

U.S. Department of the Interior
Bureau of Land Management
Little Snake Field Office
455 Emerson Street
Craig, CO 81625

DOCUMENTATION OF LAND USE PLAN CONFORMANCE AND NEPA ADEQUACY

NUMBER: DOI-BLM-CO-N010-2010-0080-DNA

BIOLOGICAL CONTROL AGENT RELEASE PROPOSAL NUMBER: 10-CO-100-61

PROJECT NAME: Release of *Mecinus janthinus* stem boring weevil to control Dalmatian toadflax along CO State Highway 13 near Morapos Creek.

LEGAL DESCRIPTION: T5N, R91W, Sec. 31; Also see map Attachment #1.

APPLICANT: Little Snake Field Office BLM

A. Describe the Proposed Action

Dalmatian toadflax is a List B weed species on the Colorado Noxious Weed List. List B weed species include species for which noxious weed management plans should be designed to stop the continuous spread of the weed. Biological Control Agent Release Proposal 10-CO-100-61 outlines the proposed release of *Mecinus janthinus* along CO State Highway 13 near Morapos Creek. Attachment #1 shows the location of the infestation and proposed release sites.

Mecinus janthinus is a stem boring weevil that, when in the larval stage, causes damage to the stem and reduces seed production. This beetle is capable of killing a large portion of the above-ground plant by boring into and killing the stems where the larvae live and feed. These beetles have proven very effective against Dalmatian toadflax at a number of sites around the state. The insects would be purchased from either the Colorado Department of Agriculture insectary in Palisade, CO or a supplier based out of Montana.

The proposed biological control release sites are located adjacent to the highway on a moderate slope (~15-20%). One has a south facing aspect and the other faces east. Elevation at the site is about 6,500 feet. Vegetation consists of brush cover along with perennial grasses and forbs. The soils are well drained and loamy. The sites are included within a BLM grazing allotment (#04602 Long Gulch).

This infestation stretches for several miles along the highway and into the adjacent landscape, crossing multiple property owners. At the proposed release site about 26 acres have been initially inventoried of which 11 acres are on BLM and the remaining 15 acres are on private.

Biological control is provided for in the Little Snake Field Office weed management program. Additional analysis regarding the initial release of the *Mecinus janthinus* was completed by APHIS in February 1996.

B. Land Use Plan (LUP) Conformance

LUP Name: Little Snake Resource Management Plan and Record of Decision (ROD)

Date Approved: April 26, 1989

Final RMP/EIS, September 1986

Draft RMP/EIS, February 1986

Other Documents:

Standards for Public Land Health and Guidelines for Livestock Grazing in Colorado

Date Approved: February 12, 1997

The Federal Land Policy and Management Act of 1976, as Amended (43 USC 1752)

Rangeland Reform Final Environmental Impact Statement, December 1994.

The proposed action is in conformance with the applicable LUPs because it is specifically provided for in the following LUP decisions.

C. Identify applicable NEPA documents and other related documents that cover the proposed action.

Field Release of the exotic weevil, *Mecinus janthinus* (coleopteran:circulionidae), for biological control of the weeds Dalmatian toadflax, *Linaria dalmatica*, and yellow toadflax, *Linaria vulgaris* (Scrophulariaceae). (Environmental Assessment, February 1996, APHIS)

Vegetation Treatments on BLM Lands in 17 Western States Programmatic Environmental Impact Statement (PEIS) (June, 2007)

Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS) Vegetation Treatment on BLM Lands in Thirteen Western States, June 5, 1991, and the Colorado Record of Decision (ROD, July 1991)

EA# CO-016-94-056 Noxious Weed Treatment in the Little Snake Resource Area (March 30, 1994) resulted in a Finding of No Significant Impact. This Environmental Assessment considered the options of Integrated Pest Management as outlined in the FEIS and adopted the standard operation procedures for vegetation treatment program implementation.

Amendment to EA# CO-016-94-056 Noxious Weed Treatment in the Little Snake Resource Area (May 4, 1994) expanded the use of herbicide application methods to include broadcast and aerial applications.

D. NEPA Adequacy Criteria

1. Is the current proposed action substantially the same action (or is a part of that action) as previously analyzed? Is the current proposed action located at a site specifically analyzed in an existing document?

Yes. This proposal is the same as that analyzed in the APHIS release EA. The BCARP and the proposed action in this DNA include additional site-specific information.

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

Yes. The alternatives included in the APHIS EA are applicable to this release site.

3. Is the existing analysis valid in light of any new information or circumstances?

Yes. The Proposed Action would have no disproportionate impacts on minority populations or low income communities per Executive Order (EO) 12898 and would not adversely impact migratory birds per EO 13186. No additional information or circumstances invalidates the existing analysis.

4. Do the methodology and analytical approach used in the existing NEPA document(s) continue to be appropriate for the current proposed action?

