



## **Bureau of Land Management**

Boise District Office  
Four Rivers Field Office  
3948 Development Ave  
Boise, ID 83705  
<http://www.id.blm.gov>

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### **Determination of Land Use Plan Conformance and NEPA Adequacy (DNA)**

U.S. Department of the Interior - Bureau of Land Management

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#### **A. BLM Office(s):** Four Rivers Field Office

**NEPA Log Number:** DOI-BLM-ID-B010-2013-0048-DNA

**Lease/Serial Case File No.:**

**Proposed Action Title/Type:** Hilltop Fire HT65 Emergency Stabilization and burned area Rehabilitation (ESR) Plan

**Location/Legal of Proposed Action:** Approximately 15 miles east of Boise, Idaho: T2N R4E Section 6, T3N R3E Section 36, and T3N R4E Sections 30 and 31.

**Applicant (if any):** N/A

#### **Description of the Proposed Action and any applicable mitigation measures:**

Emergency Stabilization (S) and Burned Area Rehabilitation (R) Treatments

##### *R2 Ground Seeding*

Approximately 10 acres along Highway 21 would be drill seeded with prostrate kochia with an ATV and small drill seeder. Topographically, this is the only practical area to implement ground seeding; steep, rugged terrain precludes ground seeding elsewhere. Establishing a stand of prostrate kochia here would help rehabilitate crucial winter range for big game. It would also help limit the danger of fire ignition from State Highway 21 protecting the investment made (i.e., aerial seeding and seedling planting treatments) to rehabilitate the rest of the burned area.

##### *R3 Aerial Seeding*

Aerially seed all of the burned BLM land (765 acres) with native (Wyoming big sagebrush) and non-native (prostrate kochia) shrub species. The fire removed nearly 100% of the shrub cover and consumed all shrub skeletons; therefore, natural regeneration is not possible as sagebrush seed does not persist in the soil and no unburned sagebrush islands exist to provide a seed source. The area is left with little to no above ground structural component or forage for big game - the area burned is identified as deer and elk crucial winter range – particularly in winter. This treatment would aid in the re-establishment of sagebrush, as

well as provide forage for big game, particularly until antelope bitterbrush seedlings are established (see R4 below).

#### *R4 Seedling Planting*

Hand plant 50,000 one-year-old, bare root seedlings (40,000 antelope bitterbrush, 10,000 Wyoming big sagebrush) a year for three years in strategic locations. Seedling planting in conjunction with aerial seeding of shrubs would provide multiple age classes of shrubs in the burned area. Seedling planting would increase connectivity of habitat across the burned with habitat outside the fire perimeter. Draws where bitterbrush grew previously would be targeted for planting to provide optimum potential for growth and success. Planting will occur in the spring of FY14-FY16. Planting would be done by hand using sharpshooter shovels, hoe dads, augers, or planting bars.

#### *S5/R5 Noxious Weeds*

Noxious weed inventory and spot herbicide treatment would occur during the first three years following the fire within the burned area. Noxious weeds would be treated with BLM approved chemicals in accordance with the Boise District Noxious Weed Environmental Assessment and 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 strictly adhered to for vegetation treatments using herbicides.

#### *R7 Fence Repair*

Three miles of existing livestock management fence would be repaired in the Boise Front allotment, Boise Front South pasture. Pasture boundary fence repair would prevent entry by livestock utilizing adjacent allotments/pastures and deter big game (mule deer) from having highway access. The fences would be repaired/reconstructed to BLM wildlife standards.

#### *S13/R13 Monitoring*

Monitoring would be conducted to determine effectiveness of ESR treatments and to ensure treatments are properly implemented and maintained. Monitoring methods would be qualitative and quantitative, and commensurate with the level of treatment complexity and scale. Monitoring would be the responsibility of the ESR team. An annual monitoring summary report would be submitted documenting treatment status and effectiveness.

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

The proposed action is in conformance with the Cascade RMP, even though it is not specifically provided for, because it is clearly consistent with the LUP decisions (resource objectives, terms, and conditions) in the following sections/pages listed in the table below.

