

**U.S. Department of the Interior
Bureau of Land Management**

**Determination of NEPA Adequacy
DOI-BLM-NV-L000-2011-0002-DNA
August, 2010**

Stonehouse Sagebrush Habitat Improvement Project

Fuels Reduction Treatment

North Spring Valley

Ely District Office
Ely, Nevada
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OFFICE: BLM Ely District Office

TRACKING NUMBER: DOI-BLM-NV-L000-2011-0002-DNA

PROPOSED ACTION TITLE/TYPE: Stonehouse Sagebrush Habitat Improvement Project

LOCATION/LEGAL DESCRIPTION: North Spring Valley, Nevada on the east and west benches extending from Snowbank Canyon on the south to Dolan's Trap Canyon on the north.

The area is located in the following legal land descriptions (Mt. Diablo Base and Meridian):

T21N., R65E, S1, 12, 13, 24.

T21N., R66E, S5, 6, 7, 8.

T22N., R65E, S1, 1, 2, 3, 4, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 24, 25, 26..

T22N., R66E, S4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 21, 22, 23, 24, 25, 26, 27, 28, 33, 34, 35, 36.

T23N., R65E, S1, 2, 3, 10. 11. 12. 13. 14. 15. 16. 21. 22. 23. 24. 25. 26. 27. 28. 33. 34. 35. 36.

T23N., R66E, S15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, 28, 29, 30, 31, 32, 33.

T24N., R65E, S26, 35, 36.

A. Description of the Proposed Action and any applicable mitigation measures:

It is proposed to add up to 2,500 acres of mowing and drill seeding treatments, up to three wildlife guzzlers and to change the implementation timing to July 15th through March 31st to the stonehouse project area. The Stonehouse Hazardous Fuels Reduction and Habitat Improvement Project encompasses approximately 23,676 acres in total. A decision was signed on 7/19/2010 that allowed for the treatment of 16,600 to 19,000 acres of sagebrush (*Artemisia spp.*) sites where pinyon (*Pinus monophylla*) and juniper (*Juniperus scopulorum*) has become established.

The objectives for the proposed action are to:

- Reduce late seral and decadent sagebrush stands within the treatment area, to recruit younger more vigorous sagebrush and increase the herbaceous understory.
- Provide additional water sources as deemed necessary through consultation with the Nevada Department of Wildlife to support and improve populations of big game and small game within North Spring Valley.
- Increase the amount of time available for project implementation to accommodate the availability of resources and environmental factors such as weather and soils conditions.

It is proposed that up to 2,500 acres of late seral and decadent sagebrush within the Stonehouse Hazardous Fuels Reduction and Habitat Improvement Project boundaries

would be treated by mowing and drill seeding. This constitutes approximately 20 percent of the project area that has not been treated by chaining or piling and burning. Most of the mowing and drill seeding would occur in the northwestern portion of the project area (see attached map). Some of the potential mowing acres will have pinyon and juniper selectively removed under the previous decision. This type of treatment has been identified within the North Spring Valley, Antelope Valley, Steptoe A and North Antelope Valley implementation strategy as an appropriate treatment method to accomplish the identified goals and objectives. Monitoring data, visual observations and Landfire data indicate an abundance of late seral vegetation with diminishing herbaceous understory over much of the project area. Vegetation targeted for treatment would be within the Biophysical Setting model seral class descriptions for mid development closed and late development open for the respective models.

Treatments would be conducted in a mosaic fashion creating a mixture of seral states across the landscape. Mowing would be conducted using a brush mower pulled by a rubber-wheeled tractor and seeding would be conducted using a rangeland drill pulled by a rubber wheeled tractor. Seed would be applied at a rate of approximately 12 lbs/acre.

The seed mix listed below is proposed for the area. However, other desirable perennial species adapted to site conditions could be used depending on seed and funding availability.

