

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

Twin Falls District
Shoshone Field Office
400 West F Street
Shoshone, Idaho 83352

CATEGORICAL EXCLUSION

NEPA No. DOI-BLM-ID-T030-2016-0016-CX

A. Background

BLM Office: Shoshone Field Office.

Lease/Serial/Case File No.: IDI-0-10307 – Bear Trap Landing Strip
IDI-0-10310 – Hollow Top Landing Strip
IDI-0-10311 – Laidlaw Corral Landing Strip

Proposed Action Title/Type: Idaho Division of Aeronautics Lease Renewal

Location of Proposed Action (existing lease areas):

IDI-0-10307, Bear Trap Landing Strip
Boise Meridian,
T. 5 S., R. 27 E.,
sec. 19, NE¹/₄ and SE¹/₄NW¹/₄ .

IDI-0-10310, Hollow Top Landing Strip
Boise Meridian,
T. 1 S., R. 24 E.,
sec. 22, S¹/₂SW¹/₄NW¹/₄,
S¹/₂N¹/₂SE¹/₄NW¹/₄,
N¹/₂S¹/₂SE¹/₄NW¹/₄.

IDI-0-10311, Laidlaw Corral Landing Strip
Boise Meridian,
T. 4 S., R. 23 E.,
sec. 32, S¹/₂N¹/₂NE¹/₄NE¹/₄;
sec. 33, S¹/₂N¹/₂NW¹/₄NW¹/₄.

(For further detail on the location and layout of lease areas refer to Attachment A.)

B. Description of Proposed Action

The Bureau of Land Management (BLM), Shoshone Field Office has received a request from the Idaho Transportation Department, Division of Aeronautics to renew three existing leases for remote area landing strips. The landing strips were originally developed as authorized through a special land use

permit in 1950. In 1959 the landing strips were authorized under a long term public works lease. These leases were recorded under the case file numbers IDI-0-10307, IDI-0-10310, and IDI-0-10311. Each lease was subsequently amended to adjust the acreage in 1963 and renewed in 1993. Each lease grants the Division of Aeronautics the exclusive right for maintaining the landing strips on the lands described and as provided for within the terms and conditions of the lease.

Each of the landing strips has remained unchanged in its use and characteristics since their original development. The landing strips are grass runways used primarily for emergency purposes, with minor amounts of use occurring from federal/state agencies and some occasional recreation uses. While the exact number of landings is not tracked, BLM's experience is that use is intermittent with approximately 50 to 150 aircraft visits per year. The Division of Aeronautics proposes to continue to utilize the landing strips for the same purpose and to maintain them as they have in the past with some minor changes as described below. Maintenance of the landing strips would consist of seasonal mowing, herbicide application (only as needed to control noxious weeds), limited rodent control (non-rodenticide control actions only), and maintaining the rock markers that outline the landing strips. Maps showing the layout of each landing strip are provided in Attachment A.

It is important to note that the lease pertains to the existence and maintenance of the airstrips themselves and not their use. The airstrips are maintained to provide emergency landing sites or sites for intermittent private use and are regulated through the Stat of Idaho Laws governing Aeronautics. Because of the primitive improvements on the sites (which preclude their use by large-size or commercial aircraft except in extreme emergencies), it is unlikely that any receive more than nominal use in any given year.

The areas of the renewed leases will be adjusted (reduced) to more accurately reflect the current facilities that are present and being maintained. The lease area for the Bear Trap Landing Strip, IDI-010307, will be adjusted from 42.5 acres to 9 acres, the lease area for the Hollow Top Landing Strip, IDI-0-10310, will be adjusted from 40 acres to 10 acres, and the lease area for the Laidlaw Corrals Landing Strip, IDI-0-10311, will be adjusted from 20 acres to 9 acres.

The lease will contain terms and conditions that require the Division of Aeronautics to limit maintenance activities so that they do not result in repeated or sustained disturbance to lekking birds and would require the holder to avoid anthropogenic disturbance from maintenance during sage-grouse nesting and wintering periods. The terms and conditions of the lease will also require that the holder limit the use of the landing strips to emergency purposes only between the hours of 6:00 PM through 9:00 AM from March 15 through May 1. Other terms and conditions limit rodent control to methods that do not include rodenticides and limit herbicide applications to non-aerial systems that target noxious weeds. See Attachment C for additional terms and conditions of the leases.

C. Land Use Plan Conformance

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

Date Approved/Amended: April 22, 1985.

The proposed action is not specifically provided for in the RMP; however it does fall within the concept of multiple use management. "For the Monument RMP, a variety of resource uses are allowed. Production and use of commodity resources and commercial use authorization would occur, while

protecting fragile resources and habitat, preserving natural systems and cultural values, and allowing for non-consumptive resource uses.” (Monument RMP, pg 5) “The public lands will be managed under the principles of multiple use and sustained yield as required by FLPMA. Any valid occupancy, and development of the public lands, including but not limited to, those requiring rights-of-way, leases, licenses will be subject to applicable environmental review procedures,... BLM will include stipulations and special conditions as necessary in leases, licenses, and permits to ensure the protection and preservation of resources.” (Monument RMP, pg 25)

Land Use Plan Name: Craters of the Moon National Monument and Preserve Management Plan
Date Approved/Amended: 2006

Presidential Proclamation 7373 of November 9, 2000, expanded the boundary of the Craters of the Moon National Monument as well as added the administrative efforts of the BLM to those of the National Park Service (NPS). Proclamation 7373 states that: “The establishment of this monument is subject to valid existing rights” (pg. 47). The lease authorizing two of the three landing strips are specifically identified within the RMP as valid existing rights in Table 7. Management Action LANDS-4 states: “Action on applications for new discretionary land use authorizations will be guided by existing NPS and BLM policies.” The primitive zone provides an undeveloped, primitive, and self-directed visitor experience while accommodating motorized and mechanized access on designated routes. Facilities will be rare and provided only where essential for resource protection. (pg. 14)

Land Use Plan (amendment): Idaho and Southwest Montana Greater Sage Grouse Approved Resource Management Plan Amendment (ARMPA)

Approved: 2015

The ARMPA and Record of Decision (ROD) were signed on September 21, 2015. The ARMPA provides a layered management approach that offers the highest level of protection for greater sage-grouse in the most valuable habitat. Land use allocations in the ARMPA would limit or eliminate new surface disturbance in Priority Habitat Management Areas (PHMA) and Important Habitat Management Areas (IHMA), while minimizing disturbance in General Habitat Management Areas (GHMA). In addition to establishing protective land use allocations, the ARMPA also would implement a suite of management tools, such as anthropogenic disturbance limits, required design features, seasonal habitat buffers, habitat objectives and monitoring, mitigation approaches, adaptive management triggers and responses, and other protective measures throughout the species range. A conformance review providing a discussion on the applicable Management Decisions of the ARMPA is provided in Attachment D

D. Compliance with NEPA

The proposed action is qualified under categorical exclusions 516 DM 11.9 E(9) “(r)enewals and assignments of leases, permits, or rights-of-way where no additional rights are conveyed beyond those granted by the original authorizations” Anticipated effects of the proposed action have been reviewed, and none of the extraordinary circumstances described in 516 DM 2 apply (see Attachment B: Categorical Exclusion Review Sheet).

