



**United States Department of the Interior
Bureau of Land Management**

Date 11/2009
Updated 03/2010

**Environmental Assessment
DOI-BLM-CA-C0500-2010-0014**

Rail Canyon Land Sale
(Federal Parcel)
Location: Colusa, and Glenn County

U.S. Department of the Interior
Bureau of Land Management
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Chapter 1 - Introduction

Project Title: Rail Canyon Land Sale

Name and Address of Proponent: Rich Burns, Ukiah Field Manager
Bureau of Land Management
Department of the Interior
2550 North State Street
Ukiah, CA 95482

Case File: CACA- 50514

Project Location: Colusa and Glenn County, Ladoga, CA.
Mount Diablo Meridian, T. 18 N., R. 5 W,
Sec. 30, lots 1-4, inclusive.

USGS Topographic Map: 7.5 minute quads
Rail Canyon
Lodoga

Land Status Verified: Yes, per Master Title Plat parcel is under BLM federal ownership.

Affected Surface Area: 43.40 acres of public lands

Relationships to Statutes and Regulations:

Statutory authority for land sales is found in Section 203 of the Federal Land Policy and Management Act of 1976 (43 U.S.C. 1713) and the implementing Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) found in 43 CFR 2710, and Federal natural resource related policies and laws including:

- The proposed action is consistent with Federal natural resource related policies and laws including: Archeological Resources Protection Act of 1979 (16 U.S.C. 470aa - 470mm)
- National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 and 1999 amendment (16 U.S.C. 470 et seq.)
- Native American Graves and Repatriation Act of 1990 (43 CFR 7)
- American Indian Religious Freedom Act of 1978
- Endangered Species Act of 1973 (16 U.S.C. 1531 et seq. as amended)
- National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (42 U.S.C. 4321)
- Federal Land Policy and Management Act of 1976
- Federal Water Pollution Control Act of 1977 (Clean Water Act) (33 U.S.C. 1251 et seq.)
- Clean Air Act of 1955

- Taylor Grazing Act, as amended, 1970
- Lacey Act (Federal Noxious Weed Act of 1974)
- Public Rangelands Improvement Act 1978
- Healthy Forest Restoration Act of 2003
- Federal Noxious Weed Act of 1974 (as amended by Sec. 15, Management of Undesirable Plants on Federal Lands, 1990)
- Wilderness Act of 1964
- Wild and Scenic Rivers Act of 1968
- Surface Mining and Reclamation Act of 1977
- BLM Manual Section 6840
- Executive Order 11987 Exotic Species
- Executive Order 13112 (1999) National Invasive Species Council
- Executive Order 12580 Clean Water
- Executive Order 13112 Invasive Species
- Executive Order 13186 Responsibilities of Federal Agencies to Protect Migratory Birds
- Executive Order 13084 Consultation and Coordination with Indian Tribal Government
- Executive Order 12989 Environmental Justice in Minority Populations and Low-Income Populations
- Executive Order 11990 Protection of Wetlands
- Executive Order 11988 Floodplain Management

Conformance with Applicable Land Use Plan or other Plans:

As provided by 43 Code of Federal Regulations 1610.5, the proposed action is in conformance with the Ukiah Resource Management Plan (September 2006).

-Section 2.6 Lands and Realty, Goals, page 11: “Dispose of lands and interest in lands to support local community and development needs and/or improve efficiency in BLM management of lands and resources.”

-Section 2.6 Lands and Realty, Goals, page 12: “parcel is identified as suitable for disposal pending a site specific assessment.”

The Colusa County General Plan approved in 1989, designated zone for this parcel is Open Space (OS).

Glenn County’s zone is designated as RZ-160 (Recreational Zone, 160 acre minimum). Glenn County defines this as having open space value for recreational purposes, and shall not be used as a permanent residence. Both counties give no specific guidance on federal disposal of the subject land.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

The subject parcel is 43.40 acres located in the Sacramento Valley area of the California Central Valley that crosses the counties of Colusa and Glenn, California, 10 miles

northwest of Sites and 4 miles northeast of Stonyford, California. This parcel was part of a larger block of lands previously identified for disposal for a land exchange in 1992, which did not come to fruition, and is now eligible for sale under the Federal Land Transaction Facilitation Act (FLTFA). The adjoining landowner has expressed interest in this parcel, who owns property on both sides of the county road to the east and west. This parcel is isolated from other public lands, and is located in a rural area which is generally agricultural in nature.

