

**BLM IDAHO POST-FIRE RECOVERY PLAN
EMERGENCY STABILIZATION AND BURNED AREA
REHABILITATION**

PLAN TEMPLATE 2010

BENWALK FIRE (G1MC)

BLM Boise District Office

IDAHO STATE OFFICE

FIRE BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Fire Name	Benwalk
Fire Number	G1MC
District/Field Office	Boise District Office
Admin Number	LLIDB00000
State	IDAHO
County(s)	ELMORE
Ignition Date/Cause	07/09/2012 Lightning
Date Contained	07/10/2012
Jurisdiction	<i>Acres</i>
State	3392
Private	4545
BLM	21163
Total Acres	29100
Total Costs	\$2,231,000
Costs to LF20000ES (2822)	\$2,160,000
Costs to LF32000BR (2881)	\$71,000

Status of Plan Submission (check one box below)

	Initial Submission of Complete Plan
X	Updating or Revising the Initial Submission
	Amendment

PART 1 - PLAN SUMMARY

BACKGROUND INFORMATION ON FIRE.

The Benwalk was ignited by lightning at approximately 4:20 P.M. on July 9, 2012. The fire burned 21,163 acres of public land managed by the Bureau of Land Management (BLM), 3,392 acres of land managed by the Idaho Department of Lands (IDL) and 4,545 acres of private land. Of the BLM land, 16,309 acres are within the Morley Nelson Snake River Birds of Prey National Conservation Area (NCA) and 4,854 acres are within the boundaries of the Four Rivers Field Office (FRFO). Several wildfires have occurred within the Benwalk perimeter and only 7,931 acres had no record of having burned previously. The fire burned through a portion of the Highway 20 Fire that occurred early this year. The fire was contained on June 10 and controlled June 11.

The fire burned 1,109 acres (43%) of the Double Anchor FFR (01097), 522 acres (8%) of the North Cold Springs Allotment, and 24,004 acres (25%) of the Mountain Home Subunit Allotment. The 9,082 acre Cold Springs Allotment had less than 0.5 acres burn.

The digital soil survey data (SSURGO 2008) indicate that the vast majority of the burn occurred in the Loamy 8-12 Wyoming Big Sagebrush/Bluebunch Wheatgrass–Thurber Needlegrass ecological site. Although much of the area had burned previously, most had recovered to support a mature stand of sagebrush. The understory varied across the burn area from a sparse understory consisting mainly of bur buttercup, to areas with a healthy understory of Sandberg bluegrass, six week fescue and various forbs, and other areas with inclusions of cheatgrass and Medusahead rye. Medusahead is more prevalent on the northern edge of the fire and heavy infestations exist just to the north. Overall, only a small percentage of the area was dominated by cheatgrass. Rabbitbrush was scattered across the burn with moderate densities occurring in some areas. Well established microbiotic crusts were found throughout the burned area. The fire moved rapidly across the landscape but the burn was a mix of low to high intensity with islands of sagebrush remaining.

The burned area contained 3,927 acres of occupied slickspot peppergrass (*Lepidium papilliferum*, LEPA) habitat and 16,750 acres of LEPA habitat. Slickspot peppergrass was federally listed as threatened in 2009 under the Endangered Species Act of 1973 (ESA). Occupied Habitat is defined as the area immediately surrounding a known LEPA Element Occurrence (EO) combined with a one half mile buffer surrounding the occurrence to protect pollinator habitat. LEPA Habitat is defined as habitat that has been identified as having slickspots but presence was not documented at the time of the survey. The fire burned through EO-51 Hot Creek, EO-62 SW of Eureka Cave EO, and within the half mile buffer of EO-29 Mountain Home Southeast, and through the one half mile buffer of a newly discovered occurrence that has yet to be given an EO name or number. The above EOs were known to be occupied as of 2011. The entire area inside the perimeter of this fire was surveyed for LEPA as well as other BLM special status plants between 2007 and 2011. The burned area also supports populations of mourning milkvetch, a BLM Type IV Special Status plant species (SSS).

Approximately 6,409 acres of the fire were classified as Greater Sage-grouse Preliminary General Habitat (PGH) which is defined as areas of occupied seasonal or year-round habitat outside of priority habitat. Greater sage-grouse are a candidate species for listing under the Endangered Species Act of 1973. Candidate status was assigned because although listing was warranted, higher priority was given to other species. A large portion of the fire was also identified as Key Habitat, which is an area with generally intact sagebrush that provide sage-grouse habitat during some portion of the year. However, the presence of multiple electric transmission lines existing within the burn perimeter and several nearby wind towers greatly reduces the value of this area to sage-grouse and it is likely that sage-grouse would never re-occupy habitat in the burned area. The closest active lek is approximately 4 miles to the east.

The burned area supported several BLM Special Status wildlife species (SSS) and federally protected bald and golden eagles. Bald eagles are generally observed during winter months while golden eagles are present throughout the year. Special Status Animal Species occurring within the burn area include western toad, Piute ground squirrel, ferruginous hawk, and prairie falcon. The latter three are quite common in the NCA.

The fire burned 16,309 BLM acres within the NCA, which provided habitat for prey species of raptors. The NCA was established to conserve, protect, and enhance raptor populations and their habitats. The NCA contains the greatest concentration of nesting raptors in North America. About 700 raptor pairs, representing 16 species, nest in the NCA each spring, including golden eagles, burrowing owls, and the greatest density of prairie falcons in the world. The NCA is a unique habitat for birds of prey because the cliffs of the Snake River Canyon provide ideal nesting sites, while the adjacent plateau supports unusually large populations of small mammal prey species. The NCA is noted for having one of the highest densities of ground squirrels ever recorded, and the Piute ground squirrel is a critical food source during late winter, spring, and early summer for many of the NCA raptor species – most notably prairie falcons. Golden eagles preferred prey is the black-tailed jackrabbit.

The fire did not burn habitat that was previously identified as crucial mule deer winter range, however, since 2009 over 16,738 acres of crucial winter habitat have been destroyed by fire. This loss of crucial winter range increased the value and importance of the nearby remaining sagebrush habitat. Delineation of crucial mule deer winter range was updated in 2009. While there was no designated crucial winter range in the Benwalk Fire perimeter, wildlife biologists realized it had become such due to the loss of surrounding crucial winter habitat. Over the last 15 years approximately 50% of crucial winter habitat in the Upper Bennett Hills big game management area has been burned at least one time. The crucial winter range area was supporting approximately 3,500 mule deer and a few hundred elk.

LAND USE PLAN CONSISTENCY

S2 - Ground Seeding

There are three applicable land use plans for this ES&BAR project area including the Jarbidge Resource Management Plan (JRMP) and associated Record of Decision (ROD) dated March 23, 1987, the Snake River Birds of Prey National Conservation Area Resource

Management Plan (NCARMP) and associated ROD dated September 30, 2008, and the Kuna Management Framework Plan (KMFP) dated March 30, 1983.

JRMP – Objectives for the Lower Bennett MUA that apply to these treatments include:

- Continue soil stabilization practices on areas receiving critical erosion damage (pg. II-18).
- Improve lands in poor ecological condition (p. II-18).
- Manage big game habitat to support mule deer and antelope (p. II-19).
- Improve sage-grouse nesting and brood rearing habitat (p. II-19).
- Maintain existing vegetative improvements (p. II-18).

NCARMP – Objectives from the NCARMP that apply to these treatments include:

- Emphasize protection and enhancement of raptor prey and other wildlife populations and habitats, expand areas utilized by raptor prey and big game, and reduce competition for forage in perennial pastures between livestock and Piute ground squirrels (p. 2-4).
- Include shrubs that are suitable for raptor prey (small mammals) and big game in habitat restoration projects (p. 2-4).
- BLM will use seeding techniques that minimize soil disturbance such as no-till drills and rangeland drills equipped with depth bands when ES&BAR projects have the potential to impact LEPA habitat (p. A-79).
- Adapted perennial grasses, forbs, and shrubs will be seeded when possible to (1) stabilize the soil, (2) prevent weed invasion, (3) restore wildlife habitat, and (4) reduce the likelihood of future fires (p. 2-7).
- All wildfires will be evaluated for possible Emergency Stabilization and Rehabilitation (ES&BAR). Objectives include the establishment of shrub and perennial herbaceous species to minimize soil erosion and invasion by annual plant species, and to maintain and improve raptor prey habitat (p. 2-9).
- Grazing management practices will be designed and scheduled to support vegetation management projects [restoration, fuels and Emergency Stabilization and Rehabilitation (ES&BAR)]. Areas treated for restoration or rehabilitation purposes will be rested from livestock grazing for whatever time is necessary for adequate recovery and/or seedling establishment, up to ten (10) years.

KMFP – Objectives from the KMFP that apply to these treatments include:

- Establish seedings or plantings of preferred species if reasonably necessary to improve forage condition on suitable sites of crucial deer winter range (WL-3.2-c).
- Manage all watersheds to achieve stable or moderate soil surface factor conditions and, where feasible/economical, strive for maintaining or establishing good perennial vegetation cover (WS-1.1).

