

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.: 3600944

NEPA Log Number: DOI-BLM-ORWA-W020-2016-0012-CX

Proposed Action Title: Colockum Creek Grazing Lease Renewal

Location of Proposed Action: The Colockum Creek allotment is located approximately 9 miles southwest of Wenatchee in Chelan County, Washington. The allotment is in the Chelan County Scattered Tracts Management Area. See attached Map. The legal description of the allotment is T. 21 N., R. 21 E., Section 26: SE¹/₄SE¹/₄, NW¹/₄NW¹/₄, Willamette Meridian.

Proposed Action: The lessee has applied to the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) to renew the existing term grazing lease. BLM is proposing to renew (fully process) the term grazing lease with the same terms and conditions as the expiring lease. The BLM is proposing to authorize grazing by livestock under the grazing lease as shown in the following table for a term not to exceed 10 years:

Allotment Name	Allotment Number	Authorization Number	Livestock Type	Livestock Number	Season of Use	Active Animal Unit Months (AUMs)
Colockum Creek	0944	3600944	Cattle	6	4/1-5/31	12
Colockum Creek	0944	3600944	Cattle	1	4/1-4/30	1

The lessee is a qualified applicant for the purposes of a lease renewal. Pursuant to 43 CFR part 4110.1(b)(1), a grazing lease may not be renewed if the lessee seeking renewal has an unsatisfactory record of performance with respect to the previous grazing lease. BLM reviewed the record of performance for the grazing lease holder for allotment 0944 and determined that the lessee has a satisfactory record of performance relative to compliance with terms and conditions of the existing lease.



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 because it is specifically provided for in the following:

The Spokane RMP Record of Decision, Rangeland Program Summary (p. 24) provides for continued grazing of custodial allotments. Custodial allotments, such as Colockum Creek, are mostly unfenced, small tracts which are intermingled with much larger acreages of non-BLM rangelands which limit BLM management opportunities. In this case, the 80 acres of BLM land associated with this allotment is within 2,480 acres of private land owned by the lessee. Allotment 0944 is specifically identified as a C2 allotment; allotments categorized as C2 would remain as custodial management. Page 48 of the RMP Record of Decision, Rangeland Program Summary shows allotment 0944 includes the use of 13 AUMs on 80 acres with a season of use from April 1 to May 31. This use is the same as the proposed renewal.

Renewing the lease on the Colockum Creek allotment for a period of 10 years is consistent with the livestock grazing management direction contained in the RMP. The BLM managed lands within the allotment have been identified as available for livestock grazing.

C. Standards for Rangeland Health

A land health evaluation for the Colockum Creek allotment was completed in 2016. The allotment was achieving the 1997 Oregon/Washington Standards for Rangeland Health and was conforming to the Guidelines for Livestock Grazing Management. The Oregon/Washington standards are:

1. Watershed Function- Uplands
2. Watershed Function- Riparian
3. Ecological Processes
4. Water Quality
5. Native, Threatened or Endangered (T&E) and Locally Important Species

D. Compliance with the National Environmental Policy Act

The proposed action is categorically excluded from documentation in an environmental assessment or environmental impact statement for two reasons. First, the grazing lease is appropriate in this situation because the proposed lease is consistent with Section 402(h)(1) of the Federal Lands Policy and Management Act (FLPMA) of 1976 (43 U.S.C. 1752) as amended by the National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) 2015. Section 402(h) states:

- (1) In general.--The issuance of a grazing permit or lease by the Secretary concerned may be categorically excluded from the requirement to prepare an

environmental assessment or an environmental impact statement under the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (42 U.S.C. 4321 et seq.) if (A) the issued permit or lease continues the current grazing management of the allotment; and (B) the secretary concerned--(i) has assessed and evaluated the grazing allotment associated with the lease or permit; and (ii) based on the assessment and evaluation under clause (i) has determined that the allotment--(I) with respect to public land administered by the Secretary of the Interior--(aa) is meeting land health standards; or (bb) is not meeting land health standards due to factors other than existing livestock grazing.

As discussed above, the grazing lease being renewed under this CX meets these requirements.

Second, the grazing lease being renewed must be screened for extraordinary circumstances. A list of extraordinary circumstances is found at 43 CFR 46.215. These extraordinary circumstances are restated in the lettered paragraphs below. If any are found to apply, an environmental assessment or environmental impact statement is required. The extraordinary circumstances, listed below, have been reviewed and none of them apply to this lease renewal.

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

Continued livestock grazing would not result in impacts on public health or safety.

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.

None of the above mentioned resources except migratory birds are present on this allotment. Consequently, none of these resources would be affected by continued livestock use in this area. Migratory birds were considered within the species groups sagebrush obligate, shrub-steppe associated and riparian associated, and the allotment is achieving Standard 5 for all of these species groups. Therefore, no impacts to migratory birds were identified.

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)].

