

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

OFFICE: Humboldt River Field Office, LLNVW01000

TRACKING NUMBER: DOI-BLM-NV-W010-2015-0040-DNA

CASEFILE/PROJECT NUMBER: Paradise – JXV5

PROPOSED ACTION TITLE/TYPE: Paradise (JXV5) Fire Emergency Stabilization
and Rehabilitation Plan

LOCATION/LEGAL DESCRIPTION:

Invasive Species Management

T. 42 N., R. 43 E., sec. 26, 27

Aerial Seeding

T. 42 N., R. 43 E., sec. 26, 27

APPLICANT (if any): Bureau of Land Management

BACKGROUND:

The Paradise Fire was ignited by lightning on 7/10/2015 and contained on 7/11/2015.

The Paradise Fire occurred northeast of Chimney Reservoir. The fire burned entirely within the North Fork of the Little Humboldt River BLM Wilderness Study Area (WSA). The fire area burned previously in the 1996 North Chimney Fire. The entire fire area is Greater-Sage Grouse Priority Habitat Management Area (PHMA) and FIAT priority 1 Greater Sage-Grouse Habitat. The entire fire area is classified as pronghorn antelope year-round habitat as defined by the Nevada Department of Wildlife. The area is also heavily utilized by grassland birds and migratory birds and is near raptor nesting sites.

The degree of fire severity was low to moderate and burned the entire shrub community. The complete loss of shrub cover will negatively affect Greater Sage-Grouse which utilize shrubs for cover, foraging, and nesting. *Bromus tectorum* is present in scattered to clumped amount throughout the fire area. The area that burned is within a vegetation community phase at risk to transitioning to an annual plant state due to the presence of *Bromus tectorum* on site and drought conditions. Wyoming big sagebrush (*Artemisia tridentata ssp. wyomingensis*) was killed by the fire and only regenerates from seed. Recovery time for Wyoming big sagebrush may require 50-120 or more years (Baker, 2006). There are some burned bluebunch wheatgrass (*Pseudoroegneria spicata*) plants present on site. Bluebunch wheatgrass is drought tolerant, persistent, has an extensive

root system and good seedling vigor, and is adapted to stabilization of disturbed soils. Bluebunch wheatgrass is competitive with weedy species and establishes fairly quickly. The few plants present would benefit by additional seed. Lack of treatment of this area could result in monocultures of cheatgrass due to the lack of competition from native species directly after a fire. Owyhee prickly phlox (*Leptodactylon glabrum*), a BLM sensitive species, has been identified in the adjacent mountains and its habitat could be threatened due to increasing populations of non-native annuals caused by the Paradise Fire.

The soils in this fire area are identified as moderately erosive to wind events. The nature of these soils will contribute to accelerated soil loss due to the loss of shrub and grass cover.

The fire burned within one soil map unit, containing three soil components. The different soil components are associated with different rangeland ecological sites. The possible rangeland ecological sites are R025XY019NV, which is a loamy site receiving 8-10” of precipitation annually, R025XY022NV, which is a cobbly claypan site receiving 8-12” precipitation annually, R025XY015NV, which is a south slope receiving 8-12” precipitation annually.

Rangeland Ecological Site	The vegetation community in reference condition, is typically dominated by:
R025XY019NV	Wyoming sagebrush (<i>Artemisia tridentata ssp. Wyomingensis</i>), Thurber’s needlegrass (<i>Achnatherum thurberianum</i>) and bluebunch wheatgrass (<i>Pseudoroegneria spicata</i>).
R025XY022NV	little sagebrush (<i>Artemesia arbuscula</i>), Thurber’s needlegrass (<i>Achnatherum thurberianum</i>), and bluebunch wheatgrass (<i>Pseudoroegneria spicata</i>).
R025XY015NV	Wyoming sagebrush (<i>Artemisia tridentata ssp. Wyomingensis</i>) and bluebunch wheatgrass (<i>Pseudoroegneria spicata</i>).

