

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

Determination of NEPA Adequacy (DNA)

**McKinnley FFR Water Gap DNA
DOI-BLM-NV-E020-2015-0029-DNA**

PREPARING OFFICE

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**Prepared by
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Elko, Nevada**

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McKinnley FFR Water Gap DNA Worksheet

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

OFFICE: Tuscarora FO, LLNVE02000

TRACKING NUMBER: DOI-BLM-NV-E020-2015-0029-DNA

CASEFILE/PROJECT NUMBER: RIPs #018320

PROPOSED ACTION TITLE/TYPE: McKinnley FFR Water Gap DNA/ 4120 Grazing Management

LOCATION/LEGAL DESCRIPTION: Susie Creek Basin, Elko County, T35N, R53E, Sections 1, 2, 11, 12. GPS: 587208E, 4533019N NAD 83

APPLICANT (if any):

A. Description of Proposed Action and any applicable mitigation measures

The Tuscarora Field Office, Elko District, Bureau of Land Management (BLM), is proposing to create a water gap for livestock along Susie Creek in the northernmost corner of the McKinnley FFR Allotment (refer to the attached maps). The Proposed Action consists of constructing approximately 850 feet of new fence on public land; repairing approximately 0.3 miles of existing fence on public land; removing approximately 0.4 miles of fence from private land; relocating a cattleguard from private land to public land; and installing a new cattleguard on public land. The purpose of the water gap is to provide an alternate source of water for livestock in the McKinnley FFR Allotment so that prescriptive grazing practices can be more effectively applied to management units in both upstream and downstream areas along Susie Creek. The proposed water gap would be one of a number of projects implemented in the Susie Creek Basin to improve upland and riparian habitat conditions for Greater Sage-Grouse, Lahontan Cutthroat Trout and other species of wildlife. The new fence would be a four strand barb-wire fence, except for an approximately 40 foot span across Susie Creek that would be post and rail for durability. New fence construction would be to conventional BLM specifications as analyzed in the referenced EAs. Flight diverters would be installed on new and repaired barb-wire fence segments to reduce opportunities for avian collisions.

B. Land Use Plan Conformance

LUP Name* NV - Elko RMP Date Approved: 1987

**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:

1987 ROD for Elko Resource Management Plan: Wildlife Objective to Conserve and Enhance Terrestrial, Riparian and Aquatic Wildlife Habitat through the following management actions:

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applicable mitigation measures*

Manage 117 miles (3,480 acres) of high priority riparian/stream habitat to provide good habitat condition for wildlife and fish (Management Action 6). Susie Creek is identified as a high priority stream.

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 (objectives, terms, and conditions):

NA

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

List by name and date all applicable NEPA documents that cover the proposed action.

Susie Fire (CR28) Emergency Stabilization and Rehabilitation Plan, Environmental Assessment, Finding of No Significant Impact and Decision Record and Project Approval – BLM/EK/PL-2006/021

Basco Fire Emergency Stabilization and Rehabilitation Plan, Environmental Assessment, Finding of No Significant Impact and Decision Record and Project Approval – BLM/EK/PL-2006/025

Lower Susie Creek Fence, Record of Decision/Finding of No Significant Impact, EA-NV-010-90-47

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).

McKinnley FFR (Susie Creek) Water Gap, Elko County, Nevada, Cultural Resources Inventory Negative Report, BLM Report Number 1-3120n, dated April 24, 2015.

1995 Lahontan Cutthroat Trout Recovery Plan, U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Portland, Oregon. Susie Creek is identified as a potential reintroduction stream for Lahontan Cutthroat Trout.

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 action is a feature of alternatives analyzed in the existing EAs, which were then selected for implementation. The proposed action in the Susie Fire EA was to construct six miles of permanent fence, remove burned fence segments and install one cattleguard for the purpose of controlling livestock and improving watershed conditions in the Susie Creek Basin. Specifications for fence and cattleguard installation analyzed in this EA are the same as the specifications for the new proposed action. The proposed action in the Basco Fire EA was to

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

construct six miles of permanent fence and remove one mile of fence for the purpose of improving upland and riparian habitat conditions along Susie Creek through control and management of livestock. Specifications for fencing analyzed in this EA are the same as the specifications for the new proposed action. The proposed action in the Lower Susie Creek Fence EA was to construct 9.4 miles of conventional four-strand fence along nine miles of Susie Creek for the purpose of managing livestock for stream and riparian habitat recovery.

The new proposed action and the previously analyzed actions are within the Susie Creek Basin; the upland and riparian vegetative communities affected by the actions are similar to each other and typical for the Susie Creek Basin. For the Susie Fire EA, see sections 3.1.8 (Vegetation) and 3.1.11 (Wetlands and Riparian Zones). For the Basco Fire EA, see section D. (Vegetation). For the Lower Susie Fence EA, see sections A. (Soils and Vegetation) and B. (Habitat Conditions).

