U.S. Department of the Interior
Bureau of Land Management (BLM)

Twin Falls District
Jarbidge Field Office
2536 Kimberly Road
Twin Falls, ID 83301

Worksheet
Determination of NEPA Adequacy (DNA)

NEPA No. DOI-BLM-ID-T010-2012-0017-DNA

BLM Office: Jarbidge Field Office. **Lease/Serial/Case File No.:** N/A.

Proposed Action Title/Type: Balanced Road (GWL8) Emergency Stabilization and Rehabilitation (ES&BAR) Plan.

Location of Proposed Action: The Balanced Road Fire is located in Twin Falls and Owyhee counties about 9 miles west of Castleford, Idaho, and covers multiple sections in T. 10S and 11S, and R. 11E and 12E. The fire burned portions of the Devil Creek/Balanced Rock and East Juniper Draw livestock grazing allotments.

Applicant (if any): N/A.

A. Description of the Proposed Action

The proposed action is to implement the Balanced Road ES&BAR plan as prescribed by the Boise District and Jarbidge Field Office Normal Fire Emergency Stabilization and Rehabilitation Plan and Environmental Assessment. Treatments and associated design features and monitoring are detailed in the Balanced Road Fire (GWL8) ES&BAR plan. The proposed action consists of the following treatments :

(1) Aerial seed Wyoming big sagebrush on 6,241acres at a rate of 1 lb (bulk)/acre during fall/winter 2012/2013.

(2) Inventory and treat 6,241 acres for noxious weeds for 3 years.

(3) Repair or replace up to 10 miles of burned livestock management and permanent wildlife tract protection fence.

(4) Close the burned area to grazing until resource objectives for the burned area have been met.

(5) Hand plant up to 50,000 containerized or bare-root Wyoming big sagebrush seedlings, if necessary, to supplement aerial sagebrush seeding and establish shrub patches. Planting would occur in early spring or late fall and would utilize contract-grown plants using seed from a local source.

(6) The wildlife tracts BG-41 and BG-42 will be monitored for germination of cheatgrass or other invasive non-native annual plants prior to drill seeding. If necessary, the herbicide *Glyphosate* would be ground-applied on up to 120 acres in summer or fall 2012 at a rate of 8-16 ounces/acre of active ingredient to control invasive non-native annual plants.

(7) Drill seed 120 acres of burned wildlife tracts BG-41 and BG-42 in fall 2012 with the following seed mix:

Balanced Road Drill Seed Mix for Cooperative Wildlife Management Tracts 120 Acres	
Species and Variety	**Seed Rate Lbs/Acre**
Grasses	
1. 'Secar' Snake River Wheatgrass*	3.00
2. 'Vavilov' II Siberian Wheatgrass	2.00
3. 'Trailhead' Great Basin Wildrye*	1.00
4. 'Reliable' Sandberg's Bluegrass*	0.30
5. 'Rattlesnake' Bottlebrush Squirreltail*	0.30
Forbs	
1. 'Ladak' Alfalfa	1.00
2. Munroe Globemallow ♦	0.10
3. 'Eski' Sainfoin	1.00
Shrubs	
1. Fourwing Saltbush ♦	1.00
*** Native Cultivar / ♦ Wildland Collected**	

B. Land Use Plan (LUP) Conformance

Land Use Plan Name: Jarbidge Resource Management Plan (RMP).
Date Approved/Amended: March 23, 1987.

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

- Improve lands in poor ecological condition (pp. II-31 and II-47).
- Maintain existing vegetative improvements (pp. II-31 and II-47).
- Manage big game habitat to support mule deer and antelope (pp. II-31 and II-48).
- Maintain existing upland game nesting and cover habitats (p. II-31).
- Improve sage-grouse habitat (p. II-48).

In addition, the proposed action addresses the following RMP Resource Management Guidelines:

- Terrestrial Wildlife (pp. II-83 – II-84):
  - Manage all ecological sites on mule deer, pronghorn, elk, bighorn sheep and sage-grouse habitat currently in fair or poor ecological condition, for good ecological condition.
  - Manage all wildlife habitat within the resource area to provide a diversity of vegetation and habitats.
  - Seed mixtures for range improvement projects and fire rehabilitation projects will include a mixture of grasses, forbs, and shrubs that benefit sage-grouse.
- Fire Management (p. II-89):
  - Seedings will include appropriate seed mixtures to replace wildlife habitat that is burned.
- Control of Noxious Weeds (p. II-94):
  - BLM will control the spread of noxious weeds on public lands where possible, where economically feasible, and to the extent that funds are prioritized for that purpose.
- Fire Management (p. II-89):
  - All grazing licenses issued that include areas recently burned and/or seeded will include a statement concerning the amount of rest needed in the seedings or burned area. Normally two years of rest will be necessary to protect these areas. This rested area may include remnant stands of desirable species that survived the fire.

