

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT - ALTURAS FIELD OFFICE

DECISION RECORD FOR A CATEGORICALLY EXCLUDED ACTION

A. Background

BLM Office: Alturas Field Office LLCAN02000

Lease/Serial/Case File No.: CA320-NEPA-08-32

Proposed Action Title/Type: Fitzhugh Creek Wildlife Fence Modification

Location of Proposed Action: This project is located approximately 10 miles southeast of Alturas, California, in Modoc County, and within the Fitzhugh Creek corridor.

Mount Diablo Meridian

T. 41 N., R. 13 E., Secs. 23, 24, 27, and 28;

T. 41 N., R. 14 E., Secs. 18 and 19.

See Attached Maps

Description of Proposed Action:

The Bureau of Land Management, Alturas Field Office will maintain, rebuild, or improve fence crossings across the Fitzhugh Creek corridor at livestock crossings to prevent livestock access into the wildlife/riparian enclosures on the creek.

Two large barbed wire fence enclosures are in place on the Fitzhugh Creek corridor. The lower enclosure has: 8 miles of fence, is approximately 300 acres in size, protects 3.5 miles of creek, has 3 livestock crossings, and was constructed in 1980. All livestock crossings have 3/4" steel cable spanning the creek with juniper limbs or PVC pipe suspended from the cable to prevent livestock access into the creek and riparian areas. Two of these crossings are constructed from hanging juniper limbs and posts to restrict livestock from the creek, while diversion crossings are constructed with hanging 4" diameter PVC pipe. The upper enclosure has: 2.5 miles of fence, protects 1 mile of creek and 150 acres of riparian habitat, has one livestock crossing, and was constructed in 1986. High rock rims prevent livestock access to another 1.5 miles of the creek and protects an additional 150 acres of stream and riparian resources.

These proposed crossings will utilize the same cables that currently hang across the creek. The fences that hang off of the cables and cross the creek are designed to allow debris to pass under the fence but restrict livestock from the wildlife and riparian areas. Some of the crossings will only need a few hanging juniper limbs or hanging PVC pipe replaced where limbs or pipes are missing. Other crossings or boundary fences will be reconstructed of 2" x 4" wood material, but still utilize the same footprints and cables as the old crossings. All fences within the stream corridor and enclosure fences will be maintained as needed.

The work will be done manually by Cal Fire Conservation Crews and/or the BLM fuels crew.

Any salvageable metal T-posts and wire will be returned to the Alturas Field Office. Non-useable metal materials will be recycled at the Alturas recycling center.

Lower Exclosure

At the western BLM/private boundary, the fence will be rebuilt on the original hanging cables with 2" x 4" wood posts packed to the site by local Conservation Crews. The Crews will drive to within 1 mile of the site on the Little Juniper Reservoir Road, then walk west along the south rim for 1 mile to the work site.

The Little Juniper crossing will be accessed by vehicles on the Little Juniper reservoir road to the south rim and walk ¼ mile to the creek. Work will consist of replacing 5-10 juniper limbs on each existing cross fence, and tightening up the adjacent barbed wire fence. The juniper to be used will be cut from trees at the site.

Maintenance on the west fence of Willow crossing will consist of replacing 5-10 juniper limbs cut from trees on site. The adjacent barbed wire on the west and east cross fences will be tightened as needed. Vehicles will use the Signal Butte Road on the north side of the creek, park at the antelope trap, and walk 400' south to the creek.

Within the lower wildlife/riparian exclosure area, approximately ½ mile of down barbed wire fence that is hazardous to wildlife will be removed, wooden posts would be left standing intact.

One quarter mile of standing and non-functional barbed wire fence will be removed and utilized to construct ¼ mile of barbed wire fence in an adjacent location to prevent livestock access into the lower 200 acre wildlife/riparian exclosure area. BLM's wildlife specifications (BLM Fencing Manual H-1741-1) will be used for the fence.

Upper Exclosure

Sheep Bridge crossing maintenance will consist of replacing a total of 20 juniper limbs on the east and west cross fences, and the limbs will be cut from trees on site. Adjacent barbed wire fences will also be tightened. Vehicle access will be from the Jim Creek Road to Yankee Jim Ranch and park on the southwest boundary of the ranch. The crew will tighten the existing north/south fence, then walk 1 mile west to Sheep Bridge crossing, following an existing 4x4 road on the north rim.

The upper or eastern boundary fence between BLM and California Department of Fish and Game will have 5-10 juniper limbs replaced, which will be cut on site, and the adjacent wire fence would be tightened. Access will be from the Jim Creek Road to the southwest corner of Yankee Jim Ranch, park and walk ¼ mile to the site.

Mitigation

1. Prior to entry on public lands, clean all vehicles and equipment of extraneous vegetative material to prevent spread of noxious weeds.

