

**UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT**

Twin Falls District
Burley Field Office
15 East 200 South
Burley, ID 83318

Riparian Shrub Planting Exclosure Fence Categorical Exclusion (CX)

DOI-BLM-ID-T020-2013-0005-CX

A. Background

BLM Office: Burley Field Office.

Proposed Action Title/Type: Riparian Shrub Planting Small Exclosure Fences.

Location of Proposed Action:

1. Little Cottonwood Creek: T 14 S; R 21 E; Section 10, 11, & 15
 - a. Black cottonwood (*Populus balsamifera*)
 - b. Redoiser dogwood (*Cornus sericea*)
2. Raft River: T16 S; R 26 E; Section 05, & T 15 S; R 26 E; Section 32,
 - a. Black cottonwood (*Populus balsamifera*)
3. Trapper Creek: T 14 S; R 21 E; Section 26
 - a. Black cottonwood (*Populus balsamifera*)
 - b. Redoiser dogwood (*Cornus sericea*)
4. Parks Creek: T 14 S; R 26 E; Section 07,
 - a. Black cottonwood (*Populus balsamifera*)
 - b. Redoiser dogwood (*Cornus sericea*)
5. Goose Creek: T 15S; R22 E; Section 31
 - a. Black cottonwood (*Populus balsamifera*)
 - b. Redoiser dogwood (*Cornus sericea*)
6. Cold Creek: T 15 S; R22 E; Sections 19 & 20
 - a. Redoiser dogwood (*Cornus sericea*)
7. Mountain Meadow: T 12 S; R 20 E, Sections 15, & 22
 - a. Yellow willow (*Salix lutea*)

- b. Narrowleaf willow (*Salix exigua*)
- 8. Mule Creek: T 16 S; R 16 E; Section 20
 - a. Narrowleaf willow (*Salix exigua*)
 - b. Yellow willow (*Salix lutea*)
 - c. Redoiser dogwood (*Cornus sericea*)
- 9. Warm Creek: T 12 S; R28 E; Section 29, 20, & 19
 - a. Narrowleaf willow (*Salix exigua*)
 - b. Black cottonwood (*Populus balsamifera*)

Description of Proposed Action:

The Bureau of Land Management Burley Field Office is proposing to construct exclosures around riparian shrub plantings of black cottonwood, yellow willow, narrowleaf willow and redoiser dogwood at nine locations within the Office (DOI-BLM-ID-T020-2013-0004-DNA). The purpose of the project is to protect shrub plantings from livestock and wildlife herbivory. Protecting plantings will help to restore native woody riparian vegetation and increase native plant diversity. The need for this action is to improve the vegetative health of the nine subject riparian areas. Improving vegetative health of riparian areas would consequently improve wildlife habitat as well.

To increase the success of the plantings, temporary fencing would be constructed to discourage herbivory. Plantings are not expected to withstand herbivory from livestock and wild ungulates unless they are protected during early stages of development. Fences would be removed after plantings are large enough to withstand moderate levels of herbivory. This is expected to take 2 to 4 years. Hog panels, smooth wire and T-posts would be used for fence construction. All fences would be small, ≤ 100 Sq. feet. The only expected ground disturbance from fence construction would be pounding T-posts into the soil at an approximate depth of 12 inches. Some soil disturbance would occur during fence maintenance and removal.

B. Land Use Plan Conformance

The proposed action is in conformance with the applicable LUPs, even though it is not specifically provided for, because it is clearly consistent with the LUP decisions to maintain and improve wildlife habitat and watershed conditions. The Twin Falls Management Framework Plan and the Cassia Resource Management Plan contain the following objectives:

- 1. Twin Falls Management Framework Plan:
 - a. “Improve and maintain terrestrial, aquatic and wetland-riparian habitats for upland game species throughout the planning unit (p. 222).”
 - b. “Improve and maintain terrestrial, aquatic and wetland-riparian habitats for furbearers, waterfowl, shorebirds, and game fish (p. 243).”

- c. “Improve and maintain terrestrial, aquatic and wetland-riparian habitat for threatened and endangered, sensitive and high interest mammalian and avian species, amphibians and reptiles, and all other non-game mammalian and avian species (p. 270).”

2. Cassia Resource Management Plan:

- a. BLM will manage fish and wildlife habitat on the public lands. A variety of methods may be employed, including management actions designed to maintain or improve wildlife habitat... (p. 5).”
- b. “A variety of methods may be employed to maintain, improve, protect and restore watershed conditions. Priority will be given to meeting emergency watershed needs due to flooding, severe drought or fire (p. 9).”

C. Compliance with NEPA

The Proposed Action is categorically excluded from further documentation under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) in accordance with 516 DM 11.9, J(9): Construction of small protective enclosures.