The fire burned a cumulative total of 124 acres of BLM-administered lands within the Little Owyhee Grazing Allotment. It is estimated that closure to livestock use of the lands affected by the fire would reduce annual use in the Little Owyhee Grazing Allotment by 5 Animal Use Months (AUMs).

REFERENCES

Baker, W. L. 2006. Fire and Restoration of Sagebrush Ecosystems. Wildlife Society Bulletin 34:177-185

A. Description of the Proposed Action with attached map(s) and any applicable mitigation measures.

Invasive Plants and Noxious Weeds Management:

Manage invasive species within the fire-affected area to limit further infestation through active treatment of previously existing and newly established infestations of noxious weeds. Up to 25 acres of noxious weed infestations would be treated annually during 2015, 2016, and 2017.

Located infestations, if any, would be treated with BLM approved herbicides as appropriate, and in compliance with BLM operating procedures and label requirements for BLM approved herbicides. Localized treatments may include one or more of the following chemicals depending on species present in project location:

Imazapyr
 Glyphosate
 2, 4-D
 Picloram
 Dicamba
 Metsulphuron methyl
 Clorsulphuron
 Imazapic

Herbicides would be applied with crews utilizing backpack pumps to spray noxious weeds or annual invasive species. All infestations and treatments would be tracked in District GIS layers/shapefiles.

Aerial Seeding

The BLM proposes to aerial seed a total of 124 acres of public land managed by BLM that was burned by the Paradise Fire. Seeding would occur in the fall or winter with a preference for application in late fall or early winter. The possible species the project would seed with are bluebunch wheatgrass (*Pseudoroegneria spicata spp.spicata*), fourwing saltbush (*Atriplex canescens*), hoary tansyaster (*Machaeranthera canescens*), rocky mountain beeplant (*Cleome serrulata*), scarlet globemallow (*Sphaeralcea coccinea*), and Wyoming big sagebrush (*Artemisia tridentata ssp.wyomingensis*). All species proposed for aerial seeding are native.

Objectives for aerial seeding are as follows:

1. Obtain an average of 1 seeded plant per meter² by the end of the third year following fire containment, which occurred on 07/11/2015.
2. Obtain 100% or greater perennial cover of the low potential perennial plant cover for the appropriate ecological site by the end of the third year following fire containment.

3. The aerial seeding would result in lower abundance (density and cover) of invasive annual plant species, and a higher abundance of desirable perennial plant species than the unseeded control areas.
4. Seeded species would be well established and reproducing.

Environmental Protection Measures

The applicable design measures for this proposal are listed below. The existing NEPA documents are listed under section C. These design measures have been reviewed against the Required Designed Features (RDF) in the GSG Plan and ROD. There are no RDF's that have not been addressed below.

All treatments identified will be in accordance with Instruction Memorandum IM-NV-2015-017 Revised Direction for Proposed Activities within Greater Sage-Grouse Habitat (July 2014), and WO-IM-2014-114 Sage Grouse Habitat and Wildland Fire Management (July 2014).

Aerial Seeding

Applicable measures from the Holloway Fire Emergency Stabilization and Rehabilitation Plans Environmental Assessment DOI-BLM-OR-B060-2013-0003-EA (DR/FONSI 3/1/2013):

Treatments would occur at a time of year when most birds have migrated out of the area, and birds that remain are highly mobile and able to leave the immediate area. Disturbance effects from aerial seeding would not be measurable on migratory bird populations due to the brief (few hours) amount of time required to spread the seed or apply the herbicide. Most migratory birds would return to the area or resume activity once seeding is complete.

Monitoring

All treatments would be monitored for efficacy and efficiency using established protocols and design features that are outlined in the Normal Year Fire Rehabilitation Plan Environmental Assessment No.NV-020-04-21 (DR/FONSI 8/19/2004).

Invasive Plants and Noxious Weeds Management

Wildlife and Migratory Birds

Applicable measures from the Winnemucca Wildland Urban Interface (WUI) Fuels Treatment Project Environmental Assessment No.NV-WO10-2010-0011-EA (DR/FONSI 9/20/2010):

Application of herbicide would not occur within ¼ mile of any known sage grouse lek sites.

