

UNITED STATES  
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT  
BURNS DISTRICT OFFICE

**CATEGORICAL EXCLUSION ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW AND APPROVAL**

**CX Number:** DOI-BLM-OR-B060-2015-011-CX

**Date:** 11/21/14

**Subject Function Code:** 4100

**Case File:** Fields Basin Allotment File #6035

**Preparer:** Louis E. Clayburn, Rangeland Management Specialist

**Applicant:** Bureau of Land Management and Permittee

**Title of Proposed Action:** Fields Basin Allotment #6035 Reservoir Maintenance

**A. Background**

**Description of Proposed Action and Project Design Elements:**

The Bureau of Land Management (BLM) and/or Permittee proposes to clean out, repair, and maintain 4 existing reservoirs within the Fields Basin pasture of the Fields Basin Allotment #6035 in the next 3 years. These reservoirs are no longer functioning correctly due to silt deposits, eroded dam structures, and dysfunctioning spillways, resulting in reduction of water storage capacities. All cultural clearances will be completed prior to work starting at each reservoir site and will be marked for avoidance or removed prior to the start of work.

All reservoir maintenance activity would be done by the use of an excavator, dozer, or backhoe. This activity would be limited to the existing footprint of the original disturbed area. Silt would be removed and strategically placed in accordance to design of each reservoir for optimum function. Bentonite may be used to seal bottoms of reservoirs where applicable.

These reservoirs need to be cleaned so that they can hold water for livestock and wildlife for longer periods especially during the hot, dry months of summer; currently the slight amount of water that they do store quickly evaporates in early summer.

To minimize opportunities for spread of noxious weeds by seeds or other plant parts, all equipment would be cleaned prior to beginning work on site of these reservoirs. Each reservoir will be monitored closely for two years post-clean for noxious weeds. Any weeds found will be treated by the most appropriate method. All activities described have limited context and intensity (e.g. limited size and magnitude or short term effects).

The proposed maintenance would be conducted out of migratory bird critical nesting season (April 15 to July 15 each year), most likely in the fall. Maintenance activities would be short in duration (completed in 1-2 days per reservoir).

**Legal Description (see attached map):**

Reservoir: Eight Mile Reservoir, W.M., T. 37 S., R. 32.75 E., sec. 17.

Reservoir: Blair Canyon Reservoir, W.M., T. 37 S., R. 32.75 E., sec. 19.

Reservoir: Fields Seep Reservoir, W.M., T. 37 S., R. 32.75 E., sec. 30.

Reservoir: Cone Reservoir, W.M., T. 37 S., R. 32.5 E., sec. 25.

**B. Conformance with Land Use Plan (LUP):** Andrews Management Unit (AMU) Record of Decision (ROD) and Resource Management Plan (RMP)

**Date Approved/Amended:** August 2005

The proposed action is in conformance with the applicable LUP, even though it is not specifically provided for, because it is clearly consistent with the following LUP decision(s):

Grazing Management Objective 1 (RMP-54 AMU ROD/RMP, August, 2005). Management actions will provide for sustainable livestock grazing in the AMU that meets allotment management (natural resource) objectives and the Standards and Guides (S&Gs) (USDI 1997a).

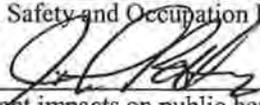
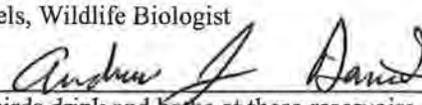
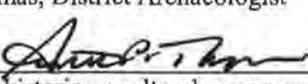
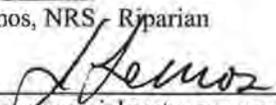
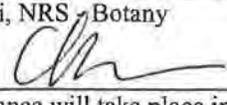
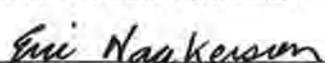
Grazing Management Objective 2 (RMP-54 AMU ROD/RMP, August, 2005). "Implement administrative solutions and rangeland projects to provide proper management for livestock grazing while meeting resource objectives and requirements for S&Gs (USDI 1997a)."

Existing projects within the AMU will be maintained if they support livestock grazing or other uses.

**C. Compliance with NEPA**

**DOI Categorical Exclusion Reference (43 CFR 46.210):** "(f) Routine and continuing government business, including such things as supervision, administration, operations, maintenance, renovations, and replacement activities having limited context and intensity (e.g., limited size and magnitude or short-term effects)."

