



Bureau of Land Management

Boise District Office
Four Rivers Field Office
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Determination of Land Use Plan Conformance and NEPA Adequacy (DNA)
U.S. Department of the Interior - Bureau of Land Management

A. BLM Office: Four Rivers Field Office and Snake River Birds of Prey NCA

NEPA Log Number: DOI-BLM-ID-B010-2013-0002-DNA

Lease/Serial Case File No.:

Proposed Action Title/Type: Springs Fire Emergency Stabilization and Burned Area Rehabilitation (ES&BAR) Plan

Location/Legal of Proposed Action: The Springs Fire was ignited near Skinny Dipper Hot Springs just about 4 miles northwest of Banks, Idaho on August 5th, 2012. The fire is entirely within Township 9N, Range 3E and burned a total of 6,145 acres within multiple jurisdictions. The following table summarizes the area (by jurisdiction) burned within the fire perimeter:

Jurisdiction	Area Burned (Acres)
Other	28
State	2,153
USFS	913
Private	1,338
Bureau of Reclamation	522
Bureau of Land Management	1,191
Total	6,145

Applicant (if any):

Description of the Proposed Action and any applicable mitigation measures:

1. S14 Other Treatments

Warning signs would be installed along the two highways and at Skinny Dipper Hot Springs. The signs would warn the public of dangers that have changed as a result of the fire. They would contain language specifying items to be aware of when entering a burn

area such as falling trees and limbs, rolling rocks, flooding and debris flows. These signs would be located at the following sites:

- a. On the trail to Skinny Dipper Hot Springs installed within 50 feet of the lower pool and visible to the trail users and the hot springs visitors.
- b. South-bound traffic on Highway 55 at the location where BLM lands within the fire perimeter meet the highway above Banks, ID.
- c. West-bound traffic on Banks-Lowman Highway at the location where BOR lands within the fire perimeter meet the highway coming from Garden Valley, ID.

2. S7/R7 Fence/Gate/Cattleguard

- a. S7 - Repair about 1 mile of allotment/pasture boundary fence damaged or destroyed by the fire. Damaged wood corners and braces would be replaced with galvanized steel posts. Damaged wire would also be repaired. Construct 3 miles of temporary fence to aid the enforcement of the livestock closure. The management fences would be constructed to BLM fence standards for wildlife. All length of temporary fence would be 3 strand wire, 22' T-post spacing, smooth bottom with spacing 18" bottom, 26" middle, 38" top wire. Construction of fence would include use of white-top T-posts.
- b. R7 - Two miles of fence in the Galdunis and Cow Camp pastures would be repaired in the Jerusalem Allotment to facilitate grazing after ES& BAR recovery objectives have been met for the livestock closure. The fence would replace burned and functioning fence for successful livestock grazing operations. Damaged wood corners and braces would be replaced with galvanized steel posts. Damaged wire would also be repaired. The management fences would be constructed to BLM fence standards for wildlife.

3. S12 Closures (livestock, area)

a. Livestock

The Springs Fire burned area would be rested from livestock grazing until monitoring shows that ES&BAR objectives have been met. Livestock closure would be achieved with a grazing decision to temporarily close the burned portion of Galdunis pasture of the Jerusalem Allotment and the burned portion of the Packer John Allotment. Burned portions would be closed through fencing (Jerusalem Allotment) or by moving trailing operations away from the burned area (Packer John Allotment). Discussions with IDL and USFS have identified that the permittee would move sheep through Smith's Ferry. USFS is working to approve trailing during burned area closure period.

b. Skinny Dipper Hot Spring

There is an increased danger to the public due to fire damage, especially the removal of stabilizing vegetation upstream from the hot springs. The Skinny Dipper Hot Springs must be temporarily closed to recreation use during the next period of high intensity rainfall (February through May 2013). Closure would protect visitors during the rainfall season that is predicted to result in the most likely period of hazards such

as rockfall, flooding, or debris flows. Recovery of vegetation condition would mitigate the risk to pre-fire levels.

