



Natural Resources Conservation Service
9173 W. Barnes Dr., Suite C
Boise, Idaho 83709
Phone: (208) 378-5700
Fax: (208) 378-5735

MAR - 1 2013

Loretta Chandler, Field Manager
Bureau of Land Management, Owyhee Field Office
20 First Avenue West
Marsing, ID 83639

RE: Termination of NRCS as a Cooperating Agency under the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) BLM-MOU-ID-2012-0006-1610

Dear Ms. Chandler,

With this letter, NRCS is providing written notice of termination in the MOU as a Cooperating Agency (CA) in the development of the Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for the Jump Creek, Succor Creek, and Cow Creek area allotments. NRCS is not terminating our participation due to disagreement with the EIS content or process. Rather, we are concerned that our involvement as a CA will undermine our ability to work with Owyhee County permittees to achieve mutual conservation objectives.

NRCS administers voluntary conservation programs and our success in implementing these programs is dependent upon building and maintaining relationships with agricultural producers that are based on trust. We feel these relationships would be damaged if the NRCS name appears on NEPA documents that are of a regulatory nature.

Since the scope of the EIS was not expanded to include range improvement projects such as fences, water developments, and vegetation management, it will not assist NRCS in fulfilling our own environmental review requirements as we had hoped. Without the ability to use the EIS to make decisions to implement Farm Bill program funding, NRCS has no jurisdiction by law that would necessitate our participation as a CA. NRCS will continue to provide BLM with information related to our areas of special expertise, such as soils and Ecological Site Descriptions, upon request. We would also be happy to provide technical review of any EIS-related documents.

NRCS participation as a CA will terminate 30 days from the date of this letter. Please ensure that NRCS' name does not appear on the draft EIS that is circulated for public comment. Karen Fullen will remain the contact for technical information or technical review of documents.

Sincerely,


JEFF BURWELL
State Conservationist



Cc: Kurt Huston, Operations Chief-South, Idaho Dept. of Lands
Scott Reinecker, Supervisor, Idaho Dept. of Fish & Game, Southwest Region
Jacob Vialpando, Special Projects Manager, BLM Idaho State Office
Jim Fincher, District Manager, BLM Boise District Office
✓ Steven Ellis, State Director, BLM Idaho State Office