United States Department of the Interior
Bureau of Land Management

Environmental Assessment CA-180-14-36

Finding of No Significant Impact

Electra #04114, French Hill #04116, Blue Moon #04127, High Mountain #04135, North Fork Mokelumne #04154, Oneto Ranch #04155, Volunteer Gulch #04160, and Pine Peak #04189 Grazing Authorizations

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July 2014

Finding of No Significant Impact
Mother Lode Field Office

FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT DETERMINATION:

Based upon a review of the EA and the supporting documents, I find that the proposed action is not a major federal action, and will not significantly affect the quality of the human environment, individually or cumulatively with other actions in the general area. No environmental effects meet the definition of significance in context or intensity as defined in 40 CFR 1508.27 and do not exceed those effects described in the Sierra RMP. Therefore, an environmental impact statement is not needed. This finding is based on the context and intensity of the project as described:

Context: The project is a site-specific action cumulatively (all 8 allotments), directly involving approximately 2,100 acres of BLM administered land that by itself does not have international, national, regional, or state-wide importance.

Intensity: The following discussion is organized around the Ten Significance Criteria described in 40 CFR 1508.27 and incorporated into BLM's Critical Elements of the Human Environment list (H-1790-1), and supplemental Instruction Memorandum, Acts, regulations and Executive Orders. The following have been considered in evaluating intensity for this proposal:

1. **Impacts may be both beneficial and adverse**. The proposed action would impact resources as described in the EA. None of the environmental effects discussed in detail in the EA and associated appendices are considered significant, nor do the effects exceed those described in the Sierra RMP FEIS.

2. **The degree to which the selected alternative will affect public health or safety**. No health and safety issues are associated with the proposed action.

3. **Unique characteristics of the geographic area such as proximity to historic or cultural resources, park lands, prime farm lands, wetlands, wilderness, wild and scenic rivers, or ecologically critical areas**. The allotments are not located within park lands, prime farm lands, wetlands, wilderness, wild and scenic rivers, or ecologically critical areas. No adverse impacts to cultural values were identified.

4. **The degree to which the effects on the quality of the human environment are likely to be highly controversial**. There is no scientific controversy over the nature of the impacts.

5. **The degree to which the possible effects on the human environment are highly uncertain or involve unique or unknown risks**. The project is not unique or unusual. The BLM has experience implementing similar actions in similar areas. The environmental effects to the human environment are fully analyzed in the EA. There are no predicted effects on the human environment that are considered to be highly uncertain or involve unique or unknown risks.

6. **The degree to which the action may establish a precedent for future actions with significant effects or represents a decision in principle about a future consideration.** The actions considered in the selected alternative are not precedent setting. They were considered

by the interdisciplinary team within the context of past, present, and reasonably foreseeable future actions. A complete analysis of the direct, indirect, and cumulative effects of the selected alternative and all other alternatives is described in Chapter 3 of the EA.

7. **Whether the action is related to other actions with individually insignificant but cumulatively significant impacts – which include connected actions regardless of land ownership.** The interdisciplinary team evaluated the possible actions in context of past, present and reasonably foreseeable actions. The proposed action has low potential to cause adverse cumulative impacts. Even the elimination of grazing would have minor cumulative socio-economic effect because of the relatively small size and economic input of the grazing use that would be authorized.

8. **The degree to which the action may adversely affect districts, sites, highways, structures, or other objects listed in or eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places or may cause loss or destruction of significant scientific, cultural, or historical resources.** Section 106 NHPA compliance is still ongoing but the goal is to avoid adverse effects to cultural resources listed on or eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places, or cause loss or destruction of significant scientific, cultural, or historical resources. A cultural inventory has been completed for the proposed action in accordance with Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA). It is anticipated that the BLM will reach a finding of "no historic properties affected" pursuant to the statewide Protocol Agreement (2014) between BLM California and the State Historic Preservation Officer.

9. **The degree to which the action may adversely affect an endangered or threatened species or its habitat that has been determined to be critical under the Endangered Species Act of 1973, or the degree to which the action may adversely affect: 1) a proposed to be listed endangered or threatened species or its habitat, or 2) a species on BLM's sensitive species list**. Although elderberry bushes (potential host plant for the valley elderberry longhorn beetle, a species listed as threatened under the federal Endangered Species Act) occurs on one of the eight allotments, there is either no evidence that these bushes are being degraded as a result of grazing or there are no indications of valley elderberry beetle presence (exit holes). The Blue Moon and High Mountain allotments has a BLM sensitive plant species (different ones on each allotment) occurring on it. The two BLM sensitive plants are not undergoing grazing impacts. Therefore, the proposed action is not anticipated to affect endangered or threatened species or their habitat, or BLM sensitive species.

10. **Whether the action threatens a violation of a federal, state, or local, regulation or policy imposed for the protection of the environment, where non-federal requirements are consistent with federal requirements.** The project does not violate any known federal, state, local or tribal law or requirement imposed for the protection of the environment. State, local, and tribal interests were given the opportunity to participate in the environmental analysis process. Furthermore, letters were sent to appropriate Native American tribes concerning consulting party status, and there was no response from any of the tribes. In addition, the project is consistent with applicable land management plans, policies, and programs.

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William S. Haigh, Mother Lode Field Manager Date

ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT
LIVESTOCK GRAZING AUTHORIZATION

EA # CA-180-14-36

Electra #04114 (Cuneo)
French Hill #04116 (Dell Orto)
Blue Moon #04127 (Gann)
High Mountain #04135 (Chatom Vineyards)
North Fork Mokelumne #04154 (Oneto)
Oneto Ranch #04155 (Oneto Partnership)
Volunteer Gulch #04160 (Porteous)
Pine Peak #04189 (Ferrara)

Mother Lode Field Office
July 2014

INTRODUCTION

This Environmental Assessment (EA) is prepared to disclose and analyze the environmental consequences of re-authorizing a livestock grazing lease as proposed in Alternative 1 on the Electra #04114 (previously Cuneo), French Hill #04116 (previously Dell Orto), Blue Moon #04127, High Mountain #04135 (previously Chatom), North Fork Mokelumne #04154 (previously Oneto), Oneto Ranch #04155 (previously Oneto Partnership), Volunteer Gulch #04160 (previously Porteous), and Pine Peak #04189 (previously Sanders). The EA is a site-specific analysis of potential impacts that could result with the implementation of one of the alternatives. The EA assists the BLM in project planning and ensuring compliance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), and in compliance with other laws and policies affecting the alternatives. If the decision maker determines that the proposed action has "significant" impacts following the analysis in the EA, then an EIS would be prepared for the project. If not, a grazing decision will be issued along with a FONSI statement, documenting the reasons why implementation of the selected alternative would not result in "significant" environmental impacts.

Background

Table 1

Name	County	Acres	Type and # of Livestock	Season of Use	AUMs	Current Exp. Date
Electra - 04114	Amador – See maps for specific allotment area	Current – 237 Proposed – 198	6 Cows Proposed – Same	Current – 12/1 – 5/31 Proposed – 9/1 – 5/31	Current – 36 Proposed – 54	2/28/14
French Hill - 04116	Calaveras – See maps for specific allotment area	Current – 1062 acres Proposed – 247	Current – 5 cows Proposed – 8 cows	Current – Year-round Proposed – 4/1 – 6/30	Current - 60 Proposed - 25	2/28/16
Blue Moon - 04127	Mariposa – See maps for specific allotment area	Current – 80 Proposed – Same	Current – 10 cows Proposed – Same	Current – 1/1 – 4/30 Proposed – Same	Current - 40 Proposed – Same	2/28/16
High Mountain 04135	Calaveras – See maps for specific allotment area	Current – 610 Proposed – Same	Current – 8 cows 6 cows Proposed – Same	Current – 2/1 – 2/28 3/1 – 5/31 Proposed – Same	Current – 26 Proposed – Same	2/28/14
North Fork Mokelumne – 04154	Amador – See maps for specific allotment area	Current Total – 663 North Fork Parcel 1 – 614 North Fork Parcel 2 – 49	Current – 7 cows	Current – Year-round	Current – 84	2/28/16

		Proposed – Same	Proposed – Same	Proposed – Same	Proposed -- Same	
Oneto Ranch – 04155	Amador – See maps for specific allotment area	Current – 85 Proposed – Same	Current – 1 cow Proposed – Same	Current – Year-round Proposed – Same	Current – 12 Proposed – Same	2/28/14
Volunteer Gulch – 04160	Calaveras – See maps for specific allotment area	Current – 107 Proposed – Same	Current – 1 cow Proposed – 3 cows	Current – Year-round Proposed – 3/1 – 6/30	Current – 12 Proposed – Same	2/28/14
Pine Peak – 04189	Calaveras – See maps for specific allotment area	Current – 91 Proposed – Same	Current – 3 horses Proposed – Same	Current – 12/1 – 5/31 Proposed – Same	Current – 18 Proposed – Same	2/28/14

Purpose and Need for the Action

The purpose of the action is to consider whether to authorize grazing on the Electra allotment #04114 (previously Cuneo), French Hill allotment #04116 (previously Dell Orto), Blue Moon allotment #04127, High Mountain #04135 (previously Chatom), North Fork Mokelumne allotment #04154 (previously Oneto), Oneto Ranch allotment #04155 (previously Oneto Partnership), Volunteer Gulch allotment #04160 (previously Porteous), and Pine Peak allotment #04189 (previously Sanders). If authorized, grazing would be in accordance with 43 CFR 4100 and consistent with the provisions of the Taylor Grazing Act, Public Rangelands Improvement Act, and Federal Land Policy and Management Act. The purpose of the action is also to ensure that all authorizations implement provisions of, and are in conformance with, the Sierra Resource Management Plan (February 2008), and are in conformance with the Central California Standards and Guidelines for Rangeland Health (2000).

The action is needed to respond to expired leases and leases that will expire within the next couple years.

Scoping and Issues

The proposed action underwent internal, interdisciplinary scoping. Possible special status plant issues were raised for the Blue Moon allotment. Possible invasive species issues were raised for the High Mountain allotment.

Prevention of Unnecessary or Undue Degradation

In addition to the management prescriptions discussed in this EA, including all terms and conditions, BLM may use its authority to close an area of any of the allotments to grazing use or take other measures to protect resources at any time, if needed. Therefore, issuance of a grazing lease with appropriate terms and conditions is consistent with BLM's responsibility to manage the public's use, occupancy, and development of the public lands and prevent unnecessary or undue degradation of the lands. (43 USC 1732(b)).

Relationship to Statutes, Regulations, and Plans

The Endangered Species Act of 1973 (ESA) requires federal agencies to complete formal consultation with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) for any action that "may affect" federally listed species or critical habitat. The ESA also requires federal agencies to use their authorities to carry out programs for the conservation of endangered and threatened species.

In August 2004, the State Director, California Bureau of Land Management and the California State Historic Preservation Officer (SHPO) addressed the issue of the National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA) Section 106 compliance procedures for processing grazing permit lease renewals for livestock as defined in 43 CFR 4100.0-5. The State Director and the SHPO amended the 2004 State Protocol Agreement between California Bureau of Land Management and The California State Historic Preservation Officer with the 2004 Grazing Amendment, Supplemental Procedures for Livestock Grazing Permit/Lease Renewal. This amendment allows for the renewal of existing grazing permits prior to completing all NHPA compliance needs as long as the 2004 State Protocol direction, the BLM 8100 Series Manual Guidelines, and specific amendment direction for planning, inventory methodology, tribal and interested party consultation, evaluation, effect, treatment, and monitoring stipulations are followed. The 2004 Grazing Amendment remains in effect as a part of the current State Protocol Agreement, renewed in 2014. The Mother Lode Field Office did not need to invoke the amendment to complete its Section 106 obligations to renew the grazing leases under the proposed alternative.

Plan Conformance

Determination:

The proposed action is in conformance with the Sierra Resource Management Plan (RMP), approved in February, 2008, including the Central California Standards and Guidelines for Rangeland Health.

Rationale:

The proposed action would occur in areas identified as available for livestock grazing in the Sierra Resource Management Plan (RMP). The proposed action is consistent with the land use decisions and resource management goals and objectives of the plan, as described in the RMP on pages 23-24. The key decisions, goals, and objectives include: manage livestock to achieve the four fundamentals of rangeland health; change authorized grazing preference and/or season of use to meet or make progress toward meeting standards established by the Central California Standards and Guidelines for Rangeland Health approved in July 2000.

Rangeland Health

The Central California Standards for Rangeland Health are as follows:
Soils: Soils exhibit functional biological and physical characteristics that are appropriate to soil type, climate, and land form.

