

**U.S. Department of the Interior
Bureau of Land Management
Uncompahgre Field Office
2465 South Townsend Avenue
Montrose, CO 81401**

Determination of NEPA Adequacy (DNA)

NUMBER: DOI-BLM-CO-S054-2009-58-DNA

PROPOSED ACTION TITLE: Peach Valley Riparian Enhancement Recovery Project

LOCATION/LEGAL DESCRIPTION: Township 50 North, Range 9 West, Section 15, 16, 22

APPLICANT: BLM

A. Description of the Proposed Action and any applicable mitigation measures

The proposed action is to remove and treat tamarisk (*Tamarix spp.*) along a 4 mile stretch of drainage within the Gunnison Gorge National Conservation Area (NCA).

Tamarisk removal would occur in the fall or winter, and would include mechanical or manual methods. After tamarisk are cut, the stumps would be treated with herbicide within 30 minutes. Herbicide used on tamarisk would be an aquatic Triclopyr (Garlon 3A or Pathfinder II) at a rate of no more than 2.67 gallons per acre per year (8-lb a.e.). Mechanical methods of tamarisk removal would be with a vertical or horizontal-shaft mower (hydro-axe or fecon head). Manual removal of tamarisk would require cutting then chipping and piling the slash at a designated area for use around parking areas at a later date. Any regrowth would be treated with herbicide (aquatic Triclopyr) in the spring or fall.

There is about a 1.5 mile area where tamarisk was removed and piled in an earlier treatment without the follow up of herbicide; this area will be retreated. Older slash piles would be chipped to promote ease of understory treatment of Russian knapweed and whitetop.

After treatments have been completed, the area would be seeded with salt tolerant native grasses (table 1) including inland saltgrass, alkali sacaton, and western wheatgrass. Native vegetation in the area includes greasewood, sedges, Fremont cottonwood, and sandbar willow.

This DNA is tiered to EA #CO-150-2004-052. which allows the GGNCA to prepare a document without duplicating relevant portions of the previous EA. The previous EA addresses mechanical/herbicide treatments along with the recovery of desirable riparian vegetation associated with the removal of tamarisk. This DNA also tiers to the national Programmatic Environmental Impact Statement (June, 2007) which address the environmental consequences associated with herbicide treatment.

Design Features:

1. In the event that bald eagles are roosting on cottonwood trees in the project area, the contractor is to avoid the 1/8 mile area near the roosting bald eagles until the eagles voluntarily leave the area. To avoid impacts to bald eagles that may roost ... at night, all work will take place between one half hour after sunrise and one half hour before sunset.
2. All equipment oil and hydraulic leaks would be repaired before use. Any leaks developed during use would be repaired immediately.
3. Equipment fueling would occur on or adjacent to roads and away from any drainages. During fueling operations the operator would ensure no fuel spillage occurs. Care should be taken to ensure all fuel tank caps, hoses, and spillage is minimized to prevent soil contamination. Should a spill occur, it would be reported to the authorized officer and BLM's Hazardous Materials Specialist immediately for proper response action.
4. All equipment would be power washed before entering public lands. This would reduce the spread and/or establishment of noxious weeds.

Table 1; Seed mix for the project area.

Species	Variety	Desired % of mix	#PLS/acre aerial application
Alkali sacaton		25	1
Inland saltgrass		30	4.2
Western wheatgrass	Arriba	30	4.8
Great Basin wildrye		15	2.4
Totals		100	12.4

B. Land Use Plan (LUP) Conformance

LUP Name: Gunnison Gorge NCA Resource Management Plan (RMP) and Environmental Impact Statement (EIS).

Date Approved: November 5, 2004

The proposed action is in conformance with the LUP, and is consistent with the following LUP decisions (objectives, terms, and conditions): Pages 2-64 through 2-78; specifically, "Weed-control measures will be implemented. BLM will develop partnerships with the Park Service, Tamarisk Coalition and other partners where possible." And "BLM will continue mechanized and chemical control of tamarisk and other weeds."

C. Identify applicable National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) documents and other related documents that cover the proposed action.

Gunnison Gorge Tamarisk Mechanical Removal & Treatment; Environmental Assessment, 2004 (EA #CO-150-2004-052).

Vegetation Treatments Using Herbicides on Bureau of Land Management Lands in 17 Western States Programmatic Environmental Impact Statement, 2007 (FES 07-21)

Other Documentation:

Gunnison Gorge Area; Land Health Assessment, 2001

D. NEPA Adequacy Criteria

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

The proposed action is analyzed under the proposed action in EA CO-150-2004-052. This proposal evaluates removing tamarisk by mechanical means along with treating the cut stumps and regrowth with herbicide along the Gunnison River in the Gunnison Gorge NCA.

The proposed action is within the Gunnison Gorge NCA. It is located in the southern portion of the NCA in an area called Peach Valley. The action is along a drainage that manages irrigation return flow to the Uncompahgre River. Similar conditions exist in this drainage as along the Gunnison River only in smaller magnitude. The treatment proposed is similar to the one used along the Gunnison River in the northern portion of the NCA.

The actions are very similar to one another, are in riparian systems, and have the same objectives; to remove tamarisk.

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

Yes. The alternative to the proposed action is not to treat tamarisk along this drainage, which is the same as in the existing NEPA document.

3. Is the existing analysis valid in light of any new information or circumstances (such as, rangeland health standard assessment, recent endangered species listings, 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. Circumstances have not changed, and new information has not come to light. Even though Tamarisk Beetles (*Diorhabda elongate*) have been introduced into the Gunnison River drainage it will be several years before they migrate into this drainage.

4. 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. In comparison, both treatments include the removal and treatment of tamarisk. Both support riparian habitat, and aquatic and wetland species by removal of tamarisk, which degrades and changes the vegetation, soil, and environment they invade. Impacts to the environment would be the same as the original EA.

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

Yes. The original EA had a review period. Also, this proposed action is covered in the Gunnison Gorge NCA Resource Management Plan and Environmental Impact Statement; the public had the opportunity to comment extensively on the plan.

E. Persons/Agencies /BLM Staff Consulted

<u>Name</u>	<u>Title</u>	<u>Resource/Agency Represented</u>
Glade Hadden	Archaeologist	Bureau of Land Management
Alan Kraus	HazMat Program Coordinator	Bureau of Land Management
Melissa Siders	Biological Staff Supervisor	Bureau of Land Management

REMARKS:

Cultural Resources: The project has been exempted from inventory requirements under the provisions of 8110.23B1. No further work is required.

Native American Religious Concerns: There are none known or anticipated in this area.

Threatened and Endangered Species: No Threatened or Endangered species are expected within the project area (see 6840 File for Clearance documentation). By following the Standard

Operating Procedures outlined in FES 07-21 (pgs 4-77, 4-85, 4-85 and 4-88), impacts to aquatic and terrestrial wildlife should be negligible. There “may be affects to individuals, but not likely to result in a trend toward federal listing” (see 6840 File for Clearance documentation). Most effects would be related to short-term disturbance while activities were taking place which may displace individuals from the treatment area.

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 the NEPA.

Name of Project Lead: Lynae Rogers Date Completed: 10/5/2009

Signature of NEPA Coordinator /s/ Bruce Krickbaum Date 10/09/2009

Signature of the Responsible Official /s/ Barbara Sharrow

Barbara Sharrow
Field Manager, Uncompahgre Field Office

Date 10/13/2009

Note: 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.

