

Categorical Exclusion Review
U.S. DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT
Boise District Office
Four Rivers Field Office

**Healthy Hills Initiative Wildland Urban Interface (WUI) Trailhead Maintenance
and Fuelbreak**

CE No.: DOI-BLM-ID-B010-0061-CX

Lease/Serial/Case File No.: FR03_HHI_Fuel_break

Purpose and Need for Action: The proposed fuelbreak is part of a hazardous fuels reduction/restoration demonstration project in the Boise/Eagle foothills known as the Healthy Hills Initiative. Several partners including BLM, Ada County, the Eagle Fire Department, Natural Resource Conservation Service, Idaho Department of Fish and Game, and the United States Fish and Wildlife Service are working cooperatively in this area. The fuelbreak is needed to reduce the possibility of a wildland fire spreading from public lands (particularly from the existing trailhead) into the Bonita Hills subdivision and vice versa. The objective would be to reduce hazardous fuels immediately adjacent to the subdivision thereby changing wildland fire behavior (reduced flame lengths and rate of spread) as it enters this zone making fire more readily controllable.

Description of Proposed Action: The proposed action would be to mow a minimum 30 foot, maximum 60 foot fuelbreak (width depends on fire hazard) on the western edge of the 40 acres of public lands directly adjacent to the Bonita Hills subdivision in Eagle Idaho. A Ridge to Rivers trailhead with kiosk occurs within this proposed strip and would be mowed to reduce the fire hazard. This BLM fuelbreak would tie in with fuelbreak work occurring on adjacent Ada County lands. Mowing would be accomplished with either a Bobcat or tractor with mower attachment and hand held weed eaters. Remaining vegetation stubble height would be approximately 6 inches. In most years the mowing would occur once a year in late spring or early summer prior to fire season. A second mowing may be required if cheatgrass or other weedy annuals get late spring or early summer precipitation and grow to the point where they are a hazard again. The majority of the vegetation in this area is cheatgrass and medusahead with isolated patches of sagebrush. In those areas where sagebrush density exceeds 1 plant per 3/m², the fuelbreak would be thinned to this brush density standard to maintain a safe fire suppression area. Sagebrush thinning would occur with chainsaws and all woody material cut would be removed.

Project Location: The fuelbreak is adjacent to the City of Eagle's bike park located on Horseshoe Bend Way, T4N, R1E, Section 11 SWNE

Applicant (if any): Healthy Hills Initiative members

Part I – Plan Conformance Review

This proposed Action is subject to the following land use plan: Cascade Resource Management Plan and Environmental Impact Statement

Date Plan Approved: July 1, 1988

The proposed action is in conformance with the LUP, even though it is not specifically provided for, because it is clearly consistent with the following LUP decision(s):

The Boise Front, encompassing 12,000 acres in the Boise foothills, will be managed to protect watershed, wildlife, recreation, and scenic values. Maintenance and reconstruction of existing roads and trails and full fire suppression are identified as emphasized management activities (as well as others) to further protect resource values.

Remarks: Four Rivers Field Office specialists reviewed the proposed action and conducted a site visit on August 2nd, 2011. No cultural, botanical, or wildlife resource conflicts/issues were found. Slickspots do not occur within the proposed fuelbreak area.

Part II – NEPA Review

A. Categorical Exclusion Review: This proposed action qualifies as a categorical exclusion under 43 CFR 46.210(f).

Category description: Routine and continuing government business, including such things as supervision, administration, operations, maintenance, renovations, and replacement activities having limited context and intensity (e.g., limited size and magnitude or short-term effects).

I certify that none of the Departmental exceptions (Extraordinary Circumstances) in 516 DM 2, Appendix 2 apply to this action; therefore, this categorical exclusion is appropriate for this situation.