- Bluebunch wheatgrass (*Pseudoroegneria spicata*)
- Indian ricegrass (*Achnatherum hymenoides*)
- Sandberg's bluegrass (*Poa secunda*)
- Thickspike wheatgrass (*Elymus lanceolatus*)
- Needle and Thread grass (*Hesperostipa comata*)
- Globemallow (*Sphaeralcea* spp.)
- Small Burnett (*Sanguisorba minor*)
- Blue Flax (*Linum perenne*)

Treatments would avoid areas where cheatgrass (*Bromus tectorum*) is established. Pre-treatment monitoring data within the project boundaries indicates an absence of cheatgrass. Landfire seral class data indicates the presence of Uncharacteristic Exotic vegetation in the lower elevation and southern ends of the project area. These areas would be monitored prior to implementation of the proposed action to verify the Uncharacteristic Exotic classification and determine the reason for the classification. Areas that have cheatgrass or any other exotic invasive species established would be avoided as much as possible to avoid propagating exotic invasive species. Any noxious or invasive weeds detected within the project boundary would be treated as described within the original Stonehouse Hazardous Fuels Reduction and Habitat Improvement Project Environmental Assessment (DOI-BLM-NV-L020-2008-0028-EA).

Livestock grazing would not be authorized within the treatment areas during implementation of the selected alternative. Through coordination with the grazing permittees a livestock closure would be in place in the project area for the duration that livestock grazing would be restricted. Livestock grazing would not be allowed to occur within the mowing and drill seeding areas for a minimum of two complete growing

seasons and may be extended until the following vegetation objectives have been achieved:

- The establishment of at least 6 desirable (species that accomplish the purpose and need and/or are listed within the recommended seed mixture), perennial plants per 9.6 square foot hoop or ten percent perennial vegetative cover

Progress towards meeting vegetation objectives would be measured from selected monitoring sites using random density 9.6 square foot plots. Monitoring sites would be established within one year following treatment completion and measured annually during the livestock grazing closure period. The closure period may be extended pending the rate of progress towards vegetative establishment. No new fencing is being proposed in order to prevent livestock from entering the treated areas. The livestock grazing permittee would be required to keep livestock out of the treatment area by employing other means of livestock control (e.g., herding or removing livestock from the allotments). Livestock grazing could resume as normally scheduled after vegetation cover objectives have been met. An interdisciplinary team would conduct a review of resource monitoring data and objectives to determine if and when livestock grazing should be allowed to occur within the project area. If environmental factors prevent attainment of resource management objectives following the mandatory rest period, an interdisciplinary team would review resource monitoring data and determine an appropriate grazing regime with the permittee. Any terms and conditions specific to livestock grazing within the project area would also be discussed and included in grazing closure agreements.

Monitoring points would be selected and pre-monitoring data would be collected within the areas targeted for mowing. Pre-monitoring data would be collected to establish baseline conditions as well as verify the Landfire data accuracy.

The treatment areas would be monitored following project implementation to determine success towards meeting resource management objectives. All monitoring techniques would follow BLM approved methods. Vegetative establishment would be monitored to determine if the project is promoting soil protection, providing forage and protective cover and improving the overall ecological and watershed conditions. All vegetative trend monitoring site locations would be marked and recorded. Common methods which may be used include, but are not limited to, line point intercept for cover, belt transect with a macro-plot for density and photographs. At a minimum all sites utilized to record the pre-treatment data would be incorporated into the monitoring of the treatment. The methodologies utilized within the pre-treatment monitoring would be carried through post treatment monitoring. Additional methodologies and sites may be employed as appropriate.

It is proposed that there may be up to three guzzlers located within the boundaries of the Stonehouse Hazardous Fuels Reduction and Habitat Improvement Project. These guzzlers may be for the purpose of either big game or small game. Exact site locations would be determined through consultation with the Nevada Department of Wildlife

(NDOW) and would be dictated by access, existing water facilities, habitat and avoiding potentially sensitive resources.

Guzzler sites would be accessed using existing two-track roads and cross country travel to deliver supplies necessary for construction. Cross country travel would be limited to the minimum number of trips and the minimum size of available equipment necessary to transport the necessary materials. No permanent new roads or trails would be created. A rubber-tired backhoe would be used to level the areas where the storage tanks and apron would be located. Volunteers would walk from the existing roads to the sites. Approximately one day would be needed to prepare each site using a backhoe and an estimated two days per site would be needed to install the wildlife water development.

Wildlife water developments may be designed for big game such as elk and deer or small game such as sage grouse. Guzzlers designed for big game would include one water collection apron and two plastic storage tanks (1,800 gallons each) with built-in drinkers for each. To prevent damage due to heavy snow loading, the plastic 25' x 100' apron would be constructed on the ground. Johnson filtration screens would be used to filter out dirt and debris. The water would flow through 2" polyethylene pipes to the brown polyethylene storage tanks partially buried down slope of the aprons. The pipe would be buried between the apron and storage tanks. The tanks would be plumbed together and situated to allow for access at all drinkers. The system eliminates the need for a float valve system. Excess water would overflow through the drinker.