Species: Viable, healthy, productive, and diverse populations of native species, including special status species (Federal T&E, Federal proposed, Federal candidates, BLM sensitive, or California State T&E) are maintained or enhanced where appropriate.

Riparian/Wetland: Riparian/wetland vegetation, structure and diversity, and stream channels and floodplains are functioning properly, and meeting regional and local management objectives.

Water Quality: Surface and groundwater quality complies with objectives of the Clean Water Act and other applicable water quality requirements, including meeting the California State standards.

> U.S. Bureau of Land Management. 2000. Central California Standards and Guidelines for Rangeland Health. Central California Resource Advisory Council. Approved July 13, 2000.

The standards are determined to be as represented in the table below:

Table 2

Rangeland Health Standard	**Meets Standard**	**Does Not Meet Standard**	**Livestock are the causal factor for not meeting Yes or No**	**Remarks (locations, etc.)**
Soil	Yes for all			
Species	Yes for all except 04135	04135	No.	Weeds, including yellow starthistle, Italian thistle, medusahead, tocolate, and bull thistle are largely within a confined area and have not spread significantly since 2000. The weeds appear to be related to past vehicle traffic along a primary road that runs east to west through the BLM parcel in Section 35. The road is no longer passable at its eastern end.
Riparian	Yes for all			
Water quality	Yes for all			

Table 3

Allotment Name and Number	Date of Assessment	Date of Determination
Electra - 04114	February 20 and April 24, 2014	June 26, 2014
French Hill - 04116	February 20, 2014	June 26, 2014
Blue Moon – 04127	May 13, 2014	June 26, 2014
High Mountain - 04135	November 26, 2013	June 26, 2014
North Fork Mokelumne – 04154	April 25 and May 23, 2014	June 26, 2014
Oneto Ranch – 04155	March 14, 2014	June 26, 2014
Volunteer Gulch – 04160	February 20, 2014	June 26, 2014
Pine Peak - 04189	February 24, 2014	June 26, 2014

CHAPTER 2: PROPOSED ACTION AND ALTERNATIVES

Alternative 1 – Proposed Action

This proposed action is to authorize grazing on the Electra #04114 (previously Cuneo), French Hill #04116 (previously Dell Orto), Blue Moon #04127, High Mountain #04135 (previously Chatom), North Fork Mokelumne #04154 (previously Oneto), Oneto Ranch #04155 (previously Oneto Partnership), Volunteer Gulch #04160 (previously Porteous), and Pine Peak #04189 (previously Sanders) allotments with applicable provisions as discussed further in this section. We propose changes to the terms and conditions on three of the leases based on discussions with the lessees regarding how the allotments are actually used. For the Electra allotment, the season of use and number of livestock will change from 6 cows from December 1 to May 31 to 6 cows from September 1 to May 31. The total AUMs for the Electra allotment will also change from 36 to 54. For the French Hill allotment, the season of use and number of livestock will change from 5 cows year-round to 8 cows from April 1 to June 30. The total AUMs for the French Hill allotment will also change from 60 to 25. In addition, several parcels which are no longer being used will be removed from the French Hill allotment. The total acreage for the French Hill allotment will change from 1062 acres to 247 acres. For the Volunteer Gulch allotment, the season of use and number of livestock will change from 1 cow year-round to 3 cows from March 1 to June 30. The number of AUMs for the Volunteer Gulch allotment will remain the same. These proposed changes are illustrated in Table 4 below. The terms and conditions for 5 of the allotments will remain the same. The lease period for seven of the allotments will be 10 years. For the Pine Peak allotment, the lease period will be for 3 years due to the fact that the lessee is taking non-use of the allotment and can only do that for a period of three years. For the Oneto Ranch allotment, approximately 340 feet of an existing road in the northern parcel will be brushed so that the road can be usable to the lessee (see map 8). For the Electra allotment, the livestock congregation areas associated with springs will be monitored every two years to assess whether future fencing may be necessary to protect these areas. To understand how the Proposed Action (Alternative 1) differs from the Current Management Action (Alternative 2), compare Table 4 with Table 5 under the Current Management (no action) alternative below. Also refer to Table 1 above.

A. Mandatory Terms and Conditions

Table 4

Allotment	Acreage	Percent BLM	Number of Livestock	Kind	From	To	AUMs	Lease Length
Electra #04114	198	100	6	Cows	9/1	5/31	54	10 yrs
French Hill #04116	247	100	8	Cows	4/1	6/30	25	10 yrs
Blue Moon #04127	80	100	10	Cows	1/1	4/30	40	10 yrs
High Mountain #04135	610	100	8 6	Cows Cows	2/1 3/1	2/28 5/31	8 18 26	10 yrs
North Fork Mokelumne #04154	Parcel 1 – 614 Parcel 2 – 49 Total – 663	100	7	Cows	3/1	2/28	84	10 yrs
Oneto Ranch #04155	85	100	1	Cow	3/1	2/28	12	10 yrs
Volunteer Gulch #04160	107	100	3	Cows	3/1	6/30	12	10 yrs
Pine Peak #04189	91	100	3	Horses	12/1	5/31	18	3 yrs

Alternative 2 – Current Management (No Action)

A 10-year permit would be issued for each lease with the terms and conditions unchanged from the previous leases. This action is illustrated in Table 4 below. The terms and conditions of the Electra #04114, French Hill #04116, and Volunteer Gulch #04160 leases would not be changed to more accurately reflect actual grazing use of these allotments. The acreage of the French Hill allotment would not change to reflect the current acreage that is being used for livestock grazing in the allotment. The acreage for the Electra allotment would not change to reflect the small portion that is no longer accessible to the cows due to the construction of the fence. The springs on the Electra allotment would not be monitored to assess whether fencing would be needed for their protection in the future. The lessee would not brush the road on the Oneto Ranch allotment. The lease for the Pine Peak allotment would be for 10 years versus three years under the proposed alternative. See Table 4 in proposed action section to compare terms and conditions to this alternative. Also refer to Table 1 for a comparison of the current and proposed alternatives. The existing terms and conditions are as follows:

Table 5

Allotment	Acreage	Percent BLM	Number of Livestock	Kind	From	To	AUMs	Lease Length
Electra #04114	237	100	6	Cows	12/1	5/31	36	10 years
French Hill #04116	1062	100	5	Cows	3/1	2/28	60	10 years
Blue Moon #04127	80	100	10	Cows	1/1	4/30	40	10 years
High Mountain #04135	610	100	8 6	Cows Cows	2/1 3/1	2/28 5/31	26	10 years
North Fork Mokelumne #04154	Parcel 1 – 614 Parcel 2 – 49 Total – 663	100	7	Cows	3/1	2/28	84	10 years
Oneto Ranch #04155	85	100	1	Cow	3/1	2/28	12	10 years
Volunteer Gulch #04160	107	100	3	Cows	3/1	6/30	12	10 years
Pine Peak #04189	91	100	3	Horses	12/1	5/31	18	10 years

Alternative 3 - No Grazing

This alternative would cancel the lease on the Electra #04114, French Hill #04116, Blue Moon #04127, High Mountain #04135, North Fork Mokelumne #04154, Oneto Ranch #04155, Volunteer Gulch #04160, and Pine Peak #04189 allotments. As a result, grazing would not be authorized on these allotments. Under this alternative, BLM would initiate the process in accordance with the 43 CFR parts 4100 and 1600 to eliminate grazing on these allotments and amend the Sierra Resource Management Plan.

Current Livestock Management

Electra (04114) – Jim Cuneo, the previous lessee, passed away. The base property associated with the allotment is now split between Stan Dell Orto and three Cuneo families that inherited the base property. All 4 lessees should be on the new lease renewal. Stan Dell Orto indicated that he would like to see the season of use changed from December 1 through May 31 to September 1 through May 31. The fence to prevent cows from entering the riparian zone is in good shape with the exception of one spot where a branch fell. This portion of the fence needs to be repaired. In addition, the lessees have a 300-acre lease with PG&E that is grazed in concert with the BLM allotment. The Cuneo and Dell Orto properties which total approximately 1500 acres are contiguous with BLM lands. The lessees run about 100-120 yearlings and a few pairs (more pairs on some years) on the combined private, PG&E, and BLM lands. There are a couple

of springs that dry up in the summer on the private property. There are developed springs and troughs on the BLM allotment, in addition to the fence above Electra Road.

French Hill (04116) – There appears to be little grazing on a majority of the lease. Stan Dell Orto suggested that he is no longer using three parcels associated with his grazing lease. These three parcels will be eliminated from the allotment. The parcel adjacent to the Mokelumne River downstream of Electra Powerhouse will be the one remaining parcel in the allotment. Stan Dell Orto 240-acre private ranch is just south of this parcel. Mr. Dell Orto owns 15 pair (cow/calf) which he grazes in April, May and June between his private parcel and the BLM allotment. There is no fencing between the private and BLM. There is a fence along the entire extent of the allotment north of Electra Road. This fence prevents cattle from entering the riparian area south of Electra Road.

Blue Moon (04127) – Mr. Gann grazes approximately 48 cow/calf in winter and spring between his private ranch (350 acres) and the two BLM parcels (80 acres). The lower 40 acres is more extensively grazed than the upper 40 acres. The public land is fenced.

High Mountain (04135) – A conversation with the lessee, Gay Callan, indicated that they rotate the cows between four privately-owned parcels throughout the year. The 120-acre private pasture associated with the BLM allotment (609 acres) is grazed during the spring. Much of the allotment area appears to be minimally, if at all, used for grazing, particularly the northern parcel which showed no indication of livestock grazing. Grazing is concentrated in a small area along Indian Creek and the more open uplands. The private pasture is fenced off from BLM and appears to be heavily grazed. The BLM allotment is not heavily grazed, even where livestock concentrate. Currently, the lessee has reduced the number of cows that they own to 20 due to the ongoing drought.

North Fork Mokelumne (04154) – There appears to be little grazing on a majority of the allotment in both parcels. Brian Oneto indicated that he is taking non-use on the parcel on the North Fork Mokelumne this year. I informed him that he could take non-use for up to 3 years.

On the BLM parcel near Drytown, he indicated that he has two (100-acre each) private pastures that are associated with the allotment. There is no fence on the southern border of the allotment. The remaining boundaries are fenced. Mr. Oneto indicated that he grazes 32 cow/calf pairs from the end of December through mid-April.

Oneto Ranch (04155) – The lessee indicates that he has approximately 45 cows using the lease from June through September. He grazes the 2 (40-acre) public land parcels in common with his 790-acre ranch and leased private lands. A majority of the grazing use occurs in the southern 40-acre parcel in the clearings north and south of the road. This area constitutes 5-10 acres of the 80-acre allotment. There is light use in the northern parcel. There are no fences separating BLM from private property. The lessee would like to brush approximately 340 feet of an existing road in the northern parcel as part of the lease renewal.

Volunteer Gulch (04160) – The lessee indicates that there is considerable brome on the slopes that is not preferred by the cattle. He suggested that the cattle use only Volunteer Creek and the slope up from the creek. He suggested that his private base associated with the allotment is 15-acres. He indicated that he grazes 6 or 7 cows from March 1 through June 15. There is little indication of cattle use.

Pine Peak (04189) – The lessee reports that she is not using the allotment currently. I explained that she can take non-use for 3 years, but that after that BLM would request that she relinquish the lease.

CHAPTER 3: ENVIRONMENTAL EFFECTS

The following supplemental authorities are not relevant to this project because related resources or conditions are not present: ACEC; environmental justice; essential fish habitat; prime or unique farmlands; floodplains; Native American cultural values; solid or hazardous wastes; wild and scenic rivers; wilderness; or wild horse and burro herds.

Air Quality

Affected Environment

The project areas are in the Mountain Counties Air Basin. Five of the 8 allotments (French Hill #04116, Blue Moon #04127, High Mountain #04135, Volunteer Gulch #04160, and Pine Peak #04189) are in an area classified as federal non-attainment for ozone 8-hour standard under the National Ambient Air Quality Standards. A state implementation plan (SIP) for California identifies sources of emissions which include motor vehicles, consumer products, and pesticides. The SIP also includes control measures to reduce emissions. The remaining three allotments (Electra #04114, North Fork Mokelumne (04154), and Oneto Ranch (04135) are all in areas not classified as non-attainment.

Impacts of all Alternatives

The relatively small livestock operations and associated vehicle use would not affect air quality under the current and proposed alternatives. Cancellation of these small leases similarly would not affect air quality.

Cultural Resources

Affected Environment

04114 – Electra – About 70% of this lease area has been inventoried – mainly by consulting archaeologists with David Chavez & Associates in the 1980s for the now-defunct Upper Mokelumne River Hydroelectric Projects. Since 2002 BLM archaeologists have conducted inventories (of five acres or less) in the lease area for various projects including range improvements. To date, five cultural resources have been identified within the lease area. A fence restricts livestock access to the resources located along the Mokelumne River. The inventory coverage is sufficient.