Patrols by BLM Law Enforcement Rangers and non-enforcement staff may be conducted to monitor and enforce closures. Law enforcement services could also be contracted to local law enforcement agencies.

A Federal Register Notice would be published to initiate the closure, and signing would be completed as needed and at the start of the closure. . Three signs would be needed to describe the closure boundary at the hot springs site. The first sign would be at the junction of the user-developed trail and the Banks-Lowman Highway identifying that the pool area of the hot springs site would be closed from February 1 through May 31 due to the fire and increased risk to flooding, rockfall, and debris flows. The second and third signs would be placed at the lower and upper pools with wording that identifies the reason for the closure (similar to sign #1) and describing the boundary for the closure to be within 50 feet of the drainage bottom or flow of the hot springs (the expected path of flooding, rockfall, or debris flows during high intensity precipitation events).

4. S5/R5 Noxious Weeds

Leafy spurge, Canada thistle, field bindweed, rush skeletonweed, and tree-of-heaven are known to occur within and adjacent to the burned area boundary. These and other noxious weeds have high 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 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. Rush skeletonweed would not be treated along the highways due to its persistence and dominance in this area.

5. S13/R13 Monitoring

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 the ES&BAR plan.

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

LUP/Document¹	Sections/Pages	Date Approved
Cascade Resource Management Plan (CRMP)	Fire Management and Resource Management Guidelines	July 1, 1988

¹List applicable LUPs (e.g., Resource Management Plans, Management Framework Plans, or applicable amendments) and activity, project, management, water quality restoration, or program plans.

The proposed action would be in conformance with the LUP that provides management direction for the burned area:

All ES & BAR Treatments Planned

Public lands and resources affected by wildfires would be rehabilitated. The multiple use objectives identified in this land use plan would be evaluated for potential accomplishment through fire rehabilitation and greens tripping efforts. Fire rehabilitation and greenstripping efforts would incorporate, to the extent practicable, provisions to help accomplish those objectives as conditions allow. The following would be applied:

- All grazing licenses issued that include areas recently burned and/or seeded will include a statement concerning the amount of rest needed in the seedings or burn area. Normally two years of rest will be necessary to enable recovery of these areas.

C. Identify applicable NEPA documents and other related documents that cover the Proposed Action. List by name and date other documentation relevant to the proposed action (e.g., biological assessment, biological opinion, watershed assessment, allotment evaluation, and monitoring report).

NEPA/Other Related Documents	Sections/Pages	Date Approved
Normal Fire Emergency Stabilization and Rehabilitation Plan Boise District Office and Jarbidge Field Office Environmental Assessment (EA)	All	May 12, 2005
Biological Assessment for the Normal Year Fire Rehabilitation Plan as amended and USFWS letter of concurrence	All	July 13, 2006 Sept. 13, 2006
Noxious and Invasive Weed Treatment EA – Boise District	All	Feb 6, 2007
Vegetation Treatments Using Herbicides on BLM Lands in 17 Western States Programmatic Environmental Impact Statement (PEIS) and the Vegetation Treatments on BLM Lands in 17 Western States Programmatic Environmental Report.	All	June, 2007
Noxious and Invasive Weed Treatment Program Biological Assessment and Addendum for Boise District and Jarbidge Field Office of the Twin Falls District – Ada, Adams, Boise, Canyon, Elmore, Gem, Owyhee, Payette, Twin Falls, Valley, and Washington Counties, Idaho	All	August 27, 2009

The treatments outlined in the 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) and the Noxious and Invasive Weed Treatment EA (#ID100-2005-EA-265) for the Boise District.

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.