A four-strand, barbed wire fence would be constructed approximately 10' wider than the outer edges of the apron to prevent damage to the apron from livestock, wildlife, or wild horses. A pipe rail fence with two 1-5/8" steel rails at 24" and 42" above the ground would be installed around the storage tanks and drinker. This would prevent livestock and wild horses from accessing the site. The apron, steel fencing, and any exposed pipe would be left to rust and corrode thus visually integrating the project into the surrounding environment.

Guzzlers designed for small game would consist of a 300-400 gallon tank with an incorporated drinker. An apron constructed of wood and corrugated metal sheeting would be placed above the tank and would be plumbed into tank. A four strand barbed wire fence would be placed around the structure to prevent wildlife, livestock or wild horses from accessing the site. The apron, steel fencing, and any exposed pipe would be left to rust and corrode thus visually integrating the project into the surrounding environment.

The installation of each wildlife water development would result in less than 1 acre of total disturbance. Access to the site for subsequent annual inspections and routine maintenance would be on foot. Wildlife water developments and associated fencing will avoid existing obvious horse trails.

The current decision for the Stonehouse Hazardous Fuels Reduction and Habitat Improvement Project allows for implementation to occur from September through February. Due to the availability of crews and limitations due to environmental factors it

is proposed to change the implementation dates to July 15th through March 31st. This would allow more flexibility with scheduling to accommodate the availability of resources and potential delays due to environmental factors (i.e. weather, soils conditions, etc.). All other design features and mitigation identified within the previous decision and associated Environmental Assessment would apply to this proposal.

The following design features would be adhered to:

1. All treatment actions would comply with the *Migratory Bird Treaty Act – Interim Management Guidance* (Instruction Memorandum 2008-050) or the most current policy at the time of the treatments.
2. All treatment areas that create surface disturbance would be inventoried for cultural resources to identify eligible (Historic Properties) and sensitive sites prior to implementing treatments. Identified cultural sites would be recorded and evaluated to determine eligibility for the National Register of Historic Places. Eligible cultural resources would be avoided or impacts mitigated as necessary before any surface disturbing treatments are initiated. A standard 30 meter buffer would be in place for any treatments utilizing heavy equipment. If determined appropriate by the authorized officer and appropriate technical specialist the sites would be cut with chainsaws and the vegetation would be lopped and scattered. Avoidance areas that would not be treated would be irregularly shaped and blended with the landscape.
3. The treatment of vegetation with mowing and drill seeding would not be conducted within 100 feet of riparian areas or their associated mesic vegetation.
4. No new roads would be constructed or created during project implementation. Off-road travel with equipment may occur during implementation, however, off-road travel would be limited to that necessary to safely and practically achieve resource objectives. Loading and unloading any equipment would occur on existing roads to minimize off-road disturbances and impacts. If determined necessary, signs would be posted along roads within or adjacent to the treatment areas in regards to travel restrictions in order to assist in mitigating impacts from future cross country travel. In the event that the area is open to fuel wood gathering there would be no new roads authorized. Future travel management is to conform to the decisions outlined within the Ely District Resource Management Plan (RMP).
5. The BLM Ely District Weed Management Standard Operating Procedures and recommendations contained in the Weed Risk Assessment for the project would be followed.

- a. Prior to the entry of vehicles and equipment to a project area, areas of concern would be identified and flagged in the field by a weed scientist or qualified biologist. The flagging would alert personnel and participants to avoid areas of concern. These sites would be recorded using global positioning systems or other Ely District Office approved equipment and provided to the District Office Weed Coordinator or designated contact person.
 - b. Prior to entering public lands, the contractor, operator, or permit holder would provide information and training regarding noxious weed management and identification to all personnel who would be affiliated with the implementation and maintenance phases of the project. The importance of preventing the spread of weeds to uninfested areas and importance of controlling existing populations of weeds would be explained.
 - c. To eliminate the transport of vehicle-borne weed seeds, roots, or rhizomes all vehicles and heavy equipment used for the completion, maintenance, inspection, monitoring or for authorized off-road driving would be free of soil and debris capable of transporting weed propagules. All such vehicles and equipment would be cleaned with power or high pressure equipment prior to entering or leaving the work site or project area. Cleaning efforts would concentrate on tracks, feet and tires, and on the undercarriage. Special emphasis would be applied to axels, frames, cross members, motor mounts, on and underneath steps, running boards, and front bumper/brush guard assemblies. Vehicle cabs would be swept out and refuse would be disposed of in waste receptacles. Cleaning sites would be recorded using global positioning systems or other mutually acceptable equipment and provided to the District Office Weed Coordinator or designated contact person.
 - d. The sites would be checked for noxious weeds annually for at least three seasons, or until native vegetation has recovered enough to minimize the chance of infestation
6. A project inspector would be assigned to all phases of implementation to insure it is completed according to specifications.
 7. Guzzlers would be inspected and maintained annually by BLM and/or NDOW personnel, as well as volunteers.
 8. To minimize ground impacts, equipment would not be allowed to operate when the ground is unsuitable (i.e. excessively muddy or when saturated with moisture) or in steep terrain.
 9. Removal of vegetation for guzzler construction would be kept to the

