

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

## DETERMINATION OF NEPA ADEQUACY (DNA) DOI-BLM-MT-M010-2016-0006-DNA

**Project Title:** Henry Smith North Unit, Controlled Burn



**Location:** Phillips County T31N R31E Sec 6

### **Project Contact:**

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# DETERMINATION OF NEPA ADEQUACY REVIEW AND APPROVAL

## A. Background

Description of Proposed Action and any Applicable Mitigation Measures:

The BLM would remove vegetative obstruction utilizing prescribed fire and fully record and document all cultural features at the Henry Smith site (24PH0794) within the Big Bend of the Milk River ACEC located at T32N, R31E Sec(s) 31 & 32 which were not burned and not included in the 2015 studies.

The following design features will be included with this action:

- 1.) All equipment and vehicles (with the exception of the UTV ignition vehicle) utilized during the prescribed fire would be restricted to existing roads and trails to ensure no disturbance to cultural resources occurs, exceptions may be made to maintain personnel safety and ensure control of the prescribed fire if needed.
- 2.) The allotment would not be utilized by the livestock permittee for at least one growing season in order to allow vegetation to regrow prior to grazing activities. Additional rest may be scheduled based on post burn conditions.
- 3.) Placement of water tanks, staging areas and other gathering/ deposition points would be placed away from known cultural features.
- 4.) All vehicles that will be part of the controlled burn will be required to have the undercarriage washed prior to the burn to prevent weed seed from being spread through the proposed burn area.

## B. Land Use Plan Conformance

The proposed action is in conformance with the HiLine Resource Management Plan approved in 2015. The HiLine RMP can be accessed using the internet at <http://www.blm.gov/8qkd>. Specific references to this proposal are detailed in the following table.

Page Number	Language
3-5, 3-6	<p>Categorizing cultural resources according to their potential uses is the culmination of the identification process and the bridge to protection and utilization decisions. Use categories establish what needs to be protected, and when or how use should be authorized. All cultural resources have uses, but not all should be used in the same way (BLM 8110 Manual, 2004).</p> <p>Public Use: This category may be applied to any cultural property found to be appropriate for use as an interpretive exhibit in place, or for related educational and recreational uses by members of the general public. The category may also be applied to buildings suitable for continued use or adaptive use, for example as staff housing or administrative facilities at a visitor contact or interpretive site. Public Use properties include sites of similar composition to:</p>

	– Henry Smith (24PH794). This site complex is important because it contains bison kill sites, extensive drive lines, stone circle features and unique stone effigies. The site is part of the Big Bend of the Milk River ACEC.
3-55	The Henry Smith site (1,000 acres) has been allocated for Public Use. The site will be inventoried for cultural resources, and mapping and/or collecting data will be completed as necessary.

**C. Identify Applicable National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) Documents(s) and Other Related Documents That Cover the Proposed Action.**

The proposed action is addressed in Environmental Assessment (EA) Environmental Assessment DOI-BLM-MT-M01000-2015-0002-EA Henry Smith Controlled Burn. The Decision Record and Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) were signed March 2<sup>nd</sup> 2015 by the Malta Field Manager. Mitigation measures were set forth in the EA and re-emphasized within this document.

**D. NEPA Adequacy Criteria**

Is the new proposed action a feature of, or essentially similar to, an alternative analyzed in the existing NEPA document(s)?

Yes

The existing EA proposed and analyzed a 300 acre controlled burn within the big bend of the Milk ACEC (800 acres). The current proposal is to conduct a controlled burn on the remaining 500 acres in the exact same area (Big Bend of the Milk ACEC) but descending into the coulees and uplands not burned in 2015.

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 project is directly adjacent to the area that was burned in 2015 and was analyzed the previous EA as part of the cumulative effects. The part of the proposed burn area which is outside of the analysis area of the original EA does not include woody draws and bottoms that are significant to big game winter range and sage-grouse winter habitat.

Is the range of alternatives analyzed in the existing NEPA documents(s) appropriate with respect to the new proposed action, given current environmental concerns, interests, and resource values?

Yes

Alternatives analyzed in the existing NEPA included: 1) Proposed Action utilizing prescribed fire to remove vegetation to allow for complete recording of the Henry Smith Site and 2) No Action. Additionally there were additional alternatives considered but eliminated from future analysis.

