

## **Categorical Exclusion Documentation**

Department of the Interior  
Bureau of Land Management, Spokane District  
1103 North Fancher Road  
Spokane Valley, WA 99212

### **A. Background**

*BLM Office: Wenatchee Field Office*

*Lease/Serial/Case File No.:*

*NEPA Log Number: DOI-BLM-OR134-2012-CX-0041*

*Proposed Action Title: Split Rock Willow Thinning*

*Location of Proposed Action: BLM Split Rock recreation site, located 19 miles west of Oroville, along the Oroville-Loomis highway (T39N, R26E, S18, Lots 7 & 8), in north-central Washington.*

*Description of Proposed Action: BLM will thin the willows at Split Rock Recreation Area. Currently, the willows are encroaching on picnic tables that have been set up along the beach, as well as encroaching on the stairs leading from the parking lot to the beach and the boat ramp. The willows are growing in a tall, dense thicket; they now block the view of Palmer Lake from the visitor kiosk and picnic tables located next to the parking lot. BLM proposes to thin the willows to improve the aesthetics of the recreation area. Thinning the willows will provide better views of the lake and will make sitting at the picnic tables on the beach more enjoyable.*

*Willows will be cut back around the stairs to provide a clear corridor free of hazards such as branches poking people in the face as they descend the stairs. Willows will be cut back along the edges of the boat ramp and its approach road, and within a 10 ft radius around the picnic tables on the beach. Willows will be cut down in small pockets, lined up with the picnic tables located up above the stairs next to the parking lot in order to provide views of the lake from the tables. Willows will be cut retaining roots. Removed willow stems will be installed in adjacent areas lacking willows. Hence limited riparian disturbance will occur. The attached site map for the recreation site shows the relative location of the picnic tables and stairs.*

*Willows will be cut to the base of the trunk, level with the beach, leaving the stump and rootwad in the ground. Leaving the root wads in place minimizes ground disturbance and also allows for bank stabilization to continue. Lake levels fluctuate and the willows protect the sandy shoreline from erosion. Limiting the cutting of willows to the described areas will maintain a healthy population of willows along Palmer Lake. Where practicable, cutting of the willows will take place in late fall to winter, in order to avoid taking out bird nests that may become established in the spring.*

*Cutting back the willows will be part of annual maintenance for the site. Willows will be cut back in the above locations every year or as needed.*

### **B. Land Use Plan Conformance**

*Land Use Plan Name: Spokane Resource Management Plan*

*Date Approved/Amended: Approved 1987/Amended 1992*

*Option 1 (conforms with LUP):* The proposed action is in conformance with the applicable LUP because it is specifically provided for in the following LUP decision(s): This proposed action is subject to the Spokane District Resource Management Plan (1985), its Record of Decision (ROD)(1987), and its RMP Plan Amendment (1992) and ROD (1992), specifically Chapter 2; General Management Objectives: 7: Manage public lands for increasing recreational uses and keep access routes open for a variety of recreational opportunities/experiences, including both motorized and nonmotorized recreation activities.

OR

*(Option 2: not explicitly provided for in the LUP)* 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*):

**C. Compliance with NEPA:**

The proposed action is categorically excluded from further documentation under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) in accordance with

516 DM 2.1.7, 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).

This categorical exclusion is appropriate in this situation because there are no extraordinary circumstances potentially having effects that may significantly affect the environment. The proposed action has been reviewed, and none of the extraordinary circumstances described in 43 CFR 46.215 apply, as shown in the following table:

<b>CX EXTRAORDINARY CIRCUMSTANCES DOCUMENTATION</b> The proposed categorical exclusion action will:	<b>YES</b>	<b>NO</b>
(a) Have significant impacts on public health or safety.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
(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); floodplains (Executive Order 11988); national monuments; migratory birds; and other ecologically significant or critical areas.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
The potential impacts to migratory birds were considered and no significant impacts are expected from the proposed activity. Minor brush clearing would not measurably alter the availability of suitable habitat within the area and conducting this activity outside the summer breeding season would eliminate the potential of adversely affecting nest success.		
(c) Have highly controversial environmental effects or involve unresolved conflicts concerning alternative uses of available resources [NEPA Section	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

102(2)(E)].		
(d) Have highly uncertain and potentially significant environmental effects or involve unique or unknown environmental risks.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
(e) Establish a precedent for future action or represent a decision in principle about future actions with potentially significant environmental effects.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
(f) Have a direct relationship to other actions with individually insignificant but cumulatively significant environmental effects.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
(g) Have significant impacts on properties listed, or eligible for listing, on the National Register of Historic Places as determined by either the bureau.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
(h) 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.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
<p>The potential impacts to threatened, endangered, or proposed species was considered and no impacts were identified. Both grizzly bears (federally threatened) and gray wolves (federally endangered) may occasionally pass through the surrounding area, but they are not known to regularly use the developed recreation site. Additionally, no designated critical habitat occurs within the project area</p> <p>Kokanee salmon in lake but no sockeye. No listed fish species known for this lake system. Willows will be cut retaining roots. Where practicable, removed willow stems will be installed in adjacent areas lacking willows. Hence limited riparian disturbance will occur.</p>		
(i) Violate a Federal law, or a State, local, or tribal law or requirement imposed for the protection of the environment.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
(j) Have a disproportionately high (and adverse effect on low income or minority populations (Executive Order 12898).	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
(k) 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).	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
(l) 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	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

may promote the introduction, growth, or expansion of the range of such species (Federal Noxious Weed Control Act and Executive Order 13112).		

**F: Signature**

/s/ Linda Coates-Markle

September 18, 2012

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(Authorizing Official Signature)

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(Date)

Name: Linda Coates-Markle

Title: Field Manager

**G. Contact Person**

For additional information concerning this CX review, contact Holly Eagleston, Outdoor Recreation Planner, Spokane District Wenatchee Field Office, at 509-665-2133.

**Note:** A separate decision document must be prepared for the action covered by the CX.