

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT, BOISE DISTRICT OFFICE
EA TITLE PAGE, FONSI, AND DECISION RECORD

Applicant (if any)			Proposed Action: Fenceline Burn		Project No.: FA14	EA No. 02025
State IDAHO	Counties Ada, Elmore	District LSRD	Field Office Four Rivers (Snake River Birds of Prey NCA)		Authority: Federal Land Policy and Management Act of 1976	
Prepared By (signature)			Title: Fire Use Specialist		Field Exam Date(s) 04-01-01	Report Date

LANDS INVOLVED

Proj. name	Township	Range	Section(s)	Acres
Fenceline Burning: Public lands located in the Kuna Planning Unit, north of the Snake River and north and south of Interstate 84.	T1N	R1W	11-14,23,26,33,35	1200 (Fenceline)
	T1S	R1W	1,2,11-14,23-26	
	T1S	R1E	31	
	T1N	R1E	32-34	
	T1S	R1E	3-5,8-10,14-17,20-23,26,27, 35	
	T2S	R1E	1,2,11,13,17,24	
	T2S	R2E	28-30	
	T3S	R4E	2,3,10,11,14,16,21-23,25-28,34-36	
	T4S	R4E	13,22-24,27,28,31-33	
	T4S	R5E	1-3,9,17,18	
	T5S	R5E	11-14,23,24	
	T5S	R6E	7,18	
T4S	R8E	10-12,17,18		

FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT

The proposed action is tiered to: The 1983 Kuna Management Framework Plan, which adequately analyzes the impacts of the proposed actions and indicates there will be no significant adverse effects on the quality of the human environment. Therefore, no Environmental Impact Statement will be prepared.

DECISION RECORD

The proposed decision is to implement the following actions:

1) Conduct a prescribed burn on approximately 1200 acres along fence lines north of the Snake River, and north and south of Interstate 84, to reduce fuels and wildland fire hazard. Burning will take place annually, or as needed, for 5 years after final decision, and the decision will be reviewed at the end of that time to determine whether additional environmental analysis is necessary.

Rationale: The proposed action will:

- 1) Reduce wildfire hazard along fence lines and roads by reducing buildup of Russian thistle (tumbleweeds) and other highly flammable fuels.
- 2) Provide a training opportunity and exercise for fire personnel in prescribed fire and wildland fire safety, methods, and firing equipment.

The proposed action is in conformance with the 1983 Kuna Management Framework plan.

Any applicant, permittee, lessee or other person whose interest is adversely affected by the final decision may file an appeal and petition for stay of the decision pending final determination on appeal. The appeal and petition for stay must be filed in the office of the authorized officer as noted above, within 30 days following receipt of the final decision, or 30 days after the date the decision becomes final.

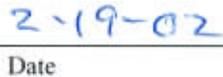
The appeal shall state the reasons clearly and concisely, why the appellant thinks the final decision is in error.

Should you wish to file a motion for stay, the appellant shall 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.

As noted above the appeal and petition for stay must be filed in the office of the authorized officer.


Field Office Manager


Date

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT, BOISE FIELD OFFICE

ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT FACE SHEET

EA No. 02025 Fenceline Burning

Consideration of Critical Elements

	Not Present	Present, No Impact	Present, Discussed in EA
Air Quality Concerns	—	X	—
Areas of Critical Environmental Concern	X	—	—
Cultural Resources	—	—	—
Prime or Unique Farm Land	X	—	—
Floodplains	X	—	—
Native American Religious Concerns	—	—	(Pending consultation)
Special Status Species	—	—	—
Hazardous Substances or Solid Wastes	X	—	—
Water Quality Concerns	X	—	—
Wetlands/Riparian Zones	X	—	—
Wild and Scenic Rivers (eligible)	X	—	—
Wilderness Study Areas	X	—	—
Wild Horse Herd Management Areas	X	—	—
Noxious Weeds	—	X	—
Environmental Justice	—	X	—