04116 – French Hill – This lease area has been entirely inventoried. Nearly all of it was inventoried by David Chavez & Associates in the 1980s for the now-defunct Upper Mokelumne River Hydroelectric Projects. Since the early 1990s BLM archaeologists have conducted inventories (of five acres or less) in the lease area for a cabin demolition project and a grazing lease renewal. To date, eight cultural resources have been identified within the lease area. Most are related to historic-era hardrock and placer gold mining. The condition of some of the resources was field checked by a BLM archaeologist in 2014. Much of the lease area is dry forested slopes of the Mokelumne River canyon, where livestock use is unlikely.

04127 – Blue Moon – This lease area was inventoried in 1988 by archaeologists with California State University Stanislaus. Two cultural resources were identified within the lease area. The condition of these resources was field checked by a BLM archaeologist in 2011. The condition of the cultural resources has not changed. The 1988 inventory is sufficient.

04135 – High Mountain – BLM archaeologists have conducted various field inventories within this lease area since 1980 for forestry, cabin demolition, road access, and grazing lease renewal projects (in 2000 and 2014). The total area inventoried is approximately 133 acres. Much of the lease area is steep, dry, and brushy terrain with low potential for cultural resources (aside from mine prospects) and where livestock use is unlikely due to the lack of suitable water and forage. All areas with higher sensitivity for cultural resources and where grazing has occurred (and would occur under the proposal renewal) have been intensively inventoried by a BLM archaeologist in 2000 with follow-up work in 2014. This inventory adds up to about 20 acres. To date, nine cultural resources have been identified. The resources relate mostly to historic-era hardrock gold mining and related occupancy. The inventory coverage is sufficient.

04154 – North Fork Mokelumne – Parcel 1 has been subjected to 10 separate field inventory efforts (as well as cultural resources monitoring) by BLM archaeologists since 1977. Most fieldwork has been related to forestry projects since the late 1980s (most notably 40 acres in 2005 for the Tiger Creek timber salvage), though BLM archaeologists conducted 160 acres of inventory in 1980 for the range program. Approximately a quarter of the lease area has been inventoried. All areas with high sensitivity for cultural resources and where grazing might occur under the proposal renewal have been intensively inventoried by BLM archaeologists. Most of the lease area is rocky, dry, vegetated slopes of the North Fork Mokelumne River canyon where livestock use is unlikely. To date, thirteen cultural resources have been identified within the lease area. These resources vary from historic-era hardrock gold mining features to prehistoric sites. Inventory coverage is considered sufficient. Parcel 2 was entirely inventoried by a BLM archaeologist in 2000 for a land exchange project. One cultural resource related to historic-era occupancy was identified.

04155 – Oneto Ranch – This lease area was inventoried by a BLM archaeologist in 1999 for a land exchange project and by BLM archaeologists in 2004 for a grazing lease renewal. One cultural resource (a historic-era road) was identified.

04160 – Volunteer Gulch – About 90 percent of this lease area has been inventoried. Most of the work was done by consulting archaeologists with David Chavez & Associates in the 1980s for the now-defunct Upper Mokelumne River Hydroelectric Projects. A BLM archaeologist has

conducted inventory (in 2002) and monitoring (in 2014). One cultural resource related to historic-era gold mining was identified.
04189 – Pine Peak – This lease area has been subjected to various field inventories by a BLM archaeologist since 2002. The most notable effort was an inventory for a grazing lease renewal in 2002. A BLM archaeologist walked a single meandering transect, about 5,000 ft long, through the lease area, resulting in about 13 acres of coverage in areas with potential for cultural resources. Inventories of one acre or less were conducted for abandoned mine lands and fuels variance projects. Two cultural resources have been identified. These resources are hardrock gold mining features. The inventory coverage is sufficient.

Impacts of Proposed Action and Current Management

The BLM is in the process of completing studies pursuant to the Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA) for the proposed action. The studies will involve a review of existing cultural resources inventory reports, records, and other data; Native American consultation outreach; highly focused inventory and other fieldwork; and other reasonable-and-good faith efforts to identify and consider effects to significant cultural resources within the proposed action's area of potential effects (APE). As result of identification efforts, to date, a total of 38 cultural resources have been identified within the APE. Eleven of these resources (or major portions of these resources) have been formally determined by BLM to be not NRHP eligible. They no longer require consideration under Section 106 NHPA. The other resources have not been evaluated by BLM to determine their NRHP eligibility status. Of the resources that have yet to be evaluated, none appear to be negatively affected by the current level of livestock grazing. Either they contain features and other site constituents (i.e., concrete footings, mine workings, etc.) that are not normally affected by grazing, or they would be subjected to little or no livestock use due to lack of forage and water (and low levels of grazing use under the proposed action). CA-018-AC-08 is a prehistoric site with midden and lithics. This site appears to be the most susceptible to grazing impacts due to its open location along a road; however there is little forage at the site and no evidence of grazing impacts to the site were observed during monitoring in 2006, 2010, and 2014. No negative effects are anticipated, but monitoring on a regular basis (perhaps every three years) is recommended. Additional fieldwork is currently in progress to check the condition of cultural resources within the lease areas. If negative effects as a result of grazing to unevaluated resources are detected, BLM will take steps to evaluate the affected resources and, if necessary, work with the grazing lessee and other stakeholders to avoid, minimize, or mitigate adverse effects. Please refer to the attached cultural resources memo for more information.

Impacts of the No Grazing

Elimination of grazing on these allotments would not affect cultural resources.

Invasive, non-native species

04114 – Electra – Most of the weeds were found either along the Mokelumne River or in the riparian areas of the allotment. Weeds included edible fig, tree of heaven, oblong spurge (large areas), Italian thistle, and milk thistle. Some medusahead was noted in the uplands. Spanish and

Scotch broom are present along the river, along with bull thistle. Cattle are blocked from accessing the river by a BLM fence.
04116 – French Hill – Weeds were not widespread on the allotment. Himalayan blackberry was found along riparian areas and small patches of Scotch broom were present in the river corridor.

04127 – Blue Moon – Small patches of Italian thistle occur on the allotment.

04135 – High Mountain – Weeds are prominent in the southern portion of the lease, (south of Indian Creek). Cleared areas, often along roads, are heavily infested with yellow starthistle and Italian thistle, with other weeds including medusahead, tocalote, and bull thistle. The most weed infested areas are west of the peak in the south central portion of Section 35. Transportation on a road that had previously been open through the lease is believed to have been the main contributor to the spread of noxious weeds.

04154 – North Fork Mokelumne – Oblong spurge was found in a few areas along the access road north of the river in Section 33. Yellow starthistle is not prevalent but was found in one location in Section 34. A substantial population of poison hemlock was found in the Dry Creek parcel.

04155 – Oneto Ranch – No weeds were noted on the allotment.

04160 – Volunteer Gulch – Small patches of milk thistle occur in Volunteer Gulch, as does larger areas of Himalayan blackberry.

04189 – Pine Peak – There is a patch of approximately 2 or 3 acres that contains yellow starthistle and medusahead. It appears to be in a corral area, along a flat area on a ridge, which was previously fenced. There are smaller occurrences of Italian thistle and milk thistle. The majority of the allotment is relatively free of weeds.

Impacts of the Proposed Action and Current Management

Invasive weed species are present on many of these allotments. Although, weed species do compete with native herbaceous species for available moisture, nutrients, and spatial occupation of available habitat, the weeds on the allotments do not appear to be significantly impacting the abundance or cover of native species. Cattle can spread weed seed through their scat and on their hair. The proposed, low level of grazing that will occur on these allotments would not measurably affect the spread of invasive weeds.

Impacts of No Grazing

Under the no grazing alternative, the potential for dispersal of seeds through livestock hairs and scat would decrease throughout the allotments. Once weeds are established, moderate grazing during their growth period and when they are palatable can help control some important herbaceous weed species including yellow starthistle. Elimination of grazing could exacerbate existing weed problems in some areas. Because current, low levels of grazing do not appear to be significantly affecting weed spread, elimination of grazing would not be expected to noticeably reduce invasive species on the allotments.

Recreation

Affected Environment

Very little recreation is occurring on any of the allotments. The most accessible allotment, Electra, is accessible via Electra Road and is a developed recreation area. The Mokelumne River on the allotment does have considerable recreation, including recreational gold panning, swimming, picnicking, hiking, rafting, etc. Cattle have been fenced out of the river where a majority of the recreational activities occur. In the uplands where grazing occurs, the limited recreation that may occur includes some hunting. The Blue Moon allotment is accessible via road and unlocked gates, however, no signs of recreation use were present on the allotment. High Mountain due to largely brushy, steep slopes had no evidence of recreational use. The North Fork Mokelumne parcel near Dry Town is accessible through private property and does appear to be used by recreationists. The North Fork Mokelumne parcel along the North Fork Mokelumne is accessible along its southern extent. However, the road constitutes the southern boundary of the allotment. A few spur roads do come off the main road, and some limited dispersed recreation can occur along these roads. The northern portion of the allotment is not accessible to vehicular traffic due to the installation of a BLM gate. The area had been subject to target shooting and trash dumping prior to the gate installation. Limited, dispersed recreation occurs along the gated road. On the Oneto Ranch, the northern 40-acre parcel is accessible through private lands and there was no evidence of recreational use on this parcel. The southern 40-acre parcel is accessible along a main road, but is fenced along the road. The lessee did suggest that hunters do use the parcel occasionally. Pine Peak is accessible along a dirt road off of a main road, however it appeared to have little or no recreational use.

Impacts of the Proposed Action and Current Management

The primary impact of grazing on recreation opportunities will be the presence of domestic livestock and the livestock operator in the area during the grazing season. Due to limited access and limited, dispersed recreation, the proposed action is not impacting recreational opportunities.

Impacts of No Grazing

Due to limited access and limited, dispersed recreational use, elimination of already low/no impact grazing is not expected to affect recreation in the allotments.

Social and Economic Values

Due to the size and nature of these allotments, it is expected that the lessees employ few individuals in the community. Livestock grazing on the scale of these allotments contribute little economic value to the community. Economic impacts of all of the alternatives are insignificant.

Because the leases have been in the families for a number of years, livestock grazing has become a way of life and a tradition passed from generation to generation through the years. Social impacts of the lease cancellation would impact the lessee's way of life.

Soils

Affected Environment

04114 – Electra – Soil Survey of Amador Area, California, maps the main portion of the lease along Electra Road as three units: Rockland; Sierra very rocky coarse sandy loam, moderately deep, 31% to 51% slopes; and Mariposa very rocky loam, 51% to 85% slopes. The land form is shoulder slopes to river bottoms. Erosion is not occurring on this allotment. The allotment is currently meeting the soil standard for rangeland health.

04116 – French Hill – The soils are mapped as Calaveras formation and granite rocks on the Geologic Map of Calaveras County compiled by Clark and Lydon. The land form is from ridge top to valley bottom. Erosion is not occurring on this allotment. The allotment is currently meeting the soil standard for rangeland health.

04127 – Blue Moon – The soils consist of Daulton very rocky loam, 30% to 75% slopes. The land form is mostly ridgetop and shoulder slope (some mid slope). Erosion potential of this soil is very high. Erosion is not occurring on this allotment. The allotment is currently meeting the soil standard for rangeland health.

04135 – High Mountain – The soils are mapped mostly as Calaveras formation, with interbedded black graphitic schist and quartzite. The peak in section of section 35 has ultramafic rock, mostly talc-antigorite rock, probably derived from serpentine. The land form is ridge tops to drainage bottoms. Erosion potential for these soils ranges from slight to high. Erosion is not occurring on this allotment. The allotment is currently meeting the soil standard for rangeland health.

04154 – North Fork Mokelumne – The soils are mostly Musick very rocky sand loam, 16% to 71% slopes; with a small area of Musick extremely rocky sand loam, 51% to 71% slopes at west end of lease. At the east end of lease, there is Holland very rocky coarse sandy loam, 51% to 71% slopes; and Aiken very rocky loam, 51% to 71% slopes. The land form is shoulder slope to valley bottom. Erosion is not occurring on the allotment. The allotment is currently meeting the soil standard for rangeland health.

04155 – Oneto Ranch – The geology is mapped as Calaveras complex, argillite and chert. The soils are mapped as Josephine loam, deep, 16% to 31% slopes; Josephine loam, 16% to 31% slopes; Josephine very rocky loam, 16% to 71% slopes; Mariposa very rocky loam, 31% to 51% slopes; Sites loam 3% to 51% slopes. The land form is side slopes and saddles on southern parcel and ridgetop to drainage bottom on northern parcel. Erosion is not occurring on this allotment. The allotment is currently meeting the soil standard for rangeland health.

