

RISK ASSESSMENT FOR NOXIOUS & INVASIVE WEEDS

Blue Garden Fence Extension Lincoln County, Nevada

On September 16, 2015 a Noxious & Invasive Weed Risk Assessment was completed to analyze conversion of four Emergency Site Restoration (ESR) fences from temporary use for fire restoration to permanent range allotment improvements, as well as 0.6 miles of new fence to extend the Blue Garden Fence. However, because the existing ESR fences are already existing and most have been in place for over ten years, and because the proposed action of making them permanent will not result in any new ground disturbance, only the Blue Garden Extension is analyzed in this weed risk assessment.

No field weed surveys were completed for this project. Instead the Ely District weed inventory data was consulted. There are currently no mapped weed infestations within the project area.

There are probably undocumented weeds found scattered along roads in the area.

A list of species undocumented in the District's follows:

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|----------------------------------|-----------------|
| <i>Arctium minus</i> | Common burdock |
| <i>Bromus diandrus</i> | Ripgut brome |
| <i>Bromus rubens</i> | Red brome |
| <i>Bromus tectorum</i> | Cheatgrass |
| <i>Ceratocephala testiculata</i> | Bur buttercup |
| <i>Convolvulus arvensis</i> | Field bindweed |
| <i>Elaeagnus angustifolia</i> | Russian olive |
| <i>Erodium cicutarium</i> | Filaree |
| <i>Kochia scoparia</i> | Kochia |
| <i>Halogeton glomeratus</i> | Halogeton |
| <i>Marrubium vulgare</i> | Horehound |
| <i>Salsola kali</i> | Russian thistle |
| <i>Sysimbrium altissimum</i> | Tumble mustard |
| <i>Tragopogon dubius</i> | Yellow salsify |
| <i>Ulmus pumila</i> | Siberian elm |
| <i>Verbascum thapsus</i> | Common mullein |

Factor 1 assesses the likelihood of noxious/invasive weed species spreading to the project area.

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| None (0) | Noxious/invasive weed species are not located within or adjacent to the project area. Project activity is not likely to result in the establishment of noxious/invasive weed species in the project area. |
| Low (1-3) | Noxious/invasive weed species are present in the areas adjacent to but not within the project area. Project activities can be implemented and prevent the spread of noxious/invasive weeds into the project area. |
| Moderate (4-7) | Noxious/invasive weed species located immediately adjacent to or within the project area. Project activities are likely to result in some areas becoming infested with noxious/invasive weed species even when preventative management actions are followed. Control measures are essential to prevent the spread of noxious/invasive weeds within the project area. |
| High (8-10) | Heavy infestations of noxious/invasive weeds are located within or immediately adjacent to the project area. Project activities, even with preventative management actions, are likely to result in the establishment and spread of noxious/invasive weeds on disturbed sites throughout much of the project area. |

For this project, the factor rates as None (0) at the present time. This rating was chosen based on the lack of noxious weeds in or adjacent to the project area, as well as the limited amount of new ground disturbance related to the project.

Factor 2 assesses the consequences of noxious/invasive weed establishment in the project area.

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| Low to Nonexistent (1-3) | None. No cumulative effects expected. |
| Moderate (4-7) | Possible adverse effects on site and possible expansion of infestation within the project area. Cumulative effects on native plant communities are likely but limited. |
| High (8-10) | Obvious adverse effects within the project area and probable expansion of noxious/invasive weed infestations to areas outside the project area. Adverse cumulative effects on native plant communities are probable. |

This project rates as Low (2) at the present time. This rating was chosen based on the invasive annual grass driven fires that have occurred over the past 20 years. The project area has already experienced the consequences of invasive species (*Bromus Spp.*, though these species are not currently listed as noxious).

The Risk Rating is obtained by multiplying Factor 1 by Factor 2.