Based on my review of the project described above and field office staff recommendations, I have determined that the project is in conformance with the applicable land use plan and is categorically excluded from further environmental analysis. I have decided to approve the three lease renewals as proposed by the Idaho Transportation Department, Division of Aeronautics. A separate lease will be offered to the Idaho transportation Department, Division of Aeronautics authorizing the continued maintenance and operation of each landing strip. The operations and maintenance will allow for the facilities to be maintained and used, but the maintenance and use will be required to be within the parameters of the terms and conditions.

E. Signature

Authorizing Official: /s/ Michael C. Courtney Date: 8/10/2016
Name: Michael C. Courtney
Title: District Manager

F. Contact Person

For additional information concerning this Categorical Exclusion, contact Kasey Prestwich, Realty Specialist, at (208) 732-7204 or at 400 West F Street, Shoshone, Idaho 83352

G. Attachments

- Attachment A, Location Maps and drawings
- Attachment B, Extraordinary Circumstances Review
- Attachment C, Draft Landing Strip Leases
- Attachment D, Land Use Plan Conformance Review

Idaho Transportation Department, Division of Aeronautics Landing Strip Lease Renewals

Hollow Top Landing Strip

Laidlaw Corral Landing Strip

Bear Trap Landing Strip

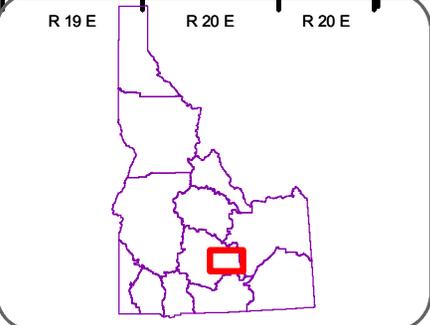
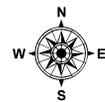
Legend

- IDI0-10310_Airstrip
- 0-10307_Airstrip
- 0-10311_Airstrip
- Bureau of Land Management
- Forest Service
- National Park Service
- Private; other
- State
- State Fish and Game

US Dept. of the Interior
Bureau of Land Management
Twin Falls District, Idaho



These data are provided by Bureau of Land Management (BLM) "as is" and might contain errors or omissions. The User assumes the entire risk associated with its use of these data and bears all responsibility in determining whether these data are fit for the User's intended use.



T 01 N
T 01 S
T 02 S
T 03 S
T 04 S
T 05 S
T 06 S

R 19 E R 20 E R 20 E R 21 E R 22 E R 23 E R 24 E R 25 E R 26 E R 27 E R 28 E

R 26 E

R 27 E

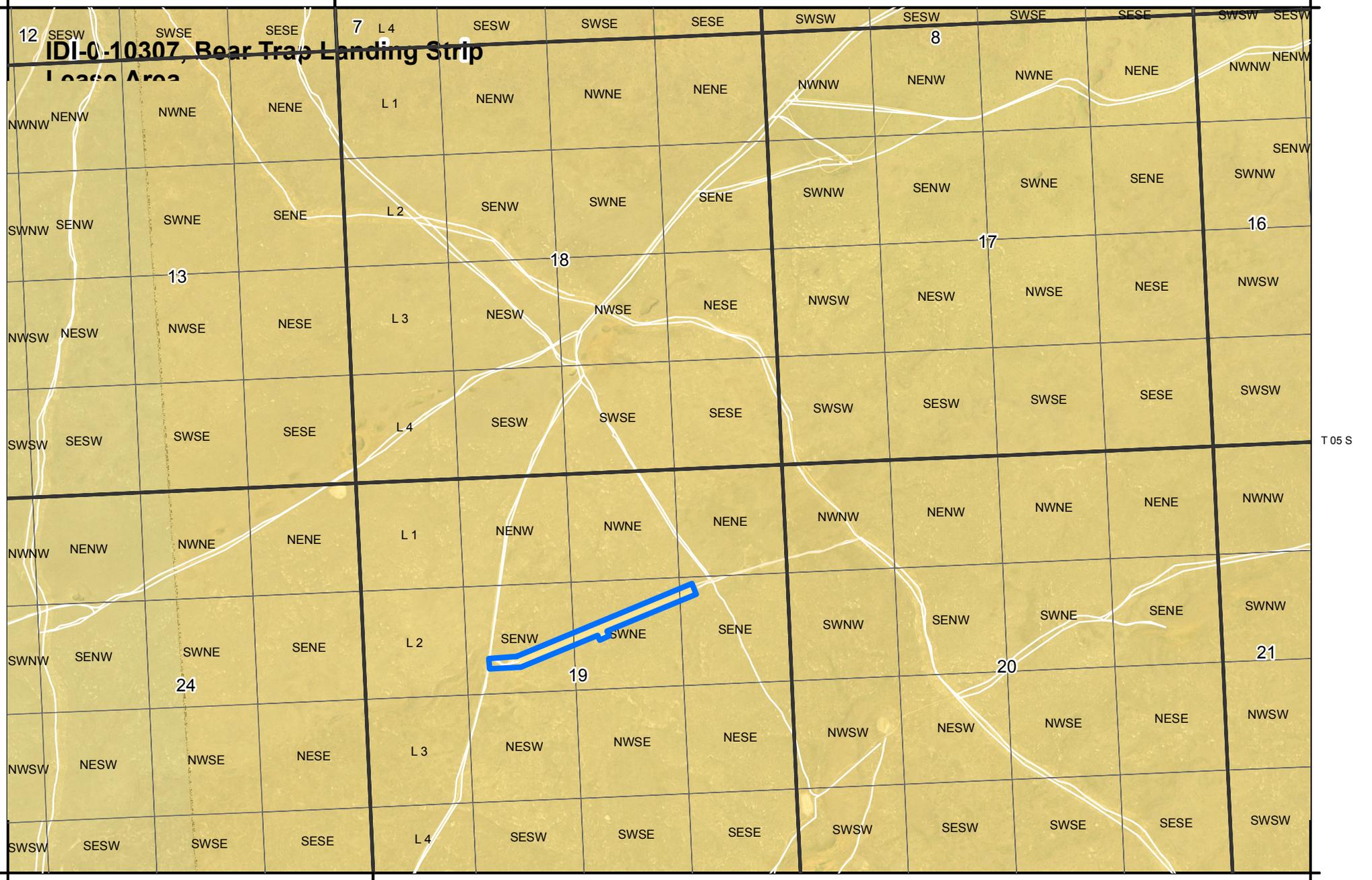
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7

8

IDI-0-10307, Bear Trap Landing Strip

Lease Area



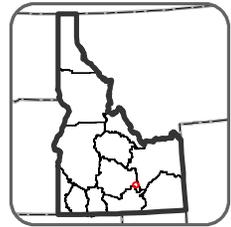
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T 05 S

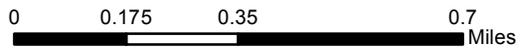
Idaho

R 26 E

R 27 E



- ▬ Limited Access
- ▬ Highway
- ▬ Major Road
- ▬ Local Road
- ▬ Minor Road
- ▬ Other Road
- Bureau of Land Management
- Forest Service
- National Park Service
- Private; other
- State
- State Fish and Game
- IDI-0-10310_Airstrip
- IDI-0-10307_Airstrip
- IDI-0-10311_Airstrip

