

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

CATEGORICAL EXCLUSION ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW AND APPROVAL

CX Number: DOI-BLM-OR-B060-2015-0025-CX

Date: 3/19/15

Subject Function Code: 6717 (Wells)

Case File/Serial Number or Name: Little Butte Well RIPS #711386 and Reimers Valley Well RIPS #715849 Project Folders

Preparer: Richard Knox, Rangeland Management Specialist

Applicant: Bureau of Land Management/Tule Springs Allotment #6018 Permittees

Title of Proposed Action: Tule Springs Allotment Solar Well Projects

Description of Proposed Action and Project Design Elements:

The Bureau of Land Management (BLM)/Tule Springs Allotment #6018 Permittees propose to maintain, repair, and reconstruct the existing Little Butte Well (built in 1978), Range Improvement Project System (RIPS) #711386, and the Reimers Valley Well (built in 1989), RIP #715849, within the Andrews Resource Area (RA), Burns District (see attached map). The existing wells would have their power sources changed to solar with fence constructed around the wells and solar towers for protection. In addition, one trough will be replaced. The activities would be limited to the existing footprints of the original disturbed areas with no new disturbances; they would be completed in less than one week for each well by 3-4 individuals, after July 1, 2015. The BLM and the Permittees will enter into a Cooperative Range Improvement Agreement to share the work and costs of these projects.

Little Butte Well - install a 30-foot or smaller bottomless water trough to replace the current non-functional 30-foot bottomless water trough. In the past, water was pumped from the well by a generator into the 30-foot bottomless water trough and then overflowed into a reservoir. Currently, the BLM/Permittees propose to install a solar tower to power the water pump for the well. In addition, a small protection fence (30 feet by 30 feet) would be built around the well and solar tower. Water would be pumped from the existing well at the site into the trough and then overflow into the existing reservoir. A small trench about 200 feet long and 1.5 feet wide would be dug in order to place a water pipe from the Well to the trough and from the trough to the reservoir if needed. The BLM Operations Crew (estimated 4 people) would conduct the work between July 1 and October 15. Equipment used would include a backhoe for leveling a spot for the trough and digging a small trench, a boom truck for placement of the solar tower, and a cement truck for hauling cement to the site for the bottom of the trough. A bird ramp would be installed inside the trough to prevent the drowning of small birds, small mammals, and other wildlife. Cultural and botanical resources (if any are discovered during surveys) would be avoided. In the event that cultural resources are uncovered during construction, work would be halted and the District Archeologist notified.

Reimers Valley Well - install a solar pump and solar tower for the existing well and trough. There would be a small (30 feet by 30 feet) protection fence built around the well and solar tower. The BLM Operations Crew (estimated 4 people) or contract crew would conduct the work between July 1 and October 15. Equipment used would include a boom truck for placement of the solar tower and pump. A bird ramp would be installed inside the trough to prevent the drowning of small birds, small mammals, and other wildlife. Cultural and botanical resources (if any are discovered during surveys) would be avoided. In the event that cultural resources are uncovered during construction, work would be halted and the District Archeologist notified.

To minimize opportunities for spread of noxious weeds by seeds or other plant parts, all equipment would be cleaned prior to beginning work on BLM land. Disturbed sites would be monitored closely for two years post-clean for noxious weeds. Any weeds found would 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).

Legal Descriptions: (see attached map)

Little Butte Well - W.M., T. 39 S., R. 36 E., Sec. 07.

Reimers Valley Well - W.M., T. 36 S., R. 35 E., Sec. 33.

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) (*objectives, terms, and conditions*):

Grazing Management Objective 1 (AMU RMP-54). Management actions will provide for sustainable livestock grazing in the AUM that meets allotment management (natural resource) objectives and the [Standards and Guidelines] S&Gs.