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| None (0) | Proceed as planned. |
| Low (1-10) | Proceed as planned. Initiate control treatment on noxious/invasive weed populations that get established in the area. |
| Moderate (11-49) | Develop preventative management measures for the proposed project to reduce the risk of introduction of spread of noxious/invasive weeds into the area. Preventative management measures should include modifying the project to include seeding the area to occupy disturbed sites with desirable species. Monitor the area for at least 3 consecutive years and provide for control of newly established populations of noxious/invasive weeds and follow-up treatment for previously treated infestations. |
| High (50-100) | Project must be modified to reduce risk level through preventative management measures, including seeding with desirable species to occupy disturbed site and controlling existing infestations of noxious/invasive weeds prior to project activity. Project must provide at least 5 consecutive years of monitoring. Projects must also provide for control of newly established populations of noxious/invasive weeds and follow-up treatment for previously treated infestations. |

For this project, the Risk Rating is None (0). This indicates that the project can proceed as planned as long as the following measures are followed:

- Continue to use integrated weed management to treat weed infestations and use principles of integrated pest management to meet management objectives and to reestablish resistant and resilient native vegetation communities.

- When manual weed control is conducted, remove the cut weeds and weed parts and dispose of them in a manner designed to kill seeds and weed parts.
- Where appropriate, inspect source sites such as borrow pits, fill sources, or gravel pits used to supply inorganic materials used for construction, maintenance, or reclamation to ensure they are free of plant species listed on the Nevada noxious weed list or specifically identified by the Ely District Office. Inspections will be conducted by a weed scientist of qualified biologist.
- Where appropriate, vehicles and heavy equipment used for the completion, maintenance, inspection, or monitoring of ground disturbing activities; for emergency fire suppression; or for authorized off-road driving will be free of soil and debris capable of transporting weed propagules. Vehicles and equipment will be cleaned with power or high pressure equipment prior to entering or leaving the work site or project area. Vehicles used for emergency fire suppression will be cleaned as a part of check-in and demobilization procedures. Cleaning efforts will concentrate on tracks, feet and tires, and on the undercarriage. Special emphasis will be applied to axels, frames, cross members, motor mounts, on and underneath steps, running boards, and front bumper/brush guard assemblies. Vehicle cabs will be swept out and refuse will be disposed of in waste receptacles. Cleaning sites will be recorded using global positioning systems or other mutually acceptable equipment and provided to the Ely District Office Weed Coordinator or designated contact person.
- Animals used on public lands by special recreation permittees or by contractors for weed control or reclamation will be cleaned, quarantined, and fed weed-free feed prior to being used or released on public lands. The length of this quarantine will be specified in the special recreation permit or contract.
- To minimize the transport of soil-borne noxious weed seeds, roots, or rhizomes, infested soils or materials will not be moved and redistributed on weed-free or relatively weed-free areas. In areas where infestations are identified or noted and infested soils, rock, or overburden must be moved, these materials will be salvaged and stockpiled adjacent to the area from which they were stripped. Appropriate measures will be taken to minimize wind and water erosion of these stockpiles. During reclamation, the materials will be returned to the area from which they were stripped.
- Keep removal and disturbance of vegetation would be kept to a minimum through construction site management (e.g. using previously disturbed areas and existing easements, limiting equipment/materials storage and staging area sites, etc.)
- Certify that all interim and final seed mixes, hay, straw, and hay/straw products are free of plant species listed on the Nevada noxious weed list.
- Respread weed-free vegetation removed from the right-of-way to provide protection, nutrient recycling, and seed source.
- When managing in areas of special status species, carefully consider the impacts of the treatment on such species. Wherever possible, hand spraying of herbicides is preferred over other methods.
- Do not conduct noxious and invasive weed control within 0.5 mile of nesting and brood rearing areas for special status species during the nesting and brood rearing season.

- Control or restrict the timing of livestock movement to minimize the transport of livestock-borne noxious weed seeds, roots, or rhizomes between weed-infested and weed-free areas.
- When maintaining unpaved roads on BLM-administered lands, avoid the unnecessary disturbance of adjacent native vegetation and spread of weeds. Grade roads shoulders or barrow ditches only when necessary to provide for adequate drainage. Minimize the width of grading operations. The BLM Authorized Officer will meet with equipment operators to ensure that they understand this objective.
- Prior to entering public lands, the contractor, operator, or permit holder will provide information and training regarding noxious weed management and identification to all personnel who will be affiliated with the implementation of the project. The importance of preventing the spread of weeds to uninfested areas and importance of controlling existing populations of weeds will be explained.
- Whenever possible, hand spraying of herbicides is preferred over other methods at heavily used recreation sites (i.e. campgrounds, trailheads, etc.).