04160 – Volunteer Gulch – The geology and soils are mapped as Calaveras formation and granite rocks on the Geologic Map of Calaveras County compiled by Clark and Lydon. The land form is from mid slope to river drainage. Erosion potential for these soils ranges from slight to high. Erosion is not occurring on this allotment. The allotment is currently meeting the soil standard for rangeland health.

04189 – Pine Peak – The soils are mapped as Dorado 4/61, Coarsegold 3/67, and Los Gatos (schist) 10/74. The land form is shoulder slopes to ridge top. Erosion potential for these soils ranges from slight to moderate. Erosion is not occurring on this allotment. The allotment is currently meeting the soil standard for rangeland health.

Impacts of the Proposed Action and Current Management

There is little evidence of erosion or compaction on any of the allotments. Therefore, livestock grazing is not impacting soils on these allotments.

Impacts of the No Grazing Alternative

Elimination of grazing will not affect soil productivity or stability.

Water Quality

Affected Environment

The allotments are within 4 different watersheds; however 6 of the 8 allotments are within the upper Mokelumne River watershed. The other two watersheds are Upper Calaveras River and Upper Merced River watersheds.

All allotments were assessed to be meeting the standard for water quality. None of the allotments are in watersheds designated by California as 303d impaired water bodies under the Clean Water Act.

Several beneficial uses are designated for the various watersheds listed above in the Sacramento/San Joaquin Basin Plan. These include domestic water supply, irrigation and stock watering, power generation, recreation, warm and cold water fisheries migration and spawning, and wildlife habitat.

Impacts of the Proposed Action and Current Management

Water quality monitoring/inventory has not occurred on any of the 8 allotments. It is generally believed due to the small nature of the livestock operations, and the generally good health of the riparian areas in all 8 allotments that livestock is having little to no impact on water quality.

Impacts of No Grazing

Elimination of grazing is not expected to significantly improve water quality on the allotments.

Wetlands/Riparian

Lotic (moving water) riparian areas are functioning properly when adequate vegetation, landform, or large woody debris is present to dissipate stream energy associated with high waterflows, thereby reducing erosion and improving water quality; filter sediment, capture bedload, and aid floodplain development; improve flood-water retention and ground-water recharge; develop root masses that stabilize streambanks against cutting action; develop diverse ponding and channel characteristics to provide the habitat and the water depth, duration, and temperature necessary for fish production, waterfowl breeding, and other uses; and support greater biodiversity. The functioning condition of riparian-wetland areas is a result of interaction among geology, soil, water, and vegetation.

Lentic (still water) wetland areas are functioning properly when adequate vegetation, landform, or debris is present to: dissipate energies associated with wind action, wave action, and overland flow from adjacent sites, thereby reducing erosion and improving water quality; filter sediment and aid floodplain development; improve flood-water retention and ground-water recharge; develop root masses that stabilize islands and shoreline features against cutting action; restrict water percolation; develop diverse ponding characteristics to provide habitat and the water depth, duration, and temperature necessary for fish production water-bird breeding, and other uses and support greater biodiversity.

Affected Environment

04114 – Electra – Approximately 1.75 miles of the Mokelumne River run through the allotment. The river, however, is fenced off from cattle. The river was assessed to be properly functioning. There are springs within the allotment where cattle tend to congregate. The cattle have created bank erosion and reduced riparian vegetation in these areas. The congregation areas tend to be small, with the riparian areas upstream and downstream of the congregation areas being in good condition. Overall, the spring areas were assessed to be in proper functioning condition.

04116 – French Hill – Approximately 1.75 miles of the Mokelumne River run through the allotment. It would appear due to steep, brushy slopes that the cattle do not access the river. The river was assessed to be in proper functioning condition.

04127 – Blue Moon – There are no riparian or wetland areas on the allotment.

04135 – High Mountain – Approximately ¼ mile of Indian Creek runs through the allotment. The creek was assessed to be in properly functioning condtion.

04154 – North Fork Mokelumne – Approximately two miles of the North Fork Mokelumne River is located on the allotment. The North Fork Mokelumne was determined to be properly functioning. Approximately ¼ mile of Dry Creek runs through the parcel near Dry Town. Dry Creek was assessed to be in properly functioning condition.

04155 – Oneto Ranch – Approximately ¼ mile of Rancheria Creek runs through the northern parcel. The creek was assessed to be in properly functioning condition.

04160 – Volunteer Gulch – 1/8 mile of Volunteer Gulch runs through the allotment. The stream is not long enough to be appropriate for proper functioning condition assessment.

04189 – Pine Peak – 1/10 mile of Old Woman Gulch runs through the northwestern corner of the allotment. The stream is not long enough to be appropriate for proper functioning condition assessment.

Impacts of the Proposed Action and Current Management

On all 8 allotments, there is either no riparian resources or the riparian resources were found to be in properly functioning condition and were found to be largely not impacted by grazing. The exception is the small areas where cattle congregate near springs on the Electra allotment. Bank erosion and reduced riparian vegetation are evident in these small, isolated areas. The riparian degradation in these cattle congregation areas will be monitored every 2 years. Should monitoring indicate further degradation of the riparian zone, fencing of the springs will be considered.

Impacts of No Grazing

Canceling of the 7 of the 8 allotments would have no impact on riparian resources since riparian resources are either not present or are not currently being impacted by cattle grazing. Cancellation of the Electra allotment could improve conditions in the cattle congregation areas near the springs. However, cancellation of the Electra allotment may lead to the fence, that prevents cows from entering the Mokelumne River currently, no longer being maintained. The cows would be able to reach the river contributing to stream bank erosion.

Wildlife

Affected Environment

04114 – Electra – Vegetation communities consist of montane riparian and montane hardwood. These vegetation communities support a wide range of wildlife. The riparian community is particular valuable to many wildlife species. Such areas provide water, thermal cover, migration corridors, and diverse nesting and feeding opportunities. The allotment contains a wide range of species particularly along the Mokelumne River. Bird species observed included American robin, Anna's hummingbird, black-capped chickadee, spotted towhee, Acorn woodpecker, California quail, prairie falcon, black phoebe and white-crowned sparrow. The allotment also supports a large coyote and bobcat population. The area supports a small resident deer population, and provides winter range for migrating deer herds. Sufficient browse remains on the allotment to support deer and other wildlife.

04116 – French Hill – Vegetation communities consist of montane riparian and montane hardwood. These vegetation communities support a wide range of wildlife. The riparian community is particular valuable to many wildlife species. Such areas provide water, thermal cover, migration corridors, and diverse nesting and feeding opportunities. The allotment contains a wide range of species particularly along the Mokelumne River. Bird species observed

included American robin, Anna's hummingbird, black-capped chickadee, spotted towhee, acorn woodpecker, California quail, black phoebe and white-crowned sparrow. The allotment also supports a large coyote and bobcat population. The area supports a small resident deer population, and provides winter range for migrating deer herds. Sufficient browse remains on the allotment to support deer and other wildlife.

04127– Blue Moon – The allotment consists largely of blue oak woodland. Blue oak woodlands supports a variety of wildlife species, including 29 species of amphibians and reptiles, 57 species of birds, and 10 species of mammals. The allotment is in the year-long range of the Yosemite Deer Herd. Surveys of the allotment indicate a diversity of typical, native wildlife species for the area, such as coyote, deer, California quail, American robin, common raven, greater roadrunner, western kingbird, red-tailed hawk, mourning dove, western scrub jay, black phoebe, western meadowlark, turkey vulture, Bullock's oriole, cliff swallow, and ash-throated flycatcher. No special status species were observed on the allotment.

04135 – High Mountain – Vegetation communities include mixed chaparral, blue oak woodland, montane hardhood, and valley foothill riparian. Wildlife or wildlife sign observed on the allotment included deer tracks, coyote scat, mourning dove, and other bird species. Sufficient browse remains on the allotment to support deer and other wildlife.

04154 – North Fork Mokelumne – Vegetation communities consist of montane riparian and montane hardwood. These vegetation communities support a wide range of wildlife. The riparian community is particular valuable to many wildlife species. Such areas provide water, thermal cover, migration corridors, and diverse nesting and feeding opportunities. The allotment contains a wide range of species including spotted towhee, red-breasted nuthatch, common raven, acorn woodpecker, western scrub jay, Anna's hummingbird, mourning dove, California quail, turkey vulture, ruby-crowned kinglet, red-tailed hawk, northern flicker, Bewick's wren, black bear, coyote, deer, fox, opossum, and Pacific treefrog. Vegetation includes mixed conifer with knobcone pine, ponderosa pine, incensed cedar and black oak. South facing river canyon had ceanothus, manzanita, mountain misery, buckeye, bay, toyon, live oak, bull pine, and a few scattered ponderosa pines.

04155 – Oneto Ranch – Vegetation communities include montane hardwood-conifer, mixed chaparral, annual grassland, and valley foothill riparian. The allotment contains a wide range of species including acorn woodpecker, spotted towhee, western bluebird, red-breasted nuthatch, Anna's hummingbird, ruby-crowned kinglet, common bushtit, red-tailed hawk, California quail, sharp-shinned hawk, turkey vulture, pileated woodpecker, western rattlesnake, black bear, coyote, and mountain lion.

04160 – Volunteer Gulch – Vegetation communities consist of montane riparian and montane hardwood. These vegetation communities support a wide range of wildlife. The riparian community is particular valuable to many wildlife species. Such areas provide water, thermal cover, migration corridors, and diverse nesting and feeding opportunities. The allotment contains a wide range of species particularly along the Mokelumne River. Bird species observed included American robin, Anna's hummingbird, black-capped chickadee, spotted towhee, acorn woodpecker, California quail, black phoebe and white-crowned sparrow. The allotment also

supports a large coyote and bobcat population. The area supports a small resident deer population, and provides winter range for migrating deer herds. Sufficient browse remains on the allotment to support deer and other wildlife.

04189 – Pine Peak – Vegetation communities consist of blue oak woodland and montane hardwood. These vegetation communities support a wide range of wildlife including scrub jay, Anna's hummingbird, turkey vulture, dark-eyed junco, common bushtit, spotted towhee, acorn woodpecker, wild turkey, California quail, western gray squirrel, dusky-footed woodrat, mule deer, mountain lion, and several species of amphibians and reptiles. Sufficient browse remains on the allotment to support deer and other wildlife.

Special Status Wildlife

Seven of the 8 allotments have no special status animal species occurring on them.

04154 – North Fork Mokelumne – Blue elderberry was found on Parcel 1 of the North Fork Mokelumne allotment along the road that defines the southern boundary of the allotment and in an isolated patch along a riparian area. Examination of the shrubs revealed no exit hole that may indicate the presence of valley elderberry longhorn beetle, a federally threatened invertebrate. In addition, grazing of the elderberry shrubs was not occurring.

Impacts of all Alternatives

Neither proposed, current management or elimination of grazing are expected to impact wildlife because grazing does not appear to be adversely affecting special status species known to occur on one allotment or their habitats, and there is no apparent competition for forage between wildlife and livestock on any of the allotments.

Vegetation

Affected Environment

04114 – Electra – Three main communities dominate the lease which is situated mostly on south facing slopes of the Mokelumne River canyon. Away from the river and tributary drainages, there is non-native annual grassland and blue oak woodland. In the drainages, an oak woodland with a shrub understory predominates, with interior live oak, canyon live oak, black oak, gray pine, California buckeye, toyon, holly leaf redberry, California coffeeberry, storax, and poison oak. In riparian area, both along the river and in spring-fed side drainages, there is Oregon ash, Fremont cottonwood, white alder, valley oak, red willow, sandbar willow, buttonwillow, California wild grape, with non-native elements like edible fig, tree-of-heaven, and Himalayan blackberry.

04116 – French Hill – The west facing slope of the allotment is a mosaic of grassland, chaparral and oak woodland. Blue oak, interior live oak and canyon live oak are all present. Other woody species include gray pine, California buckeye, toyon, holly-leaf redberry, white-leaf Manzanita, mewukka Manzanita, keckiella, storax, deerweed, silver lupine, poison oak. At the top of the

ridge there is true chaparral and also westside ponderosa pine forest. Chamise, buckbrush and western mountain mahogany are associated with the chaparral; black oak, mock orange, deerbrush, and mountain misery are associated with the forest sites.

04127 – Blue Moon – The western area of the lease was surveyed. Blue oak savannah is dominant. Interior live oak and buckbrush are the other important woody species.