**Screening for Exceptions:** The following extraordinary circumstances (516 DM 2, Appendix 2) may apply to individual actions within the categorical exceptions. The indicated specialist recommends the proposed action does *not*:

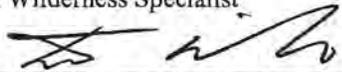
| CATEGORICAL EXCLUSION EXTRAORDINARY CIRCUMSTANCES DOCUMENTATION  |   |
|--|---|
| <b>2.1</b>   | Have significant impacts on public health or safety.  |
| Specialist: John Petty, Safety and Occupation Health Manager   |   |
| Signature and Date:  1/6/15   |   |
| Rationale: No significant impacts on public health or safety.  |   |
| <b>2.2</b>   | 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); flood plains (Executive Order 11988); national monuments; migratory birds; and other ecologically significant or critical areas. |
| <u>Migratory Birds</u>   |   |
| Specialist: Andy Daniels, Wildlife Biologist   |   |
| Signature and Date:  1/6/15   |   |
| Rationale: Migratory birds drink and bathe at these reservoirs during the spring and early summer when water is available and may forage adjacent to reservoirs throughout the year. No new habitat would be disturbed because maintenance work would be limited to previously disturbed areas (existing reservoirs). Work would also be temporary, occurring over a relatively short period (1-2 days per reservoir) and out of the critical nesting period (April 15 to July 15). Birds in the immediate vicinity of the reservoirs would flush during project work, but would return as soon as maintenance was complete. Few birds are likely to nest in the immediate area adjacent to reservoirs due to the limited vegetative cover relative to the surrounding area. Temporary maintenance activities may impact individuals but would not affect populations of migratory birds or their habitat. |   |
| <u>Historic and Cultural Resources</u>   |   |
| Specialist: Scott Thomas, District Archaeologist   |   |
| Signature and Date:  1-6-15   |   |
| Rationale: If present, historic or cultural resources would be protected through avoidance and, therefore, not be affected by the proposed project.  |   |
| <u>Areas of Critical Environmental Concern(ACEC)/Research Natural Areas (RNA)</u>  |   |
| Specialist: Caryn Burri, Natural Resource Specialist (NRS) - Botany  |   |
| Signature and Date:  1/6/15   |   |
| Rationale: There are no ACECs/RNAs within the proposed project area.   |   |
| <u>Water Resources/Flood Plains</u>  |   |
| Specialist: Jarod Lemos, NRS - Riparian  |   |
| Signature and Date:  1/6/15   |   |
| Rationale: There are no perennial water resources in the proposed project area, nor does the project area lie within a floodplain.   |   |
| <u>Soils, Biological Soil Crust, Prime Farmlands</u>   |   |
| Specialist: Caryn Burri, NRS - Botany  |   |
| Signature and Date:  1/6/15   |   |
| Rationale: All maintenance will take place in the original footprint of the reservoirs and within currently disturbed areas and will not impact undisturbed soils and biological soil crusts outside the project area. Biological soil crusts are not present within the proposed project area as a result of constant disturbance and soil compaction. There are no Prime Farmlands within the proposed project area.   |   |
| <u>Recreation/Visual Resources</u>   |   |
| Specialist: Eric Haakenson, Outdoor Recreation Planner   |   |
| Signature and Date:  1-6-15   |   |

Rationale: The proposed project occurs within a Visual Resource Management (VRM) Class 4 which provides for management activities that allow major modification of the landscape. Therefore, the proposed project would meet the VRM Class 4 objective.

Maintenance of the proposed reservoirs would provide more water holding capacity. A consequence of more water is the added benefit to wildlife which provides better opportunities for wildlife hunting and wildlife viewing.

Wilderness/Wild and Scenic River Resources  
Specialist: Tom Wilcox, Wilderness Specialist

Signature and Date:

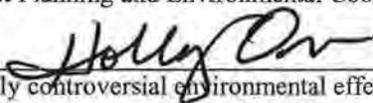
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Rationale: There is no Wilderness, wilderness study area, Wild and Scenic River, citizen proposed wilderness study area, or land with wilderness characteristics in the project area.

**2.3** Have highly controversial environmental effects or involve unresolved conflicts concerning alternative uses of available resources (NEPA Section 102 [2] [E]).

Specialist: Holly Orr, District Planning and Environmental Coordinator

Signature and Date:

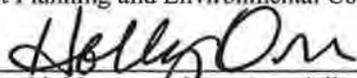
 1/6/15

Rationale: There are no highly controversial environmental effects or unresolved conflicts concerning alternative uses of available resources. The reservoirs are existing features on the landscape. The action is to perform routine and continuing maintenance on existing facilities.

**2.4** Have highly uncertain and potentially significant environmental effects or involve unique or unknown environmental risks.

Specialist: Holly Orr, District Planning and Environmental Coordinator

Signature and Date:

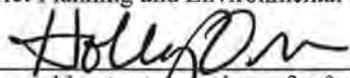
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Rationale: There are no known highly uncertain or potentially significant environment effects or unique or unknown environmental risks. The reservoirs are existing features on the landscape. The action is to perform routine and continuing maintenance on existing facilities.

