



**United States Department of the Interior
Bureau of Land Management**

Date November 2, 2015

**Categorical Exclusion
BLM-CA-C05000-2016-005**

**Rocky Fire Emergency Stabilization
Colusa, Lake, and Yolo Counties**

U.S. Department of the Interior
Bureau of Land Management
Ukiah Field Office
2550 North State Street
Ukiah, CA 95482
Phone: (707) 468-4000
FAX: (707) 468-4027

Date: November 2, 2015

Categorical Exclusion Number:

516 DM 2 (1.13)

Post-fire rehabilitation activities not to exceed 4,200 acres (such as tree planting, fence replacement, habitat restoration, heritage site restoration, repair of roads and trails, and repair of damage to minor facilities such as campgrounds) to repair or improve lands unlikely to recover to a management approved condition from wildland fire damage, or to repair or replace minor facilities damaged by fire. Such activities: Shall be conducted consistent with agency and Departmental procedures and applicable land and resource management plans; Shall not include the use of herbicides or pesticides or the construction of new permanent roads or other new permanent infrastructure; and Shall be completed within three years following a wildland fire.

516 DM 11.9 (I) (1) Emergency Stabilization

Planned actions in response to wildfires, floods, weather events, earthquakes, or landslips that threaten public health or safety, property, and/or natural and cultural resources, and that are necessary to repair or improve lands unlikely to recover to a management-approved condition as a result of the event. Such activities shall be limited to: repair and installation of essential erosion control structures; replacement or repair of existing culverts, roads, trails, fences, and minor facilities; construction of protection fences; planting, seeding, and mulching; and removal of hazard trees, rocks, soil, and other mobile debris from, on, or along roads, trails, campgrounds, and watercourses. These activities:

- a. Shall be completed within one year following the event;
- b. Shall not include the use of herbicides or pesticides;
- c. Shall not include the construction of new roads or other new permanent infrastructure;
- d. Shall not exceed 4,200 acres; and
- e. May include temporary roads which are defined as roads authorized by contract, permit, lease, other written authorization, or emergency operation not intended to be part of the BLM transportation system and not necessary for long-term resource management. Temporary roads shall be designed to standards appropriate for the intended uses, considering safety, cost of transportation, and impacts on land and resources; and
- f. Shall require the treatment of temporary roads constructed or used so as to permit the reestablishment by artificial or natural means, or vegetative cover on the roadway and areas where the vegetative cover was disturbed by the construction or use of the road, as necessary to minimize erosion from the disturbed area. Such treatment shall be designed to re-establish vegetative cover as soon as practicable, but at least within 10 years after the termination of the contract.

Case File/Serial Number: N/A

Project Title: Rocky Fire Emergency Stabilization

Name and Address of Applicant: Bureau of Land Management
2550 North State Street, CA 95482
Ukiah Field Office, CA

Project Location: Colusa, Lake, and Yolo Counties (See Appendix A: Location Map)

Land Status Verified: Yes

Affected Surface Area: 4,200 acres of Public Lands

Conformance with Applicable Land Use Plan: This proposed action conforms to the conditions and guidelines of the following land use plan:

Name of Plan:

Ukiah Resource Management Plan (2006)

- Section 2.10, Fire Management, Fire Rehabilitation, Stabilization & Restoration (pg 18); “Rehabilitate burned areas to mitigate adverse effects of fire on soils, water, cultural and vegetation.”
- Section 2.10, Fire Management, Fire Rehabilitation, Stabilization & Restoration Management Actions(pg. 19):
 - “Native species would be used in reseedings to minimize noxious weed invasion.”
 - “Develop local or regional “Normal Fire Year Rehabilitation Plans”
 - “Monitor rehabilitation efforts to facilitate future planning and implementation.”

Background Information:

The Rocky Fire began on July 29, 2015 near Rocky Creek along Morgan Valley Rd. in Lake County, CA. The Rocky Fire started as two separate fires that grew together, the cause of the one of the fires was due to a faulty gas water heater located in an outbuilding that contained flammable liquids while the cause of the second fire is still under investigation. The fire destroyed a total of 43 residences, 53 outbuildings, and 8 structures. The Rocky fire burned a total of 69,438 acres, of which 47,433 acres were located on BLM lands. Though the fire burned an area of greater than the 4,200 acre threshold for the CX, treatments placed for post-fire repair work will be less than 4,200 acres.