D. NEPA Adequacy Criteria

- 1. Is the new proposed action a feature of, or essentially similar to, an alternative analyzed in the existing NEPA document(s)? Is the project within the same analysis area, or if the project location is different, are the geographic and resource conditions sufficiently similar to those analyzed in the existing NEPA document(s)? If there are differences, can you explain why they are not substantial?**

Documentation of answer and explanation:

Yes. The proposed treatment actions described in this plan are similar to those analyzed in the Boise District NFRP EA (EA pages 10-30). Weed treatments would occur as described in the NFRP EA (pages 15-16, 20-21) and the Biological Assessment (BA) (pages 11-13, 20). The purpose of the ES&BAR plan is to: 1) provide for recovery of surviving desirable perennial pre-fire plant species, 2) reestablish a healthy viable plant community comprised of perennial shrubs, forbs, and grasses, to support and maintain wildlife species, 3) identify noxious weed infestations and initiate actions to prevent their spread, and 4) provide for monitoring objectives to be used in assessing the effectiveness of treatment actions implemented under the proposed ES&BAR plan.

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

Documentation of answer and explanation:

Yes. The range of alternatives analyzed in the existing NFRP EA document is appropriate. The proposed treatment actions presented in the Springs Fire ES&BAR plan are a subset of possible treatments identified in the NFRP. The treatment methods were selected based on site visits by an interdisciplinary team that took into account a variety of resource concerns including, but not limited to, pre-burn vegetative conditions, intensity and severity of burn, potential for erosion, past experience with ES&BAR treatments under similar conditions, and potential for the establishment and spread of noxious weeds.

3. Is the existing analysis adequate and are the conclusions adequate in light of any new information or circumstances (e.g., riparian proper functioning condition reports; rangeland health standards assessments; inventory and monitoring data; most recent USFWS lists of threatened, endangered, proposed, and candidate species; most recent BLM lists of sensitive species)? Can you reasonably conclude that all new information and all new circumstances would not substantially change the analysis of the new proposed action?

Yes. The rapid assessment (summarized below) did not identify risks to any threatened, endangered, proposed, or candidate species. Although bull trout do exist in the South Fork Payette River, the critical habitat is identified upstream from the burned area. It was determined that the burn severity was mostly low to moderate and that the vegetative recovery was expected to be strong. Therefore, threats to other species were not substantial.

Field surveys were planned and completed as a rapid assessment to evaluate the potential risk to valuable resources. Samples were collected in a qualitative manner, and numbers are not statistically valid. Methods included aerial reconnaissance from a helicopter on August 17, 2012. This aerial mapping of apparent fire intensity was then used to identify areas for field data collection. Field data collection was completed on August 17th, 18th, 20th, and 22nd. This field reconnaissance was mostly observational but included an evaluation of effective ground cover, changes to soil structure, and hydrophobicity.

The field data indicated that the majority of the affected acres received a low to moderate severity burn. Many downed trees were scorched, but intact, on the soil surface. Fine roots and some forest litter remained. The only contiguous high burn severity was of minor extent (< 100 acres) on BLM/BOR lands. The assessment of potential loss of soil productivity due to hillslope erosion and potential mass movement was focused on several face drainages to the South Fork Payette River because the rest of the BLM, BOR, and USFS lands burned at a low to moderate severity.

Viable grass and shrub root crowns should provide for natural re-vegetation of the low to moderate severity sites within 1-4 years. Soils with a high burn severity classification were limited to a few scattered relatively small areas and have significantly less viable shrub root crowns. The natural re-vegetation on these sites is likely to be slower.

In the Soil Hydrologic Reconnaissance for the Boise National Forest, a majority of the area within this burned area is identified as having an inherently mod-high to high erosion hazard risk when disturbed and ground cover is removed. The probability that these sites would erode has increased due to the fire consumption of the protective duff layer. The low-moderate severity burn removed much of the forest litter layer providing ground cover. Erosion rates are expected to increase, and there is an increased risk of mass movement. Mountain slopes were determined to be too steep for mulch to work effectively; therefore, treatment was not proposed. Erosion rates on localized slopes may reach or exceed soil loss tolerances in the 1-4 years following the fire, but long-term productivity is not likely to be negatively affected.

