

**PROGRAM CONSULTATION & COORDINATION
BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT
TUCSON FIELD OFFICE**

ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW

Turbo NEPA #: **AZ-420-2006-19**

ASSIGNMENT AND REVIEW

Subactivity: 1020
Case/Project No: None

Project Name: **Empire Ranch Vegetation Treatment**

Location:

NLCS Unit: Las Cienega National Conservation Area

Quad Name:

Project Lead: Keith Hughes

Unit Manager/Supervisor Review: _____ Date: _____

Technical Review:

| Will Be Impacted Yes No | Can Be Mitigated Yes No | Attach Mitigation? Yes No | NAME | CRITICAL ELEMENTS | SIGNATURE | DATE |
|----------------------------|----------------------------|------------------------------|--------------|-----------------------------------|-----------|------|
| () () | () () | () () | Dan Moore | Air Quality | | |
| () () | () () | () () | Catie Fenn | Areas of Critical Env. Concern | | |
| () () | () () | () () | Max Witkind | Cultural Resources/Paleo | | |
| () () | () () | () () | Bill Auby | Environmental Justice | | |
| () () | () () | () () | Dan Moore | Farm Lands (Prime or Unique) | | |
| () () | () () | () () | Dan Moore | Floodplain | | |
| () () | () () | () () | Max Witkind | Native Am. Religious Concerns | | |
| () () | () () | () () | Keith Hughes | Threatened or Endangered Species | | |
| () () | () () | () () | Bill Auby | Wastes, Hazardous or Solid | | |
| () () | () () | () () | Dan Moore | Water Quality, Drinking or Ground | | |
| () () | () () | () () | Keith Hughes | Wetlands/Riparian Zones | | |
| () () | () () | () () | Catie Fenn | Wild and Scenic Rivers | | |
| () () | () () | () () | Catie Fenn | Wilderness | | |
| () () | () () | () () | Keith Hughes | Invasive & Non Native Weeds | | |
| () () | () () | () () | Bill Auby | National Energy Policy | | |

Additional Specialists Review:

| SPECIALTY | NAME | COMMENTS | SIGNATURE | DATE |
|--------------------|---------------|----------|-----------|------|
| Lands/Realty | Susan Bernal | | | |
| Minerals/Mining | Bill Auby | | | |
| AZ Game & Fish | | | | |
| Fisheries | Jeff Simms | | | |
| Soils/Water Rights | Dan Moore | | | |
| Wildlife/Range | Grant Drennen | | | |

Approval:

Environmental Coordinator: _____ Date: _____

Field Manager: _____ Date: _____

April 2006

**TUCSON FIELD OFFICE
ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT**

EA#: AZ-420-2006-19

Project Name: **Empire Ranch Vegetation Treatment**

Preparer(s): Hughes

Legal Description and Map Name: portions of T20S, R17E, sections 9 and 10, Elgin Quad

Is Project Area Flagged? No

INTRODUCTION

Background and Need for the Proposed Action: The grasslands of southeastern Arizona are historic range for the endangered Sonoran pronghorn. This pronghorn subspecies was extirpated from southeastern Arizona by the late 1800's. In the 1980's, pronghorn from Texas were introduced to the area now known as the Las Cienegas National Conservation Area (NCA). Currently, the NCA contains approximately 80-100 pronghorn. The herd occupies approximately 1/3 of the NCA (Figure 1).

Pronghorn in the Sonoita Valley face two major limiting factors: 1) Lack of space and, 2) Dispersal impediments within existing range. Space, or suitable habitat, is limited by rural development surrounding Sonoita and the steady encroachment of mesquites into the grasslands. On the NCA, pronghorn dispersal is impeded primarily by dense mesquite invasion and to a lesser extent, redundant livestock fencing.

This proposal addresses means of converting mesquite invaded grasslands into open grassland habitat suitable for pronghorn occupancy and dispersal.

Conformance with Land Use Plan

The proposed action is in conformance with the Approved Las Cienegas Resource Management Plan/Record of Decision (RMP/ROD) (BLM 2003).

The proposed action is in conformance with the Las Cienegas RMP because it is specifically provided for in the following decisions:

1. Implement an integrated vegetation treatment program (WS05) on 20,000 acres. Vegetation treatments may be prescribed for additional acreage in the future in response to vegetation monitoring. The treatment program is described in more detail on pages 26-27 and Appendix 8 of the Approved Plan.

