

Finding of No Significant Impact
Agricultural Research Service (ARS) – NCA Research Plots
DOI-BLM-ID-B011-2012-0009-DNA

I have reviewed the Council on Environmental Quality Regulations (CEQ) for significance (40 CFR 1508.27) and have determined the actions analyzed in the Agricultural Research Service (ARS) – NCA Research Plots DOI-BLM-ID-B011-2012-0009-DNA 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 DNA, using the following factors defining significance.

"Significantly" as used in NEPA requires considerations of both context and intensity: (a) Context. This means that the significance of an action must be analyzed in several contexts such as society as a whole (human, national), the affected region, the affected interests, and the locality. Both short- and long-term effects are relevant. (b) Intensity. This refers to the severity of impact. The following should be considered in evaluating intensity:

1) Impacts that may be both beneficial and adverse.

The Proposed Action would have beneficial effects to native vegetation and soils/watershed. Specifically the proposed project treatments would increase the efficacy of seed germination by reducing competition of invasive species (**DNA Sec. A**). No adverse effects are anticipated based on adherence to project design criteria (**DNA Sec. A**).

2) The degree to which the proposed action affects public health or safety.

No adverse effects to public health were identified in referenced NEPA documents. Herbicides to be used have been analyzed for human health and safety in *Vegetation Treatment on BLM Lands in the Thirteen Western States*, EIS #ID100-2005-EA-265 (**DNA Sec. 2**).

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 major effects on unique characteristics are identified in the DNA. No adverse effects on cultural or historical resources, parklands, prime farmlands, wild and scenic rivers, or ecologically critical areas were identified in the DNA (**DNA Sec. D-3**).

4) The degree to which the effects on the quality of the human environment are likely to be highly controversial.

The analysis did not identify any controversy or substantial disagreement concerning the positive effects on the quality of the human environment by herbicide application in the project area.

The Proposed Action would have beneficial effects to native vegetation and soils/watershed values as well as to reduce fuel loading (**DNA Sec. D-2**).

5) The degree to which the possible effects on the human environment are highly uncertain or involve unique or unknown risks.

The conservation measures recommended in the proposed action used to suppress noxious weeds are well understood and proven by many federal, state and private entities.

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 proposed action is independent of all other actions, and does not represent a commitment of BLM resources beyond that described in the DNA.

7) Whether the action is related to other actions with individually insignificant but cumulatively significant impacts.

The small scale of the proposed project makes it primarily independent of all other actions in the planning area, except for the Sec. 16 site which is within proximal distance (0.5 miles) of the NCA Joint Fire Science Project EA (ID-B011-2011-0016). A cumulative effects analysis was completed for this project and the results of that analysis are representative of any cumulative effects as a result of this proposed action.

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.

The analysis showed that the action would not result in significant adverse effects to cultural or historic resources (**DNA Sec. D-3**).

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 analysis showed that no endangered or threatened species would be impacted by the proposed project based on distance away (0.19 mile) from the *Lepidium papilliferum* element occurrence occur in the project area and specific design criteria identified in the *Lepidium papilliferum* Candidate Conservation Agreement and (**DNA Sec. 2**). In addition, the proposed action meets the treatment type scope and intensity analyzed in the 2004 Biological Assessment for the Normal Fire Emergency Stabilization and Rehabilitation Plan. *10) Whether the action*

threatens a violation of Federal, State, and local laws or requirements imposed for protection of the environment.

The action does not threaten a violation of Federal, State, or local law, or requirements imposed for protection of the environment. The proposed action is in conformance with the applicable Land Use Plan and all State and Federal statutes (**DNA Sec. C**).

 /s/ Patricia Roller
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 4/19/2012
Date