

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

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**Decision Record - Memorandum  
Upper Spruce Spring Chaining and Mastication**

**PREPARING OFFICE**

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





# **Decision Record - Memorandum**

## **Upper Spruce Spring Chaining and Mastication**

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

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# Chapter 1.

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## **1.1. Introduction**

The Bureau of Land Management, Wells Field Office, is proposing to complete mastication and chaining operations within the Upper Spruce Spring Treatment Area of the Spruce Mountain Restoration Project Area (refer to attached maps). The Proposed Action consists of chaining and or masticating up to 650 acres of pinyon-juniper woodlands. The Upper Spruce Spring Treatment Area was originally evaluated under the 2011 Spruce Mountain Restoration Project Environmental Assessment (EA)(DOI-BLM-NV-E000-2011-0501-EA), based on estimated understory species composition. The original treatment types proposed for the Upper Spruce Spring Treatment Area included; broadcast burning, pile burning, management of wildland fire, hand thinning, herbicide, seeding, vegetation treatment protection, firewood cutting, and maintenance. Upon further investigation of site conditions, it is apparent that the Upper Spruce Spring Treatment Areas contains less desired understory vegetation than what had been originally estimated. The Wells Field Office is proposing to add chaining and mastication to the list of viable treatment methods available for use within this treatment area. Chaining and mastication were analyzed under the original Spruce Mountain Restoration EA for several treatment areas including the adjacent Coyote East and Lower Spruce Spring treatment areas.

## **1.2. Alternatives Considered**

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.

Additionally the 2011 Spruce Mountain Restoration Project EA considered two alternatives which were not analyzed in detail. These two alternatives included Hand Thinning Only, and Sagebrush Mowing or Dixie Harrowing. These two alternatives were not determined to meet the purpose and need of the Environmental Assessment and were therefore disregarded during the decision making process.

## **1.3. Public Involvement**

Scoping for the Spruce Mountain Restoration Project EA was initiated on January 14, 2011. A field tour was requested by interested parties and was conducted on July 20, 2011. A separate field tour was held for interested tribal governments on October 21, 2011. Additionally the BLM held a public meeting regarding the Spruce Mountain Restoration Project on February 29, 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 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 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.

## 1.4. Rationale

Environmental Impacts of chaining and mastication were adequately analyzed in the 2011 Spruce Mountain Restoration Project EA (DOI-BLM-NV-E000–2011–0501–EA). Direct, indirect, and cumulative impacts are considered the same as those referenced in the EA. 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.

The Proposed Action is consistent with the 1985 Wells Resource Management Plan and 2004 Elko and Wells Resource Management Plans Fire Management Amendment “Fire Prevention: Use of prescribed burning, mechanical, chemical, and biological (including grazing) treatments to reduce wildfire fuel hazards”. Cultural inventory was completed for the Upper Spruce Spring Treatment Area during the fall months of 2014.

## 1.5. Decision

It is my decision to implement the Proposed Action described in the Determination of NEPA Adequacy (DNA) DOI-BLM-NV-E030–2015–0020–DNA. Based on the review of existing NEPA analysis of potential environmental impacts in the 2011 Spruce Mountain Restoration Project EA (DOI-BLM-NV-E000–2011–0501–EA), the Proposed Action is adequately analyzed for NEPA compliance and is in conformance with Wells Resource Management Plan (RMP), and Elko and Wells Resource Management Plans Fire Management Amendment.

## 1.6. Authority

This decision is subject to administrative appeal. Within 15 days of receipt of this decision, parties who are adversely affected and believe it is incorrect have the right to appeal to the Department of the Interior Board of Land Appeals, Office of the Secretary, in accordance with regulations at 43 CFR 4.4. Appellants must follow procedures outlined in the form, “Information on Taking Appeals to the Board of Land Appeals.” An appeal should be in writing and specify the reasons, clearly and concisely, as to why the decision is in error. Appellants are requested to supply this office with a copy of their Statement of Reasons.

This wildfire management decision is issued under 43 CFR 4190.1 and is effective immediately. The BLM has made the determination that vegetation, soil, or other resources on the public lands are at substantial risk of wildfire due to drought, fuel buildup, or other reasons, or at immediate risk of erosion or other damage due to wildfire. Thus, notwithstanding the provisions of 43 CFR 4.21(a)(1), filing a notice of appeal under 43 CFR Part 4 does not automatically suspend the effect of the decision. The Interior Board of Land Appeals must decide an appeal of this decision within 60 days after all pleadings have been filed, and within 180 days after the appeal was filed (43 CFR 4.416).

\_\S\ Melanie A. Peterson  
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Signature  
Melanie A. Peterson  
Field Manager  
Wells Field Office

\_\_10/13/2015\_\_\_\_\_

Date