2. The Las Cienegas RMP/ROD also provides the following resource objectives for the management of the tree component in upland grassland wildlife habitat:

-Maintain or achieve properly functioning uplands with a high similarity index (> 50% by weight) to the historic climax community present on site (RMP/ROD, page 8);

-Limit trees to no more than 5% of the total cover (RMP/ROD, page 10);

-Maintain scattered trees greater than 12 feet tall (RMP/ROD, page 11);

-Using site appropriate methods (fire, mechanical, herbicide, etc.) treat mesquite within at least 20,000 acres of mesquite invaded grasslands by applying the prescriptive elements listed immediately above (RMP/ROD, page 28 and Map 10).

Relationship to Statutes, Regulations, or Other Plans:

The projects will occur on public (BLM) and State land. The project conforms with decisions in the Eastern Arizona Grazing EIS - 1986, the Approved Las Cienegas Resource Management Plan (RMP) – 2003, the Arizona Statewide Wild and Scenic Rivers Legislative Environmental Impact Statement – 1994, and the Vegetation Treatment on BLM Lands in Thirteen Western States Final EIS – 1991.

Additionally, the proposed project conforms will all state and local regulations. Local support for the project has been garnered through the Sonoita Valley Planning Partnership (SVPP), a collaborative group interested in maintaining ecological functions in the Sonoita Valley. .

THE PROPOSED ACTION AND ALTERNATIVES

Proposed Action:

Mesquite Removal: The proposed action is to mechanically remove most mesquite in relatively small defined treatment units within the larger vegetation treatment area defined in the LCNCA RMP (Figure 1). Cutting will occur within defined treatment units and progress sequentially across the general treatment area over a period of years. Individual treatment units will vary in size from 100-1200 acres. The Treatment blocks for the first year (2006) are shown in Figure 2. Treatment blocks for subsequent years will be mapped out as part of each years project planning.

Cutting methods will include mechanized rubber tired equipment such as a skidster with tree cutting attachment and chainsaws. Herbicides such as Garlon will be used sparingly to treat cut stumps in an effort to prevent root and stump sprouting.

Sites that contain mesquite densities greater than the desired condition objectives will be treated as follows:

Desired Mesquite Density: Mesquite density will be reduced to the point that mesquite cover is no greater than 5% of total cover within treatment units. The remaining mesquite trees will be large mesquites, 12' or taller.

Mesquite Removal Methods: Mesquite will be removed with a variety of instruments including chainsaws, rubber tired equipment with lopping devices, landscape tree removal devices, fire, and herbicide. Garlon and similar herbicides will be applied to cut stumps at the time of cutting. This family of herbicides are effective in controlling woody species such as mesquite, yet they biodegrade relatively quickly and do not leave harmful residues in the environment.

Treatment of Slash:

- a. In units to be burned subsequent to the mechanical removal of mesquite, slash will be piled atop mesquite stumps and to a lesser degree lopped and scattered through the treatment units. These units will be rested at least one

grazing cycle, then burned under approved burn plans. Burning is intended to remove slash from the site and will potentially reduce resprouting of mesquite.

- b. In units that will not be burned subsequent to the mechanical removal of mesquite, mesquite slash will be piled or chipped. Most chips will be left on site.
- c. Biomass utilization. Some of the slash may be used at designated recreation sites for groundcover, fencing, or other uses. Some chips may be bagged as part of a public outreach effort. The biomass market is expanding nationwide, and BLM will endeavor to provide biomass product to any of these emerging markets as opportunities exist. Sewardship contracting with wood biomass the resultant product will be investigated and implemented opportunities present themselves.

No Action Alternative:

None of the pronghorn habitat improvement activities described in the proposed action would occur.

ENVIRONMENTAL CONSEQUENCES

General Wildlife:

Setting: The high diversity of fish and wildlife species within the Las Cienegas area results from the habitat diversity, including the presence of several rare plant communities. Three native fishes inhabit Cienega Creek and Mattie Canyon. More than 230 bird species have been documented in the planning area, including both resident and migratory species and special status species. A variety of other mammals also inhabit the planning area. Cottontail rabbits are common in shrubby habitats, and black-tailed jackrabbits occur in open habitats. Raccoon and skunks are found most often in riparian areas. Coati mundi inhabit dry canyons and riparian areas. Ringtails are found on rocky hillsides, usually near crevices, caves, mine shafts, and abandoned buildings. Predatory mammals include mountain lion, bobcat, coyote, and grey fox. A small band of pronghorn occupy the grassland areas.