Effective ground cover is primarily in the form of downed timber and some remaining litter. Inspection of the soil surface showed that many roots and root crowns of both shrubs and grasses remain in the low and moderate severity burns. The remaining ground cover and mostly intact root systems provide stability and some protection against erosion. Increased erosion is expected for 1-4 years while vegetation recovers. It is anticipated, however, that remaining root structure and ground cover, as well as naturally colonizing forbs and shrubs and dissipating hydrophobicity, would be sufficient to protect soil productivity.

4. Are the direct, indirect, and cumulative effects that would result from implementation of the new proposed action similar (both quantitatively and qualitatively) to those analyzed in the existing NEPA document?

Documentation of answer and explanation:

Yes. The impacts are substantially unchanged and the types of impacts relating to the proposed ES&BAR plan were sufficiently analyzed. There are no unique site specific impacts resulting from the implementation of the ES&BAR plan or the individual rehabilitation treatments. The direct and indirect impacts of the plan are identified and addressed in the NFRP EA, IV Environmental Consequences, B by resources affected, pages 60-75 (Soils, Water, Floodplains/Wetland/Riparian Zones, Air, Vegetation, Terrestrial Wildlife, Aquatic Wildlife, Recreation, Special Management Areas, Visual Resources, Cultural Resources, and Grazing Management).

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

Documentation of answer and explanation:

Yes. The public involvement and interagency review of the existing NEPA document is adequate for the current proposed action. The scoping and public comment periods for the Boise District NFRP EA# ID-90-2004-050 provided for extensive input from Idaho Department of Fish and Game, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, grazing permittees, conservation groups, academia, and members of the interested public concerning the implementation of proposed stabilization/rehabilitation treatment actions.

E. Persons/Agencies /BLM Staff Consulted

TJ Clifford – Team Lead/Outdoor Recreation Planner - District

Cindy Fritz – Operations Specialist - Operations

Mark Steiger – Botanist – Four Rivers FO

Alex Webb – GIS Specialist – Operations

Lara Hannon – Ecologist – Four Rivers FO

Martin Espil – Rangeland Management Specialist –Four Rivers FO

Danelle Mendiola - Rangeland Management Specialist –Four Rivers FO

Alan Tarter – Hydrologist - Four Rivers FO

Joe Weldon – Wildlife Bioloist - Four Rivers FO

Terry Hardy – BAER Coordinator – Boise National Forest
 Brett Berry – Assistant Forest Engineer – Boise National Forest
 Danelle Highfill – Recreation Staff Officer – Boise National Forest
 John Thornton – Acting District Ranger – Emmett Ranger District
 John Harrington – Vegetation Resources – Idaho Department of Lands
 Bill Jones – County Road Supervisor – Boise County

Note: Refer to the EA/EIS for a complete list of the team members participating in the preparation of the original environmental analysis or planning documents.

F. Mitigation Measures: List any applicable mitigation measures that were identified, analyzed, and approved in relevant LUPs and existing NEPA document(s). List the specific mitigation measures or identify an attachment that includes those specific mitigation measures. Document that these applicable mitigation measures have been incorporated and implemented.

No applicable mitigation measures were identified and analyzed in the Jarbidge RMP, Boise District NFRP and associated Biological Assessment/USFWS letter of concurrence, or Boise District Noxious and Invasive Weed Treatment EA.

G. Conclusion (*If you found that one or more of these criteria is not met, you will not be able to check this box.*)

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

/s/ TJ Clifford
 Preparer

11/8/2012
 Date

/s/ Seth Flanigan
 NEPA Specialist

11/8/2012
 Date

/s/ Terry A. Humphreys
 Four Rivers Field Manager

11/9/2012
 Date

Note: The signed Conclusion on this Worksheet is part of an interim step in the BLM's internal decision process and does not constitute an appealable decision. However, the lease, permit, or other authorization based on this DNA is subject to protest or appeal under 43 CFR Part 4 and the program-specific regulations.