



United States Department of the Interior



BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT

Surprise Field Office
P. O. Box 460
Cedarville, CA 96104
www.ca.blm.gov/surprise

In Reply Refer To:
6500 (LLCAN0700) P

August 21, 2013

NOTICE OF FIELD MANAGER'S DECISION Cherry Mountain California Bighorn Sheep Augmentation

The Bureau of Land Management (BLM) is proposing to allow the Nevada Department of Wildlife (NDOW) to augment the existing California bighorn sheep (*Ovis canadensis californiana*) population on Cherry Mountain in northern Washoe County. The capture and release will occur between October 1, 2014-February 1, 2016. Twenty-five to forty captured sheep will be loaded into and moved in a modified stock trailer, and will then be let out of the trailer along the Wall Canyon road and released into Cockrell Canyon in the Wall Canyon West allotment onto SFO BLM lands at Township 38N Range 20E Section 6. If road conditions are deemed too poor to access the site, the release will be postponed until road conditions permit access to the release location within the identified time period for release. This Categorical Exclusion is to authorize the release of California bighorn sheep onto Cherry Mountain on lands managed by the Surprise Field Office BLM and does not authorize the capture of California bighorn sheep. The release of sheep will not occur within the administrative boundaries of the Wall Canyon WSA. The proposed release site is shown on the attached map. Analysis of capture of bighorn sheep will be completed by the appropriate federal agency in accordance with the provisions of the National Environmental Policy Act.

BACKGROUND and PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT

A Categorical Exclusion was prepared for the proposed bighorn sheep augmentation: DOI-BLM-CA-N070-2013-0017 CX. The CX analyzed the Proposed Action. The release plan was developed as result of internal and external scoping between the NDOW and the SFO BLM.

Based on those determinations, the Surprise Field Office is proposing to implement the CX's proposed action which would allow NDOW to release between twenty-five to forty bighorn sheep between October 1, 2014-February 1, 2016. Twenty-five to forty captured sheep will be loaded into and moved in a modified stock trailer, and will then be let out of the trailer along the Wall Canyon road and released into Cockrell Canyon in the Wall Canyon West allotment onto SFO BLM lands at Township 38N Range 20E Section 6. Several meetings were held between NDOW and BLM regarding the bighorn sheep augmentation. Issues discussed were release sites, road access, disease risks, and current bighorn sheep population dynamics. BLM conducted a 30 day scoping period from July 18, 2013 to August 19, 2013 for the proposed bighorn sheep release with interested publics and Native American Tribes. No comments or concerns were received.

FIELD MANAGER'S DECISION

It is my decision to implement the CX's Proposed Action, the release of twenty five to forty California bighorn sheep on Cherry Mountain. The release would occur as specified in the CX. Categorical Exclusion NEPA #

DOI-BLM-CA-N070-2013-0017-CX was prepared to assess the impacts of augmenting the Cherry Mountain bighorn sheep population in consultation with the permittees, state agencies and interested publics and to determine if an Environmental Assessment was required for the augmentation. Based on the CX, no further NEPA analysis is necessary to permit NDOW to augment the existing population of California bighorn sheep.

RATIONALE

Based on the review of resources issues identified during field visits and analysis in the CX, environmental effects of the proposed bighorn sheep augmentation does not require an Environmental Assessment. The augmentation would increase the population numbers of bighorn sheep on Cherry Mountain on the Nevada portion of lands managed by the SFO and increase population levels to a point where predation is compensatory. The augmentation would maintain heterozygosity and allelic diversity and reduce the potential for inbreeding. In the long term, increased bighorn sheep population levels would be expected to maintain bighorn sheep population viability.

This decision conforms to the Surprise Resource Management Plan (RMP) and Record of Decision, April 2008, and is consistent with federal, state and local laws, regulations, and plans to the maximum extent consistent with federal law.

FUTURE MONITORING

The Surprise Field Office BLM and NDOW will continue to monitor and survey bighorn sheep populations to assess the relative health of bighorn sheep populations and the success of bighorn sheep augmentations.

AUTHORITY

The authority for this decision is contained in Federal Statutes and Title 43 of the Code of Federal Regulations:

Federal Land Policy and Management Act (FLPMA) of 1976, as amended (43 U.S.C. 1701 *et seq.*).

43 C.F.R. Part 24 – State-Federal Relationships

43 C.F.R. Part 46 – Implementation of the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969

2008 Surprise Field Office RMP and Final Environmental Impact Statement- 2.22.4.4 Proposed Management Actions for Group 2

2008 Surprise Field Office RMP and Final Environmental Impact Statement- 2.22.5.4 Proposed Management Actions for Group 3

ADMINISTRATIVE REMEDIES

This decision may be appealed to the Interior Board of Land Appeals, Office of the Secretary, in accordance with the regulations at Title 43 of the Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) Part 4, and the information provided in BLM Form 1842-1.

If an appeal is taken, your notice of appeal must be filed in the Surprise Field Office, Bureau of Land Management, U.S. Department of the Interior, 602 Cressler Street, Cedarville, CA 96104, within 30 days from receipt of this decision. The effective date of this decision (and the date initiating the appeal period) will be the date this notice of decision is posted on BLM's internet website (<http://www.blm.gov/ca/st/en/fo/surprise.html>).

The appellant has the burden of showing that the decision appealed is in error.