Environmental Impacts of the Proposed Action and Alternatives: Wildlife dependant upon mesquite habitats will be impacted by the proposed action; however, much mesquite habitat will remain outside treatment areas. As such, the proposed action is not expected to reduce or significantly impact the abundance and diversity of general wildlife species; however, the distribution of some species will obviously shift once mesquite dominated grasslands are converted to pure grassland stands. Conversely, species such as the pronghorn antelope, grasshopper sparrow, and Botteri's sparrow will increase in both abundance and diversity because more suitable grassland habitat will be available once treatments are complete.

The no action alternative will not impact general wildlife species.

Threatened and Endangered Species:

Setting: Thirty-seven special status fish, wildlife, and plant species occur or have the potential to occur within the LCNCA. These special status species mainly inhabit the Las Cienegas rare riparian and grassland habitats. The proposed action would occur in upland grassland habitats and sacaton bottoms.

Environmental Impacts of the Proposed Action and Alternatives: Most of the threatened and

endangered species on LCNCA are associated with riparian habitat. The proposed action will not impact riparian and wetland habitat; as such, the proposed action will have no impact on threatened and endangered species, with the following exception: Lesser long-nosed bats, a federal endangered species could occur in the project area due to the presence of agave in the uplands. Most agave fields do not occur in dense mesquite habitat, the habitat targeted by the proposed action. If agaves occur within treatment units, agave will be flagged and avoided. Contractors will be made aware of agaves, and will be instructed to avoid damage to all agaves. The no action alternative will have no impacts on threatened and endangered species.

Cultural/Historic Resources:

Setting: The Cienega Valley has been inhabited by humans for approximately 5000 years. Material cultural remains have been found for the Archaic, Ceramic, Protohistoric, and Historic periods of occupation along portions of Cienega Creek and its tributaries. Cienega Creek was a major focus for prehistoric occupation due to dependable year-round water supply and abundant natural resources, including wildlife, which served to supplement the economic needs of the prehistoric inhabitants.

Environmental Impacts of the Proposed Action and Alternatives:

Impacts of the Proposed Action: Portions of the proposed vegetation treatment project are located in culturally sensitive areas. Mechanical removal of mesquite may involve the use of rubber tired lopping devices (such as skid steer loaders with lopper attachments). Some cultural objects could be damaged as these rubber tired devices traverse the project area. However, pre-treatment archeological surveys of the project area will identify cultural resources and cultural objects can be avoided. Additionally, hand treatment in areas containing cultural objects will greatly reduce the likelihood that cultural objects would be impacted. A variety of mesquite removal techniques will be used within treatment areas, and techniques appropriate to the protection of cultural resources will be employed. Specific stipulations to protect cultural objects follow:

- 1) Areas that contain cultural resources will be evaluated and vegetation treatment actions will be selected that will not adversely affect cultural resources. Ground disturbing mesquite removal techniques will not be utilized in areas with cultural resources. In some instances, avoidance of cultural resources may be necessary. In areas with cultural sensitivity, vegetation removal will be monitored by a TFO archaeologist.
- 2) Should any archaeological resources or vertebrate fossils be discovered during implementation of this project, all surface disturbing activities in the area of discovery shall cease and the Field Office archaeologist shall be notified. The archaeologist will evaluate the discovery and provide recommendations to the Authorized Officer. Surface disturbing activities shall not resume until permission is obtained from the Authorized Officer.

As such, the mechanical treatment of mesquite is not expected to impact cultural resources.

The no action alternative will have no impacts on cultural resources.

Air Quality:

Setting: The Clean Air Act, which was last amended in 1990, requires EPA to set National Ambient Air Quality Standards for pollutants considered harmful to public health and the environment. The Clean Air Act established two types of national air quality standards. Primary standards set limits to protect public health, including the health of "sensitive" populations such as asthmatics, children, and the elderly. Secondary standards set limits to protect public welfare, including protection against decreased visibility, damage to animals, crops, vegetation, and buildings (EPA 2002). Secondary standards apply to the Las Cienegas National Conservation Area. The Area meets Secondary standards (USDI, BLM 2002).

