

**UNITED STATES
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT
Hassayampa Field Office**

**Hassayampa Wildland-Urban Interface Fire Defense System
DOI-BLM-AZ-P010-2014-0030-EA**

Finding of No Significant Impact

I, the undersigned authorized officer, considering the criteria provided by 40 CFR 1508.27 and the information contained in the Hassayampa Wildland-Urban Interface (WUI) Fire Defense System Environmental Assessment (DOI-BLM-AZ-P010-2014-0030-EA), and as explained further below, find that the proposed action will not significantly affect the quality of the human environment. Therefore, an environmental impact statement does not need to be prepared.

Context

This environmental assessment (EA) has been prepared to analyze the proposed project to reduce the intensity and severity of future wildland fires in the WUI by reducing hazardous fuels on the ground and by creating a defensible buffer to provide for a safer suppression environment. The project area consists of 22,084 acres of BLM administered land and all of those acres will be targeted for treatment.

The Proposed Action would include mechanical treatment methods, biological treatment methods (i.e. prescribed grazing), chemical treatment methods (i.e. herbicides), prescribed fire and reclamation efforts (i.e. seeding and monitoring).

The EA for the WUI Fire Defense System was made available to the interested public for a 30-day review and comment period. No comments were received during the open comment period.

Intensity

1. Impacts that may be both beneficial and adverse

The EA considered both beneficial and adverse impacts of the reduction of hazardous fuels from the proposed treatment units within the Hassayampa WUI Fire Defense System.

Design features are in place (and documented in the EA) to minimize or reduce adverse environmental impacts that would occur from implementation of the Proposed Action. Under the Proposed Action, the following would be accomplished:

- Reducing shrub density from current hazardous levels
- Reducing overall fuel loading (burnable above-ground biomass) in the WUI

- Reducing average height and decreasing horizontal continuity to reduce anticipated fire behavior in WUI
- Reducing shrub fuel loadings in hazard areas in order to reduce fire behavior in the WUI
- Restoring native vegetation in areas where non-native and noxious weeds have taken over in the WUI.

2. Degree of effect on public health and safety

The design features outlined in the EA would be followed to conduct the proposed hazardous fuel reduction projects. These features are designed to protect human health and safety. Therefore, the Proposed Action would have minimal effects on public health or safety.

3. Unique characteristics of the geographic area such as proximity to historic or cultural resources, park lands, prime farmlands, wetlands, wild and scenic rivers, or ecologically critical areas:

There are no park lands, prime farmlands, wetlands, wild and scenic rivers, or ecologically critical areas within the proposed treatment units.

Significant impacts to cultural resources are not anticipated because the BLM would conduct a cultural resources inventory in compliance with Section 106 of the NHPA, as amended, at each treatment unit prior to ground-disturbing activities associated with the Proposed Action. The BLM would avoid all cultural resources identified in the project area and have included design features in the proposed action to do so.

Long-term impacts to floodplains are not anticipated because the BLM would avoid occupancy and modification of the 100-year floodplain during project activities.

4. Degree to which the possible effects on the quality of the human environment are likely to be highly controversial:

The effects that would occur from implementation of the proposed hazardous fuel reduction are well known and understood. This is demonstrated through the “Effects Analysis” section in the EA. No unresolved issues concerning the impacts to resources or the human environment were raised following the public outreach process.

5. Degree to which the possible effects on the quality of the human environment are highly uncertain or involve unique or unknown risk.

The Proposed Action has no known effects on the human environment which are considered highly uncertain or involve unique or unknown risks. This is demonstrated through the “Effects Analysis” section in the EA.

6. Degree to which the action may establish a precedent for future actions with significant effects or represents a decision in principle about a future consideration:

Future projects occurring within the proposed treatment units would be evaluated independently with the appropriate level of NEPA documentation. The Proposed Action does not set a precedent for future actions.

7. Whether the action is related to other actions with individually insignificant but cumulatively significant impacts:

The Proposed Action is not related to other actions within the project area that would result in cumulatively significant impacts. Proper environmental analysis would be completed for all future actions. Cumulative impacts were analyzed in the EA.

8. Degree to which the action may adversely affect district, sites, highways, structures, or objects listed on the National Register of Historic Places or may cause loss or destruction of significant scientific, cultural, or historical resources:

The Proposed Action would not affect significant scientific, cultural, or historic resources. The BLM would conduct a cultural resources inventory in compliance with Section 106 of the NHPA, as amended, at each treatment unit prior to ground-disturbing activities associated with the Proposed Action. The BLM would avoid all cultural resources identified in the project area as included in the design features of the Proposed Action.

9. Degree to which the action may adversely affect an endangered or threatened species or its critical habitat:

The project design features were developed to minimize or prevent effects to threatened and endangered species or their habitat or proposed habitat.

10. Whether the action threatens a violation of federal, state, or local environmental protection law:

The Proposed Action would not violate or threaten to violate any federal, state, or local law or requirement imposed for the protection of the environment. The Proposed Action is in conformance with all applicable regulations under Title 43 of the Code of Federal Regulations.



Rem Hawes
Field Manager
Hassayampa Field Office



Date