Authorizing Official:

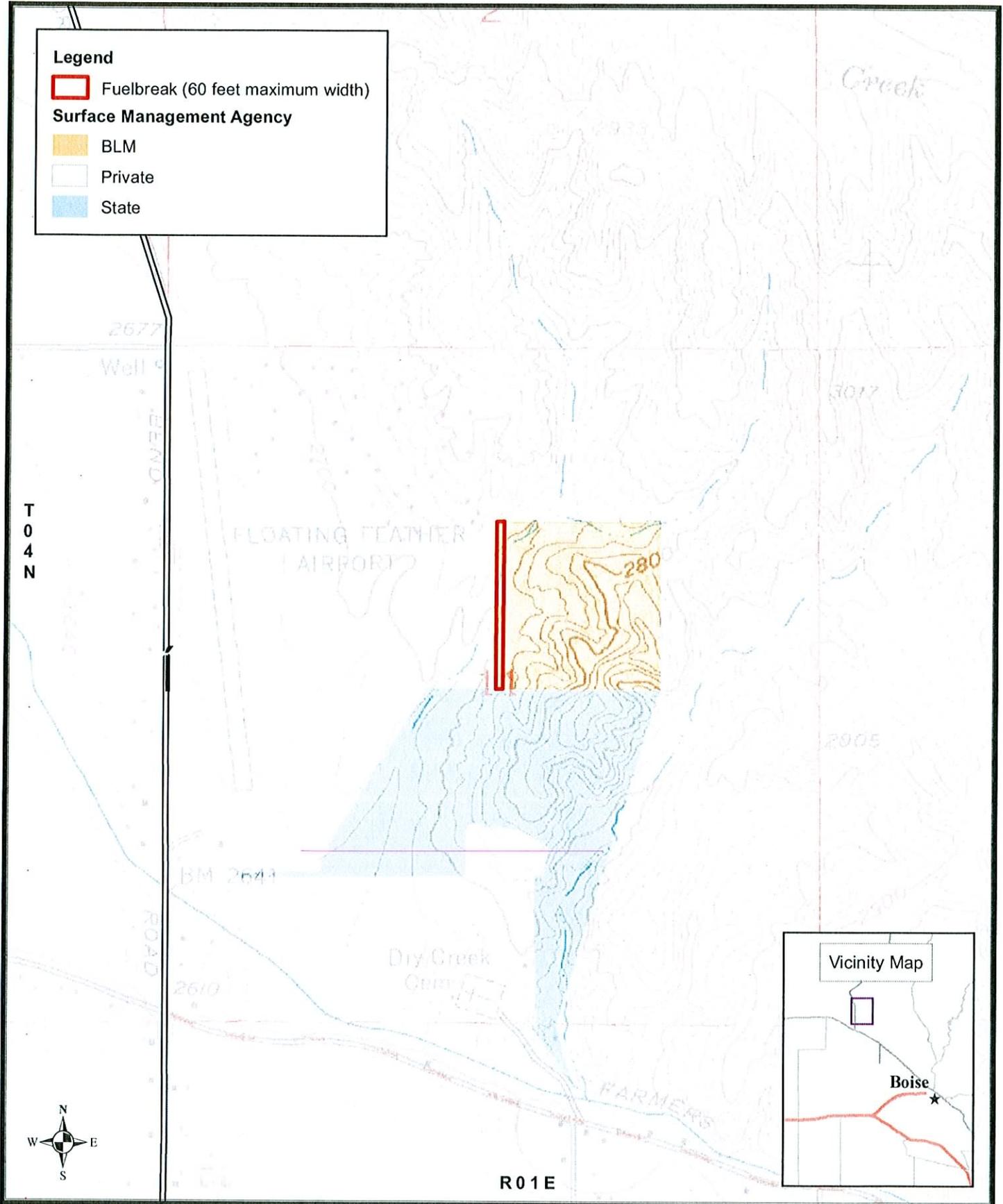


Date: 8/10/2011

Name: Terry Humphrey

Title: Four Rivers Field Office Manager

Healthy Hills Initiative Demonstration Area Fuelbreak - Eagle, Idaho



The sources of the data are from Idaho-BLM Corporate Data, and the USGS. 8/8/2011



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U.S. DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT

SPECIAL STATUS ANIMAL CLEARANCE WORKSHEET

Part I. Project Description and Location (To be completed by Requestor)