Environmental Impacts of the Proposed Action and Alternatives: Under the proposed action, skidsteer loaders and similar equipment and ½ ton and ¾ ton trucks will be used to access the project area and treat mesquite. The vehicles will produce emissions that will not substantially alter air quality in the study area. The no action alternative will not impact air quality.

Farmlands (prime or unique):

Setting: The project area has no prime or unique farmlands (USDI, BLM 2002).

Environmental Impacts of the Proposed Action and Alternatives: Prime and unique farmlands are not present.

Hazardous or Solid Wastes:

Setting: No hazardous or solid waste sites or issues have been found within the project area (USDI, BLM 2002).

Environmental Impacts of the Proposed Action and Alternatives: Hazardous and solid waste are not present in the project area.

Wilderness:

Setting: The project area does not occur within a designated wilderness and is not suitable for wilderness designation (USDI, BLM 2002).

Environmental Impacts of the Proposed Action and Alternatives: Wilderness values will not be impacted by the proposed action and the no action alternative.

Recreation Management:

Setting: The Las Cienegas National Conservation Area provides a wide variety of dispersed recreation opportunities including camping, bird watching, nature study, hang gliding, picnicking, horseback riding, hunting and training bird dogs. Areas of concentrated use include Oak Tree Canyon, the abandoned Agricultural Fields, Maternity Well and the abandoned Air Strip. Designated recreation sites are being developed at these locations as well as at Cieneguita and Road Canyon.

Environmental Impacts of the Proposed Action and Alternatives: The proposed action will occur near areas of concentrated recreational use and designated recreation sites. Vegetation treatments could impact the site plans for these areas. Treatment areas will change in aspect from mesquite thickets to pure grassland stands. This visual, landscape change will not impact the nature of

recreation on the LCNCA.

Vegetation treatments will be coordinated with the Outdoor Recreation Planner to ensure that vegetation removal in any designated recreation sites is compatible with the site plans. In some instances, vegetation treatments within designated recreation sites will be necessary to implement the site plans, in other locations, some trees will need to be marked to be left for recreation purposes.

The no action alternative has no impact on recreational resources.

Riparian:

Setting: The proposed action would not occur in riparian habitat.

Environmental Impacts of the Proposed Action and Alternatives: No impacts to riparian will occur under the proposed action and no action alternative.

Environmental Justice:

Setting: The community of Sonoita AZ is approximately 6 miles southwest of the project site.

Environmental Impacts of the Proposed Action and Alternatives: The proposed action and no action alternative will not disproportionately affect low income or minority communities.

Area of Critical Environmental Concern:

Setting: The LCNCA is designated as an ACEC for the protection and enhancement of watershed, grassland, and threatened/endangered wildlife resources, emphasizing total ecosystem management.

Environmental Impacts of the Proposed Action and Alternatives: The proposed action furthers the desired vegetation goals as stated in the RMP. As such, the proposed action will enhance the vegetative and biotic goals of the ACEC. The no action alternative will not impact the ACEC.

Water Quality:

Setting: The proposed project would occur in the Cienega Creek watershed in upland areas where mesquite has invaded into grassland sites.

Environmental Impacts of the Proposed Action and Alternatives: The proposed action will not occur in drainages, riparian areas and wetlands. As such, the potential for increased sedimentation will not occur. Herbicides will be applied in limited quantities and in a highly controlled fashion upon cut mesquite stumps. No herbicides will be applied during inclement weather, nor will herbicides be applied to riparian areas, drainages, washes and wetlands. As such, no herbicide laden runoff will occur to levels impacting water quality.

Floodplains:

Setting: The proposed project would occur in the Cienega Creek watershed in upland areas where mesquite has invaded into grassland sites. The projects would not occur in Floodplain areas.

Environmental Impacts of the Proposed Action and Alternatives: Neither the proposed action or the no action alternatives will not affect Floodplain areas.

Wild and Scenic Rivers:

Setting: The proposed project does not occur in or near portions of Cienega Creek tentatively classified as scenic under the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act.

Environmental Impacts of the Proposed Action and Alternatives: The proposed action and no action alternative will not impact wild and scenic rivers.

Visual Resource Management:

Setting: Currently, the project area is a mesquite invaded grassland. A grassland setting is described as the desired future condition for the treatment areas.