The proposed ground seeding treatments over the burned area would re-establish shrub cover and vegetation diversity important for LEPA and prey species of raptors occupying the NCA. Shrubs are also important to other sagebrush obligate wildlife, big game, and upland game birds that occur within the area. The proposed treatments are in conformance with the RMPs and consistent with existing consultations for slickspot peppergrass and BLM sage-grouse conservation policy.

The ground seedings outlined in this plan are also consistent with the treatments analyzed in the Boise District Office Normal Fire Emergency Stabilization and Rehabilitation Plan

(NFRP) and Environmental Assessment (EA, #ID-090-2004-050), the Noxious and Invasive Weed Treatment EA (#ID100-2005-EA-265) for the Boise District.

Proposed ground seedings are consistent with existing 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. 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.

Surveys for slickspot peppergrass have confirmed its occurrence within the fire perimeter. LEPA Management Area 9C (MA9C) consists of 14,746 acres. Approximately 6,418 acres of MA9C are within the fire perimeter and were burned during the fire. Several slickspots are located in the burned area. Project design features that address conservation measures contained in the LUP BO and Conference Reports are included 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 this plan are:

- Implement Emergency Stabilization and Rehabilitation (ES&BAR) 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&BAR objectives, defined through the ES&BAR plans (LUP BO p. 84, ES&BAR Conference Report p. 2)
 - b. BLM will initiate and complete ES&BAR efforts for slickspot peppergrass.

The proposed ground seedings would 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), re-establishing 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 re-vegetation 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.

S3 - Aerial Seeding

There are three applicable land use plans for this ES&BAR project area including the Jarbidge Resource Management Plan (JRMP) and associated Record of Decision (ROD) dated March 23, 1987, the Snake River Birds of Prey National Conservation Area Resource Management Plan (NCARMP) and associated ROD dated September 30, 2008, and the Kuna Management Framework Plan (KMFP) dated March 30, 1983.

The proposed ground seeding treatments over the burned area would re-establish shrub cover and vegetation diversity important for LEPA and prey species of raptors occupying the NCA. Shrubs are also important to other sagebrush obligate wildlife, big game, and upland game birds that occur within the area. The proposed treatments are in conformance with the RMPs and consistent with existing consultations for slickspot peppergrass and BLM sage-grouse conservation policy.

The aerial seeding treatments outlined in this plan are also consistent with the treatments analyzed in the Boise District Office Normal Fire Emergency Stabilization and Rehabilitation Plan (NFRP) and Environmental Assessment (EA, #ID-090-2004-050), the Noxious and Invasive Weed Treatment EA (#ID100-2005-EA-265) for the Boise District.

Treatments are consistent with existing 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. 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.

Surveys for slickspot peppergrass have confirmed its occurrence within the fire perimeter. LEPA Management Area 9C (MA9C) consists of 14,746 acres. Approximately 6,418 acres of MA9C are within the fire perimeter and were burned during the fire. Several slickspots are located in the burned area. Project design features that address conservation measures contained in the LUP BO and Conference Reports are included 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 this plan are:

- Implement Emergency Stabilization and Rehabilitation (ES&BAR) 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&BAR objectives, defined through the ES&BAR plans (LUP BO p. 84, ES&BAR Conference Report p. 2)
 - b. BLM will initiate and complete ES&BAR efforts for slickspot peppergrass.

The proposed ground seedings would 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), re-establishing 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 re-vegetation 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.

S5 - Noxious Weeds

There are three applicable land use plans for this ES&BAR project area including the Jarbidge Resource Management Plan (JRMP) and associated Record of Decision (ROD) dated March 23, 1987, the Snake River Birds of Prey National Conservation Area Resource Management Plan (NCARMP) and associated ROD dated September 30, 2008, and the Kuna Management Framework (KMF) dated March 30, 1983.

JRMP – Objectives identified in the Lower Bennett MUA concerning the treatment of noxious weeds include:

- Improve lands in poor ecological condition (pg. II-18).
- Maintain existing vegetative improvements (pg. II-18).

NCARMP – Objectives identified in the NCARMP concerning the treatment of noxious weeds include:

- Public Law (PL)103-64 established the NCA to "...provide for the conservation, protection, and enhancement of raptor populations and habitats and the natural and environmental resources and values associated therewith..."
- Upland Vegetation Standard Operating Procedure include objectives that emergency

stabilization and rehabilitation (ES&BAR) will include the establishment of shrub and perennial herbaceous species to minimize soil erosion and invasion by annual plant species, and to maintain and improve raptor prey habitat.

- Treat approximately 4,000 acres for noxious weed infestations annually. Restored areas and SSS habitat have priority for treatment.

KMFP – Management objectives in the KMFP concerning the treatment of noxious weeds include:

- Manage sensitive species habitat to maintain or increase existing and potential populations (WL-1).
- Manage 207,680 acres of big game habitat to obtain good ecological condition (WL-3).
- Manage habitat for good ecological condition where feasible/economical (WL-3.4-d).

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 noxious weed treatments address the objectives cited above to improve lands in poor ecological condition and maintain existing vegetative improvements. They also address JRMP Resource Management Guidelines to 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 (p. II-94). Treatments are also consistent with the treatments analyzed in the NFRP and Boise District. Weed control treatments would improve recovery of existing seedings by reducing noxious weed competition. In addition, project design features are consistent with existing consultations for slickspot peppergrass. These include training of weed treatment staff for slickspot and slickspot peppergrass detection and implementation of treatment buffers should occupied slickspots be found.

S7 - Fence/Gate/Cattleguard

There are three applicable land use plans for this ES&BAR project area including the Jarbidge Resource Management Plan (JRMP) and associated Record of Decision (ROD) dated March 23, 1987, the Snake River Birds of Prey National Conservation Area Resource Management Plan (NCARMP) and associated ROD dated September 30, 2008, and the Kuna Management Framework Plan (KMFP) dated March 30, 1983.

JRMP – Objectives for the Lower Bennett MUA that apply to S7 include:

- Continue soil stabilization practices on areas receiving critical erosion damage (pg. II-18).
- Improve lands in poor ecological condition (p. II-18).
- Manage big game habitat to support mule deer and antelope (p. II-19).
- Improve sage-grouse nesting and brood rearing habitat (p. II-19).

- Maintain existing vegetative improvements (p. II-18).

NCARMP – Objectives from the NCARMP that apply to S7 include:

- Emphasize protection and enhancement of raptor prey and other wildlife populations and habitats, expand areas utilized by raptor prey and big game, and reduce competition for forage in perennial pastures between livestock and Piute ground squirrels (p. 2-4).
- Include shrubs that are suitable for raptor prey (small mammals) and big game in habitat restoration projects (p. 2-4).
- BLM will use seeding techniques that minimize soil disturbance such as no-till drills and rangeland drills equipped with depth bands when ES&BAR projects have the potential to impact LEPA habitat (p. A-79).
- Adapted perennial grasses, forbs, and shrubs will be seeded when possible to (1) stabilize the soil, (2) prevent weed invasion, (3) restore wildlife habitat, and (4) reduce the likelihood of future fires (p. 2-7).
- All wildfires will be evaluated for possible Emergency Stabilization and Rehabilitation (ES&BAR). Objectives include the establishment of shrub and perennial herbaceous species to minimize soil erosion and invasion by annual plant species, and to maintain and improve raptor prey habitat (p. 2-9).
- Grazing management practices will be designed and scheduled to support vegetation management projects [restoration, fuels and Emergency Stabilization and Rehabilitation (ES&BAR)]. Areas treated for restoration or rehabilitation purposes will be rested from livestock grazing for whatever time is necessary for adequate recovery and/or seedling establishment, up to ten (10) years.

KMFP – Objectives from the KMFP that apply to S7 include:

- Establish seedings or plantings of preferred species if reasonably necessary to improve forage condition on suitable sites of crucial deer winter range (WL-3.2-c).
- Manage all watersheds to achieve stable or moderate soil surface factor conditions and, where feasible/economical, strive for maintaining or establishing good perennial vegetation cover (WS-1.1).

Project design features of this treatment that address conservation measures contained in the LUP BO and Conference Reports are included 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 this plan are:

1) Implement Emergency Stabilization and Rehabilitation (ES&BAR) 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&BAR objectives, defined through the ES&BAR plans (LUP BO p. 84, ES&BAR Conference Report p. 2).

b. BLM will initiate and complete ES&BAR efforts for slickspot peppergrass.

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), re-establishing 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 re-vegetation 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.

S12 - Closures (area, OHV, livestock)

There are three applicable land use plans for this ES&BAR project area including the Jarbidge Resource Management Plan (JRMP) and associated Record of Decision (ROD) dated March 23, 1987, the Snake River Birds of Prey National Conservation Area Resource Management Plan (NCARMP) and associated ROD dated September 30, 2008, and the Kuna Management Framework (KMF) dated March 30, 1983.

JRMP – Objectives for the Lower Bennett MUA concerning closures include:

- Improve lands in poor ecological condition (pg. II-18).
- Manage big game habitat to support mule deer and antelope (pg. II-19).
- Improve sage-grouse nesting and brood rearing habitat (pg. II-19).
- Maintain existing vegetative improvements (pg. II-18).

NCARMP – Objectives from the NCARMP concerning closures include:

- 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&BAR objectives, defined through the ES&BAR plans (p. A-79).

