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**U.S. Department of the Interior
Bureau of Land Management
Kremmling Field Office
P.O. Box 68
Kremmling, CO 80459**

CATEGORICAL EXCLUSION

NUMBER: CO-120-2007-49 CE

PROJECT NAME: F.S. Weather Research Center Renewal

LEGAL DESCRIPTION: T. 8N., R. 78W., Secs. 19, 20, 29 and 30

APPLICANT: USDA F.S. Rocky Mountain Research Station

DESCRIPTION OF PROPOSED ACTION: The USDA Forest Service, Rocky Mountain Research Station was issued a right-of-way August 8, 2002 for a NASA funded project which examined snow cover in regions of Colorado during successive winters. Snowpack is sampled for depth and water content at about 100 locations in the study area. The field included:

- 164 fence stakes that mark snow survey transect end points.
- One meteorological tower (38 feet high) with solar, wind, temperature, relative humidity and precipitation sensors. The concrete footer for this tower is less than 2'x2'x1'.

The studies are continuing and the right-of-way needs to be renewed for another five years. No additional equipment installation or ground disturbance would occur.

PLAN CONFORMANCE REVIEW: The Proposed Action is subject to and has been reviewed for conformance with (43 CFR 1610.5, BLM 1617.3) the following plan:

Name of Plan: Kremmling Resource Management Plan (RMP), Record of Decision (ROD)

Date Approved: December 19, 1984; Updated February 1999

Decision Number/Page: II-B-12 pg.14

Decision Language: Provide the opportunity to utilize public lands for development of facilities which benefit the public, while considering environmental and agency concerns.

CATEGORICAL EXCLUSION REVIEW: The Proposed Action qualifies as a categorical exclusion under 516 DM 6, Appendix 5.4, Number: (E) (9) “Renewals and assignments of leases, permits or rights-of-way where no additional rights are conveyed beyond those granted by the original authorizations.” None of the following extraordinary circumstances in 516 DM 2, Appendix 2, apply.

Extraordinary Circumstances	Yes	No
2.1 Have significant impacts on public health or safety		X
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
2.3 Have highly controversial environmental effects or involve unresolved conflicts concerning alternative uses of available resources [NEPA section 102(2)(E)].		X
2.4 Have highly uncertain and potentially significant environmental effects or involve unique or unknown environmental risks.		X
2.5 Establish a precedent for future action or represent a decision in principle about future actions with potentially significant environmental effects.		X
2.6 Have a direct relationship to other actions with individually insignificant but cumulatively significant environmental effects.		X
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
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
2.9 Violate a Federal Law, or a State, local, or tribal law or requirement imposed for the protection of the environment.		X
2.10 Have a disproportionately high and adverse effect on low income or minority populations (Executive Order 12898).		X
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
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

INTERDISCIPLINARY REVIEW:

Name	Title	Area of Responsibility	Date Review Completed
Susan Cassel	Realty Specialist	Lands	8-20-07
Dennis Gale	Assistant Field Manager	NEPA	8/30/2007
Megan McGuire	Wildlife Biologist	T & E Species	7/27/07
Bill Wyatt	Archaeologist	Cultural	7-31-2007
Paula Belcher	Hydrologist	Soil, Air, Water	8/29/07

REMARKS:

Cultural Resources: This Right-of-Way renewal for the USDA Forest Service, Rocky Mountain Research Station permit is not considered to be a ground disturbing activity nor a federal undertaking for Section 106. In FY2002 a cultural survey was completed for an area of less than one acre for a single tower placement location.

Native American Religious Concerns: The American Indian Tribes that are part of consultation for traditional spiritual concerns were not consulted in 2002 for the original permit. A new consultation was not initiated for this ROW renewal per Kremmling Archaeologist.

Threatened and Endangered Species: The proposed renewal would not impact Endangered, Threatened, or Sensitive Species.

COMPLIANCE PLAN : The right-of-way would be inspected and monitored periodically to ensure compliance with the terms and conditions of the grant. The right-of-way would also be inspected after any maintenance activities to determine compliance with and effectiveness of reclamation measures.

NAME OF PREPARER: Susan L. Cassel

NAME OF ENVIRONMENTAL COORDINATOR: Dennis Gale

DATE: 8/30/2007

ATTATCHMENTS: Project Map

DECISION AND RATIONALE: I have reviewed this CER and have decided to implement the proposed action.

This action is listed in the Department Manual as an action that may be categorically excluded. I have evaluated the action relative to the 12 criteria listed above and have determined that it does not represent an extraordinary circumstance and is, therefore, categorically excluded from further environmental analysis.

SIGNATURE OF AUTHORIZED OFFICIAL: /s/ David Stout

DATE SIGNED: 8/31/2007