

U.S. Department of the Interior  
Bureau of Land Management  
Carson City District Office

**CATEGORICAL EXCLUSION  
ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW AND DECISION**

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**Project Lead: Coreen Francis**

**Field Office: Sierra Front**

**Lead Office: Sierra Front**

**Case File/Project Number:**

**Applicable Categorical Exclusion** (cite section): H-1790-1 – Appendix 4, Section C. – Forestry

2. Sale and removal of individual trees or small groups of trees which are dead, diseased, injured, or which constitute a safety hazard, and where access for the removal requires no more than maintenance to existing roads.

4. Pre-commercial thinning and brush control using small mechanical devices.

7. Harvesting live trees not to exceed 70 acres, requiring no more than 0.5 mile of temporary road construction. Such activities:

- a. Shall not include even-aged regeneration harvests or vegetation type conversions.
- b. May include incidental removal of trees for landings, skid trails, and road clearing.
- c. May include temporary roads which are defined as roads authorized by contract, permit, lease, other written authorization, or emergency operation not intended to be part of the BLM transportation system and not necessary for long-term resource management. Temporary roads shall be designed to standards appropriate for the intended uses, considering safety, cost of transportation, and impacts on land and resources; and
- d. Shall require the treatment of temporary roads constructed or used so as to permit the reestablishment by artificial or natural means, or vegetative cover on the roadway and areas where the vegetative cover was disturbed by the construction or use of the road, as necessary to minimize erosion from the disturbed area.

Such treatment shall be designed to reestablish vegetative cover as soon as practicable, but at least within 10 years after the termination of the contract.

Examples include, but are not limited to:

- a. Removing individual trees for sawlogs, specialty products, or fuelwood.
- b. Commercial thinning of overstocked stands to achieve the desired stocking level to increase health and vigor.

**NEPA Number: DOI-BLM-NV-C020-2012-0058-CX**

**Project Name: Sunrise Pass Roadside Thinning and Public Firewood Area**

**Project Description:**

This project involves selectively thinning pinyon and juniper trees along the Sunrise Pass road, limbing and topping the cut trees, scattering the slash, and allowing the public to cut firewood out of the trunks. The work would be done in the fall of 2012 and may continue into 2013 depending upon the availability of the crew that will be implementing the project.

The first zone of treatment will be up to 75 acres of green tree thinning in the first 50 foot zone on either side of the road. The second zone of treatment (up to 75 acres) will involve the removal of dead, diseased and dying trees from the area between the green tree thinning zone and up to 100 feet from the road. In the green tree thinning zone there will be between 30 and 50% of the existing crown area retained in order to meet stand diversity and health objectives (see prescription). In the second zone (50 to 100 feet from the road), trees that are dead, dying (less than 30% live crown), or diseased (mistletoe, blister rust, etc.) would be cut. A 10 person crew with chainsaws will be selecting individual trees based on the attached prescription. Stump height will not exceed 6 inches. No live limbs will be left on the stump of cut trees. Material from cut trees will be treated so that it lays no higher than 24 inches above the ground.

Limbs and tops from the trees would be lopped and scattered on site and/or chipped depending upon the amount of the slash generated. The treatment area would become a designated firewood cutting area for the public. Specific permits would be issued for the area that would contain a stipulation that prohibits off road travel. The permits would have a limited time period (e.g. October 1<sup>st</sup> – November 30<sup>th</sup>) so that compliance checks can be done by BLM personnel during the activity.

The project area is not in priority habitat for the bi-state sage-grouse.

**Applicant Name:** N/A

**Project Location (include Township/Range, County):** T14N, R22E, Sec 1-5 & 8-17

**BLM Acres for the Project Area:** 140-300

**Land Use Plan Conformance (cite reference/page number):** FOR-1 Desired Outcomes #3,

**Name of Plan:** NV – Carson City RMP.

**Screening of Extraordinary Circumstances:** The following extraordinary circumstances apply to individual actions within categorical exclusions (43 CFR 46.215). The BLM has considered the following criteria:

<i>If any question is answered 'yes' an EA or EIS must be prepared.</i>	<b>YES</b>	<b>NO</b>
1. Would the Proposed Action have significant impacts on public health or safety? (project lead/P&EC)		<b>X</b>
2. Would the Proposed Action have significant impacts on such natural resources and unique geographic characteristics as historic or cultural resources; park, recreation or refuge lands; wilderness areas; wild or scenic rivers; national natural landmarks; sole or principal drinking water aquifers; prime farmlands; wetlands (EO 11990); floodplains (EO 11988); national monuments; migratory birds (EO 13186); and other ecologically significant or critical areas? (wildlife biologist, hydrologist, outdoor recreation planner, archeologist)		<b>X</b>
3. Would the Proposed Action have highly controversial environmental effects or involve unresolved conflicts concerning alternative uses of available resources [NEPA 102(2)(E)]? (project lead/P&EC)		<b>X</b>
4. Would the Proposed Action have highly uncertain and potentially significant environmental effects or involve unique or unknown environmental risks? (project lead/P&EC)		<b>X</b>
5. Would the Proposed Action establish a precedent for future action or represent a decision in principle about future actions with potentially significant environmental effects? (project lead/P&EC)		<b>X</b>
6. Would the Proposed Action have a direct relationship to other actions with individually insignificant but cumulatively significant environmental effects? (project lead/P&EC)		<b>X</b>
7. Would the Proposed Action have significant impacts on properties listed, or eligible for listing, on the NRHP as determined by the bureau or office? (archeologist)		<b>X</b>
8. Would the Proposed Action have significant impacts on species listed, or proposed to be listed, on the list of Endangered or Threatened Species, or have significant impacts on designated Critical Habitat for these species? (wildlife biologist, botanist)		<b>X</b>
9. Would the Proposed Action violate federal law, or a State, local or tribal law or requirement imposed for the protection of the environment? (project lead/P&EC)		<b>X</b>
10. Would the Proposed Action have a disproportionately high and adverse effect on low income or minority populations (EA 12898)? (project lead/P&EC)		<b>X</b>
11. Would the Proposed Action limit access to and ceremonial use of Indian sacred sites on federal lands by Indian religious practitioners or significantly adversely affect the physical integrity of such sacred sites (EO 13007)? (archeologist)		<b>X</b>
12. Would the Proposed Action contribute to the introduction, continued existence, or spread of noxious weeds or non-native species known to occur in the area or actions that may promote the introduction, growth, or expansion of the range of such species (Federal Noxious Weed Control Act and EO 13112)? (botanist)		<b>X</b>

**SPECIALISTS' REVIEW:** During ID Team consideration of the above Proposed Action and extraordinary circumstances, the following specialists reviewed this CX:

- Realty Specialist:** Erik Pignata \_\_\_ or Perry Wickham PW
- Outdoor Recreation Planner:** Arthur Callan AC
- Hydrologist:** Niki Cutler nc
- Archaeologist:** Jim Carter JC or Rachel Crews \_\_\_
- Wildlife Biologist:** Pilar Ziegler PZ
- Botanist:** Dean Tonenna DT
- Planning & Environmental Coordinator:** Brian Buttazoni BBD
- Range Management Specialist:** Katrina Leavitt KL or Ryan Leary \_\_\_
- Wild Horse and Burro Specialist:** John Axtell JA
- Geologist:** Dan Erbes DEH for Dan
- Forester:** Coreen Francis CF

**DECISION:** Based upon the review of this Proposed Action, I have determined that the above-described project is a categorical exclusion, in conformance with the LUP, and does not require an EA or EIS. It is my Decision to implement the Sunrise Pass Public Firewood Area project.

Approved by:



Leon Thomas  
Field Manager  
Sierra Front Field Office

10-17-2012  
(date)

## **APPEAL PROCEDURES**

This decision may be appealed to the Interior Board of Land Appeals, Office of the Secretary, in accordance with 43 CFR Part 4. If you appeal, your appeal **must also** be filed with the Bureau of Land Management at the following address:

Leon Thomas, Sierra Front Field Manager  
BLM, Carson City District Office  
5665 Morgan Mill Road  
Carson City, NV 89701

Your appeal must be filed within thirty (30) days from receipt or issuance of this decision. The appellant has the burden of showing that the decision appealed from is in error.

