

Worksheet
Documentation of Land Use Plan Conformance and NEPA Adequacy (DNA)
U.S. Department of the Interior
Bureau of Land Management

NEPA# DOI-BLM-ID-I010-2012-0079-DNA

Note: This Worksheet is to be completed consistent with the policies stated in the Instruction Memorandum entitled, “*Documentation of Land Use Plan Conformance and National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) Adequacy*” transmitting this Worksheet and the “*Guidelines for using the DNA Worksheet*,” located at the end of the Worksheet. (Note: The signed CONCLUSION at the end of this worksheet is part of an interim step in the BLM’s internal analysis process and does not constitute an appealable decision.)

A. Introduction

BLM Office: Upper Snake Field Office, Idaho Falls District

Fire Number: G1Q8

Proposed Action Title/Type: Cox’s Well Fire Emergency Stabilization and Rehabilitation Plan

Location of Proposed Action: The Cox’s Well Fire is located roughly twenty-eight miles northwest of Aberdeen, Idaho. The fire consumed approximately 4,575 acres of public lands administered by the Bureau of Land Management’s (BLM) Upper Snake Field Office (USFO), as well as 3,225 acres of BLM Monument lands located within the Craters of the Moon National Monument and Preserve (CMNMP).

The legal description, in whole or in part:

Township 2 South, Range 27 East, sections 10, 11, 13-15, 22-26, 34-36

Township 2 South, Range 28 East, sections 19, 30, 31

Township 3 South, Range 27 East, sections 01-03, 10-12

Township 3 South, Range 28 East, sections 06, 07

Description of the Proposed Action:

The proposed action is to implement the Cox’s Well Fire Emergency Stabilization and Rehabilitation (ESR) Plan as supported by the Normal Fire Emergency Stabilization and Rehabilitation Plan Environmental Assessment, #ID-320-2005-003, January 2005. The intent of the plan is to protect the area impacted by the Cox’s Well Fire by excluding livestock grazing for no less than two growing seasons, provide for the proper recovery of areas drill seeded, allow drill seeded species the opportunity to grow and mature, and maximize the recovery and production of the surviving native vegetation within the burn area. This will provide for ample vegetation and ground litter cover necessary to restore ecosystem function of the rehabilitated area. The burned area would also be surveyed for any potential invasive or noxious weed invasion and sprayed to control their spread.

Applicant (if any): N/A

B. Conformance with the Land Use Plan (LUP) and Consistency with Related Subordinate Implementation Plans

LUP Name*: Big Desert Management Framework Plan Date Approved: October 15, 1981

LUP Name*: Fire, Fuels, and Related Vegetation Management Direction Plan Amendment
Date Approved: July 25, 2008

* List applicable LUPs (e.g., Resource Management Plans or applicable amendments).

** List applicable activity, project, management, water quality restoration, or program plans.

The proposed action is in conformance with the applicable LUPs because it is specifically provided for in the following LUP decisions:

Fire, Fuels, and Related Vegetation Management Direction Plan Amendment

- Treat sage-grouse key and restoration habitats to expand source habitats. Improve and maintain sage-grouse Restoration (R1-3) and key habitats. (*Objective 3, ROD, pp. 18*)
- Plant materials used in re-vegetation actions would be native when appropriate and practical. However, desirable non-native species may be used in re-vegetation actions on harsh or degraded sites, when native seed is not available, or where they would structurally mimic the natural plant community and prevent soil loss and invasion by exotic annual grasses and noxious weeds. The species used would be those that have the highest probability of establishment on these sites. These "placeholders" would maintain the area for potential future native restoration. Native seed would be used more frequently and at larger scales as species adapted to local areas become more available. (*Placeholder Species, ROD, pp. 31*)
- All treatment areas would be rested from livestock grazing until project-specific monitoring identified in site-specific project plans and/or NEPA documents show that resource objectives have been met. Resumption of grazing would be determined on a case-by-case basis. (*Livestock Grazing, ROD, pp. 31*)
- The respective Field Office's Normal Fire Rehabilitation Plan contains ESR restrictions that would be applied to all site-specific ESR actions as appropriate. (*ESR Restrictions, ROD, pp. 35*)

Big Desert Management Framework Plan

- Consider not reseeding for fire rehabilitation except in annual grass (cheatgrass) areas where it is desirable to change to a perennial grass. (*Watershed Step 1 W 4.3 Step 3 W 4.2*).
- Seeding areas in poor range condition. Seeding areas in poor range condition will expedite recovery of vegetation cover. The improved cover will upgrade watershed protection and reduce erosion. (*Watershed Step 1 W 4.4 Step 3 W 4.3*).

- Accept with modification – use vegetation that will be most successful in soil stabilization. This would be either native or exotic species. (*Watershed Step 1 WSW 2.1 Step 3 WSW 2.1*).

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

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

1. Idaho Falls District Normal Fire Stabilization and Rehabilitation Plan EA #ID-320-2005-003, approved and signed January 11, 2005.
2. Upper Snake-Pocatello Integrated Weed Control Program Programmatic Environmental Assessment, EA#: ID-310-2008-EA-43.
3. Vegetation treatment on BLM Lands in Thirteen Western States, approved July 23, 1991

List by name and date other documentation relevant to the proposed action (e.g., source drinking water assessments, biological assessment, biological opinion, watershed assessment, allotment evaluation, rangeland health standard’s assessment and determinations, and monitoring the report).

