U.S. Department of the Interior
Bureau of Land Management
Coeur d'Alene Field Office
3815 N Schreiber Way
Coeur d'Alene, Idaho 83815

Determination of NEPA Adequacy (DNA) Worksheet

Blackwell Island Native Plant Garden
DOI-BLM-ID-C010-2014-0005-DNA

A. Description of the Proposed Action

The BLM proposes to establish and maintain a native plant garden at its developed Blackwell Island Recreation Site on the outskirts of Coeur d'Alene, Kootenai County, Idaho. The garden area would be located within the existing recreation site boundary, which was built on a man-made island where the Spokane River exits Lake Coeur d'Alene. A portion of the proposed garden area was graded and used as a staging area during construction of the recreation facility (Figures 1, 2, 3).

Figure 1. Blackwell Island Recreation Site, following construction. Project area lies in foreground, below the site access road, in the lower one-third of the photo. Note silt fence (thin, black line) is still in place between access road and a portion of the canal.

Figure 2. Blackwell Island Recreation Site, the first summer of use after construction. Project area is the triangular-shape piece of land in the lower left corner of the photo, between the site access road and the canal.

Figure 3. Blackwell Island Recreation Site construction phase, November 2002. Project area is just left of the pavement.

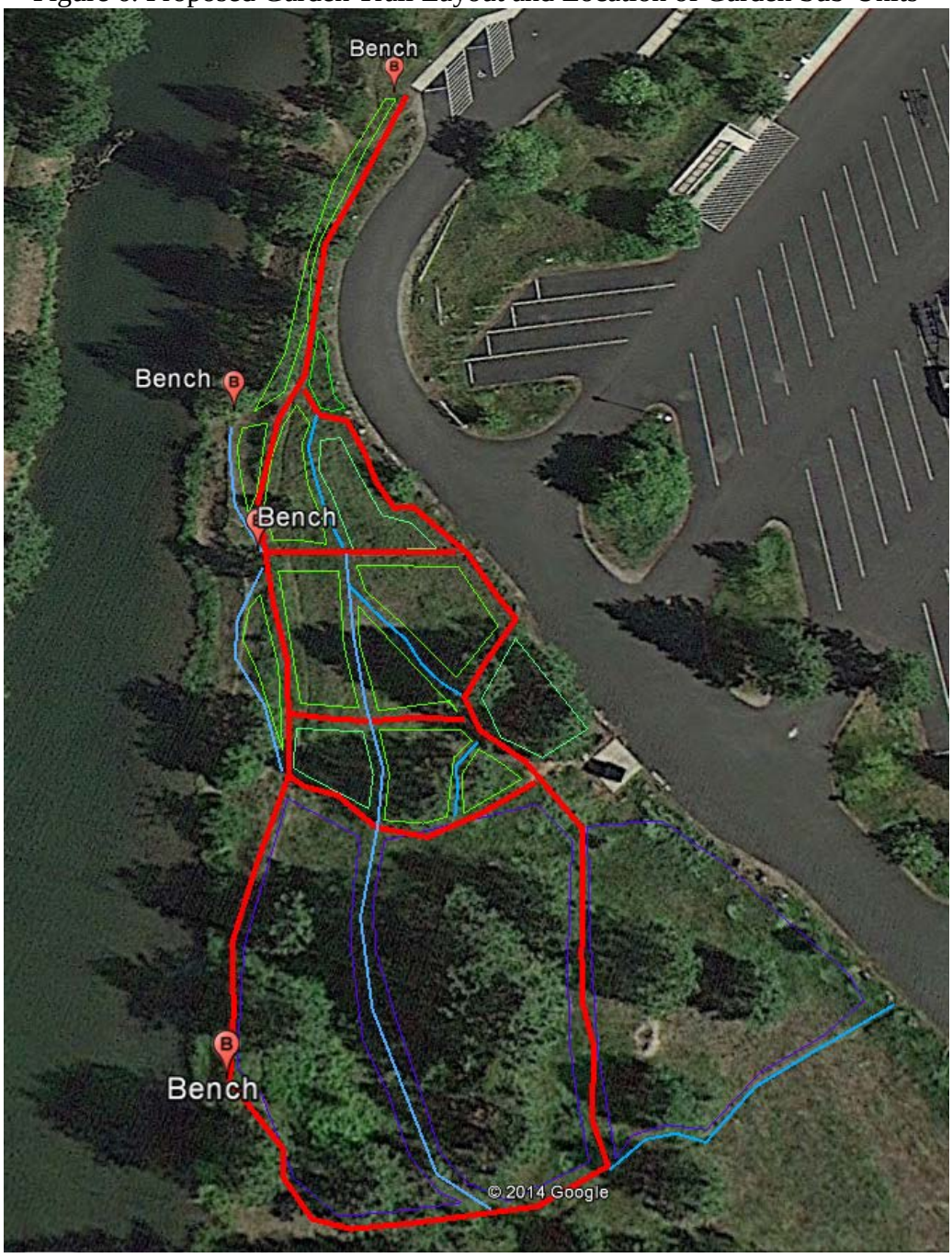
Native and non-native vegetation currently grows in the proposed garden area (Figures 4, 5). As much existing native vegetation as possible occurring within the garden boundary would be incorporated into the garden layout. Species native to northern Idaho would be planted in the garden, including those species which attract native pollinators.