If you wish to file a petition pursuant to regulation 43 CFR 4.21 (58 FR 4942, January 19, 1993) for a stay (suspension) of the decision during the time that your appeal is being reviewed by the Board, the petition for stay must accompany your notice of appeal. Copies of the notice of appeal and petition for a stay must also be submitted to:

Board of Land Appeals  
Dockets Attorney  
801 N. Quincy Street, Suite 300  
Arlington, VA 22203

A copy must also be sent to the appropriate office of the Solicitor at the same time the original documents are filed with the above office.

U.S. Department of the Interior  
Office of the Regional Solicitor  
Pacific Southwest Region  
2800 Cottage Way, Room E-1712  
Sacramento, CA 95825

If you request a stay, you have the burden of proof to demonstrate that a stay should be granted. A petition for a stay is required to show sufficient justification based on the following standards:

1. The relative harm to the parties if the stay is granted or denied.
2. The likelihood of the appellants success on the merits.
3. The likelihood of immediate and irreparable harm if the stay is not granted.
4. Whether the public interest favors granting the stay.

The Office of Hearings and Appeals regulations do not provide for electronic filing of appeals, electronically filed appeals will therefore not be accepted.

## Variable Density Pinyon-Juniper Thinning Prescription

**Goal:** retain a diversity of species and size classes of the healthiest pinyon and juniper trees in the stand.

To achieve this goal, a variable density approach to thinning is needed. By spacing trees according to their size class, the stand will appear more natural than if only the largest trees are selected. The majority of the trees left on site will be the healthiest large trees because of the preference guidelines but if there is a small healthy tree growing next to a large tree that has insect, disease or other problems then the small tree will be the leave tree selected. The following spacing guidelines are provided in order to achieve a relative stand density of 35%:

Diameter Root Collar (inches)	Trees Per Acre	Bole Spacing Between Trees of the Same Size (feet)	Clearing Radius (from dripline to dripline)
<4.0	537	9	6
4.1 – 8.0	302	12	7
8.1 – 12.0	145	17	9
12.1 – 16.0	85	23	11
16.1 - 20.0	57	28	14
20.1 – 24.0	41	33	17
>24.0	31	37	21

When selecting between two different size classes the spacing will be a hybrid between the spacing guidelines. For example, a 4.1-8.0 inch tree (spacing of 12 feet) and a 20.1-24.0 inch tree (spacing of 33) would have a spacing of 21 feet between the two ( $33-12=21$  feet). This creates a variable density effect and is very important in retaining younger trees for future stand development.

