

**UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT**

Twin Falls District
Burely Field Office
15 east 200 South
Burley, ID 83318

DECISION RECORD
for the
Cottonwood Pole Planting Project

DOI-BLM-ID-T020-2012-0008-DNA

I. Decision

I have decided to implement the Cottonwood Pole Planting Project as described in the DOI-BLM-ID-T020-2012-0008-DNA. Based on my review of the DNA, I have concluded that the proposed action was analyzed in sufficient detail in the programmatic Burley Shrub Planting EA (ID-220-2009-EA-3555) to allow me to make an informed decision. I have decided to implement the proposed action because planting cottonwood poles and seedlings will provide a net benefit to riparian/wetland zones and wildlife at each respective project area.

II. Appeals

This decision may be appealed to the Interior Board of Land Appeals (IBLA), Office of the Secretary, in accordance with the regulations contained in 43 CFR Part 4. Any appeal must be filed within 30 days of this decision. Any notice of appeal must be filed with me, Michael Courtney, Burley Field Office, 15 East 200 South, Burley, ID 83318. The appellant shall serve a copy of the notice of appeal and any statement of reasons, written arguments, or briefs on each adverse party named in the decision, not later than 15 days after filing such document (see 43 CFR 4.413(a)). Failure to serve within the time required will subject the appeal to summary dismissal (see 43 CFR 4.413(b)). If a statement of reasons for the appeal is not included with the notice, it must be filed with the IBLA, Office of Hearings and Appeals, U. S. Department of the Interior, 801 North Quincy St., Suite 300, Arlington, VA 22203 within 30 days after the notice of appeal is filed with Michael Courtney, Field Manager.

Notwithstanding the provisions of 43 CFR 4.21(a)(1), filing a notice of appeal under 43 CFR Part 4 does not automatically suspend the effect of the decision. If you wish to file a petition for a stay of the effectiveness of this decision during the time that your appeal is being reviewed by the Board, the petition for a stay must accompany your notice of appeal.

A petition for a stay is required to show sufficient justification based on the following standards:

- (1) The relative harm to the parties if the stay is granted or denied;
- (2) The likelihood of the appellant's success on the merits;
- (3) The likelihood of immediate and irreparable harm if the stay is not granted; and
- (4) Whether the public interest favors granting the stay.

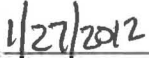
In the event a request for stay or an appeal is filed, the person/party requesting the stay or filing the appeal must serve a copy of the appeal on the Office of the Field Solicitor, 960 Broadway Ave., Suite 400, Boise ID, 83706.

III. Contact Person

For additional information concerning this project, contact: Jesse Rawson, Wildlife Biologist, at (208) 677-6625 or at 15 East 200 South, Burley, ID.



Michael Courtney
Field Manager



Date

**UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT**

Twin Falls District
Burley Field Office
15 East 200 South
Burley, ID 83318

Cottonwood Pole Planting Enclosure Fence Categorical Exclusion
DOI-BLM-ID-T020-2012-0007-CX

A. Background

BLM Office: Burley Field Office.

Proposed Action Title/Type: Cottonwood Pole Planting Small Enclosure Fences.

Location of Proposed Action:

1. Little Cottonwood Creek (Figure 2): T 14 S; R 21 E; Section 11, E ½, SE ¼.
2. Raft River (Figure 3): T16 S; R 26 E; Section 05, NE ¼, NE ¼ & T 15 S; R 26 E; Section 33, NW ¼, NE ¼.
3. Schodde Ponds (Figure 4): T 09 S; R 28 E; Section 18, S ½.
4. Trapper Creek (Figure 5): T 14 S; R 21 E; Section 25, W ½ NW ¼ & Section 26, N ½ SE ¼.
5. Parks Creek (Figure 6): T 14 S; R 26 E; Section 07, N ½.

Description of Proposed Action: The Bureau of Land Management Burley Field Office is proposing to construct enclosures around plantings of narrowleaf cottonwood (*Populus angustifolia*) and/or black cottonwood (*Populus balsamifera*) at five locations within the Burley Field Office (see Figures 1 through 6). The purpose of the project is to protect cottonwood plantings from livestock and wildlife herbivory. Protecting cottonwood plantings will help to restore native woody riparian vegetation and increase native plant diversity. The need for this action is to enhance the vegetative health of the five subject riparian areas. Enhancing vegetative health of riparian areas would consequently improve wildlife habitat as well. Cottonwoods are a native woody riparian species in the region [1]. However, cottonwoods are limited within the Burley Field Office; historically, cottonwoods were likely present throughout the region.

