extraordinary circumstances potentially having effects that may significantly affect the environment. Based on this review, there is no potential for significant impacts so further NEPA analysis is not needed.

Responsible official: H. F. "Chip" Faver 12/10/15

Chip Faver, Field Manager, Central Oregon Resource Area Date

Contact person

For additional information concerning this review, contact: Adam Belew, RMS, Prineville District Office, 3050 NE 3rd Street, Prineville, OR 97754, telephone: (541) – 416- 6714, E-mail: abelew@blm.gov.

CX EXTRAORDINARY CIRCUMSTANCES DOCUMENTATION The proposed action would:	**YES**	**NO**
2.1 Have significant impacts on public health or safety.		X
Rationale: The administrative action of transferring a grazing lease has not been associated with having significant impacts on public health or safety, as of yet. In addition, the end result of a grazing lease transfer is the continuation of a land use which is in conformance with the John Day Basin RMP.		
2.2 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.		X
Rationale: The proposed action does not have significant impacts on the items listed. The geographic boundaries of the proposed action do not contain park or refuge lands, wilderness, national natural landmarks, principal drinking water aquifers, prime farmlands, wetlands, or national monuments.		
2.3 Have highly controversial environmental effects or involve unresolved conflicts concerning alternative uses of available resources [NEPA Section 102(2)(E)].		X
Rationale: The proposed action is in conformance with the John Day Basin RMP which did not identify any highly controversial environmental effects or unresolved conflicts concerning alternative uses of available resources. Grazing is provided for in the Livestock Grazing instructions on page 86 of the RMP, "Allow permitted/leased livestock grazing at the use levels (AUM) described in Appendix K."		
2.4 Have highly uncertain and potentially significant environmental effects or involve unique or unknown environmental risks.		X
Rationale: The administrative action of transferring a grazing lease from one person to another does not have highly uncertain and potentially significant environmental effects or involve unique or unknown environmental risks beyond what was disclosed in the John Day Basin RMP.		
2.5 Establish a precedent for future action or represent a decision in principle about future actions with potentially significant environmental effects.		X
Rationale: Thousands of grazing permit/lease transfers have occurred every year starting in 1935, therefore the proposed action would not be regarded as precedent setting with potentially significant environmental effects. Due to the management constraints imposed by the John Day Basin RMP, the proposed action is within the limits of acceptable environmental effects.		
2.6 Have a direct relationship to other actions with individually insignificant but cumulatively significant environmental effects.		X
Rationale: Past actions that are similar to the proposed action did not result in significant direct, indirect, or cumulative environmental effects. The proposed action does not alter the		

magnitude of environmental effects because it is an administrative action which does not change the already existing uses in the planning area.		
2.7 Have significant impacts on properties listed, or eligible for listing, on the National Register of Historic Places as determined by either the bureau or office.		X
Rationale: There are no properties listed or eligible for listing on the National Register of Historical Places within the grazing allotment for which this transfer of grazing lease is occurring.		
2.8 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.		X
Rationale: The proposed action is not within an area where sensitive, endangered, or threatened species have been found.		
2.9 Violate a federal law, or a state, local, or tribal law or requirement imposed for the protection of the environment.		X
Rationale: The proposed action conforms to the direction given for the management of public lands within the John Day RMP, which complies with all applicable laws, such as the Clean Water Act and Endangered Species Act.		
2.10 Have a disproportionately high and adverse effect on low income or minority populations (Executive Order 12898).		X
Rationale: The transfer of a grazing permit/lease would have no measurable impact on low income or minority populations; however, it would provide public grazing land for a ranch operation which may employ low income or minority persons.		
2.11 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).		X
Rationale: There is no documentation of limited access or use of sacred Indian ceremonial sites regarding the propose action. In addition, there is no documentation that the physical integrity of such sites, if they exist, has been significantly adversely affected. Should an adverse situation arise, action would be taken to alleviate the problem.		
2.12 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).		X
Rationale: The proposed action would not measurably change the rate of introduction, continued existence, or spread of noxious weeds or invasive species. Livestock entering public lands have the potential to transport some viable undesirable seed via hide or gut; however, the possibility of introducing undesirable plants not already in the area, is remote.		