Figure 4. North Unit of garden from northern end of unit; looking south. Canal on right.

Figure 5. South Unit of garden from southeastern side of unit; looking approximately northwest.

The approximate area of the garden would be 0.33 acres (see Figure 6) and include two main units: A North Unit with eleven sub-units separated by several short trail segments; and a South Unit containing three sub-units separated by relatively longer and fewer trail segments.

Figure 6. Proposed Garden Trail Layout and Location of Garden Sub-Units



The project would include site preparation and planting phases. The site preparation phase would occur during summer and fall 2014 and consist of the following tasks:

- construct 900 feet of 5 foot-wide Americans with Disabilities Act (1990)-compliant trails (see Figure 6) using a small piece of machinery such as a Bobcat or skidsteer; surface would be compacted gravel
- construct 500 feet of 2 foot-wide foot trails (see Figure 6) using handtools; surface would be lightly compacted (due to foot traffic) and covered with bark mulch
- install two to three interpretive signs (e.g., 3-foot x 4-foot sign supported by two 4-inch x 4-inch posts), as funding allows
- install up to four benches, as funding allows
- place rocks and woody debris (e.g., large branches, root wads) with a small excavator to create planting microsites and to enhance garden aesthetics

The planting phase would occur during late fall 2014 and early spring 2015 and initially focus on the northern unit, due to funding constraints, and include the following tasks:

- sow seed for certain wildflower species in fall 2014
- plant container-grown plants in spring 2015; holes for largest shrubs (up to 5-gallon size) may be dug by a small excavator
- install small signs (e.g., small placard on 12-inch tall ¼-inch diameter stake) identifying the plant species growing in the garden

Local youth and other volunteers would be involved in the planting process. When additional funding is received, planting in the southern unit would be focused on augmenting the native species in the understory (wildflowers, grasses) because there are more existing native shrubs and trees than in the northern unit.

B. Location

Kootenai County; T.50N, R.4W, Section 14, Lots 3, 4, and 5; Boise Meridian.

C. Land Use Plan Conformance

In accordance with the Federal Land Policy and Management Act (FLPMA), this proposed action has been reviewed for conformance with the Coeur d'Alene Resource Management Plan (RMP), approved June 2007. It is consistent with the following decisions from the RMP:

Goal VN-1 Maintain native and desirable non-native plant communities.

D. National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) Documents

The following NEPA document(s) covers the proposed action:

Blackwell Island Recreation Site Development Environmental Assessment (EA)
ID-410-EA-2454
Decision signed 7/14/1995

E. NEPA Adequacy Criteria

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

The proposed action is essentially similar to actions included in the proposed action (Alternative 1) in the existing NEPA document.

In the 1995 site development EA, Section 2c. of the proposed action describes trails, wildlife observation and interpretation at Blackwell Island:

A general purpose hiking trail will be constructed on the north island. It will form a single loop around the perimeter of the island and will be approximately 0.32 miles long and 5-feet wide. The trail will be essentially level following the natural flat topography. The trail may be paved, aggregate-surfaced or left natural, provided the surface is graded smooth and firmly compacted. The trail will be accessed by a foot bridge.

A wildlife observation trail approximately 800-feet long will be built from the east corner of the parking lot to and along the river wetlands. Across wet areas, the trail will be an elevated boardwalk to minimize ground disturbance and to confine pedestrian traffic.

Signs and brochures will be used to describe plants and animals that can be viewed from the trail.

