

United States Department of the Interior
Bureau of Land Management
Cottonwood Field Office
1 Butte Drive
Cottonwood, ID, 83522

DECISION RECORD

Middle Creek Tree Planting Project
DOI-BLM-ID-C020-2013-0008-CX

1. Background

In 2007, the Chimney Complex Wildfire burned approximately 52,000 acres and the majority occurred within the Idaho Fish and Game's (IDFG) Craig Mountain Wildlife Management Area. The burned area includes the Middle Creek drainage, which is a tributary to the Snake River. Prior to the Chimney Complex fire, the Middle Creek drainage contained important forest habitat that supported a variety of wildlife, including many Bureau of Land Management BLM sensitive species and IDFG species of greatest conservation need. However, the high severity fire in the drainage destroyed much of that habitat and five years later, little to no conifer regeneration has occurred.

2. Decision

It is my decision to authorize the planting of ponderosa pine and Douglas fir on approximately 45 acres of BLM lands located in the Middle Creek drainage (Snake River tributary). Tree seedlings would be planted at a rate of approximately 242 trees per acre, with a mixed stock of approximately 75 percent ponderosa pine and 25 percent Douglas fir. Under the authority of 43 CFR 5003.1, this decision is in effect immediately upon signature.

3. Authority

Decision authority for this project is a general public land decision in accordance with The Federal Land Policy and Management Act of 1976 as Amended, Section 301, and 43 CFR 5003 (Forest Management).

4. Rationale

The proposed action is in conformance with the Cottonwood RMP and is a type of action that the BLM has determined does not have a significant effect on the quality of the human environment. The action is needed to restore vegetation and wildlife habitat damaged by a previous wildfire. IN addition, the IDFG will plant trees on approximately 30 acres of IDFG lands.

5. Coordination and Consultation

This project was coordinated with the Idaho Department of Fish and Game, Clearwater Region, Lewiston, Idaho. A scoping notice was sent to the Nez Perce Tribe notifying them about the proposed project. The Nez Perce Tribe had no comments and did not identify any issues regarding the proposed project.

6. Protest and Appeal

This decision may be protested under 43 CFR 5003 - Administrative Remedies. As outlined in 43 CFR 5003.3 (a) and (b), protests of a forest management decision may be made within 15 days of the publication date of the decision notice and shall contain a written statement of reasons for protesting the decision. Publication of this decision record on the BLM's ePlanning website on March 27, 2013 will initiate this protest period. Therefore, protests must be filed in person or by mail before close of business (4:15 p.m.), April 11, 2013, at:

Bureau of Land Management
Cottonwood Field Office
ATTN: Middle Creek Tree Planting
1 Butte Drive
Cottonwood, ID, 83522

Regulations do not authorize acceptance of protests in any form other than a signed, paper document that is delivered to the physical address of the BLM office. Therefore, the BLM will not accept protests delivered by e-mail, verbal, or facsimile means.

7. Signature

/s/

3/26/13

Will Runnoe
Field Manager

Date

Attachments:

- 1) Categorical Exclusion Documentation
- 2) Map 1 Middle Fork Tree Planting

U.S. Department of the Interior
Bureau of Land Management
Cottonwood Field Office
1 Butte Dr. Cottonwood, ID. 83530

Categorical Exclusion Documentation

Middle Creek Tree Planting Project

NEPA Register No. DOI-BLM-ID-C020-2013-0008-CX

Location: Nez Perce County, Idaho; Craig Mountain Wildlife Management Area – Middle Cr.
Boise Meridian
T. 31 N., R. 4 W., Section 6, and
T. 31 N., R. 5 W., Section 1

Description of the Proposed Action

In cooperation with the Idaho Department of Fish and Game (IDFG), the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) proposes to plant ponderosa pine and Douglas fir on approximately 75 acres of BLM and IDFG lands, which previously burned during the 2007 Chimney Complex Fire. The Chimney Complex Wildfire burned approximately 52,000 acres and the majority occurred within the IDFG's Craig Mountain Wildlife Management Area.

The proposed tree planting area is within the Middle Creek drainage, which is a tributary to the Snake River. Prior to the Chimney Complex fire, the Middle Creek drainage contained important forest habitat that supported a variety of wildlife, including many BLM sensitive species and IDFG species of greatest conservation need. However, the high severity fire in the drainage destroyed much of that habitat and five years later, little to no conifer regeneration has occurred.

The proposed tree planting area includes approximately 45 acres of BLM lands and 30 acres of Idaho Department of Fish and Game lands. Tree seedlings would be planted at a rate of approximately 242 trees per acres with a mixed stock of approximately 75 percent ponderosa pine and 25 percent Douglas fir.

Land Use Plan Conformance

In accordance with the Federal Land Policy and Management Act (FLPMA), this proposed action has been reviewed for conformance with Cottonwood Resource Management Plan (RMP), approved December 21, 2009. It is consistent with the following decisions from the RMP:

Objective WS-1.6 – Manage rangeland and forest vegetation habitats to provide for diversity, cover, structure, forage, and security to contribute to health populations of rangeland and forest dependent species and other wildlife. Page 27.

