

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

Categorical Exclusion

**DOI-BLM-UT-G010-2016-0048-CX
John Jarvie Ranch Historic District Tree Removal**

PREPARING OFFICE

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



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Prepared by
U.S. Department of the Interior
Bureau of Land Management
Vernal Field Office, Green River District

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Chapter 1. John Jarvie Ranch Historic District Tree Removal

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A. Background

BLM Office:

LLUTG01000

Lease/Serial/Case File No.:

Proposed Action Title/Type:

John Jarvie Historic Ranch District Tree Removal

Location of Proposed Action:

The proposed action will occur at the John Jarvie Historic Ranch District, located in the Browns Park region of northeastern Utah. The legal description for the historic property is as follows: Lot 3, Section 23, Township 2 North, Range 24 East, Salt Lake Meridian.

Description of Proposed Action:

The proposed action for tree removal and trimming at the John Jarvie Historic District ranch involves the removal of six dead trees; the trimming of dead and overhanging branches which threaten a reconstructed store building and the stone house, which is a contributing element to the historic district; and trimming of dead branches on cottonwood trees at the picnic area on the south end of the district. The dead trees and branches pose a threat to the life and safety of staff and visitors to the publicly interpreted site (see photos attachment).

First, the Vernal Field Office (VFO) intends to remove six dead Lombardy Poplars located north of the fenced garden area and immediately adjacent to Browns Park Road. The trees will be removed and stumps cut flush to the ground. The stumps of the trees will not be removed in order to maintain subsurface integrity of potential buried cultural remains. In order to maintain the visual screening of the road provided by the trees, new historically appropriate Fremont Cottonwood or Green Ash trees will be planted near the stumps of the removed trees. The planting of the new saplings will occur immediately adjacent to the stumps of the removed trees in order to minimize ground disturbance. An archaeologist will monitor the planting of the new saplings.

The second component of the proposed action involves the trimming and removal of branches of hybrid poplars which overhang a reconstructed store building and the stone house. The dead branches pose a threat to the life and safety of visitors to the site and the two structures. Of particular concern is the threat to the historic stone house, which is a contributing element to the historic district. Professional removal of the dead branches will increase visitor safety and reduce the threat of branch fall on the two structures. A VFO archaeologist will communicate with the crew removing the branches about the necessity for the branches not to fall on the structures during removal operations.

The final component of the proposed undertaking is trimming of low and dead branches in two cottonwood trees which overhang two picnic areas on the south and east sides of the site. These branches pose a safety risk to visitors. No historic structures are threatened by the hazard limbs.

The proposed undertaking will be part of a larger effort to improve the overall condition of the publicly interpreted site. Other intended projects associated with the undertaking include conservation and restoration efforts on the stone house and repairs to the reconstructed store

B. Land Use Plan Conformance

Land Use Plan Name:

Vernal Field Office Record of Decision and Approved Resource Management Plan

Date Approved/Amended:

October 2008

The proposed action is in conformance with the applicable LUP because it is specifically provided for in the following LUP decision(s):

The proposed action is in conformance with the LUP, even though it is not specifically provided for, because it is clearly consistent with the following LUP decision(s) (objectives, terms, and conditions) :

The October 2008 Approved Resource Management Plan for the Vernal Field Office includes a management decision, CUL-25 (BLM VFO 2008 ROD and Approved Resource Management Plan, pg 75) which pertains to the John Jarvie Historic Ranch District. CUL-25 calls for reconstruction, stabilization and restoration of important cultural features, and the elimination or separation of other features that are not culturally significant at the John Jarvie Historic Ranch District. An additional element of CUL-25 notes the need to provide adequate protection and management of the site.

The approved 1980 Recreation Management plan for the site, which was subject to NEPA analysis notes that hazards to health and safety at the John Jarvie Ranch Historic District will be corrected as soon as possible.

C. Compliance with NEPA:

The Proposed Action is categorically excluded from further documentation under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) in accordance with 43 CFR 46.215,

Department of Interior Categorical Exclusion 1.7 (43.CFR.46((210)) which provides for routine and continuing government business including maintenance and replacement activities having limited context and intensity and BLM Categorical Exclusion Forestry C.4 (516 DM 11.9) which provides for the removal of individual trees or small groups of trees which are dead, diseased, or injured or which constitute a safety hazard.