minimum necessary for construction. At the end of each project, vegetation would be spread on the bare ground and disturbed areas to provide soil shade and cover. A portion of or all of the proposed seed mix may be broadcast over the disturbed area after construction.

10. Project area cleanup would be accomplished by removing all refuse to an approved sanitary landfill.
11. The exclusion fence surrounding the guzzler would be marked using white flagging to decrease the potential for wildlife and wild horse collisions or entanglements.
12. A survey for mining claim markers in documented active claim sites would be conducted prior to implementing treatments. All active mining claim marker locations and tag information would be recorded. Active mining claim marker or stakes would be avoided to the extent practical. Active mining claim markers that are destroyed by project operations would be re-staked using a legal mining claim marker. The re-staking of mining claim markers would occur in coordination with the existing mining claimants to assure accurate, legal staking procedures that would minimize damage to claims.
13. If any mining sites or dumps are discovered within the project area, thinning operations would avoid these sites in order to minimize risk from hazardous materials. Any such discoveries would be reported to the appropriate Ely District BLM Hazardous Materials Specialist for inspection and potential treatment.
14. All known raptor nests have been avoided with project design. Should any raptor nests be discovered prior to implementation the appropriate buffer would be determined by the authorized officer and appropriate technical specialist.
15. Sage grouse leks that are within the boundaries of the proposed treatment would be monitored for 3 years following the treatment.
16. Treatments within half of a mile of active sagergrouse leks would be coordinated with the wildlife biologist to determine appropriate avoidance timeframes.
17. Existing facilities located within the proposed project area will be inspected and any damages as a result of the Proposed Action would be repaired.
18. Within and adjacent to the proposed project area there are two piezometers that are maintained by the Southern Nevada Water Authority (SNWA) in accordance with a stipulated agreement with Department of Interior agencies. Prior to the implementation of any phase of the proposed action

SNWA would be informed so that the changes within the landscape can be recorded and incorporated into the piezometer log data.

B. Land Use Plan (LUP) Conformance

LUP Name:
Ely District Resource Management Plan

Date Approved:
August 20, 2008

The proposed action is in conformance with the Ely District Record of Decision and Approved Resource Management Plan signed August 20, 2008.

The proposed project is consistent with the following goals and objectives:

Vegetation Resources

Goal

Manage vegetation resources to achieve or maintain resistant and resilient ecological conditions while providing for sustainable multiple uses and options for the future across the landscape (page 26).

Objectives

To manage for resistant and resilient ecological conditions including healthy, productive, and diverse populations of native or desirable nonnative plant species appropriate to the site characteristics (page 26).

General Vegetation Management

VEG-1: Emphasize treatment areas that have the best potential to maintain desired conditions or respond and return to the desired range of conditions and mosaic upon the landscape, using all available current or future tools and techniques (page 26).

Parameter – Sagebrush (basin big sagebrush, wyoming big sagebrush, mountain big sagebrush, and black sagebrush)

VEG-17: Integrate treatments to: 1. Establish and maintain the desired herbaceous state or early shrub state where sagebrush is present along with a robust understory of perennial species. 2. Prioritize treatments toward restoration of sagebrush communities on areas with deeper soils and higher precipitation (page 30).

VEG-18: Manage native range to meet the requirements of wildlife species. Management will focus on maintaining or establishing diversity, mosaics, and connectivity of sagebrush between geographic areas at the mid and fine scales (page 30).

