

**United States Department of the Interior  
Bureau of Land Management**

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**Environmental Assessment MT-C020-2016-0054**

**July 26, 2016**

**FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT  
(FONSI)**

**Rattlesnake Dam Reconstruction  
Rattlesnake Fence Exclosure  
Prairie Goat Dam Reconstruction  
Cedar Creek Cattleguard and Fence Relocation**

*Location:* Cedar Creek AMP (01436), Dawson County, MT  
Rattlesnake Dam and fence enclosure T. 13N, R. 56E, Sec 17 E2NE  
Cedar Creek Cattle guard and Fence Relocation, T. 13N, R. 56E, Sec 8  
Prairie Goat Dam T. 13N, R. 56E, Sec 9 NESW

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UNITED STATES

DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT  
MILES CITY FIELD OFFICE  
FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT

Project Name  
DOI-BLM-MT-C020-2016-0054-EA

**FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT**

On the basis of the information contained in the EA (DOI-BLM-MT-C020-2016-0054-EA), and all other information available to me, it is my determination that:

- (1) The implementation of the Proposed Action or alternatives will not have significant environmental impacts beyond those already addressed in the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) 2015, Miles City Field Office (MCFO), Proposed Resource Management Plan and Final Environmental Impact Statement (PRMP/FEIS).
- (2) The Proposed Action is in conformance with the Record of Decision for the BLM 2015, MCFO Approved Resource Management Plan (ARMP); and
- (3) The Proposed Action does not constitute a major federal action having a significant effect on the human environment.

Therefore, an environmental impact statement or a supplement to the existing environmental impact statement is not necessary and will not be prepared.

This finding is based on my consideration of the Council on Environmental Quality's (CEQ) criteria for significance (40 CFR '1508.27), both with regard to the context and to the intensity of the impacts described in the EA.

**Context**

The proposed actions would occur in the Cedar Creek AMP (01436), designated as available for livestock grazing in the BLM 2015 MCFO ARMP, and includes a sport fish reservoir. The ARMP anticipated that rangeland improvements, such as water development, fencing, etc., would occur to maintain or improve resource conditions in uplands and riparian habitats available for livestock grazing. The ARMP states on page 3-15 "Manage reservoirs with fisheries in a manner to provide for quality recreational experiences while minimizing conflicts and conserve resources". The proposed actions are in accordance with the BLM 2015 MCFO ARMP.

Under the Proposed Action, the BLM would contract or approve the following projects:

**Rattlesnake Dam:** The BLM proposes to design and reconstruct Rattlesnake Dam located in Section 17, Township 13 North, Range 56 East. The design/construction package for this project would be completed by July 2016. The earliest start date for this project would be summer 2016.

The proposed reconstructed principal spillway would be located at the elevation of the existing auxiliary spillway, and would consist of a 60-inch precast concrete manhole riser with a conical trash rack. The design includes a concrete encased, 30-inch diameter reinforced concrete pipe (RCP) from the riser to a new outlet basin at the dam toe. The proposed modifications to the auxiliary spillway would include raising the spillway crest, widening the right side of the spillway channel, filling the head cut in the channel, and constructing a training dike along the left side of the channel. The embankment would be reconstructed with a crest width of 10 feet and crest elevation of 2,340.0 feet, restoring the embankment to its originally designed elevation. Slope protection utilizing either riprap or a 6-inch deep geocell cellular confinement system will be installed on the upstream dam slope to prevent erosion.

The right side of the spillway would be excavated to widen the channel approximately 30 feet to provide a borrow source for filling the spillway erosion, constructing the training dike, and reconstructing the dam crest and upstream face. Because the borrow soils have dispersive properties, borrow soils will be processed prior to placement and use for embankment. Disturbed areas will be seeded using an approved seed mixture.

Approximately 1400 cubic yards of muck excavation is expected to be produced as waste material while excavating for the principal spillway inlet. This waste material will be placed downstream of the embankment on the right stream bank (facing downstream) in a previously disturbed area and blended to match the existing stream bank. A second location identified for waste material if needed is approximately 150' downstream of the embankment on the left downstream stream bank in a large natural washout area. Although the second waste site location is outside of the previously disturbed area of the existing reservoir, the location (0.3 acres) is a natural washout and is naturally disturbed during times of heavy rainfall events. All waste material will be blended to match the existing stream bank.

**Rattlesnake Reservoir Fence Enclosure:** The BLM proposes to build a four wire fence, built to BLM specifications, around Rattlesnake Reservoir. The fence will tie into the existing cross fence. (See Attachment A.)

**Prairie Goat Dam:** The BLM proposes to design and reconstruct Prairie Goat Dam located in Section 9, Township 13 North, Range 56 East. The design/construction package for this project would be completed by July 2016. The earliest start date for this project would be summer 2016.

The proposed reconstructed principal spillway would consist of a 60-inch precast concrete manhole riser with a conical trash rack. The design would include a concrete encased, 30-inch diameter RCP from the riser to a new outlet basin at the dam toe. The majority of the existing embankment would be excavated and reconstructed to replace the outlet works. To collect seepage and prevent internal erosion, the reconstructed embankment would include a drain system. The embankment would be reconstructed with a crest width of 13.5 feet and a crest elevation of 2,391.0 feet. The proposed crest configuration would also include 6 inches of gravel road surfacing. The original auxiliary spillway crest has been partially filled with sediment and currently has a width of approximately 20 feet at elevation 2,390.0 feet. Excavating this sediment to restore the crest dimensions would be the only work proposed for the auxiliary spillway. The proposed design would also include a small diversion berm at the top of the left downstream grain. This berm would have a lower slope and direct runoff into the reservoir to reduce erosion.