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

The treatments outlined in this plan are also consistent the following NEPA documents:

- Decision Record for the Boise District Office and Jarbidge Field Office Normal Fire Emergency Stabilization and Rehabilitation Plan (NFRP) and Environmental Assessment (EA, #ID-090-2004-050), approved May 12, 2005. The Balanced Road ES&BAR project meets the following treatment criteria outlined in the NFRP (p. 10):
  - Areas where the soil is susceptible to accelerated erosion either because of soil characteristics, steep topography, or recurrent high winds.
  - Areas where perennial grasses, shrubs, and forbs have been depleted and cannot reasonably be expected to provide soil and watershed protection within two years after a wildland fire.
  - Aeras where noxious weeds or exotic annual grasses may readily invade and become established following a wildland fire.
  - Areas that contain crucial habitat for wildlife and/or special status species.
  - Areas where ESR is necessary to meet land use plan objectives.

  The NFRP contains analysis of treatment types included in the proposed action, including ground and aerial seeding, including the use of herbicides for seedbed preparation (p. 10); noxious and invasive weed treatments (pp. 14-16); hand planting shrub seedlings (p. 12); livestock management fence repair (p. 19); and livestock grazing closure (p. 19).
- Decision Record for the Noxious and Invasive Weed Treatment EA (#ID100-2005-EA-265) for the Boise District and Jarbidge Field Office, approved January 25, 2007. This EA analyzed chemical, mechanical, and biological control methods for

managing noxious and invasive weeds (pp. 5-6) The Noxious and Invasive Weed Treatment EA also includes general design features that would be applied in the proposed action (pp. 7-10).

- Record of Decision (ROD) for the Programmatic Envionmental Impact Statement for Vegetation Treatments Using Herbicides on Bureau of Land Management Lands in 17 Western States, approved September 29, 2007. Appendix B of the ROD includes a list of standard operating procedures that would be used for vegetation treatments using herbicides.
- Decision Record for the Twin Falls District Wildlife Tracts Habitat Enhancement EA (#ID-210-2008-EA-248), approved June 10, 2010. This EA analyzed prescribed fire, chemical, mechanical (including seeding), and shrub planting treatments that would be utilized to reduce invasive vegetation and associated fine fuels, control noxious weeds, reestblish more natural and resilient perennial vegetation communities, and restore shrub cover. Design features and mitigation were included to reduce the potential for impacts to wildlife, special status plants, and cultural resources (pp. 10-12).
- Decision Record for the Jarbidge Field Office Shrub Planting EA #ID-201-2008-EA-359), approved February 2, 2012. This EA analyzed the effects of hand and mechanical planting upland and riparian shrubs. Design features to reduce impacts to sensitive resources, including restricting vehicles to existing roads and no planting in slickspot microsites, were included in the ES&BAR plan.

Other Relevant Documents

Proposed treatments are consistent with existing Endangered Species Act (ESA) Section 7 consultations for slickspot peppergrass. On August 26, 2009, Idaho BLM signed a Conservation Agreement (CA) with the Idaho Fish and Wildlife Office of the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service (Service). In this CA, BLM agreed to develop and implement activities that provide for the conservation and recovery of slickspot peppergrass. On September 16, 2009, BLM initiated consultation with the Service on existing land use plans. On November 30, 2009, the Service issued a Biological Opinion (LUP BO) which further recommended implementation of conservation measures contained within the CA, which was attached as an appendix to the BO.