LUP/Document	Sections/Pages	Date Approved
Cascade Resource Management Plan	Watershed Resources p. 25 Vegetative Resources p. 25 Wildlife Resources pp. 26, 27, 48, 50, & 51 Boise Front Area of Critical Environmental Concern pp. 32-34 Fire Management pp. 53-55 Management Guidelines (Control of Noxious Weeds) p.60	July 1, 1988

**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
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 ( <a href="http://www.blm.gov/wo/st/en/prog/more/veg_eis.html">http://www.blm.gov/wo/st/en/prog/more/veg_eis.html</a> )	Record of Decision and Appendix B - Standard Operating Procedures	June, 2007
Boise District Noxious and Invasive Weed Treatment EA	All	February 6, 2007
Idaho Standards for Rangeland Health and Guidelines for Livestock Grazing Management	All	August 1997
Boise District and Jarbidge Field Office Normal Fire Emergency Stabilization and Rehabilitation Plan EA	All	May 12, 2005

**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.** A range of proposed actions were analyzed under the Normal Fire Emergency Stabilization and Rehabilitation Plan Environmental Assessment (NFESRP EA) for the Boise District BLM. These included herbicide use for noxious weed treatments and livestock

management actions. An interdisciplinary team review of this fire has determined that the resource values, concerns, and rehabilitation needs are extensively similar to those discussed and approved in the NFESRP EA and best meet the vegetative, watershed, and soil objectives of the 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?**

**Yes.** The range of alternatives analyzed in the NFESRP EA is appropriate for this action. Two alternatives to the proposed action were analyzed in the NFESRP EA (pp. 8-30). These included an alternative action that would not implement ESR treatments, which was eliminated from detailed analysis because it was not consistent with BLM policy, and the No Action Alternative, which would continue to use the existing 1987/1988 NFESRP. The overall goals of the Proposed Action of the NFESRP EA is to stabilize a burned site, return it to its previous native and/or seeded condition in the shortest timeframe, and enhance and protect watersheds, soils, wildlife habitat, and livestock forage values. The proposed actions of the Hilltop ES&R plan are designed to accomplish these same goals for the area burned by the Hilltop Fire (HT65).

**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.**

Based on new information gained during recent inventory and survey of the burn area, existing analysis from the NFESRP EA is adequate. The proposed actions within the treatment area and their consequences to the species/resources addressed below were analyzed in the plan and found to be insignificant (pp. 64 and 65).

The proposed treatments (in particular, aerial seeding of sagebrush, seedling planting of bitterbrush and sagebrush, noxious weed control, and fence repair) would promote soil stabilization and recovery of crucial winter range for big game. All fence reconstruction would be consistent with the NFESRP EA (p. 24) in big game habitat.

**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 impacts delineated in the existing NEPA document (the NFESRP EA) directly correlate to those impacts expected from the proposed action including aerial seeding,

noxious weed treatment, and infrastructure repair and construction. The NFESRP EA provides analysis of site specific impacts to resources such as vegetation, wildlife, soils, and sensitive species as a result of proposed treatments outlined in ESR plans. Direct and indirect effects resulting from implementation of the proposed action would be similar to and covered by impacts analyzed in the NFESRP EA. All specific design features outlined in the NFESRP EA will be followed during implementation of the emergency stabilization and rehabilitation treatments. The NFESRP EA does not provide analysis of fire impacts and the resulting loss of habitat, which is outside the scope of the document.

The cumulative effects analyzed in the NFESRP EA are satisfactory to cover the addition of the proposed action. Special status and non-status animals and plants would be protected by general and species specific design features, and would benefit from a return to more natural fire cycles and improved ecosystem function, habitat/population connectivity, migratory corridors, habitat structure, forage, and suitability.

**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 existing NEPA document is adequate for the current proposed action. The NFESRP EA states on page 77 that “ A scoping letter informing the public of the purpose and need for action were sent to 1,077 interested publics including organizations, and federal and state agencies in October 2003.” The general public and other agencies included ranchers, academia, conservation groups, Tribal governments, Idaho Department of Fish and Game, and Endangered Species Act (ESA) consultation with the US Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS).

**E. Persons/Agencies/BLM Staff Consulted\***

<b>Name</b>	<b>Title</b>	<b>Resource/Agency Represented</b>
Barbara Chaney	Biologist	USFWS
County Commissioners	Local Policymakers	Owyhee County
Shoshone Piute Tribes	Wings and Roots	Native American Nation

\* 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 Mitigation Measures have been identified.

**G. Conclusion** (If 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/ Lara Hannon  
Lara Hannon  
Preparer

11/15/2013  
Date

/s/ Seth Flanigan  
Seth Flanigan  
NEPA Specialist

11/15/2013  
Date

/s/ Terry Humphrey  
Terry A. Humphrey  
Four Rivers Field Manager

11/15/2013  
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.