

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

CATEGORICAL EXCLUSION DOCUMENTATION

A. Background

BLM Office: Alturas Field Office LLCAN02000

NEPA File No.: DOI-BLM-CA-N020-2012-0014-CX

Proposed Action Title/Type: Peterson Lease Transfer

Location of Proposed Action: The Peterson Allotment consists of 400 acres of public land and is located within Shasta County, California, approximately 5 miles southeast of Fall River Mills, California:

Mount Diablo Meridian

T. 36 N., R. 5 E.,

Parts of Sections 25, 27 & 34.

See attached map.

Description of Proposed Action: Transfer of the Peterson Allotment grazing lease from the Thomason Family Trust to Spencer Thomas. Spencer Thomas is a co-owner of the Thomason Family trust and he is leasing the base from the Trust; the term of the Lease is from February 20, 2009 to February 20, 2016; the term of the grazing lease will not exceed the term of the lease/permit renewal as approved in Environmental Assessment # CA-320-06-31. The base property consists of the approximately 1,080 acres shown on the attached map. The term of the permit will be for the term of the Lease, ending February 20, 2019. The authorized use will remain unchanged. An Environmental Assessment was approved to renew the grazing lease for the Peterson Allotment (CA-320-NEPA-06-31, Grazing Permit Renewal West Side Group). This grazing authorization is classified as a Section 15 Grazing Lease as defined under the Taylor Grazing Act of 1934 (43 USC 315).

The mandatory terms and conditions for the permit are as follows:

Livestock		Grazing Period		% PL	AUMs		
Number	Class	Begin	End		Active	Suspend- ed	Total
18	Cattle	4/15	6/30	100%	46	0	46

B. Land Use Plan Conformance

This action conforms to the Alturas Resource Management Plan (RMP) and Record of Decision (ROD), approved on April 17, 2008 because it is specifically provided for or is clearly consistent with the RMP objectives and decisions.

C. Compliance with the National Environmental Policy Act

The Proposed Action is categorically excluded from further documentation under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) in accordance with H-1790-1-National Environmental Policy Act Handbook, Appendix 4, p. 150:

D. Rangeland Management

1. Approval of transfers of grazing preference.

D. Signature

This categorical exclusion is appropriate for this action because there are no extraordinary circumstances potentially having effects that may significantly affect the environment. The Proposed Action has been scoped by an interdisciplinary team of specialists in the Alturas Field Office and there were no issues or unresolved conflicts identified. I have determined that the above described project is a categorical exclusion, in conformance with the Alturas RMP, and does not require further NEPA analysis.

/S/

4/19/2012

Timothy J. Burke
Field Manager

Date

E. Contact

For more information, contact the Range Staff, at (530) 233-4666

Attachments:

Allotment Map

Base Property map

Review of Extraordinary Circumstances

The Department of the Interior Manual 516 2.3A (3) requires review of the following “extraordinary circumstances” (516 DM 2 Appendix 2) to determine if an otherwise categorically excluded action would require additional environmental analysis/documentation.

Would the proposed action: (YES or NO)

- 1) Have significant impacts on public health or safety.

Yes No

Date: 03/01/12 MPD

Comments:

- 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.

Yes No

Date: 03/01/12 MPD

Comments: No significant impacts to drinking water aquifers, prime farmlands, wetlands, floodplains, or other ecologically significant areas.

Comments: No recreation, wild and scenic rivers, or wilderness areas will be affected by the proposed

transfer project. In 2012 the wilderness characteristics inventory was updated for this area, and no lands with wilderness characteristics were found within this small project area (Approximately 3000 contiguous acres of public land in the area-approximately. 640 acres in this project area). There will be no further discussion or assessment of this issue. For further information see file folder (CA-NO-02-323) in the wilderness case files. 3/22/2012, CS

Comments: No adverse effects to historic or cultural resources. 4/10/2012, DJS

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

Yes No

Date: 04/12/12, MPD

Comments:

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

Yes No

Date: 04/12/12, MPD

Comments:

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

Yes No

Date: 04/12/12, MPD

Comments:

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

Yes No

Date: 04/12/12, MPD

Comments:

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.

Yes No

Date: 4/10/2012, DJS

Comments:

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.

Yes No

Date: 03/01/12 MPD; 04/08/12 ADK

Comments: No impacts to any listed or proposed listed T&E species or their critical habitat.

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

Yes No

Date: 04/12/12, MPD

Comments:

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

Yes No

Date: 04/12/12, MPD

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).

Yes No

Date: 4/10/2012, DJS

Comments:

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).

Yes No

Date: 03/14/2012, AMU

Comments: The Peterson Allotment #01401 grazing permit/lease transfer would have a low probability to 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. A review of the Alturas Field Office noxious weeds database shows no existing noxious weed sites within the Peterson Allotment. Although, coordination with Fall River RCD Kelly Schuler, informed the BLM of a squarrose knapweed site on the base property that was treated last year by Spencer Thomas. Kelly also thought that the 40 acre piece of BLM land on the east side of the private property may also be infested with squarrose knapweed. It was decided to inventory both the base property and the Peterson Allotment this field season to get an accurate account of the squarrose knapweed infestations. The BLM's weed crews have inventoried and treated 4 yellow starthistle sites in 2010 and 2011 along the road north of the Peterson Ranch. Both yellow starthistle and squarrose knapweed should be surveyed for on the Peterson Ranch. The BLM will continue to coordinate with Fall River RCD (Kelly Schuler) and Spencer Thomas (owner) on the inventory and control of noxious weeds on the Peterson Ranch and Peterson Allotment to ensure noxious weeds do not become established and/or to prevent any further spread of existing infestations found during the inventory and treatment process.

Reviewers:

Botany/Riparian

Date

Cultural Resources

Date

Wildlife

Date

Invasive Species

Date

Recreation/Wilderness

Date