A small amount of borrow material would be required for reconstruction of the embankment. The source of borrow material would be the hillslope upstream of the left abutment. Since borrow soils have dispersive properties, borrow soils will be processed prior to placement and use for embankment. New construction areas will occur within areas which have previously been disturbed. Disturbed areas will be seeded using an approved seed mixture.

Approximately 2500 cubic yards of excess waste material may be generated from the project. Suitable material will be used to build up the existing access road bed adjacent to the embankment.

**Cedar Creek Cattleguard and Fence Relocation:** Relocate the fence and cattleguard upslope. Install a 16 foot gate near the cattleguard. Properly drain any waterbars away from the structure to prevent sedimentation into the cattleguard. (See Attachment A.)

## **THE FOLLOWING STIPULATIONS WILL APPLY TO ALL PROJECTS**

### **Wildlife**

Construction will not occur from April 15 through July 15 on public lands in order to protect nesting neo-tropical migrants and other nesting bird species.

### **Noxious Weeds/Invasive Species**

Prior to entering the project area all tools and equipment should be cleaned to prevent the spread of noxious weed seeds.

Any disturbed areas should be reseeded using an approved seed mixture. (See Table 1.)

Table 1. BLM recommended native seed mixture and drilled rates for a variety of soil types.

Name	Species	lbs./acre of PLS
Western wheatgrass*	<i>Pascopyrum smithii</i> var. Rosanna	3.0
Green needlegrass	<i>Stipa viridula</i> var. Lodom	2.0
Slender wheatgrass	<i>Elymus trachycaulus</i> ssp. <i>trachycaulus</i> var. Pryor	2.0
Needleandthread	<i>Stipa comata</i>	1.0
Bluebunch wheatgrass**	<i>Pseudoroegneria spicata</i> ssp. <i>spicata</i> var. Goldar	2.0
Sideoats grama***	<i>Bouteloua curtipendula</i>	2.0
Little bluestem**	<i>Schizachyrium scoparium</i>	2.0

\* Thickspike wheatgrass may be substituted when western wheatgrass is unavailable.

\*\* Bluebunch wheatgrass and little bluestem may be omitted from the mix when seeding around Rattlesnake Dam

\*\*\* Blue grama (*Bouteloua gracilis*) may be substituted for Sideoats grama at the same rate when seeding around Rattlesnake Dam

Pure Live Seed (PLS) formula: (% Germination X % Purity) / 100 = % PLS

Bulk Seed (lbs./acre) = PLS lbs./acre seeding rate / (% PLS / 100)

### Intensity

I have considered the potential intensity/severity of the impacts anticipated from the proposed action relative to each of the ten areas suggested for consideration by the CEQ.

**1. Impacts that may be both beneficial and adverse.** The EA considered both potential beneficial and adverse effects. None of the effects are beyond the range of effects analyzed in the BLM 2015 MCFO PRMP/FEIS to which the EA is tiered.

**2. The degree to which the proposed action affects public health and safety.** No aspect of the proposed actions would have an effect on public health and safety.

**3. Unique characteristics of the geographic area such as proximity of historic or cultural resources, park lands, prime farmlands, wetlands, wild and scenic rivers, or ecologically critical areas.** There are no known historic or cultural resource sites that would be affected by the proposed actions. A pre-project cultural resource survey was conducted in conjunction with the location of the EA and did not result in the discovery of significant cultural properties. The Montana BLM and the Montana Historic Preservation Office have developed a protocol agreement recognizing the paucity of discoverable historic properties. There are no parks, prime farmlands, or wild and scenic rivers in the planning area. As actual field work for the project is completed, cultural or historic resources may be found within project area.

**4. The degree to which the effects on the quality of the human environment are likely to be highly controversial.** No unique or appreciable scientific controversy has been identified regarding the effects of the Proposed Actions.

**5. The degree to which the possible effects on the human environment are highly uncertain or involve unique or unknown risks.** The analysis has not shown that there would be any unique or unknown risks to the human environment not previously considered and analyzed in the EISs to which this EA is tiered.

**6. The degree to which the action may establish a precedent for future actions with significant effects or represents a decision in principle about a future consideration.** This project neither establishes a precedent nor represents a decision in principle about future actions. The proposed action is consistent with actions appropriate for the area as designated by the BLM 2015 MCFO ARMP.

**7. Whether the action is related to other actions with individually insignificant but cumulatively significant impacts.** The environmental analysis did not reveal any cumulative effects beyond those already analyzed in the EISs which accompanied the BLM 2015 MCFO ARMP.

**8. The degree to which the action may adversely affect districts, sites, highways, structures, or objects listed in or eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places or may cause loss or destruction of significant scientific, cultural, or historic resources.** The proposed actions will not adversely affect any district, site, highway, structure, or object listed or eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places or cause loss or destruction of significant scientific, cultural, or historic resources.

**9. The degree to which the action may adversely affect an endangered or threatened species or its habitat that has been determined to be critical under the Endangered Species Act of 1973.** The proposed actions do not adversely affect any endangered or threatened species or its habitat that has been determined to be critical under the Endangered Species Act of 1973. There have been no known inventories for special status plant species completed on the allotment. T&E species habitat does not exist within the project area.

**10. Whether the action threatens a violation of Federal, State, or local law or requirements imposed for the protection of the environment.** The proposed actions do not threaten to violate any Federal, State, or local law.

**/s/ Todd Yeager**  
Todd D. Yeager  
Field Manager  
Miles City Field Office

**8/30/2016**  
Date