

**FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT  
FOR THE  
NORMAL FIRE REHABILITATION PLAN  
BOISE DISTRICT OFFICE AND JARBIDGE FIELD OFFICE  
EA# ID-090-2004-050**

**FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT**

Based on the findings documented in Environmental Assessment ID-090-2004-050, implementation of the Proposed Action will not significantly affect the quality of the human environment. Therefore, no Environmental Impact Statement is required.

**I base the above findings on the following:**

**Context:** The context of the analyzed treatments occur within an area already damaged by a wildfire event. These areas are in need of treatments to minimize the potential effects of the wildfire.

**Intensity:** The impacts of the treatments in relation to the existing condition of the fire damaged area are minimal compared to the impact of the fire disturbance.

**1. Impacts that may be both beneficial and adverse.**

The environmental assessment has considered both beneficial and adverse impacts of the proposed action within the context of a fire disturbed area. Approximately 50% of wildfire disturbed areas are capable of natural recovery following a wildfire disturbance. Areas that require treatments may have short term adverse effects caused by the treatment but these effects would be immeasurable compared to affects caused by the wildfire and would be beneficial in the long term. Since the proposed action is to stabilize and rehabilitate areas disturbed by a wildfire, the proposed action will result in improved vegetative condition and fire resiliency in burn areas.

Secondary effects of the proposed action will include wildlife habitat improvement, increased biodiversity of native plants and animals, improved soil stability and water quality and a return to a more ecologically functional sagebrush steppe habitat. Improving ecological conditions will enhance the quality of the human environment through reactive fuels management, and is not considered an adverse effect both in the short or long term. The adverse effects caused by the treatments are immeasurable and will be beneficial in the long term.

**2. The degree to which the proposed action affects public health or safety.**

The purpose of ESR is to address public health and safety after a wildfire. The ESR actions and treatments are designed to protect the public from hazardous situations caused by the wildfire. Actions such as closing an area to protect the public and users from a potential dangerous situation or erosion structures to prevent future hazardous erosion events are designed to reduce adverse impacts to public health and safety. The impacts of the treatments in context of the

burned area are immeasurable and will benefit that public in the long term. Implementation of the proposed action will not result in potentially substantial or adverse impacts to public health and safety. The purpose of actions or treatments is to address public health and safety i.e. closures, structures. (EA, Page 18)

### **3. Unique characteristics of the geographic area such as, proximity to historic or cultural resources, park lands, prime farmlands, wetlands, wild and scenic rivers, or ecologically critical areas.**

Within the analysis area there exist many different unique areas such as ACECs, WSAs, Cultural, etc. Within the context of this analysis these unique areas are fire disturbed areas in need of treatment to minimize the potential effects of the wildfire.

Further effects to cultural resources are avoided by conducting surveys prior to ground-disturbing treatments and if found will be avoided. Cultural sites damaged by the wildfire will be protected and stabilized and significant resources may be repaired to a pre-fire condition when feasible.

Wildfire disturbed wetlands often recover naturally, but if treatments are necessary they are limited in scope and entail things like willow and grass plantings. The effects of these treatments are immeasurable in context to the wildfire damage. (EA, page 62)

When Wild and Scenic Rivers, Wilderness Study Areas and Areas of Critical Environmental Concern are burned by wildfire, treatments are designed to minimize effects to these unique areas. All treatments will adhere to policy and management criteria designed to protect special area values. (EA, page 73)

Public lands within the Boise District Office and Jarbidge Field Office areas do not contain any prime farm lands or Park Lands. Prime farmlands in the vicinity of treatments on public lands would not be adversely impacted.

### **4. The degree to which the effects on the quality of the human environment are likely to be highly controversial.**

All ESR actions and treatments outlined in the EA are actions that are taken on a normal and reoccurring basis. These treatments have been shown to be beneficial to fire damaged areas in the long term and have not proven to be controversial in the past and are not expected to controversial in the future. Treatments that have the potential to be controversial are outside the scope of this analysis.

ESR activities, by policy, are intended to mitigate the effects of wildfire and to stabilize the soil and vegetation resource, thus protecting the human environment. ESR activities in socially or politically sensitive areas will be designed to protect the human environment by reducing post-fire degradation of soils and vegetation, and thus enhancing long-term resilience to potential future wildfire

**5. The degree to which the possible effects on the human environment are highly uncertain or involve unique or unknown risks.**

The Boise District Office and the Jarbidge Field Office have a long history of (40+ years) of conducting ESR activities. Through this time, treatment techniques have evolved and have been applied over a broad landscape under a variety of conditions. Based on this experience, the effects of ESR are not uncertain and the risks associated the treatment types are neither unique nor unknown.

**6. The degree to which the action may establish a precedent for future actions with significant effects or represents a decision in principle about a future consideration.**

The actions and treatments analyzed in the EA are normal practices that have a long history of implementation. This programmatic document does not set a president for future actions that have significant effects. Any future projects that may have significant impacts are outside the scope of this document and would require a separate analysis.

**7. Whether the action is related to other actions with individually insignificant but cumulatively significant impacts.**

This EA considered potential cumulative impacts of treatments in the context of the burned environment on all potentially affected resources. The documents cited and analysis disclosed in the EA support the finding that treatments will not cause significant cumulative effects on biological or physical resources, even when considered in relation to other actions. The effects of ESR treatments in relation to other past present and future actions are immeasurable. (EA, pg75)

**8. The degree to which the action may adversely affect districts, sites, highways, structures, or objects listed in or eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places or may cause loss or destruction of significant scientific, cultural, or historical resources.**

Within the context of this analysis these areas are fire disturbed areas in need of treatment to minimize the potential effects of the wildfire.

Effects to cultural resources from ESR actions and treatments are avoided by conducting surveys prior to ground-disturbing treatments and if found will be avoided. If cultural resources cannot be avoided, further work will be undertaken to mitigate adverse affects to the site(s). Cultural sites damaged by the wildfire will be protected and stabilized and significant resources may be repaired to a pre-fire condition when feasible. (EA, page 74)

Based on the analysis documented in the EA, the proposed action will not cause loss or destruction of significant scientific, cultural, or historical resources.

**9. The degree to which the action may adversely affect an endangered or threatened species or its habitat that has been determined to be critical under the Endangered Species Act of 1973.**

The Boise District Office and the Jarbidge Field Office completed informal consultation with the US Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS). Project design features have been included in the proposed action to avoid adverse impacts to threatened or endangered (T&E) species resulting

from ESR treatments. The USFWS has concurred with the finding that the proposed action “may affect” but is not likely to adversely affect any T&E animal species occurring in the project area. (EA, pages 64, 66, 70, 76)

**10. Whether the action threatens a violation of Federal, State, or local law for requirements imposed for the protection of the environment.**

The proposed action was developed in accordance with Federal, State and Local Laws for the protection of the environment. (EA, page 6) The EA disclosed the effects of the proposed action on all critical and non-critical elements and it was determined the proposed action will not adversely affect any of the elements. (EA, page 29)