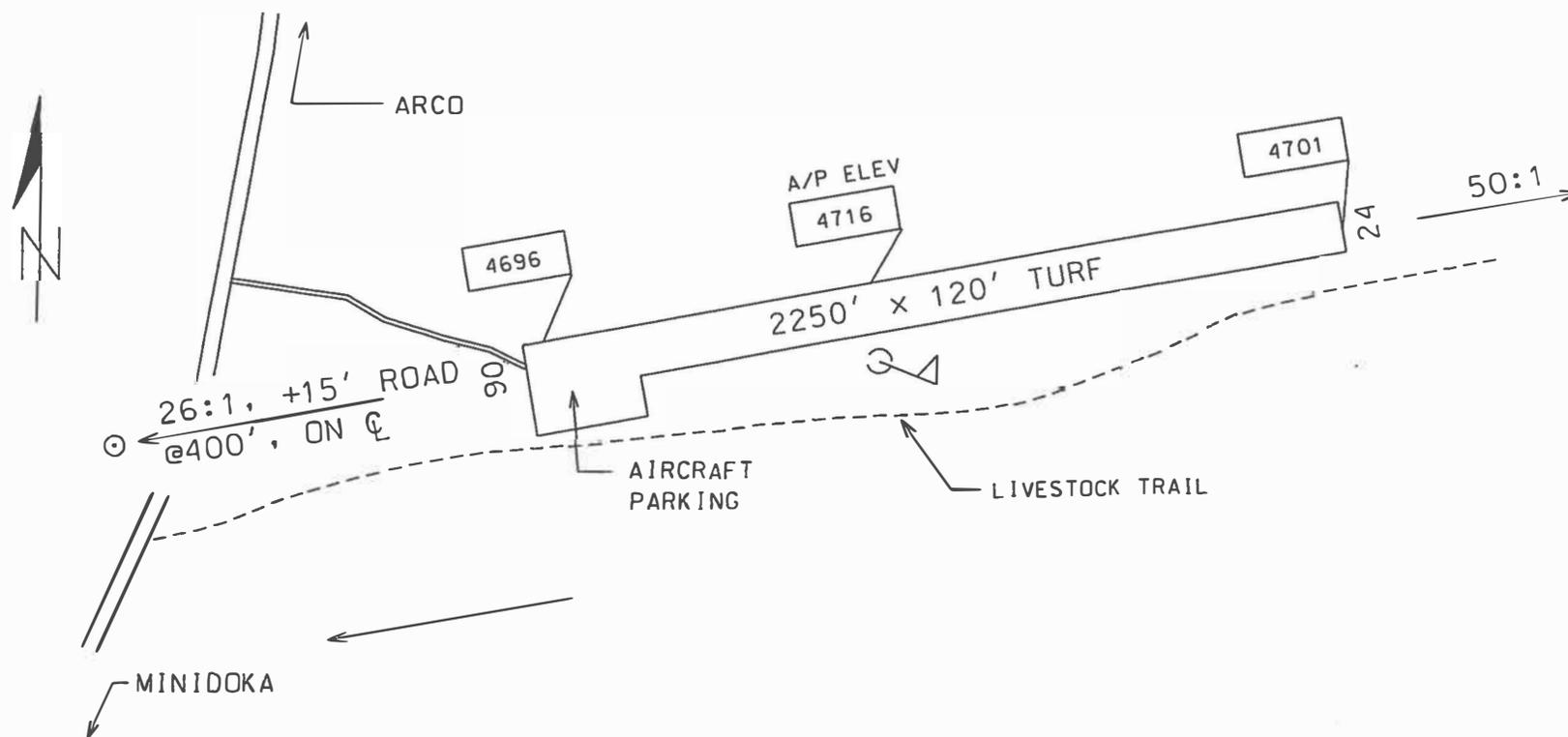


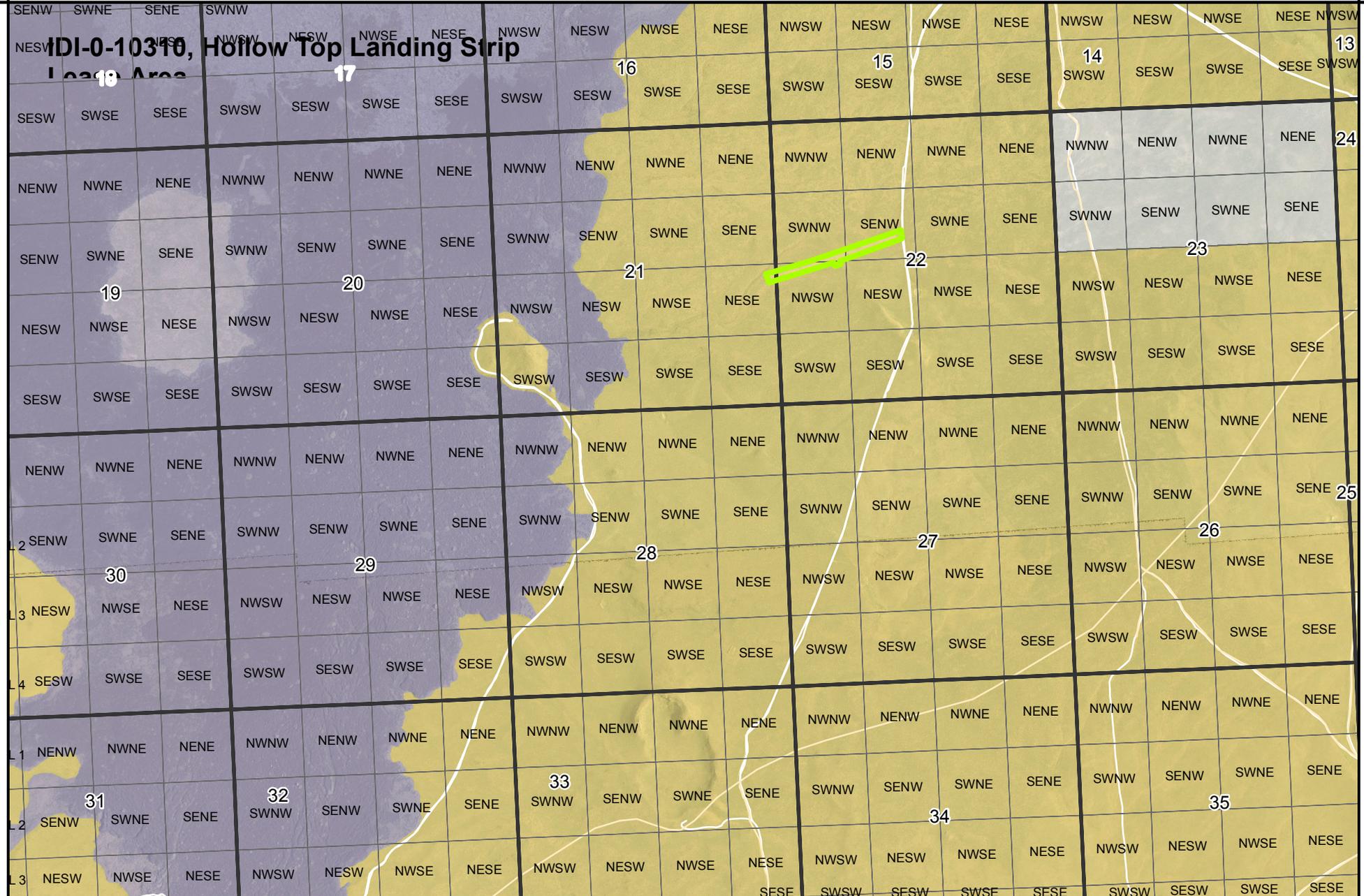
These data are provided by Bureau of Land Management (BLM) "as is" and might contain errors or omissions. The User assumes the entire risk associated with its use of these data and bears all responsibility in determining whether these data are fit for the User's intended use.