Environmental Impacts of the Proposed Action and Alternatives: Mesquites will be cut as close to the ground as possible in effort to obscure the stumps from view. Grass will obscure many stumps, but it is likely that some stumps will be visible for years to come, thereby slightly impacting the visual resources in local areas. Mesquite slash will be piled on stumps (to increase intensity of fire over stumps to eliminate the stumps and also reduce root sprouting) or scattered across the cutting units and remain on the units for up to one growing season. Slash will then be burned (burning described in separate EA).

The no action alternative will not achieve the desired future vegetation community and the visual aspect of the grassland area will remain mesquite obscured.

Native American Religious:

Setting: Native Americans have not identified locations of traditional cultural or religious importance in the Las Cienegas National Conservation Area.

Environmental Impacts of the Proposed Action and Alternatives: Native American cultural and religious locations will not be influenced by the proposed action and no action alternative.

Energy Policy:

Setting: No energy policy issues are present in the proposed project area

Environmental Impacts of the Proposed Action and Alternatives: Energy policy issues will not be influenced by the proposed action and no action alternative.

Rangelands and Livestock Grazing

Setting: Some of the upland ecological sites on Las Cienegas are in degraded condition due to invasion of mesquite which is now in greater abundance than it was historically. Vegetation treatments to remove or reduce mesquite are necessary in order to move these ecological sites toward desired conditions. Livestock grazing occurs on four allotments on Las Cienegas NCA and surrounding public lands.

Environmental Impacts of the Proposed Action and Alternatives: The proposed action will improve the condition of ecological sites and move them toward desired upland conditions. The

proposed action could impact livestock grazing activities by limiting use of pastures by livestock during treatment activities and possibly disrupting livestock movement patterns or use of waters during treatment activities. Development of treatment unit boundaries and treatment prescriptions including timing will be coordinated with livestock permittees on any allotments being treated.

Under the no action alternative, these sites will remain in degraded condition.

Invasive and Non Native Weeds

Setting: Las Cienegas NCA is designated as a weed management area. Many treatment units have been invaded by exotic Lehmann's lovegrass. There are currently no methods known to eradicate this species from native grassland areas. Techniques such as washing equipment prior to use in an area have proven inadequate once Lehmanns is established in an area

Environmental Impacts of the Proposed Action and Alternatives: Vehicles used in mechanical removal of mesquite and herbicide application have the potential to spread seed of exotic Lehmann's lovegrass into areas where it currently has not invaded; however, the cumulative impacts of land management activities have dispersed Lehmanns seed throughout the area. This action has no greater potential to disperse Lehmanns seeds than other activities. As such, the proposed action will not increase the proliferation of Lehmanns in the area

Residual and Cumulative Impacts: The ecological aspect of the proposed treatment area will change from mesquite dominated grassland to semi-desert grassland. As such, the ecological functions of the treated areas and the wildlife assemblages that occupy these areas will change. For instance, mesquite dominated areas once unsuitable for pronghorn and grassland sparrows, will be suitable for these species once mesquite is no longer a major component of the vegetative community. This change in ecotype can be considered a residual impact, and the impact will be present for many years. This however, is a desired ecologic shift as described in the LCNCA RMP. Conversely, mesquites in drainages will not be removed. As such, the capacity of the treatment areas to continue to function as wildlife movement corridors will not be substantially impacted and most of the wildlife species which use the Cienega Valley for dispersal from adjacent mountain ranges will continue to utilize existing dispersal and travel corridors.

As to cumulative impacts, the proposed action can be considered another ground disturbing action in a long list of ground disturbing management activities that BLM has undertaken and continues to undertake in the proposed project area. These actions include: livestock management including the active rotation of 800-1200 cattle within the LCNCA, road maintenance, water development for livestock and wildlife, prescribed burning, facilities maintenance and the moderate expansion of operational facilities (primarily water well drilling and waterline improvement). One cumulative result of these actions is that Lehmanns Lovegrass has continued to spread across the areas of ground impact. Lehmanns Lovegrass is a pervasive, aggressive, open space colonizer and the proposed action will provide open space niches available to Lehmanns colonization. However, most range land specialists concur that Lehmanns, given its aggressive colonizing nature, is firmly established in the grasslands of Arizona, and preventative measures such as weed washing of equipment have little impact on the spread of Lehmanns. The vegetation treatment proposal will not accelerate the spread of Lehmanns past its already rapid expansion into native grasslands in the project area.

