



# United States Department of the Interior



## BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT

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## Decision Record

### Kirkwood Meadow Irrigation Ditch Maintenance (DOI-BLM-CAC-070-2010-0012-EA)

#### Introduction and Background

The Bureau of Land Management (BLM) Bishop Field Office intends to perform planned maintenance activities on the Kirkwood Meadow Irrigation Ditch in the vicinity of Conway Summit in Mono County, California. Planned maintenance activities would involve the use of a small backhoe to clean, repair and improve the existing irrigation ditch system to restore it to a fully functional state. All planned maintenance work would be restricted to the immediate ditch edge and the footprint of the existing ditch network. As a result of planned maintenance work, the continued productivity and availability of irrigated wet meadow habitat at Kirkwood Meadow would be ensured over the long-term.

The purpose of the proposed project is to maintain and improve the distribution capabilities of the existing irrigation ditch system for Kirkwood Meadow. Kirkwood Meadow is an irrigated wet meadow complex that provides important habitat for a diverse suite of wildlife species including Greater Sage-Grouse (*Centrocercus urophasianus*), migratory mule deer (*Odocoileus hemionus*), and a wide-variety of other meadow dependent species. Kirkwood Meadow is also a key component of the Conway Summit Area of Critical Environmental Concern (ACEC) and a primary contributor to the scenic quality of the ACEC. The persistence of the high quality wildlife habitat and scenic values associated with Kirkwood Meadow is dependent upon continued surface irrigation provided by the existing ditch system. The proposed project is designed to benefit meadow dependent wildlife and plant species in the project vicinity and to preserve the existing scenic quality of the Conway Summit ACEC.

#### Decision and Rationale

Based on the information and analysis provided in environmental assessment DOI-BLM-CAC-070-2010-12-EA and the associated finding of no significant impact, I have determined that implementation of the proposed action as designed would not result in any significant adverse effects on the human environment and therefore an environmental impact statement is not required. I

have also determined that the proposed action conforms to, and is consistent with, the overall guidance and management direction provided by the Bishop Resource Management Plan (RMP), approved March 25, 1993. The Bishop RMP has been reviewed, and the proposed action conforms to the land use plan terms and conditions as required by 43 CFR 1610.5.

Implementation of this project will ensure the continued productivity and availability of high quality wet meadow habitat at Kirkwood Meadow. The proposed project will benefit Greater Sage-Grouse within the Bi-state distinct population segment; a BLM designated sensitive wildlife species and candidate for listing under the Endangered Species Act of 1973. Implementation of this project will also benefit other meadow dependent wildlife and plant species within the project vicinity and ensure the long-term preservation of the existing scenic character of Kirkwood Meadow which is a primary contributor to the scenic value of the Conway Summit ACEC.

The project will have negligible effects on air quality, global climate change, invasive non-native plant species and soils.

The project will have no effect on any threatened or endangered species, nor will it result in the destruction or adverse modification of any designated critical habitat.

Therefore, it is my decision to implement the proposed action as designed, and subject to, the following project implementation stipulations as outlined in the environmental assessment:

- ❖ Primary access to the project site will be limited to existing roads. Off-road equipment travel and use will be restricted to the immediate ditch edge and the footprint of the existing ditch network. Disturbed areas and equipment tracks will be re-contoured by hand following the completion of ditch maintenance work.
- ❖ All project equipment will be equipped with spark arrestors and mufflers.
- ❖ No toxic materials or fluids will be used or disposed at the site.
- ❖ All project equipment will be pre-washed with a high powered water spray device to remove any weed seed prior to site access. All sediment removed from the ditch and not used for ditch maintenance work will be removed from the site.
- ❖ To protect breeding and nesting birds, including Greater Sage-Grouse, no project work will occur between March 1<sup>st</sup> and August 15<sup>th</sup>.
- ❖ If previously undiscovered archaeological resources are encountered during project implementation, operations will be immediately stopped and the Bishop Field Office manager and archaeologist notified. The project will be

modified to avoid impacts to any late discoveries of archaeological resources prior to the resumption of work.

### **Administrative Remedies**

Administrative remedies may be available to those who believe they will be adversely affected by this decision. Appeals may be made to the Office of Hearings and Appeals, Office of the Secretary, U.S. Department of the Interior, Board of Land Appeals (Board) in strict compliance with the regulations in 43 CFR Part 4. Notices of appeal must be filed in this office within 30 days after publication of this decision. If a notice of appeal does not include a statement of reasons, such statement must be filed with this office and the Board within 30 days after the notice of appeal is filed. The notice of appeal and any statement of reasons, written arguments, or briefs must also be served upon the Regional Solicitor, Pacific Southwest Region, U.S. Department of the Interior, 2800 Cottage Way, E-1712, Sacramento, CA 95825.

### **Project Contact**

For additional information about this decision and project implementation, please contact Casey Boyd, BLM Natural Resource Specialist, at 351 Pacu Lane, Suite 100, Bishop, CA 93514, phone 760-872-5025; or myself, Bernadette Lovato, BLM Bishop Field Manager, at 351 Pacu Lane, Suite 100, Bishop, CA 93514, phone: 760-872-5011.

/s/ Bernadette Lovato  
Bernadette Lovato  
Bishop Field Manager

9/7/10  
Date