04135 – High Mountain – A substantial portion of the lease was surveyed. The parcel is a mosaic of chaparral, blue oak savannah, live oak woodlands and early successional stages of communities that will become woodlands or forest in the areas affected by the Old Gulch Fire of 1993. Prominent woody species include black oak, canyon live oak and big leaf maple primarily on steep north facing slopes. On other aspects grow ponderosa pine, gray pine, interior live oak, whiteleaf manzanita, mewukka manzanita, toyon, California coffeeberry, yerba santa, golden fleece, coyote brush, buckbrush, deerbrush, chamise, and poison oak. Riparian vegetation consisted of Himalayan blackberry and white alder.

04154 – North Fork Mokelumne – On the Oneto allotment, along the shallower slopes at the top of the canyon is westside ponderosa pine forest. Vegetation transitions to live oak woodland and chaparral on lower slopes near the river. Other woody species include incense cedar, Douglas-fir, black oak, interior live oak, canyon live oak, madrone, California buckeye, mountain misery, buckbrush, white leaf manzanita, toyon, keckiella, and golden fleece. Riparian zones support white alder, California bay, willow, coffeeberry, and blue elderberry.

The smaller parcel just north of Dry Creek supports blue oak woodlands with an annual grassland understory.

04155 – Oneto Ranch – The survey covered a good portion of the allotment. The northern portion of the southern parcel is dominated by chaparral on a mostly south facing slope. Whiteleaf manzanita is dominant, with toyon, chamise, holly leaf redberry, poison oak, coyote brush, buckbrush, yerba santa and golden fleece. The occasional trees include ponderosa pine, gray pine, black oak and interior live oak. South of the county road, the aspect changes to mostly north-facing, and the vegetation becomes an open canopy ponderosa pine forest. In this area, sugar pine, black oak, interior live oak, coffeeberry, poison oak, common manzanita, and white-leaf manzanita are found. Riparian vegetation occurs around a seep south of the road. Chain fern, mugwort, Himalayan blackberry, sedges and rushes are prominent. Most of the remainder of the parcel is open, with grassland and blue oak savannah. Valley oak and California buckeye dot the landscape. Along the road, the vegetation was cleared in years past, and a swath of herbaceous vegetation occurs there now.

The northern parcel is dominated by the canyon of Rancheria Creek. The north-facing slope is dominated by incense cedar and canyon live oak, with Douglas fir, black oak, ponderosa pine, sugar pine, deer brush, and holly-leaf redberry. Big-leaf maple and mock orange are found in moister locations. The riparian zone of Rancheria Creek also supports valley oak, white alder, red willow, Oregon ash, California wild grape, wild rose, and serviceberry. On the south-facing slope of the canyon, interior live oak and blue oak are dominant. At the east edge of the parcel, valley oak is also prominent on the lower slope, in a distinctly upland topographic setting. White

leaf manzanita, mewukka manzanita, toyon, California buckeye, foothill pine, and canyon live oak also contribute to the south-facing slope.

A mixed oak woodland, with a substantial valley oak component, is found along Rancheria Creek and on a portion of the lower slope of the south facing side of the canyon. Such valley oak stands are uncommon in the foothills, and they are rare on BLM lands.

04160 – Volunteer Gulch – The survey covered south and west portions of property and Volunteer Creek. Vegetation communities consisted mostly of live oak woodland with interior live oak, canyon live oak, black oak and gray pine with a shrub understory of toyon, holly leaf redberry, California coffeeberry, poison oak, storax, keckiella and white leaf manzanita. The riparian area had big leaf maple, California buckeye, willow, mock orange, Himalayan blackberry and California wild grape.

04189 – Pine Peak – Ridgetops and portions of the slopes were surveyed. Blue oak savannah dominated south facing slopes. Oak woodlands dominated more northerly aspects, and consisted of interior live oak, black oak and blue oak with a shrub understory of white leaf manzanita, buckbrush, toyon, poison oak and holly leaf redberry.

Special Status Plants

Six of the 8 allotments have no special status plant species occurring on them.

04127 – Blue Moon – C*larkia rostrata*, a BLM sensitive plant species, was found on the allotment in two different locations.

04135 – High Mountain – *Horkelia parryi*, a BLM sensitive plant species, was located on the ridges of High Mountain in the allotment.

<u>Impacts of the Proposed Action and Current Management</u>

04127 – Blue Moon – *Clarkia rostrata*, a BLM sensitive species, was found on the allotment. Cattle grazing clearly affects *Clarkia rostrata*. Cattle consume stems of the plant. However, grazed pastures support large populations of this species. In fact, in the vicinity of Lake McClure and Lake McSwain, all the large populations of this species are in grazed pastures. These pastures have been grazed for over 100 years. So while grazing affects the species, the long term effects appear to be either (1) mildly detrimental but not negative enough to affect population viability, (2) neutral, or (3) positive. In addition, there was no evidence that any Clarkia had been grazed in the Blue Moon allotment when the populations were surveyed in 2014.

04135 – High Mountain – *Horkelia parryi*, a BLM sensitive plant species, was located on the ridges of High Mountain in the allotment. It does not appear that cattle grazing at the levels found in this area are impacting the sensitive plant species.

Impacts of No Grazing

Elimination of grazing is not expected to impact special status plants.

Cumulative Impacts

Because no site specific adverse impacts are expected for any resources (described above), cumulative impacts at the larger, watershed scale are not anticipated, for the proposed alternative. Lease cancellation could lead to cumulative social impacts. The rural way of life is being impacted in these areas due to expanding development and urbanization, and changes within the livestock industry. Livestock grazing is a tradition and lifestyle choice for many of the current lessees. Lease cancellation would impact this lifestyle and tradition.

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http://www.waterboards.ca.gov/water_issues/programs/tmdl/303d_lists2006_epa.shtml

Essential Fish Habitat Website. http://www.habitat.noaa.gov/protection/efh/habitatmapper.html

FEMA Flood Hazard Maps Website
https://msc.fema.gov/webapp/wcs/stores/servlet/mapstore/homepage/MapSearch.html

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http://www.waterboards.ca.gov/centralvalley/water_issues/basin_plans/

CHAPTER 4: CONSULTATION AND COORDINATION

Persons, Groups, and Agencies Consulted

- Stan Dell Orto
- Gay Callan
- Brian Oneto
- Albert Oneto
- Gary Porteous
- Christine Ferrera
- Indian tribes

Public Participation

The EA will be available on BLM's website for a 15-day public review period.

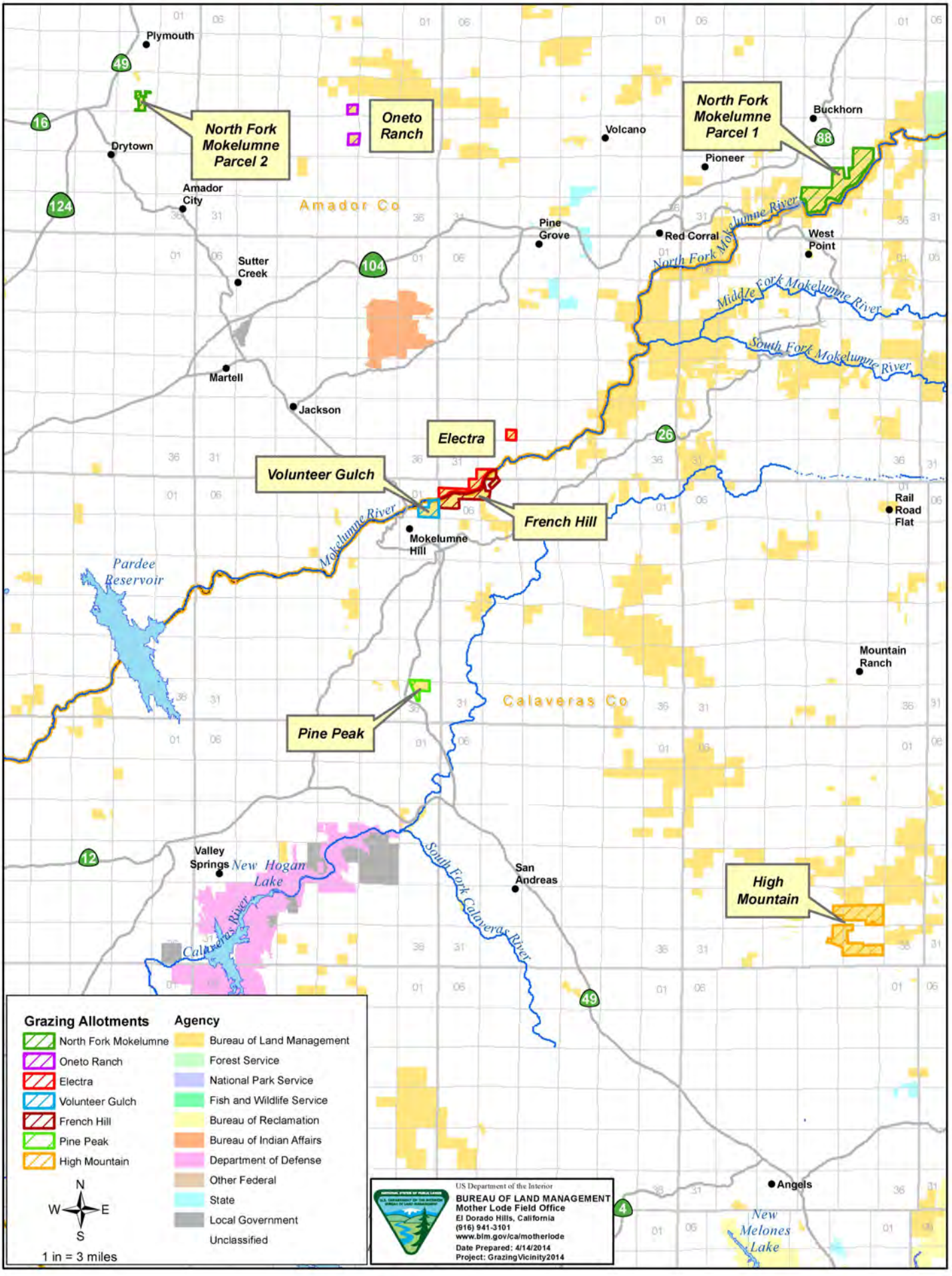
List of Preparers and Reviewers

- Peggy Cranston, Wildlife Biologist and Range Program Lead
- Beth Brenneman, Botanist
- James Barnes, Archaeologist and NEPA Coordinator
- Jeff Horn, Recreation Lead

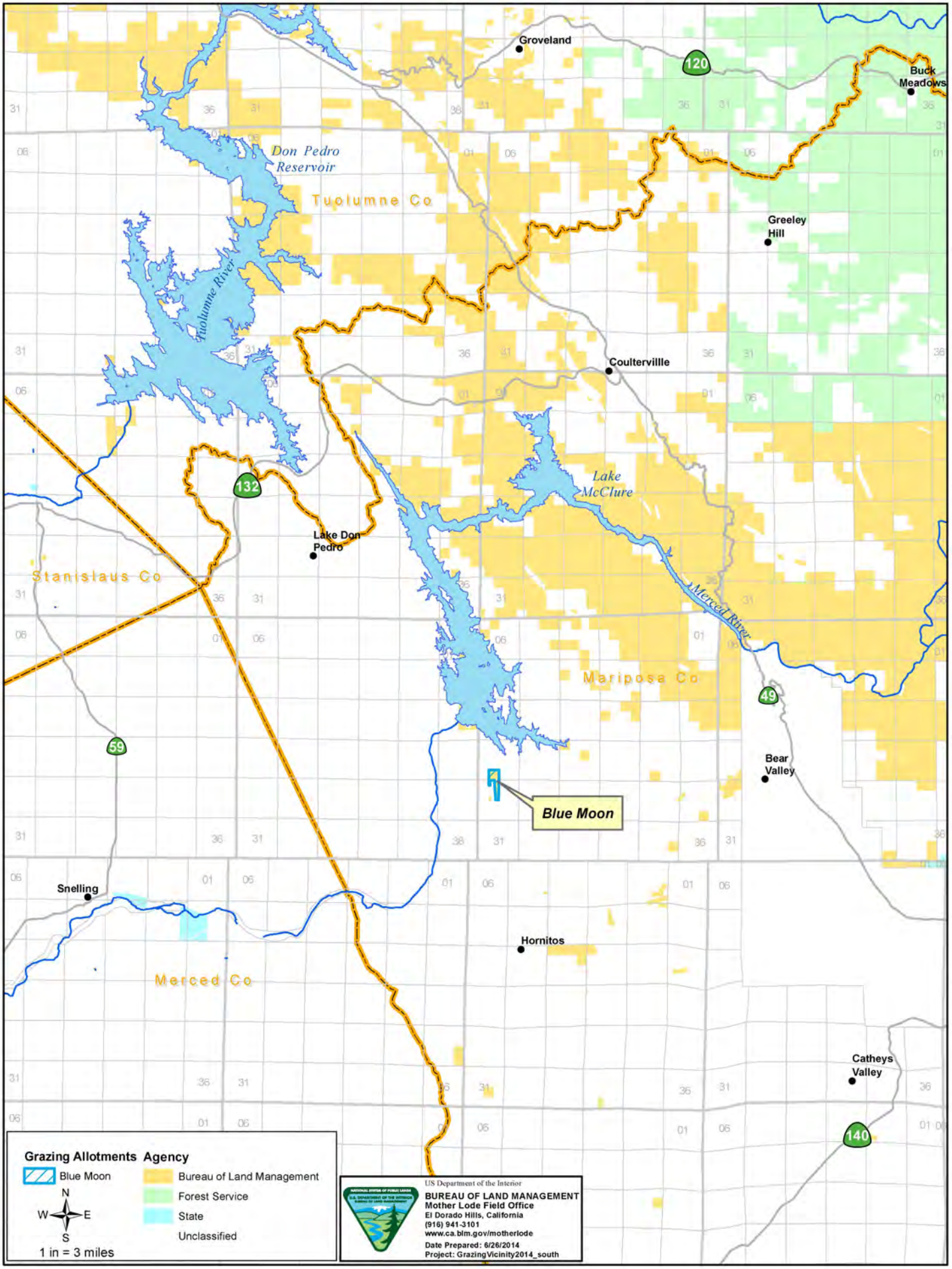
Reviewers:

/s/ James Barnes	*7/2/14*
NEPA Reviewer/Cultural Resources	
/s/ Beth Brenneman	*7/2/14*
Botany	
/s/ Peggy Cranston	*7/1/14*
Wildlife and Range	
/s/ Jeff Horn	*7/2/14*
Recreation	

Grazing Allotments 2014 Vicinity Map



Grazing Allotments 2014 Vicinity Map - South



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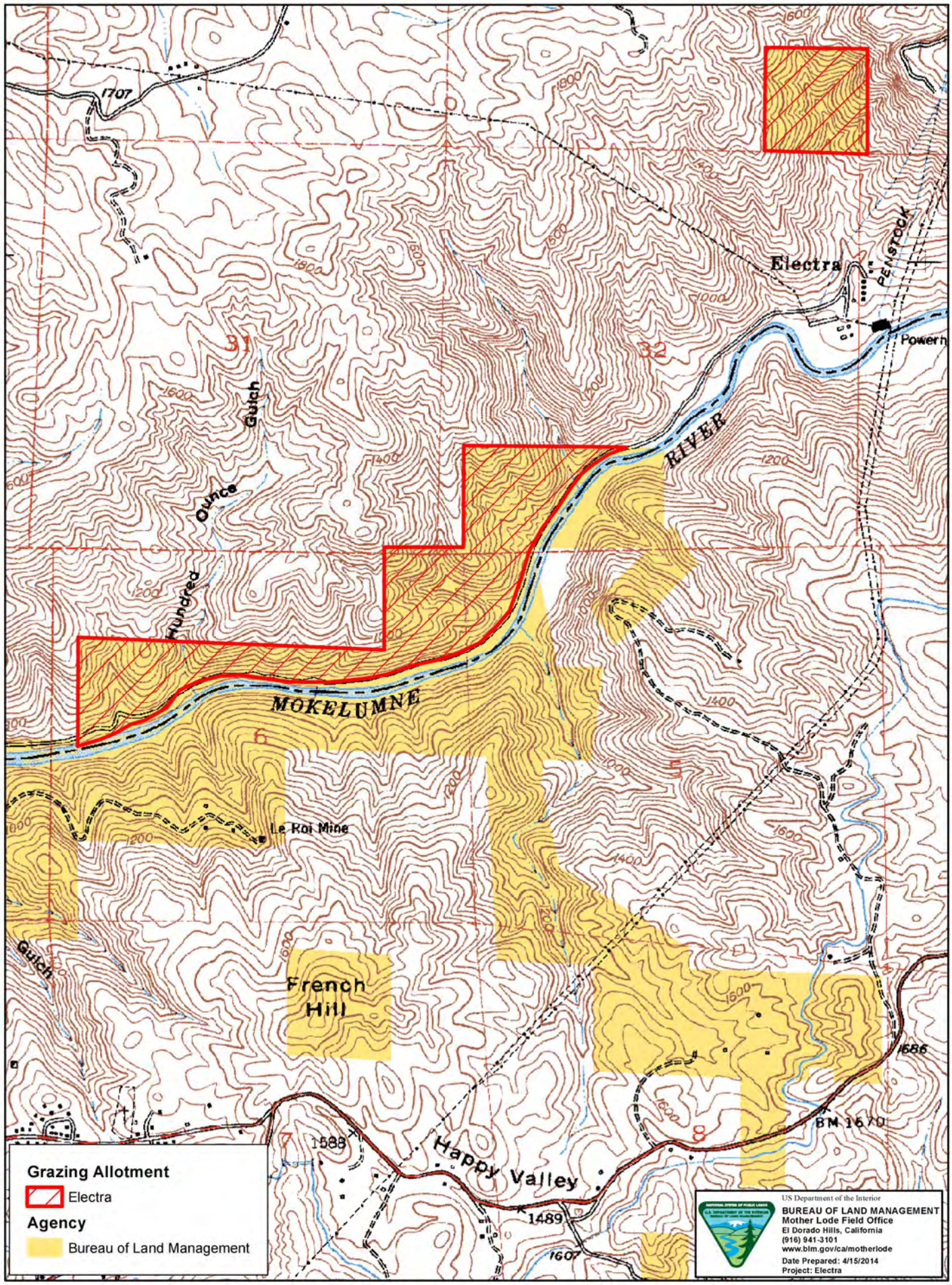
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Ounce
Gulch
Le Roi Mine
French
Hill
Gulch
Happy Valley
BM 1670
1686
1588
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1607
1707
31
32
6
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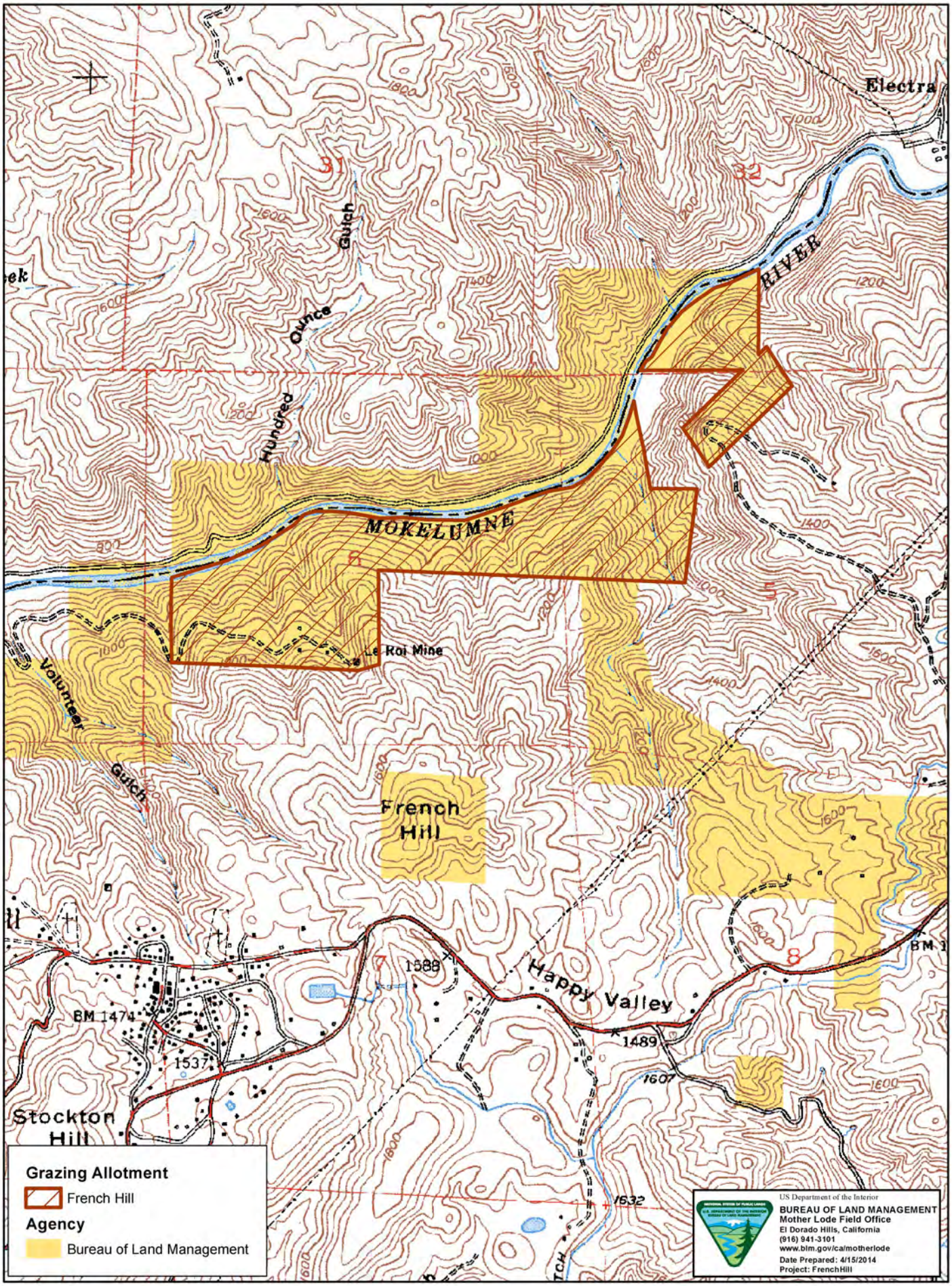
8
Grazing Allotment
Electra
Agency
Bureau of Land Management
US Department of the Interior
BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT
Mother Lode Field Office
El Dorado Hills, California
(916) 941-3101
www.blm.gov/ca/motherlode
Date Prepared: 4/15/2014
Project: Electra