Purpose and Need for the Proposed Action:

Purpose – The purpose of the proposed action is to transfer a small parcel of public land into private ownership and to generate funds pursuant to the Federal Land Transaction Facilitation Act (FLTFA). The sale of this parcel would fulfill BLM’s responsibility to dispose of lands which benefit the public at large as well as provide revenue sources needed for the acquisition of FLTFA nominated lands.

Need -

The parcel is isolated from other public lands, it would continue to be uneconomical and difficult to properly manage. Trespass through the federal parcel onto private properties would continue to occur, straining BLM and law enforcement resources. Funds from the sale are needed to purchase lands which have been nominated for acquisition pursuant to the FLTFA.

Description of Alternatives, including Proposed Action:

This Environmental Assessment (EA) has been prepared to analyze the potential sale of 43.40 acres of federal lands. The EA is a site-specific analysis of potential impacts that could result with the implementation of a proposed action or alternatives to the proposed action.

No Action Alternative. Under the no action alternative, the proposed sale would not occur and the public lands would be retained in federal ownership for the foreseeable future.

Funds would not be generated from the sale of this parcel and deposited in the Federal Land Disposal Account. These funds are available via a Department of Interior competitive process for future land acquisition.

Trespass over federal lands to access adjacent private properties would continue to occur, straining BLM staff and law enforcement resources.

If approved, Title would be conveyed upon completion of the comment period, and completion of necessary paperwork to convey title.

Alternatives Considered, but Dismissed from Analysis:

Previous to the proposed action in this environmental assessment the following was considered.

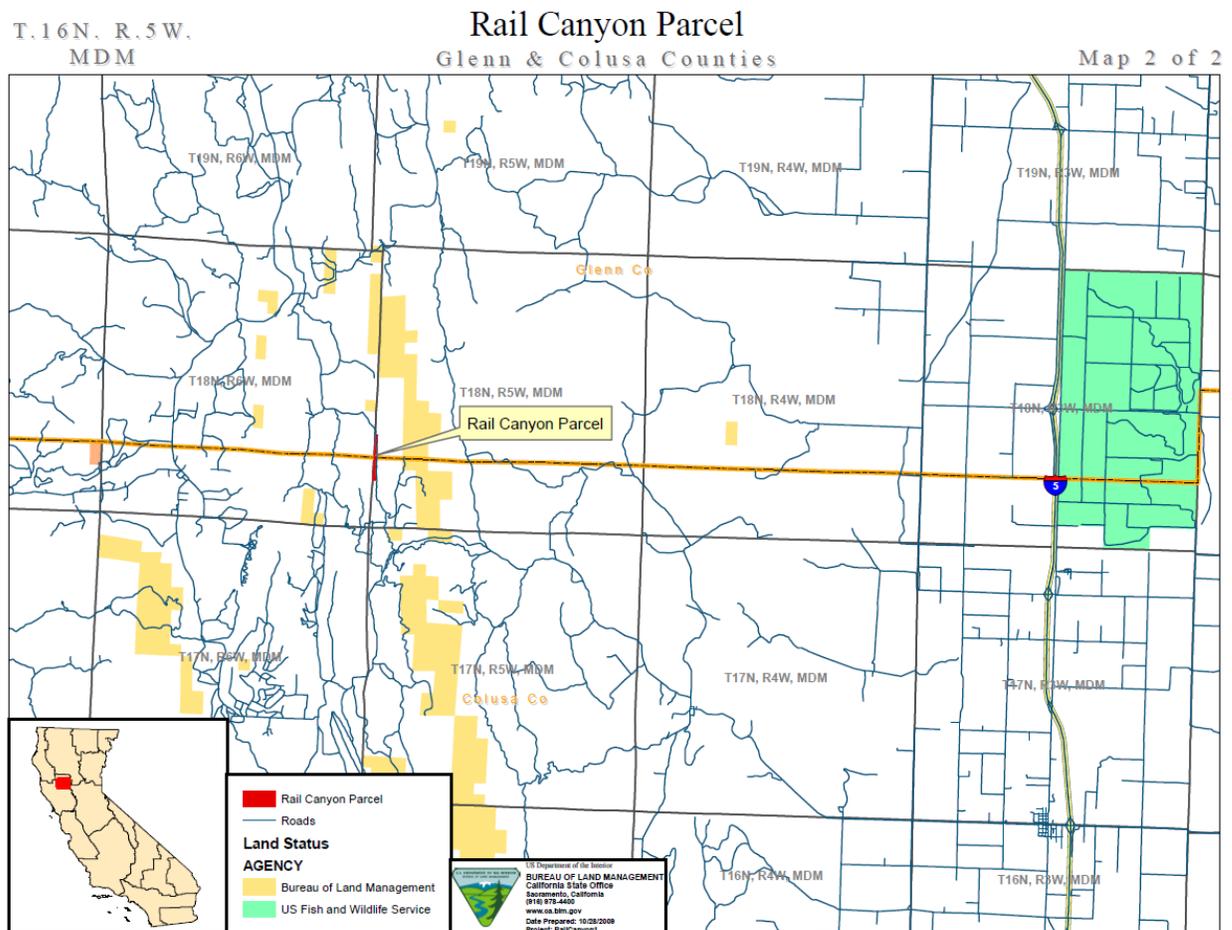
The “Land Exchange” Alternative. The parcel was previously identified for disposal as part of a larger land exchange in 1992, of which did not come to fruition. Recent consideration was given as to another land exchange however land exchanges are extremely time consuming and would not be cost effective to try and exchange only 43.40 acres.