Is the existing analysis valid in light of any new information or circumstances (such as, rangeland health standard assessment, recent endangered species listings, or 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

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

Are the public involvement and interagency review associated with existing NEPA document(s) adequate for the current proposed action?  
 Yes

**E. Preparers**

<b>Name</b>	<b>Title</b>	<b>Resource Represented</b>	<b>Signature &amp; Date</b>
<b>Josh Chase</b>	<b>Archaeologist</b>	<b>Cultural and Paleontological Resources, Native American Concerns</b>	/s/ 2/1/2016 Josh Chase
<b>Kathy Tribby</b>	<b>Wildlife Biologist</b>	<b>Wildlife</b>	/s/ Kathy Tribby 2/01/2016
<b>Jason Snellman</b>	<b>Outdoor Recreation Planner</b>	<b>Recreation</b>	/s/ Jason Snellman 2/5/16
<b>Adrienne Lipka</b>	<b>Rangeland Management Specialist</b>	<b>Range/ NEPA</b>	/s/ Adrienne Lipka 2/9/2016
<b>Josh Sorlie</b>	<b>Soil Scientist</b>	<b>Soils</b>	/s/Josh Sorlie 2/1/2016
<b>Tom Probert</b>	<b>Hydrologist</b>	<b>Hydrology</b>	/s/ <i>Thomas Probert</i> 2/9/2016

**F. Conclusion**

I considered this review and determined that the proposed action is in conformance with the applicable land use plan and that the NEPA documentation fully covers the proposed action and constitutes BLM’s compliance with NEPA requirements.

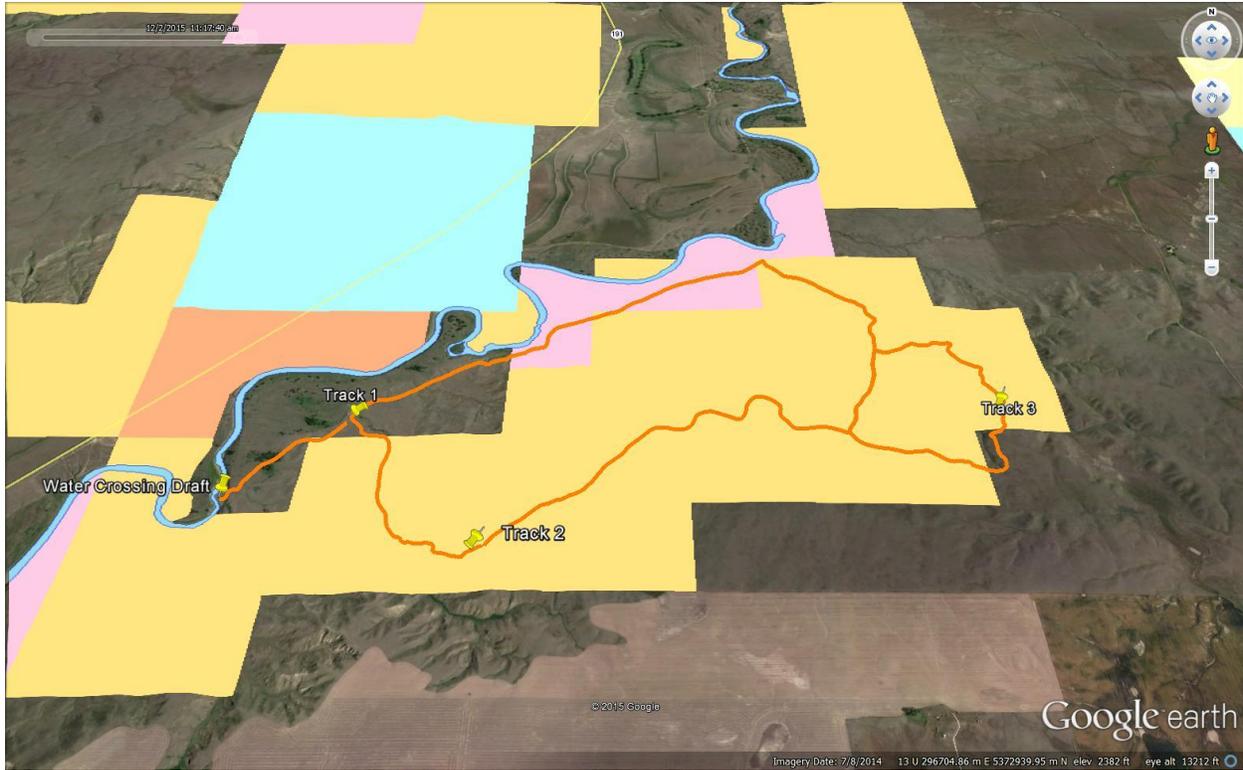
/s/ Josh Chase 2/9/2016  
Signature of Project Lead

/s/ Adrienne Lipka 2/10/2016  
Signature of NEPA Coordinator

/s/ Vinita Shea  
Signature of Responsible Official

Feb. 10, 2016  
Date

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.



**Figure 1: General Boundary of proposed 2016 prescribed fire**