Project No. _____ EA No. DOI-BLM-ID-B010-0061-CX

Project Title: Healthy Hills Initiative Wildland Urban Interface (WUI) Fuelbreak

Project Description: The proposed action is to mow a minimum 30 foot, maximum 60 foot fuelbreak (width depends on fire hazard) on the western edge of the 40 acres of BLM directly adjacent to the nearby Bonita Hills subdivision in Eagle Idaho. A Ridge to Rivers trailhead with kiosk occurs within this proposed strip and would also be mowed to reduce the fire hazard. This BLM fuelbreak would tie in with fuelbreak work occurring on adjacent Ada County lands. Mowing would be accomplished with either a bobcat or tractor with mower attachment and hand held weed eaters. Remaining vegetation stubble height would be approximately 6 inches. In most years the mowing would occur once a year in late spring or early summer prior to fire season. A second mowing may be required if cheatgrass or other weedy annuals get late spring or early summer precipitation and grow to the point where they are a hazard again. The majority of the vegetation in this area is cheatgrass/medusahead wildrye with isolated patches of sagebrush. In those areas where sagebrush density exceeds 1 plant per 3/m², the fuelbreak would be thinned to this brush density standard to maintain a safe fire suppression area. Sagebrush thinning would occur with chainsaws and all woody material cut would be removed.

Legal Description: T4N, R1E, Section 11 SWNE

Project Lead: Sarah Heide Date Requested By: 8/4/2011

**Part II. Clearance Findings/Section 7 Consultation
Recommendations**

(To be completed by Resource Specialist)

This section based on conclusions from the reverse side of form.

Full Clearance – to the best of my knowledge, this project will not adversely impact any special status animal species or its habitat.

Conditional Clearance – Special status animal species may exist within the area of this project.

Based upon the field exam, no special status animals or their critical habitat exist within the project area.

Based upon the field exam, special status animals or their critical habitat exist within the project area (see above).

The field exam was conducted at an inappropriate season.

No field exam was conducted (see justification below).

Biological Evaluation (Project Impact Assessment and Recommendation)

There may not be any special status animals or their critical habitat within the project area but this habitat is utilized by small mammals (rabbits, jackrabbits, mice, voles, and ground squirrels), badgers, coyote, various ungulates, songbirds, upland birds, and raptors. I would recommend that the fuel break to be mowed should not exceed 35 feet, as anything beyond this width would result in an excessive removal of valuable wildlife habitat. A 35 foot fuel break would allow adequate space for fire fighters and their equipment. A 35 foot fuel break would also protect wildlife habitat from possible fire escape from the adjacent residential area.

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT

SPECIAL STATUS PLANT SPECIES CLEARANCE WORKSHEET

Part I. Project Description and Location (To be completed by Requestor)

EA No.: Not available

Project Title: Healthy Hills Initiative Wildland Urban Interface (WUI) Fuelbreak

Project Description: The proposed action is to mow a minimum 30 foot, maximum 60 foot fuel break (width depends on fire hazard) on the western edge of the 40 acres of BLM directly adjacent to the nearby subdivision. A trailhead with kiosk occurs within this proposed strip and would also be mowed to reduce the fire hazard. This portion of the fuelbreak would tie in with fuelbreak work occurring on adjacent Ada County lands. Mowing would be accomplished with both a bobcat/mower attachment and hand held weed eaters. In most years the mowing would occur once a year in late spring or early summer prior to fire season. A second mowing may be required if cheatgrass or other weedy annuals get late spring or early summer precipitation and grow to the point where they are a hazard again. The majority of the vegetation in this area is cheatgrass/medusahead wildrye with isolated sagebrush plants. In those very limited areas where sagebrush density exceeds 1 plant per 3/m², the fuelbreak would be thinned to this brush density standard to maintain a safe fire suppression area.

Project #: Not available.

Legal Description: T4N, R1E, Section 11 SWNE

Project Lead: Sarah Heide

Date Requested By:

**Part II. Clearance Findings/Section 7 Consultation Recommendations
(To be completed by Resource Specialist)**

- Full Clearance - To the best of my knowledge, this project will not adversely impact any special status plant species or its habitat (see **Biological Evaluation for comments**).
- Conditional Clearance - Special status plant species may exist within the area of impact of this project; further investigation is necessary and will be done prior to _____ (date).
- Conditional Clearance - Special status plant species do occur within the area of impact; project modification or delineation of an avoidance area is recommended. See the Biological Evaluation.
- Negative Clearance - To the best of my knowledge, this project is likely to adversely impact special status plant species or their critical habitat.
- Section 7 Consultation/Conferencing with FWS is needed (federally listed or proposed species).
- Technical Assistance from the FWS is recommended (federal candidate species).