CONSULTATION AND COORDINATION

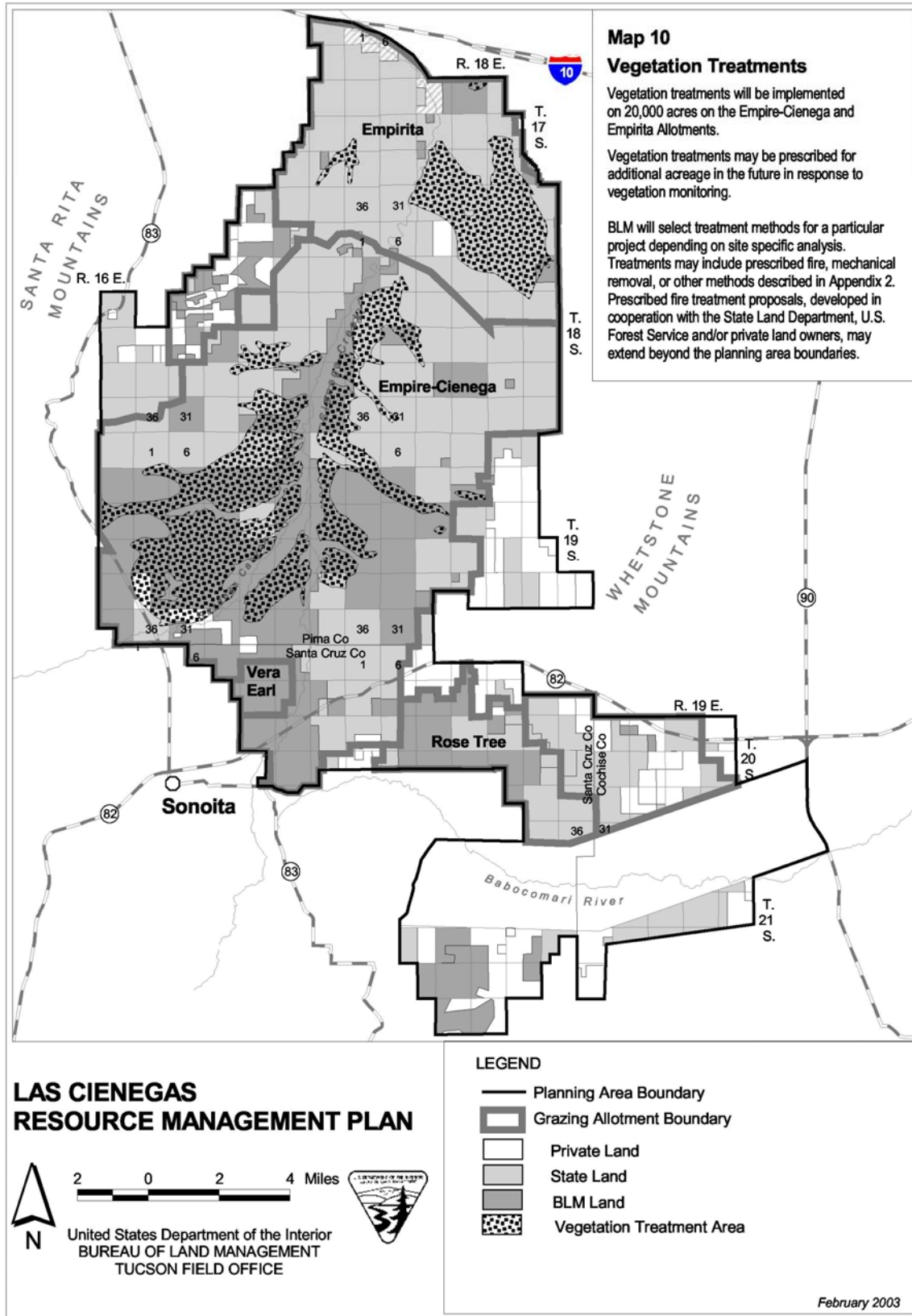
Persons and Agencies:

BLM, Tucson Field Office National Environmental Policy Act team members
LCNCA Rangeland Resources Team
LCNCA Technical Review Team
Mac Donaldson, Empire Ranch LLC
Joe Sacco, Arizona Game and Fish Department
Kurt Bahti, Arizona Game and Fish Department
Phil Ogden, UA Range Professor, Retired
Dan Robinett, Natural Resources Conservation Service
Wally Alexander, Arizona State Lands Department

Tucson Field Manager Signature

Date Signed

Figure 1: Vegetation Treatments on Las Cienegas NCA and Sonoita Valley Acquisition Planning District



FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT

EA Number: AZ-420-2006-19;
Lease/Serial/Case File No. N/A
BLM Office: Tucson Field Office

prepared: June 2006

Finding of No Significant Impact:

I have reviewed the environmental assessment, **AZ-420-2006-19, Empire Ranch Vegetation Treatment** - including the explanation and resolution of any potentially significant environmental impacts. I have determined that the proposed action with the mitigation measures listed below will not have any significant impacts on the human environment and that an EIS is not required. I have determined that the proposed action is in conformance with the Approved Las Cienegas Resource Management Plan/Record of Decision – 2003.