Fire Management

Management Actions

Implement and update the Ely Fire Management Plan, as needed.... The following management actions will take place within those fire management units. (page 107)

- 2) Fuels treatments – develop and implement prescribed fire and non-fire fuels treatments (mechanical, chemical, and biological) to create fire safe communities, protect private property, achieve resource management objectives (see discussion on Vegetation Resources), and restore ecological system health; (page 107)

FM-4: Incorporate and utilize Fire Regime Condition Class as a major component in fire and fuels management activities. Use Fire Regime Condition Class ratings in conjunction with vegetation objectives (see the discussion on Vegetation Resources) and other resource objectives to determine appropriate response to wildland fires and to help determine where to utilize prescribed fire, wildland fire use, or other non-fire (e.g., mechanical) fuels treatments (page 108).

FM-5: In addition to fire, implement mechanical, biological, and chemical treatments along with other tools and techniques to achieve vegetation, fuels, and other resource objectives (page 108).

The proposed action is in compliance with the management actions outlined for implementation within the Fire Management Units (FMUs) as prescribed within FM-3 on page 106. Specifically that the following would be implemented within the FMUs;

- 2) Fuels treatments – develop and implement prescribed fire and non-fire fuels treatments (mechanical, chemical, and biological) to create fire-safe communities, protect private property, achieve resource management objectives (see the discussion on Vegetative Resources), and restore ecological health.

C. Identify applicable National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) documents and other related documents that cover the proposed action.

List by name and date all applicable NEPA documents that cover the proposed action.

Name	Date
Ely Proposed Resource Management Plan/Final Environmental Impact Statement	2007
Stonehouse Hazardous Fuels Reduction and Habitat Improvement Project, Environmental Assessment (DOI-BLM-NV-L020-2008-0028-EA)	2010

North Spring Valley Habitat Improvement and Hazardous Fuels Reduction Project Environmental Assessment (NV-040-06-007) 2006

Antelope Range Wildlife Water Development EA (Insert NEPA number) 2010

List by name and date other documentation relevant to the proposed action (e.g., biological assessment, biological opinion, watershed assessment, allotment evaluation, and monitoring report).

Name	Date
White Pine County Public Lands Policy Plan	2007
Northeastern Great Basin Resource Advisory Council Standards and Guidelines	1997
North Spring Valley and Antelope Valley Watershed Evaluation Report	2005
Implementation Strategy for North Spring Valley, Antelope Valley, Steptoe A and North Antelope Valley	2006
White Pine County Elk Management Plan	2007
White Pine County Sage Grouse Conservation Plan	2004

D. NEPA Adequacy Criteria

1. Is the new proposed action a feature of, or essentially similar to, an alternative analyzed in the existing NEPA document(s)? Is the project within the same analysis area, or if the project location is different, are the geographic and resource conditions sufficiently similar to those analyzed in the existing NEPA document(s)? If there are differences, can you explain why they are not substantial?

Yes No Documentation of answer and explanation:

The three elements of the proposed action are features of or are substantially similar to the actions analyzed within the existing NEPA documents listed above. The proposed action occurs within the boundaries of the existing Stonehouse Hazardous Fuels Reduction and Habitat Improvement Project. The three elements of the current proposed action are;

- Changing the implementation dates of Pinyon and Juniper removal activities from September through February to July 15th through March 31st
- Using a brush mower and rangeland drill pulled behind a rubber tired tractor to treat up to 2,500 acres of late seral and decadent sagebrush stands.
- Up to three wildlife guzzlers may be installed within or adjacent to the boundaries of the existing Stonehouse Hazardous Fuels Reduction and Habitat Improvement Project.

The Stonehouse Hazardous Fuels Reduction and Habitat Improvement Project analyzed the impacts of mechanically and manually removing pinyon and juniper from the project area and are currently ongoing. The approved action allows implementation of the project from September through February. The proposed action includes changing these dates to July 15th through March 31st. Resource concerns would be identical to those analyzed within the Stonehouse Hazardous Fuels Reduction and Habitat Improvement Project Environmental Assessment.

The North Spring Valley Habitat Improvement and Hazardous Fuels Reduction Project specifically analyzed the mechanical treatment of sagebrush with the use of a brush mower and seeding with a rangeland drill conducted during the spring, summer and fall months. The North Spring Valley project is located approximately 2 miles to the north of the proposed action and within the same watershed. Vegetative conditions are very similar comprised of black and Wyoming sagebrush sites.