To increase the success of the plantings, temporary fencing would be erected around each planting to discourage herbivory. Plantings are not expected to withstand herbivory from livestock and wildlife unless they are protected until they become established. Fences would be removed after pole plantings are large enough to withstand moderate levels of herbivory. This is

expected to take 2 to 4 years. Hog panels and T-posts would be used for fence construction. The only expected ground disturbance from fence construction would be pounding T-posts into the soil at an approximate depth of 12 inches. All fences would be monitored annually to ensure effectiveness and complete maintenance.

B. Land Use Plan Conformance

The proposed action is in conformance with the Monument and Cassia Resource Management Plans. The Cassia Resource Management Plan was approved in January 1985. The Monument Resource Management Plan was approved in January 1986. Even though constructing enclosures fences around plantings is not specifically provided for in the resource management plans it is clearly consistent with the watershed management objectives of maintaining, improving, and restoring watershed conditions [2, p. 9] & [3, p. 31]. Planting cottonwoods would increase native plant diversity and restore watershed conditions.

C. Compliance with NEPA

The Proposed Action is categorically excluded from further documentation under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) in accordance with 516 DM 11.9, J(9): Construction of small protective enclosures.

This categorical exclusion is appropriate in this situation because there are no extraordinary circumstances potentially having effects that may significantly affect the environment. I have reviewed the proposed action and none of the extraordinary circumstances described in 43 CFR 46.215 apply.

1. The proposed action would not have significant impacts on public health or safety.

Installing small enclosures around cottonwood plantings will not pose a significant impact to public health and safety.

2. The proposed action would not have significant impacts on such natural resources and unique geographic characteristics as historic or cultural resources; park, recreation or refuge lands; wilderness 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; and other ecologically significant or critical areas.

There are no known natural resources and unique geographic characteristics such as historic or cultural resources; park, recreation or refuge lands; wilderness areas; wild or scenic rivers; national natural landmarks; sole or principal drinking water aquifers; prime farmlands; wetlands (Executive Order 11990); national monuments; and other ecologically significant or critical areas at any of the cottonwood planting locations. The construction of small livestock enclosures will not have a significant adverse impact to resource values. These small enclosure will aid in assuring that plantings are successful and that wildlife habitat and riparian conditions are improved. To avoid conflicts with migratory birds a nesting survey of each respective project

area would be completed prior to construction, any identified active nest sites would be avoided. If BLM determines that nesting migratory birds will not be harmed by project construction then implementation may take place during the nesting season.

3. The proposed action would not have highly controversial environmental effects or involve unresolved conflicts concerning alternative uses of available resources [NEPA Section 102(2)(E)].

Constructing exclosures to discourage livestock and wildlife herbivory for 2-4 years is not expected to have controversial environmental effects. The environmental effects of the proposed action are well understood.

4. The proposed action would not have highly uncertain and potentially significant environmental effects or involve unique or unknown environmental risks.

Constructing exclosure fences to protect cottonwood plantings does not pose any highly uncertain, potentially significant and/or no unique or unknown environmental risks. The development of small livestock exclosures is expected to foster the development of cottonwood seedlings and improve vegetative health and riparian conditions.

5. The proposed action would not establish a precedent for future actions or represent a decision in principle about future actions with potentially significant environmental effects.

The proposed action will not establish a precedent, nor does it represent a decision in principle regarding future actions with potentially significant environmental effects. Constructing small exclosures around cottonwood plantings will not require any future actions other than fence removal once the plantings become established.

6. The proposed action would not have a direct relationship to other actions with individually insignificant but cumulatively significant environmental effects.

The proposed action is in response to a proposal to plant cottonwood poles or seedlings (see DOI-BLM-ID-T020-2012-0008-DNA). Cumulatively, the two actions would not result in any significant effects. Successful implementation of the two actions is expected to result in the enhancement of riparian conditions over time. The enhancement in riparian conditions would be gradual and coincide with the succession of cottonwood pole plantings.

7. The proposed action would not have significant impacts on properties listed, or eligible for listing, on the National Register of Historic Places as determined by the bureau.