Below are the substantive reasons for finding no significant impact:

- **No Critical NEPA elements will be significantly impacted**

Mitigation Measures:

- Limit application of herbicide to dry weather conditions and upland settings
- Cut stumps such that few are visible to public
- Ensure that no agaves within treatment areas are destroyed.
- Areas that contain cultural resources will be evaluated and vegetation treatment actions will be selected that will not adversely affect cultural resources. Ground disturbing mesquite removal techniques will not be utilized in areas with cultural resources. In some instances, avoidance of cultural resources may be necessary. In areas with cultural sensitivity, vegetation removal will be monitored by a TFO archaeologist.
- Should any archaeological resources or vertebrate fossils be discovered during implementation of this project, all surface disturbing activities in the area of discovery shall cease and the Field Office archaeologist shall be notified. The archaeologist will evaluate the discovery and provide recommendations to the Authorized Officer. Surface disturbing activities shall not resume until permission is obtained from the Authorized Officer.
- Coordinate vegetation treatments with the Outdoor Recreation Planner to ensure that vegetation removal in any designated recreation sites is compatible with the site plans. In some instances, vegetation treatments within designated recreation sites will be necessary to implement the site plans, in other locations, some trees will need to be marked to be left for recreation purposes.
- Coordinate treatment unit boundaries and prescriptions with the grazing permittee on each allotment that is being treated.

Attachments: EA No. AZ-060-2003-12

Field Manager

Date

DECISION RECORD

EA Number: AZ-420-2006-19; prepared: *June 2006*

Lease/Serial/Case File No. N/A

BLM Office: Tucson Field Office

Decision: It is my decision to select the proposed action which is to mechanically and chemically treat mesquite in selected treatment units within the vegetation treatment area as described by the Las Cienegas Resource Management Plan. Mesquites would be cut with rubber tired motor driven lopping equipment and with chainsaws. Cut stumps would be treated with herbicides specific to the treatment of woody species such that root and stump sprouting would be minimal.

Alternatives Considered: The only alternative to the proposed action that was considered in the environmental assessment was the no action alternative. The no action alternative was not selected because no action negates the possibility of achieving the desired natural community of pure grassland stands on the currently mesquite invaded grassland portions of the LCNCA.

Rationale for Decision: The proposed action is provided for in the Approved Las Cienegas Resource Management Plan (RMP) – 2003. The environmental assessment analyzed the potential impacts to the environment and the public should the project be implemented. A FONSI has been signed. There are no significant impacts to the environment that would require an environmental impact statement. By selecting the proposed action, the Tucson Field Office is implementing portions of the Approved Las Cienegas Resource Management Plan -2003.

Mitigation Measures:

- Limit application of herbicide to dry weather conditions and upland settings
- Cut stumps such that few are visible to public
- Ensure that no agaves within treatment areas are destroyed.
- Areas that contain cultural resources will be evaluated and vegetation treatment actions will be selected that will not adversely affect cultural resources. Ground disturbing mesquite removal techniques will not be utilized in areas with cultural resources. In some instances, avoidance of cultural resources may be necessary. In areas with cultural sensitivity, vegetation removal will be monitored by a TFO archaeologist.
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- Coordinate treatment unit boundaries and prescriptions with the grazing permittee on each allotment that is being treated.

