

Worksheet
Determination of NEPA Adequacy (DNA)
U.S. Department of the Interior
Bureau of Land Management

OFFICE: Humboldt River Field Office, LLNVW01000

TRACKING NUMBER: **DOI-BLM-NV-W010-2013-0072-DNA**

CASEFILE/PROJECT NUMBER: Porcupine – HJ5R

PROPOSED ACTION TITLE/TYPE: Porcupine (HJ5R) Fire Emergency Stabilization
and Rehabilitation Plan

LOCATION/LEGAL DESCRIPTION:

Drill/Ground Seeding

T. 41 N., R. 37 E., sec. 13, 14

T. 41 N., R. 38 E., sec. 19

Invasives Mgmt.

T. 41 N., R. 37 E., sec. 13, 14

T. 41 N., R. 38 E., sec. 19

APPLICANT (if any): Bureau of Land Management (BLM)

BACKGROUND INFORMATION ON FIRE.

The Porcupine Fire was ignited by lightning on 6/9/2013 and contained on 6/10/2013.

The fire burned a total of 530 acres of combined BLM and US Forest Service (USFS) lands with 375 acres occurring on BLM managed public lands. The fire consumed a considerable amount of intact wildlife habitat in close proximity to Greater Sage Grouse Preliminary Priority Habitat (PPH) (within 250 feet), and within the Santa Rosa Population Management Unit (PMU). All of the fire burned in Greater Sage Grouse winter-range as defined by the Nevada Department of Wildlife (NDOW). The fire also burned 197 acres of mule deer crucial winter habitat, 136 acres of bighorn habitat, which is a sensitive species on BLM and neighboring US Forest Service lands, and all of the fire area is defined as year-round habitat for pronghorn.

The Porcupine Fire affected two ecological two sites on BLM-administered lands. Approximately 95% of the BLM burned acres occurred in Ecological Site R024XY005NV, which is a loamy soil site, receiving 8-10” of precipitation annually.

Dominant species (in reference condition) include Wyoming big sagebrush (*Artemisia tridentata* ssp. *wyomingensis*) and Thurber's needlegrass (*Achnatherum thurberianum*). The remaining 5% of the fire area occurred in Ecological Site R024XY028NV, which is a loamy-soil site receiving 8-12" of precipitation annually. Dominant species (in reference condition) include Wyoming big sagebrush and bluebunch wheatgrass (*Pseudoroegneria spicata*). Approximately 150 acres of the fire affected area occurred on flat/gently rolling ground and 225 acres of the burned area occurred on steeper mountain slopes above the flats. Approximately 75 acres of the lower elevation, flatter areas were previously burned in the Peterman Fire in 2004 and were dominated by invasive annual grasses when the Porcupine Fire occurred.

The Porcupine Fire occurred within the Andorno Allotment.

A. Description of the Proposed Action with attached map(s) and any applicable mitigation measures.

Ground Seeding

The BLM proposes to ground seed a total of 125 acres of public land managed by BLM that burned due to lightning ignited wildfire in July 2013. Seeding would occur in the fall or winter with a preference for application in fall or early winter. A no-till drill would be preferentially utilized in order to minimize disturbance to naturally recovering vegetation or when no-till drills are unsuitable range drills utilizing depth bands which would limit soil penetration by the disks to 2" or less. In areas where rocky ground makes the use of a no-till drill infeasible, seed would be broadcast and lightly harrowed utilizing ATV/UTV or light tractor harrows. Project would seed with Wyoming big sagebrush, Sandberg's bluegrass (*Poa secunda*), bluebunch wheatgrass, and/or fourwing saltbush (*Atriplex canescens*). Other site-adapted native plant species would be utilized depending on seed and funding availability.

Objectives for ground seeding are as follows:

1. Obtain an average of 0.25 sagebrush plants per meter².
2. Obtain an average of 1 perennial, seeded species per meter².
3. Obtain 50% or greater perennial cover of the low potential perennial plant cover for the appropriate ecological site by the end of the third year from fire containment.
4. The ground seeding will result in lower abundance (density and cover) of invasive annual plant species and a higher abundance of desirable perennial plant species when compared with unseeded control areas (if controls are available).
5. Seeded species are well established. Grasses are reproductive.
6. Obtain the above results by the end of the third year after fire containment, which occurred on 6/10/2013.