Amy J. Stillman – Biology Technician (Botany)



Signature of person conducting clearance

8/2/2011

Date

Part III. Species List and Biological Evaluation

Actions taken to assess the project area for presence of special status plants or their habitat:

CDC database consulted: X Yes No FO maps consulted: X Yes No

Other: _____

Physical examination of the area: X Yes No

Date(s) examined: August 2, 2011 Time spent: 1 hr

FO: FRFO

Consultant Report: _____

Special status plant species within the project area (list if applicable):

Confirmed X Suspected None

Lepidium papilliferum (slickspot peppergrass) – EO 38 within 0.25 mile.

Astragalus mulfordiae (Mulford's milkvetch) – EO 56 within 0.50 mile.

Allium aaseae (Aaseae's onion) – EO 27 within 0.75 mile.

Dominant plant species or community type in the project area: Community is largely made up of *Artemisia tridentata* ssp. *wyomingensis* (Wyoming big sagebrush) with a *Taeniatherum caput-medusae* (medusahead rye) understory.

Based upon the field exam, no special status plants or their critical habitat exist within the project area.

Based upon the field exam, special status plants or their critical habitat exist within the project area (see above).

The field exam was conducted at an inappropriate season.

No field exam was conducted (see justification below).

Biological Evaluation (Project Impact Assessment and Recommendations):

No special status plants were observed during this survey. Additionally, no *Lepidium papilliferum* habitat was found during this survey. The soils in the project area sandy to sandy loam and therefore are not suitable for slick spot formation. However, the sandy soils could be considered suitable habitat for *Astragalus mulfordiae* and/or *Allium aaseae* habitat, though no plants of either species were observed during this survey. Because the project does not call for ground disturbing activities a full clearance is being issued. If ground disturbance such as blading is proposed in the future, a new clearance will have to be conducted to determine if such activities could take place.

Plant List – Healthy Hill Initiative – T4N, R1E, Section 11 SWNE

SCIENTIFIC NAME (syn. in parens)	COMMON NAME	Intro (noxious)
Non-native Grasses		
<i>Agropyron cristatum</i>	crested wheatgrass	x
<i>Bromus tectorum</i>	cheatgrass	x
<i>Secale cereale</i>	cereal rye	x
<i>Taeniatherum caput-medusae</i>	medusa-head wildrye	x
Non-native Forbs		
<i>Amaranthus albus</i>	white pigweed	x
<i>Ambrosia sp.</i>	ragweed	x
<i>Chondrilla juncea</i>	rush skeletonweed	x Nox
<i>Convolvulus arvensis</i>	field bindweed	x Nox
<i>Conyza canadensis</i>	horseweed	x
<i>Erodium cicutarium</i>	stork's bill	x
<i>Lactuca serriola</i>	prickly lettuce	x
<i>Medicago sativa</i>	alfalfa	x
<i>Melilotus alba</i>	white sweetclover	x
<i>Onopordum acanthium</i>	Scotch thistle	x Nox
<i>Polygonum aviculare</i>	prostrate knotweed	x
<i>Sisymbrium altissimum</i>	tumble-mustard	x
<i>Tragopogon dubius</i>	yellow salsify	x
Native Shrubs		
<i>Artemisia tridentata ssp. wyomingensis</i>	Wyoming big sagebrush	
<i>Chrysothamnus viscidiflorus</i>	green rabbitbrush	
<i>Ericameria nauseosa (Chrysothamnus n.)</i>	gray rabbitbrush	
Native Sedges		
<i>Carex sp.</i>	sedge	

Native Grasses		
<i>Aristida purpurea</i>	purple threeawn	
<i>Elymus elymoides</i>	bottlebrush squirreltail	
<i>Festuca sp.</i>	fescue	
<i>Sporobolus cryptandrus</i>	sand dropseed	
<i>Vulpia octoflora (Festuca o.)</i>	six-weeks fescue	
Native Forbs		
<i>Achillea millefolium</i>	common yarrow	
<i>Astragalus purshii</i>	woollypod milkvetch	
<i>Calochortus eurycarpus</i>	wide-fruit mariposa lily	
<i>Cirsium sp.</i>	thistle	
<i>Epilobium brachycarpum</i>	tall annual willow-herb	
<i>Erigeron lanatus</i>	woolly daisy	
<i>Helianthus annuus</i>	common sunflower	
<i>Myosurus minimus</i>	least mouse tail	
<i>Sphaeralcea grossulariifolia</i>	gooseberry-leaved globemallow	
<i>Verbascum blattaria</i>	moth mullein	