2. Noxious weeds will be treated prior to and after construction and disturbance.

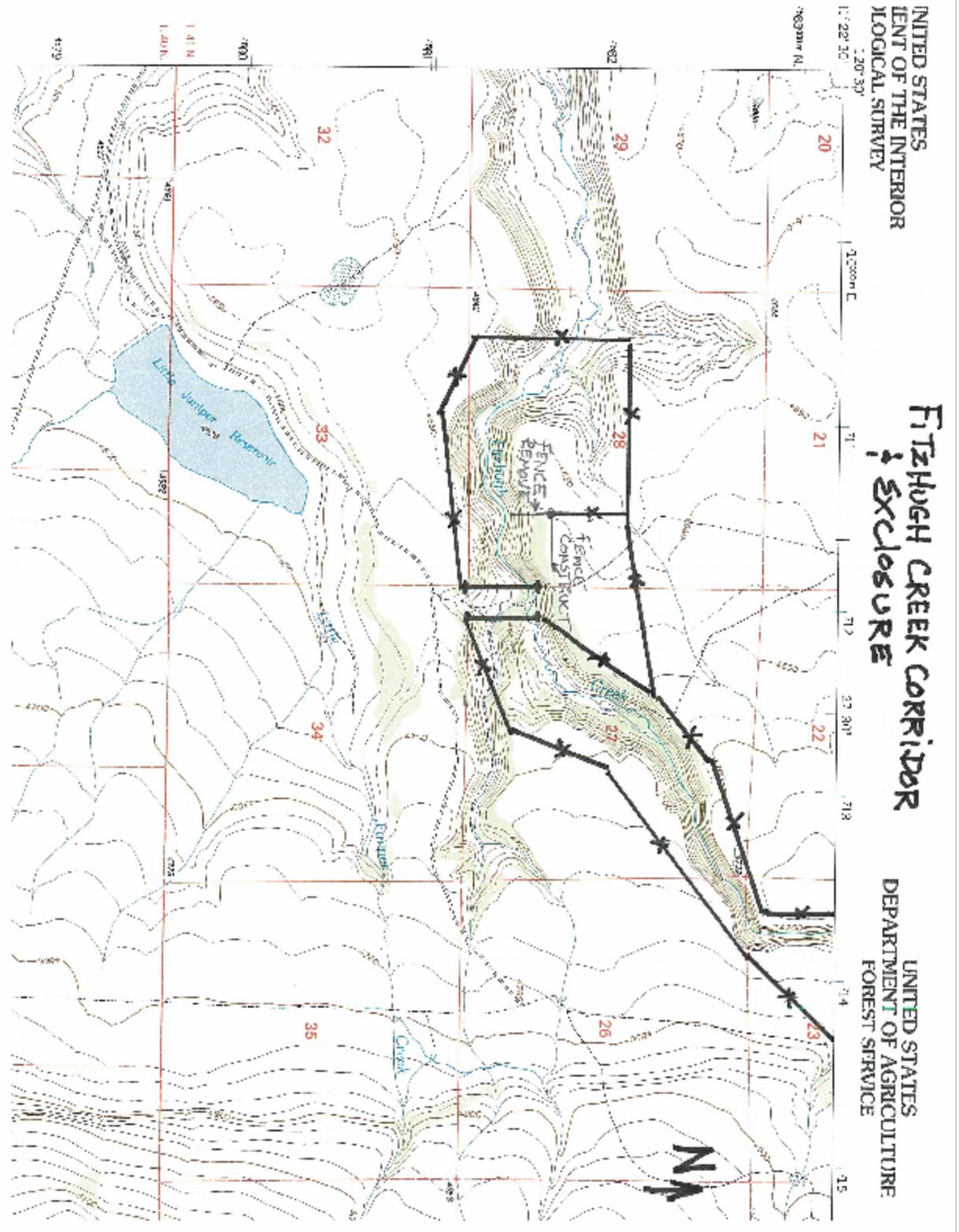
3. Wildlife Stipulations:

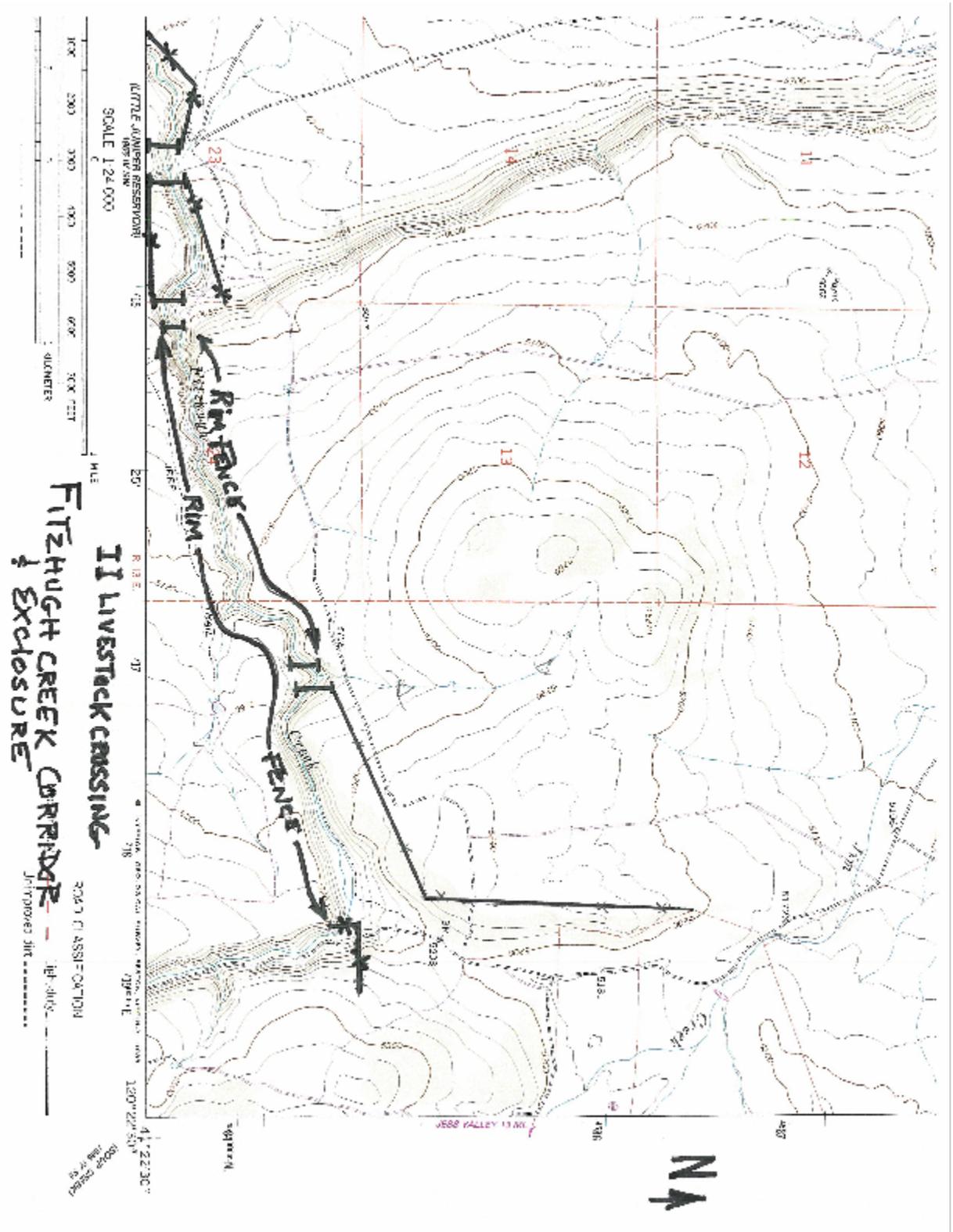
Sage-grouse:

- All work activities will be conducted outside sage-grouse breeding season- March 1- June 15th.
- New segments of fence will have deflectors added to the barbed wire (See Attached).

Golden Eagles:

- An eagle/raptor survey is required prior to the commencement of project activities to identify active nest along Fitzhugh Creek. If an active nest is identified, restrictions according to



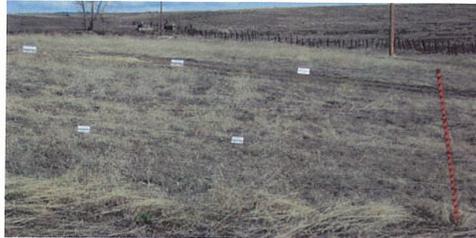




Friendly Designs

Visibility (CONTINUED)

Another relatively inexpensive alternative is offered by the Sutton Avian Research Center in Oklahoma using "undersill" or trim strips of white vinyl siding cut into 3" pieces. The undersill siding strips have a lip that can be snapped onto barbed-wire fence, and the vinyl strips can be easily cut with tin snips or a miter saw. The siding pieces are lightweight and durable, and a long run of fence can be marked quickly and easily.



Cristina Page

Durable Markers for Wire Fence

- Several 12' strips of "undersill" or trim strips of white vinyl siding, available at home hardware centers.
- Cut strips to 3" lengths. Use tin snips for small projects, or use a 10" miter saw with a 200-tooth blade to cut up to eight pieces at a time for larger projects.
- One 12' siding strip yields 48 pieces.
- Snap pieces onto top and middle wires: at least four pieces on the top wire per fence section, and three pieces on the middle wire per section.



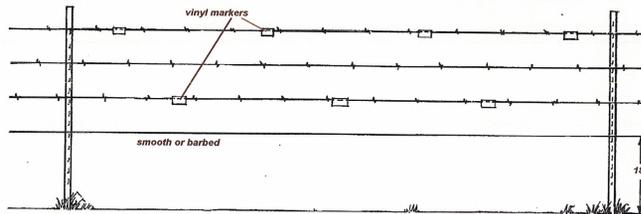
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Durable and lightweight fence markers can be cut from strips of vinyl siding trim. The trim strip has a lip that easily snaps onto fence wires.

DURABLE MARKERS ON WIRE FENCE



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