These categorical exclusions are appropriate in this situation because there are no extraordinary circumstances potentially having effects that may significantly affect the environment. The proposed action has been reviewed, and none of the extraordinary circumstances described in 43 CFR 46.210 apply.

I considered: The recommendations of the reviewing staff, the 1980 Jarvie Ranch Management Plan, and the 2008 Vernal Field Office Resource Management Plan.

D. Approval and Contact Information

Michelle Brown
Assistant Field Manager, Renewable Resources

4/1/2016

Contact Person

Stephanie Howard
NEPA Coordinator
Vernal Field Office
170S 500E
Vernal, UT 84078
(435) 781-4469

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Chapter 2. Extraordinary Circumstances Documentation

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2.1. Categorical Exclusion Rationale

| | |
|------------------------------------|------------------------------|
| CX Number: | DOI-BLM-UT-G010-2016-0048-CX |
| Date: | 3/31/2016 |
| Lease/Case File/ Serial Number: | |
| Regulatory Authority (CFR or Law): | 43.CFR.46(210); 516 DM 11.9 |

The following block would be inside instruction tags and not be printed or visible in the final document

NEPA Guidance: Answers to the Extraordinary Circumstances questions below will affect the level of NEPA required for this project. If any of the extraordinary circumstances are applicable to the action being considered, either an EA or EIS must be prepared for the action.

Section 1.1 Impacts on Public Health and Safety

| 1. Does the proposed action have significant impacts on public health and safety? | | |
|---|----|------------------------------|
| YES | NO | REVIEWER/TITLE |
| | X | Nicole Lohman, Archaeologist |

Rationale: The removal of dead trees will improve public health a safety by reducing the risk of branches falling or the trees uprooting in a heavy windstorm. The trimming of low hanging and dead branches which overhang historic structures and picnic areas will also improve public health and safety by reducing the risk of unplanned limb fall.

Section 1.2 Impacts on Natural Resources or Unique Geographic Characteristics

| 2. Does the proposed action have significant impacts on such natural resources and unique geographic characteristics as historic or cultural resources; park, recreation or refuge lands; wilderness or wilderness study 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 (Executive Order 13186); and other ecologically significant or critical areas? | | |
|--|----|---|
| YES | NO | REVIEWER/TITLE |
| | X | Natasha Hadden (As long as timing stipulations are agreed upon) |

Rationale: Removal and replacement of dead trees with period appropriate tree saplings will not significantly impact unique historic characteristics of the John Jarvie Historic Ranch district.

Wildlife:

1. An active great horned owl nest was located 10–25 meters from the proposed actions.

Stipulations (field review and RMP):

Timing restriction for Great horned owl; 2/1-9/31, 0.25 mile buffer

BLM biologists have agreed to monitor the active nest, to observe when the owlets have fledged the nest and are no longer utilizing the area, so that proposed tree removal and trimming can be implemented earlier than the September 31 timing restriction. Authorization and restrictions of the proposed actions will be reevaluated as new data are gathered.

2. The proposed action does fall within the Priority Habitat Management Area (PHMA) for greater sage-grouse, however the John Jarvie Historic Ranch would be considered non-habitat for sage-grouse and sage-grouse do not utilize the ranch, thus the proposed tree removal and trimming will not significantly impact sage-grouse.

3. Numerous species may migrate through, or nest within the project area. Project actions would be planned to occur after August 31 to mitigate for any impending impacts or disturbance during the nesting season (March 1 – August 31). The trees proposed for trimming and removal can be monitored by biologists for nesting birds so that the proposed actions can be implemented earlier than the August 31 timing restriction. In the hybrid poplar tree, nearest to the river, that is proposed to have low hanging and dead branches trimmed, there is a nest cavity in one of the larger branches. Removal of the nesting cavity will be avoided.

Section 1.3 Level of Controversy

| 3. Does the proposed action have highly controversial environmental effects or involve unresolved conflicts concerning alternative uses of available resources [NEPA Section 102(2)(E)]? | | |
|--|----|------------------------------------|
| YES | NO | REVIEWER/TITLE |
| | x | Stephanie Howard, NEPA Coordinator |

Rationale: The effects of removing or trimming dead or dying trees are well known and documented and are categorically excluded.