Chapter 2 - Proposed Action and Alternatives

Alternative A – Proposed Action:

The proposed action is to offer a competitive bid sale of the following public lands, consisting of 43.40 acres located at Mount Diablo Meridian, T. 18 N., R. 5 W., Sec. 30, lots 1-4, inclusive. Identified and recorded by an official US survey.

The parcel is shown on the following map.



Funds from the sale would be deposited into the Federal Land Disposal Account pursuant

to the Federal Land Transaction and Facilitation Act (FLTFA). The Mineral Potential Report conducted in December 1994 indicates that the property has no known mineral values. Therefore, the proposed sale would include the conveyance of both the surface and mineral interests of the United States.

The sale would be conducted by inviting bidders to submit written sealed bids to the BLM. The minimum acceptable bid would be the fair market value of \$23,000, based on the approved appraisal conducted by North Valley Land Services. The highest bid would be declared the high bidder. If BLM receives two or more identical high bids, those bidders could submit supplemental bids.

Colusa and Glenn County's General Plan has policies about the limitations of development. Application of those measures would be the responsibility of the local jurisdiction when the lands are developed.

Roles and Responsibilities:

1. Roles:

BLM Sacramento Realty Specialist – Tom Gey, Realty Specialist
BLM Sacramento Realty Specialist- Tim Wing,
BLM Ukiah Realty Specialist- Alice Vigil

2. Responsibilities:

This is a joint effort of the parties involved to accomplish the administrative process of the proposed action.

Monitoring and Compliance:

No monitoring is needed other than “administrative monitoring” to make certain all paperwork is completed on time for possible transfer of lands.

Mitigation Measures:

No mitigation has been identified by BLM.

Chapter 3 – Affected Environment

Biological Resources

In a biological and hazmat survey prepared by Gregg J. Mangan, Wildlife Management Biologist for the BLM, April 12-30, 1993, there were no special status plant or animal species and their habitats observed. There were also no hazardous materials found on or near the parcel.

A review of The California Native Plant Society Data Base and the California Natural Diversity Data Base was conducted on 01/20/2009, for State and Federally-listed endangered, threatened, and rare plants and animals. The review determined that there are no occurrence of threatened and endangered species of plants and animals on this parcel

Cultural Resources

On June 12, 2007, Brooke Brown, Field Office Archeologist for the BLM, determined that there were no cultural sites on this parcel. No mitigation work is needed.

Mineral Potential

This area has been identified as having no mineral potential.

Hazardous Materials

No evidence of hazardous materials was observed from the air or on the ground. Another field inspection was conducted on October 2009, no hazardous materials were noted.

Visual Resources

This area has been classified as Visual Resource Management (VRM) Class III, which states in the Ukiah RMP that it must partially retain the landscape's existing character, and the level of change to characteristic landscape can be moderate.

Recreational Resources

The lands proposed for sale is in an area currently and historically used for rural recreational use such as camping, hiking, and hunting. The recreation use is a very low intensity use.

Existing Land Uses and Authorizations

There is a county road easement accessible to the public. This road is identified as Rail Canyon Road in Colusa County, and County Road 401 in Glenn County.

There are no other land uses and authorizations on this parcel.

Land Use Planning

Although local planning and zoning designations are not binding on public lands, they become applicable when those lands are transferred into private ownership. The General Plans included a land use element, placing all lands in specific land use designations/zones. Land use designations/zones are a foundation component in the General Plan. None of the public lands proposed for sale are identified for conservation in BLM Ukiah's land use plan.

Colusa County General Plan of 1989:

The Colusa County General Plan was approved in 1989. The Colusa County General Plan designated this parcel as Open Space (OS). The Open Space is necessary to ensure that the land will be available for production of food, management of natural resources, the enjoyment of scenic beauty, and recreation. It must be kept undeveloped or developed with uses that complement the inherent natural, scenic, or resource characteristics of the land.