Applicable measures from the Holloway Fire ESR DNA DOI-BLM-NV-WO10-2013-0015-DNA (DR/FONSI 12/27/2012):

During the raptor breeding season, January 1 through August 31, control of noxious weeds would be implemented or delayed in accordance with spatial and temporal recommendations defined in the Utah Field Office Guidelines for Raptor Protection from Human and Land Use Disturbances (USFWS 2002).

Control of noxious weeds would not be conducted within 0.6 miles of active Sage Grouse leks during lekking and nesting season from March 1st through June 30th. Greater Sage-Grouse nest and brood surveys in areas proposed for noxious weeds control efforts will be conducted no more than 10 days and no less than 3 days prior to initiation of disturbance. If active nests and/or broods are located, rehabilitation activities will be delayed until the grouse have voluntarily left the area.

Herbicide applications

The use of all herbicides listed would adhere to the environmental protection measures listed below from the Integrated Weed Management Environmental Assessment NV-020-02-19 (DR/FONSI 8/27/2002).

1. Standard safety procedures and standard operating procedures would be strictly followed.
2. Re-applications of the herbicide would not be less than the persistence factor identified for any product selected for use.
3. Ground applications of herbicides (including backpack and power sprayer) would be limited to spraying the target weeds and the surrounding ground for 10 feet. Backpack applications of liquids would occur only at low nozzle pressure and at ground level. Granular formulations would be applied by broadcast spreaders or by hand within 3.5' of the ground.
4. The BLM would notify the livestock grazing permittee(s) when herbicides are used on grazing allotments. Phenology of target species and multiple use objectives would also be considered.
5. No herbicide application would be conducted when rain (greater than 50% chance) is predicted within 24 hours of treatment. The BLM would use the Interagency Fire Dispatch Center for weather reports for rain predictions.
6. All herbicide spray solutions would be applied with a blue dye so that application sites are visible.

Applicable measures from the Montana Mountains Cooperative Fuels Treatment Projects Environmental Assessment No. DOI-BLM-NV-W010-2011-0005-EA (DR/FONSI 8/2/2012):

All terrestrial equipment (e.g. vehicles, hand tools, tractors, etc.) to be used in treatments will be washed offsite prior to being brought to the project site, to avoid spreading noxious weed seeds.

B. Land Use Plan (LUP) Conformance

LUP Name Winnemucca District Planning Area Resource Management Plan and Record of Decision (May 21, 2015), as amended by the Record of Decision and Approved Resource Management Plan (GSG Plan and ROD) Amendments for the Great Basin Region Including the Greater-Sage Grouse Sub-Regions of Idaho and Southwestern Montana, Nevada and Northeastern California, Oregon, and Utah (September 21, 2015).

*List applicable LUPs (for example, resource management plans; activity, project, management, or program plans; or applicable amendments thereto)

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

VW1.1: Use appropriate integrated vegetation treatments (e.g., chemical, mechanical, prescribed fire, prescribed grazing, cultural, and biological) for the control of invasive and noxious plants. (2-13)

VW3.1: Implement and monitor treatments to control or eradicate invasive annual plants using ES&R treatments, use restrictions, seeding, chemical or biological control, prescriptive grazing, and other integrated weed management practices. (2-14)

VR1.3: Restore and improve degraded rangelands and habitat and/or achieve vegetation management objectives by initiating land treatments. Use management tools, such as prescribed fire, prescribed grazing and fire for multiple objectives including for resource benefits, vegetation manipulation (mechanical, biological, and chemical treatments), fencing, seed and use restrictions. Allow natural recovery due to the presence of surviving perennial plants or a sufficient seed source. (2-15)

VR1.4: Seed burned areas, as appropriate. (2-15)

VR3.1: Close burned areas, new seedlings, or reseeded areas to permitted livestock use, WHB grazing, or other uses until monitoring objectives are achieved or until rehabilitation efforts are determined to have failed. (2-16)

