North Cove Creek Grazing Lease Renewal
Categorical Exclusion Documentation

(DOI-BLM-OR-M060-2009-0004-CX)

A. Background
BLM Office: Medford District Office
Allotment Name and Number: North Cove Creek #10148

Proposed Action Title: North Cove Creek Grazing Lease Renewal
Location of Proposed Action: 38S 2E Sections 1 and 12
Description of Proposed Action: The proposed action is to renew the North Cove Creek Allotment's 10 year grazing lease using the same grazing preference and Terms and Conditions as the prior lease. The North Cove Creek Allotment has a permitted use of 10 cattle from 7/16-9/15.

B. Land Use Plan Conformance
The grazing program is implemented through provisions in the Medford Grazing Management Program Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) (April 1984) and the Rangeland Program Summary (RPS) Record of Decision (September 1984). Since 1984, additional RPS updates have been published (October 1987, October 1990, October 2001).

The proposed action is in conformance with the applicable LUP because it is specifically provided for in the following LUP decision: USDI Bureau of Land Management 2008. Record of Decision and Resource Management Plan. Medford, OR.

C: Land Health Assessment
The allotment is meeting the following standards and conforming to guidelines (43 CFR 4180.2, *Standards for Rangeland Health and Guidelines for Grazing Management for Public Lands in Oregon and Washington* (1997). The following standards are being met:

Standard 1: Watershed Function- Uplands
Standard 2: Watershed Function- Riparian
Standard 3: Ecological Processes
Standard 4: Water Quality
Standard 5: Native, Threatened or Endangered (T&E) and locally important species

D: Compliance with NEPA:
The Proposed Action is categorically excluded from further documentation under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) in accordance with 516 DM 11.9, as published in the Notice of Final Action to Adopt Revisions to the Bureau of Land Management's Procedures for Managing the NEPA Process, Chapter 11 of the Department of the Interior's Manual Part 516. Federal Register: Volume 72, Number 156 -August 14, 2007, pages 45503-45542. "*Issuance of livestock grazing permits/leases where (a) The new grazing permit/lease is consistent with the use specified on the previous permit/lease, such that (1) the same kind of livestock is grazed, (2) the active use previously authorized is not exceeded, and (3) grazing does not occur more than*

14 days earlier or later than as specified on the previous permit/lease, and (b) The grazing allotment(s) has been assessed and evaluated and the Responsible Official has documented in a determination that the allotment(s) is (1) meeting land health standards, or (2) not meeting land health standards due to factors that do not include existing livestock grazing."

This categorical exclusion review has been conducted by an interdisciplinary team (IDT), which utilized all available allotment information to make a recommendation.

An interdisciplinary team conducted an evaluation of the Standards for Rangeland Health for this Allotment. Additionally, a Determination was made and signed on February 10, 2009 by the Authorized Officer which finds that all five Standards for Rangeland Health (Watershed Function- Uplands, Watershed Function- Riparian, Ecological Processes, Water Quality, and Native, Threatened or Endangered (T&E) and locally important species) are being met.

This categorical exclusion is appropriate in this situation because there are no extraordinary circumstances potentially having effects that may significantly affect the environment as documented in the following table. The proposed action has been reviewed, and none of the extraordinary circumstances described in 516 DM 2, Appendix 2 apply.

CX EXTRAORDINARY CIRCUMSTANCES DOCUMENTATION The proposed categorical exclusion action will:	**YES**	**NO**
2.1 Have significant impacts on public health or safety.		✓
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.		✓
Rationale: Rufous hummingbirds are affected by grazing due to the removal of plants and degradation of shrubs used for nectaring. However, the light level of use that occurs within this allotment will not have an adverse effect on the rufous hummingbird.		
2.3 Have highly controversial environmental effects or involve unresolved conflicts concerning alternative uses of available resources [NEPA Section 102(2)(E)].		✓
2.4 Have highly uncertain and potentially significant environmental effects or involve unique or unknown environmental risks.		✓
2.5 Establish a precedent for future action or represent a decision in principle about future actions with potentially significant environmental effects.		✓
2.6 Have a direct relationship to other actions with individually insignificant but cumulatively significant environmental effects.		✓
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.		✓
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.		
Rationale: There are no effects to federally listed SONC coho salmon or their critical habitat as a result of this action. The allotment is outside the range of federally listed plants defined by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USDI Fish and Wildlife Service, 2003). Current use levels on the allotment are slight-light, regardless of use level northern spotted owls are not likely to be adversely affected by the current grazing.		
2.9 Violate a Federal law, or a State, local, or tribal law or requirement imposed for the protection of the environment.		✓
2.10 Have a disproportionately high and adverse effect on low income or minority populations (Executive Order 12898).		✓
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).		✓
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).		✓
Rationale: There were five occurrences of broadleaved weeds within the allotment however; the current level of livestock grazing will not increase the spread of these weeds. Medusahead and other exotic annual grasses are present in some meadows within the allotment. Exotic annual grass infestations are of concern because they alter the ecological functioning of native plant communities, reduce the value of wildlife habitat, and provide inferior forage for wildlife and livestock (D'Antonio and Vitousek, 1992). The areas most likely to experience conversion from native perennial grasslands to exotic annual grasslands have already undergone conversion, and current stocking rates are unlikely to convert additional areas of remnant native grassland.		

F: Signature

Authorizing Official: _____ Date: 2/10/09
(Signature)

Name: John Gerritsma
Title: Resource Area Manager

G. Contact Person

For additional information concerning this CX review, contact Kimberly Hackett, Rangeland Management Specialist 618-2309.

Kimberly Hackett 2/10/09
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Steve Slavik: Rangeland Management

Ted Hass 2/10/09
Ted Hass: Soils

Jeff Stephens 2/6/09
Jeff Stephens: Wildlife, T&E Animals

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Dulcey Schuster: Botany, Environmental Coordinator

Kevin Kocarek 2/10/09
Kevin Kocarek: Aquatic, Fisheries

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Tim Montfort: Hydrology, Riparian, Wetlands

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