REMARKS:

- (1) RUNWAY NOT MARKED
- (2) WHITE ROCK BOUNDARY MARKERS
- (3) + 1' BERM, FULL LENGTH, BOTH SIDES OF RUNWAY, - 1' DITCH AROUND PERIMETER OF RUNWAY
- (4) NO LINE OF SIGHT BETWEEN RUNWAY ENDS





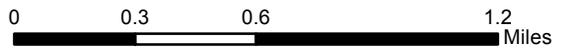
1 S

T 01 S

Idaho



- Limited Access
- Highway
- Major Road
- Local Road
- Minor Road
- Other Road
- Bureau of Land Management
- Forest Service
- National Park Service
- Private; other
- State
- State Fish and Game
- IDI-0-10310_Airstrip
- IDI-0-10307_Airstrip
- IDI-0-10311_Airstrip



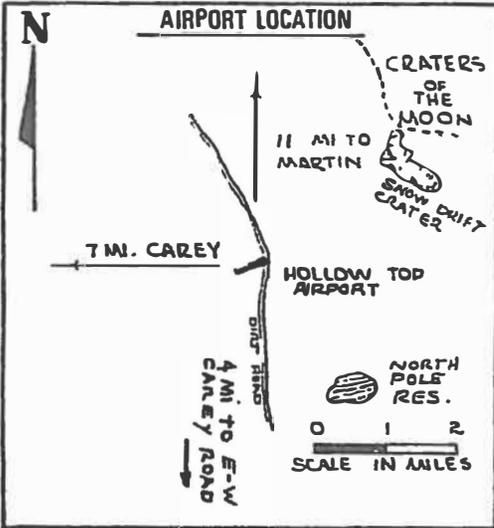
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RUNWAY CATEGORIES

