

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

DOI-BLM-MT-C020-2016-0069-DNA

March 3, 2016

DEICISION RECORD

Yarger Prescribed Fire

Location:

Bobcat Unit: SE corner of T6S, R50E sec 18, SW corner of sec 17, NE corner of sec 19 W ½ of sec 20.

U.S. Department of the Interior
Bureau of Land Management
Miles City Field Office
111 Garryowen Road
Miles City, MT 59301
Phone: 406-233-2800
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YARGER BUTTE PRESCRIBED FIRE

DECISION RECORD

DECISION: It is my decision to authorize the Yarger Butte (Bobcat Unit) prescribed fire as described in the Determination of NEPA Adequacy (DNA) DOI-BLM-MT-C020-2016-0069-DNA.

SUMMARY OF THE PROJECT: The Bureau of Land Management, Miles City Field Office would the prescribed fire to create openings in the vast overstocked ponderosa pine/Rocky Mountain juniper woodlands. The Bobcat Unit Burn would be completed during the spring months (February through June, 2016).

RATIONALE: The decision to authorize this treatment has been made in consideration of the environmental impacts of the proposed action. The action is in conformance with the Miles City Field Office Land Use Plan (September, 2015), as well as the Yarger Butte Burn Plan.

The purpose of the proposed project is to reduce the risks of catastrophic wildland fire to people, communities, and natural resources while restoring forest and rangeland ecosystems to more closely match their historical structure, function, diversity and dynamics. This action will lead to improved ecosystem health while continuing to meet Standards of Rangeland Health. The need for action results from subsequent field visits by BLM resource specialists with raised concerns of conifer expansion and encroachment leading to a risk of the project area failing to meet Land Health Standards. Those standards most at risk include the following: Standard 1 (uplands are in proper functioning condition), Standard 2 (riparian areas and wetlands are in proper functioning condition), and Standard 5 (habitats are provided for healthy, productive and diverse native plant and animal populations and communities). Stands of ponderosa pine (*Pinus ponderosa*) and Rocky Mountain juniper (*Juniperus scopulorum*) within the proposed project area have shifted from a Fire Regime Condition Class (FRCC) 1 to FRCC 2 and 3. This shift has led to a risk of higher intensity, more severe wildfire. This shift has also led to decreased ecosystem health and degraded wildlife habitats. Implementation of the proposed action will help to shift vegetative conditions including structure and composition in portions of the project area toward the expected historical fire return intervals.

Implementation Date: This project will be implemented in the spring of 2016.

/s/ **Wendy Warren**
Authorized Officer (Signature)
Wendy Warren
Acting Field Manager
Miles City Field Office

3/3/2016
Date of Signature

Administrative Review or Appeal Opportunities

APPEAL OPPORTUNITIES: The decision may be appealed to the Interior Board of Land Appeals, Office of the Secretary, in accordance with the regulations contained in 43 CFR Part 4. Public notification of this decision will be considered to have occurred on (Include the date that Decision was signed). Within 30 days of this decision, a notice of appeal must be filed in the office of the authorized officer at (address of the authorized officer). If a statement of reasons for the appeal is not included with the notice, it must be filed with the Interior Board of Land Appeals, Office of Hearings and Appeals, U.S. Department of the Interior, 801 North Quincy St., Suite 300, Arlington, VA 22203 within 30 days after the notice of appeal is filed with the authorized officer.

If you wish to file a petition for stay pursuant to 43 CFR Part 4.21(b) (or cite applicable programmatic rules for petition for stay), the petition for stay should accompany your notice of appeal and shall show sufficient justification based on the following standards:

- 1. The relative harm to the parties if the stay is granted or denied,*
- 2. The likelihood of the appellant's success on the merits,*
- 3. The likelihood of irreparable harm to the appellant or resources if the stay is not granted, and*
- 4. Whether the public interest favors granting the stay.*

If a petition for stay is submitted with the notice of appeal, a copy of the notice of appeal and petition for stay must be served on each party named in the decision from which the appeal is taken, and with the IBLA at the same time it is filed with the authorized officer.

A copy of the notice of appeal, any statement of reasons and all pertinent documents must be served on each adverse party named in the decision from which the appeal is taken and on the Office of the Field Solicitor, U.S. Department of the Interior, 2021 Fourth Avenue North, Suite 112, Billings, Montana 59101, not later than 15 days after filing the document with the authorized officer and/or IBLA.

Contact Person

For additional information concerning this decision, contact:

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