

Finding of No Significant Impact
Columbian Sharp-tailed Grouse Habitat Acquisition
Environmental Assessment DOI-BLM-ID-B000-2016-0003-EA

I have reviewed the Council on Environmental Quality Regulations (CEQ) for significance (40 CFR § 1508.27) and have determined the actions analyzed in DOI-BLM-ID-B000-2016-0003-EA would not constitute a major federal action that would significantly affect the quality of the human environment; therefore an Environmental Impact Statement is not required. This finding was made by considering both the context and intensity of the potential effects, as described in the above EA, using the following factors defining significance:

1) *Impacts that may be both beneficial and adverse.*

Beneficial and adverse impacts related to vegetation, wildlife, special status species, social, economic, livestock management, and recreation were discussed in the EA (EA Sections 3.1.2 and 3.2.2). The physical and biological impacts would be limited to the acquired properties and immediately adjacent lands and would be negligible to moderate (as defined in the EA Section 3.0) in context and intensity. The social and economic impacts would be negligible at the county level.

2) *The degree to which the proposed action affects public health or safety.*

No public health and safety issues were identified in the EA.

3) *Unique characteristics of the geographic area such as proximity to historic or cultural resources, park lands, prime farmlands, wetlands, wild and scenic rivers, or ecologically critical areas.*

There would be no adverse impacts to areas with unique characteristics or ecologically critical areas. Acquisition of the identified parcels would consolidate land ownership adjacent to the Columbian Sharp-tailed Grouse Habitat Area of Critical Environmental Concern and provide long-term management benefits (EA Section 3.1.2.1). No wetlands, floodplains, cultural resources, parklands, prime farmlands, or wild and scenic rivers occur in the subject parcels (EA Section 1.6).

4) *The degree to which the effects on the quality of the human environment are likely to be highly controversial.*

The identified resource impacts (e.g., habitat loss or alteration, disturbance, predation, development, wildfire, social, economic, and recreational uses) are well understood in the scientific community and are not considered controversial.

5) *The degree to which the possible effects on the human environment are highly uncertain or involve unique or unknown risks.*

The EA made valid assumptions for future land uses (EA Section 3.1.2) that were supported by current information, policies, regulations, and laws. The impacts from the proposed acquisition are clearly understood and explained (EA Section 3.0).

- 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.*
The action neither represents a decision in principle about a future consideration, nor sets a precedent for future projects.
- 7) *Whether the action is related to other actions with individually insignificant but cumulatively significant impacts.*
The EA identified no known significant cumulative impacts associated with implementation of the proposed action (EA Sections 3.1.3 and 3.2.3).
- 8) *The degree to which the action may adversely affect districts, sites, highways, structures, or objects listed in or eligible for listing in the NRHP or may cause loss or destruction of significant scientific, cultural, or historical resources.*
Any cultural resources present on the acquired parcels would be managed under appropriate cultural resource laws and executive orders (EA Section 1.5).
- 9) *The degree to which the action may adversely affect an endangered or threatened species or its habitat that has determined to be critical under the Endangered Species Act of 1973.*
The EA identified no threatened or endangered species or their habitat that would be affected by the exchange proposal (EA Section 3.1).
- 10) *Whether the action threatens a violation of Federal, State, and local laws or requirements imposed for protection of the environment.*
The proposed action analyzed in the EA would be consistent and compatible with all known Federal, State, and local laws, regulations, or requirements imposed for protection of the environment (EA Section 1.5 includes references to the most pertinent laws).

/s/ *Tate Fischer*

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Date