There are no highly controversial environmental effects or unresolved conflicts concerning alternative uses of available resources. The proposed action is to renew an existing grazing lease within the Colockum Creek allotment that continues the current grazing management. The nature of effects associated with authorizing livestock grazing in this allotment is well understood. A land health evaluation was completed and the allotment was achieving the standards for rangeland health.

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

There are no highly uncertain and potentially significant environmental effects or effects that involve unique or unknown environmental risks. The proposed lease renewal is to continue grazing for 10 years within the Colockum Creek allotment. Grazing on the Colockum Creek allotment by this lessee has been occurring since 1968. The effects of grazing on this allotment are well understood and the allotment is meeting rangeland health standards.

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.

Implementation would not set precedence for future actions or represent a decision in principle about future actions with potentially significant environmental effects. The 1987 RMP Record of Decision (p. 24) acknowledges that management opportunities within most custodial allotments are limited because these unfenced, small tracts of land are intermingled with larger acreages of non-BLM lands. Any future proposal on lands in the Colockum Creek allotment would undergo separate analysis.

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

Implementation does not have any known direct relationship to other actions with individually insignificant but cumulative significant environmental effects. The Colockum Creek allotment is a custodial allotment on 80 acres of BLM-managed land. This parcel of BLM-managed land is intermingled with non-BLM lands that are primarily used for livestock grazing. The effects of grazing on this allotment were considered within the context of livestock grazing on both private and public land and the allotment is meeting land health standards.

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.

On May 30, 2008, the BLM issued consultation letters regarding proposed 2008 and 2009 allotment lease renewals, including the Colockum Creek allotment (#0944). As proposed in that letter, intensive, Class III cultural resource inventory was undertaken by North Wind, Inc. under contract to the BLM, in areas of the ‘highest sensitivity’ for cultural resources, and those areas potentially most vulnerable to grazing impacts. No cultural resources were identified during that inventory. The BLM determined lease renewal would have no effect on Historic Properties and the Washington State Department of Archaeology and Historic Preservation (DAHP) concurred with that determination; no response was received from the Colville Confederated Tribes (CCT) or the Yakama Indian Nation (YIN). On May 19, 2016, consultation letters reminding the DAHP, CCT, and YIN that the Section 106 process had been completed, and lease renewal would have no effect on Historic Properties. Again, the DAHP concurred on May 24, 2016, and no response was received from the CCT or YIN.

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.

There are no threatened or endangered plants or wildlife or other locally important plant species known to occur in this allotment. In general, the native plant population shows adequate diversity with several species of perennial and annual forbs, shrubs, and perennial grasses. The

allotment appears to be capable of supporting a diverse community of wildlife and plant species.

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.

Implementation would not violate any known law or regulation imposed for the 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).

Continuing livestock grazing in Allotment 0944 for 10 years would not have a disproportionately high or adverse effect on low income or minority populations. Estimates from the U.S. Census Bureau for 2010 data indicate that Chelan County contained at least one minority group at higher concentrations than their respective shares statewide. In other words, Chelan County is considered to contain environmental justice populations because the county contains meaningful greater shares of minority populations when compared to the State of Washington. The proposed action would continue the current level of livestock grazing and associated economic activity within Chelan County.

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 action would authorize grazing with the same terms and conditions as the expiring lease. Because the proposed action would not alter any access to the allotment, continued livestock grazing would not alter access to or ceremonial use of sacred sites on federal lands.

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).

Rangeland conditions were documented in the 2016 Colockum Creek Land Health Evaluation that concluded the Colockum Creek Allotment was meeting the OR/WA standards for rangeland health. Healthy rangelands are expected to limit the resources available to support the establishment and spread of non-native species.

However, non-native species are known to occur on the allotment, including cheatgrass. Cheatgrass is widespread throughout central and eastern Washington. The conditions for its continued existence are expected to occur with or without livestock on the allotment. Considering the Land Health Evaluation findings, the renewal of this grazing lease is not expected to create conditions that would measurably change the rate of introduction, continued existence, or spread of noxious weeds or invasive plant species. Non-native invasive plant species present are expected to remain at the same levels after project implementation.

E. Management Determination

This categorical exclusion is appropriate in this situation because it meets the conditions described above and there are no extraordinary circumstances potentially having effects that may significantly affect the environment. The proposed action has been reviewed, and, as described above, none of the extraordinary circumstances described in 43 CFR 46.215 apply.

Based upon review of this proposal, I have determined the Proposed Action is in conformance with the Spokane RMP, qualifies as a categorical exclusion, and does not require further NEPA analysis.