This categorical exclusion is appropriate in this situation because there are no extraordinary circumstances potentially having effects that may significantly affect the environment. I have reviewed the proposed action and none of the extraordinary circumstances described in 43 CFR 46.215 apply. Refer to the following extraordinary circumstances:

1. The proposed action would not have significant impacts on public health or safety.

Installing small enclosures around shrub plantings will not pose a significant impact to public health and safety.

2. The proposed action would not 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 (Executive Order 11990); floodplains (Executive Order 11988); national monuments; migratory birds; and other ecologically significant or critical areas.

There are no known natural resources and unique geographic characteristics such 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 (Executive Order 11990); national monuments; and other ecologically significant or critical areas at any of the shrub planting locations, with the exception of wetlands. All proposed plantings would occur in wetland areas. However, work would not be completed within any stream. No significant impacts would occur as a result of the shrub plantings. Also, the proposed undertaking is excluded from case-by-

case review with Idaho SHPO as per stipulation IV. B., Appendix C of the 1998 National Programmatic Agreement (PA) and the implementing protocol agreement between Idaho BLM and the Idaho State Historic Preservation office. This project would have no effect to cultural resources.

- 3. The proposed action would not have highly controversial environmental effects or involve unresolved conflicts concerning alternative uses of available resources [NEPA Section 102(2)(E)].**

Constructing exclosures to discourage livestock and wildlife herbivory for 2-4 years is not expected to have controversial environmental effects. The environmental effects of the proposed action are well understood.

- 4. The proposed action would not have highly uncertain and potentially significant environmental effects or involve unique or unknown environmental risks.**

Constructing exclosures to protect shrub plantings does not pose any highly uncertain, potentially significant and/or unique or unknown environmental risks. The development of small livestock exclosures is expected to foster the development of shrub plantings and improve vegetative health and riparian conditions.

- 5. The proposed action would not establish a precedent for future actions or represent a decision in principle about future actions with potentially significant environmental effects.**

The proposed action will not establish a precedent, nor does it represent a decision in principle regarding future actions with potentially significant environmental effects. Constructing small exclosures around cottonwood plantings will not require any future actions other than fence removal once the plantings become established. Any future projects would be subject to project specific NEPA analysis.

- 6. The proposed action would not have a direct relationship to other actions with individually insignificant but cumulatively significant environmental effects.**

The proposed action is in response to a riparian shrub planting proposal (DOI-BLM-ID-T020-2013-0004-DNA). Cumulatively, the two actions would not result in any significant effects. Successful implementation of the two actions is expected to result in the improvement of riparian conditions over time. The improvement in riparian conditions would be gradual and coincide with the natural succession of shrubs.

- 7. The proposed action would not have significant impacts on properties listed, or eligible for listing, on the National Register of Historic Places as determined by the bureau.**

The proposed undertaking is excluded from case-by-case review with Idaho SHPO as per stipulation IV. B., Appendix C of the 1998 National Programmatic Agreement (PA) and

the implementing protocol agreement between Idaho BLM and the Idaho State Historic Preservation office. This project would have no effect to cultural resources.

- 8. The proposed action would not 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.**

There are no known populations of, or critical habitat for, Threatened or Endangered species within the project areas. The greater sage-grouse is a Candidate species for listing under the Endangered Species Act. Greater sage-grouse are known to occur in the region. The proposed action is expected to benefit sage-grouse by promoting healthy riparian conditions. The proposed action is expected to improve habitat conditions for a variety of special status species.

- 9. The proposed action would not violate a Federal law, or a State, local or tribal law or requirement imposed for the protection of the environment.**

The proposed action is consistent with federal, state, local and tribal regulations.

- 10. The proposed action would not have a disproportionately high and adverse effect on low income or minority populations (Executive Order 12898).**

Development of small exclosures is not expected to affect low income or minority populations.

- 11. The proposed action would not 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 (Executive Order 13007).**

There are no known ceremonial and/or sacred sites on federal land within the project areas. This project would not limit access.

- 12. The proposed action would not contribute to the introduction, continued existence, or spread of noxious weeds or non-native invasive 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 Executive Order 13112).**

The proposed action is not expected to influence introduction or spread of noxious weeds or invasive plants. The proposed action is expected to improve habitat conditions by promoting healthy riparian habitat.

D. Participating Staff

Name of Participant	Position Title or Resource Expertise
Jesse Rawson	Project Lead
Jeremy Bisson	Wildlife Biologist
Jason Theodozio	Rangeland Management Specialist
Suzann Henrikson	Archaeologist

I have considered the proposed action and extraordinary circumstances. No conflicts have been identified. I have determined that there is no potential for significant impacts.

E. Signature

Authorizing Official: /S/ Michael Courtney Date: January 18, 2013
Michael Courtney
Field Manager

Contact Person

For additional information concerning this CX review, contact Jesse Rawson, Wildlife Biologist, at (208) 677-6600, or at 15 East 200 South, Burley ID, 83318.