Though the proposed hiking trail on the north island ultimately was not built, impacts associated with its construction, as well as the wildlife observation trail, were analyzed in the 1995 EA. Impacts due to the construction of trails within the proposed garden area would be very similar to what were analyzed in 1995. The interpretive signs and brochures mentioned in 1995 are also a component of the current proposed action.

Section 4 of the proposed action in the 1995 site development EA stated:

The <u>developed portion of the main island will be landscaped</u>, which will be irrigated. Shrubs and ground cover will be used to direct and control pedestrian traffic. A mixture of deciduous and evergreen species will be used. <u>Plants requiring limited maintenance</u> but that also provide spring and fall color <u>will be favored</u>. Grassy drainages will have mixed turf grass <u>hardy to the northern Idaho climate</u>. Trees will be used to provide

shade. Existing ponderosa pines in the way of the proposed developments, if not too large, will be transplanted and used for this purpose.

Outside of the developed portions of the site, native vegetation will be favored. Noxious weeds will be replaced with native grasses, shrubs, and trees to improve food and shelter for wildlife. …The area between the highway and the development will be heavily planted with trees and shrubs to create a visual and sound barrier. A similar vegetation barrier will be planted on both the main island and the small island to buffer the BLM property from adjacent residential areas to the west. Canal banks will be planted with willows and other shrubs to hold the soil and prevent pedestrian use.

Coyote willow, Douglas spiraea, mockorange, redoiser dogwood, snowberry, Wood's rose, chokecherry, Douglas hawthorn, blue or black elderberry, Saskatoon serviceberry, aspen, black cottonwood, and ponderosa pine will be planted.

Table 1 lists their values for recreation and wildlife. Older plants in one-gallon containers will be used to ensure better survival from browsing animals. Where feasible, existing plants will be transplanted from the proposed development areas.

Table 1. NATIVE SHRUBS AND TREES TO BE PLANTED ON BLACKWELL ISLAND

Height	Spacing	Species	Wildlife	Recreation	
Low (3-15')	5 feet	coyote willow#*	cover	foot traffic	
		Douglas spiraea#	cover	ornamental	
		mockorange	nesting	ornamental	
		redosier dogwood#	food/nesting	ornamental	
		snowberry	food/cover	Landscape	
		Wood's rose*	food/nesting	foot traffic	
Medium (10-25')	15 feet	chokecherry	food	Screen	
		Douglas hawthorn*	nesting	foot traffic	
		elderberry	food	ornamental	
		serviceberry	food	ornamental	
Tall (30-100')	20 feet	aspen	nesting	Shade	
		black cottonwood	nesting	Shade	
		ponderosa pine	nesting	Shade	

- streambank location is best
* - growth form helps direct foot traffic

The 1995 EA emphasized the use of native plant species outside the developed portions of the Blackwell Island recreation site, which is where the proposed garden would be located. Also, most of the native species in Table 1 of the 1995 EA are on the list of species that would be planted in the garden. Currently, non-native grasses and Idaho noxious weeds dominate the understory of the garden area. Planting native species and controlling weeds would move the project area closer to the intent described in 1995.

Section 3 of the 1995 proposed action emphasized site accessibility. In the native garden, about 900 out of 1400 feet of the trail system would be ADA-compliant.

Section 6 of the 1995 proposed action stated: "Native shrub and tree species, identified in Table 1 (see above), will be planted on the island to improve food and shelter requirements for wildlife". The proposed garden would contain a diversity of native plant species to support northern Idaho wildlife.

The following pertinent mitigation measures recommended in the 1995 EA were accepted in the project decision:

-all soil disturbance should be minimized in extent to that which is necessary to accomplish construction
-minimize the time between soil disturbance and protection from erosion by surfacing or planting of disturbed areas
-amendments of organic mulch to the planting hole are recommended when planting trees and shrubs, especially on the main island, due to restrictive soil conditions
-favor native species over introduced species when landscaping the area

These mitigation measures would be followed for the garden project.

b) 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)?

The garden area would be located within the existing recreation site boundary, which was analyzed in the 1995 EA.

c) If there are differences, can you explain why they are not substantial?

Documentation of answer and explanation:

As more research has occurred and knowledge has accumulated over the last decade or so, an increased awareness has developed regarding pollinators and their role in plant communities. Therefore, planting wildflowers, in addition to the tree, shrub, and grass species mentioned in

the 1995 EA, would enhance plant community diversity and benefit native pollinator species on 0.33 acres of the recreation site.

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, and resource values?