/s/ Bryan Mulligan (for) _____
Linda Coates-Markle
Field Manager

6/28/16 _____
Date

F. Contact Person and Reviewers

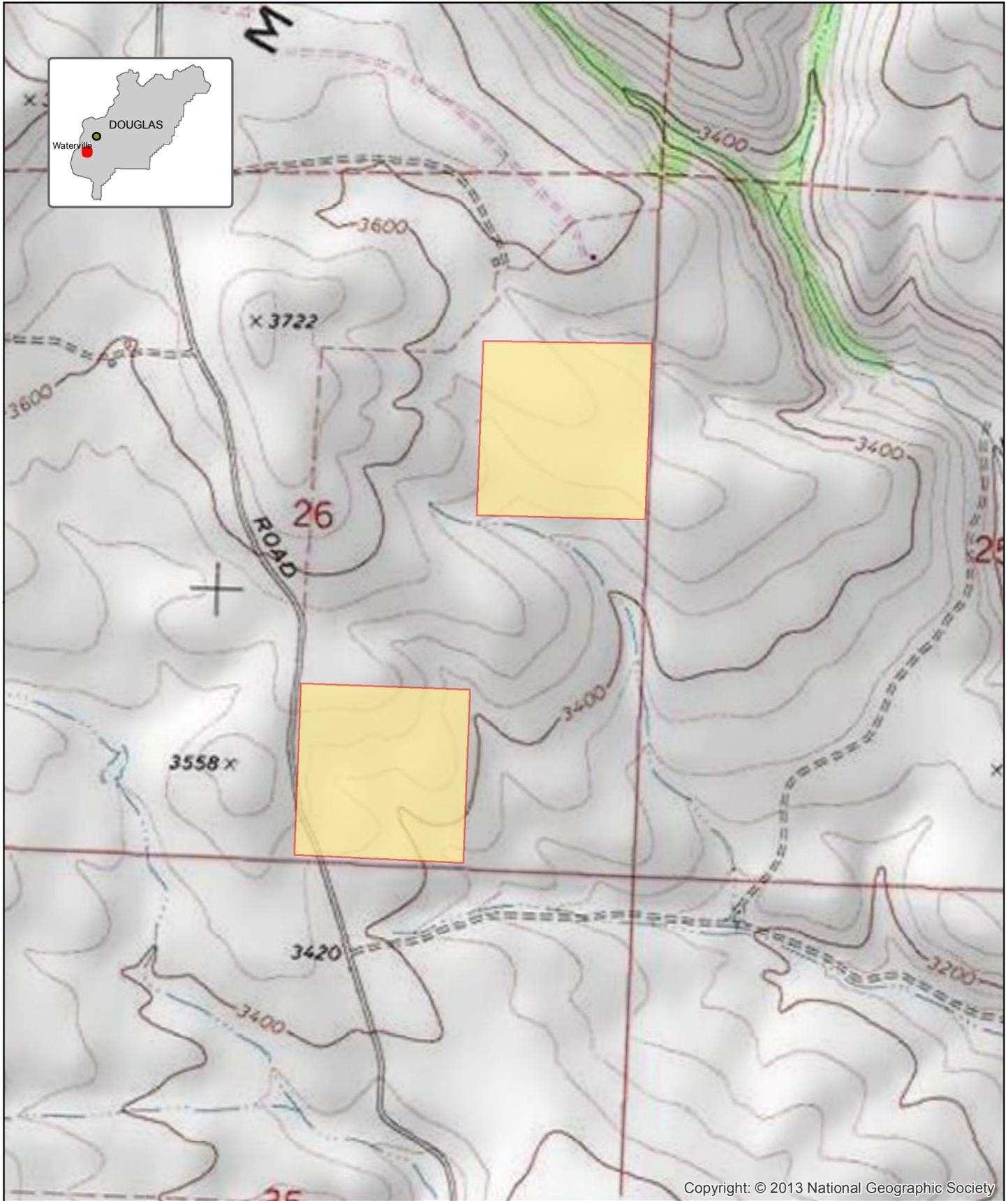
For additional information concerning this Categorical Review, contact Angela Link, Range Management Specialist 509-665-2116.

Reviewers	Resource	Initials	Date
Erik Ellis	Wildlife, Special Status Wildlife	EDE	6/9/16
Kim Frymire	Botany, Special Status Plants	KDF	6/1/16
Kat Russell	Historic/Cultural	klr	06/27/16
Katherine Farrell	NEPA	kf	6/24/16
Pete Sargent	Weeds	PBS	06/02/2016
Angela Link	Range/Grazing	AL	6/27/16
Diane Priebe	Recreation/Visual	DP	6/6/2016
Angela Link	Socio-economics	AL	5/26/16
Keith Anderson	Soil, Water, Air	CAA	5-25-2016

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

Badger Mountain Grazing Lease

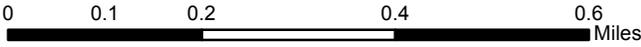
DOI-BLM-ORWA-W020-2016--0022--CX



Copyright: © 2013 National Geographic Society

Legend

- BLM land in Allotment
- Township-Range



No warranty is made by the Bureau of Land Management as to the accuracy, reliability, or completeness of these data for individual or aggregate use with other data. Original data were compiled from various sources and may be updated without notification.