If you wish to file a petition for a stay of the effectiveness of this decision during the time that your appeal is being reviewed by the board, pursuant to Title 43 of the Code of Federal Regulations, Part 4, Subpart E, the petition for a stay must accompany your notice of appeal. A petition for a stay is required to show sufficient justification based on the standards listed below. Copies of the notice of appeal and petition for a stay must also be submitted to the Interior Board of Land Appeals and to the appropriate Office of the Solicitor (see 43 CFR 4.413) at the same time the original documents are filed with this office. If you request a stay, you have the burden of proof to demonstrate that a stay should be granted.

Standards to Obtaining a Stay:

Except as otherwise provided by law or other pertinent regulations, a petition for a stay of a decision pending appeal shall show sufficient justification based on the following standards:

- (1) the relative harm to the parties if the stay is granted or denied,
- (2) the likelihood of the appellant's success on the merits,
- (3) the likelihood of immediate and irreparable harm if the stay is not granted, and
- (4) whether the public interest favors granting the stay.

___/s/ Timothy Burke_____

Timothy Burke
Acting Surprise Field Office Manager

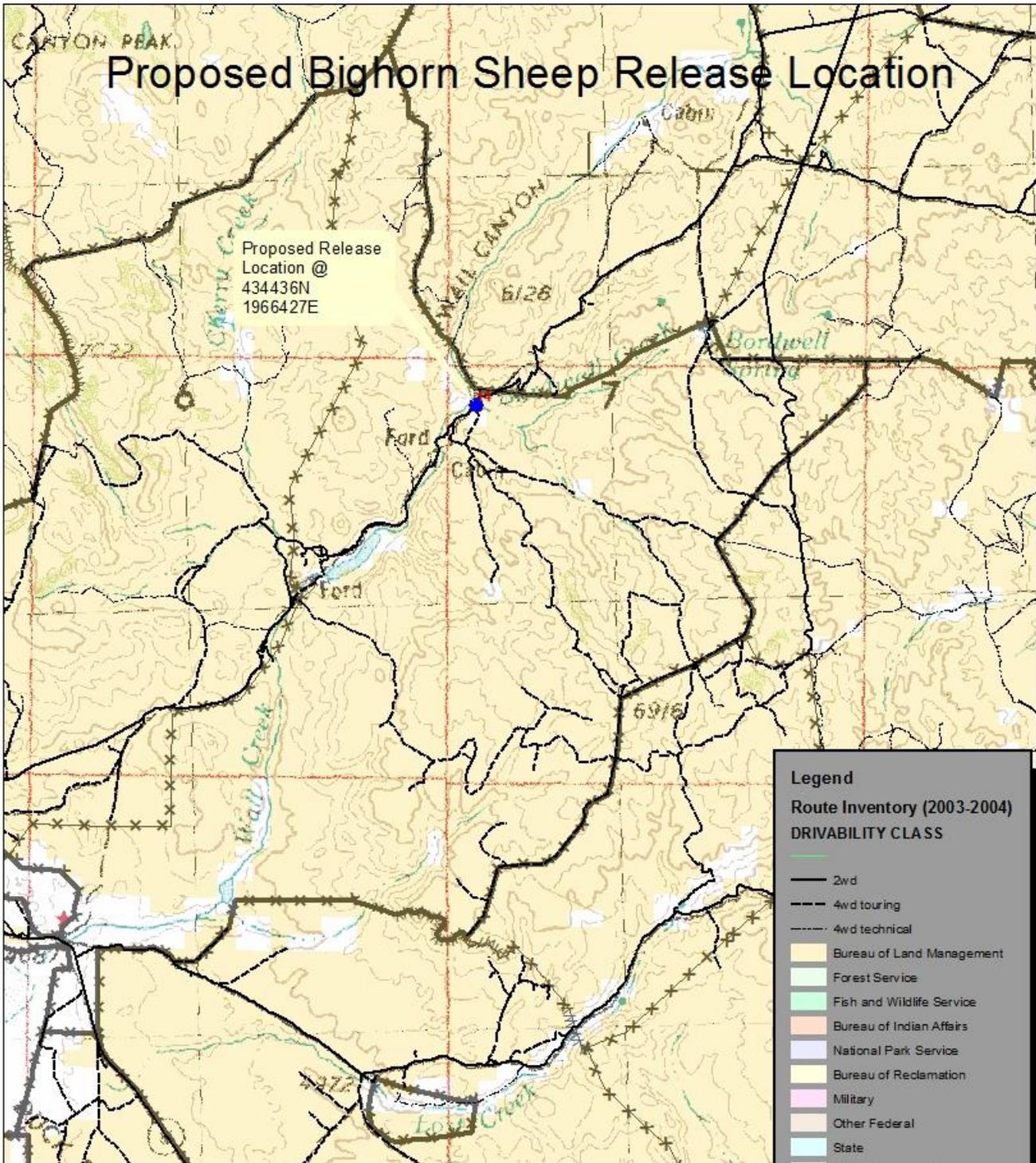
8/21/2013_____

Date

Attachments:

Project maps (1)

Proposed Bighorn Sheep Release Location



Legend

Route Inventory (2003-2004)

DRIVABILITY CLASS

- 2wd
- - - 4wd touring
- · - · 4wd technical
- Bureau of Land Management
- Forest Service
- Fish and Wildlife Service
- Bureau of Indian Affairs
- National Park Service
- Bureau of Reclamation
- Military
- Other Federal
- State
- Other Government
- Private
- Allotments
- ✕ ✕ Fence
- ≡ Natural; Natural Boundary
- Pastures