Section 1.4 Highly Uncertain or Unique or Unknown Environmental Risks

| 4. Does the proposed action have highly uncertain and potentially significant environmental effects or involve unique or unknown environmental risks? | | |
|---|----|------------------------------------|
| YES | NO | REVIEWER/TITLE |
| | x | Stephanie Howard, NEPA Coordinator |

Rationale: There are no uncertain or significant effects or risks associated with the proposed tree removal and trimming.

Section 1.5 Precedent Setting

| 5. Does the proposed action establish a precedent for future action, or represent a decision in principle about future actions, with potentially significant environmental effects? | | |
|---|----|------------------------------------|
| YES | NO | REVIEWER/TITLE |
| | x | Stephanie Howard, NEPA Coordinator |

Rationale: There is no precedent or decision in principle that will be set by the proposed action because the maintenance is routine.

Section 1.6 Cumulatively Significant Effects

| 6. Does the proposed action have a direct relationship to other actions with individually insignificant, but cumulatively significant, environmental effects? | | |
|---|----|------------------------------------|
| YES | NO | REVIEWER/TITLE |
| | x | Stephanie Howard, NEPA Coordinator |

Rationale: There are no cumulatively significant actions that are related to this project. Tree maintenance is a part of the overall management plan for Jarvie Ranch, which was previously analyzed.

Section 1.7 Impacts on Cultural Properties

| 7. Does the proposed action have significant impacts on properties listed or eligible for listing, on the National Register of Historic Places as determined by either the Bureau or office? | | |
|--|----|------------------------------|
| YES | NO | REVIEWER/TITLE |
| | x | Nicole Lohman, Archaeologist |

Rationale: The John Jarvie Historic Ranch District is listed as a historic district on the National Register of Historic Places. The proposed action will not impact the contributing elements of the property provided care is taken when removing limbs overhanging the site. Impacts to the setting and feeling of the site will be minimal. Replacement of dead non-native trees with native trees will improve the historic feeling of the site.

Section 1.8 Impacts on Federally Listed Species or Critical Habitat

| 8. Does the proposed action 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? | | |
|--|----|----------------|
| YES | NO | REVIEWER/TITLE |
| | x | Natasha Hadden |
| | x | Jessi Brunson |

Rationale: BLM data files have been reviewed and field surveys have been conducted within the John Jarvie Ranch Historic Ranch. The data files and field surveys reveal that there are no wildlife or plant species that are endangered, threatened, proposed to be listed or their critical habitats, that would be significantly impacted by the proposed action of trimming dead limbs and also removal of 6 dead Lombardy poplar trees.

Section 1.9 Compliance With Laws

| 9. Does the proposed action violate a Federal law, or a State, local, or tribal law or requirement imposed for the protection of the environment? | | |
|---|----|------------------------------------|
| YES | NO | REVIEWER/TITLE |
| | x | Stephanie Howard, NEPA Coordinator |

Rationale: No Federal, State, or tribal laws would be violated by the proposed tree trimming and removal.

Section 1.10 Environmental Justice

| 10. Does the proposed action have a disproportionately high and adverse effect on low income or minority populations (Executive Order 12898)? | | |
|---|----|------------------------------|
| YES | NO | REVIEWER/TITLE |
| | x | Nicole Lohman, Archaeologist |

Rationale: The proposed action will not impact low income or minority populations because none are present in the project area.

Section 1.11 Indian Sacred Sites

| 11. Does the proposed action 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)? | | |
|---|----|------------------------------|
| YES | NO | REVIEWER/TITLE |
| | x | Nicole Lohman. Archaeologist |

Rationale: John Jarvie Ranch Historic District is not identified as a sacred site to Indian religious practitioners.

Section 1.12 Noxious and Non-Native Invasive Species

| 12. Does the proposed action 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)? | | |
|---|----|----------------|
| YES | NO | REVIEWER/TITLE |
| | x | Jessi Brunson |

Rationale: Disturbance associated with this project will be insignificant and will not contribute to invasive and noxious weed spread. The planned disturbance will also occur in areas that are already relatively disturbed by anthropogenic activities

Section 1.2 Preparer Information

Michelle Brown
Assistant Field Manager, Renewable Resources

04/01/2016