VR4.1: Seed disturbed areas with an appropriate mixture of grasses, forbs, and shrubs. Use a combination of native seed collections and desirable adapted species for rehabilitation and reclamation. Priority for use of seeds, where effective and available, is as follows:

1. Locally collected native seed;
2. Native seeds; then
3. Non-native seeds (desirable adapted species). (2-16)

VR4.2: Treat monocultures of cheatgrass and other non-native invasive and noxious plant communities by chemical, biological, prescribed grazing, prescribed fire, or mechanical methods. Treatment areas will be seeded to reestablish desired vegetation and stabilize soils. Prioritize restoration efforts on important habitat for wildlife and special status species. (2-16)

VR5.1: Native and introduced species will be seeded in areas lacking potential for natural recovery (see VR4.1). (2-16)

VR8.2: In areas lacking sufficient seed source, seed native and introduced plants including shrubs, grasses, and forbs to reestablish vegetation. Allow natural recovery in areas having sufficient seed sources (see VR4.1). (2-17)

WFM6.1: Rehabilitate degraded rangeland by determining and implementing suitable land treatments to achieve ES&R objectives, based on the National Fire Rehabilitation Plan or applicable updates, existing land use plans, and ES&R program guidance (see Objective VR3). (2-34)

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

- Holloway Fire Emergency Stabilization and Rehabilitation Plans Environment Assessment, DOI-BLM-OR-B060-2013-0003-EA (DR/FONSI 3/1/2013)
- Montana Mountains Cooperative Fuels Treatment Projects Environmental Assessment No. DOI-BLM-NV-WO10-2011-0005-EA (DR/FONSI 8/2/2012)
- Winnemucca Wildland Urban Interface Area Treatment Project Environmental Assessment, DOI-BLM-NV-WO10-0011-EA, (DR/FONSI 9/20/2010)
- Paradise Fuelbreak Maintenance Environmental Assessment No.: DOI-BLM-NV-WO10-2010-0009-EA (DR/FONSI 7/19/2010)
- Santa Rosa Fuelbreak Project Environmental Assessment No.: DOI-BLM-NV-WO10-2010-0003-EA (DR/FONSI 2/19/2010)
- Vegetation Treatment Using Herbicides on BLM Lands in Seventeen Western States Programmatic Final Environmental Impact Statement, 07/2007, (ROD 9/29/07)
- Normal Year Fire Rehabilitation Plan Environmental Assessment EA# NV-020-04-21, 06/2004, (DR/FONSI 8/19/04)
- Integrated Weed Management Environmental Assessment NV-020-02-19, 8/07/02, (DR/FONSI 8/27/02)
- Vegetation Treatment on BLM Lands in Thirteen Western States Environmental Impact Statement, 5/91, (ROD 8/91)

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).

- IM NV 2015-017 Revised Direction for Proposed Activities within Greater Sage-Grouse Habitat (February 2015)
- WO IM 2014-114 Sage-Grouse Habitat and Wildland Fire Management (July 2014)
- Holloway Fire ESR Determination of NEPA Adequacy DOI-BLM-NV-WO10-2013-0015-DNA (DR 12/27/2012)

- USFWS Biological Opinion for the Normal Year Fire Rehabilitation Plan (August 2004)
- A Report on National Greater Sage-Grouse Conservation Measures. Produced by: Sage-grouse National Technical Team, 12/21/2011 (pp 27)

D. NEPA Adequacy Criteria

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

Documentation of answer and explanation:

Yes, the proposed action is identical to aerial seeding actions analyzed in the Holloway Fire Emergency Stabilization and Rehabilitation Plans EA (DR/FONSI 3/1/2013). Invasive species treatments within WSAs were also analyzed in the Holloway Fire Emergency Stabilization and Rehabilitation Plan EA (DR/FONSI 3/1/2013), Montana Mountains Cooperative Fuels Treatment Project EA (DR/FONSI 8/2/2012), Normal Fire Rehabilitation Plan EA-NV-020-04-21 (DR/FONSI 8/19/04), the Integrated Weed Management EA, and the two programmatic EISs.