- Livestock Grazing Standard Operating Procedures states; “Grazing management practices will be designed and scheduled to support vegetation management projects (p. 2-17).
- Areas treated for restoration or rehabilitation purposes will be rested from livestock grazing for whatever time is necessary for adequate recovery and/or seedling establishment, up to ten (10) years” (p. 2-17).

KMFP – Objectives from the KMFP concerning closures include:

- Manage all watersheds to achieve stable or moderate soil surface factor conditions and, where feasible/economical, strive for maintaining or establishing good perennial vegetation cover (WS-1.1).

The NFRP states that livestock grazing would be deferred for at least two growing seasons, or until resource objectives are met, through the closure of pastures, resting whole allotments, or construction or reconstruction of protective fences as needed (NFRP, pp. 17, 19). The BLM ES&BAR Handbook (H-1732-1) states that livestock are to be excluded from burned areas until monitoring results, documented in writing, show ES&BAR objectives have been met (H-1742-1, p. 35). Closing the burned area would improve the potential natural recovery of existing seedings by eliminating livestock use of recovering plants. Livestock use would be resumed when ES&BAR objectives are met. Therefore, the proposed treatment conforms to the Jarbidge RMP, NFRP, and current BLM policy.

S13 - Monitoring

NCARMP – Objectives from the NCARMP that apply to these treatments include:

- Emphasize maintenance, protection, and enhancement of raptors and other sensitive wildlife populations and habitats (p. 3-5).
- The distribution, abundance, and vigor of special status plants will be maintained or improved (p. 3-6).

R4 - Seedling Planting

There are three applicable land use plans for this ES&BAR project area including the Jarbidge Resource Management Plan (JRMP) and associated Record of Decision (ROD) dated March 23, 1987, the Snake River Birds of Prey National Conservation Area Resource Management Plan (NCARMP) and associated ROD dated September 30, 2008, and the Kuna Management Framework Plan (KMFP) dated March 30, 1983.

JRMP – Objectives for the Lower Bennett MUA that apply to these treatments include:

- Continue soil stabilization practices on areas receiving critical erosion damage (pg. II-18).
- Improve lands in poor ecological condition (p. II-18).
- Manage big game habitat to support mule deer and antelope (p. II-19).
- Improve sage-grouse nesting and brood rearing habitat (p. II-19).
- Maintain existing vegetative improvements (p. II-18).

NCARMP – Objectives from the NCARMP that apply to these treatments include:

- Emphasize protection and enhancement of raptor prey and other wildlife populations and habitats, expand areas utilized by raptor prey and big game, and reduce competition for forage in perennial pastures between livestock and Piute ground squirrels (p. 2-4).
- Include shrubs that are suitable for raptor prey (small mammals) and big game in habitat restoration projects (p. 2-4).
- BLM will use seeding techniques that minimize soil disturbance such as no-till drills and rangeland drills equipped with depth bands when ES&BAR projects have the potential to

impact LEPA habitat (p. A-79).

- Adapted perennial grasses, forbs, and shrubs will be seeded when possible to (1) stabilize the soil, (2) prevent weed invasion, (3) restore wildlife habitat, and (4) reduce the likelihood of future fires (p. 2-7).
- All wildfires will be evaluated for possible Emergency Stabilization and Rehabilitation (ES&BAR). Objectives include the establishment of shrub and perennial herbaceous species to minimize soil erosion and invasion by annual plant species, and to maintain and improve raptor prey habitat (p. 2-9).
- Grazing management practices will be designed and scheduled to support vegetation management projects [restoration, fuels and Emergency Stabilization and Rehabilitation (ES&BAR)]. Areas treated for restoration or rehabilitation purposes will be rested from livestock grazing for whatever time is necessary for adequate recovery and/or seedling establishment, up to ten (10) years.

KMFP – Objectives from the KMFP that apply to these treatments include:

- Establish seedlings or plantings of preferred species if reasonably necessary to improve forage condition on suitable sites of crucial deer winter range (WL-3.2-c).
- Manage all watersheds to achieve stable or moderate soil surface factor conditions and, where feasible/economical, strive for maintaining or establishing good perennial vegetation cover (WS-1.1).

The proposed seedling planting in the burned area would re-establish shrub cover and vegetation diversity important for LEPA and prey species of raptors occupying the NCA. Shrubs are also important to other sagebrush obligate wildlife, big game, and upland game birds that occur within the area. The proposed treatments are in conformance with the RMPs and consistent with existing consultations for slickspot peppergrass and BLM sage-grouse conservation policy.

The treatments outlined in this plan are also consistent with the treatments analyzed in the Boise District Office Normal Fire Emergency Stabilization and Rehabilitation Plan (NFRP) and Environmental Assessment (EA, #ID-090-2004-050), the Noxious and Invasive Weed Treatment EA (#ID100-2005-EA-265) for the Boise District.

Treatments are consistent with existing 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. 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.

Surveys for slickspot peppergrass have confirmed its occurrence within the fire perimeter. LEPA Management Area 9C (MA9C) consists of 14,746 acres. Approximately 6,418 acres of MA9C are within the fire perimeter and were burned during the fire. Several slickspots are located in the burned area. Project design features that address conservation measures contained in the LUP BO and Conference Reports are included 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 this plan are:

- Implement Emergency Stabilization and Rehabilitation (ES&BAR) 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&BAR objectives, defined through the ES&BAR plans (LUP BO p. 84, ES&BAR Conference Report p. 2).
 - b. BLM will initiate and complete ES&BAR efforts for slickspot peppergrass.

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), re-establishing 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 re-vegetation 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.

R5 - Noxious Weeds

There are three applicable land use plans for this ES&BAR project area including the Jarbidge Resource Management Plan (JRMP) and associated Record of Decision (ROD) dated March 23, 1987, the Snake River Birds of Prey National Conservation Area Resource Management Plan (NCARMP) and associated ROD dated September 30, 2008, and the Kuna Management Framework (KMF) dated March 30, 1983.

R7 - Fence/Gate/Cattleguard

Existing pasture and allotment fences would be repaired or replaced to ensure that livestock remain within their area of authorized use and off the burned area until resource objectives

are met. The NFRP states that gates, cattleguards, fences, and other control features would be repaired and/or constructed as needed to protect treatments during the recovery period or the seeding establishment period (NFRP, p. 17). The BLM ES&BAR Handbook allows for repair or reconstruction of existing BLM-approved fences to protect new seedings and natural recovery areas (H-1742-1, p. 31). Therefore, the proposed treatment is consistent with the NFRP and current BLM policy.

COST SUMMARY TABLES

Emergency Stabilization (LF20000ES)

Action/ Spec #	Planned Action	Unit (Acres, WMs, Number)	# Units	Unit Cost (If Appl.)	FY 2012	FY 2013	FY 2014	FY 2015	Totals by Spec.
S1	Planning (Project Management)				\$ 0	\$15,000	\$15,000	\$15,000	\$45,000
S2	Ground Seeding	Acres	11,111	\$ 109.35	\$1,004,000	\$211,000	\$ 0	\$ 0	\$1,215,000
S3	Aerial Seeding	Acres	19,318	\$ 35.46	\$474,000	\$211,000	\$ 0	\$ 0	\$685,000
S4	Seedling Planting								
S5	Noxious Weeds	Acres	21,163	\$ 0.85	\$ 0	\$18,000	\$ 0	\$ 0	\$18,000
S6	Soil Stabilization (Other than seedling, planting)								
S7	Fence/Gate/Cattleguard	Miles	5	\$11,800.00	\$ 0	\$56,000	\$ 0	\$3,000	\$59,000
S8	Road/Trail Water Diversion								
S9	Cultural Protection (Stabilization/Patrol)								
S10	Tree Hazard Removal								
S11	Facilities								
S12	Closures (area, OHV, livestock)	Acres	21,803	\$ 0.00	\$ 0	\$ 0	\$ 0	\$ 0	\$ 0
S13	Monitoring	Acres	21,163	\$ 6.52	\$ 0	\$51,000	\$45,000	\$42,000	\$138,000
S14	Other Treatments								
	TOTAL COSTS (LF20000ES)				\$1,478,000	\$562,000	\$60,000	\$60,000	\$2,160,000
	OTHER FUND CODE TOTALS:								
	TOTAL COSTS (???)								
	TOTAL COSTS (???)								
	TOTAL COSTS (???)								

Burned Area Rehabilitation (LF32000BR)

Action/ Spec #	Planned Action	Unit (Acres, WMs, Number)	# Units	Unit Cost (If Appl.)	FY 2012	FY 2013	FY 2014	FY 2015	Totals by Spec.
R1	Planning (Project Mgmt)				\$ 0	\$ 0	\$3,000	\$3,000	\$6,000
R2	Ground Seeding								
R3	Aerial Seeding								
R4	Seedling Planting	#	1,500	\$ 0.00	\$ 0	\$ 0	\$ 0	\$ 0	\$ 0
R5	Noxious Weeds	Acres	21,803	\$ 1.51	\$ 0	\$ 0	\$18,000	\$15,000	\$33,000
R6	Soil Stabilization (Other than seedling, planting)								
R7	Fence/Gate/Cattleguard	Miles	5	\$6,400.00	\$ 0	\$32,000	\$ 0	\$ 0	\$32,000
R8	Road/Trail Water Diversion								
R9	Cultural Protection (Stabilization/Patrol)								
R10	Tree Hazard Removal								
R11	Facilities								
R12	Closures (area, OHV, livestock)								
R13	Monitoring								
R14	Additional Treatments								
	TOTAL COSTS (LF32000BR)				\$0	\$32,000	\$21,000	\$18,000	\$71,000
OTHER FUND CODE TOTALS:									
	TOTAL COSTS (???)								
	TOTAL COSTS (???)								
	TOTAL COSTS (???)								

