U.S. Department of the Interior
Bureau of Land Management (BLM)
Twin Falls District
Burley Field Office
15 East 200 South
Burley, ID 83318

Worksheet
Determination of NEPA Adequacy (DNA)

NEPA No. DOI-BLM-ID-T020-2013-0034-DNA

BLM Office: Burley Field Office. **Lease/Serial/Case File No.:** N/A.

Proposed Action Title/Type: Emery (HM2X) Emergency Stabilization and Burned Area Rehabilitation (ES&BAR) Plan.

Location of Proposed Action: The Emery Fire is located south of Emery Creek in the Goose Creek drainage 12 miles south of Oakley, in Cassia County, Idaho. The fire covers portions of T16S R21E Sections 1 and 12, and T16S R22E Sections 6, 7, and 18. The burned area affected portions of the Wilson Gulch pasture in the Goose Creek Group allotment.

Applicant (if any): N/A.

A. Description of the Proposed Action

The proposed action is to implement the Emery ES&BAR plan as prescribed by the Shoshone and Burley Field Offices Normal Fire Rehabiliation Plan and Environmental Assessment (#ID-077-2004-008), approved May 24, 2005. Treatments and associated design features and monitoring are detailed in the Emery Fire (HM2X) ES&BAR plan. The proposed action consists of the following treatments:

- Chain about 460 acres after an aerial applied native grass seed mix in fall 2013.
- Aerial seed about 572 acres with Wyoming big sagebrush seed.
- Inventory and treat 572 acres for noxious weeds for 3 years.
- Repair or replace up to two miles of burned livestock management fence.
- Build approximately two miles of temporary protective fence to protect the seeding treatments from livestock.
- Close the burned area to livestock grazing until ES&BAR objectives have been met.

B. Land Use Plan (LUP) Conformance

The applicable land use plan for this ES&BAR project is the 1985 Cassia Resource Management Plan (Cassia RMP) as amended in 2008 by the Fire, Fuels and Related Vegetation Management Direction Plan Amendment (FMDA).

The proposed action is in conformance with the LUP, even though it is not specifically provided for, because it is clearly consistent with the following LUP decisions.

The Cassia RMP (p.7) states "Sufficient vegetation is reserved for purpose of maintaining plant vigor, stabilizing soil, providing, cover for wildlife and other non-consumptive uses." The FMDA (Record of Decision, p.4) indicates one of BLM's goals is to "maintain or restore vegetation that would support special status species (SSS) and healthy, diverse, and sustainable vegetation communities." The FMDA (ROD pp. 14-15) establishes a broad management goal to decrease acres with cheatgrass, weeds, and/or other undesirable species. Temporarily closing areas to livestock grazing and controlling noxious weeds both help to maintain or restore healthy plant communities in conformance with the LUP as amended.

The Cassia RMP (p. 7) also states "A variety of range improvements, grazing systems and other range management practices will be considered in conjunction with livestock management on individual allotments." Repairing or replacing range improvements damaged during a wildfire are consistent with using a variety of range improvement to manage livestock.

The project is in conformance with the analysis of Alternative E, the selected alternative in the 2008 Fire, Fuels and Related Vegetation Management Direction Plan Amendment (FMDA) and Environmental Impact Statement (EIS). The Final FMDA and EIS amends all LUP's for the Burley Field Office except the Craters MP, to provide direction and guidance for fire/fuels and related vegetation management.

C. Identify the applicable National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) document(s) and other related documents that cover the proposed action.

The proposed action is addressed in the following NEPA documents.

1. Vegetation Treatments Using Herbicides on BLM lands in the 17 Western States Programmatic EIS, September 29, 2007.

2. Burley Field Office Noxious Weed Management Plan, Environmental Assessment (#ID-020-88-16).

3. Shoshone and Burley Field Offices Normal Fire Rehabilitation Plan (NFRP) Environmental Assessment (#ID-007-204-008), May 24, 2005.

4. Biological Assessment for the Shoshone and Burley Field Offices NFRP and Concurrence, OALS #1-4-04-I-633.

Other Relevant Documents

Sage-grouse Habitat Conservation and Restoration
Proposed treatments are consistent with current Bureau policy (Instruction Memorandum No. 2012-043) for enhancement and restoration of Sage-grouse Preliminary Priority Habitat,

specifically:

- Evaluate land treatments in a landscape-scale context to address habitat fragmentation, effective patch size, invasive species presence, and protection of intact sagebrush communities. Coordinate land treatments with adjacent land owners to avoid any unintended negative landscape effects to sage-grouse.
- Coordinate plan, design, and implement treatments and associated effectiveness monitoring between Resources, Fuels Management, Emergency Stabilization, and Burned Area Rehabilitation programs to:
    - Promote the maintenance of large intact sagebrush communities;
    - Limit the expansion of invasive species, including cheatgrass;
    - Maintain or improve soil site stability, hydrologic function, and biological integrity; and
    - Enhance the native plant community, including the native shrub reference state in the *State and Transition Model*, with appropriate shrub, grass, and forb composition identified in the applicable Ecological Site Descriptions (ESDs) where available.
- Pursue short-term objectives that include maintaining soil stability and hydrological function of the disturbed site so a resilient plant community can be established.
- Pursue a long-term objective to maintain resilient native plant communities. Choose native plant species outlined in ESDs, where available, to revegetate sites.
- Meet vegetation management objectives that have been set for seeding projects prior to returning the area to authorized uses, specifically livestock grazing. This generally takes a minimum of two growing seasons.
- In Emergency Stabilization and Burned Area Rehabilitation plans, prioritize re-vegetation projects to (1) maintain and enhance unburned intact sagebrush habitat when at risk from adjacent threats; (2) stabilize soils; (3) reestablish hydrologic function; (4) maintain and enhance biological integrity; (5) promote plant resiliency; (6) limit expansion or dominance of invasive species; and (7) re-establish native species.