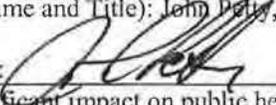
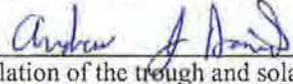
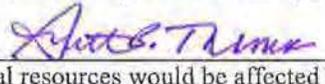
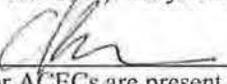
Grazing Management Objective 2 (AMU RMP-54). Implement administrative solutions and rangeland projects to provide proper management for livestock grazing while meeting resource objectives and requirements for S&Gs (USDI 1997a).

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

Bureau of Land Management (BLM) Categorical Exclusion (CX) Reference (516 DM 11.9): N/A

Department of the Interior (DOI) CX Reference (516 DM 2, Appendix 1): 1.7 "Routine and continuing government business, including such things as maintenance 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	
2.1	Have significant impacts on public health or safety.
Specialist (Print Name and Title): John Priddy, Safety Officer	
Signature and Date:  3/30/15	
Rationale: No significant impact on public health or safety. This work is regular and reoccurring maintenance the BLM work crew has done for years; the crew follows safety standards for this type of work.	
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); flood plains (Executive Order 11988); national monuments; migratory birds; and other ecologically significant or critical areas.
<u>Migratory Birds</u>	
Specialist (Print Name and Title): Andrew Daniels, Wildlife Biologist	
Signature and Date:  3/30/15	
Rationale: The installation of the trough and solar panels would cause short term (less than two weeks) disturbance while workers and equipment are at the sites. Work should occur after July 1, so that nesting birds would not be disturbed. There would be no habitat loss for migratory birds since the area has already been used for the same purpose in the past and livestock would still water there during the winter when migratory birds are not present.	
<u>Historic and Cultural Resources</u>	
Specialist (Print Name and Title): Scott Thomas, District Archaeologist	
Signature and Date:  3/30/15	
Rationale: No cultural resources would be affected by the implementation of this project because the activity is projected to occur where original well, pipeline, and trough installation occurred.	
<u>Areas of Critical Environmental Concern (ACEC)/Research Natural Areas (RNA)</u>	
Specialist (Print Name and Title): Caryn Burri, Natural Resource Specialist (NRS) - Botany	
Signature and Date:  3.30.15	
Rationale: No RNAs or ACECs are present in the Project Area.	
<u>Water Resources/Flood Plains</u>	
Specialist (Print Name and Title): Jarod Lemos, NRS - Riparian	
Signature and Date:  3/30/2015	

Rationale: Because of the localized project area within an existing development, water resources and flood plains are not expected to be affected.

Soils, Biological Soil Crust (BSC), Prime Farmlands

Specialist (Print Name and Title): Caryn Burri, NRS - Botany

Signature and Date:

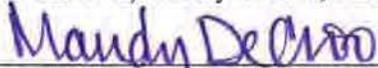
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Rationale: Soils and biological soil crusts would be disturbed with the construction of a 200-foot by 1.5-foot trench for the Little Butte Well; however, the disturbance would be unnoticeable after one to two growing seasons as vegetation re-establishes. There are no Prime Farmlands within the proposed project areas.

Recreation/ Visual Resources

Specialist (Print Name and Title): Mandy DeCruo, Outdoor Recreation Planner

Signature and Date:

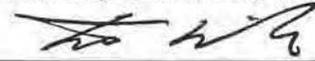
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Rationale: Impacts to recreation and visual resources would be limited to initial disturbance only. Impacts would not affect the texture, line, and color of the land as dictated by Visual Resource Management (VRM) rating.

Wilderness/Wild and Scenic River (WSR) Resources

Specialist (Print Name and Title): Tom Wilcox, Wilderness Specialist

Signature and Date:

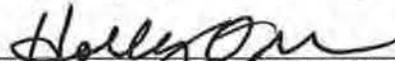
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Rationale: There are no Wilderness, Wilderness Study Areas (WSA), Wild and Scenic Rivers or Lands with Wilderness Characteristics in the proposed project area.