PART 2 - POST-FIRE RECOVERY ISSUES

EMERGENCY STABILIZATION ISSUES

1 - Human Life and Safety

N/A

2 - Soil/Water Stabilization

The fire burned stands of sagebrush which existed throughout much of the project area leaving the topsoil vulnerable to wind and water erosion. Exclusion of livestock grazing until ES&BAR vegetation recovery/treatment objectives are met would effectively aid in the maintenance/stabilization of the vegetation community within the burned area and the adjacent landscape.

3 - Habitat for Federal/State Listed, Proposed, or Candidate Species

The fire burned occupied and proposed critical habitat for slickspot peppergrass, a federally listed threatened plant species. Approximately 45% of Management Area 9C is included in the burned area. Fire and invasive exotic annual plants have been identified as the biggest threats to the habitat for slickspot peppergrass, and although they do not alter the slickspot itself, they alter the surrounding vegetation which provides structure for shade and protection from wind.

There were approximately 6,409 acres of PGH for Greater Sage-grouse in the burned area and a large percentage of the burn was Key Habitat. The closest active lek is approximately 4 miles to the east. Even though the burned area is identified as PGH and Key Habitat, the quality of the habitat is degraded due to the presence of multiple electrical power transmission towers and several large wind turbines near the burn.

Wyoming big sagebrush does not re-sprout following fire and re-establishment is slow under the best conditions. When fire occurs in areas where invasive exotic annuals occur, the annual plants gain a stronghold and typically out-compete perennial plants for resources, often resulting in loss of the sagebrush component. Loss of the sagebrush in this area negatively impacts LEPA and sage-grouse.

4 - Critical Heritage Resources

N/A

5 - Invasive Plants and Weeds

First year inventory and treatment of noxious weed species meets the ES criteria of maintaining the habitat in the highest priority areas. Rush skeletonweed was observed during suppression of the fire and several species of noxious weeds have been documented adjacent to the burned area including Scotch thistle, diffuse knapweed, whitetop, and

perennial pepperweed. These adjacent populations have potential for establishment in the burned area.

BURNED AREA RECOVERY ISSUES

1 - Lands Unlikely to Recover Naturally

The fire burned occupied and proposed critical habitat for slickspot peppergrass, a federally listed threatened plant species. Approximately 45% of Management Area 9C is included in the burned area. Fire and invasive exotic annual plants have been identified as the biggest threats to the habitat for slickspot peppergrass, and although they do not alter the slickspot itself, they alter the surrounding vegetation which provides structure for shade and protection from wind.

There were approximately 6,409 acres of PGH for Greater Sage-grouse in the burned area and a large percentage of the burn was Key Habitat. The closest active lek is approximately 4 miles to the east. Even though the burned area is identified as PGH and Key Habitat, the quality of the habitat is degraded due to the presence of multiple electrical power transmission towers and several large wind turbines near the burn.

Wyoming big sagebrush does not re-sprout following fire and re-establishment is slow under the best conditions. When fire occurs in areas where invasive exotic annuals occur, the annual plants gain a stronghold and typically out-compete perennial plants for resources, often resulting in loss of the sagebrush component. Loss of the sagebrush in this area negatively impacts LEPA and sage-grouse.

2 - Weed Treatments

Second and third year inventory and treatment of noxious weed species meets the BAR criteria of maintaining the habitat in the highest priority areas. Rush skeletonweed was observed during suppression of the fire and several species of noxious weeds have been documented adjacent to the burned area including Scotch thistle, diffuse knapweed, whitetop, and perennial pepperweed. These adjacent populations have potential for establishment in the burned area.

3 - Tree Planting

N/A

4 - Repair/Replace Fire Damage to Minor Facilities

The wildfire also damaged fences associated with the livestock management of the affected allotments. Reconstruction and repair of management fences damaged by the fire would maintain the future integrity of the existing livestock grazing system. Repair of damaged management fences would also help to manage and augment vegetation recovery.

Approximately ten carsonite signs used to identify the location of the historic Oregon Trail

were destroyed by the fire. These signs helped to protect the trail from ground disturbing activity by making people aware of its location.

PART 3 - DESCRIPTION OF TREATMENTS

Issue 2 - Soil/Water Stabilization

S7 Fence/Gate/Cattleguard

A. Treatment/Activity Description

Approximately 1.0 miles of new temporary fence is needed in pasture 6 of the North Cold Springs Allotment to allow grazing to continue in the unburned portion of the pasture. Approximately 21 miles of existing management fence damaged by the fire would be repaired. Damaged wood corners and braces would be replaced with galvanized steel posts. Damaged wire would also be repaired. The temporary fence and fence repairs would be constructed to BLM fence standards for wildlife.

B. How does the treatment relate to damage or changes caused by the fire?

The objective of this treatment is to protect the burned area and seeding treatment to allow for seeding establishment as well as provide critical rest to existing native vegetation from livestock grazing. Construction of approximately 1.0 miles of temporary fence and repair of 21 miles of existing fence damaged by the fire will effectively protect the burned area from livestock grazing while allowing the remaining unburned portions of the pastures to be available for livestock use.

C. Why is the treatment/activity reasonable, within policy, and cost effective?

This treatment is reasonable and cost effective because the temporary fence would cost less than permanent fence and would be installed by the permittee. Damaged wood stretch points and corners would be replaced with galvanized steel pipe thus increasing the longevity of the structures and resistance to future wildfire damages.

S12 Closures (area, OHV, livestock)

A. Treatment/Activity Description

The Benwalk Fire burned area would be rested from livestock grazing until monitoring shows that ES&BAR objectives have been met. Pastures in the Mountain Home Subunit Allotment to be temporarily closed include 7, 8, 9, 12, 14, 15, and 17. There would be a reduction in AUMs in pasture 6 of this allotment. Pasture 6 in the North Cold Springs Allotment would be temporarily closed.

The Double Anchor FFR would have no closures due to the small amount of federal land

that was impacted by the fire (approximately 64 acres).

B. How does the treatment relate to damage or changes caused by the fire?

The purpose of this treatment is to rest the burn area from livestock grazing to provide the opportunity for recovery of on-site vegetation. Recovery and maintenance of resilient, competitive perennial plant communities would inhibit the expansion of annual invasive vegetation and noxious weeds and stabilize soil resources.

C. Why is the treatment/activity reasonable, within policy, and cost effective?

There are no costs associated with the livestock closure.

Issue 3 - Habitat for Federal/State Listed, Proposed, or Candidate Species

S2 Ground Seeding

A. Treatment/Activity Description

Approximately 1,000 acres within the NCA would be drill seeded using a minimum till drill (Drill NCA Mintill 1000 Mix 1) and approximately 6,000 acres would be drill seeded with a standard rangeland drill using depth bands (Drill NCA 6000 Mix 2) with a mix of native of grasses, bee pollinated forbs, and Wyoming big sagebrush. Drill seeding would be completed in late fall of 2012.

In the FRFO, there would be approximately 3,131 acres drill seeded (Drill FRFO Mix 3) with a standard rangeland drill using depth bands with a native and non-native grass species.

Plant species in both mixes were selected based on their ability to establish and persist in the ecological sites common within the burned area. Forb species were specifically selected to attract bees for slickspot peppergrass pollination. Wyoming big sagebrush is important for LEPA and several wildlife species. Siberian wheatgrass in the Drill FRFO Mix 3 was selected for areas where cheatgrass occurred in sufficient quantity to potentially overtake existing perennial grasses during the recovery period. Siberian wheatgrass is more vigorous than the native grass species occurring in the burned area and better able to compete with invasive annual plants.

B. How does the treatment relate to damage or changes caused by the fire?

The fire removed thousands of acres of healthy sagebrush including nearly 7,931 acres that had no record of burning and areas where mature stands had re-established in previously burned areas. The objective of the aerial seed treatment is to re-establish sagebrush cover in an area where natural recruitment is threatened due to presence of cheatgrass, medusahead, and noxious weeds. Accelerating the rate of sagebrush establishment is critical to restoration of slickspot peppergrass, crucial mule deer winter range, sage-grouse habitat, and a number of BLM sensitive sagebrush obligate wildlife species.

C. Why is the treatment/activity reasonable, within policy, and cost effective?

The fire burned and/or reduced the vigor of existing native perennial shrubs, grasses, and forbs within occupied and proposed critical slickspot peppergrass habitat. These areas are now at increased risk of invasion from invasive annual grasses and noxious weeds. Areas containing habitat for federally listed animal and plant species are the bureau's highest priority areas for reestablishment of shrubs, herbaceous grasses, and forb species. Lack of these treatments will result in loss of habitat for slickspot peppergrass habitat. The area is also classified as sage-grouse PGH and habitat was important for prey species of golden eagle, a federally protected species. Benefits to critical resources will outweigh the cost of the treatment. Treatments attempted after the first year of the fire disturbance would be much higher in cost and the success rate would be minimal at best.