Three other significant wildfires occurred within the Ukiah Field Office Boundaries from late July until September 2015. The Wragg fire began on July 22, 2015 and burned a total of 8,051 acres, of which, 1,751 acres were BLM public lands. The Jerusalem Fire began on August 9, 2015, burning a total of 25,156 acres, 13,164 acres located on BLM lands. The Valley Fire began on September 12, 2015 and burned a total of 76,067 acres, of which 1,888 acres were located on BLM public lands. See Appendix B for a map of Ukiah Field Office Wildfires for 2015.

This Categorical Exclusion is proposed to analyze the impacts of the event since it will be a “...minor event” and will comply with NEPA. Each fire will be analyzed separately as they

occurred in separate locations with varied ecological systems and have different concerns that need to be addressed for post-fire emergency stabilization separately.

Proposed Action (include discreet actions):

Actions will be taken to provide for the overall safety of visitors and limit environmental effects caused by the fire. Actions include but are not limited to:

1. Repair/replace recreation structures damaged during the fire,
2. Prevent soil erosion by placing erosion control structures in areas with the potential for high levels of sediment loss or where debris flows have the potential to cause harm to the public,
3. Place water bars on fire suppression lines to prevent debris flows and erosion features from being created,
4. Protect culturally significant sites from looting and erosion by placing barriers and erosion control measures at the sites,
5. Clean out, place new culverts, and replace culverts that burned and are no longer functional,
6. Remove hazard trees that pose a threat to public land visitors, and
7. Improve/repair trails that now have potential safety hazards from fire related issues; i.e., holes in trails from burned out trees, waterbar trails to slow water flow, etc.

See the Emergency Stabilization and Rehabilitation Plan located in Appendix C for a more detailed view of the proposed actions. Some of the treatments discussed in the plan, such as herbicide use for noxious weeds, will require additional NEPA analysis and are not covered in this CX.

Review of Exceptions to CX: The Departmental Manual (516 DM 2.3A(3) and 516 DM 2, Appendix 2) requires that before any action described by the above CX is used, the list of Extraordinary Circumstances to Categorical Exclusions listed in 516 DM 2, Appendix 2 must be reviewed for applicability in each case. The proposed action cannot be categorically excluded if one or more of the listed exceptions apply, thus requiring either an EA or an EIS. When no exceptions apply, the above type of Bureau of Land Management, action normally does not require the preparation of an EA or EIS. The following exceptions apply to individual actions within categorical exclusions (516 DM 2, Appendix 2) and the reviewer must verify that the proposed action DOES NOT:

- x **2.1 Have significant adverse effects on public health or safety.**
- x **2.2 Have significant impacts on such natural resources and unique geographic characteristics as historic or cultural resources; park, recreation or refuge lands; wilderness areas; wild or scenic rivers; national natural landmarks; sole or principal drinking water aquifers; prime farmlands; wetlands (Executive Order 11990); floodplains (Executive Order 11988); national monuments; migratory birds; and other ecologically significant or critical areas.**

- 2.3 Have highly controversial environmental effects or involve unresolved conflicts concerning alternative uses of available resources [NEPA Section 102(2) (E)].**
- 2.4 Have highly uncertain and potentially significant environmental effects or involve unique or unknown environmental risks.**
- 2.5 Establish a precedent for future action or represent a decision in principle about future actions with potential significant environmental effects.**
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- 2.6 Have a direct relationship to other actions with individually insignificant but cumulatively significant environmental effects.**
- 2.7 Have adverse effects on properties listed or eligible for listing, on the National Register of Historic Places as determined by either the bureau or office.**
- 2.8 Have significant impacts on species listed, or proposed to be listed, on the List of Endangered or Threatened Species, or have significant impacts on designated Critical Habitat for these species.**
- 2.9 Violate a Federal law, or a State, local, or tribal law or requirement imposed for the protection of the environment.**
- 2.10 Have a disproportionately high and adverse effect on low income or minority populations (Executive Order 12898).**
- 2.11 Limit access to and ceremonial use of Indian sacred sites on Federal lands by Indian religious practitioners or significantly adversely affect the physical integrity of such sacred sites (Executive Order 13007).**
- 2.12 Contribute to the introduction, continued existence, or spread of noxious weeds or non-native invasive species known to occur in the area or actions that may promote the introduction, growth, or expansion of the range of such species (Federal Noxious Weed Control Act and Executive Order 13112).**

