

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

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**Determination of NEPA Adequacy (DNA)  
Upper Spruce Spring Chaining and Mastication**

**PREPARING OFFICE**

U.S. Department of the Interior  
Bureau of Land Management  
Wells Field Office  
Elko, NV





# **Determination of NEPA Adequacy (DNA)**

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# **Chapter 1. Determination of NEPA Adequacy (DNA)**

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U.S. Department of the Interior  
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OFFICE:LLNVE03000

TRACKING NUMBER:DOI-BLM-NV-030-2015-0020-DNA

CASEFILE/PROJECT NUMBER: LFHFJA560000

PROPOSED ACTION TITLE/TYPE: Uppers Spruce Spring Chaining and Mastication

LOCATION/LEGAL DESCRIPTION: See Attached Map

## **A. Description of Proposed Action and any applicable mitigation measures**

The Upper Spruce Spring Treatment Area is approximately 650 acres in size. This treatment area was delineated upon the lack of desired understory vegetation and the increased threat of large-scale wildland fire. This treatment area contains little to moderate desired understory vegetation. Pinyon and juniper have out-competed and removed virtually all other vegetation within the area. The Upper Spruce Treatment Area is at high risk of a large-scale, stand replacing wildfire that would negatively impact the entire watershed. This treatment area is described as “crucial winter” habitat for mule deer.

The Bureau of Land Management, Wells Field Office, has proposed in the Spruce Mountain Restoration Project DOI-BLM-NV-E000-2011-0501-EA to complete the restoration of the Upper Spruce Spring Treatment Area by means of broadcast burning, pile burning, management of wildland fire, hand thinning, herbicide, seeding, vegetation treatment protection, firewood cutting, and maintenance. After further investigation of site conditions, Wells Field Office is proposing chaining and mastication within the Upper Spruce Spring Treatment Area. Treatments will be completed during fall and winter months. Treatments would be implemented in accordance with Section 2.1.1 of the Spruce Mountain Restoration Project EA Proposed Project Procedures.

## **B. Land Use Plan Conformance**

LUP Name*	<u>Wells Resource Management Plan</u>	Date Approved:	<u>1985</u>
Other Document	<u>Elko and Wells RMP Fire Management Ammendment</u>	Date Approved:	<u>2004</u>

*\*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:**

Elko and Wells Resource Management Plan Fire Management Amendment, September 2004

- Fire Prevention: Use of prescribed burning, mechanical, chemical, and biological (including grazing) treatments to reduce wildfire fuel hazards.

**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):**N/A

### **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.**

- Spruce Mountain Restoration Project DOI-BLM-NV-E000-2011-051-EA

**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).**

- Final Biological Assessment for Vegetation Treatments on Bureau of Land Management Lands in 17 Western States (Nevada State Office 2007a) June 2007
- Programmatic Biological Opinion for the Elko and Wells Fire Management Plan Amendment issued by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service December 5, 2003

### **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 proposed Action was a feature of and substantially similar to the actions analyzed within the existing NEPA documents listed above mastication and chaining treatments analyzed and selected for implementation for adjacent units (Lower Spruce Spring, Coyote East, and Basco Chaining Maintenance).

**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 within the Spruce Mountain Restoration Project DOI-BLM-NV-E000-2011-0501-EA is appropriate given the current conditions. The Wells Field Office analyzed five alternatives within the 2011 Spruce Mountain Restoration EA including Proposed Action and No Action alternatives. Alternative A (Proposed Action) analyzed a combination of; Prescribed Fire, Management of Wildland Fire, Chaining, Mastication, Hand Thinning, Herbicide Application, Seeding, Vegetation Treatment Protection, and Maintenance. Alternative B analyzed all treatments outlined in Alternative A with the exception of Prescribed Fire and Management of Wildland Fire. Alternative C analyzed; all treatments outlined in Alternative A with the exception of Chaining. Alternative D analyzed; all treatments outlined in Alternative A with the exception of Herbicide Application. The EA analyzed alternatives developed in response to issues identified through internal and external scoping of the projects.