RUNWAY							
EXISTING							
PLANNED							
CORRECTED LENGTH							

10 ACRES



REMARKS: RUNWAY NOT MARKED

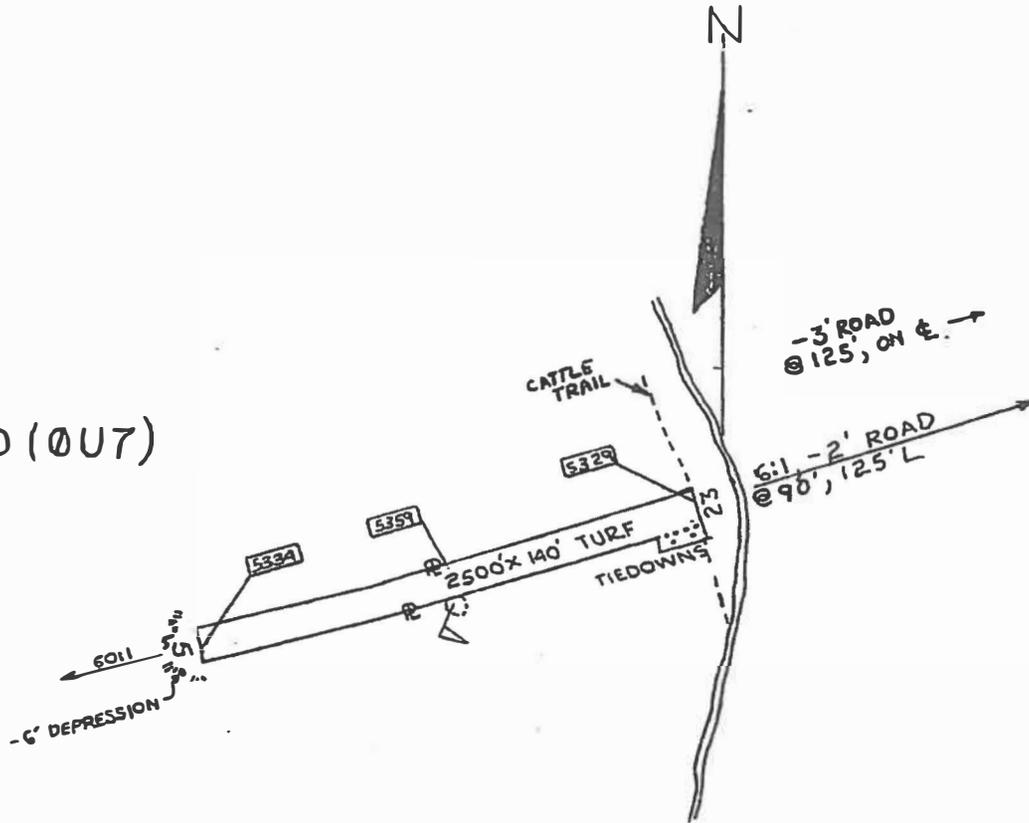
(2) WHITE ROCK BOUNDARY MARKERS

(3) + 3' SAGEBRUSH ADJACENT TO BOTH SIDES OF RUNWAY

(4) NO LINE OF SIGHT BETWEEN RWY ENDS

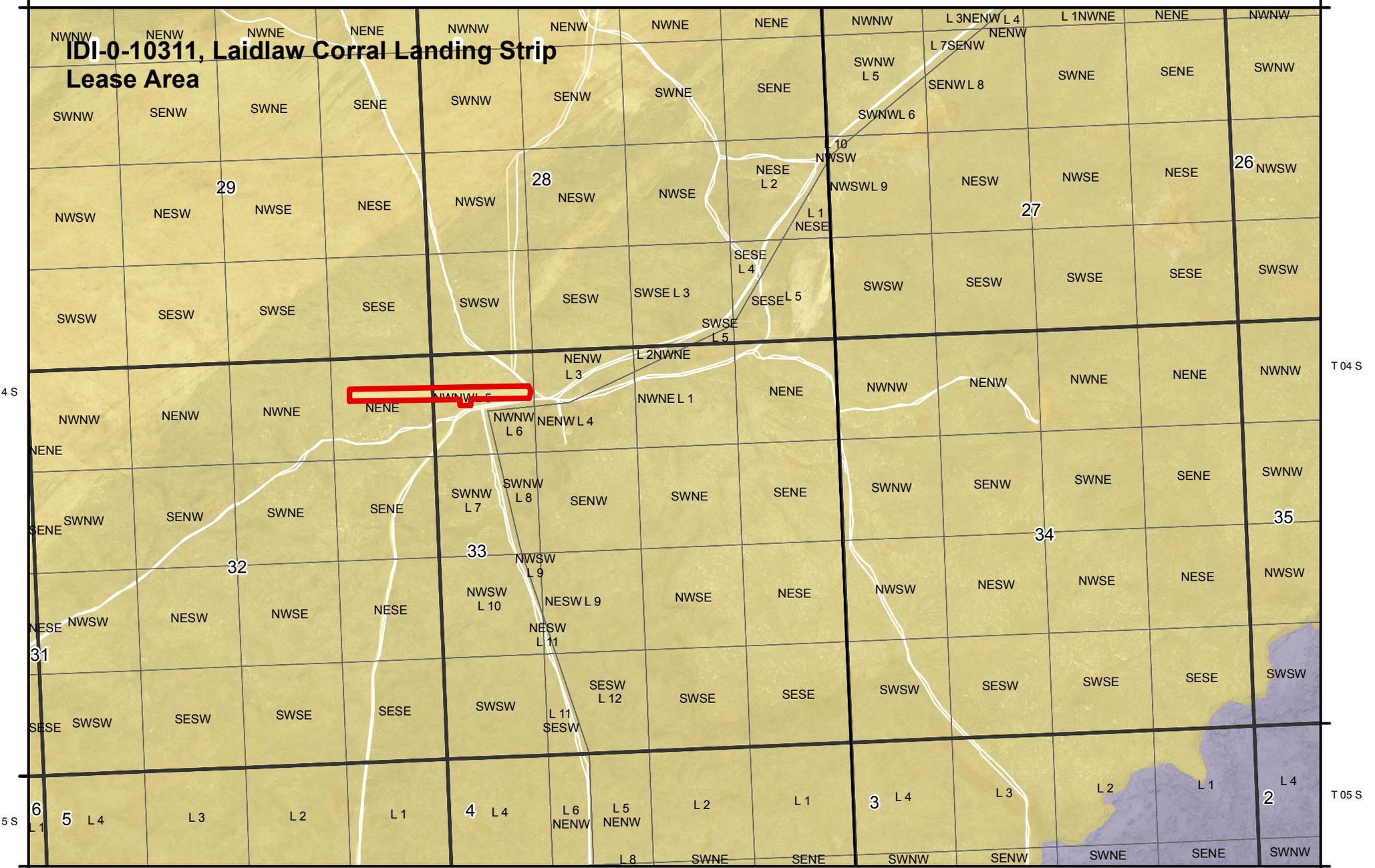
MARTIN, IDAHO (007)
HOLLOW TOP AIRPORT

100' HILL @ 1 MI, 600' L



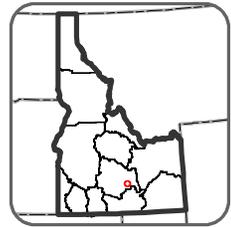
R 23 E

IDI-0-10311, Laidlaw Corral Landing Strip Lease Area

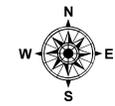
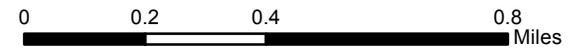


Idaho

R 23 E



- Limited Access
- Highway
- Major Road
- Local Road
- Minor Road
- Other Road
- Bureau of Land Management
- Forest Service
- National Park Service
- Private; other
- State
- State Fish and Game
- IDI-0-10310_Airstrip
- IDI-0-10307_Airstrip
- IDI-0-10311_Airstrip



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KIMAMA, ID

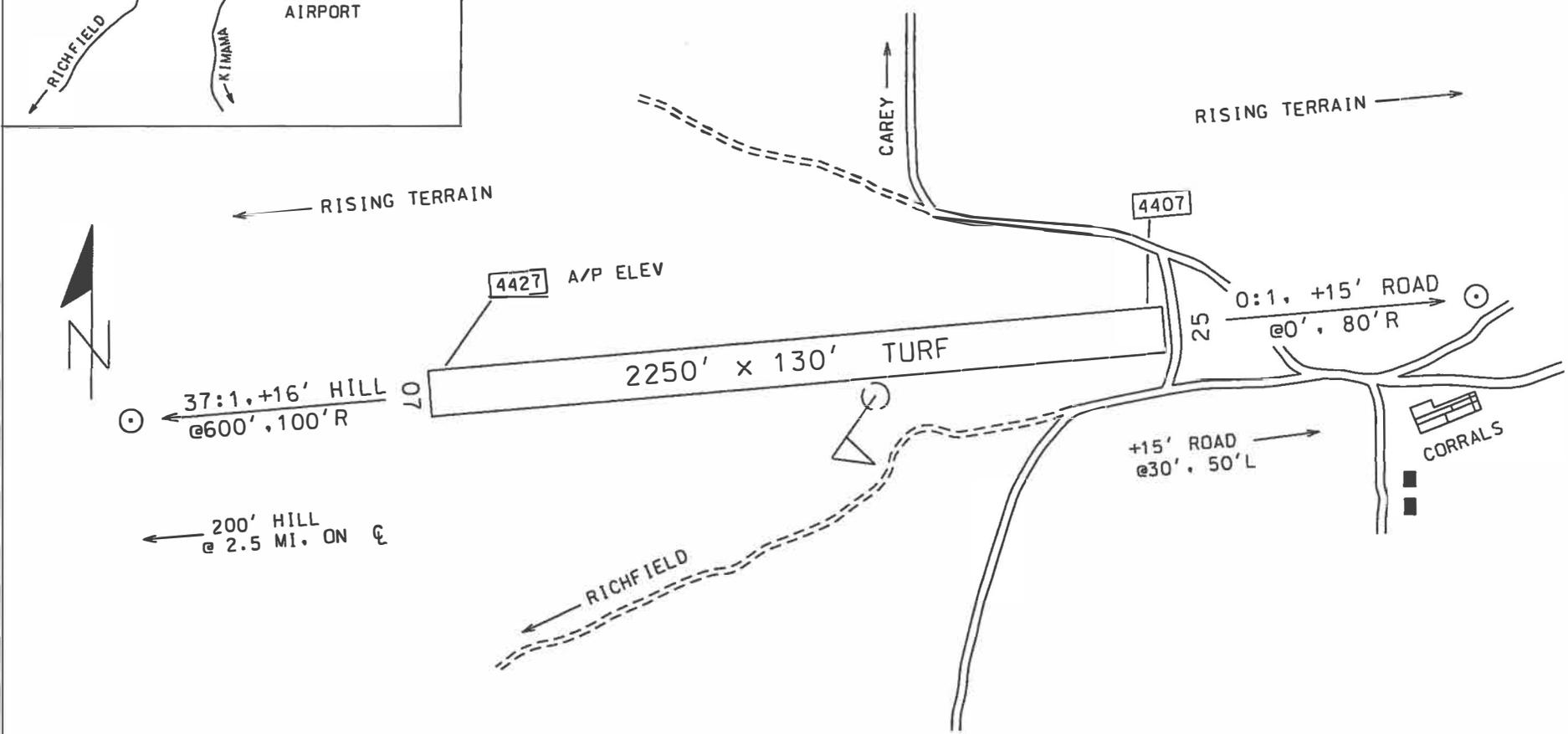
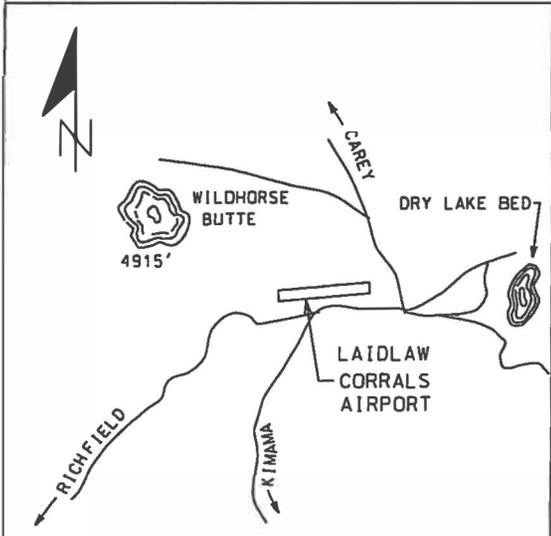
LIDLAW CORRAL (U99)

