

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

Project Lead: Coreen Francis / Keith Barker
Field Office: Sierra Front Field Office
Lead Office: Sierra Front Field Office
Case File/Project Number: n/a
NEPA NUMBER: DOI-BLM-NV-C020-2014-0029-DNA
Project Name: Alpine County Forest Health Project
Applicant Name: BLM
Project Location: Alpine County, California
T10N R20E Sec 3,4,9,10,22 & 27 and T12N R19E Sec 26 & 35

A. Description of the Proposed Action and any applicable mitigation measures:

The Proposed Action would implement a combination of manual and mechanical treatments using a combination of service contracts, sale contracts for timber and vegetative products, public woodcutting and agency personnel approximately 262 acres of public lands to restore a forest environment with a vegetative structure that more closely resembles the historic condition (Map 1). The project would be a continuation of management practices that have been in place for the past 25 years. Vegetative treatments would involve thinning brush and trees.

Treatment Activities

Manual Treatment - Manual treatment involves the use of hand tools and hand-operated power tools to cut or prune herbaceous and woody species and hand piling residual biomass. The Proposed Action would include approximately 117 acres of manual treatments.

Mechanical Treatment - Mechanical treatment involves the use of wheeled and tracked vehicles with attached implements designed to fell, shred, chip, skid, pile and load herbaceous and woody species/biomass. The Proposed Action would include approximately 145 acres of mechanical treatments.

Removal Treatment - Access to the dead and dying trees is limited by lack of roads and multiple ownerships, therefore removal may not be possible. If access is obtained and where the removal of wood would not create long term visual or detrimental soil impacts, horses and/or small equipment such as a utility vehicle (UTV), rubber tired tractor, or bobcat may be used to take wood offsite.

Tree Planting Treatment - In the next five years individual incense cedar, western juniper, and pinyon pine seedlings may be planted underneath Jeffrey pines infected with dwarf mistletoe. Reforestation techniques such as tubing, shading, mulching, and scalping may be used as warranted.

Treatment Unit Descriptions, Activities and Specifications:

Specification Definitions

Fire Regime Condition Class

A natural fire regime is a general classification of the role fire would play across a landscape in the absence of modern human mechanical intervention.

Table 1. Fire regime groups.

Group	Frequency	Severity
I	0-35 years	Low/ mixed
II	0-35 years	Replacement
III	35-200 years	Mixed/ low
IV	35-200 years	Replacement
V	200+ years	Replacement/ any severity

Fire regime condition classes measure the degree of departure from reference conditions. The three fire regime condition classes are defined as follows:

- Condition Class 1-Vegetation and fire attributes intact and functioning. The risk of losing key ecosystem components is low;
- Condition Class 2- The fire frequencies have departed by one or more return interval resulting in moderate changes in fire and vegetation attributes. The risk of losing key ecosystem components is moderate; and
- Condition Class 3- The fire frequencies have departed by multiple return intervals resulting in dramatic changes in fire and vegetation attributes. The risk of losing key ecosystems components is high.

Unit Name: AIRPORT ROAD EAST	Size: 52 acres
Slope: 10-30%	Aspect: North
Fire Regime: I	Condition Class: 2
Description: The unit is located primarily north of Airport Road, directly east of the residences on Airport Road. Unit access would be from Airport Road. An ephemeral drainage is adjacent to the unit. The vegetative overstory consists of Jeffrey pine and pinyon pine. Dwarf mistletoe is present in the Jeffrey pine southeast of the residences. The vegetative understory consists of bitterbrush, sagebrush, manzanita, grasses and forbs.	
Treatment Activity: MECHANICAL	
Treatment Specifications: 1) masticate 80% of the understory brush in a mosaic pattern leaving a narrow buffer mostly untreated along Airport Road; 2) masticate pinyon pine so that no pinyon pine canopy is within 20 feet of a Jeffrey pine bole and pinyon pine canopy spacing is a minimum of 20 feet; 3) masticate Jeffrey pine \leq 8 inches DBH so Jeffrey pine bole spacing is a minimum of 20 feet; 4) masticate 90% or more of the standing dead pinyon pine; 5) products of mastication to be treated to lie within 12 inches of the ground.	

Unit Name: FAYE LUTHER	Size: Up to 65 acres out of the 260 polygon
Slope: 5-40%	Aspect: East
Fire Regime: I	Condition Class: 2
Description: The unit is located west of the Faye Luther trail head on highway 206 south of Minden Nevada. The vegetative overstory consists of Jeffrey pine and pinyon pine. The vegetative understory consists of bitterbrush, sagebrush, manzanita, grasses and forbs.	
Treatment Activity: Create a 60 foot buffer zone between the mistletoe infection and healthy trees by removing infected trees on the fringes of uninfected trees. During the summer of 2014 and subsequent summers as needed, individual trees or groups of trees would be felled, cut into small chunks, limbs and tops would be scattered.	
Treatment Specifications: 1) cut, then buck tree trunks into small chunks and leave to dry.	
Mitigation Measures: 1) only dead and dying trees (showing signs of bark beetle attack and/or mortality) would be felled in response to the beetle activity; 2) trees with moderate mistletoe ratings (3 or greater) would also be felled when they are on the fringe between the mistletoe infection and healthy trees; 3) trees with mistletoe ratings of 2 or less, also located on the fringe, would have their lower branches pruned in an effort to save these trees for visual objectives along the trail.	