S3 Aerial Seeding

A. Treatment/Activity Description

Approximately 15,864 acres would be aerially seeded (Aerial 15864 NCA Mix 4) in the NCA with native grass, forb, and shrub species. Aerial seeding would be completed in late fall of 2012 before winter snow accumulation to ensure seed to soil contact. Approximately 3,454 acres in the FRFO would be aerially seeded with Aerial FRFO 3454 Mix 5 which includes a mix of at least one bee pollinated forb and Wyoming big sagebrush.

Plant species were selected based on their ability to establish and persist in the ecological sites common within the burned area. Forb species were specifically selected to attract bees for slickspot peppergrass pollination. Wyoming big sagebrush is important for LEPA and several wildlife species. Because sagebrush provides crucial habitat for sage-grouse and wintering big game populations within the project area, the plan proposes to broadcast sagebrush seed throughout the entire area at a rate of 0.16 PLS lbs per acre. This relative low rate is proposed with the realization that sagebrush seed will be limited this year. However (depending on final sagebrush availability) this rate will be reduced further or the area strip seeded if necessary.

B. How does the treatment relate to damage or changes caused by the fire?

The fire removed thousands of acres of healthy sagebrush including nearly 8,000 that had no record of burning and areas where mature stands of sagebrush had re-established in previously burned areas. The objective of the aerial seed treatment is to re-establish sagebrush cover in an area where natural recruitment is threatened due to presence of cheatgrass, medusahead, and noxious weeds. Accelerating the rate of sagebrush establishment is critical to restoration of habitat for slickspot peppergrass and for prey species of NCA raptors. Accelerated habitat development is also needed to provide crucial mule deer winter range, sage-grouse habitat, and habitat for a number of BLM sensitive sagebrush obligate wildlife species.

C. Why is the treatment/activity reasonable, within policy, and cost effective?

The fire burned and/or reduced the vigor of existing native perennial shrubs, grasses, and forbs within occupied and proposed critical slickspot peppergrass habitat and habitat for

raptor prey species. These areas are now at increased risk of invasion from invasive annual grasses and noxious weeds. Areas containing habitat for federally listed animal and plant species are the bureau's highest priority areas for reestablishment of shrubs, herbaceous grasses, and forb species. Lack of these treatments will result in loss of habitat for slickspot peppergrass habitat. The area is also classified as sage-grouse PGH and habitat was important for prey species of golden eagle, a federally protected species. Benefits to critical resources will outweigh the cost of the treatment. Treatments attempted after the first year of the fire disturbance would be much higher in cost and the success rate would be minimal at best.

S13 Monitoring

A. Treatment/Activity Description

Monitoring would be conducted annually to evaluate the effectiveness of treatments and attainment of objectives within the burned area. Monitoring data would be collected from initiation of the proposed treatments through the year 2015 and would be implemented per the Monitoring section of this ES&BAR plan.

B. How does the treatment relate to damage or changes caused by the fire?

Treatments to be monitored are directly related to effects from the fire.

C. Why is the treatment/activity reasonable, within policy, and cost effective?

Monitoring will provide important information to guide future ES&BAR planning and increase the likelihood of success.

Issue 5 - Invasive Plants and Weeds

S5 Noxious Weeds

A. Treatment/Activity Description

Noxious weed inventory and spot herbicide treatment would occur the first year following the fire within the burned area under ES. First year inventory and treatment of noxious weed species meets the ES criteria of maintaining the habitat in the highest priority areas. Rush skeletonweed was observed during suppression of the fire and several species of noxious weeds have been documented adjacent to the burned area including Scotch thistle, diffuse knapweed, whitetop, and perennial pepperweed. These adjacent populations have potential for establishment in the burned area.

Noxious weed inventory and spot herbicide treatment would occur the first year following the fire within the burned area under ES. Noxious weeds would be treated with the BLM-approved chemicals in accordance with the Noxious and Invasive Weed Treatment EA (Boise District and Jarbidge Field Offices EA #ID-100-2005-EA-265) and the Noxious Weed EA and the Record of Decision for Vegetation Treatments Using Herbicides on Bureau of

Land Management Lands in 17 Western States, approved September 29, 2007 (Vegetation Treatment EIS). Appendix B of the Record of Decision includes a list of standard operating procedures that would be used for vegetation treatments using herbicides.

Design features for weed treatments:

Slickspot peppergrass potential habitat

- Weed treatment staff will be trained to identify slickspots and slickspot peppergrass.
- Should slickspots containing slickspot peppergrass (aka, occupied slickspots) be located within the burned area, weed treatment staff will notify the appropriate Field Office Botanist to map the population area.
- Within an EO, herbicide application will use only hand sprayers. A 10-foot no-herbicide treatment buffer will be established around occupied slickspots. Within the buffer zone, weeds will be treated using hand-pulling or cutting and bagging.

B. How does the treatment relate to damage or changes caused by the fire?

The removal of native vegetation from wildfire provides greater opportunity for invasive species to become better established and more dominant across the landscape. Removal of vegetation and the impacts from fire suppression, including use of heavy equipment to create dozer lines, increases the potential for invasion and spread of noxious weeds due to vegetation removal and soil surface disturbance.

C. Why is the treatment/activity reasonable, within policy, and cost effective?

Inventory and treatment of new and localized noxious weed populations is more cost-effective than waiting until the population has had opportunity to establish and spread. Field work would be combined with other noxious weed treatments for cost efficiency.

Issue 1 - Lands Unlikely to Recover Naturally

R4 Seedling Planting

A. Treatment/Activity Description

Rehabilitation efforts will be concentrated in and between four areas of occupied slickspot peppergrass habitat that burned. Several slickspots are present between the areas of occupied habitat. Functional slickspot peppergrass habitat is dependent on a surrounding plant community that consists of shrubs for shade and wind protection and forbs for attracting pollinators. Establishing sage-brush would also benefit wintering mule deer and other wildlife species associated with sagebrush.

The proposal is to restore the shrub structure lost in the fire by replanting approximately 1,000 Wyoming big sagebrush seedlings and 500 globemallow seedlings in early spring of

2014. Seedlings would be comprised of one to two year old rootstock seedlings to optimize establishment success under variable climatic conditions. Approximately 2,300 seedlings would be planted near existing occupied LEPA habitat. Suitable habitat exists between the occupied areas and maintenance of those areas of suitable habitat are necessary for the future expansion of the existing populations. Plantings would be done by hand using sharpshooter shovels, hoedads, or augers.

B. How does the treatment relate to damage or changes caused by the fire?

The planting of Wyoming big sagebrush seedlings would augment long-term vegetative structure needed for LEPA habitat preservation and maintenance, and globemallow seedlings would attract pollinators needed for LEPA propagation. Mature shrub cover existed within the burn perimeter prior to the fire. A mature stand of Wyoming big sagebrush would be expected within 15-20 years following shrub planting which would provide habitat for slickspot peppergrass, raptor prey species, sagebrush obligate wildlife, and big game that depend on shrubs for cover and as a food source during the critical winter months. Other seedling planting treatments from past fire rehabilitation have had mixed results, possibly due to climatic factors, while others have proven to be very effective in establishing shrubs faster than untreated areas and therefore the planted seedlings were capable of seed production sooner than if the burned area were left to re-vegetate naturally.

C. Why is the treatment/activity reasonable, within policy, and cost effective?

The cost of growing out and planting seedlings would be covered through funding from the NCA. Providing suitable habitat as quickly as possible would augment the survival of the existing populations and would encourage expansion into suitable habitat between areas of occupied habitat. The burn removed mature sagebrush within slickspot peppergrass habitat, a federally listed threatened plant species, and habitat for prey species of golden eagle, a federally protected species. Habitat for threatened and endangered species is the bureau's highest priority areas for reestablishment of healthy vegetative communities. The area also provided important winter habitat for mule deer and re-establishing shrub habitat would provide needed cover and forage. Benefits to critical resources outweigh the cost of treatment. Treatments initiated after the first year of the disturbance have lower success rate, than those implemented immediately following fire.

Issue 2 - Weed Treatments

R5 Noxious Weeds

A. Treatment/Activity Description

Second and third year inventory and treatment of noxious weed species meets the BAR criteria of maintaining the habitat in the highest priority areas. Rush skeletonweed was observed during suppression of the fire and several species of noxious weeds have been documented adjacent to the burned area including Scotch thistle, diffuse knapweed, whitetop, and perennial pepperweed. These adjacent populations have potential for establishment in the burned area.

Design features for weed treatments:

Slickspot peppergrass potential habitat

- Weed treatment staff will be trained to identify slickspots and slickspot peppergrass.
- Should slickspots containing slickspot peppergrass (aka, occupied slickspots) be located within the burned area, weed treatment staff will notify the appropriate Field Office Botanist to map the population area.
- Within an EO, herbicide application will use only hand sprayers. A 10-foot no-herbicide treatment buffer will be established around occupied slickspots. Within the buffer zone, weeds will be treated using hand-pulling or cutting and bagging.