The proposal is to use a brush mower to break up the continuity of the late seral and decadent sagebrush stands within the project area. Areas that have been treated with the brush mower would be seeded using a rangeland drill pulled behind a rubber tired tractor. Resource concerns would be substantially similar to those within the North Spring Valley Habitat Improvement and Hazardous Fuels Reduction Project.

The Antelope Range Wildlife Water Development EA specifically analyzed the installation of three big game guzzlers on antelope range. A portion of the proposed action occurs on the bench of the Antelope Range. The proposed action includes the potential installation of small game guzzlers. While small game guzzlers were not specifically analyzed within the Antelope Range Wildlife Water Development EA the methods and disturbances associated with a small game guzzler are substantially similar to the big game guzzlers that were analyzed. Issues and concerns with the proposed action would be similar to those identified within the Antelope Range Wildlife Water Development Environmental Analysis.

2. Is the range of alternatives analyzed in the existing NEPA document(s) appropriate with respect to the new proposed action, given current environmental concerns, interests, and resource values?

Yes No Documentation of answer and explanation:

The range of alternatives analyzed within the existing NEPA documents is appropriate given the current conditions. There have been no unresolved conflicts regarding alternative uses of available resources on federal lands that would indicate the need for additional alternatives. The previous NEPA documents have analyzed alternative developed in response to issues identified through internal and external scoping of the projects. Through the scoping of the proposed action there have been no other issues raised that would suggest the need for additional alternatives. There is no information or

circumstances that would indicate the need for additional alternatives above those previously analyzed.

3. Is the existing analysis valid in light of any new information or circumstances (such as, rangeland health standard assessment, recent endangered species listings, and updated lists of BLM-sensitive species)? Can you reasonably conclude that new information and new circumstances would not substantially change the analysis of the new proposed action?

Yes No Documentation of answer and explanation:

There is no new information or circumstances that would alter the analysis of the impacts associated with the proposed action.

A wild horse gather has been conducted within the Antelope Herd Management Area. This would result in fewer horses utilizing newly treated areas and would increase the probability of success for treatment. However, this would not impact the analysis.

The US Fish and Wildlife Service recently concluded that the greater sage-grouse (*Centrocercus urophasianus*) is warranted for protection under the Endangered Species Act, however precluded at this time by higher priority species. The proposed action occurs within greater sage-grouse habitat however timing of the treatment avoids potential impacts with the species. The achievement of the goals of the proposed action would generally be considered a benefit to the greater sage grouse habitat.

4. Are the direct, indirect, and cumulative effects that would result from implementation of the new proposed action similar (both quantitatively and qualitatively) to those analyzed in the existing NEPA document?

Yes No Documentation of answer and explanation:

The direct, indirect and cumulative effects would be substantially similar to those analyzed within the previous NEPA documents. Changing the implementation dates would have minimal impacts. The proposed implementation dates are outside of the range for most of the nesting migratory birds and raptors within the proposed project area. The exception to this is the Gray Vireo (*Vireo vicinior*) which nests from April to late August and the Pinyon Jay (*Gymnorhinus cyanocephalus*) which nests from March to early June. Appropriate design criteria have been incorporated into the proposed action to mitigate impacts to these two species.

The project area is near probable nesting and foraging habitat for several species of raptors including the red tailed hawk (*Buteo jamaicensis*) and the ferruginous hawk (*Buteo Regalis*). Both species are protected under the Migratory Bird Treaty Act. Implementation dates would avoid the nesting periods for these raptors. The project should help to improve foraging habitat for raptors in general in the future.

The mowing and drill seeding of late seral and decadent sagebrush has been analyzed within the North Spring Valley Habitat Improvement and Hazardous Fuels Reduction Project. The combination of the mowing and seeding of the mowed areas would result in an increased herbaceous understory with more vigorous sagebrush remaining. The impacts associated with the proposed action would be substantially similar to those analyzed within previous NEPA documents.

The impacts associated with the installation of the wildlife guzzlers would be similar to that analyzed within the Antelope Range Wildlife Water Development EA. Ground disturbing activities have been analyzed within the Stonehouse Hazardous Fuels Reduction and Habitat Improvement Environmental Analysis.

There have been no issues identified that were not analyzed within one of the previous NEPA documents. The direct, indirect and cumulative impacts for the proposed action are substantially similar to those identified and analyzed within the previous NEPA documents.

5. Are the public involvement and interagency review associated with existing NEPA document(s) adequate for the current proposed action?