Documentation of answer and explanation:

Yes, the 1995 EA included three alternatives: Alternative 1, proposed action; Alternative 2, a smaller-scale recreation site development; and Alternative 3, No Action. The proposed action, with two modifications and accepted mitigation measures, was implemented with the 7/14/1995 decision. The modifications included not building a foot bridge to connect the north and south islands; and not building a nature trail on the north island. The mitigation measures for water, soils, and vegetation were incorporated into the decision. In addition, mitigation measures for wildlife/T&E species were incorporated except for the recommendation to build a fence excluding dogs from the wetland habitat. Rationale for the decision included a statement that the wildlife mitigation measures "are all intended to reduce impact to wildlife and its associated habitat".

The range of alternatives analyzed in 1995 is adequate for the scale and location of the proposed garden project. Furthermore, some, and possibly all, of the garden area was affected by the previous recreation site construction, whether it was surface grading or materials stockpiling, for example. So, disturbance impacts to the proposed garden site were covered in the site development EA.

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:

There is no new information or circumstance that invalidates the existing analysis.

Based on the most recent Idaho BLM Special Status Plants List (2013), no threatened, endangered, or BLM Sensitive plant species occur at the project site. No potential habitat for the aquatic plant, water howellia (federally-listed, threatened), is present.

Bull trout were federally listed as threatened under the Endangered Species Act on June 10, 1998 by the USFWS (63 FR 31647). Coeur d'Alene Lake itself contains bull trout, however little is known about the role of the lake in providing habitat for bull trout populations within the Coeur d'Alene Basin. Bull trout may use the Spokane River in

conjunction with the rest of Coeur d'Alene Lake for foraging and over wintering habitat. No potential bull trout spawning habitat exists adjacent to the proposed project site. Consultation was completed with the US Fish and Wildlife Service on September 15, 1998 for all ongoing and future actions, which included the Blackwell Island Recreation Site Development.

The USFWS issued a final rule for bull trout critical habitat on September 26, 2005, and on October 18, 2010 issued a revised designation of bull trout critical habitat, which includes Coeur d'Alene Lake, but not the Spokane River. There would be no effect on bull trout critical habitat from implementing the proposed project.

While most project implementation would occur outside the nesting season, if vegetation removal or ground disturbance would occur within the nesting season for migratory and Special Status birds, a survey would be conducted prior to disturbance. Any nests found would be flagged and buffered. Activity within 25 meters of the nest would be postponed until the completion of the nesting period. Distances may be greater (up to 100m) if raptor nests are found.

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:

The effects that would result from the implementation of the proposed action are similar to those analyzed in the existing NEPA document. The 1995 EA addressed construction impacts to at least part of the proposed garden area because it was graded and used for stockpiling material. An analysis of impacts associated with trail building at Blackwell Island was also completed in 1995, though not for the exact area included in the proposed garden. Impacts due to trail construction would be similar to what was analyzed in the 1995 EA, but would likely be of a lower magnitude due to trail surfaces being packed gravel (ADA-accessible) or mulch-covered (non-ADA-accessible) rather than covered with concrete or pavement. The 1995 EA also discussed impacts resulting from planting native vegetation within the recreation site. The 1995 EA emphasized site accessibility, as would the proposed garden project. One difference between the 1995 EA and the proposed garden project is scale: The site construction analysis covered the entire 32 acres managed by BLM at Blackwell Island, while the garden area is a 0.33 acre portion of the total acreage.

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, the public involvement and interagency review conducted during the development of the existing NEPA document are adequate for the current proposed action. The BLM conducted 3 public meetings where presentations were made regarding the Blackwell Island Recreation Site construction project. The project was also covered by the local media.

F. Persons/Agencies Consulted

Bill Cook, BLM Project Leader for 1995 Site Development EA
Terry Kincaid, BLM Outdoor Recreation Planner for 1995 Site Development EA

Consultation with the Idaho State Historic Preservation Officer concluded for the recreation site development in 1995. A letter was sent by the BLM to the Coeur d'Alene Tribe and phone messages were left with the tribal cultural staff in 1995, but no response was received. In 1995, a "no effect" determination was made by the BLM for project impacts to bald eagles; therefore, no formal or informal consultation with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service occurred. A Clean Water Act, Section 404 permit was obtained from the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers for discharge of dredged or fill material into the adjacent waterways.

G. Conclusion

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 the NEPA.

/s/ 6/11/14

Kurt E. Pavlat Date
Field Manager