SITE NO. 04226.A

REMARKS

ACRES 9

- (1) RUNWAY NOT MARKED
WHITE ROCK BOUNDARY MARKERS
- (2) +2' BERM FULL LENGTH OF
RUNWAY ON BOTH SIDES
- (3) -1' DITCH AROUND ENTIRE
PERIMETER OF RUNWAY



18 JULY 2013

NOT TO SCALE

**UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT
Twin Falls District
Shoshone Field Office
400 West F Street
Shoshone, Idaho 83352**

CATEGORICAL EXCLUSION REVIEW SHEET

NEPA No. DOI-BLM-ID-T030-2016-0016-CX

A. Project Description

The Bureau of Land Management (BLM), Shoshone Field Office has received notice from Idaho Transportation Department, Division of Aeronautics requesting to renew three existing leases for remote area landing strips. These leases recorded under the case file numbers IDI-0-10307, IDI-0-10310, and IDI-0-10311 were originally granted in 1963 and subsequently renewed in 1993. Each lease grants the Division of Aeronautics the exclusive right for maintaining the landing strips on the lands described and provided within the terms and conditions of the lease.

Each of the landing strips has essentially remained unchanged in its use and characteristics since their original development. The landing strips are grass runways used primarily for emergency purposes, with minor amounts of use occurring from federal/state agencies and some occasional recreation uses. The Division of Aeronautics proposes to continue to utilize the landing strips for the same purpose and to maintain them as they have in the past with some minor changes. Maintenance of the landing strips would consist of seasonal mowing, herbicide application (only as needed to control noxious weeds), limited rodent control (non-rodenticide control actions only), and maintaining the rock markers that outline the landing strips. Maps showing the layout of each landing strip are provided in Attachment A.

B. Consideration of Extraordinary Circumstances

This Categorical Exclusion Review Sheet documents the review of the proposed action to determine if any of the extraordinary circumstances described in 516 DM 2, Appendix 2 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 any significant impacts on public health or safety.

The continued operation and maintenance of the three remote landing strips would not have any significant impacts on public health and safety. Each lease, specific to the landing strip, would contain terms, conditions, and stipulations that would require the Division of Aeronautics to comply with Federal and State standards for public health and safety, environmental protection, operation, and maintenance of, or for, such use. The authorized officer has the ability to suspend, in whole or in part, the lease if unforeseen conditions arise

which result in the approved terms and conditions being inadequate to protect the public health and safety or to protect the environment.

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.

There are no natural resources and unique geographic characteristics such as historic or cultural resources; park, recreation, refuge lands; wilderness areas; wild or scenic rivers; national natural landmarks; sole or principal drinking water aquifers; national monuments; or other ecologically significant or critical areas that would be significantly impacted by the proposed action.

Two of the landing strips that would receive authorization for continued operation and maintenance are within the boundaries Craters of the Moon National Monument and Preserve. The other landing strip is located within the Shoshone Field Office and directly adjacent to the boundary of the craters of the Moon National Monument and Preserve. The Presidential Proclamation that established the expansion of the monument was made subject to valid existing rights for authorized uses. The landing strips located within the boundaries are specifically identified as allowable uses within the Resource Management Plan (RMP) and as valid existing rights prior to the establishment of the monument.

A cultural resource records review was conducted for the project areas in October, 2012. Based on the information from the review it was determined with concurrence from the State Historical Preservation Office (SHPO) that no eligible cultural resources would be affected by the proposed action.

A wildlife review of the proposal identified the renewed leases would be located within areas known or suspected to support foraging and nesting habitat for raptors and migratory birds. If operations and maintenance activities occur during the nesting season there is a potential for these species to be impacted. However, the lease holder will be responsible for following stipulations that require them to coordinate with the Bureau of Land Management and the United States Fish and Wildlife Service if disturbing activities must occur during the nesting season. It is anticipated that if disturbing activities are going to occur within the nesting period a biologist will be required to clear the right-of-way to ensure no active nests are present. If active nests are present the right-of-way holder will either be required to delay the proposed work or coordinate with the USFWS to determine options to limit or mitigate impacts. The proposed maintenance of the landing strips, with provided stipulations, is not expected to result in an adverse impact to the bird species that may make use of the general project area.

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 proposed action is in conformance with the Monument RMP and craters of the Moon National Monument and Preserve RMP. Both RMPs established the land use allocation and goals for the affected public land; as such, there are no unresolved conflicts regarding other uses of these resources. The proposal to renew the leases to the Division of Aeronautics for the operation and maintenance of existing landing strips is not highly controversial, nor are the effects expected to generate future controversy. These landing strips have been in place since 1950 and the BLM is not aware of any controversy surrounding the use between then and the present time.

A letter was mailed to Interested Parties and posted on the BLM eplanning web page on April 7, 2016. One response was received concerning the proposed action. The responding interested party identified concerns over the use of rodenticide for rodent control, concerns on the potential drift of herbicides, asked if the BLM is limiting use to only essential flights during spring, asked how the BLM has assessed impacts to Wilderness and Monument values, and enquired if the airstrips are used “for flights during the marmot-shooting frenzy”.

A brief summary addressing the questions and concerns is provided below:

- Rodenticide concerns – The BLM looked further into the language of the previous grant and discussed the plans for rodent control with the applicant. The previous lease did allow for the use of rodenticides for the control of rodents; however, the applicant has not recently relied on the use of rodenticides and did not plan to use them to control rodents in the future. The lease would incorporate terms and conditions that would prohibit the use of rodenticides and require the lease holder to obtain written authorization to conduct rodent control measures. Rodent control measures would only be approved after receiving a site specific plan that includes specific rodent control measures, identifies a target specie(s), and includes design features that would limit negative impacts on non-target species.
- Herbicide drift concerns – Terms and conditions in the lease would require the lease holder to control noxious weeds on the lease area. Weed treatments are required to be coordinated with the authorized officer, and if herbicides are used to control noxious weeds the applicator(s) are required to hold a current State of Idaho applicators license or be directly supervised by a licensed applicator. The lease does not authorize aerial broadcast herbicide treatments, with the expressed intention of limiting the potential for herbicide drift.
- Limiting use to essential flights during spring – The control of flights is not within the scope of BLM’s authorization. The lease provides an authorization to develop and maintain facilities that are for safe landing of aircraft, but does not regulate or authorize flights or the use of aircraft. The leases will include a term and condition that will require the lease holder to limit the use of the air strips, within their authority, to emergency purposes only between the hours of 6:00 PM through 9:00 AM from March 15th through May 1st.