Glenn County General Plan of June 15, 1993:

Glenn County's zone is classified as RZ-160 (Recreational Zone, 160 acre minimum). Glenn County defines this as having open space value for recreational purposes, and recreation shall not be used as a permanent residence.

Ukiah Resource Management Plan of September 2006:

Section 2.6.1, page 12 of this plan states: "*Identify parcels for potential disposal subject to site specific assessment.*"

Chapter 4 Environmental Impacts

Impacts to Supplemental Authorities of Alternative A (Proposed Action):

The following are either not present or would not be affected by the proposed action: Air Quality, T&E Species, Water Quality, Areas of Environmental Concern (ACECs), Wetlands/Riparian Areas, Floodplains, Farm Lands, Environmental Justice, Hazardous and Solid Waste, Native American Religious Concerns, Wilderness, Wild and Scenic Rivers, Cultural Resources, Invasive/Non-native Species, Essential fish habitat, and Healthy Forest Initiative.

Sales of public lands have little direct impact on the human environment. The primary direct impact of transferring public lands into private ownership is to increase the value of property assessed for taxes. The estimated total value of the public lands proposed for sale is approximately \$23,000. Since property taxes are assessed at 1% of value, assessed taxes in Colusa and Glenn Counties would increase by approximately \$230 total. If improvements are constructed, assessed taxes would increase based on the value of the improvements.

The indirect impacts of the sale would depend on the future use of the lands. Since Colusa County's zone has been designated as open space (OS), the impacts would be minimal due to the policies of the General Plan. Glenn County's zone is a Recreation Zone (RZ-160), and therefore impacts would be minimal as well for the same reason. If the parcel were to be used for further development beyond the zoning restrictions, county agencies would have to be consulted with.

Impacts to Other Resources:

There would be no impacts to other resources.

Climate Change: The assessment of GHG emissions and climate change remains in its formative phase. The lack of scientific tools designed to predict climate change on regional or local scales limits the ability to quantify potential future impacts of climate change on resources in the project area. In addition, while the proposed action may involve some future contribution of GHGs, these contributions would not have a noticeable or measurable effect, independently or cumulatively, on a phenomenon

occurring at the global scale believed to be due to more than a century of human activities.

Impacts to Supplemental Authorities of Alternative B (No Action):

The following are either not present or would not be affected by the proposed action: Air Quality, T&E Species, Water Quality, Areas of Environmental Concern (ACECs), Wetlands/Riparian Areas, Floodplains, Farm Lands, Environmental Justice, Hazardous and Solid Waste, Native American Religious Concerns, Wilderness, Wild and Scenic Rivers, Cultural Resources, Invasive/Non-native Species, Essential fish habitat, and Healthy Forest Initiative.

Impacts to Other Resources:

Law Enforcement and trespass issues would be affected if the sale of the parcel does not occur.

The public lands would be retained in federal ownership for the foreseeable future. Trespass over federal lands onto private properties would continue to occur, straining BLM staff and law enforcement resources.

Cumulative Effects:

The sale of this property would result in the loss of overall public land base. BLMs land tenure program is to promote more efficient and effective land management. This is accomplished by exchanging or selling scattered tracts that are isolated, difficult to manage or have low resource value.

Once in private ownership, the land zoning would be determined by the county. If development of this parcel were to occur, it could require a change to the county plan and zoning for this area.

Although there would be a loss of moneys in this transaction, the funds generated from the sale would be placed in the FTLFA account to be used for other land acquisitions that are more desirable for the public. Also, the land is uneconomical and difficult to manage, and would be in the public's best interest to dispose of the land.

Summary of Alternatives:

Alternative A – Proposed Action

The proposed action is to offer a competitive bid sale of the following public lands, consisting of 43.40 acres located at Mount Diablo Meridian, T. 18 N., R. 5 W., Sec. 30, lots 1-4, inclusive.

Alternative B – No Action

The 43.40 acre parcel would not be sold and would remain in federal ownership.

Chapter 5 Consultation and Coordination

Persons, Groups, and Agencies Consulted:

Consultation with US Fish and Wildlife Service was not conducted as there are no listed species or habitat on the parcel proposed for sale. BLM consulted with Grindstone Rancheria and the Yocha Dehe Wintun Nation. As of June 4, 2010, no comments were received.

Summary of Public Participation:

During preparation of the EA, the public will be notified of the proposed action by posting on the Ukiah Field Office Internet NEPA webpage on March 16, 2010. A public comment period was offered from March 16, 2010 to April 15, 2010. As of April 16, 2010, no comments were received.