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

Specialist (Print Name and Title): Holly Orr, District Planning and Environmental Coordinator

Signature and Date:

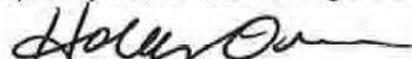
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Rationale: There are no highly controversial environmental effects or unresolved conflicts concerning alternative uses of available resources. The wells are existing features on the landscape. The action is to perform routine and continuing maintenance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

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

Specialist (Print Name and Title): Holly Orr, District Planning and Environmental Coordinator

Signature and Date:

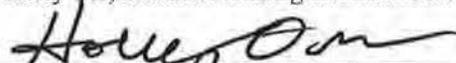
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Rationale: There are no known highly uncertain or potentially significant environment effects or unique or unknown environmental risks. The wells are existing features on the landscape. The action is to perform routine and continuing maintenance on 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 (Print Name and Title): Holly Orr, District Planning and Environmental Coordinator

Signature and Date:

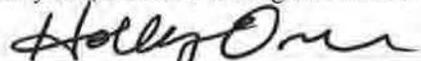
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Rationale: Implementation would not set precedence for future actions or represent a decision in principle about future actions with potentially significant environmental effects. The wells are existing features on the landscape. The action is to perform routine and continuing maintenance on existing facilities.

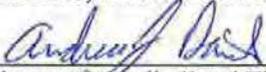
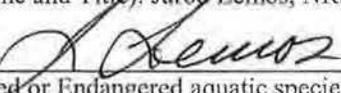
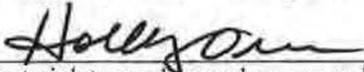
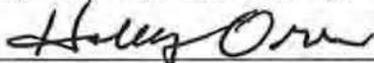
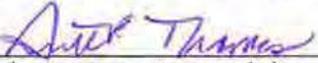
2.6 Have a direct relationship to other actions with individually insignificant but cumulatively significant environmental effects.

Specialist (Print Name and Title): Holly Orr, District Planning and Environmental Coordinator

Signature and Date:

 03/19/15

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

<p>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.</p>
<p>Specialist (Print Name and Title): Scott Thomas, District Archaeologist</p>
<p>Signature and Date:  3/30/15</p>
<p>Rationale: No National Register eligible properties would be affected by the implementation of this project because the activity is projected to occur where original well, pipeline, and trough installation occurred.</p>
<p>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.</p>
<p><u>Endangered or Threatened Species - Fauna</u></p>
<p>Specialist (Print Name and Title): Andrew Daniels, Wildlife Biologist</p>
<p>Signature and Date:  3/30/15</p>
<p>Rationale: There are no known federally listed Threatened, Endangered, Candidate or Proposed fauna species in the area of this project so there are no effects to listed species. There will be no effect to Greater Sage-Grouse as a result of this project.</p>
<p><u>Endangered or Threatened Species - Aquatic</u></p>
<p>Specialist (Print Name and Title): Jarod Lemos, NRS - Riparian</p>
<p>Signature and Date:  3/30/2015</p>
<p>Rationale: Threatened or Endangered aquatic species are not present in the project area.</p>
<p><u>Endangered or Threatened Species - Flora</u></p>
<p>Specialist (Print Name and Title): Caryn Burri, NRS - Botany</p>
<p>Signature and Date:  3-30-15</p>
<p>Rationale: There are no documented federally listed Threatened, Endangered, Candidate or Proposed or Bureau Special Status plant species, nor designated critical habitat, within the proposed project areas.</p>
<p>2.9 Violate a Federal law, or a State, local, or tribal law or requirement imposed for the protection of the environment.</p>
<p>Specialist (Print Name and Title): Holly Orr, District Planning and Environmental Coordinator</p>
<p>Signature and Date:  03/19/15</p>
<p>Rationale: Implementation would not violate any known law or regulation imposed for the protection of the environment. The wells are existing features on the landscape. The action is to perform routine and continuing maintenance on existing facilities.</p>
<p>2.10 Have a disproportionately high and adverse effect on low income or minority populations (Executive Order 12898).</p>
<p>Specialist (Print Name and Title): Holly Orr, District Planning and Environmental Coordinator</p>
<p>Signature and Date:  03/19/15</p>
<p>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.</p>
<p>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).</p>
<p>Specialist (Print Name and Title): Scott Thomas, District Archaeologist</p>
<p>Signature and Date:  3/30/15</p>
<p>Rationale: No sacred sites or access to sacred sites would be affected by the implementation of this project because the activity is essentially replacing existing facilities. No sacred sites are known to occur in the vicinity of the structures in question.</p>
<p>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).</p>

for

Specialist (Print Name and Title): Lesley Richman, District Weed Coordinator

Signature and Date:

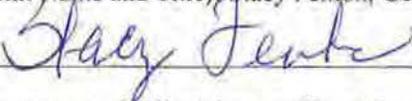
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Rationale: Noxious weeds are known to be present in or in close proximity to this area. Treatments are on-going. The weeds are not present in sufficient quantity to be considered a significant impact at this time.

Additional review (as determined by the Authorized Officer):

Specialist (Print Name and Title): Stacy Fenton, Geographic Information Specialist

Signature:



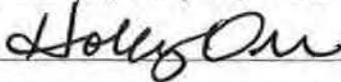
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RMP conformance and CX review confirmation:

Specialist (Print Name and Title): Holly Orr, District Planning and Environmental Coordinator

Signature:



Date:

3/31/15

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 National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) analysis.

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

Signature:



Date:

3/31/15

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

Any applicant, permittee, lessee, or other interested public may protest a proposed decision under 43 Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) 4160.1 and 4160.2, in person or in writing to Rhonda Karges, Field Manager, Andrews/Steens Resource Area, Burns District Office, 28910 Highway 20 West, Hines, Oregon 97738, within 15 days after receipt of such decision. The protest, if filed, should clearly and concisely state the reason(s) why the proposed decision is in error.

A protest electronically transmitted (e.g., email, facsimile, or social media) will not be accepted; a protest must be printed or typed on paper and submitted in person or by certified mail.

In the absence of a protest, the proposed decision will become the final decision of the authorized officer without further notice unless otherwise provided in the proposed decision.

Any applicant, permittee, lessee, or other person whose interest is adversely affected by the final decision may file an appeal of the decision. An appellant may also file a petition for stay of the decision pending final determination on appeal. The appeal and petition for stay must be filed in the office of the authorized officer, as noted above, within 30 days following receipt of the final decision, or within 30 days after the date the proposed decision becomes final. The petition for a stay and a copy of the appeal must also be filed with the Office of Hearings and Appeals at the following address:

United States Department of the Interior
Office of Hearings and Appeals
351 South West Temple, Suite 6.300
Salt Lake City, Utah 84101

The appeal must be in writing and shall state the reasons, clearly and concisely, why the appellant thinks the final decision is in error and also must comply with the provisions of 43 CFR 4.470. The appellant must also serve a copy of the appeal by certified mail on the Office of the Solicitor, U.S. Department of the Interior, 805 SW Broadway, Suite 600, Portland, Oregon 97205, and on any person(s) named (43 CFR 4.421(h)) in the Copies sent to: section of this Decision.

Standards for Obtaining a Stay—except as otherwise provided by law or other pertinent regulation, a petition for a stay of decision pending appeal shall show sufficient justification based on the following standards (43 CFR 4.21(b)):