In addition, programmatic conference reports were prepared in 2006 by the Boise District Office for Noxious and Invasive Weed Treatment (144-2006-IC-0918) and Normal Fire Emergency Stabilization and Rehabilitation (14420-2006-IC-0975) programmatic actions. These programmatic actions were developed to include all field offices in the Boise District, which, at that point in time, included the Jarbidge Field Office. These Conference Reports were confirmed December 15, 2009 (14420-2010-TA-0103). BLM also consulted with the Service regarding programmatic shrub planting activities and received a letter of concurrence on January 27, 2012. The concurrence memorandum for Programmatic Shrub Planting – Jarbidge Field Office – Elmore, Owyhee, and Twin Falls Counties, Idaho and Elko County, Nevada (01EIFW00-2012-I-0084) stated that planting shrubs utilizing hand planting methods and design features included below is not likely to adversely affect slickspot peppergrass (Concurrence Memorandum, p. 5). In addition, the concurrence memorandum states that shrub plantings would have long-term beneficial effects for slickspot peppergrass and its habitat by accelerating native shrub reestablishment and decreasing habitat fragmentation (Concurrence Memorandum, p. 6).

The burned area contains 887 acres of slickspot peppergrass potential habitat. The area is largely uninventoried for slickspot peppergrass, but has undergone past seeding treatments. Since it is unknown if slickspots or slickspot peppergrass are located in the burned area, project design features that address conservation measures contained in the LUP BO, Conference Reports, and letter of concurrence for programmatic shrub planting were included in the ES&BAR plan to: 1) allow rest from grazing to promote vegetation recovery, 2) reduce the potential for introduction and spread of noxious weeds, and 3) restore sagebrush cover within the burned area. Specific programmatic conservation measures addressed in the ES&BAR plan are:

1) Implement Emergency Stabilization and Rehabilitation (ES&R) activities to consider slickspot peppergrass habitat rehabilitation (LUP BO p. 84-85).
    a. As needed, protect disturbed and recovering areas using temporary closures or other measures. BLM will continue to rest areas from land use activities to meet ES&R objectives, defined through the ES&R plans (LUP BO p. 84, ES&R Conference Report p. 2).
    b. BLM will initiate and complete ES&R efforts for slickspot peppergrass, such as planting shrubs and forbs, within slickspot peppergrass habitat.
2) Although non-chemical methods will be the preferred approach in occupied habitat, when appropriate, projects involving the application of pesticides (including herbicides, fungicides, and other related chemicals) in slickspot peppergrass habitat and potential habitat that may affect the species will be analyzed at the project level and designed such that pesticide applications will support conservation and minimize risks of exposure (LUP BO p. 70-71).
    a. Apply appropriate spatial and temporal buffers to avoid species' exposure to harmful chemicals.
    b. Implement appropriate revegetation and weed control measures to reduce risks of nonnative invasive plant infestations following ground/soil disturbing actions in slickspot peppergrass habitat.

The proposed treatments address conservation measures identified in the 2006 Conservation Plan for the Greater Sage-grouse in Idaho, which recommended seeding or planting the appropriate species and subspecies of sagebrush as part of restoration or burned area rehabilitation treatments (pp. 4-19 through 4-20), reestablishing sagebrush in seeded perennial grasslands (pp. 4-85 through 4-87), and noxious weed control in burned areas (p. 4-20). Treatments are also consistent with current Bureau policy (Instruction Memorandum No. 2012-043) for enhancement and restoration of sage-grouse habitat, specifically:

- In Emergency Stabilization and Burned Area Rehabilitation plans, prioritize revegetation projects to (1) maintain and enhance unburned intact sagebrush habitat when at risk from adjacent threats; (2) stabilize soils; (3) reestablish hydrologic function; (4) maintain and enhance biological integrity; (5) promote plant resiliency; (6) limit expansion or dominance of invasive species; and (7) reestablish native species.

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. The proposed treatments included in the Balanced Road ES&BAR plan were analyzed in the Boise District and Jarbidge Field Office NFRP and Noxious and Invasive Weed Treatment EAs. All treatment types meet the criteria listed on page 10 of the NFRP for protection and treatment of burned areas (see section C above). In addition, treatments specific to the burned wildlife tracts BG-41 and BG-42 were analyzed in the Twin Falls District Wildlife Tracts Habitat Enhancement EA. Hand planting of shrubs was analyzed in detail in the Jarbidge Field Office Programmatic Shrub Planting EA.

The proposed action is contained in the applicable geographic analysis area for all of the NEPA documents listed above. Resource conditions are also within the range considered in all of the pertinent NEPA documents.

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

Yes. The alternatives analyzed in the existing NEPA documents are appropriate to the proposed action. Two other alternatives were analyzed in the NFRP EA. These included a No Action alternative that would have continued implementation of the 1987/1988 NFRPs, and an alternative to not implement ES&BAR treatments. The latter alternative was eliminated because it is inconsistent with BLM policy. The current proposed action is intended to protect soils and vegetation within the burned area from degradation and is appropriate relative to the existing analysis and resource conditions. In addition, proposed treatments to restore sagebrush cover to the burned area address concerns and are consistent with current consultations and policies relative to slickspot peppergrass and sage-grouse habitat.