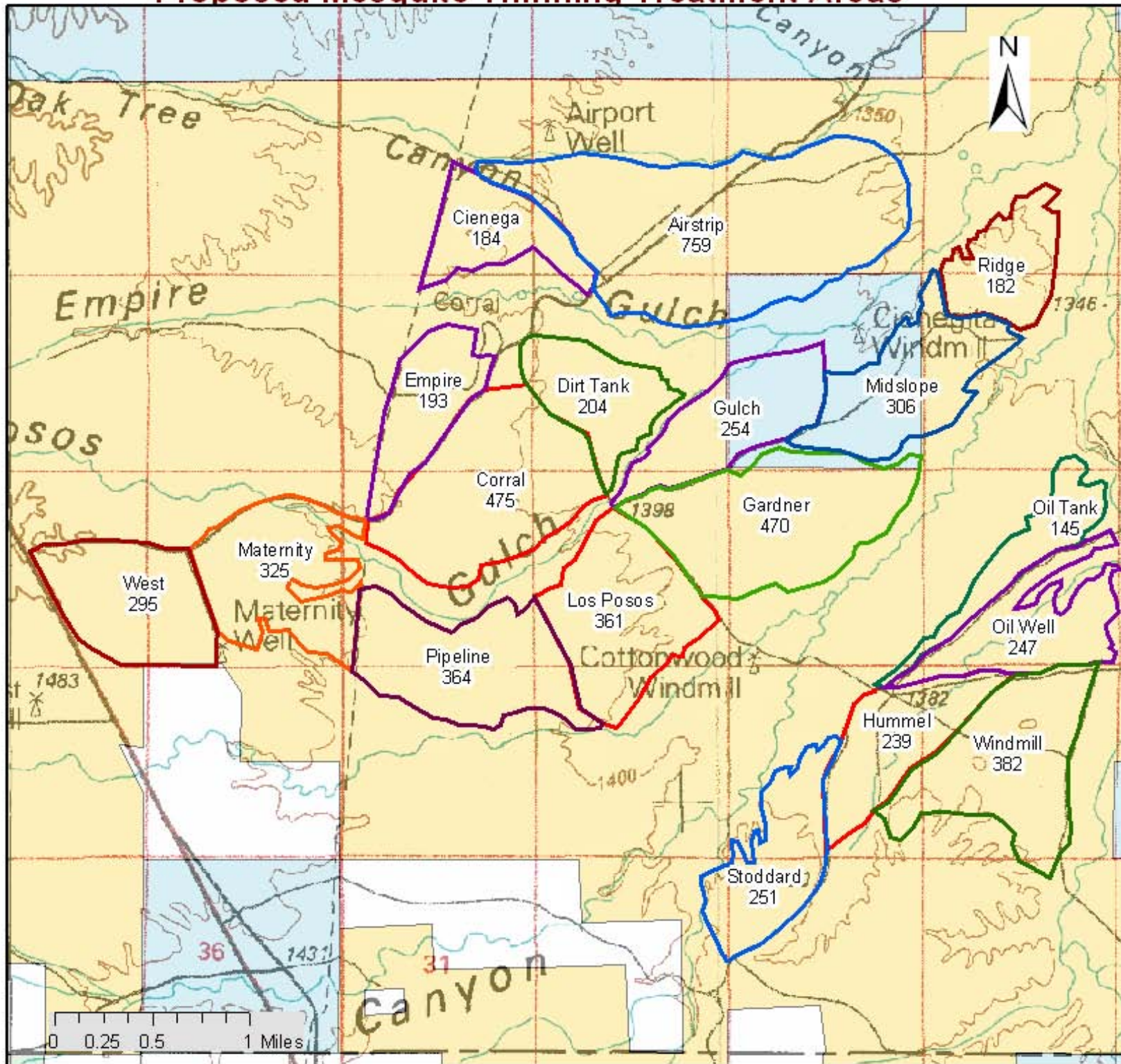
Terms / Conditions / Stipulations: None

Field Manager

Date

Attachments: Finding of No Significant Impact dated June 2006
Environmental Assessment – AZ-420-2006-19

Proposed Mesquite Thinning Treatment Areas



Legend

- Hummel Treatment Area
- Empire Treatment Area
- Corral Treatment Area
- Los Posos Treatment Area
- Maternity Treatment Area
- Dirt Tank Treatment Area
- Cienega Treatment Area
- Airstrip Treatment Area
- Oil Tank Treatment Area
- Oil Well Treatment Area
- Windmill Treatment Area
- West Treatment Area
- Gulch Treatment Area
- Gardner Treatment Area
- Stoddard Treatment Area
- Ridge Treatment Area
- Midslope Treatment Area
- Pipeline Treatment Area

18 treatment areas totaling 5,636 acres. Propose treating acres over a 5-10 year period.

Polygons not ground truthed or amended to include non-cutting areas