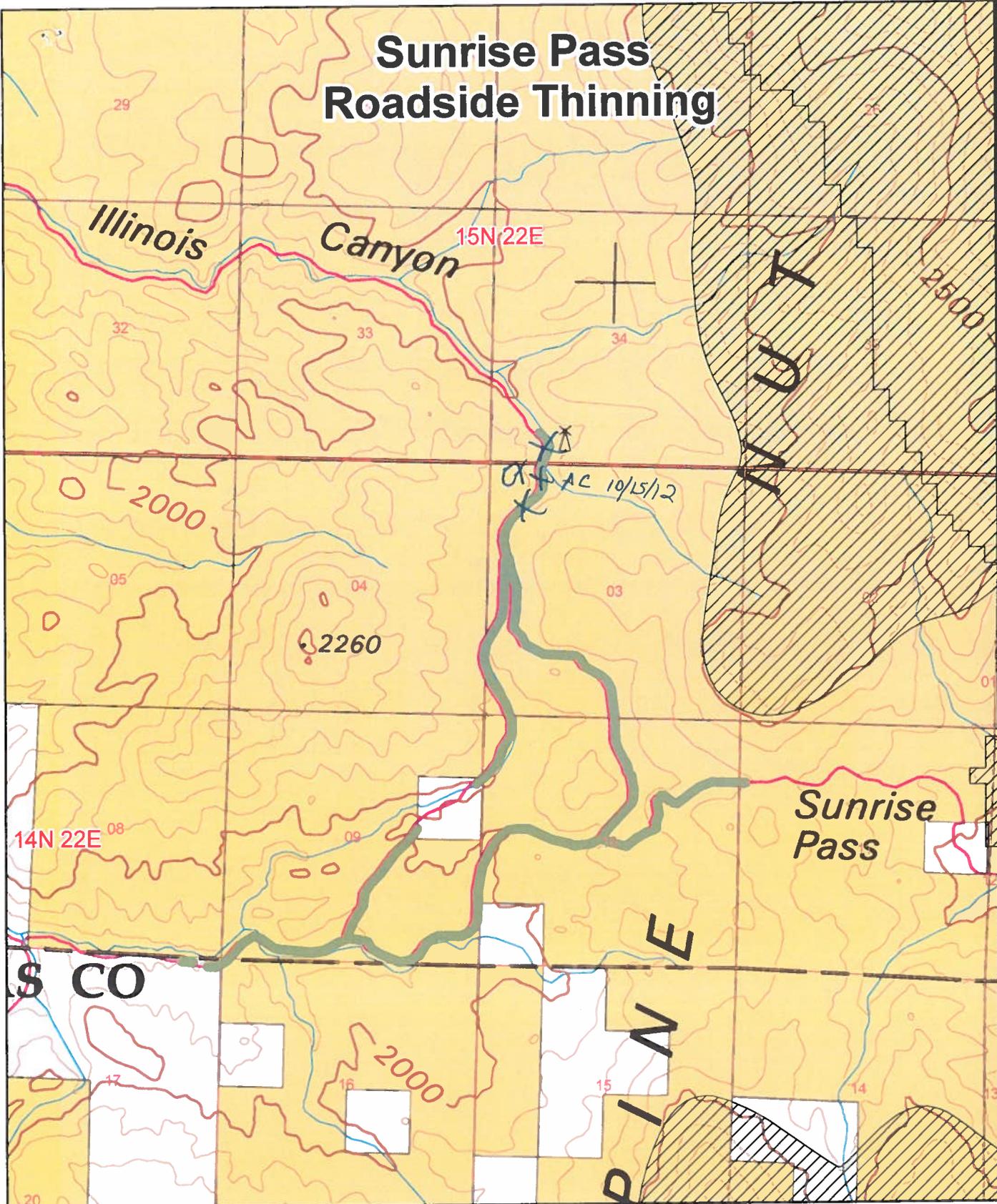
Selection of leave trees should follow the following guidelines in order of importance:

- Retain pinyon species over juniper species: if there are additional tree species found these are the preferred species over pinyon in order to retain stand diversity
- Retain trees with old-growth characteristics:
  - Large with gnarled branches
  - Crown is irregular shaped with dead branches often interspersed
  - Juniper bark is thick and fibrous and pinyon bark is thick and plate like
- Retain pinyon trees that exhibit a healthy pine cone crop
- Retain trees with a good form (i.e. straight bole with little deformity)
- Retain trees with wildlife value (e.g. evidence of nests or cavities, large with gnarled branches for future nest structures)

Target trees for removal that have the following characteristics:

- Trees with mistletoe, especially those with a dwarf mistletoe rating (DMR) of 3 or more
  - For this six class system, the live crown of the tree is visually divided into thirds and each third rated as: 0 = no visible infection, 1 = light infection (less than half of the branches in the third infected), or 2 = severe infection (more than half of the branches in the third infected). The three ratings are then added to obtain a tree rating ranging from 0 (healthy trees) to 6 (severely infected trees)
- Trees with evidence of scale insects, which is indicated by discoloration and death of needles
  - Remove trees with at least one third of their live crown that have no needles
- Remove trees that have visible signs of distress that affects more than one third of the live crown (i.e. dead top, low crown vigor, individual branch death, etc.)

# Sunrise Pass Roadside Thinning

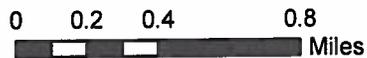


**Project Area**

- Sunrise Pass Roadside Thinning
- Bi-State Priority Habitat

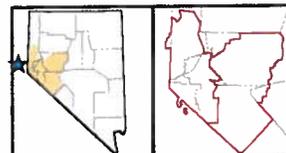
**Land Status**

- Other
- BLM
- Forest Service
- Private



Mount Como &  
Mineral Peak  
24k Quads

Carson City District    Project Area



United States Department of the Interior  
Bureau of Land Management  
Carson City District Office  
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Carson City, NV 89701  
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Map Produced by:  
B. Buttazoni on  
September 11, 2012

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