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 value?

Yes, the range of alternatives analyzed in the existing EAs is appropriate with respect to the new proposed action given current environmental concerns, interests, and resource values. The range of alternatives analyzed includes each EA's proposed action and a no action alternative; this is appropriate given the narrow scope of the new proposed action and existing fence configuration. Environmental concerns include potential impacts to Greater Sage Grouse, Lahontan Cutthroat Trout and their respective habitats; these concerns are adequately addressed in the existing EA's. For the Susie Fire EA, see sections 4.1.7 (Threatened/Endangered Species), 4.1.8 (Vegetation), 4.1.11 (Wetlands/Riparian Zones), and 4.1.12 (Wildlife and Special Status Species) for impacts from the Proposed Action and section 4.2.1 (all resources) for impacts from the No Action Alternative. For the Basco Fire EA, see sections D. (Vegetation), E. (Wildlife) and G. (Special Status Species) for both the Proposed Action and No Action Alternatives. For the Lower Susie Fence EA, see section V. A. (Soils and Vegetation) and V. B. (Habitat Conditions) for the Proposed Action and sections V. A. (Wildlife, Soils and Vegetation, Riparian Habitat Conditions) for the No Action Alternative.

3. Is the existing analysis valid in light of any new information or circumstances (such as, rangeland health standard assessments, 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?

Yes. The existing analysis is still valid in the light of recent directives applicable to the Greater Sage-Grouse. Potential impacts to sage-grouse were analyzed in Section 4.1.12 (Wildlife and Special Status Species) of the Susie Fire EA and Section G. (Special Status Species) of the Basco Fire EA. The recent directives would not substantially change the analysis for the new proposed action because more fence would be removed than constructed, and placement of flight diverters on the new and existing fence would reduce potential for collision hazards, resulting in negligible to beneficial impacts to Sage-Grouse.

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. Direct and indirect impacts from the proposed action are the same, but much narrower in scope, as those analyzed in applicable sections of the Susie Fire EA (see number 2. above), in

applicable sections of the Basco Fire EA (see number 2. above) and applicable sections of the Lower Susie Fence EA (see number 2. above). Cumulative impacts from the proposed action are also the same or similar as those analyzed in Section 4.4 of the Susie Fire EA and Chapter 5 of the Basco Fire EA. Cumulative impacts were not analyzed for any resources in the Lower Susie Fence EA.

Resources analyzed for direct, indirect and cumulative impacts in the Susie Fire EA included air quality, cultural resources, livestock grazing, migratory birds, nonnative invasive plants, soils, threatened and endangered species, vegetation, visual resources, water quality, wetlands and riparian zones, and wildlife including special status species. Potential impacts on Greater Sage-Grouse (candidate species) and Susie Creek (recovery habitat for Lahontan Cutthroat Trout, a federally listed threatened species) were emphasized.

Resources analyzed for direct, indirect and cumulative impacts in the Basco Fire EA included air quality, cultural resources, livestock grazing, migratory birds, nonnative invasive plants, soils, threatened and endangered species, vegetation, visual resources, water quality, wetlands and riparian zones, and wildlife including special status species. Potential impacts on Greater Sage-Grouse (candidate species) and Susie Creek were emphasized.

Resources analyzed for direct and indirect impacts in the Lower Susie Creek Fence EA included soils, vegetation, fisheries, cultural resources, lands, wildlife, recreation, livestock and riparian habitat.

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

Yes. Consultation with interested publics including ranching interests, other agencies and Native American groups occurred for the Susie and Basco Fire EAs. Consultation with interested publics and agencies occurred for the Lower Susie Creek Fence EA. All three EAs were developed with input from a wide range of BLM resource specialists.

E. Persons/Agencies/BLM Staff Consulted

Table 1.1. List of Preparers

Name	Role	Discipline
Carol Evans	Team Lead, Author	Fisheries Biologist
Ken Wilkinson	Reviewer	Wildlife Biologist
John Mitchell	Reviewer	Rangeland Management Specialist
Lucinda Langston	Reviewer, cultural inventory	Archeologist
Jim Harmening	Design	Engineering Technician
Terrell Dobis	Editor, NEPA Reviewer	Planning & Environmental Coordinator

Table 1.2. List of Cooperators

Name	Title	Organization
Jon Griggs	Ranch Manager	Maggie Creek Ranch

Note

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

Conclusion

Based on the review documented above in the McKinley FFR Water Gap DNA, 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 requirement of NEPA.

/s/ Carol Evans

Signature of Project Lead

/s/ Terrell Dobis 6/16/2015

Signature of NEPA Coordinator

/s/ Richard E. Adams 6/25/2015

Signature of the Authorized Officer

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 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.