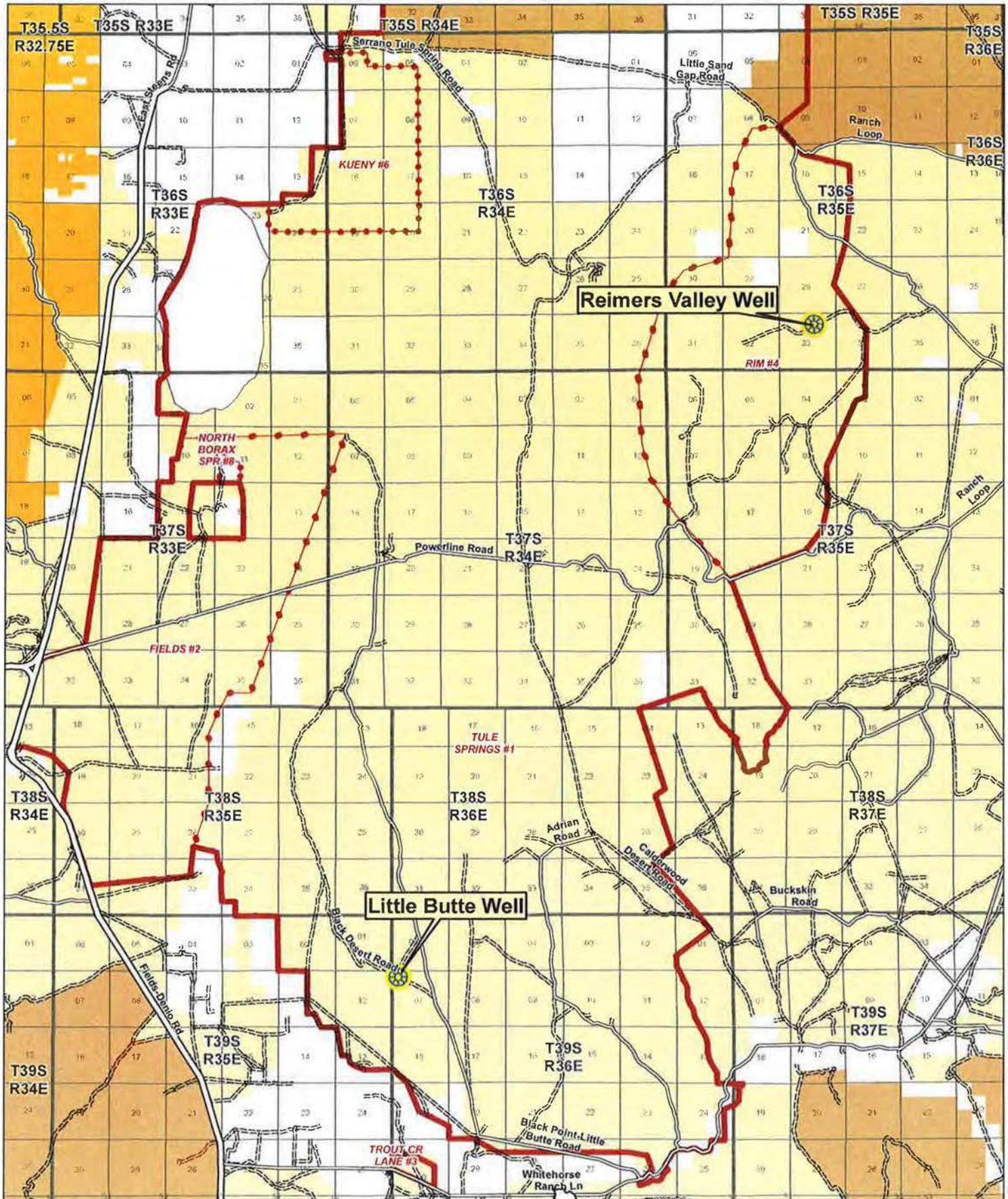
- (1) The relative harm to the parties if the stay is granted or denied,
- (2) The likelihood of the appellant's success on the merits,
- (3) The likelihood of immediate and irreparable harm if the stay is not granted, and
- (4) Whether the public interest favors granting the stay.

As noted above, the petition for stay must be filed in the office of the authorized officer, must be written or typed on paper, and must be served in person or by certified mail at the same time the notice of appeal is served..

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

Signature: Rhonda Karges Date: 3/31/15

Tule Springs Allotment Proposed Solar Well Projects



 Solar Well Project

 Pastures

 Allotments

 BLM Wilderness Study Area

 Steens Mtn Wilderness

 Bureau of Land Management

 Private/Unknown

 Paved Road

 Non-Paved Improved Road

 Natural/Unknown Road Surface



2 Miles

US DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
Bureau of Land Management

Burns District, Oregon

Note: 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 was compiled from various sources and may be updated without notification.
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