The project areas do not contain any known properties that are listed, or eligible for listing, on the National Register of Historic Places. If any sites are found in the future, work would stop and the BLM archaeologist would be consulted to determine appropriate mitigation. All precautions would be taken to prevent loss or destruction of scientific, cultural or historic resources.

8. The proposed action would not 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.

There are no known populations of, or critical habitat for, Threatened or Endangered species within the project areas. The greater sage-grouse is a Candidate species for listing under the Endangered Species Act. Greater sage-grouse are known to occur in the region. The proposed action is expected to benefit sage-grouse by promoting healthy riparian conditions. The proposed action is expected to improve habitat conditions for a variety of special status species.

9. The proposed action would not violate a Federal law, or a State, local, or tribal law or requirement imposed for the protection of the environment.

The proposed action is in conformance Federal, State, and local laws or requirements.

10. The proposed action would not have a disproportionately high and adverse effect on low income or minority populations (Executive Order 12898).

Low income or minority populations, either those who live in the area or those who may visit the area would not be affected any differently or disproportionately higher than any other individuals by the proposed action.

11. The proposed action would not 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).

There are no known ceremonial and/or sacred sites on Federal land within the project areas. This project would not limit access.

12. The proposed action would not 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).

The proposed action will promote native riparian vegetation. There are no known noxious or invasive weed infestations at the project areas. This project will not contribute to the continued existence or spread of noxious weeds or non-native invasive species, because vehicles will be restricted to existing roads and trails.

Participating Staff

Name of Participant	Position Title or Resource Expertise
Jesse Rawson	Wildlife Biologist
Scott Sayer	Natural Resources Specialist
Suzann Henrikson	Cultural Resources
Kate Forster	Fisheries Biologist
Jeremy Bisson	Wildlife Biologist

I considered the review of the aforementioned extraordinary circumstances and have determined that the proposed action would not result in any significant impacts to the human environment.

D. Signature

Authorizing Official: MC Courtney Date: 1/27/2012
Michael Courtney
Field Manager

Contact Person

For additional information concerning this CX review, contact Jesse Rawson, Wildlife Biologist, at (208) 677-6600, or at 15 East 200 South, Burley ID, 83318.