French Hill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www.blm.gov/ca/motherlode
Date Prepared: 4/15/2014
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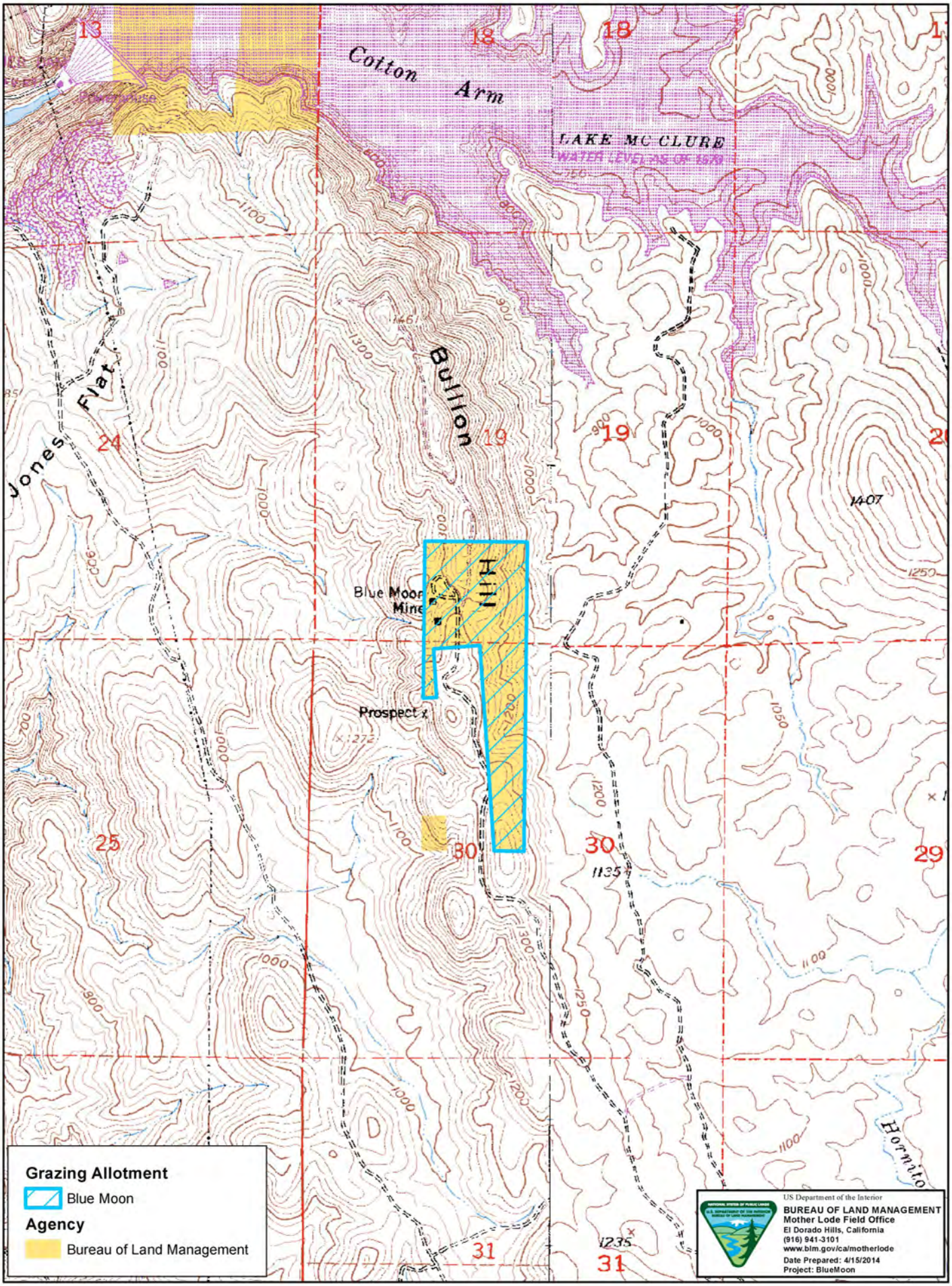
Blue Moon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Jones Flat
Bullion Hill
Blue Moon Mine
Prospect
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T4S
R15E
R16E
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Grazing Allotment
Blue Moon
Agency
Bureau of Land Management
US Department of the Interior
BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT
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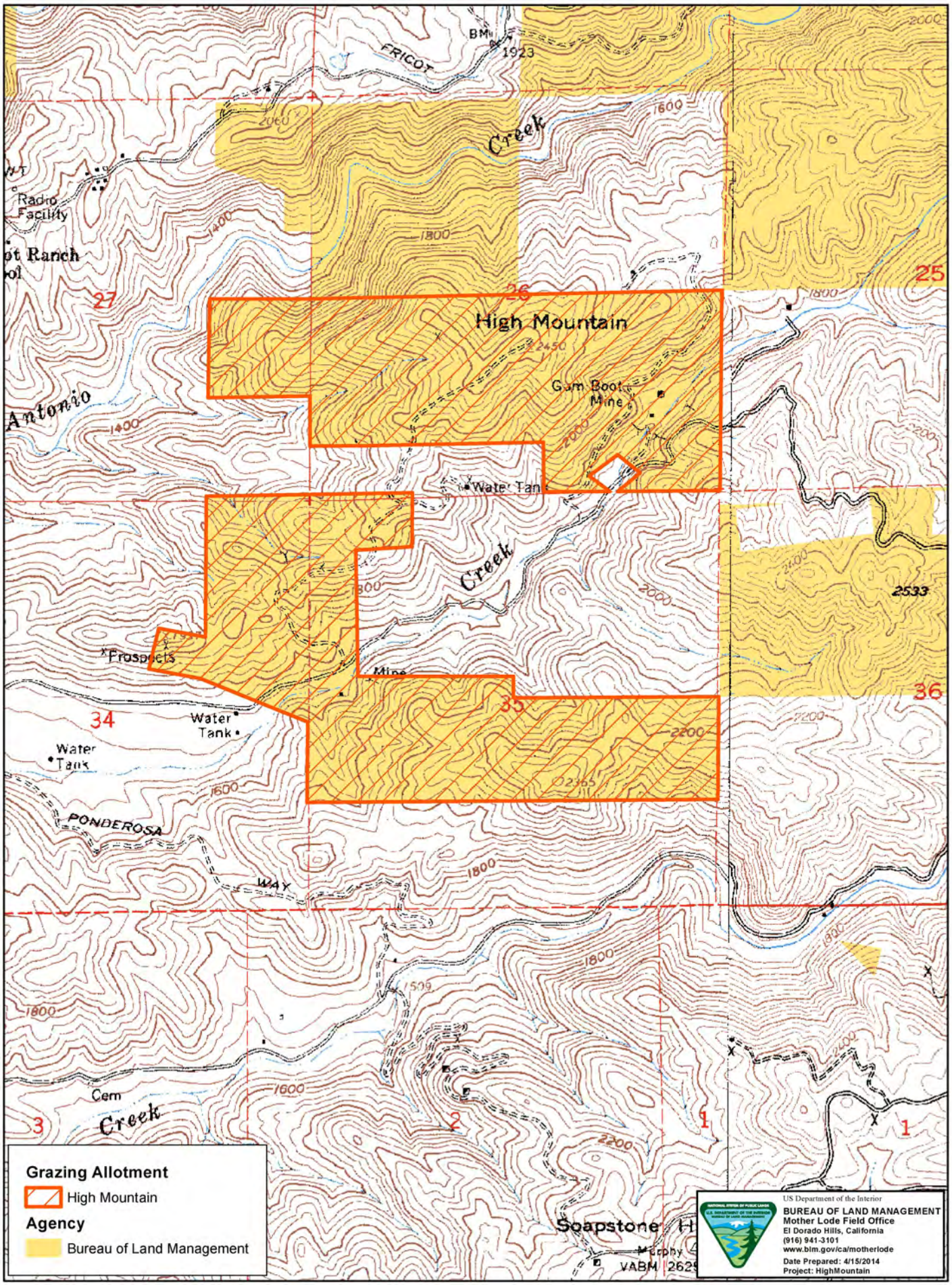
Date Prepared: 4/15/2014
Project: BlueMoon

High Mountain



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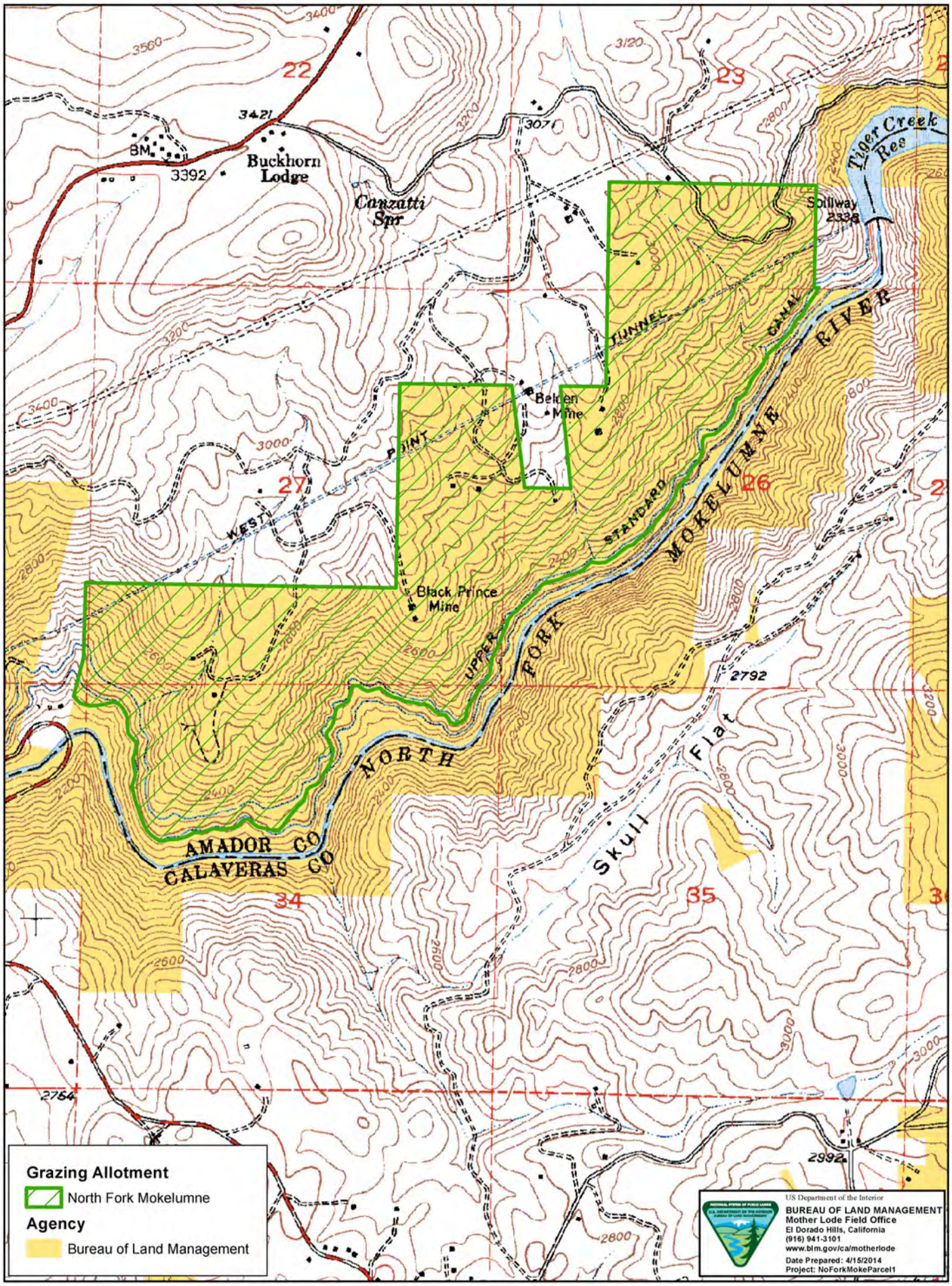

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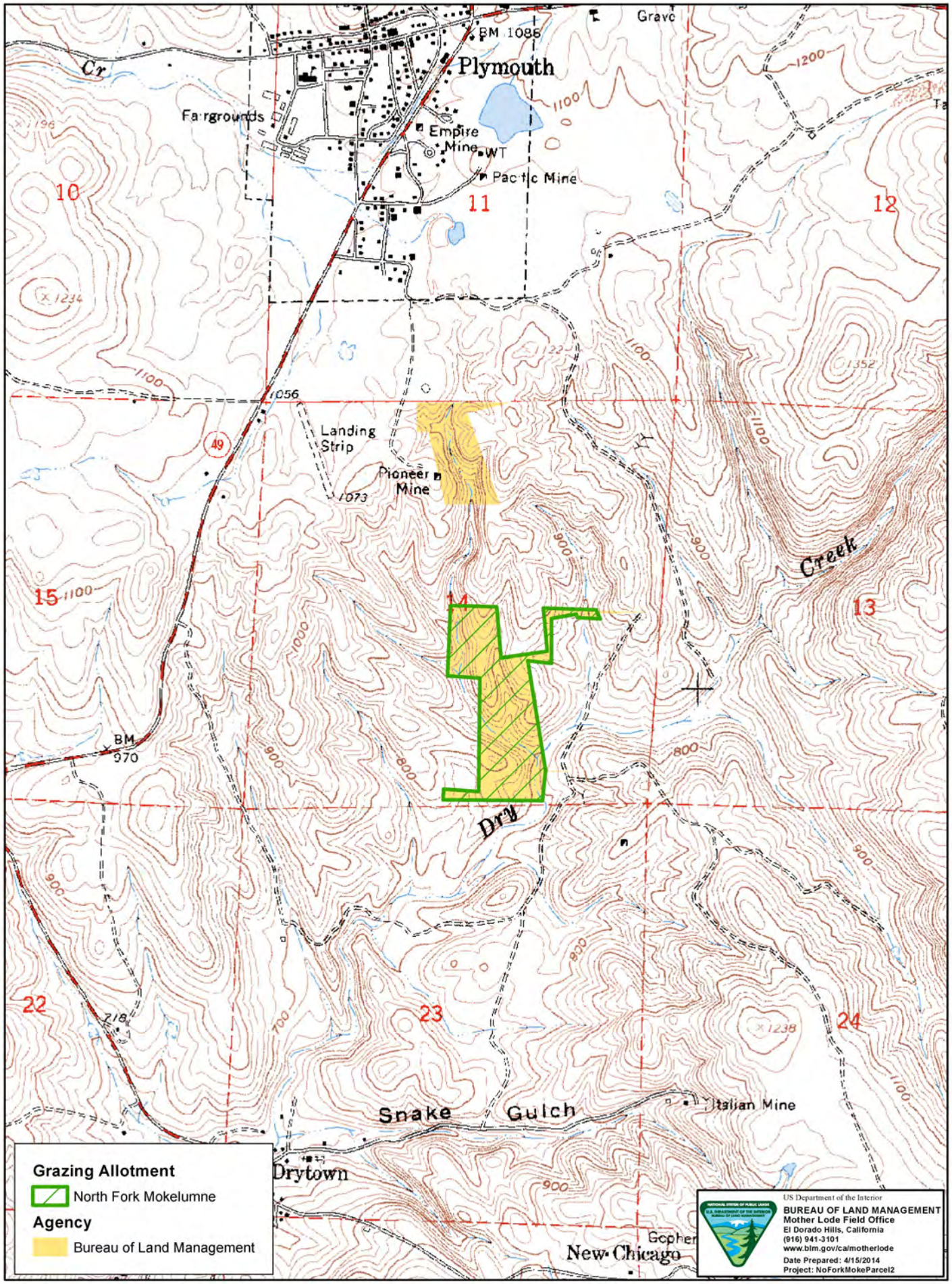