Prepared by:



Molly Nilsson
Environmental Protection Specialist

12/8/15

Date

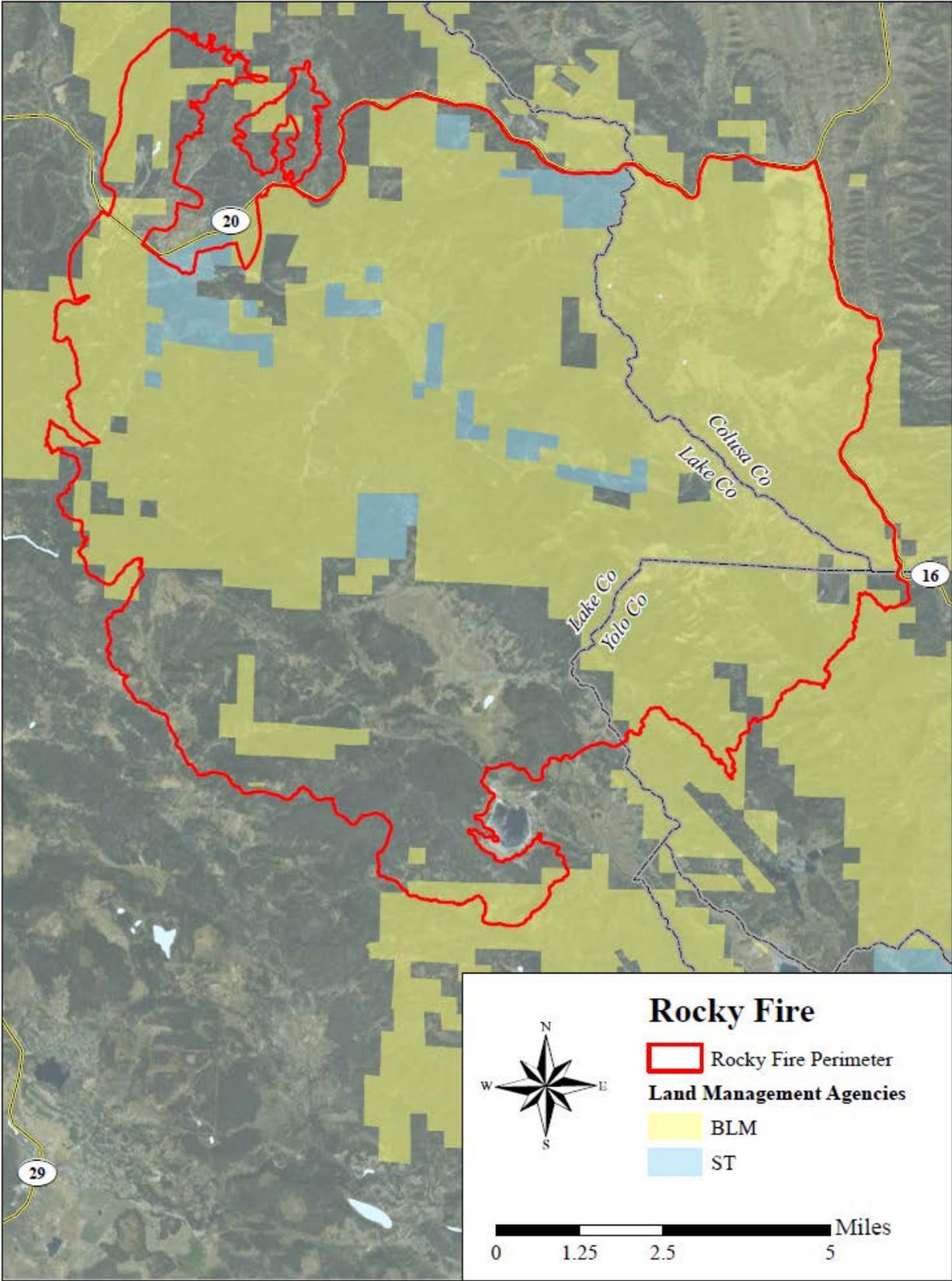
APPENDIX:

Appendix A: Location Map

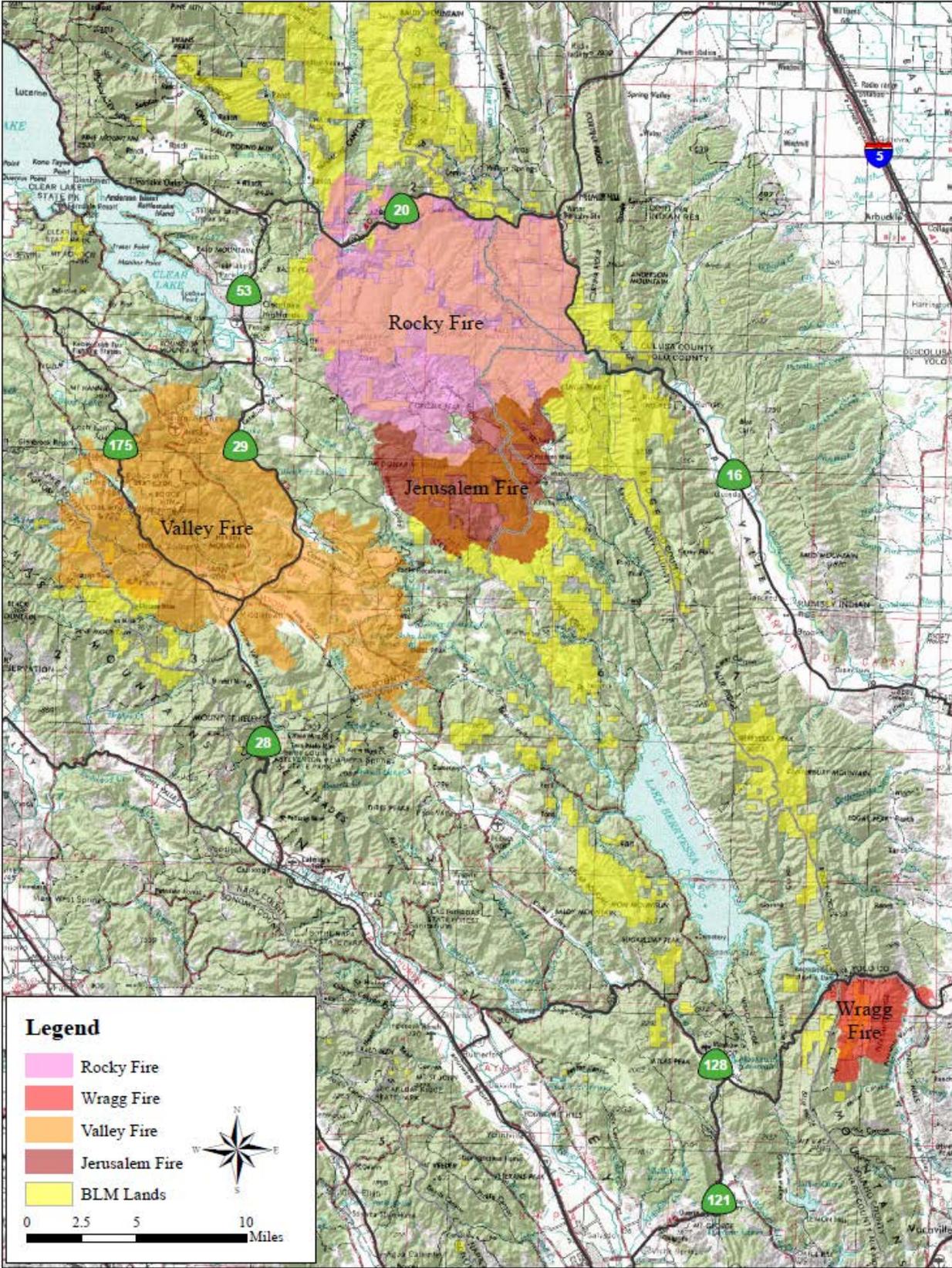
Appendix B: Ukiah Field Office Fires 2015

Appendix C: Rocky Fire Emergency Stabilization and Rehabilitation Report

Appendix A: Location Map



Appendix B: Ukiah Field Office Wildfires 2015



Appendix C: Emergency Stabilization and Rehabilitation Plan - Rocky Fire