**2.5** Establish a precedent for future action or represent a decision in principle about future actions with potentially significant environmental effects.

Specialist: Holly Orr, District Planning and Environmental Coordinator

Signature and Date:

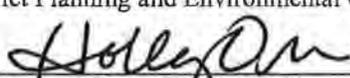
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Rationale: Implementation would not set precedence for future actions or represent a decision in principle about future actions with potentially significant environmental effects. The BLM routinely performs reservoir maintenance and these reservoirs currently exist on the landscape.

**2.6** Have a direct relationship to other actions with individually insignificant but cumulatively significant environmental effects.

Specialist: Holly Orr, District Planning and Environmental Coordinator

Signature and Date:

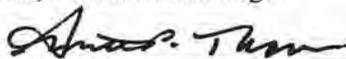
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Rationale: Implementation does not have any known direct relationship to other actions with individually insignificant but cumulative significant environmental effects. The reservoirs are existing features on the landscape. The action is to perform routine and continuing maintenance on existing facilities.

**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.

Specialist: Scott Thomas, District Archaeologist

Signature and Date:

 1-6-15

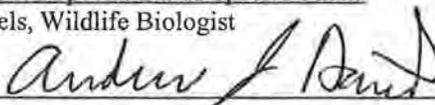
Rationale: If present, National Register eligible properties would be protected through avoidance and, therefore, not be affected by the proposed project.

**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.

Endangered or Threatened/Special Status Species-Fauna

Specialist: Andy Daniels, Wildlife Biologist

Signature and Date:

 1/6/15

Rationale: There are no known Threatened or Endangered species (T&E) or Designated Critical Habitat in the area around these reservoirs, and none would be affected off-site by the reservoir maintenance activities; as such, there would be no effect to T&E wildlife species or their habitat. The Reed Draw Reservoir is located in Greater Sage-Grouse Preliminary General Habitat (PGH) as adopted by the BLM from the low density habitat, respectively, delineated and classified by the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife (ODFW). The Greater Sage-Grouse has been placed, by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS), on the list of species that are candidates for protection under the Threatened and Endangered Species Act. There are no active leks in the vicinity of the project area. The project(s) would take place in a previously disturbed area that provides little structural or vegetative diversity for Greater Sage-Grouse. The timing of the work would be out of breeding and nesting season, with the work probably taking place in the fall. No vegetation capable of providing nest structures would be removed or destroyed. Access roads are currently used for recreation, permittee use, and BLM administrative use. Temporary maintenance activities would have no effect on Greater Sage-Grouse or their habitat as a result of this action.

Endangered or Threatened Species - Aquatic

Specialist: Jarod Lemos, NRS - Riparian

Signature and Date:

*J Lemos* 1/6/15

Rationale: There are no aquatic T&E species or critical habitat within the watersheds of the proposed action.

Endangered or Threatened Species - Flora

Specialist: Caryn Burri, NRS - Botany

Signature and Date:

*CBurri* 1/6/15

Rationale: There are no documented T&E or Special/Status plant species or designated critical habitat within the proposed project area.

**2.9** Violate a Federal law, or a State, local, or tribal law or requirement imposed for the protection of the environment.

Specialist: Holly Orr, District Planning and Environmental Coordinator

Signature and Date:

*Holly Orr* 1/6/15

Rationale: Implementation would not violate any known law or regulation imposed for the protection of the environment. The reservoirs are existing features on the landscape. The action is to perform routine and continuing maintenance on existing facilities.

**2.10** Have a disproportionately high and adverse effect on low income or minority populations (Executive Order 12898).

Specialist: Holly Orr, District Planning and Environmental Coordinator

Signature and Date:

*Holly Orr* 1/6/15

Rationale: Implementation would not have a disproportionately high or adverse effect on low income or minority populations as such populations do not exist within the project area.

**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).

Specialist: Scott Thomas, District Archaeologist

Signature and Date:

*Scott Thomas* 1-6-15

Rationale: Access to or integrity of Indian sacred sites would not be affected by these projects. None are known to occur in the project vicinity.

**2.12** Contribute to the introduction, continued existence, or spread of noxious weeds or nonnative 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).

Specialist: Lesley Richman, District Weed Coordinator

Signature and Date:

*Lesley Richman* 1/6/2015

Rationale: Noxious weeds are known to be present in or in close proximity to this area. Treatments are on-going. The weeds are not currently present in sufficient quantity to be considered a significant impact at this location.

**RMP conformance and CX review confirmation:**

Specialist: Holly Orr, Planning and Environmental Coordinator

Signature:

*Holly Orr*

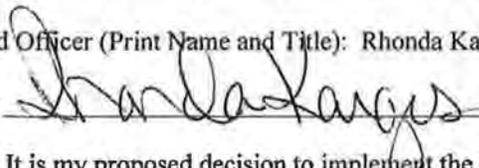
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**Management Determination:** Based upon review of this proposal, I have determined the Proposed Action is in conformance with the LUP, qualifies as a categorical exclusion and does not require further NEPA analysis.