Figure 1. Project Overview Map

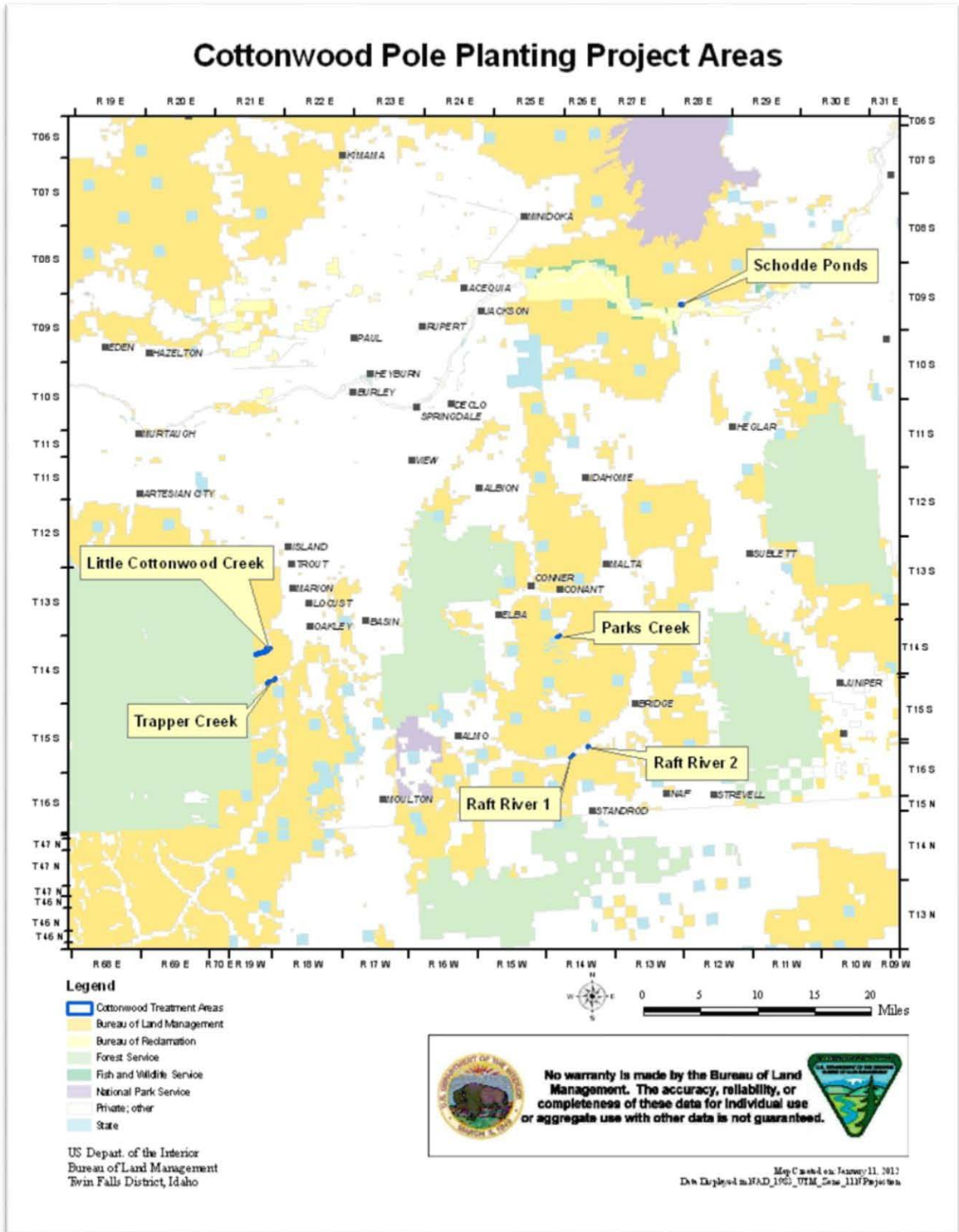


Figure 2. Little Cottonwood Project Area