The possibility of seasonally limiting the use of these landing strips was discussed with the applicant and they could put operating restrictions to comply with terms and

conditions of the lease by filing a Notice to Airmen (NOTAM) that identifies the restrictions. The applicant identified that these landing strips are primarily intended for emergency uses so physically obstructing them to control use in the spring would reduce their effectiveness in an emergency. The landing strips are not known to receive regular or heavy use during any season and there is not a requirement or the capability to ask for and/or give expressed permission, respectively, to land on the landing strips. The lease would not include a requirement to place barriers or otherwise physically restrict the use of the air strips in the spring as they will continue to be needed for emergency purposes. The lease will also include terms and conditions that require seasonal restrictions on maintenance activities as these are actions that can be controlled and are within the scope of the lease.

The past use of the landing strips, without seasonal restrictions, has not resulted in known impacts to wildlife. The landing strips have been in place and used, as needed, for over 65 years and the surrounding areas continue to provide quality wildlife habitat.

- How has the BLM assessed Wilderness and Monument values? – The landing strips already exist and have fundamentally remained unchanged in their use and characteristics over the past 65 years. The renewal of the leases for the landing strips will not authorize any additional development and none of the landing strips are located in Wilderness. Because they are not located within Wilderness and no new development is proposed, there would not be impacts to Wilderness.

The landing strips were developed and in use prior to the expansion of the monument. The Presidential Proclamation that expanded the monument was made subject to valid existing rights, which included two of the three landing strips. The third landing strip is located outside of the monument. As there is no additional development with the proposed lease renewal and the uses were occurring prior to the monument's expansion there would not be impacts to the values that were present prior to the expansion of the monument.

- “Are these strips being used for flights during the marmot-shooting frenzy phase in many areas in and around Craters, and which may endanger public lands users?” – The scope of BLM’s authorization is for the development and maintenance of landing strips for the safe landing of aircraft; the BLM does not authorize flights or control hunting. The primary purpose of the landing strips is for emergency purposes, but may be used by the public as needed. The BLM has not provided authorization for the use of these landing strips for purposes outside the uses identified in the lease. Any activities occurring on public lands that are regulated by the BLM would require a specific authorization and would be evaluated on their own merits.

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

The proposed action does not involve highly uncertain and potentially significant environmental effects or involve unique or unknown environmental risks. The use has been occurring in the project area since 1950 without involving highly uncertain and potentially

significant environmental effects or unique or unknown environmental risks. The environmental process for the proposed action has not identified any effects that may involve highly uncertain and potentially significant environmental effects or involve unique or unknown environmental risks.

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.

The proposed action is not connected to another action that would require further environmental analysis and would not set a precedent for future actions that would normally require environmental analysis.

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

The proposed action does not have a direct relationship to other actions with individually insignificant but cumulatively 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 either the bureau or office.

A cultural resource records review was conducted for the project area in October, 2012. Based on the information from the review it was determined with concurrence from the State Historical Preservation Office (SHPO) that no eligible cultural resources would be affected by the proposed action.

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.

No proposed or listed wildlife species or designated critical habitat exists within the locations of the proposed action. Sage-grouse, although not listed or proposed to be listed under the Endangered Species Act is a wildlife species that may occur within the area of the landing strips and specific management actions through a land use plan amendments have been identified in order to limit impacts to this species. The authorized landing strips are in conformance with the management actions identified and are discussed in the land use plan conformance section of this Categorical Exclusion.

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 BLM issues Airport Lease in accordance with the Act of May 24, 1928, as amended and the BLM regulations at 43 CFR 2911. Under these regulations the lease would specify that all applicable Federal, State and local laws be adhered to. The BLM has the ability to suspend the lease if a Federal, State or local laws is violated.

There are no known tribal laws in effect for the project area.

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

The proposed action would not have a disproportionately high and adverse effect on low income or minority populations (Executive Order 12898). The effect would be the same as for the general population in the general area.

11. The proposed action would not limit access to ceremonial use of Indian sacred sites on Federal lands by Indian religious practitioners or significantly affect the physical integrity of such sacred sites (Executive Order 13007).

The proposed action would not limit access to and ceremonial use of Indian sacred sites on Federal lands by Indian religious practitioners or significantly affect the physical integrity of such sacred sites. The use has been occurring in the project area since 1950 without any conflicts arising.

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).

The lease would contain terms that would require the Division of Aeronautics to be responsible for weed control on the disturbed areas within the limits of the lease area. The Division of Aeronautics will also be responsible for ensuring that the undercarriages of equipment and/or vehicles used in the operation and termination of the lease to be free of all soil and plant material prior to operating on public lands. These stipulations/requirements would reduce the risk of introduction, continued existence, or spread of noxious and non-native invasive species.

C. Consultation and Preparation

The review of potential impacts of the proposed action was described by the following:

Kasey Prestwich, Realty Specialist/Project Lead
Tara Barrier, Wildlife Biologist
Danelle Nance, Natural Resource Specialist
Lisa Cresswell, Archeologist/Shoshone Field Office NEPA Coordinator



Idaho Greater Sage-Grouse Plan Implementation Plan Conformance *Final Review*



GRSG Plan Amendment Conformance Team Members: Conducted by Ammon Wilhelm, Bonnie Claridge, Jon Porter, Scott Pavey, Ethan Ellsworth, and Natalie Cooper on January 20, 2016.

Project Name: Landing strip lease renewal

Project Type: **Airport Lease (2911)**

Location: *IDI-0-10307, Bear Trap Landing Strip*
Boise Meridian,
T. 5 S., R. 27 E.,
sec. 19, S $\frac{1}{2}$ NE $\frac{1}{4}$ and SE $\frac{1}{4}$ NW $\frac{1}{4}$.

IDI-0-10310, Hollow Top Landing Strip
Boise Meridian,
T. 10 S., R. 24 E.,
sec. 22, S $\frac{1}{2}$ SW $\frac{1}{4}$ NW $\frac{1}{4}$, S $\frac{1}{2}$ N $\frac{1}{2}$ SE $\frac{1}{4}$ NW $\frac{1}{4}$, N $\frac{1}{2}$ S $\frac{1}{2}$ SE $\frac{1}{4}$ NW $\frac{1}{4}$.

IDI-0-10311, Laidlaw Corral Landing Strip
Boise Meridian,
T. 4 S., R. 23 E.,
sec. 32, S $\frac{1}{2}$ N $\frac{1}{2}$ NE $\frac{1}{4}$ NE $\frac{1}{4}$;
sec. 33, S $\frac{1}{2}$ N $\frac{1}{2}$ NW $\frac{1}{4}$ NW $\frac{1}{4}$.

The landings strips are located within a portion of the above described public lands. Additional details concerning the location of the landing strips are available from maps and GIS files that have been provided for this review.

Area of Impact: Description: See location description above.
Document NEPA ID: DOI- BLM-ID-T030-201X-0016-CX

Conservation Area: Idaho Desert Conservation Area

Habitat Designation: *IDI-0-10307 – Bear Trap Landing Strip* – IHMA – 42.5 acres – Restorative Habitat
IDI-0-10310 – Hollow Top Landing Strip – PHMA and SFA – 40 acres – Key Habitat
IDI-0-10311 – Laidlaw Corral Landing Strip – PHMA and SFA – 20 acres – Key Habitat

Disturbance Cap: Appendix E, Table E-2 – *Airport Facilities and Infrastructure (public and private)* The footprint boundary will follow the boundary of the airport or heliport and include mowed areas, parking lots, hangers, taxiways, driveways, terminals, maintenance facilities, beacons and related features. Indicators of the boundary, such as distinct land cover changes, fences and perimeter roads, will be used to encompass the entire airport or heliport (E-7).

