DECISION MEMO
Stove Draw Fence Relocation

USDA Forest Service, Northern Region
Nez Perce-Clearwater National Forests
Palouse Ranger District
Latah County, Idaho

I. Decision

I have decided to approve the Stove Draw Fence Relocation project (Project) on on the Palouse Ranger District, Nez Perce-Clearwater National Forests, located in Township 41 North, Range 1 West, Section 10 (Boise Meridian).

The north end of the "Stove Draw" fence runs down a steep ridge then crosses a boggy draw with seasonal water flow before tying in to a fence on private property. The approximately 1500-foot section of fence is difficult to maintain due to the steepness of the grade and because the draw is wet in the spring when initial maintenance is done. Relocating the fence on the next ridge to the east, which follows a relatively gentle grade down to the same private fence, is needed to make fence maintenance easier and improve ecological conditions in the draw.

Project Design / Equipment

The grazing permittee will remove approximately 1500 feet of the existing current (fence posts and wire) and build approximately 2200 feet of new fence (steel and wooden posts, four-strand barb wire) along the ridge to the east of the current fence location (see map). The new fence will tie in with a private property fence to the north. Work involves hand-digging post holes and stringing barb wire. Fencing supplies and materials will be transported to the work site by ATV.

The Range Specialist will monitor the work, during implementation and post-implementation, to ensure it meets specifications.

Project Implementation: Work will be in late spring or late summer 2018, and take one to two weeks to complete.

Design Criteria

Forest Plan standards are incorporated by reference. Design criteria include:

- The bottom strand of fencing should be smooth wire, 16 inches from the ground.

II. Rationale for Decision and Reasons for Categorically Excluding the Decision

A. Category of Exclusion and Rationale for Using the Category

Based on information in this document and the project record, I have determined that no extraordinary circumstances affecting resource conditions exist (36 CFR 220.6), that this project may be categorically excluded from documentation in an EA or EIS, and that it meets all the criteria outlined for 36 CFR 220.6(e)(9) *Implementation or modification of minor management practices to improve allotment condition or animal distribution when an allotment management plan is not yet in place.*

B. Finding of the Absence of Significant Adverse Effects to Extraordinary Circumstances

In compliance with 36 CFR 220.6, the following resource conditions were considered in determining whether extraordinary circumstances exist to the resource conditions that could result in significant effects to the environment. Based on the findings for resource conditions described below, I have determined that no extraordinary circumstances are associated with my decision.

1. Federally listed threatened or endangered species or designated critical habitat, species proposed for Federal listing or proposed critical habitat, or Forest Service sensitive species.

The Forest Interdisciplinary (ID) Team Wildlife Biologist, Fisheries Biologist and Botanist have determined the project would have no significant effects to federally listed and R1 Sensitive wildlife, fish and plant species and/or their habitats. Therefore, no extraordinary circumstances were identified for these resources.

2. Floodplains, wetlands, or municipal watersheds.

No floodplains, wetlands, or designated municipal watersheds exist in the project area, therefore no significant effects to floodplains, wetlands or municipal watersheds are expected. The proposed project is consistent with all applicable State and Federal water quality laws for water resources. The activities are also consistent with soil and water standards in the Clearwater National Forest Plan, including the PACFISH amendment. Based on this analysis, no extraordinary circumstances were identified regarding the effects to floodplains, wetlands, and municipal watersheds; thereby complying with EO 11988, EO 11990, and FSH 1909.15 Chapter 31.2.2.

3. Congressionally designated areas, such as wilderness, wilderness study areas or national recreation areas.

The project is not located in designated wilderness, a wilderness study area or Wild and Scenic River corridor; therefore, no extraordinary circumstances were identified to these resources.

4. Inventoried roadless areas or potential wilderness areas.

The project is not located within any Roadless Areas or potential wilderness areas, and therefore, no extraordinary circumstances were identified to these resources.

5. Research Natural Areas.

The project area does not include land designated as a Research Natural Area, and therefore, no extraordinary circumstances were identified to these resources.

6. American Indians and Alaska native religious or cultural sites.

The Forest Cultural Resource Specialist has determined the above project has little likelihood to adversely affect cultural properties. As a result, a *No Inventory Decision* has been made. Therefore, no extraordinary circumstances were identified to native religious or cultural sites.

7. Archaeological sites, or historical properties or areas.

The Idaho State Historic Preservation Officer, or the Forest Archaeologist via the use of the North Idaho Programmatic Agreement, has determined that no archaeological or historic property will be adversely affected by this project. Therefore, no extraordinary circumstances were identified to these resources.

III. Interested and Affected Agencies, Organizations, and Persons Contacted

The proposed action – removing 1500 ft. of existing and building 2200 ft. of new livestock fence – is considered limited in context and intensity, and therefore scoping was conducted internally on the Nez Perce-Clearwater National Forests. The Small NEPA Interdisciplinary Team was scoped on October 11, 2017 with no significant effects or extraordinary circumstances identified.

IV. Findings Required by Other Laws

Based on my review of the actions associated with this project, I find that the Stove Draw Fence Relocation Project is consistent with applicable Federal, state and local laws and regulations, including the standards and guidelines contained in the 1987 Clearwater National Forest Plan, as amended, as required by the National Forest Management Act of 1976.

V. Contact Person

Questions regarding this decision should be sent to Jeff Chynoweth, Small NEPA Team Coordinator, c/o Nez Perce–Clearwater Supervisor's Office, 903 Third Street, Kamiah, Idaho 83536 or by telephone to (208) 935-4260 or FAX at (208) 935-4275 during business hours (M-F, excluding Federal holidays, 7:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., PST).

VI. Signature of Deciding Officer

Stefani Spencer

STEFANI SPENCER
Palouse District Ranger

10/13/2017
Date

cc: Katlyn Howisey

Enclosures (1): Map

Map of the Potlatch River Boundary Fence Extension Project

Small NEPA: Stove Draw Fence Reroute

K Howisey 5/5/2017