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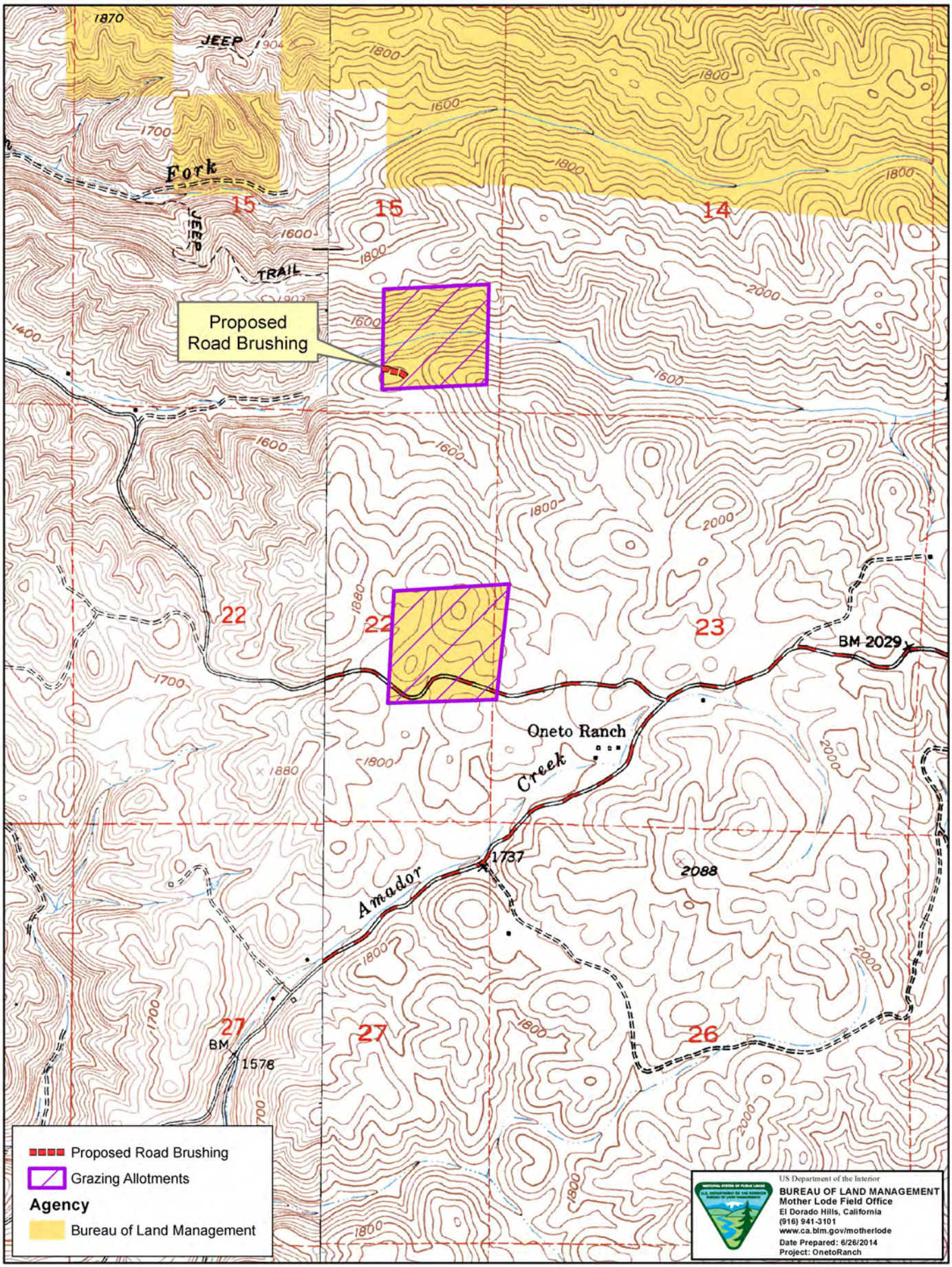
Oneto Ranch



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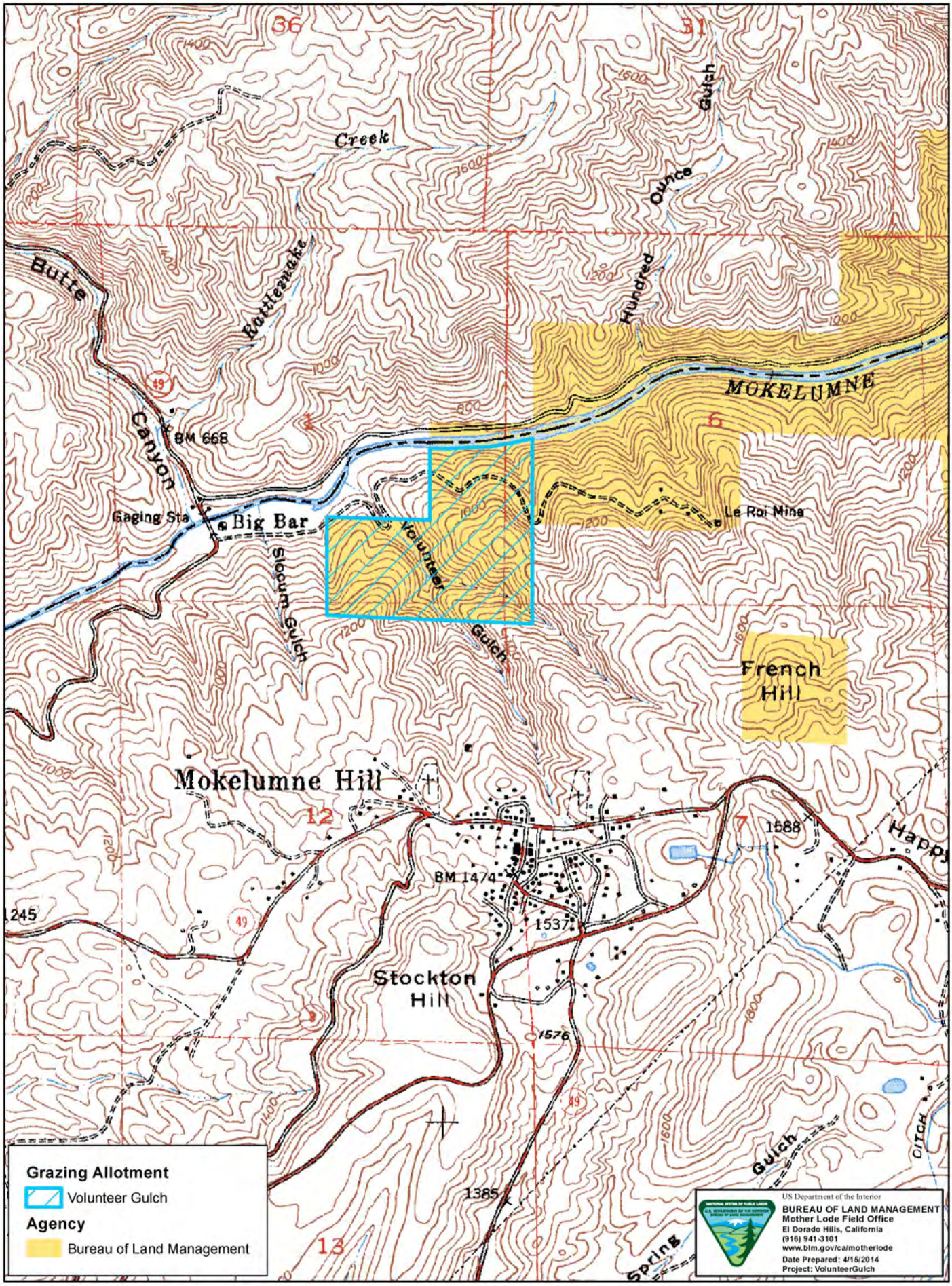
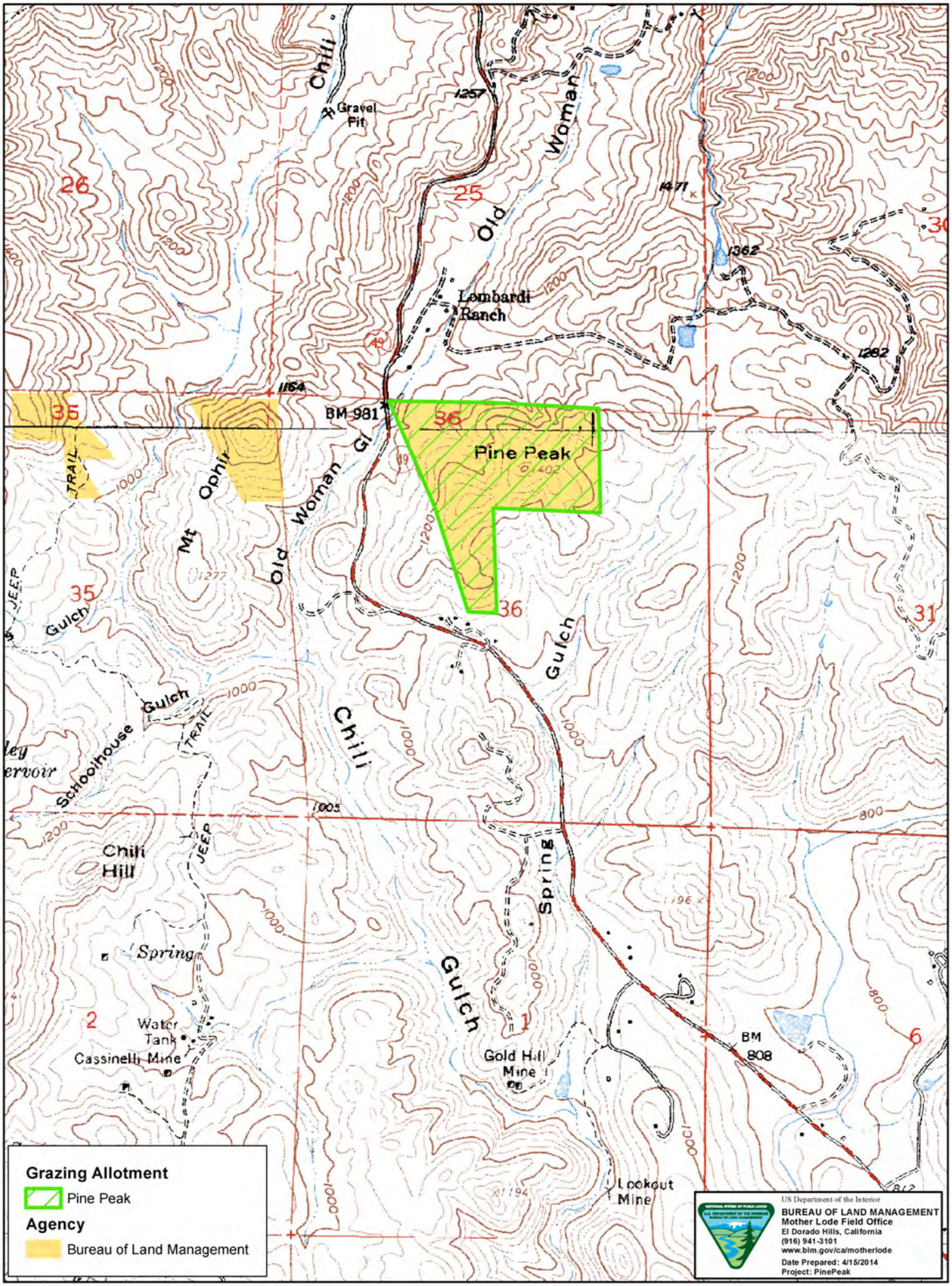


Pine Peak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Chili Hill
Spring
Water Tank
Cassinelli Mine
Gold Hill Mine
Lookout Mine
BM 981
BM 808
T5N
T4N
R11E
R12E
1:20,000
Grazing Allotment
Pine Peak
Agency
Bureau of Land Management
US Department of the Interior
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Date Prepared: 4/15/2014
Project: PinePeak