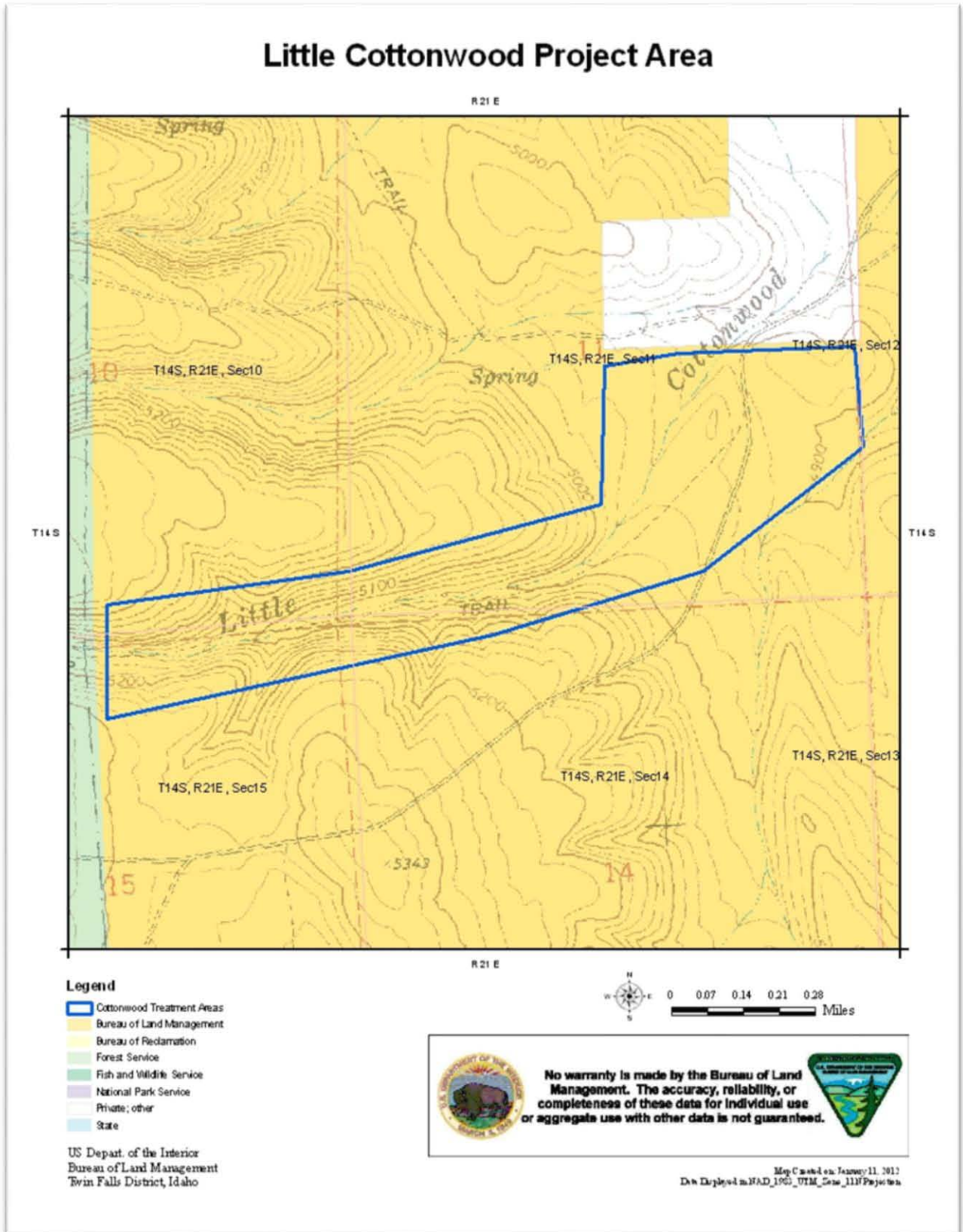


Figure 3. Raft River Project Area

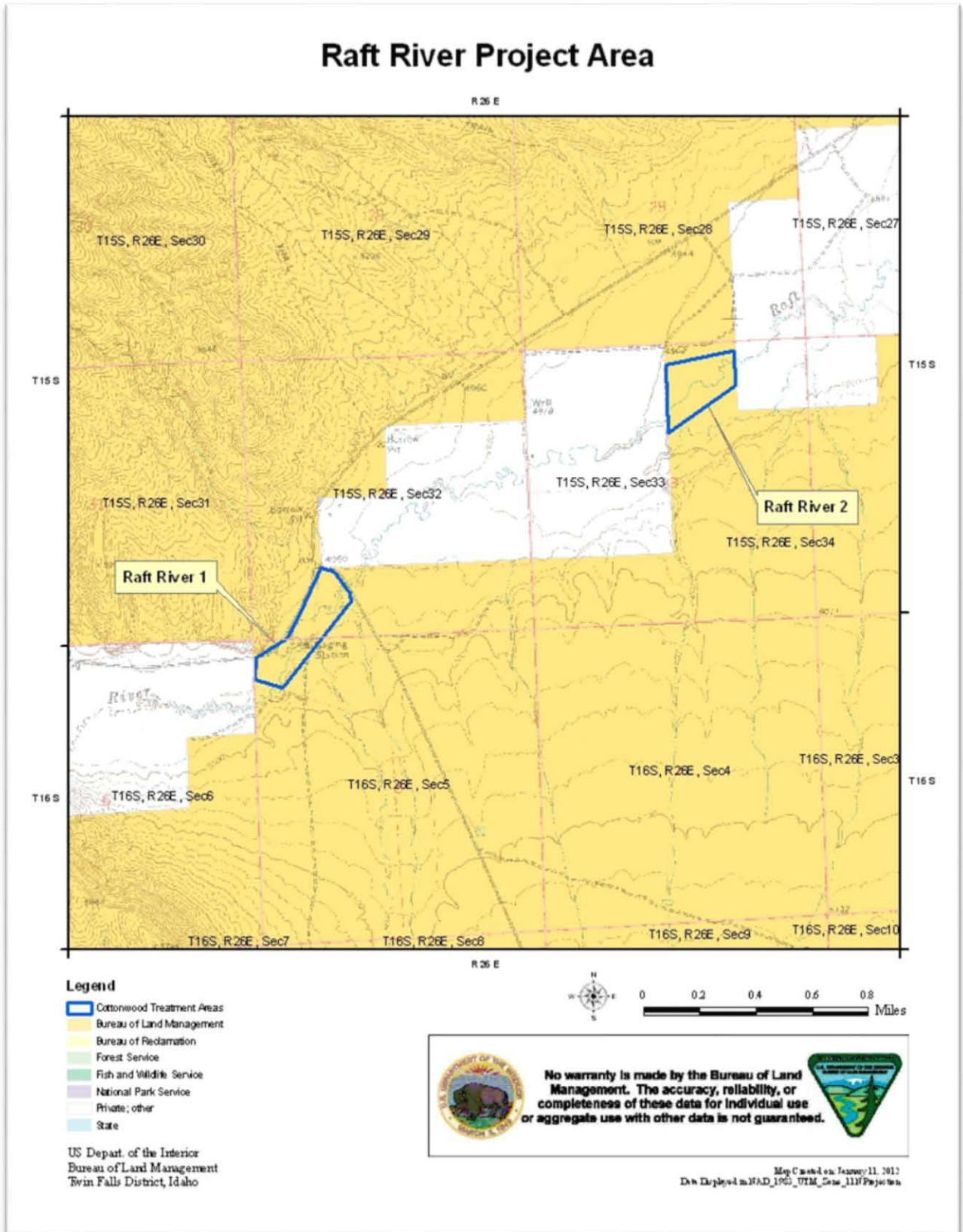