Yes. The methodology and analytical approach used in the existing NEPA documents continue to be appropriate for the current proposed action. Impacts to all resources were analyzed.

5. Are the direct and indirect impacts of the current proposed action substantially unchanged from those identified in the existing NEPA document(s)? Does the existing NEPA document analyze site-specific impacts related to the current proposed action?

Yes. Direct and indirect impacts of the current proposed action are unchanged from those identified in the existing NEPA documents. The BCARP will be reviewed and approved based on the existing NEPA documents to complete the site-specific analysis for this biological control release.

6. Can you conclude without additional analysis or information that the cumulative impacts that would result from implementation of the current proposed action substantially unchanged from those analyzed in the existing NEPA document(s)?

Yes. The cumulative impacts that would result from implementation of the proposed action would remain unchanged from those identified in the existing NEPA documents.

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

Yes. Public outreach through scoping and involvement of the public and other agencies occurred in the development of the LSFO RMP/EIS and the APHIS release EA.

E. Interdisciplinary Analysis: Identify those team members conducting or participating in the preparation of this worksheet.

Name	Title	Resource	Initials	Date
Emily Spencer	Ecologist	Air Quality, Floodplains Prime/Unique Farmlands, Water Quality – Surface	ELS	4/21/10
Robyn Morris	Archaeologist	Cultural Resources, Native American Concerns	RWM	4/26/10
Barb Blackstun	Realty Specialist	Environmental Justice	BB	04/22/10
Christina Rhyne	Rangeland Management Spec.	Hazardous Materials	CR	4/19/10
Christina Rhyne	Rangeland Management Spec.	Invasive Non-native Species	CR	4/19/10
Hunter Seim	Rangeland Management Spec.	Sensitive Plants, T&E Plant	JHS	4/22/10
Gail Martinez	Wildlife Biologist	T&E Animal	GEM	4/27/10
Marty O’Mara	Fluids Geologist	Water Quality - Ground	EMO	4/26/10
Emily Spencer	Ecologist	Wetlands/Riparian Zones	ELS	4/21/10
Gina Robison	Recreation Specialist	WSA, W&S Rivers	GMR	4/20/10
Gail Martinez	Wildlife Biologist	Animal Communities	GEM	4/27/10
Gail Martinez	Wildlife Biologist	Special Status, T&E Animal	GEM	4/27/10
Christina Rhyne	Rangeland Management Spec	Plant Communities	CR	4/19/10
Hunter Seim	Rangeland Management Spec	Special Status, T&E Plant	JHS	4/22/10
Emily Spencer	Ecologist	Riparian Systems	ELS	4/21/10
Emily Spencer	Ecologist	Water Quality	ELS	4/21/10
Emily Spencer	Ecologist	Upland Soils	ELS	4/21/10

Land Health Assessment

This action has been reviewed for conformance with the BLM’s Public Land Health Standards adopted February 12, 1997. This action meets Public Land Health Standards. Land health assessments have been conducted in landscapes and watersheds within the Field Office Planning Area. Invasive plants including Dalmatian toadflax have been found to be a problem on many sites and once established are a threat to the herbaceous component of the plant communities.

Conclusion

Based on the review documented above, I conclude that this proposal conforms to the applicable land use plan and that the NEPA documentation fully covers the proposed action and constitutes BLM's compliance with the requirements of NEPA.

