



United States Department of the Interior  
BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT  
Morley Nelson Snake River Birds of Prey National  
Conservation Area  
3948 Development Avenue  
Boise, ID 83705  
(208) 384-3300



**FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT**  
**DOI-BLM-ID-B011-2017-0002-EA**  
*Establishment of a Sustainable Water Supply for Mountain Home  
Air Force Base Mountain Home, Idaho*

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**INTRODUCTION:**

The Bureau of Land Management (BLM) has conducted an environmental analysis (DOI-BLM-ID-B011-2017-0002-EA) for a proposed water supply pipeline and pumping station. On December 5, 2016 the Idaho Water Resources Board (IWRB) submitted an application for a Right-of-Way (ROW) for construction, operation, and maintenance of a 20/24 inch water supply pipeline and pumping station on BLM-administered lands to the Mountain Home Air Force Base in Elmore County, Idaho. The project area is located southwest of Mountain Home, Idaho and includes lands from the Mountain Home Air Force Base to CJ Strike Reservoir (Section 1.1, EA). The USAF and BLM entered into a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) in November 2016 to act as Joint Lead Agencies in the preparation of this Environmental Assessment (EA).

The total project area ground-disturbance under the Alternative C: BLM Preferred Alternative (Western Alignment) would be 52.15 acres, located on the following lands:

Boise Meridian, Elmore County, Idaho

T. 4 S., R. 4 E., section 13, SE1/4SE1/4

section 22, S1/2SE1/4, NE1/4SE1/4

section 23, N1/2SW1/4, S1/2NE1/4

section 24, N1/2NW1/4, SW1/4NW1/4, NW1/4NE1/4

section 27, NE1/2NW1/4, SW1/4NW1/4, NW1/4NE1/4

section 28, E1/2SE1/2, SE1/4NE1/4

section 33, E1/2E1/2

T. 4 S., R. 5 E., section 9, S1/2SW1/4

section 8, SWSW

section 15, E1/2E1/2

section 17, Lots, 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, & 6

section 18, Lots 5, 6, 7, & 8, NE1/4NW1/4, NW1/4SE1/4, S1/2NE1/4

T. 5 S., R. 4 E., section 4, E1/2

section 9, E1/2

section 21, SE1/4NE1/4

section 22, Lots 1 & 2

The approximate 174.78 acre right-of-way includes both a linear portion (pipeline) (174.55 acres) and a square portion (pump station) (0.23 acres), the pipeline would run along developed roads and power lines and the pump station would be on the shore line of the CJ Strike Reservoir project area. DOI-BLM-ID-B011-2017-0002-EA is incorporated by reference for this Finding of No

Significant Impact (FONSI). A No Action Alternative and two action alternatives were analyzed in the EA, required design features and best management practices would be implemented as outlined within Section 2.3 of the EA.

#### **FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT:**

Based upon a review of the EA and the supporting documents, I have determined that the project 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 Snake River Birds of Prey National Conservation Area Resource Management Plan and Record of Decision (2008). 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 under the BLM Preferred Alternative is a site-specific action directly involving approximately 174.78 acres of BLM-administered lands from the Mountain Home Air Force Base to CJ Strike Reservoir. If selected, each alternative would incorporate design features, best management practices, and other minimizing measures to avoid any significant impacts to biological, cultural, or other resources within or adjacent to the project area (Section 2.3, EA). Overall, both the beneficial and adverse effects expected from implementation of the alternatives are site specific and localized in scale. None of the predicted effects associated with implementation of the project are considered measureable at the state-wide, regional, national, or international scale.

**Intensity:** The following discussion is organized around the Ten Significance Criteria described in 40 CFR 1508.27 and incorporated into resources and issues considered (includes supplemental authorities Appendix 1 H-1790-1) and supplemental Instruction Memorandum, Acts, regulations and Executive Orders.

The following have been considered in evaluating intensity for this proposal:

**1. The activities described in the proposed action and alternatives do not include any significant beneficial or adverse impacts (40 CFR 1508.27(b)(1)).**

The EA provides a description of both the beneficial and adverse effects expected from implementation. Design features and best management practices would be implemented as outlined in the EA to reduce impacts to resources. None of the environmental effects discussed in detail in the EA and associated appendices are considered significant.

**2. The activities included in the proposed action would not significantly affect public health or safety (40 CFR 1508.27(b)(2)).**

Neither the Proposed Action or the BLM Preferred Alternative would significantly affect public health or safety. In particular, the BLM Preferred Alternative is designed to supply a sustainable water supply to the workforce and residence of the Mountain Home Air Force Base located adjacent to Mountain Home, Idaho. This would eliminate future concerns that the Air Force Base has about the depletion of the aquifer that is now being used and depended on for water. The BLM Preferred Alternative would comply with Department of Transportation regulations for hauling of equipment and materials on public roads. Additionally, to protect the general public, unauthorized personnel would not be allowed in active construction areas. Because the construction would be done in a

safe manner, and operations would similarly be conducted safely, and the public would be protected from construction and operational accidents, the degree to which public safety would be affected is extremely minimal. Other best management practices would be followed as outlined within Section 2.3 and analyzed within Section 3.12 of the EA.