2. Is the range of alternatives analyzed in the existing NEPA documents(s) appropriate with respect to the new proposed action, given current environmental concerns, interests, and resource values?

Documentation of answer and explanation:

Yes, the range of alternatives analyzed in the existing NEPA documents are appropriate with respect to the current proposed action and current environmental concerns, interests, resource values, and circumstances.

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

Yes, the existing analysis is adequate. There is new information regarding the current proposal but it does not necessitate new analysis. The recent GSG Plan and ROD (September 21, 2015) designates specific habitat in Nevada as Sage-Grouse Management Categories. The Paradise Fire ES&R activities fall within PHMA and therefore must include additional correspondence and evaluation steps, including coordination and review by the Nevada Department of Wildlife (NDOW). Correspondence with the NV State Office and NDOW was initiated and the proposed action was reviewed and there is no concern from NDOW and BLM Wildlife Biologists with this project moving forward.

Although this new information updates Greater-Sage Grouse Habitat Categories and terminology as well as review process, it does not change the existing analysis of impacts to Greater-Sage Grouse habitat from this activity.

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

Yes, the analysis of direct, indirect and cumulative impacts, in the existing NEPA documents serves to disclose sufficiently the potential impacts associated with implementation of the proposed action.

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, public involvement and interagency review associated with existing NEPA documents are adequate. In addition, there has been coordination with Nevada Department of Wildlife regarding the Paradise Fire ESR actions in the form of an email with the project lead on 9/16/2015 to discuss fire-affected resources and restoration priorities. In addition, coordination regarding planned ESR actions has occurred between the Winnemucca District Range Management Specialist and the affected permittee in the form of an email and a phone call on 09/16/2015.

E. Persons/Agencies/BLM Staff Consulted

Name /Title	Resource/Agency Represented	Signature/Date	Comments (Attach if more room is needed)
Wes Barry	Range Management Specialist	/s/ Wes A. Barry Sept. 28, 2015	N/A
Rob Burton	Vegetation/Soils/Air Quality	/s/ Rob Burton 10/6/2015	
Chris Powell	Cultural Resources	/s/ Chris Powell 10/19/15	None
Matt Yacubic	Cultural Resources (oversight)	/s/ Matt Yacubic 9/22/15	
Bob Gibson	Hydrology/Riparian	/s/ Bob Gibson 10/5/15	
Elise Brown	Wildlife	/s/ Elise Brown 9-23-15	
Greg Lynch	Fisheries	/s/ Greg Lynch 10-7-15	
Philip Clauss	GIS	/s/ Philip Clauss 9/24/15	Is there a QAP or SOP related to mentioned F.G.? Perhaps more transparency to see topo and highlight burned area.
Melanie Rasor	ESR Lead/Invasive Species	/s/ Melanie Rasor 9-22-15	
Lynn Ricci	NEPA	/s/ Lynn B Ricci 10-26-15	
Samantha Gooch	Wild Horse/Burro	/s/ S Gooch 10/5/15	none
Zwaantje Rorex	Lands w/ Wilderness Characteristics/ WSA	/s/ Z Rorex 10/5/15	NOPA mailed 10/5/15
Mark Williams	Fire/Fuels	/s/ Mark Williams 13 Oct 2015	
Matt Yacubic	Paleontology	/s/ Matt Y 9/22/15	
Tanner Whetstone	Native American Religious Concerns	/s/ Tanner Whetstone 9/24/2015	
Kurt Miers	Waste, hazardous or solid	/s/ Kurt Miers 10/06/15	

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

Conclusion *(If you found that one or more of these criteria is not met, you will not be able to check this box.)*

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' compliance with the requirements of the NEPA.

/s/ Melanie Rasor 10-26-15
Signature of Project Lead

/s/ Lynn B Ricci
Signature of NEPA Coordinator

/s/ A C King
Signature of the Responsible Official

10/26/15
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. 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.