B. Land Use Plan (LUP) Conformance

List any applicable LUPs and their dates.

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

Carson City Field Office Consolidated Resource Management Plan, 2001. (CRMP)

Wildlife - Desired Outcomes (CRMP pg. WLD-2)

- Maintain and improve wildlife habitat, including riparian/stream habitats, and reduce habitat conflicts while providing for other appropriate uses.

Forestry - Desired Outcomes (CRMP pg. FOR-1)

- Forest and woodland management will be based on the principles of multiple use, sustained yield, and ecosystem management.

Forestry – Land Use Allocations (CRMP pg. FOR-1)

- Allow commercial timber sales (Markleeville and Long Valley Planning Units) consistent with VRM class designations and objectives for scenic value management.
- Commercial sales will not be allowed in the Class II VRM area (Indian Creek Recreation Lands) that is highly visible from recreation developments unless needed for disease or hazard reduction.
- Salvage and sanitation cutting of commercial timber and other cutting consistent with VRM and wildlife guidelines will be provided for in the Long Valley and Markleeville Planning Units.

Forestry – Implementation Level Decisions (CRMP pg. FOR-2)

- Vegetation manipulations such as chaining, burns, and chemical treatments will be allowed only after attempts have been made to sell or dispose of forest products through forestry sales programs.

Carson City Field Office Fire Management Plan, 2004. (FMP)

The Proposed Action is located in the Alpine (NV-030-05). Management direction applicable to this proposal includes the following:

Unit Name: RESERVOIR EAST	Size: 19 acres
Slope: 0-10%	Aspect: Flat
Fire Regime: I	Condition Class: 2
Description: The unit is located primarily east of Indian Creek Reservoir. The vegetative overstory consists of Jeffrey pine and pinyon pine. The vegetative understory consists of bitterbrush, sagebrush, manzanita, grasses and forbs.	
Treatment Activity: MECHANICAL	
Treatment Specifications: 1) masticate 50% of the pinyon pine \leq 12 inches; 2) masticate pinyon pine regardless of size where pinyon pine canopy is within 20 feet of a Jeffrey pine bole; 3) products of mastication to be treated to lie within 12 inches of the ground.	

Unit Name: HANGMANS	Size: 27 acres
Slope: 20-40%	Aspect: East
Fire Regime: I	Condition Class: 2
Description: The unit is located west of Hangmans Bridge on the west side of Hwy 89. The vegetative overstory consists of Jeffrey pine and pinyon pine. The vegetative understory consists of bitterbrush, sagebrush, manzanita, grasses and forbs.	
Treatment Activity: MANUAL (cut)	
Treatment Specifications: 1) cut up to 50% of the pinyon pine and Jeffrey \leq 8 inches; 2) cut pinyon pine regardless of size where pinyon pine canopy is within 20 feet of a Jeffrey pine \geq 24 inches dbh; 3).	

Unit Name: CURTZ EAST	Size: 25 acres
Slope: 0-20%	Aspect: West
Fire Regime: I	Condition Class: 2
Description: The unit is located on both sides of Airport Road east of Curtz Lake. The vegetative overstory consists of Jeffrey pine and pinyon pine. The vegetative understory consists of bitterbrush, sagebrush, manzanita, grasses and forbs.	
Treatment Activity: MANUAL (cut)	
Treatment Specifications East side of Airport Road: 1) cut up to 50% of the pinyon pine and Jeffrey \leq 8 inches; 2) cut pinyon pine regardless of size where pinyon pine canopy is within 20 feet of a Jeffrey pine \geq 24 inches dbh. West side of Airport Road: cut 90% or more of the pinyon pine.	

Unit Name: POOR BOY EAST	Size: 74 acres
Slope: 0-25%	Aspect: Various
Fire Regime: I	Condition Class: 2
Description: The unit is located between Hangmans Bridge and Poor Boy Road. The vegetative overstory consists of Jeffrey pine and pinyon pine. The vegetative understory consists of bitterbrush, sagebrush, manzanita, grasses and forbs.	
Treatment Activity: MECHANICAL	
Treatment Specifications: 1) masticate 80% of the understory brush in a mosaic pattern; 2) Masticate pinyon pine so that no pinyon pine canopy is within 20 feet of a Jeffrey pine bole and pinyon pine canopy spacing is a minimum of 20 feet; 3) masticate Jeffrey pine \leq 8 inches DBH so Jeffrey pine bole spacing is a minimum of 20 feet; 4) masticate 90% or more of the standing dead pinyon pine; 5) products of mastication to be treated to lie within 12 inches of the ground.	