Seedling Planting

Plant sagebrush seedlings in sloped areas which are not suitable for ground seeding activities. Seedlings would be containerized or bare-root planting stock, and would be planted in the fall of 2013, and/or 2014/2015, and also in the spring of 2014 and/or 2015/2016.

Objectives for hand planting are as follows:

1. Obtain a survival rate for all planted stock exceeding 50% after the first year of planting.
2. Maintain plant survival after the second year of planting.
3. Observe successful establishment, evidenced by new leader growth on or before the third year following planting.

Invasive Plants and Noxious Weeds Management

Manage invasive and noxious plant species within the fire-affected area to limit further infestation through active treatment of previously existing and newly established infestations of noxious weeds. Up to 20 acres of noxious weed infestations would be treated annually during 2014, 2015, and 2016.

Located infestations, if any, would be treated with BLM approved herbicides as appropriate, and in compliance with BLM operating procedures and label requirements for BLM approved herbicides. Treatments may include one or more of the following chemicals depending on species present in project location:

Imazapyr

Glyphosate

2,4-D

Picloram

Dicamba

Metsulphuron methyl

Clorsulphuron

Objectives for invasive species treatments are as follows:

1. Thoroughly inventory and document areas infested by invasive and noxious weeds within the Porcupine Fire perimeter.
2. Prohibit noxious weed infestations from expanding beyond their current size and reduce or eliminate infestations where possible, with critical resource areas being prioritized for control efforts.

Monitoring

All treatments would be monitored using established protocols summarized below for treatment efficacy and efficiency.

All vegetation treatments would be monitored for effectiveness using point-intercept, gap intercept and frame density techniques modified from Monitoring Manual for Grasses, Shrublands, and Savanna Ecosystems (Herrick, et. al., 2005) techniques outlined in BLM Technical Reference 1734-4 (BLM 1996), to determine perennial cover, and density of seeded and non-seeded plant species during the three years following fire containment on these areas.

B. Land Use Plan (LUP) Conformance

LUP Name: Paradise-Denio Management Framework Plan (MFP)

Date Approved: 1982

*List applicable LUPs (for example, resource management plans; activity, project, management, or program plans; or applicable amendments thereto)

The proposed action is in conformance with the applicable LUP because it is specifically provided for in the following LUP decisions:

The proposed treatments are in conformance with **the Paradise-Denio MFP**, .45 Soil-Water-Air which states in part;

1. "Consider rehabilitating areas which have had protective vegetative cover destroyed by wildfire....." "Utilize seed and other watershed stabilization techniques as required."
2. "Increase existing forage by artificial methods wherever appropriate. Land treatment is defined as vegetation manipulation (i.e. plowing, burning, spraying and/or seeding)."

And section .46 Wildlife-Aquatic Wildlife states in part;

1. "Initiate any necessary fire rehabilitation measures immediately after suppression of fires affecting significant areas of important wildlife habitat including but not limited to reseeding of burned areas."

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 (objective, terms, and conditions):

Paradise-Denio MFP (1982)

Although not specifically addressed, stabilization and rehabilitation treatments conform to wildlife and watershed objectives WL-1, which state in part; “Provide for improvement or maintenances of wildlife habitat in the planning area in order to assure that sufficient quantity, quality and diversity of habitat exists to accommodate the needs of all species of wildlife...”

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

- **Vegetation Treatment on BLM Lands in Thirteen Western States Environmental Impact Statement, 05/91**, Record of Decision 07/91.
- **Normal Year Fire Rehabilitation Plan Environmental Assessment EA# NV-020-04-21, 06/2004**, Decision Record and Finding of No Significant Impact 8/19/04.
- **Vegetation Treatment Using Herbicides on BLM Lands in Seventeen Western States Programmatic Final Environmental Impact Statement, 07/2007**, Record of Decision 9/29/07.
- **Integrated Weed Management Environmental Assessment NV-020-02-19, 8/07/02**, Decision Record and Finding of No Significant Impact 8/27/02.

