Finding of No Significant Impact
Big Willow Packards Milkvetch Management
Environmental Assessment
DOI-BLM-ID-B010-2011-0048-EA

I have reviewed the Council on Environmental Quality Regulations (CEQ) for significance (40 CFR 1508.27) and have determined the actions analyzed in environmental assessment (EA) #DOI-BLM-ID-B010-2011-0048-EA would not constitute a major federal action that would significantly affect the quality of the human environment; therefore an Environmental Impact Statement is not required. This finding was made by considering both the context and intensity of the potential effects, as described in the above EA, using the following factors defining significance:

1) *Impacts that may be both beneficial and adverse.*
   The EA identifies both beneficial and adverse impacts that would result from the proposed actions. Beneficial effects of implementation of this decision include:
   - Closure of 5,620 acres of BLM land to motorized uses for the protection of Packard's milkvetch. The closure would protect 100% of element occurrences (EOs) on BLM-administered lands and 65% of the entire known EOs for this species (EA Section 3.1.2.3).
   - Closure of multiple unauthorized play areas, hill climbs, and unsustainable routes would protect natural resources and reduce soil erosion (EA Section 3.1.2.3).
   - Designation of a 127-acre "open" area with an associated developed staging/parking area would provide motorized opportunities for inexperienced riders to increase their skill level and allow advanced riders to hill climb (EA Section 3.4.2.3).
   - Designation of 9.3 miles of trails would provide ridgeline and loop opportunities (EA Section 3.4.2.2).
   - Closure of routes which direct or lead riders onto or across private land would reduce trespass issues (EA Section 3.4.2.2).

   Adverse effects due to implementation of the proposed actions would include:
   - Closure of routes previously used by motorized users, especially those seeking long distance riding opportunities, would reduce riding opportunities (EA Section 3.4.2.2).

2) *The degree to which the proposed action affects public health or safety.*
   Signs and educational information would promote public health and safety by serving as informational and navigation tools for recreationists. Herbicides and other proposed vegetation treatments would have negligible affects to public safety (EA Section 3.1.2.3).

3) *Unique characteristics of the geographic area such as proximity to historic or cultural resources, park lands, prime farmlands. wetlands, wild and scenic rivers, or ecologically critical areas.*
No prime and unique farmlands, caves, wetlands, wild and scenic rivers, or other special areas are found within the project area. The proposed actions would help maintain and improve habitat for Packard's milkvetch and southern Idaho ground squirrel, both of which are candidate species under the Endangered Species Act (ESA; EA sections 3.1.2.3 and 3.2.2.3).

4) *The degree to which the effects on the quality of the human environment are likely to be highly controversial.*
There would be no highly controversial effects on the quality of the human environment from actions proposed to protect Packard's milkvetch. The use of herbicides and other vegetation treatment methods have been extensively studied and scientific literature does not indicate any controversy associated with the outcome of the treatments.

5) *The degree to which the possible effects on the human environment are highly uncertain or involve unique or unknown risks.*
The analysis did not identify any effects on the human environment which are highly uncertain or involve unique or unknown risks as a result of the proposed actions. The proposed actions are similar to actions taken in other plans BLM has completed to protect sensitive species or to manage off-highway vehicle (OHV) use. As such, the proposed actions do not include actions or effects that would be considered highly uncertain, or involve unique or unknown risks.

6) *The degree to which the action may establish a precedent for future actions with significant effects or represents a decision in principle about a future consideration*.
The actions and practices analyzed in the EA are similar actions that have been successfully implemented by the BLM in others areas. This EA does not set a precedent for future actions that have significant effects. Implementation of the decision complies with the 1988 Cascade RMP to protect sensitive species. The EA provides some flexibility for management through adaptive management principles; however, any future projects in the Big Willow area that have impacts outside the scope of this document would require a separate analysis.

7) *Whether the action is related to other actions with individually insignificant but cumulatively significant impacts.*
This EA considered potential cumulative impacts of the proposed actions and concluded that implementation would not cause significant cumulative effects on biological, cultural, or social resources, when considered in relation to other actions in this area of Payette County (EA sections 3.1.3.4, 3.2.3.4, 3.3.3.4. and 3.4.3.3).

8) *The degree to which the action may adversely affect districts, sites, highways, structures, or objects listed in or eligible for listing in the NRHP or may cause loss or destruction of significant scientific, cultural, or historical resources.*
Based on the analysis documented in the EA, the proposed action would not cause loss or destruction of significant scientific, cultural, or historical resources. Currently undiscovered eligible or listed properties that might be discovered in the future would be protected from loss or destruction using adaptive management techniques, including route closure or avoidance.

9) *The degree to which the action may adversely affect an endangered or threatened species or its habitat that has determined to be critical under the Endangered Species Act of 1973.*
The primary purpose of the proposed actions is to protect Packard's milkvetch, which is a candidate species under the ESA. The proposed actions would help insure the long-term viability of the species removing disturbance factors (i.e., livestock trampling, OHV use); reducing noxious weeds, invasive annuals, and wildfire danger; and improving pollinator habitat (EA Section 3.1.2.3). No other threatened or endangered species or habitat is known to occur within the project area. Southern Idaho ground squirrel, a candidate species under the ESA, occurs throughout the analysis area and would benefit from the proposed actions (EA Section 3.2.2.4).

10) *Whether the action threatens a violation of Federal, State, and local laws or requirements imposed for protection of the environment.*
The proposed actions were developed in accordance with Federal, State, and local laws for the protection of the environment. The EA disclosed the effect of the proposed actions on all critical and non-critical elements and it was determined that the proposed actions would not adversely affect any of these elements or violate any existing Federal, State, or local law imposed for the protection of the environment.

/s/ Matthew McCoy — 7/1/2013

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Date