Figure 4. Schodde Ponds Project Area

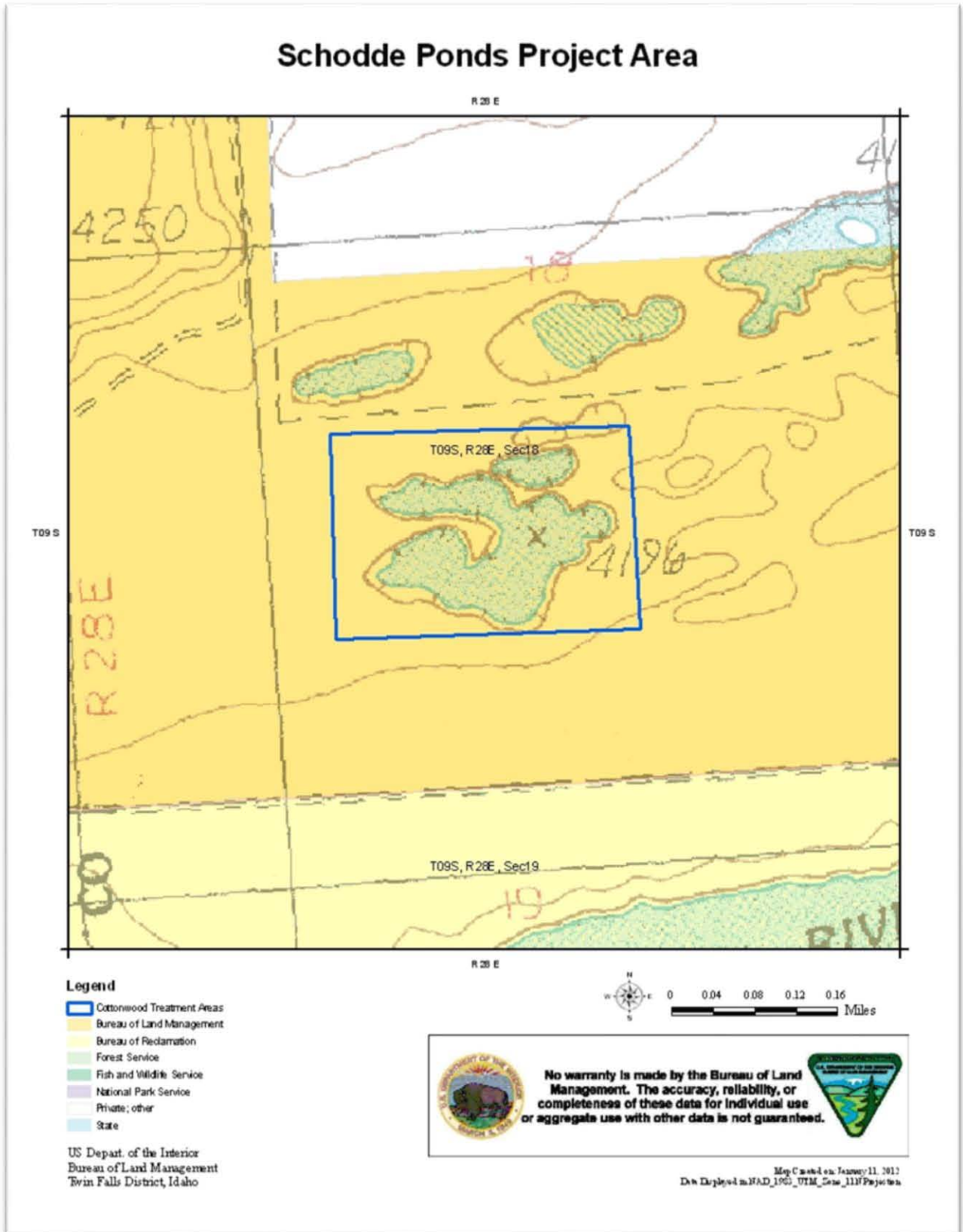