The no action alternative and four other alternatives were considered in the EA. No other issues were raised that would suggest the need for additional alternatives. There is no information or circumstances that would indicate the need for additional alternatives beyond those previously analyzed. Moreover, alternatives considered but eliminated from detailed analysis in the EA remain impractical or infeasible. Mastication and chaining were both analyzed in great detail, in the original EA, for adjacent treatment units.

**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. There is no new information or circumstances that would alter the analysis of the impacts associated with the proposed action. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service concluded in 2010 that the greater sage-grouse (*Centrocercus urophasianus*) is warranted for listing under the Endangered Species Act, but precluded at this time for listing by higher priority species. Under current Sage-Grouse habitat modeling, the Upper Spruce Spring Treatment Area is considered non-habitat. Although new directives applicable to Greater Sage-Grouse have been issued, these directives would not substantially change the analysis for the proposed action. Collectively, these actions would result 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. The direct, indirect and cumulative effects would be the same as those analyzed within Chapter 4 of the Spruce Mountain Restoration Project DOI-BLM-NV-E000-2011-0501-EA as the mastication and chaining treatments have been approved in adjacent units.

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

Yes. Public scoping for the Spruce Mountain Restoration Project was initiated on January 14, 2011. A field tour was requested by interested parties and was conducted on July 20, 2011. Additionally, the BLM held a public meeting regarding the Spruce Mountain Restoration Project on February 20, 2012. The BLM has been involved in correspondence regarding this project with the permittee, Federal and State agencies, stake holders, and other interested parties. The Spruce Mountain Restoration Project EA was posted to the Elko District Office website (<http://on.doi.gov/elkoBLM>) on January 23, 2012. Comments regarding the EA were due to the BLM by March 2, 2012. Several comments regarding the EA were received. The BLM revised the EA based on the comments received and made minor editorial corrections. The revised EA was posted to the Elko District website on June 12, 2012; comments regarding the revised EA were accepted by the BLM through July 2, 2012.

## **E. Persons/Agencies/BLM Staff Consulted**

**Table 1.1. List of Preparers**

<b>Name</b>	<b>Title</b>	<b>Discipline</b>	<b>Initials</b>	<b>Date</b>
Eric Nolan	Fire Management Specialist	Fuels and Fire Management	MM	7/28/15
Matt Murphy	Fuels Program Manager	Fuels and Fire Management	MM	7/28/15
Cameron Collins	Wildlife Biologist	Wildlife, Migratory Birds, Special Status Species	CPC	7/29/15
Norman Henrickson	Archeologist	Cultural Resources	NDH	7/29/15
John Daniels	Hydrologist	Hydrology, Riparian	JD	7/30/15
Sam Cisney	Weeds Specialist	Non-Native Invasive and Noxious Species	SC	7/28/15
Kristine Dedolph	Outdoor Recreation Specialist	Wilderness, Recreation, and Visual Resource Management	KMD	7/31/15
Dan Zvirzdin	Rangeland Management Specialist	Livestock Grazing, Rangeland	DZ	7/29/15
Bruce Thompson	Wild Horse and Burro Specialist	Wild Horses	BWC	8/3/15
Melanie Mirati	Assistant Field Manager, Renewable Resources	Review	MM	8/4/15

**Note**

Refer to the Spruce Mountain Restoration Project DOI-BLM-NV-E000-2011-051-EA for a complete list of the team members participating in the preparation of the original analysis or planning documents.

**Table 1.2. Cooperating Agencies**

<b>Agency Type</b>	Nevada Department of Wildlife
<b>Contact Name</b>	Steve Foree
<b>Sections Jointly Developed</b>	Proposed Action and Alternatives

**Conclusion**

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's compliance with the requirement of NEPA.

\S\ Matt Murphy for Eric Nolan 9/10/2015

Eric Nolan, Fire Management Specialist

\S\ Terri Dobis 8/5/2015

Terri Dobis, Planning & Environmental Coordinator

\S\ Melanie A. Peterson 10/13/2015

Melanie A. Peterson, Field Manager, Wells Field Office

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.