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).

- **IM NV 2012-043 Greater Sage-Grouse Interim Management Policies and Procedures** (December 2011)
- **IM 2012-044 BLM National Greater Sage-Grouse Land Use Plan Strategy. A Report on National Greater Sage-Grouse Conservation Measures.** Produced by: Sage-grouse National Technical Team, 12/21/2011 (pp 27)
- **Biological Opinion for the Normal Year Fire Rehabilitation Plan** (August 2004)

D. NEPA Adequacy Criteria

1. Is the new proposed action a feature of, or essentially similar to, an alternative analyzed in the existing NEPA documents(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?

Documentation of answer and explanation:

Yes, the Normal Fire Rehabilitation Plan EA-NV-020-04-21 (DR/FONSI 8/19/04), addresses the proposed treatments including planting, drill seeding, broadcast seeding, and aerial seeding. Control of noxious weeds is analyzed in the Normal Fire

Rehabilitation Plan EA-NV-020-04-21 (DR/FONSI 8/19/04), Integrated Weed Management EA-NV-020-02-19 (DR/FONSI 8/27/02) and the Vegetation Treatments Using Herbicides on Bureau of Land Management Lands in 17 Western States EIS (ROD 9/29/07).

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

Documentation of answer and explanation:

Yes, the range of alternatives analyzed in the existing NEPA documents are appropriate with respect to the current proposed action and current environmental concerns, interests, resource values and circumstances.

3. Is the existing analysis valid in light of any new information or circumstances (such as, rangeland health standard assessment, recent endangered species listings, 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?

Documentation of answer and explanation:

Yes, the existing analysis is adequate and there is no new information or circumstances regarding the current proposal known at this time.

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?

Documentation of answer and explanation:

Yes, the analytical approach used in the existing NEPA documents continues to be appropriate for the current proposed action.

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

Documentation of answer and explanation:

Yes, public involvement and interagency review associated with existing NEPA documents are adequate. In addition, there has been coordination with Nevada Department of Wildlife regarding the Porcupine Fire ESR actions in the form of a meeting on 10/30/2013 and coordination with the affected permittee in the form of a phone call on 11/14/2013 to discuss fire-affected resources and restoration priorities.

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D. Persons/Agencies/BLM Staff Consulted

Name /Title	Resource/Agency Represented	Signature/Date	Comments (Attach if more room is needed)
Wes Barry	Range	/s Wes Barry 10/22/2013	
Rob Burton	Veg/Soils	/s Rob Burton 10/24/2013	
Pat Haynal	Cultural	/s Pat Haynal 10/22/2013	
John McCann	Hydrology/Riparian	/s John McCann 10/24/2013	
Nancy Spencer-Morris	Wildlife	/s Nancy Spencer-Morris 11/6/2013	none
Greg Lynch	Fisheries	/s Greg Lynch 10/24/2013	
Allie Brandt	GIS	/s Allie Brandt 10/22/2013	none
Eric Baxter	ESR Lead	/s Eric Baxter 11/12/2013	
Lynn Ricci OR Zwaantje Rorex	NEPA	/s Lynn Ricci 11/15/2013	
Samantha Gooch	Wild Horse/Burro	/s Samantha Gooch 10/24/2013	none
Zwaantje Rorex acting for S. Gracia	Lands w/ Wilderness Characteristics	/s Zwaantje Rorex 11/13/2013	Project is in unit 852 no presence of wilderness characteristics
Mark Williams	Fire/Fuels	/s Mark Williams 11/12/2013	
Mark Turney	Public Affairs	/s Mark Turney 11/4/2013	

Note: 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.

Conclusion *(If you found that 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' compliance with the requirements of the NEPA.

/s Eric Baxter
Signature of Project Lead

/s Lynn Ricci
Signature of NEPA Coordinator

/s Derek Messmer
Signature of the Responsible Official

12/11/2013
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.