- 3. The proposed activities would not significantly affect any unique characteristics (40 CFR 1508.27(b)(3)) of the geographic area such as proximity to historic or cultural resources, park lands, prime farmlands, wetlands, caves, wild and scenic rivers, designated wilderness areas, wilderness study areas, or ecologically critical areas.**

No park lands, prime farmlands, wetlands, caves, wild and scenic rivers, designated wilderness areas, or wilderness study areas are within the project area or vicinity and therefore would not be affected. The Proposed Action and the BLM Preferred Alternative lie within a congressionally designated area, the Morley Nelson Snake River Birds of Prey National Conservation Area. The historic and cultural resources of the area have been inventoried and potential impacts would be avoided through the implementation of cultural stipulations (Section 2.3, EA). A stipulation is in place that would address unavoidable impacts (e.g., inadvertent discovery) on cultural resources.

- 4. The activities described in the proposed action do not involve effects on the human environment that are likely to be highly controversial (40 CFR 1508.27(b)(4)).**

No anticipated effects have been identified that are scientifically controversial. The BLM has implemented numerous similar projects. Sustainable water supply projects are authorized and constructed at numerous location on public lands. Pipelines are a major part of the right-of-way program for the BLM and are built public lands on a regular basis.

- 5. The activities described in the proposed action do not involve effects that are highly uncertain or involve unique or unknown risks (40 CFR 1508.27(b)(5)).**

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. A decision to implement these activities does not establish a precedent for future actions with significant effects or represent a decision in principle about a future consideration (40 CFR 1508.27(b)(6)).**

Approval of these activities in no way assures approval of any future activities. Any proposed future projects must be evaluated on their own merits and effects.

- 7. The effects of the Proposed Action and alternatives would not be significant, individually or cumulatively, when considered with the effects of other actions (40 CFR 1508.27(b)(7)). The EA discloses that there are no other connected or cumulative actions that would cause significant cumulative impacts.**

Past (e.g., development of roads), ongoing (e.g., livestock grazing), and reasonably foreseeable future actions (e.g., new ROWs sought by the Idaho Army National Guard) were evaluated in order to ascertain the potential for cumulative impacts to result from implementation of the project in concert with other activities in the region. Possible future

water development by the City of Mountain Home was also considered. The EA concluded that no significant cumulative environmental impacts would result from implementation of either the Proposed Action or the BLM Preferred Alternative.

**8. The activities described in the proposed action will not adversely affect or cause loss or destruction to scientific, cultural, or historical resources, including those listed in or eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places (40 CFR 1508.27(b)(8)).**

Neither the Proposed Action or BLM Preferred Alternative would adversely affect districts, sites, highways, structures, or other objects listed in or eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places, nor will it cause loss or destruction of significant scientific, cultural, or historical resources. Cultural resource record searches were conducted in February 2016 and March 2017, and field surveys of the project area were completed in March 2017. No cultural resources eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP) were identified in the Area of Potential Effect for either alternative. Consultation with the Idaho State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) was conducted in accordance with Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA), and on July 26, 2017 the SHPO concurred that review by their office was complete, that the project would result in No Adverse Effect, and that no further consultation would be required. Consultation with the Shoshone-Paiute Tribes and the Shoshone-Bannock Tribes was initiated in the Spring of 2017. Additional information regarding these consultations can be found in Section 4.1 of the EA.


**9. The proposed activities are not likely to adversely affect any endangered or threatened species or habitat that has been determined to be critical under the Endangered Species Act (40 CFR 1508.27(b)(9)).**

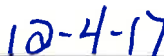
Design features and best management practices to reduce impacts to wildlife have been incorporated into the design of the both the Proposed Action and BLM Preferred Alternative. Yellow-billed cuckoo breeding habitat is not supported within the NCA, therefore the action was given a “No Effects” determination (Appendix F, EA) and no formal Section 7 ESA Consultation was conducted. Potential impacts to species known to occur in the region were evaluated, with a focus on the golden eagle, prairie falcon, ferruginous hawk, burrowing owl, long-billed curlew, and the habitat of the Piute ground squirrel (an important prey species). To avoid potential impacts, seasonal limitations on all construction activities within the confines of Snake River Canyon would be implemented from January 1 through July 31 to avoid nesting raptors and migratory bird species during their breeding season. Also, Idaho Water Resource Board (IWRB) would minimize interference with, disturbance of, and damage to nesting birds granted protection under the Migratory Bird Treaty Act (MBTA), and would not destroy any occupied migratory bird nests. Nesting burrowing owls may be present from March through July, and are known to occupy abandoned badger burrows as nest sites; IWRB would perform pre-construction site surveys to determine the presence/absence of occupied burrowing owl nests in March and April in order to prevent conflicts during construction, and would observe a 250-foot buffer zone around all identified occupied nests.

**10. The proposed activities will not threaten any violation of Federal, State, or local law or requirements imposed for the protection of the environment (40 CFR 1508.27(b)(10)).**

The project does not violate any known federal, state, local or tribal law or requirement imposed for the protection of the environment. The project would also be consistent with

applicable land management plans, policies, and programs (e.g., those established by the BLM). State, local, and tribal interests were given the opportunity to participate in the environmental analysis process. Furthermore, the project was discussed with the Shoshone-Paiute Tribes on January 19, 2017, February 16, 2017, April 20, 2017 and May 18, 2017. The project was discussed with the Shoshone-Bannock Tribes on May 17, 2017. Comments were received and concerns were addressed. In addition, the project is consistent with applicable land management plans, policies, and programs.

  
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Authorized Officer

  
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Date

Amanda Hoffman  
Morley Nelson Snake River Birds of Prey  
National Conservation Area Manager