Signature of Lead Specialist /s/ Christina Rhyne Date 04/30/10

Signature of NEPA Coordinator /s/ Jeremy Casterson Date 05/03/10

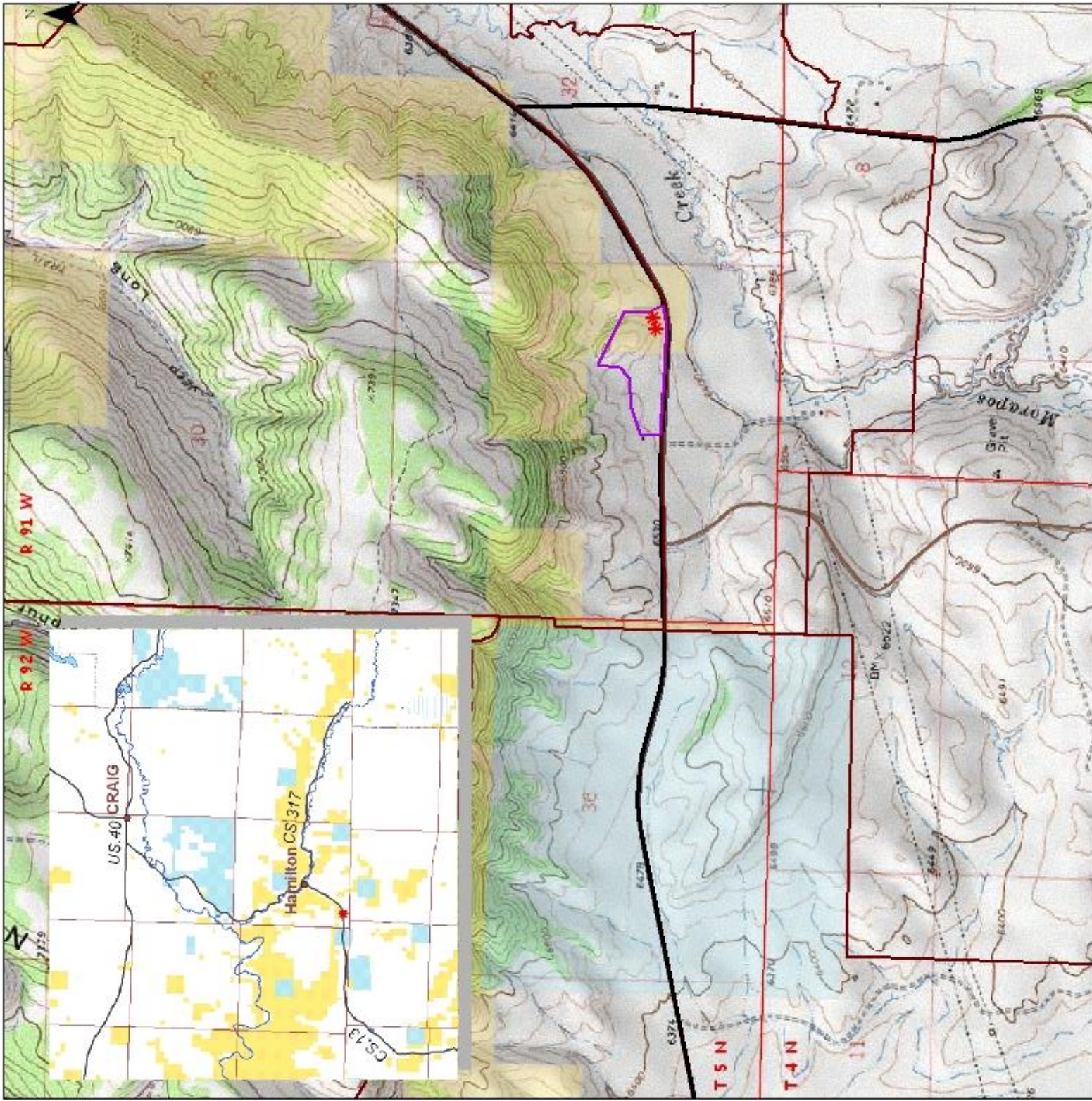
Signature of the Authorizing Official /s/ Mark Lowrey for Field Manager Date 05/03/10

Note: The signed Conclusion on this document is part of an interim step in the BLM's internal decision process and does not constitute an appealable decision.

Dalmatian Toadflax Biological Control Release

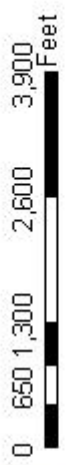
Morapos Creek and Highway 13

T5N R91W



Proposed Release Site
*
Master Weed Inventory Polygons
Allotment Boundaries
Township/Range

Surface Management Status
Private
State Land Board
US BLM



1:24,000



Monument Butte

ATTACHMENT #2
DOI-BLM-CO-N010-2010-0080-DNA
Standards and Assessments

STANDARD 1. Upland soils exhibit infiltration and permeability rates that are appropriate to soil type, climate, land form, and geologic processes. Adequate soil infiltration and permeability allows for the accumulation of soil moisture necessary for optimal plant growth and vigor, and minimizes surface runoff.

This standard is met for the site. There is minimal evidence of accelerated erosion or soil compaction and cryptogams are present and intact where appropriate. Vegetation canopy and ground cover are adequate to protect and maintain soil stability.

STANDARD 2. Riparian systems associated with both running and standing water functions properly and has the ability to recover from major disturbances such as fire, severe grazing, or 100-year floods. Riparian vegetation captures sediment and provides forage, habitat, and biodiversity. Water quality is improved or maintained. Stable soils store and release water slowly.

There are no riparian or wetland habitats at the proposed release site. This standard does not apply.

STANDARD 3. Healthy, productive plant and animal communities of native and other desirable species are maintained at viable population levels commensurate with the species and habitat potential. Plants and animals at both the community and population levels are productive, resilient, diverse, vigorous, and able to reproduce and sustain natural fluctuations and ecological processes.

The project site provides habitat for a variety of wildlife species. Elk and mule deer utilize this area for severe winter habitat. Several raptor nests, including golden eagles, exist in the vicinity of the project site. Shrubs are healthy and native grasses and forbs are present in the area however, much of the project site is experiencing degradation due to dalmatian toadflax. Dalmatian toadflax can limit native vegetation and reduce habitat quality for most terrestrial wildlife species. The site is currently meeting this standard. The project site would likely fail to meet this standard with any increases in weed species.