B. How does the treatment relate to damage or changes caused by the fire?

The removal of native vegetation provides greater opportunity for invasive species to become better established and more dominant across the landscape. Removal of vegetation and impacts from fire suppression, including use of heavy equipment to create dozer lines, increases the potential for invasion and spread of noxious weeds due to vegetation removal and soil surface disturbance.

C. Why is the treatment/activity reasonable, within policy, and cost effective?

Inventory and treatment of new and localized noxious weed populations is more cost-effective than waiting until the population has had opportunity to establish and spread. Re-treatment of weeds is often necessary to eradicate newly established populations as commonly occurs the first year following a fire. Field work would be combined with other noxious weed treatments for cost efficiency.

Issue 4 - Repair/Replace Fire Damage to Minor Facilities

R7 Fence/Gate/Cattleguard

A. Treatment/Activity Description

Approximately seven miles of livestock management fences that do not need immediate attention were damaged to the point of needing either repair or replacement in the fire. Fire damaged wood corners and braces will be replaced with steel posts and structures that will provide long term protection against any future wildfire event. Damaged wire will be repaired or replaced. All fences will be constructed to BLM fence standards for wildlife.

B. How does the treatment relate to damage or changes caused by the fire?

The fire burned wood components of interior livestock management and allotment division fencing in Mtn. Home Subunit, Double Anchor, and North Cold Springs allotments. Additionally, some stretches of fence where the fire burned with higher intensity altered the

tensile strength of the wire, resulting in brittle wires that need to be replaced. These fences would need to be repaired prior to livestock turnout for proper livestock management.

C. Why is the treatment/activity reasonable, within policy, and cost effective?

The wildfire damaged fences associated with livestock management in the affected allotments. Reconstruction and repair of management fences damaged by the fire would maintain the future integrity of the existing livestock grazing system and augment vegetation recovery. Utilizing existing fences and gates is cost effective and allows the unburned portions in the allotments to be available to livestock grazing. Damaged wood stretch points and corners would be replaced with galvanized steel pipe thus increasing the longevity of the structures and resistance to future wildfire damage.

PART 4 DETAILED TREATMENT COST TABLE

PART 5 - SEED LISTS

DRILL SEED

Species	Scientific Name	% PLS	PLS Seeds / sq. ft.	PLS Seeds / ac.	Seeds / lb (bulk)	Total Seeds / Acre (Bulk)	Drill Seedings (Acre)	Lbs / Acre	Total Lbs.	Cost / Lb	Total Cost
Bluebunch Wheatgrass, Anatone	Pseudoroegneria spicata spp. spicata	76.5%	11.05	481,338	125,680	629,200	1,000.0	3.8	3,830.0	\$ 5.00	\$25,000.00
Bottlebrush Squirreltail, Toe Jam Creek	Elymus elymoides ssp. Californicus	67.5%	5.95	259,182	192,000	383,973	1,000.0	1.4	1,350.0	\$ 25.00	\$50,000.00
Sharpleaf Penstemon	Penstemon accuminatus	72.0%	1.35	58,806	420,000	81,675	1,000.0	0.1	140.0	\$ 65.00	\$13,000.00
Basalt Milkvetch	Astragalus filipes	45.0%	0.32	13,939	100,000	30,976	1,000.0	0.1	140.0	\$ 67.32	\$20,196.00
Snake River Wheatgrass, Secar	Elymus wawawaiensis	85.0%	9.81	427,324	125,680	502,734	1,000.0	3.4	3,400.0	\$ 5.00	\$20,000.00
Wyoming Big Sagebrush, Wyoming	Artemisia tridentata wyomingensis	16.0%	9.18	399,881	2,500,000	2,499,255	1,000.0	0.2	160.0	\$ 16.00	\$16,000.00
Snake River Wheatgrass, Secar	Elymus wawawaiensis	85.0%	12.26	534,046	125,680	628,289	3,100.0	4.3	13,175.0	\$ 5.00	\$77,500.00
Snake River Wheatgrass, Secar	Elymus wawawaiensis	85.0%	9.81	427,324	125,680	502,734	6,000.0	3.4	20,400.0	\$ 5.00	\$120,000.00
Bottlebrush Squirreltail, Toe Jam Creek	Elymus elymoides ssp. Californicus	67.5%	5.95	259,182	192,000	383,973	6,000.0	1.4	8,100.0	\$ 25.00	\$300,000.00
Sharpleaf Penstemon	Penstemon accuminatus	72.0%	1.35	58,806	420,000	81,675	6,000.0	0.1	840.0	\$ 67.32	\$80,784.00
Western Yarrow, Eagle	Achillea millefolium var. occidentalis	81.0%	3.13	136,343	3,411,818	168,324	6,000.0	0.0	240.0	\$ 22.50	\$6,750.00
Siberian Wheatgrass, Vavilov II	Agropyron fragile	80.8%	38.16	1,662,250	206,000	2,058,513	3,100.0	8.1	25,017.0	\$ 4.00	\$124,000.00
TOTALS:			108.32	4,718,419	7,944,538	7,951,322		26.3		\$ 312.14	\$853,230.00

AERIAL SEED

Species	Scientific Name	% PLS	PLS Seeds / sq. ft.	PLS Seeds / ac.	Seeds / lb (bulk)	Total Seeds / Acre (Bulk)	Aerial Seedings (Acre)	Lbs / Acre	Total Lbs.	Cost / Lb	Total Cost
Gooseberryleaf Globemallow	Sphaeralcea grossulariifolia	67.5%	0.34	14,810	500,500	21,941	15,864.0	0.0	475.9	\$ 40.00	\$31,728.00
Western Yarrow, Eagle	Achillea millefolium var. occidentalis	81.0%	3.13	136,343	3,411,818	168,324	15,864.0	0.0	634.6	\$ 22.50	\$17,847.00
Sandberg Bluegrass, Mountain Home	Poa secunda	72.0%	12.02	523,591	1,046,960	727,210	15,864.0	0.5	7,932.0	\$ 8.00	\$88,838.40
Wyoming Big Sagebrush, Wyoming	Artemisia tridentata wyomingensis	16.0%	9.18	399,881	2,500,000	2,499,255	15,864.0	0.2	2,538.2	\$ 16.00	\$253,824.00
Wyoming Big Sagebrush, Wyoming	Artemisia tridentata wyomingensis	16.0%	9.18	399,881	2,500,000	2,499,255	3,454.0	0.2	552.6	\$ 16.00	\$55,264.00
Gooseberryleaf Globemallow	Sphaeralcea grossulariifolia	67.5%	0.8	34,848	500,500	51,627	3,454.0	0.1	241.8	\$ 60.00	\$20,724.00
Western Yarrow, Eagle	Achillea millefolium var. occidentalis	81.0%	3.13	136,343	3,411,818	168,324	3,454.0	0.0	138.2	\$ 22.50	\$3,885.75
TOTALS:			37.78	1,645,697	13,871,596	6,135,937		1.0		\$ 185.00	\$472,111.15

SEEDLINGS

Seedling Species	Scientific Name	Acres of Seedlings planted.	# of Seedlings per Acre	Total # of Seedlings	Cost / Seedling	Total Cost
Gooseberryleaf Globemallow	Sphaeralcea grossulariifolia		5.0	100	\$ 0.00	\$ 0.00
Wyoming Big Sagebrush, Wyoming	Artemisia tridentata wyomingensis		5.0	300	\$ 0.00	\$ 0.00
TOTALS:				10.0	400	\$ 0.00

PART 6 - NATIVE/NON-NATIVE PLANT WORKSHEET

A. Proposed Native Plants in Seed Mixtures (Both ES & BAR Treatments)

1. Are the native plants proposed for seeding adapted to the ecological sites in the burned area?

Yes No Rationale:

The proposed native species are adapted to the ecological sites within the proposed seeding area. The species in the seed mixes have been utilized in similar ecological site condition within both the NCA and Four Rivers Field Office areas.

2. Is seed or seedlings of native plants available in sufficient quantity for the proposed project?

Yes No Rationale:

Plant materials have been readily available in the past but if they become limited or not cost effective, similar substitutions will be utilized. Plant materials may be limited with increased number of fires across the region. Availability and price cannot be determined for each individual plan.

3. Is the cost and/or quality of the native seed reasonable given the project size and approved field unit management and Plan objectives?

Yes No Rationale:

The native seed proposed have been increasingly utilized in recent years for stabilization, rehabilitation, and restoration. The increased demand has increased the availability and decreased price.

4. Will the native plants establish and survive given the environmental conditions and the current or future competition from other species in the seed mix or from exotic plants?

Yes No Rationale:

The native taxon proposed for seeding have exhibited the ability to establish and persist in similar ecological sites in the NCA and Four Rivers Field Office areas. However, the ability to persist under high competition from invasive annual grasses that may become a dominant component in the area could be impacted.

5. Will the existing or proposed land management practices (e.g. wildlife populations, recreation use, livestock, etc.) maintain the seeded native plants in the seed mixture when the burned area is re-opened?

Yes No Rationale:

The burned areas would be rested from livestock grazing until resource objectives listed in this ES&BAR plan are met. All treatment areas would have to meet minimum criteria (see monitoring plan) before livestock grazing could resume.

