

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

**Finding of No Significant Impact
Sand Draw Tamarisk Treatment**

January 2016

PREPARING OFFICE

U.S. Department of the Interior
Bureau of Land Management
Worland Field Office



Sand Draw Tamarisk Treatment

DOI-BLM-WY-R010-2015-0048-DNA

RIPS #018923

INTRODUCTION:

The Bureau of Land Management (BLM) has conducted an environmental analysis (DOI-BLM-WY-R010-2010-0026-EA, Invasive Plant Management – Worland/Cody Field office, signed 01/24/2011) for a proposed action to address Invasive Plant Management in the Cody and Worland Field Offices in Park, Big Horn, Washakie, and Hot Springs Counties. The Sand Draw Tamarisk and Russian olive project would involve mastication of Tamarisk and cut stump of the Russian olive. A certified pesticide applicator will follow immediately behind the treatment with triclopyr and bark oil to treat any roots or stumps. The underlying need for the proposal would be met while accomplishing the following objectives:

- *Executive Order 13112, Invasive Species*, directs federal agencies to prevent the introduction of invasive species and provide for their control, and to minimize the economic, ecological, and human health impacts that invasive species cause
- *Carlson-Foley Act of 1968* and the *Plant Protection Act of 2000* (Public Law 106-224; includes management of undesirable plants on federal lands; authorizes the BLM to manage noxious weeds and to coordinate with other federal and state agencies in activities to eradicate, suppress, control, prevent, or retard the spread of any noxious weeds on federal lands.
- The *Federal Noxious Weed Act of 1974* established and funded an undesirable plant management program, implemented cooperative agreements with state agencies, and established integrated management systems to control undesirable plant species.
- The objectives of the *Standards for Healthy Rangelands and Guidelines for Livestock Grazing Management for the Public Lands Administered by the Bureau of Land Management in the State of Wyoming (1997)* are to “promote healthy sustainable rangeland ecosystems; to accelerate restoration and improvement of public rangelands to properly functioning conditions...and to provide for the sustainability of the western livestock industry and communities that are dependent upon productive, healthy public rangelands.”
- In addition to federal mandates, the State of Wyoming, Weed and Pest Act of 1973, requires the federal government to control undesirable plant species by the use of integrated weed management.
- Reducing the number of infested acres of invasive plants would meet the objective of sustaining biological communities as directed by the BLM Operating Plan 2004-2008. It would also meet the objectives of the Bighorn Basin Noxious Weed Management Plan, which includes best management practices for surface disturbances, roads, vehicles, livestock grazing, recreation sites, and wild land or prescribed fire, that are designed to eliminate or minimize impacts from noxious and invasive weeds.

The Sand Draw Russian Olive/Tamarisk project area covers 286 acres within the Grass Creek Resource Area in Hot Springs County. EA DOI-BLM-WY-R010-2010-0026-EA, available at the Worland Field Office, is incorporated by reference for this Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI). A no action alternative and a no herbicide use alternative were also analyzed.

FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT:

Based upon a review of the EA and the supporting documents, I have determined that the project is not a major federal action and will not significantly affect the quality of the human environment, individually or cumulatively with other actions in the general area. No environmental effects meet the definition of significance in context or intensity as defined in 40 CFR 1508.27 and do not exceed those effects described in the Worland Resource Management Plan, signed September 21, 2015. Therefore, an environmental impact statement is not needed.

This finding is based on the context and intensity of the project as described:

Context:

The project is a site-specific action directly involving approximately 286 acres of BLM administered land that by itself does not have international, national, regional, or state-wide importance.

Intensity:

The following discussion is organized around the Ten Significance Criteria described in 40 CFR 1508.27 and incorporated into resources and issues considered (includes supplemental authorities Appendix 1 H-1790-1) and supplemental Instruction Memorandum, Acts, regulations and Executive Orders.

The following have been considered in evaluating intensity for this proposal:

1. Impacts that may be both beneficial and adverse.

The proposed action would impact resources as described in the EA. Wildlife, cultural, vegetation, soils, and hydrological resources may be impacted. Mitigating measures to reduce impacts to resource values were analyzed and applied as Conditions of Approval. None of the environmental effects discussed in detail in the EA and associated appendices are considered significant, nor do the effects exceed those described in the Worland Resource Management Plan or EA DOI-BLM-WY-R010-2010-0026-EA.

2. The degree to which the proposed action affects public health or safety.

The proposed action was designed to mitigate for public health and safety. The treatment plan was reviewed for conformance with standard operating procedures and conservation measures of herbicide use in *17 Western States, Programmatic Environmental Impact Statement, (BLM 2007)*.

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.

Integrated pest management approach Per Appendix B.24 of the Wyoming State Protocol Agreement between the BLM and the State Historic Preservation Officer (SHPO), herbicide applications in areas unlikely to affect rock art or traditional Native American plant gathering areas are in most circumstances exempt from case-by-case review. However, a cultural inventory may be necessary based on the area to be treated or method of application used. Worland Field Office Cultural Resource Specialist determined that no inventory would be needed.

4. The degree to which the effects on the quality of the human environment are likely to be controversial.

There is no scientific controversy over the nature of the impacts.

5. The degree to which the possible effects on the human environment are highly uncertain or involve unique or unknown risks.

The project is not unique or unusual. The BLM has experience implementing similar actions in similar areas. The environmental effects to the human environment are fully analyzed in the EA. There are no predicted effects on the human environment that are considered to be highly uncertain or involve unique or unknown risks.

6. The 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.

The actions in the selected alternative were considered by the interdisciplinary team within the context of past, present, and reasonably foreseeable future actions. Significant cumulative effects are not predicted. A complete analysis of the direct, indirect, and cumulative effects of the selected alternative and all other alternatives is described in Chapter 3 of the EA (DOI-BLM-WY-R010-2010-0026-EA).

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

The interdisciplinary team evaluated the possible actions in context of past, present and reasonably foreseeable actions. Significant cumulative effects are not predicted. A complete disclosure of the effects of the project is contained in Chapter 3 of the EA (DOI-BLM-WY-R010-2010-0026-EA).

8. The degree to which the action may adversely affect districts, sites, highways, structures, or objects listed in or eligible for listing in the NRHP or may cause loss or destruction of significant scientific, cultural, or historical resources.

The project will not adversely affect districts, sites, highways, structures, or other objects listed in or eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places, nor will it cause loss or destruction of significant scientific, cultural, or historical resources. A BLM cultural resource specialist determined no cultural inventory was necessary because of the project design. Surface disturbance resulting from the proposed action will have no effect on known historic properties. Unknown cultural resources may be affected by surface disturbing activities. For the protection of unknown cultural resources the standard cultural stipulations apply and are included in the conditions of approval. Consultation occurred with the State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) under the Wyoming State Protocol Agreement between the BLM and the SHPO (State Protocol).

9. The degree to which the action may adversely affect an endangered or threatened species or its habitat that has been determined to be critical under the ESA of 1973.

There are no Threatened and Endangered, or BLM Special Status Plant Species known to occur in the project area.

10. Whether the action threatens a violation of Federal, State, or local law or requirements imposed for the protection of the environment.

The project does not violate any known federal, state, local or tribal law or requirement imposed for the protection of the environment.

Signed:

<i>/s/ Michael J. Phillips</i>	1/8/2016
Worland Field Office Manager	Date