Reviewed by:

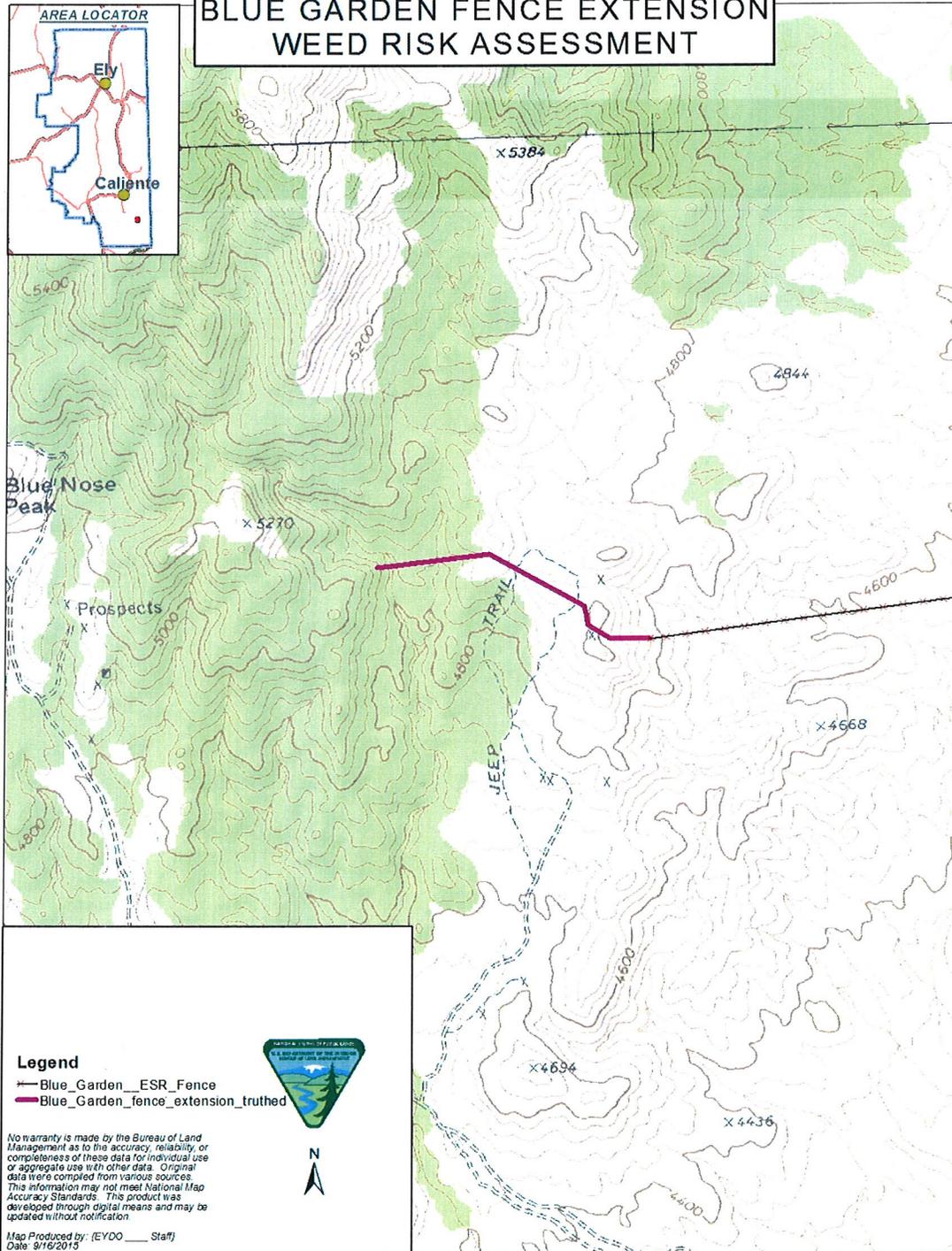
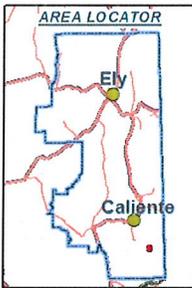


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Caliente Field Office Noxious & Invasive Weeds
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9/18/15

Date

BLUE GARDEN FENCE EXTENSION WEED RISK ASSESSMENT



Legend

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Map Produced by: (EYDO) Staff
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