B. Proposed Non-native Plants in Seed Mixtures (Both ES & BAR Treatments)

1. Is the use of non-native plants necessary to meet objectives, e.g., consistent with applicable approved field unit management plans?

Yes No Rationale:

The proposed non-native species would compete well against invasive annuals such as cheatgrass and medusahead. Siberian wheatgrass is drought tolerant, increasing the likelihood of successful establishment.

2. Will non-native plants meet the objective(s) for which they are planted without unacceptably diminishing diversity and disrupting ecological processes (nutrient cycling, water infiltration, energy flow, etc.) in the plant community?

Yes No Rationale:

The species being proposed have been used previously across the Boise District and have not disrupted ecological processes within the native plant community.

3. Will non-native plants stay on the site they are seeded and not significantly displace or interbreed with native plants?

Yes No Rationale:

There would be no interbreeding with native plants and no significant displacement based on experience of using the selected species.

C. Proposed Seed Species - Native & Non-Natives (Both ES & BAR Treatments)

Non-native Plants	Native Plants
Siberian Wheatgrass, Vavilov II (<i>Agropyron fragile</i>)	Basalt Milkvetch (<i>Astragalus filipes</i>)
	Bluebunch Wheatgrass, Anatone (<i>Pseudoroegneria spicata</i> spp. <i>spicata</i>)
	Bottlebrush Squirreltail, Toe Jam Creek (<i>Elymus elymoides</i> ssp. <i>Californicus</i>)
	Gooseberryleaf Globemallow (<i>Sphaeralcea grossulariifolia</i>)
	Sandberg Bluegrass, Mountain Home (<i>Poa secunda</i>)
	Sharpleaf Penstemon (<i>Penstemon accuminatus</i>)
	Snake River Wheatgrass, Secar (<i>Elymus wawawaiensis</i>)
	Western Yarrow, Eagle (<i>Achillea millefolium</i> var. <i>occidentalis</i>)
	Wyoming Big Sagebrush, Wyoming (<i>Artemisia tridentata wyomingensis</i>)

PART 7 - COST-RISK ANALYSIS

A. Probability of Treatments Successfully Meeting Objectives

Action/ Spec #	Planned ES Action (LF2000ES)	Unit (acres, WMs, Number)	# Units	Total Cost	% Probability of Success
S2	Ground Seeding	Acres	11111	\$1,215,000.00	80%
S3	Aerial Seeding	Acres	19318	\$685,000.00	80%
S5	Noxious Weeds	Acres	21163	\$18,000.00	75%
S7	Fence/Gate/Cattleguard	Miles	5	\$59,000.00	100%
S12	Closures (area, OHV, livestock)	Each	21803	\$ 0.00	100%
S13	Monitoring	Acres	21163	\$138,000.00	100%
				\$2,115,000.00	

Action/ Spec #	Planned BAR Action (LF3200BR)	Unit (acres, WMs, Number)	# Units	Total Cost	% Probability of Success
R4	Seedling Planting	Acres	1500	\$ 0.00	25%
R5	Noxious Weeds	Acres	21803	\$33,000.00	75%
R7	Fence/Gate/Cattleguard	Miles	5	\$32,000.00	100%
				\$65,000.00	

B. Cost Risk Summary

1. Are the risks to natural resources and private property acceptable as a result of the fire if the following actions are taken?

Proposed Action Yes No Rationale for Answer:

The proposed actions should reduce the risks to natural resources, threatened and endangered species, sage-grouse, and crucial mule deer winter range. Treatment of the upland vegetation was designed to minimize impact to natural resources and to limit sediment. As with any treatments that are weather dependent, there is always a chance of limited success, especially with seeding treatments, but the risks to natural resources are far greater without treatment than as a result of the proposed action treatments.

No Action Yes No Rationale for Answer:

While there were a few pockets with well-established stands of invasive annuals, cheatgrass and medusahead were present throughout the burn area and heavy infestations are located just to the north. The area provides habitat for LEPA, sage-grouse, raptor prey species, and important winter range for mule deer. No action would facilitate the spread of invasive annuals and noxious weeds. It is important to treat the area within the first year of the fire to provide native plants species a greater opportunity to successfully re-establish.

Alternative(s) Yes No Rationale for Answer:

2. Is the probability of success of the proposed action, alternatives or no action acceptable given their costs?

Proposed Action Yes No Rationale for Answer:

In an area occupied by a shrub-dominated plant community prior to the wildfire, the probability of success is high when seeding occurs within the first fall/winter season. Seeded species are able to establish in the ash mound areas of burned shrubs where there is little to no competition from annual grasses. The area is in occupied LEPA, sage-grouse, and important mule deer winter habitat. Costs associated with restoring this area back to suitable habitat are reasonable and acceptable.

No Action Yes No Rationale for Answer:

The burned area and surrounding lands have high potential for expansion of noxious weeds. This potential would increase without treatment and recovery of on-site vegetation. There would be no costs associated with No Action, but no benefits would be realized, and further degradation of ecosystem components would occur.

Alternative(s) Yes No Rationale for Answer:

3. Which approach will most cost-effectively and successfully attain the objectives and therefore is recommended for implementation from a Cost/Risk Analysis standpoint?

Proposed Action
Alternative(s)
No Action

Comments:

The proposed treatments are anticipated to be cost effective, and will reduce vulnerability of the site to expansion of invasive annuals by restoring ecosystem components lost by the fire. The seeding will increase shrub cover and forb diversity helping to restore the area back to suitable habitat for sage grouse. The cost/risk is reasonable considering the benefits to the long-term health of the ecosystem and important habitat for LEPA, sage-grouse, birds of prey, mule deer, and other sagebrush obligates.

Broadcast seeding is the most cost effective method for reestablishing sagebrush on a landscape scale. Although establishment success is variable, the benefit of restoring habitat for sage-brush dependent species and the other intrinsic benefits provided by rehabilitated healthy shrub steppe communities is well worth the risk.

Since fire is a natural component within most sagebrush steppe communities, these areas will undoubtedly reburn in the future. However, a rehabilitated sagebrush steppe community with its associated discontinuous and greener fuels should result in a greater fire free interval than would result if the burn was not seeded and allowed to transition into a flammable annual grass dominated community. Additionally, a future burn (on the rehabilitated site) would be expected to be spotty with at least some of the shrubs remaining unburned.

A fire resistant forage kochia fuel break was considered to further decrease the likelihood of fire to these investments. However, the existence of slickspot peppergrass habitat within the burn precludes the use of forage kochia. Alternatively, non-sagebrush strips consisting of perennial grasses will be incorporated along major roads to reduce the fuels loading and subsequently aid in fire suppression. Additionally, the burned area is within the Paradigm Fuel Breaks project area; a project for which NEPA is currently being completed.

C. Risk of Resource Value Loss or Damage

No Action - Treatments not Implemented

Resource Value	N/A	None	Low	Med	High
Unacceptable Loss of Topsoil				X	
Weed Invasion					X
Unacceptable Loss of Vegetation Diversity					X
Unacceptable Loss of Vegetation Structure					X
Unacceptable Disruption of Ecological Processes					X
Off-site Sediment Damage to Private Property				X	
Off-site Threats to Human Life			X		
Other-loss of Access Road Due to Plugged Culverts				X	

Proposed Action - Treatments Successfully Implemented

Resource Value	N/A	None	Low	Med	High
Unacceptable Loss of Topsoil			X		
Weed Invasion			X		
Unacceptable Loss of Vegetation Diversity			X		
Unacceptable Loss of Vegetation Structure			X		
Unacceptable Disruption of Ecological Processes			X		
Off-site Sediment Damage to Private Property			X		
Off-site Threats to Human Life		X			
Other-loss of Access Road Due to Plugged Culverts		X			

PART 8 - MONITORING PLAN

S2 - Ground Seeding

Identify the objective of the treatment:

Objective of this treatment is to establish an environment conducive to the preservation and maintenance of slickspots, as well as critical forage and cover for sage-grouse, mule deer, and elk while outcompeting noxious and/or invasive species found in the area.

Describe how implementation will be monitored:

Implementation monitoring includes ensuring that the seed is planted at the proper time, in the correct area and using the correct methods.

Describe how effectiveness will be monitored, how it will be measured, and within what time period:

) Effectiveness monitoring includes a combination of the following methods/objectives.

1. Conduct Drill Row Basal Gap Monitoring of drill seeded species to determine seedling establishment success. Success would be attained when >50% of the transect gaps are 100cm.
2. Conduct Line-Point Intercept Monitoring to determine species abundance/composition. A 20% increase in desirable perennial vegetation foliar cover and a 20% decrease in invasive annual grass foliar cover as compared to a burned, untreated control area. This will only be conducted in year 2-3.
3. Conduct Basal Intercept Monitoring: A 30% decrease in basal gaps >50cm and as compared to a burned, untreated area.
- 4) Livestock Objectives
 1. Drill seeding effectiveness objectives have been met, or the treatment has been determined to be a failure and objectives are unlikely to be met.
 2. Greater than 95% of canopy gaps are 25cm.
 3. Drill seeded species must have developed root systems that are extensive enough to provide soil stabilization and prevent uprooting when grazed, especially when soils are moist.
 4. Greater than 80% of drill seeded species are producing seed.

If the evidence indicates the Monitoring Objectives are not being met, then the livestock closure period may be extended.