Carson City Field Office Fire Management Plan, 2004. (FMP)

The Proposed Action is located in the Alpine (NV-030-05). Management direction applicable to this proposal includes the following:

FMU Fire Management Objectives Priority Statement (*FMP, 2004 pg. 99*)

- Maintain or improve the condition of the public rangelands to enhance productivity for all rangeland and watershed values. *Citation: CRMP. pg. LSG-1.1.*
- Maintain a sufficient quality and diversity of habitat and forage for livestock, wildlife, and wild horses through natural regeneration and/or vegetation manipulation. (*CRMP pg. LSG-2A*)
- Restore fire as an integral part of the ecosystem; improve the diversity of the vegetation, and to reduce fire hazard fuels. (*CRMP pg. FIR-2.1*)

FMU Prescribed Fire Strategy: (*FMP pg. 102*)

- Prescribed fire may be used in a coordinated manner with cooperators in critical areas to reduce the threat of catastrophic wildfire, increase the manageability of wildfire, and maintain or improve ecosystem condition. Management action should appear to be natural and not create strong visual impacts.
- Utilize prescribed fire to modify vegetation communities and achieve fuels, habitat, watershed, and riparian objectives. Prescribed fire may be utilized to prevent pinyon and white fir encroachment into Jeffrey pine and sagebrush sites, reduce fuel loads in Jeffrey pine stands, create mosaic habitat patterns on a landscape scale, restore watershed functions, improve infiltration rates, and increase perennial stream flow.

Non-Fire Fuels Treatment Strategies: (*FMP pg. 103*)

- Priority will be given to fuel treatment projects in the wildland urban interface (Markleeville, Woodford, Indian Creek Reservoir) designed to protect life and private property. Techniques to accomplish this will include thinning, chipping, mowing, mastication, and seeding of fire resistant species.
- Hazardous fuels treatment would be considered in combination with resource driven vegetation modification projects to achieve mutually beneficial vegetation, habitat, watershed, cultural resource, and fuels objectives. Hazardous fuels loads would be treated in order to reduce rates of fire spread, and the threat of escaped fires.
- Utilize mechanical, chemical, and biological treatments to modify vegetation communities and achieve fuels, habitat, watershed, and riparian objectives.
- Non-fire fuels projects may be designed to maintain, restore, or enhance high value habitat areas. Projects would generally be less than 150 acres in size.

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

Alpine Forest Restoration Project Environmental Assessment (EA) (EA-NV-030-08-011) (June 2008).

Finding of No Significant Impact and Decision Record for Alpine Forest Restoration Project (July 2008).

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, the new Proposed Actions are essentially similar to an alternative analyzed in the Alpine Forest Restoration Project EA (EA-NV-030-08-011). The treatment activities, specifications and resource protection

measures are consistent with the EA. The treatment units are all in Alpine County, in similar vegetation communities and in most cases directly adjacent to treatment units identified in the EA.

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?

The range of alternatives analyzed in the environmental assessment is appropriate with respect to the new Proposed Action. Environmental concerns, interests, and resource values have not changed since the original analysis. Forest health issues and wildland fire management continue to be important issues for the public and private landowners and therefore require land managers to implement projects to promote healthy resilient landscapes and fire safe communities.

3. Is the existing analysis valid in light of any new information or circumstances (such as, range-land 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?

The existing analysis is valid for the new Proposed Action. The treatment activities and resource protection measures developed for the Alpine Forest Restoration Project were designed using the best science available. No new information or circumstances have come about as a result of project implementation, therefore it is reasonable to conclude new information or new circumstances would not change the analysis of the new proposed action.

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?

The new Proposed Action would allow implementation on an additional 262 acres in the Carson River watershed over the next five years. The reasonable foreseeable future actions analyzed in the environmental assessment include 100-200 acres of vegetation treatment per year (BLM and USFS). The direct, indirect, and cumulative effects that would result from implementation of the new proposed action are similar and consistent with those analyzed in the EA.

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

The public involvement and interagency review associated with the Alpine Forest Restoration Project Environmental Assessment is adequate for the Airport Road, Reservoir East, Curtz East, Poor Boy East and Hangmans treatment units. Additional outreach to local residents, county officials, trail clubs and other interested parties would be done prior to implementation in the Fay Luther treatment unit. This outreach would include a discussion of the insects and diseases, possible treatment options, visual mitigation measures, and adaptive management techniques that can be used to address concerns or emerging issues.

E. Persons/Agencies/BLM Staff Consulted

<u>Name</u>	<u>Title</u>	<u>Resource/Agency Represented</u>
Keith Barker	Fire Ecologist	BLM
Brian Buttazoni	NEPA Coordinator	BLM
Coreen Francis	Forester	BLM

Note: Refer to the EA for a complete list of the team members participating in the preparation of the original environmental analysis or planning documents.

Decision: Based on the review documented above, I determined 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.

Concetta Furrow

Signature of Project Lead

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Signature of NEPA Coordinator

[Signature]

Leon Thomas
Field Manager
Sierra Front Field Office

Date 7-23-2014