Figure 5. Trapper Creek Project Area

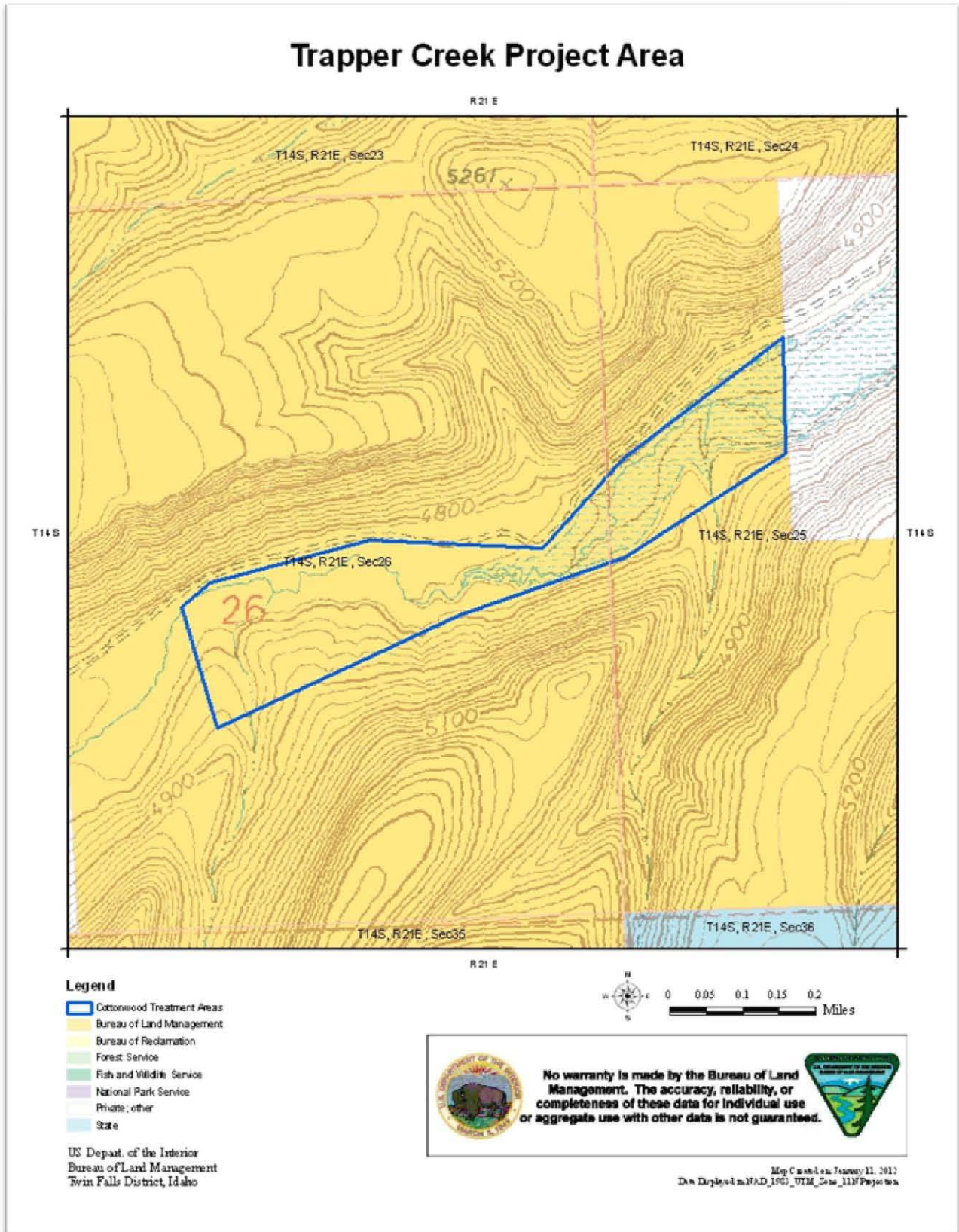


Figure 6. Parks Creek Project Area