1. Big Desert Sheep Allotment Assessment, Determination, and Environmental Assessment, EA#: ID-030-1999-025.
2. Cox’s Well Allotment Assessment, Determination, and Environmental Assessment, EA#: ID-074-2004-015.

D. NEPA Adequacy Criteria

1. Is the current proposed action substantially the same action (or is a part of that action) as previously analyzed?

Yes

Documentation of answer and explanation: An interdisciplinary resource team review of this fire has revealed that the resource values, concerns, and rehabilitation needs are the same as those discussed in the Normal Fire Emergency Stabilization and Rehabilitation Plan of January 2005 and best meet the wildlife, watershed, and soil objectives. The primary purpose of this Emergency Stabilization Plan is to protect the burned area. The primary goal of the Rehabilitation Plan is to reduce invasive exotic annuals and restore rangeland function through drill seeding low ecological condition areas with native grasses, forbs, and shrubs with the hope that the native plant composition will increase.

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, and resource values, and circumstances?

Yes

Documentation of answer and explanation: The range of alternatives analyzed in the existing NEPA document is appropriate. Two alternatives to the proposed action were analyzed in the EA. The overall objective of the Proposed Action of this plan is to stabilize and return the burned sites to their previous native and/or seeded conditions in the shortest time frame to enhance and protect the watershed, soil, wildlife habitat and livestock forage values of the area.

3. Is the existing analysis adequate and are the conclusions adequate in light of any new information or circumstances (including, for example, riparian proper functioning condition [PFC] reports; rangeland health standards assessments; Unified Watershed Assessment categorizations; inventory and monitoring data; most recent Fish and Wildlife Service lists of threatened, endangered, proposed, and candidate species; most recent BLM lists of sensitive species)? Can you reasonably conclude that all new information and all new circumstances are insignificant with regard to analysis of the proposed action?

Yes

Documentation of answer and explanation: There are no concerns or impacts to the above mentioned circumstances in the area of this burn. The burn occurred within a previously burned area where there are no riparian areas or T&E and sensitive plant and animal species. Approximately 6,217 acres of the burn was in early-seral condition while the remaining 1,583 acres was in mid to late-seral condition. The area identified as early-seral was lacking in native grasses, forbs and shrubs and was losing its value as sage-grouse habitat due to the increased presence of cheatgrass and general lack of sagebrush.

4. Do the methodology and analytical approach used in the existing NEPA document(s) continue to be appropriate for the current proposed action?

Yes

Documentation of answer and explanation: It is appropriate for the proposed action because it allows for the full recovery of predominantly rehabilitated rangeland.

5. Are the direct and indirect impacts of the current proposed action substantially unchanged from those identified in the existing NEPA document(s)? Does the existing NEPA document analyze site-specific impacts related to the current proposed action?

Yes

Documentation of answer and explanation: The impacts of the proposed action are not changed from those identified in the existing and current NEPA document. The impacts of the proposed action will likely improve the pre-existing seeded conditions of the burn area.

6. Can you conclude without additional analysis or information that the cumulative impacts that would result from implementation of the current proposed action are substantially unchanged from those analyzed in the existing NEPA document(s)?

Yes

Documentation of answer and explanation: According to this plan, it is anticipated that there will not be any additional cumulative impacts to implementing the proposed action. The area is proposed to be rehabilitated with a native vegetation mix (Bluebunch Wheatgrass, *Pseudoroegneria spicata*, Snake River Wheatgrass, *Elymus wawawaiensis*, Indian Ricegrass, *Acnatherum hymenoides*, Big Bluegrass, *Poa secunda*, Blue Penstemon, *Penstemon cyaneus*, Silvery Lupine, *Lupinus argenteus*, Basalt Milkvetch, *Astragalus filipes*, Wyoming Big Sagebrush, *Artemisia tridentata* ssp. *wyomingensis*, and Basin Big Sagebrush, *Artemisia tridentata* ssp. *tridentata*). The rehabilitated areas within the Cox's Well and Big Desert Sheep Allotments will be rested to allow for proper recovery of seeded areas. The remaining portions of the burn that will not be treated will be rehabilitated to pre-burn vegetation conditions with rest.

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

Yes

Documentation of answer and explanation: The public involvement and interagency review of the existing NEPA document is adequate for the current proposed action. A scoping letter was sent out December 19, 2003 to over 200 interested individuals, groups, agencies, etc. to request input to the NFRP prior to the plan and associated environmental assessments being written.

E. Interdisciplinary Analysis

Identify those team members conducting or participating in the NEPA analysis and preparation of this worksheet.

<u>Name</u>	<u>Title</u>	<u>Resource Represented</u>
Glen Guenther	Supervisory Natural Resource Spec.	Range/Botany
Scott Minnie	Range Management Spec.	Range
Jordan Hennefer	Range Management Spec.	Range
Devin Englestead	Wildlife Biologist	Wildlife
Marissa Guenther	Archaeologist	Cultural
Brandy Janzen	Soil Scientist/NRS	Soils/Watershed
Monica Zimmerman	Outdoor Rec. Planner	Recreation
Dan Kotansky	Hydrologist	Hydrology
Ben Dyer	Fire Ecologist	Rehabilitation

F. Mitigation Measures

The burned area on public lands will be monitored and managed to keep livestock from grazing the site until project-specific monitoring identified within the ESR plan (Part 8) shows that resource objectives have been met and adequate regrowth and recovery of the rehabilitated area has occurred. Cultural resource surveys will be used to identify and mark known locations. Identified sites will be marked prior to the implementation of ground disturbing activities (drill seeding) to avoid any potential adverse effects to significant sites.