Allocation: Leases are not specifically designated in Table 2-1. Assuming they would be treated similar to a ROW action, PHMA and IHMA are both avoidance areas. However, these are renewals of existing projects.

Applicable Management Decisions from Chapter 2:

MD SSS 7: GRSG habitat within the project area will be assessed during project-level NEPA analysis within the management area designations (PHMA, IHMA, GHMA). Project proposals and their effects will be evaluated based on the habitat and values affected.

The landing strips have been developed and in use since the 1950s with no anticipated changes. The wildlife clearance took into account the management designations (preliminary at the time) and acknowledged that the landing strip areas were in sage-grouse habitat and that there were nearby leks. The wildlife biologist concluded that the proposed lease renewals would not adversely impact special status animal species (including sage-grouse) or their habitat provided that some seasonal restrictions were put in place.

MD SSS 31: Co-locating new infrastructure within existing ROWs and maintaining and upgrading ROWs is preferred over the creation of new ROWs or the construction of new facilities in all management area.

The proposal is a renewal of a lease for an emergency landing strip. There will be no new infrastructure.

MD SSS 32: Incorporate RDFs as described in Appendix C in the development of project or proposal implementation, reauthorizations or new authorizations and suppression activities, as conditions of approval (COAs) into any post-lease activities and as best management practices for locatable minerals activities, to the extent allowable by law, unless at least one of the following conditions can be demonstrated and documented in the NEPA analysis associated with the specific project:

- a. A specific RDF is not applicable to the site-specific conditions of the project or activity;
- b. A proposed design feature or BMP is determined to provide equal or better protection for GRSG or its habitat; or
- c. Analysis concludes that following a specific RDF will provide no more protection to GRSG or its habitat than not following it, for the project being proposed.

See comments in the RDF section below.

MD SSS 33: Conduct implementation and project activities, including construction and short-term anthropogenic disturbances consistent with seasonal habitat restrictions described in Appendix C.

Secured by terms and conditions in the leases as well as RDFs.

MD SSS 34: RDFs and seasonal habitat restrictions will not be required for emergency or short-term activities necessary to protect and preserve human life or property.

The RDF's identified below will not apply to this action in the case of an emergency.

MD VEG 3: Require use of native seeds for restoration based on availability, adaptation (ecological site potential), and probability of success (Richards et al. 1998). Non-native seeds may be used as long as they support GRSG habitat objectives (Pyke 2011) to increase probability of success, when adapted seed availability is low or to compete with invasive species especially on harsher sites.

The proposed project would not have any new construction requiring restoration. Upon relinquishment or termination, the authorized officer shall approve a termination and rehabilitation plan to comply with the above management decision (stipulated in the leases).

Required Design

Features Required: The following RDFs likely apply to this project. *Rationale and comments are provided in italics.*

RDF 1: Solicit and consider expertise and ideas from local landowners, working groups, and other federal, state, county, and private organization during the development of projects.

A Notice to Interested Parties will be sent out once the GRSG Plan Conformance Review has been completed, and a discussion with the proponent has taken place to see if they can still continue to operate the landing strips with all of the restrictions and RDFs and wish to continue with the renewals.

RDF 2: No repeated or sustained behavioral disturbance (e.g., visual, noise over 10 bdA at lek, etc.) to lekking birds from 6:00 pm to 9:00 am within 2 miles (3.2 km) of leks during the lekking season.

The following will stipulation will be made part of the terms and conditions of the lease: Maintenance activities shall not result in repeated or sustained

disturbance (e.g. visual, noise over 10 dba at lek, ect.) to lekking birds from 6:00 pm to 9:00 am within 2 miles (3.2 km) of leks during the lekking season.

RDF 3: Avoid mechanized anthropogenic disturbance, in nesting habitat during the nesting season when implementing: 1) fuels/vegetation/habitat restoration management projects, 2) infrastructure construction or maintenance, 3) geophysical exploration activities, 4) organized motorized recreational events.

The following stipulation will be made part of the terms and condition of the lease: The holder will avoid Mechanized anthropogenic disturbances resulting from maintenance or construction of authorized infrastructure during sage-grouse nesting and wintering periods when these actions would occur within sage grouse nesting and wintering habitat, respectively.

RDF 4: Avoid mechanized anthropogenic disturbance during the winter, in wintering areas when implementing: 1) fuels/vegetation/habitat restoration management projects, 2) infrastructure construction or maintenance, 3) geophysical exploration activities, 4) organized motorized recreational events.

The stipulation identified above for compliance with RDF 3 was designed to also meet the requirements for RDF 4.

RDF 53: Above-ground disturbance areas would be seeded with perennial vegetation as per vegetation management.

The proposed project would not have any new construction requiring restoration. Upon relinquishment or termination, the authorized officer shall approve a termination and rehabilitation plan to comply with the above required design feature (secured by the terms and conditions of the leases).

RDF 54: Place infrastructure in already disturbed locations where the habitat has not been fully restored.

New infrastructure, construction or developments are not anticipated or proposed. Should they need to occur, the proponent would have to file an amendment, during the processing of which we would evaluate, and impose the RDF.

RDF 55: Cluster disturbances, operations, and facilities as close as possible.

New infrastructure, construction or developments are not anticipated or proposed. Should they need to occur, the proponent would have to file an amendment, during the processing of which we would evaluate, and impose the RDF.

RDF 60: Restrict the construction of tall facilities and fences to the minimum number and amount needed.

New infrastructure, construction or developments are not anticipated or proposed. Should they need to occur, the proponent would have to file an amendment, during the processing of which we would evaluate, and impose the RDF.

RDF 61: Use free-standing structures where possible, to limit the use of guy wires. Where guy wires are necessary and appropriate bird collision diverters will be used, if doing so would not cause a human safety risk.

New infrastructure, construction or developments are not anticipated or proposed. Should they need to occur, the proponent would have to file an amendment, during the processing of which we would evaluate, and impose the RDF.

RDF 63: Construction and development activities should conform to seasonal restrictions.

New infrastructure, construction or developments are not anticipated or proposed. Should they need to occur, the proponent would have to file an amendment, during the processing of which we would evaluate, and impose the RDF.

RDF 71: Control the spread and effects of non-native plant species (Gelbard and Belnap 2003, Bergquist et al. 2007, Evangelista et al. 2011). (E.g. by washing vehicles and equipment.)

Secured by the terms and conditions of the leases.

RDF 102: Restore disturbed areas at final reclamation to the pre-disturbance landforms and desired plant community.

The proposed project would not have any new construction requiring restoration. Upon relinquishment or termination, the authorized officer shall approve a termination and rehabilitation plan to comply with the above required design feature (secured by the terms and conditions of the leases).

Mitigation Required: No new habitat loss is authorized as a result of this renewal. Therefore no mitigation is required.

Conclusion: Based on the above review, this project is in conformance with the Approved Sage-grouse Resource Management Plan Amendment (Sept 2015) and the NEPA process should continue.