Objective WS-1.8-Manage wildlife habitats to provide for overall species diversity. Page 28

Compliance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA)

The proposed action is categorically excluded from further documentation under NEPA in accordance with the BLM categorical exclusion (CX) established in 516 DM 11.9 C (3). “Seeding or reforestation of timber sales or burn areas where no chaining is done, no pesticides are used, and there is no conversion of timber type or conversion of non-forest to forest land. Specific reforestation activities covered include: seeding and seedling plantings, shading, tubing (browse protection), paper mulching, bud caps, ravel protection, application of non-toxic big game repellent, spot scalping, rodent trapping, fertilization of seed trees, fence construction around out-planting sites, and collection of pollen, scions and cones”. The proposed action has been reviewed, and none of the extraordinary circumstances described in 516 DM 2, Appendix C apply.

/s/

3/26/13

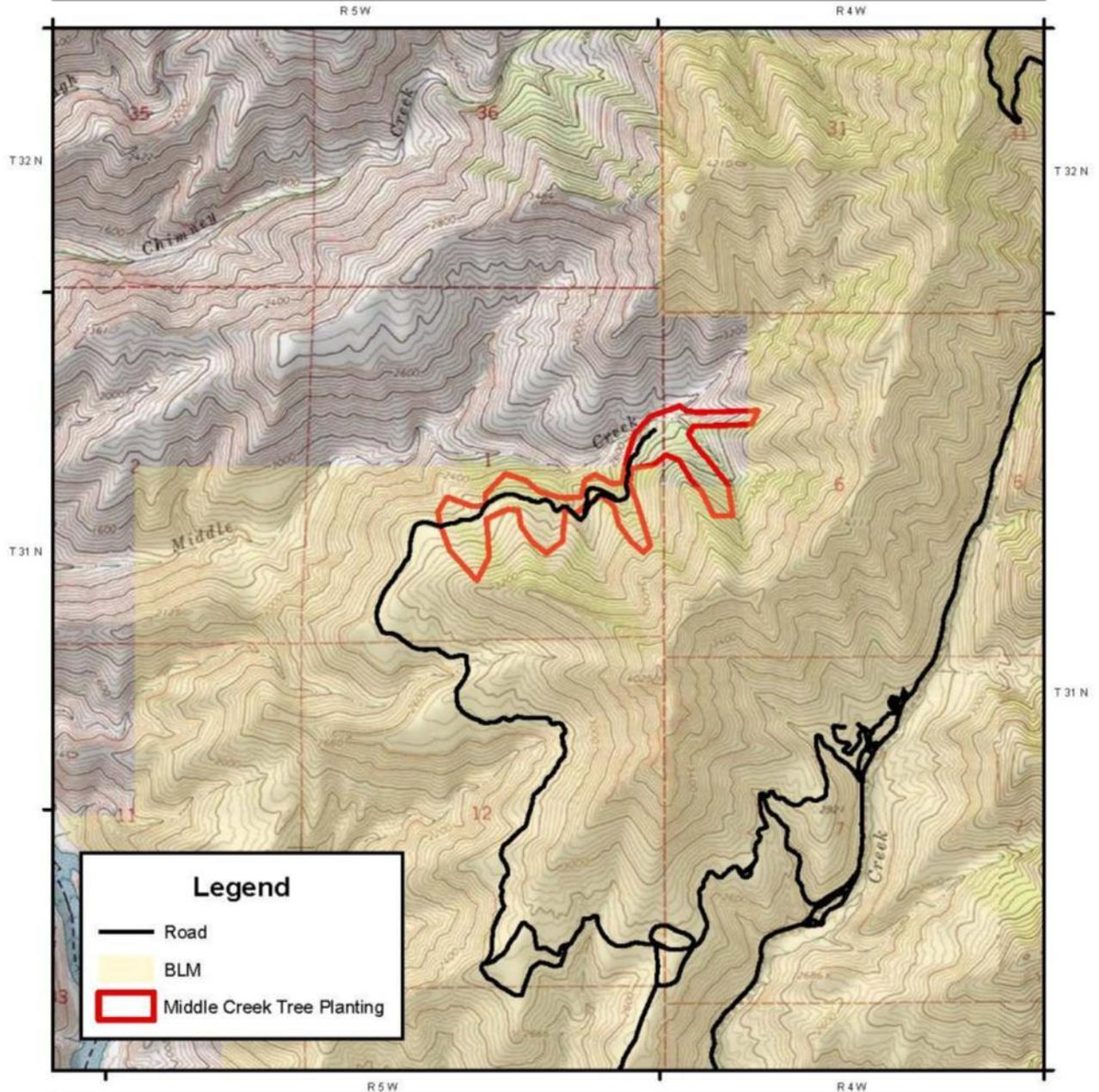
Will Runnoe
Field Manager

Date

Contact Person

For additional information concerning this CX review, contact Craig Johnson, Biologist, at (208) 962-3688.

Middle Creek Planting





Map Created: 12/12/2012

The surface management status ("land ownership") should be used as a general guide only. Official land records, located at the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) and other offices, should be checked for up-to-date information concerning any specific tract of land.

No warranty is made by the Bureau of Land Management. The accuracy, reliability, or completeness of these data for individual use or aggregate use with other data is not guaranteed. The following cannot be made Section 508 compliant. For help with its data or information, please contact the BLM Idaho State Office Webmaster at 208-373-4000.

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Data displayed in UTM Zone 11N, NAD83