

**Decision Memorandum on Action and for Application of:**

**Departmental Categorical Exclusion 1.13**

**Valley Fire Emergency Stabilization**

U.S. Department of the Interior  
Bureau of Land Management  
Ukiah Field Office  
Ukiah, California

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**Description of Proposed Action and the Purpose and Need for the Action**

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. The cause of the fire is still under investigation. The fire destroyed a total of 1,958 structures, including 1,307 homes and multi-family structures and 66 commercial properties. BLM lands affected by the fire are located in in the Geysers area in the southwest portion of the fire perimeter, in Lake and Sonoma Counties. Impacts to BLM lands include areas of complete vegetation loss, unstable slopes, and dead trees that have the potential to fall on trails. The primary purpose of the proposed action is to provide post-fire rehabilitation activities within the Valley Fire perimeter. The proposed action includes:

1. Remove hazardous trees and place on slopes to aid in slope stabilization and/or chip to cover bare soils,
2. Place erosion control, such as wattles and straw on slopes, and
3. Place waterbars on fire suppression lines that were created during firefighting activities.

**Plan Conformance**

The proposed action is in conformance with the Ukiah Resource Management Plan and Final EIS (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 reseeding to minimize noxious weed invasion.”
  - “Develop local or regional “Normal Fire Year Rehabilitation Plans”
  - “Monitor rehabilitation efforts to facilitate future planning and implementation.”

## **Compliance with the National Environmental Policy Act**

The Proposed Action is categorically excluded from further documentation under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) in accordance with 516 DM, Appendix 1, 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.

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The application of this categorical exclusion in this situation is appropriate because there are no extraordinary circumstances potentially having effects which may significantly affect the environment. For this project, none of the exceptions apply. The extraordinary circumstances are contained in 516 DM, 2 Appendix 2.

### **Person and Agencies Consulted**

No persons or agencies were consulted in the development of the action as post-fire emergency stabilization will be conducted on BLM lands.

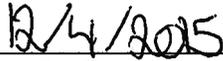
### **Decision and Rationale on Action**

I have decided to implement the proposed treatments listed in the Description of Proposed Action Section. These actions meet the purpose and need by providing post-fire rehabilitation on BLM lands within the Valley Fire perimeter. In addition, I have reviewed the plan conformance statement and have determined that the proposed action is in conformance with the approved land use plan and that no further environmental analysis is required.

### **Implementation Date**

This project will be implemented upon completion of analysis, advertisement of decisions, and protest periods.

  
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Rich Burns  
BLM Ukiah Field Office Manager

  
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Date

## **Administrative Review or Appeal Opportunities**

The decision in the Categorical Exclusion for post-fire emergency stabilization is subject to a 15-day comment period. If no comments are received, this decision will become effective upon completion of the Decision Record. If comments are received, this decision will become effective upon BLM's completion of its review and response to the comments. Any contest of this decision should state specifically which portion or element of the decision is being protested and cite the applicable CFR regulations.

### **Contact Person**

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For additional information concerning this decision, contact:

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