S3 - Aerial Seeding

Identify the objective of the treatment:

The objective is to establish sagebrush, increase forb diversity, and establish early germinating cool season grasses that will reduce the expansion of invasive grasses and

weeds on the site as well as prevent erosion to susceptible areas. The treatment will be considered successful when aerially seeded sagebrush attain a density of 1 plant per 10m² in suitable areas.

Describe how implementation will be monitored:

Aerial seeding implementation treatment will be monitored during contract administration to ensure contract specifications for the seeding treatment are met. A Contract Officer Representative will be at the landing site with the contractor, and a Project Inspector will be on the on-site to measure seed distribution.

Describe how effectiveness will be monitored, how it will be measured, and within what time period:

There are pockets of suitable planting sites within the fire perimeter. They are not always easily to define post fire and would be impractical to delineate. Seeding of the entire area will ensure that all suitable sites are seeded. Monitoring for shrub seeding will be conducted using photo plots and landscape monitoring shrub hoop method. Long transect lines will be walked and when a suitable area is encountered a 10 m² sized plot (1.73 meter radius circle) will be used when counting and recording shrub density. The monitoring of forb establishment is difficult, because of irregularities in plant growth and phenology, being dependent on spring weather. The timing of the site visit needs to coincide with the seasonal appearance of perennial forbs on site. The treatment will be considered successful when aerially seeded sagebrush attain a density of 1/10m² in suitable areas.

S5 - Noxious Weeds

Identify the objective of the treatment:

The objective of this treatment is to contain or reduce the expansion of noxious weeds following the fire. During the the first year the entire burned area will be inventoried and treated accordingly, during the second and third year treatments inventory and treatments will continue on all existing and new infestations of noxious weeds. If treatments initiated by this project are needed beyond the third year for effective noxious weed control coordination with the noxious weed program will coore to ensure that the investment is not lost. Because weeds are not uniformly distributed across the area a definable objective cannot be determined until site visits and inventories are completed during the first year. New infestations of noxious weeds previously unknown in the area could occur as a result of disturbances associated with the wildfire.

Describe how implementation will be monitored:

Locations of noxious weeds and size of infestations will be recorded by GPS and GIS technology. Treatments will be documented with a Pesticide Application Record for location, method of treatment, and time of treatment.

Describe how effectiveness will be monitored, how it will be measured, and within what time period:

Size and location of each noxious weed population will be compared to existing data and treatments between years 1, 2 and 3. Noxious weed populations are expected to at least remain the same or be reduced but not expand with treatments. Noxious weed populations remaining in the area after the third year will become the responsibility of the Boise District Noxious weed program. If further treatments are needed they will be completed utilizing other funding but will assist in protecting the investment from the ESR program.

S7 - Fence/Gate/Cattleguard

Identify the objective of the treatment:

To protect the ESR investment from livestock use until plan objectives have been met and resumption of grazing will not impede recovery. Protective fence will be necessary to ensure the area will be rested.

Describe how implementation will be monitored:

Implementation will be monitored through contract administration to ensure the fence is constructed to BLM specifications. Any changes from project design will be noted in "as built" drawings and reflected in the monitoring report.

Describe how effectiveness will be monitored, how it will be measured, and within what time period:

Fence construction will be documented in "as built" drawings and reflected in monitoring reports. Fencing will be considered effective when it prevents livestock from gaining access into project area. Construction will be completed within the first year of the fire.

S12 - Closures (area, OHV, livestock)

Identify the objective of the treatment:

To close the area during post-fire recovery and seeding establishment. Closures will be applied in this area to achieve the overall objective. Livestock closure to rest treatment until objectives are met. Removal of livestock is critical to the recovery of proposed seeding areas, existing seedings, and within areas of existing native grasses and forbs. This is consistent with LUP, RMP, and NFRP.

Describe how implementation will be monitored:

Resumption of livestock grazing would ultimately depend on monitoring and meeting of treatment objectives. The monitoring for grazing availability and recommendations for opening the burned area to livestock use would be the responsibility of an interdisciplinary team. Implementation is monitored through rangeland management administration. A full

force and effect decision would be issued to close the burned area to livestock grazing.

Describe how effectiveness will be monitored, how it will be measured, and within what time period:

S13 - Monitoring

Identify the objective of the treatment:

See individual objectives above.

Describe how implementation will be monitored:

Describe how effectiveness will be monitored, how it will be measured, and within what time period:

R4 - Seedling Planting

Identify the objective of the treatment:

Objective is to restore shrub structure lost in the fire to ensure long-term vegetative structure and attract pollinators needed for LEPA habitat preservation and maintenance and LEPA propagation.

Describe how implementation will be monitored:

Implementation will be conducted by staff and volunteer groups. Field Office staff will be on site to ensure quality planting.

Describe how effectiveness will be monitored, how it will be measured, and within what time period:

Effectiveness will be monitored in April-June of the following spring. Monitoring sites will be revisited and the number of plants alive vs. dead will be counted. Conclusions for mortality will be finalized to explore ways of improving seedling plantings. Seedling establishment will be considered successful when 40% of the planted seedlings persist into the third growing season.

R5 - Noxious Weeds

Identify the objective of the treatment:

The objective of this treatment is to contain or reduce the expansion of noxious weeds following the fire. During the the first year the entire burned area will be inventoried and treated accordingly, during the second and third year treatments inventory and treatments will continue on all existing and new infestations of noxious weeds. If treatments initiated by this project are needed beyond the third year for effective noxious weed control

coordination with the noxious weed program will coore to ensure that the investment is not lost. Because weeds are not uniformly distributed across the area a definable objective cannot be determined until site visits and inventories are completed during the first year. New infestations of noxious weeds previously unknown in the area could occur as a result of disturbances associated with the wildfire.

Describe how implementation will be monitored:

Locations of noxious weeds and size of infestations will be recorded by GPS and GIS technology. Treatments will be documented with a Pesticide Application Record for location, method of treatment, and time of treatment.

Describe how effectiveness will be monitored, how it will be measured, and within what time period:

Size and location of each noxious weed population will be compared to existing data and tretments between years 1, 2 and 3. Noxious weed populations are expected to at least remain the same or be reduced but not expand with treatments. Noxious weed populations remaining in the area after the third year will become the responsibility of the Boise District Noxious weed program. If further treatments are needed they will be completed utilizing other funding but will assist in protecting the investment from the ESR program.

R7 - Fence/Gate/Cattleguard

Identify the objective of the treatment:

To protect the ESR investment from livestock use until plan objectives have been met and resumption of grazing will not impied recovery. Protective fence will be necessary to ensure the area will be rested.

Describe how implementation will be monitored:

Implementation will be monitored through contract administration to ensure the fence is constructed to BLM specifications. Any changes from project design wil be noted in "as built" drawings and reflected in the monitoring report.

Describe how effectiveness will be monitored, how it will be measured, and within what time period:

Fence construction will be documented in "as built" drawings and reflected in monitoring reports. Fencing will be considered effective when it prevents livestock from gaining access into project area. Construction will be completed within the first year of the fire.

PART 9 - MAPS

1. - A-Plan Map Allotments, Sage-grouse and LEPA Habitat
2. - A-Plan Map R4 Seedling Planting
3. - A-Plan Map S2 Ground Seeding
4. - A-Plan Map S3 Broadcast Seeding
5. - A-Plan Map S5_R5 Noxious Weeds
6. - A-Plan Map S7_R7 New Protective and Repair Fence
7. Closures - A-Plan Map S12_R12 Closures
8. - G1MC_Benwalk_FirePerimeter

PART 10 – REVIEW, APPROVALS, and PREPARERS

TEAM MEMBERS

Position	Team Member (Agency/Office)	Initial and Date
Team Leader	Mike McGee (BLM Fuels)	
Operations	Cindy Fritz (BLM Operations)	
NEPA Compliance & Planning	Seth Flannigan (BLM NEPA)	
Botanist	Mark Steiger (BLM Four Rivers)	
Restoration Ecologist	Anne Halford (BLM NCA)	
Rangeland Mgt. Specialist	Mike Barnum (BLM Four Rivers/NCA)	
Wildlife Biologist	Mike McGee (BLM Fuels)	
GIS Specialist	Alex Webb (BLM Operations)	
Technical Specialist: Monitoring	Rob Bennett (BLM Operations)	
Technical Specialist: Slickspot Peppergrass	Amy Stillman (BLM Four Rivers)	

PLAN APPROVAL

/s/ Patricia Roller 7/26/12
 FIELD OFFICE MANAGER, Birds of Prey NCA DATE

/s/Terry A. Humphrey 7/26/12
 FIELD OFFICE MANAGER, Four Rivers Field Office DATE

FUNDING APPROVAL

The funding of ES treatments is approved through the appropriate administrative approval level in coordination with the National Office Budget Shop. As funding is available, ES funding requested within a plan that totals below \$100,000 may be approved by the State Director, while ES funding of \$100,000 and above must be approved by the WO. If the ES funding cap is reached, all ES funding will be approved through the National Office in coordination with State ES&BAR Coordinators to determine highest priority projects. Funding of all BAR treatments is accomplished through a scoring process and is dependent on accurate entries into NFPORS. All funding is approved and allocated on a year-by-year basis.