Yes No Documentation of answer and explanation:

Previous analysis conducted within the area included adequate public and interagency review relative to the proposal. The previous NEPA documents included both internal and external scoping of issues. External scoping included scoping letters and internet posting of the proposal, tribal consultation, coordination with the US Fish and Wildlife Service, coordination with the Nevada State Clearinghouse, mailing of the preliminary environmental assessment, and responding to comments received.

A scoping letter for the current proposal has been mailed out to the 2011 interested public list and other affected parties. The letter has also been posted on the Ely District Office website. There have been three comments received. The comments and responses are summarized below.

- The Duckwater Shoshone Tribe would like to have a field tour of the proposed project area.
 - A field visit will be scheduled with the Duckwater Shoshone Tribe.
- Southern Nevada Water Authority has requested notification of activities consistent with the request on the Stonehouse Hazardous Fuels Reduction and Habitat Improvement Project.
 - Southern Nevada Water Authority will be notified of activities within the area of interest indicated on the map emailed on January 11th and February 14th, 2011.
- Robert E Dickenson sent a comment letter identifying three concerns:
 - No mention of fencing. How will the grazing problems be addressed if there is no control of livestock, horses, and wildlife?
 - If this not wilderness, why are there such severe restrictions on vehicles?
 - What seed or vegetative species are planned for use in treated land areas?

- The management of grazing and the specific seed mix have been addressed within the proposed action. The management of vehicle travel is managed under the current Resource Management Plan and is beyond the scope of this proposal.

The Nevada State Clearinghouse received comments from the Division of State Lands and the State Historic Preservation Office supporting the proposed action.

Curt Baughman, Wildlife Biologist for the Nevada Department of Wildlife (NDOW), met with BLM fuels staff on June 20th, 2011 to express concerns about the proposed action. Mr. Baughman expressed concerns relating to the percentage of each treatment unit to be treated, project design, and the targeted sagebrush mortality for the treatment. In response to this concern NDOW would be consulted during project design and implementation.

E. Persons/Agencies /BLM Staff Consulted

Name	Title	Resource/Agency Represented
Mark D’Aversa	Hydrologist	Ely District Office, BLM
Craig Hoover	Range Specialist	Schell Field Office, BLM
Zach Peterson	Forester	Ely District Office, BLM
Kurt Braun	Archeaologist	Ely District Office, BLM
Ben Noyes	Wild Horse Specialist	Schell Field Office, BLM
Paul Podborny	Supervisory Resource Management Specialist	Schell Field Office, BLM
Dave Jacobson	Wilderness Planner	Schell Field Office, BLM
John Miller	Wilderness Ranger	Schell Field Office, BLM
Dave Davis	Geologist	Ely District Office, BLM
Brenda Linnell	Realty Specialist	Schell Field Office, BLM
Melanie Peterson	Hazardous Materials Specialist	Ely District Office, BLM
Elvis Wall	Tribal Coordination	Ely District Office, BLM
Gloria Tibbetts	NEPA Coordinator	Schell Field Office, BLM
Matt Rajala	Fire Planner	Ely District Office, BLM
Chris Hanefeld	Public Affairs Specialist	Ely District Office, BLM
Cindy Longenetti	Realty Specialist	Schell Field Office, BLM
Tenille Lenard	ESR Program Manager (Acting)	Ely District Office, BLM

- Based on the review documented above, I conclude that this proposal conforms to the applicable land use plan and that the NEPA documentation fully covers the proposed action and constitutes BLM’s compliance with the requirements of the NEPA.

