

SECTION A. Project Title: USDA Sheep Experiment Station

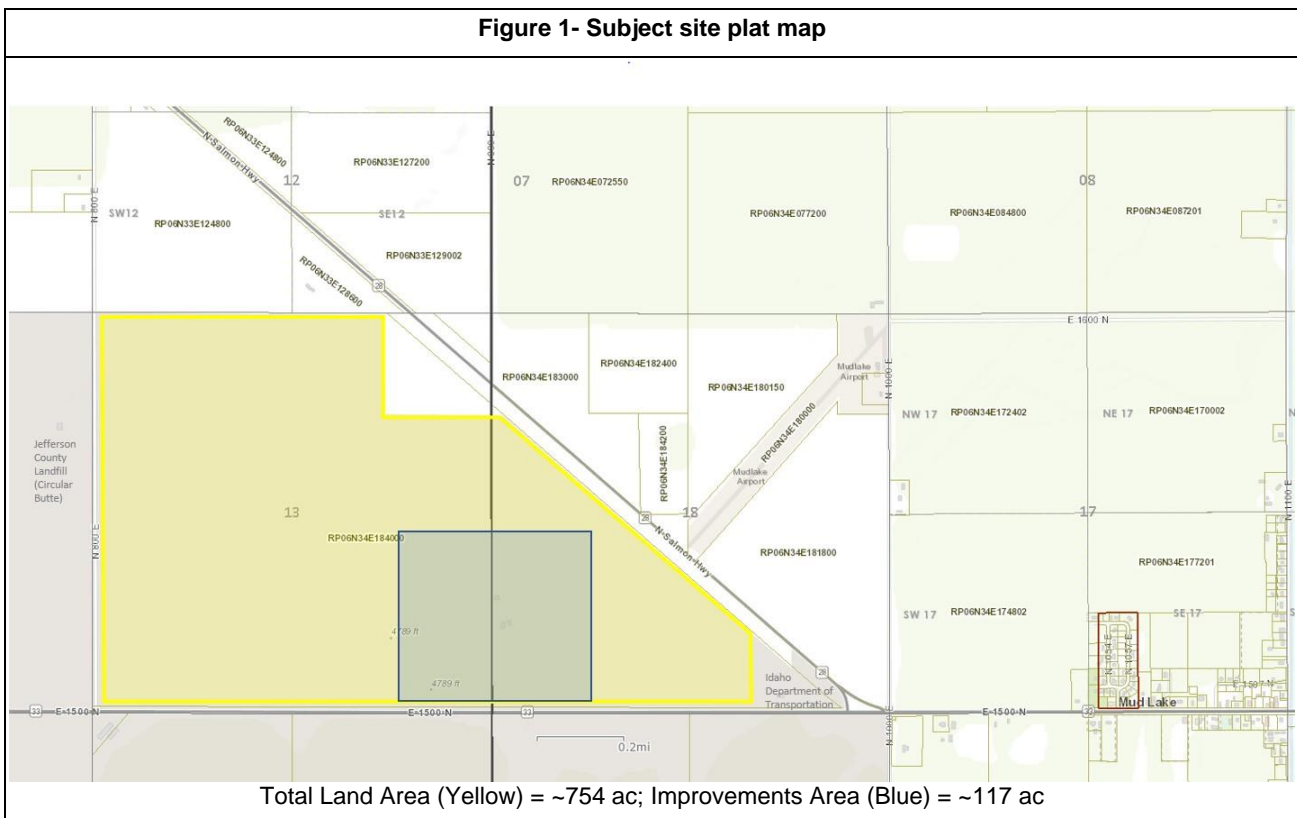
SECTION B. Project Description:

The proposed project is to grant a permit to the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA), Agricultural Research Service (ARS), Sheep Experiment Station to continue seasonal use of the DOE property known as the Mud Lake Feedlot in Jefferson County near Mud Lake, Idaho (Figure 1). A Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with USDA was established February 12, 1963, and seasonal use of the property has continued annually since that time. This permit will replace the MOU. The subject site is surrounded by (i.e., borders) various industrial, municipal, and agricultural properties. Specifically, deeded agricultural croplands and rural housing to the north and south; the Mud Lake/Jefferson County Airport to the northeast; the Jefferson County Landfill to the west; and the Idaho Department of Transportation Maintenance Shed-Mud Lake and Mud Lake municipality on the east. The property is bounded by Idaho State Highways 28 and 33 (and accompanying fences and service utilities) on the northeast and south, respectively, and Jefferson County Road N 800 E (and accompanying fence) on the west (Figure 1). Only two entrance roads access the property from Highway 28 and Jefferson County Road N 800 E.

Use of the property began in 1963 and includes maintenance of permanent improvements and management of sheep. Improvements include equipment shop, office building, livestock-working barn and equipment, livestock pens and alleys, perimeter fences, livestock shelters, well and water-supply system, feed-storage pens, gravel road, and service utilities, all of which have been in place for decades. Maintenance includes general repair and upkeep of infrastructure, cleaning of pen surfaces, and repair of road surface. With regard to sheep pens, manure is removed annually and used as soil amendment for vegetation and stabilization. Sheep management includes the care of up to 2,500 head of sheep during the breeding season and at times when grazing lands are not available (generally early winter thru early spring). Specific activities include daily feeding, watering, and monitoring for health issues; receipt and transport of sheep from/to other sites; arranging groups for genetics research objectives; and conducting general husbandry practices respective to domestic sheep. Sheep, intermittently and in varying numbers, occupy the feedlot from October thru April.

In accordance with the current MOU, ARS Dubois has continually stewarded the property to maintain the land and improvements. Granting the permit will not result in a change in the use of the property. The proposed project will not result in releases or place an increased demand on any portion of the local, county and municipal transportation, utility infrastructure or the human environment.

Figure 1- Subject site plat map



DOE-ID NEPA CX DETERMINATION

SECTION C. Environmental Aspects / Potential Sources of Impact

The proposal continues use of the feedlot that began in 1963. Use, and subsequent impacts, in recent years is substantially less than what occurred in the earlier years of the feedlot and is not expected to increase.

SECTION D. Determine the Level of Environmental Review (or Documentation) and Reference(s): Identify the applicable categorical exclusion from 10 CFR 1021, Appendix B, give the appropriate justification, and the approval date.

Note: For Categorical Exclusions (CXs) the proposed action must not: 1) threaten a violation of applicable statutory, regulatory, or permit requirements for environmental, safety, and health, including requirements of DOE orders; 2) require siting and construction or major expansion of waste storage, disposal, recovery, or treatment facilities; 3) disturb hazardous substances, pollutants, contaminants, or CERCLA-excluded petroleum and natural gas products that pre-exist in the environment such that there would be uncontrolled or unpermitted releases; 4) adversely affect environmentally sensitive resources. In addition, no extraordinary circumstances related to the proposal exist which would affect the significance of the action, and the action is not "connected" nor "related" (40 CFR 1508.25(a)(1) and (2), respectively) to other actions with potentially or cumulatively significant impacts.

References: B1.24 Transfer, lease, disposition, or acquisition of interests in personal property (including, but not limited to, equipment and materials) or real property (including, but not limited to, permanent structures and land), provided that under reasonably foreseeable uses (1) there would be no potential for release of substances at a level, or in a form, that could pose a threat to public health or the environment and (2) the covered actions would not have the potential to cause a significant change in impacts from before the transfer, lease, disposition, or acquisition of interests.

Justification: The activity consists of continuing USDA use of the sheep feedlot on DOE property through a permit grant to USDA by DOE.

Is the project funded by the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 (Recovery Act) Yes No

Approved by Jason Sturm, DOE-ID NEPA Compliance Officer on 2/23/2021