Authorized Officer (Print Name and Title): Rhonda Karges, Andrews/Steens Field Manager

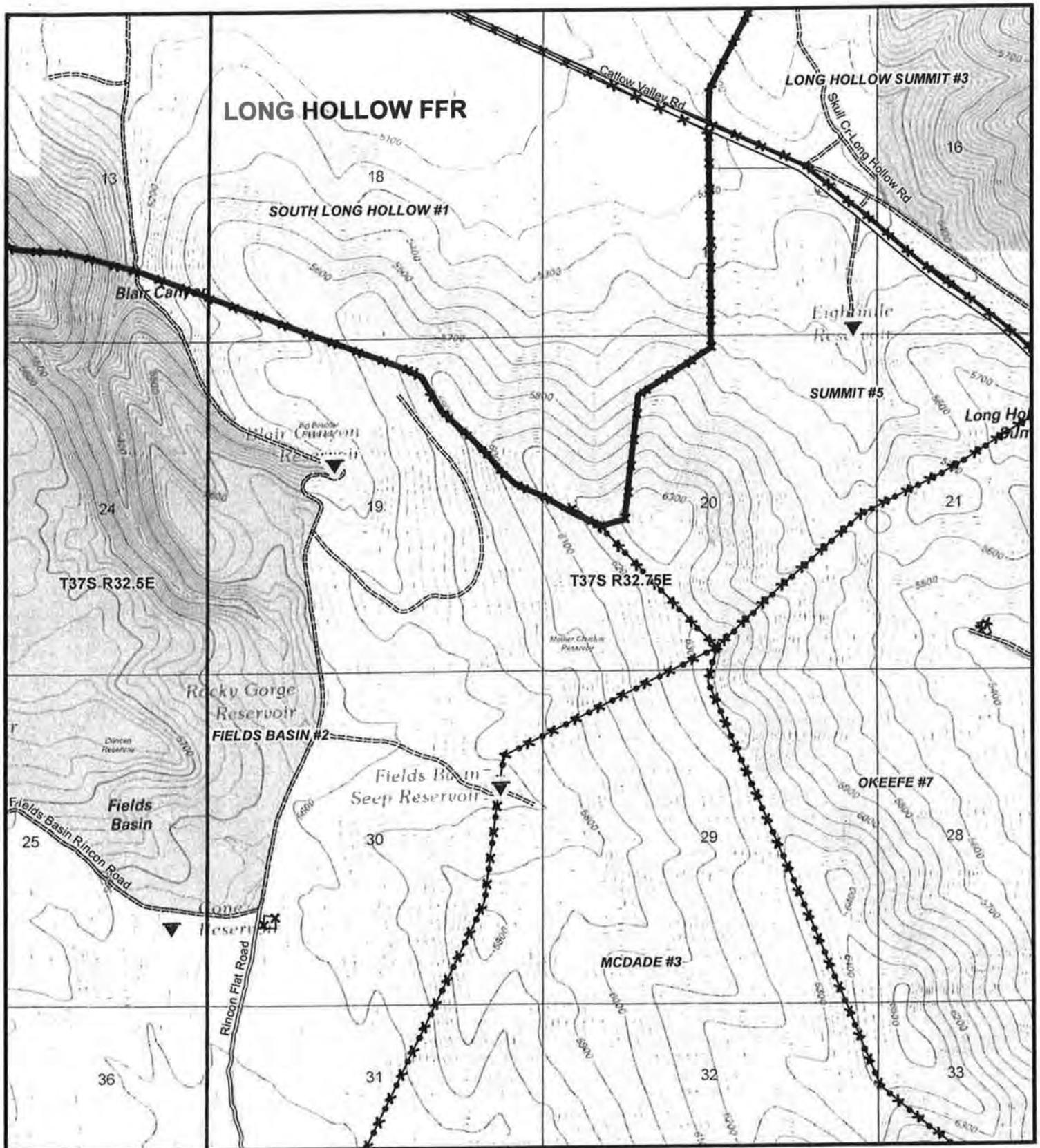
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Date: \_\_\_\_\_

1/8/15

**Decision:** It is my proposed decision to implement the Proposed Action with Project Design Elements (if applicable) as described above.



## Fields Basin CX Reservoir Cleanout

- Reservoirs
- Paved Road
- Allotments
- Pastures
- Fences
- Natural/Unknown Road Surface
- BLM Wilderness Study Area
- Steens Mtn Wilderness  
Bureau of Land Management  
Private/Unknown



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Burns District, Oregon

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