/S/ Matthew Rajala

Signature of Project Lead

/S/ Gloria Tibbetts

Signature of NEPA Coordinator

/S/ Tye Petersen

Signature of the Responsible Official

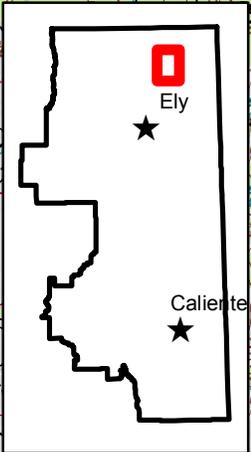
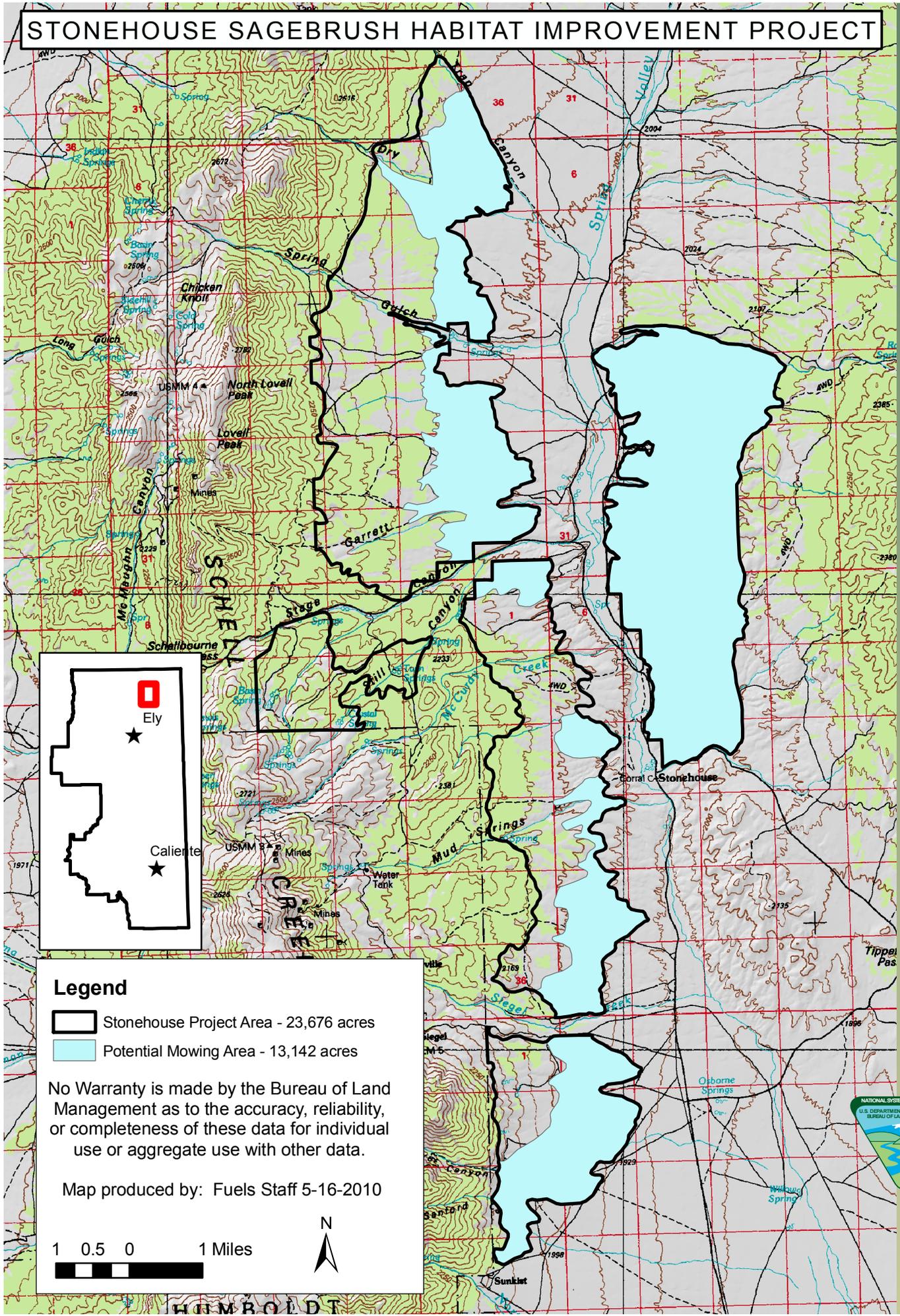
June 30, 2011

Date

Note: The signed Conclusion on this Worksheet is part of an interim step in the BLM's internal decision process and does not constitute an appealable decision. However, the lease, permit, or other authorization based on this DNA is subject to protest or appeal under 43 CFR Part 4 and the program-specific regulations.

STONEHOUSE SAGEBRUSH HABITAT IMPROVEMENT PROJECT

BLM



Legend

- Stonehouse Project Area - 23,676 acres
- Potential Mowing Area - 13,142 acres

No Warranty is made by the Bureau of Land Management as to the accuracy, reliability, or completeness of these data for individual use or aggregate use with other data.

Map produced by: Fuels Staff 5-16-2010

1 0.5 0 1 Miles

Ely District Office



HUMBOLDT