

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT
Klamath Falls Resource Area

**Draft Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI)
New Hayden Fox Environmental Assessment
#DOI-BLM-ORWA-L040-2015-0015-EA**

Introduction

The New Hayden Fox EA includes only the unburned portion of the original Hayden Fox project area that is outside of the Oregon Gulch Fire perimeter. The original Hayden Fox EA (#DOI-BLM-OR-L040-2013-04-EA) was completed in April of 2014 but a decision was not issued because the Oregon Gulch Fire burned approximately two-thirds of the original Hayden Fox project area in August, 2014. The effects of treatments on the burned Hayden Fox units were analyzed in the Oregon Gulch Fire Salvage and Rehabilitation EA (#DOI-BLM-OR-L040-2015-01-EA) completed in February, 2015.

Considering the changes to the environment caused by the Oregon Gulch wildfire, the BLM found it necessary to complete a new EA for the portions of the Hayden Fox EA analysis area that remained unburned. The New Hayden Fox analysis area is approximately 8,574 acres in size, including 3,679 acres of BLM lands. Treatments are proposed on approximately 1,480 acres on BLM lands only, and would include commercial thinning (timber sale), small diameter thinning, brush mowing, hazardous fuels treatments, and invasive weed treatments. The EA analyzes three alternatives including the No Action Alternative.

Plan Conformance and Consistency

The proposed actions are subject to the following land use plan: Klamath Falls Resource Area Resource Management Plan (RMP), approved in Sept. 1994. The proposed actions have been determined to be in conformance with this RMP as required by regulation (43 CFR 1610.5-3(a)).

Context

The project area is entirely within the Klamath Falls Resource Area (KFRA). Treatments are proposed primarily in Matrix (General Forest Management Area) lands (1,328 acres out of 1,480 acres of treatment), a land use allocation for which timber production activities were designated in the RMP.

Intensity

I have considered the potential intensity/severity of the impacts anticipated from New Hayden Fox project actions relative to each of the ten areas suggested for consideration by the CEQ:

1. ***Impacts that may be both beneficial and adverse.*** The EA considered both potential beneficial and adverse effects on numerous resources in the project area and especially for relevant resources such as the northern spotted owl. Consultation with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service has been ongoing since 2012 when analysis began for the original Hayden Fox project. The USFWS concluded that “the [original] Hayden Fox project is not expected

to result in significant impacts to the northern spotted owl or its designated critical habitat.” The USFWS is expected to reach a similar conclusion for the New Hayden Fox project because there is less habitat post-fire. I have determined that none of the direct, indirect or cumulative impacts associated with the proposed action are significant, individually or combined.

2. ***The degree to which the proposed action affects public health or safety.*** The proposed project is located within a rural setting and involves the same type of vegetation treatment activities that have been conducted in the KFRA on a regular basis. Based on resource specialist analysis, public scoping, and other information contained in the EA, I have determined that the actions proposed would not affect public health or safety.

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.*** The project area does not contain park lands, prime farmlands, wild and scenic rivers, or ecologically critical areas. Treatments to promote late successional forest structure are proposed within Hayden Creek District Designated Reserves (DDR), totaling 107 acres. The proposed treatments are consistent with DDR objectives.

Surveys for historic and cultural resources have been completed. Historic and cultural properties would be avoided by project design, so effects from any action alternative are expected to be negligible.

4. ***The degree to which the effects on the quality of the human environment are likely to be controversial.*** Scoping for the proposed action and background information was sent to other agencies, groups, known affected and interested publics. Four letters of comment were received in response. The interdisciplinary team reviewed the scoping responses and used the relevant comments in developing the alternatives. After review of the analysis, I have determined that the effects described in the EA are not highly controversial.

5. ***The degree to which the possible effects on the human environment are highly uncertain or involve unique or unknown risks.*** Timber sales, thinning, tree planting, brush mowing, underburning, and medusahead rye weed treatment (imazapic application) are common actions authorized by the BLM, and similar actions have been implemented in similar areas. The analysis provided in the attached EA does not indicate that these actions would involve any 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 proposed actions would not establish a precedent for future actions on KFRA-managed lands. This analysis would be used for the implementation of the treatments described in the New Hayden Fox project area only.

7. ***Whether the action is related to other actions with individually insignificant but cumulatively significant impacts.*** The action alternatives were considered by the interdisciplinary team within the context of past, present, and reasonably foreseeable future actions. Based upon the EA analysis, significant cumulative effects are not anticipated.

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.* There are no features within the project area that are listed or eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places, or any that are considered significant scientific, cultural, or historic resources. Local tribes were consulted regarding project effects on significant cultural and tribal resources and none were identified. The tribes consulted are listed in the EA.
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.* Due to potential effects to northern spotted owl Designated Critical Habitat, this project will be consulted on pursuant to Section 7 of the ESA. The consultation will be based on the previous consultation process (# 08EKLA00-2014-1-0014) that was completed for the original Hayden Fox EA prior to the Oregon Gulch fire (see #1 above). There are no other threatened or endangered listed, proposed, candidate species or designated critical habitat under the Endangered Species Act (as amended USDI Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) 1973) that occur within the project area or that would be affected from project activities.
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, or local law or requirement imposed for the protection of the environment. In addition, the project is consistent with applicable land management plans, policies, and programs.

DRAFT Finding of No Significant Impact Determination

I have reviewed the Hayden Fox EA (#DOI-BLM-ORWA-L040-2015-0015-EA), dated November of 2015. On the basis of the information contained in the EA, it is my determination that:

- (1) implementation of either of the action alternatives will not have significant environmental impacts beyond those already addressed in the KFRA RMP;
- (2) all of the alternatives are in conformance with the RMP; and
- (3) None of the alternatives (including the proposed action) constitute a major Federal action having a significant effect on the human environment. Therefore, an environmental impact statement or a supplement to the existing RMP and Environmental Impact Statement is not necessary and will not be prepared.

This finding is based on my consideration of the Council on Environmental Quality's (CEQ) criteria for significance (40 CFR 1508.27), both with regard to the context and to the intensity of the impacts described in the EA or as articulated in the letters of comment.

Donald J. Holmstrom
Field Manager, Klamath Falls Resource Area

Date