The proposed treatments also address applicable conservation measures identified in the 2006 Conservation Plan for the Greater Sage-grouse in Idaho, which included rehabilitation and restoration actions. Specifically,

Restoration and Burned Area Rehabilitation Conservation Measures (pp. 4-19 through 4-20):

- Emphasize the use of native plant materials to the greatest extent possible, and as appropriate for site conditions. Seeds should be certified weed free.
- Use proper site-preparation techniques (e.g., seedbed preparation, control of invasives, weed-control), seeding techniques, and seed mixes in designing restoration and burned area rehabilitation plans. For example, the restoration of annual grasslands may require preparatory chemical treatments and/or an exotic/native seed mix.
- When planting or reseeding sagebrush, favor the sagebrush species, subspecies, that are appropriate for the ecological site. Source identified seed is preferable. To maximize the likelihood of establishment, consider multiple approaches, such as aerial seeding, ground broadcast seeding with harrow or roller, and planting of seedlings in strategic patches or strips. Avoid seeding sagebrush or other shrubs near road margins if the road and road

margin might otherwise serve as a fuel break in the event of future fire.

- When using exotic perennial grasses and forbs in restoration use species whose growth form, species, and phenology, most closely mimic native species.
- Provide for noxious weed control in burned area rehabilitation projects.

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?

Yes. An interdisciplinary resource team review of this fire revealed that the resource values, concerns, stabilization and rehabilitation needs are essentially the same as those analyzed in the 2005 NFRP and best meet the wildlife, watershed, and soil objectives in the 1985 Cassia RMP and 2008 FMDA. The primary purpose of the ES&BAR Plan is to evaluate actual and potential long-term post-fire impacts to cultural and natural resources and identify those areas unlikely to recover naturally from severe wildland fire damage and to repair or replace minor facilities damaged by wildland fire. The project is within the same analysis area considered in the 2005 NFRP.

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

Yes. The range of alternatives analyzed in the NFRP is appropriate with respect to the proposed ES&BAR plan. In addition to the proposed action, two alternatives to the proposed action were analyzed in that EA. They included an alternative action that would not implement ESR treatments, but was eliminated from detailed analysis because it was not consistent with BLM policy, and the No Action Alternative which would have continued to use the outdated Burley (1990) and Shoshone (1989) NFRPs. The current proposals follow the NFRP proposed action with the overall objective of stabilizing and rehabilitating the burned area in the shortest time frame to enhance and protect the watershed, soil, wildlife habitat, and livestock forage values of the area.

3. Is the existing analysis valid in light of any new information or circumstances (such as rangeland health standard assessment, recent endangered species listings, or updated lists of BLM-sensitive species)? Can you reasonably conclude that new information and new circumstances would not substantially change the analysis of the new proposed action?

Yes. No new information has been provided since development and analysis of the Shoshone and Burley Field Offices NFRP. The most recent BLM Special Status species list (including, threatened, endangered, and sensitive plant and animal species) was utilized in development of the ES&BAR plan.

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?

Yes. The direct, indirect, and cumulative effects of aerial seeding, ground seeding, controlling noxious weeds, replacing or repairing fences, and temporarily resting areas from livestock grazing are analyzed in the 2005 Shoshone and Burley Field Offices NFRP and Vegetation Treatments Using Herbicides on BLM Lands Final EIS. The effects of this proposed action are similar to those analyzed in the existing NEPA documents.

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

Yes. The public involvement and interagency review of the 2005 Shoshone and Burley Field Offices NFRP is adequate for the current proposed action. Scoping letters informing the public of the purpose and need for action were sent to approximately 700 interested publics including organizations, and federal and state agencies beginning in November 2003. The general public and other agencies included interest from ranchers, academia, conservation groups, the Tribes, Idaho Department of Fish and Game, and ESA consultation with the USFWS.

E. Persons/Agencies/BLM Staff Consulted

Name	Title	Resource/Agency Represented
Dustin Smith	Fire Ecologist	Fuels/BLM
Scott Uhrig	Fire Rehabilitation Specialist	Operations/BLM
Suzann Henrikson	Archaeologist	Cultural Resources/BLM
Jason Theodozio	Rangeland Management Specialist	Range/BLM
Shanin VanBuskirk	NEPA Coordinator	NEPA/BLM
Jeremy Bisson	Wildlife Biologist	Wildlife/BLM

CONCLUSION

Based on the review documented above, I conclude that this proposal conforms to the 1985 Cassia RMP as amended by the 2008 FMDA and that the existing NEPA documentation fully covers the proposed action and constitutes BLM's compliance with the requirements of NEPA.

/s/ Michael C. Courtney 8/26/2013
Michael C. Courtney, Burley Field Manager 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.