STANDARD 4. Special status, threatened, and endangered species (federal and state), and other plants and animals officially designated by BLM, and their habitats are maintained or enhanced by sustaining healthy native plant and animal communities.

There are no federally listed threatened or endangered or BLM sensitive plant species present within or in the vicinity of the proposed treatment. For plants, this standard does not apply.

The proposed release site provides habitat for two BLM sensitive species, greater sage grouse and Columbian sharp-tailed grouse. The allotment is on the fringe of greater sage grouse habitat.

The site provides winter and overall habitat for Columbian sharp-tailed grouse. Sagebrush/grass and mixed shrubland communities on the allotment are in good condition, providing suitable habitat for both grouse species. Shrub density and structure are appropriate for overall and winter habitat. Although the site was found to be meeting this standard, it would likely fail to meet this standard with any increases in weed species.

STANDARD 5. The water quality of all water bodies, including ground water where applicable, located on or influenced by BLM lands will achieve or exceed the Water Quality Standards established by the State of Colorado. Water Quality Standards for surface and ground waters include the designated beneficial uses, numeric criteria, narrative criteria, and anti-degradation requirement set forth under State law as found in 5 CCR 1002-8, as required by Section 303 of the Clean Water Act.

There is no surface water at the proposed release site, however Morapos Creek is within ¼ mile of the release site. Sustained management of perennial invasive species would promote native vegetation that provides better soil stability and reduces the potential for erosion over the long term. There are no water quality impairments or suspected water quality problems for Morapos Creek. This standard is met.

ATTACHMENT #3
DOI-BLM-CO-N010-2010-0080-DNA

CULTURAL RESOURCES:

Affected Environment: Cultural resources, in this region of Colorado, range from late Paleo-Indian to Historic. For a general understanding of the cultural resources in this area of Colorado, see *An Overview of Prehistoric Cultural Resources, Little Snake Resource Area, Northwestern Colorado*, Bureau of Land Management Colorado, Cultural Resources Series, Number 20, *An Isolated Empire, A History of Northwestern Colorado*, Bureau of Land Management Colorado, Cultural Resource Series, Number 2 and *Colorado Prehistory: A Context for the Northern Colorado River Basin*, Colorado Council of Professional Archaeologists.

Environmental Consequences: The proposed project, biocontrol release on Dalmatian toadflax, has not undergone a Class III cultural resource survey. The proposed action does not have the potential to effect cultural resources. No Class III cultural resource survey is necessary. The proposed project may proceed as described with the following mitigative measures in place.

Mitigative Measures:

The following standard stipulations apply for this project:

1. The operator is responsible for informing all persons who are associated with the operations that they will be subject to prosecution for knowingly disturbing historic or archaeological sites, or for collecting artifacts. If historic or archaeological materials are encountered or uncovered during any project activities, the operator is to immediately stop activities in the immediate vicinity of the find and immediately contact the authorized officer (AO) at (970) 826-5000. Within five working days, the AO will inform the operator as to:
 - Whether the materials appear eligible for the National Register of Historic Places;
 - The mitigation measures the operator will likely have to undertake before the identified area can be used for project activities again; and
 - Pursuant to 43 CFR 10.4(g) (Federal Register Notice, Monday, December 4, 1995, Vol. 60, No. 232) the holder of this authorization must notify the AO, by telephone at (970) 826-5000, and with written confirmation, immediately upon the discovery of human remains, funerary items, sacred objects, or objects of cultural patrimony. Further, pursuant to 43 CFR 10.4(c) and (d), you must stop activities in the vicinity of the discovery and protect it for 30 days or until notified to proceed by the authorized officer.

2. If the operator wishes, at any time, to relocate activities to avoid the expense of mitigation and/or the delays associated with this process, the AO will assume responsibility for whatever recordation and stabilization of the exposed materials may be required. Otherwise, the operator will be responsible for mitigation costs. The AO will provide technical and procedural guidelines for the conduct of mitigation. Upon verification from

the AO that the required mitigation has been completed, the operator will then be allowed to resume construction.

Name of specialist and date: Robyn Watkins Morris 4/26/10

NATIVE AMERICAN RELIGIOUS CONCERNS

A letter was sent to the Eastern Shoshone, Uinta and Ouray Tribal Council, Southern Ute Tribal Council, Ute Mountain Ute Tribal Council on May 26, 2009. The letter listed the FY2010 projects that the BLM would notify them on and projects that would not require notification. A followup phone call was performed on July 26, 2009. No comments were received (Letter on file at the Little Snake Field Office). This project requires no additional notification.

Name of specialist and date: Robyn Watkins Morris 4/26/10