



United States Department of the Interior



BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT

Egan Field Office

702 N. Industrial Way

Ely, Nevada 89301-9408

http://www.blm.gov/nv/st/en/fo/ely_field_office.html

FEB 17 2016

In Reply Refer To:
9214 (NVL0100)

Dear Interested Public:

This letter is to notify you of a 15 day public scoping period for a proposed habitat restoration and fuels reduction project. The Bureau of Land Management (BLM), Egan Field Office is proposing a hazardous-fuels-reduction and habitat-improvement project within Egan and Johnson Basins. The Egan and Johnson Basins Restoration Project area is comprised of approximately 35,000 acres located in the Egan and Cherry Creek Ranges near Cherry Creek, White Pine County, Nevada. Important habitat for Greater sage-grouse as well as other wildlife has been identified within the project area. The purpose of the proposed action is to improve vegetation community resistance and resilience to natural disturbance, reduce the risk of wildland fire to adjacent crucial wildlife habitat located within Egan and Johnson Basins, and improve Greater sage-grouse and other wildlife habitat. The proposed action consists of thinning and/or removal of pinyon pine and Utah juniper trees from sagebrush sites, as well as woodland sites, through manual and mechanical methods, prescribed fire, invasive species control and seeding.

The project area has been divided into treatment units (see attached map). Manual methods of tree removal would include the use of hand crews and chainsaws to remove the trees. Mechanical methods would include the use of machinery to remove individual trees or groups of trees and would include mastication and/or chaining. Biomass resulting from thinning pinyon pine and Utah juniper would be available for fuelwood and/or the slash would be piled and burned. Prescribed fire would also be used as a treatment method in select areas to reduce tree density and hazardous fuels.

The objectives for the proposed action are to:

- Improve habitat for nesting and early brood rearing/yearlong Greater sage-grouse use.
- Improve and protect valuable mule deer and elk habitat within the watersheds.
- Conduct hazardous fuels reduction projects to create a mosaic of vegetation types and stand age classes that would improve shrub and herbaceous composition, enhance vegetative community resistance and resilience and slow potential fire progression and aid fire suppression.
- Move the Fire Regime Condition Class (FRCC) rating for Egan and Johnson Basin closer to FRCC1.

The public was previously notified of this project in February 2013. However, the project was put on hold and the BLM is now continuing with project planning. All previous comments from scoping will be carried forward into this current planning effort.

BLM will use the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) public participation requirements to assist the agency in satisfying the public involvement requirements under Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA) (16 U.S.C. 470(f) pursuant to 36 CFR 800.2(d)(3)). The information about historic and cultural resources of value within the area potentially affected by the proposed action will assist the BLM in identifying and evaluating impacts to such resources in the context of both NEPA and Section 106 of the NHPA. Tribal or individual concerns, including impacts and potential impacts to culturally valued areas, will be given due consideration.

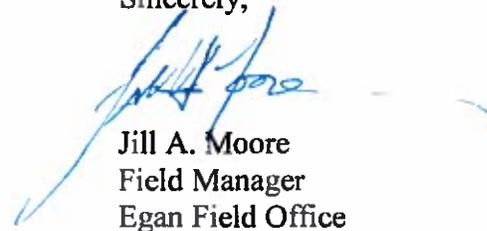
Following this public scoping period, the BLM will prepare an Environmental Assessment (EA) to analyze potential effects of the proposed action as well as other possible alternatives. Public comments are always appreciated and are an important step in the NEPA process. Scoping comments on this proposed action and requests for additional information should be sent to the BLM Ely District Office, Attn: Katie Walsh at 702 N. Industrial Way; Ely, NV 89301, or call (775) 289-1867, or email kwalsh@blm.gov.

Before including your address, phone number, email-address, or any other personal identifying information in your comments, be advised that your entire comment, including personal identifying information, may be made publicly available at any time. While individuals may request that the BLM withhold personal identifying information from public view, the BLM cannot guarantee it will be able to do so. If you wish us to withhold your personal information you must state this prominently at the beginning of your comment. We will make all submissions from organizations or businesses available for public disclosure in their entirety.

If you have any questions, please contact Katie Walsh, at (775) 289-1867. Please submit comments by March 4, 2016. Please note that future planning and EA documents will only be sent to those who respond by the above listed due date. However, all documents for this project will be posted on BLM's e-planning website at the following address:
<http://1.usa.gov/1T9Yesn>

Thank you for participating in the planning process for this project.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Jill A. Moore", is written over a horizontal line. The signature is fluid and cursive.

Jill A. Moore
Field Manager
Egan Field Office

Enclosure