In addition to the selected alternative, four other alternatives were considered in the Noxious and Invasive Weed Treatment EA. These included a No Action alternative that would have continued implementing the 1998 weed control program, an alternative that considered not using herbicides, an alternative that considered not treating weeds, and an alternative limited to treating juniper and sagebrush. The noxious weed and invasive plant treatments proposed in the Balanced Road ES&BAR plan are consistent with the selected alternative and are appropriate given existing resource conditions.

Both the Twin Falls District Wildlife Tracts Habitat Enhancement EA and the Jarbidge Field Office Programmatic Shrub Planting EA analyzed a No Action alternative in addition to the proposed action. Neither public nor internal scoping resulted in additional alternatives for either of these programmatic NEPA documents. Proposed treatments specific to burned wildlife tracts BG-41 and BG-42 and potential hand planting of sagebrush remain appropriate relative to the scope of the original NEPA analyses.

3. Is the existing analysis valid in light of any new information or circumstances (such as rangeland health standard assessment, recent endangered species listings, or 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. The existing analyses contained in the NEPA documents listed in section C continue to be valid because no new information or changed circumstances have been identified that would cause the BLM to consider a new or revised proposed action. During the interdisciplinary review, team members consulted the most recent list of Threatened and Endangered species (see http://www.fws.gov/idaho/species/T&E/TE072611IFWOREV.pdf, accessed June 5, 2012) and BLM sensitive species for the Jarbidge Field Office. Treatments and design features were included in the proposed action consistent with existing ESA Section 7 consultations for slickspot peppergrass to avoid impacts to the plant or its 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. The NEPA documents listed in section C above adequately analyzed the environmental effects that would result from implementation of the treatments proposed in the Balanced Road ES&BAR plan. No new treatment types have been identified that will deviate from those analyzed in these documents. The direct, indirect, and cumulative effects analyses contained in these existing NEPA documents continue to be current and accurate.

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

Yes. The public involvement and interagency review of the existing NEPA documents is adequate for the current proposed action. Scoping letters were sent to interested publics, including individuals, organizations, and federal and state agencies, as summarized in the table below. In addition, government-to-government consultations were performed with the Shoshone-Paiute Tribes of the Duck Valley Reservation and the Shoshone-Bannock Tribes of Fort Hall, and ESA Section 7 consultations were performed with the Service for these programmatic documents.

NEPA Document	Number of Scoping Letters	Date of Scoping
NFRP EA	1,077	October 2003
Noxious and Invasive Weed Treatment EA	102	April 2003
Twin Falls District Wildlife Tract Habitat Enhancement EA	N/A	EA was provided to the public for 30 day review in Setember 2009
Jarbidge Field Office Programmatic Shrub Planting EA	18	April 2010

E. Persons/Agencies/BLM Staff Consulted

Name	Title	Resource/Agency Represented
Julie Hilty	Fire Ecologist	Fuels/BLM
Scott Uhrig	Fire Rehabilitation Specialist	Operations/BLM
Barbara Bassler	Planning and Environmental Coordinator	NEPA/BLM
Thomas Stewart	Botanist	Botany/BLM
Jeff Ross	Archaeologist	Cultural Resources/BLM
Dan Strickler	Rangeland Management Specialist	Range/BLM
Melissa Rutledge	Rangeland Management Specialist	Range/BLM
Jim Klott	Wildlife Biologist	Wildlife/BLM
Bruce Palmer	Regional Wildlife Habitat Biologist	Wildlife/Idaho Department of Fish and Game
Mark Fleming	Regional Wildlife Habitat Manager	Wildlife/Idaho Department of Fish and Game

CONCLUSION

Based on the review documented above, I conclude that this proposal conforms to the Jarbidge RMP and that the existing NEPA documentation fully covers the proposed action and constitutes BLM's compliance with the requirements of NEPA.

/s/ Julie Hilty 6/21/2012
Julie Hilty, Project Lead Date

/s/ Barbar Bassler 6/22/2012
Barbara Bassler, NEPA Coordinator Date

/s/ Codie Martin, Acting 6/22/2012
Brian W. Davis, Field Office Manager 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.