Clearances Survey Worksheets

	<u>Worksheet Status</u>	
	Attached	Pending
Cultural Resource Worksheet (ID-01-8100-3)	—	X
Special Status Animal Worksheet (ID-01-6840-10)	—	—
Special Status Plant Worksheet (ID-01-6850-1)	X	—

Visual Resource Evaluation

VRM Class: 3 and 4 Visual Contrast Rating completed: No Photo included: —

Visual impacts of action: The proposed action will produce columns of smoke that will dissipate over the course of several hours causing only a temporary visual impact. The proposed action will also remove dead plant material which produces a negative visual impact.

BLM Staff Input/Review

<u>Name</u>	<u>Discipline</u>	<u>Initial</u>	<u>Date</u>
Irene Saphra	Fire Use Specialist	—	—
John Sullivan	NCA Manager	—	—
John Doremus	Wildlife Biologist	<i>JD</i>	<i>10Apr-02</i>
Juanita Allen	Archeologist	<i>JA</i>	<i>3-19-02</i>
Ann DeBolt	Botanist	<i>AD</i>	<i>3-20-02</i>
Ray Pease	Rangeland Management Specialist	<i>RP</i>	<i>3/19/02</i>
Larry Ridenhour	Outdoor Recreation Planner	<i>LR</i>	<i>4-12-02</i>
Zig Napkora	Hydrologist	<i>ZN</i>	<i>3-27-02</i>

I. PURPOSE AND NEED

The purpose of this project is as follows:

Reduce the buildup of Russian thistle (tumbleweeds) and other highly-flammable fuels and subsequent wildfire hazard along fence lines in the Kuna Planning Unit north of the Snake River and north and south of Interstate 84. Fenceline burning will also prevent the fences from collapsing due to the weight of the wind on the thistle against the fences.

Provide a training opportunity for fire crews and prescribed fire crews to familiarize them with prescribed fire safety and wildland and prescribed fire equipment, firing methods, and procedures.

A. Hazard reduction:

In the fall and winter, Russian thistle accumulates along fence lines within the NCA. These highly flammable fuels often approach hazardous levels, and if they are ignited, pose a threat to firefighter and public safety. In addition, the weight of the fuels can make the fences prone to collapsing during windy weather.

Prescribed burning can successfully reduce fuels, and when conducted on a regular schedule, during the appropriate season, is a relatively low-risk, cost-effective method of hazard reduction. If objectives are met, the proposed action would also reduce the potential risk of future ignitions, spread and intensity of wild or accidental fire.

B. Training Opportunity

Low-complexity prescribed fires are an excellent method of familiarizing fire personnel with firing methods, safety, and procedures. In addition, an annual project such as fenceline burning will provide an opportunity for personnel to gain necessary wildland and prescribed fire qualifications, including Burn Boss, Ignition Specialist, Engine Crew member, and Burn Plan writer.

II. PROPOSED ACTIONS AND ALTERNATIVE

Proposed Actions:

A. Fenceline Burning: This project would reduce fuels on approximately 1200 acres along fence lines in the NCA (See attached map). In the fall and winter, Russian thistle accumulates along fence lines within the NCA. The accumulations of these highly flammable fuels often approach hazardous levels, and if they are ignited, pose a threat to firefighters and public safety, as well as a threat to adjacent shrub stands and public and private lands. In addition, the weight of the fuels along the fences can make them prone to collapsing during windy weather. The sites now consist primarily of Russian thistle, tumble mustard, and other exotic annual weeds, and cheatgrass in adjacent areas. The sites would be burned annually, or as needed, for five years, at which time, this decision would be reviewed to see if additional environmental analysis was needed. In addition to reducing fire hazard, the prescribed fire would be used as an opportunity to:

- 1) Train and familiarize fire personnel with prescribed and wildland fire safety methods, techniques, and equipment.
- 2) Provide "red card" experience for wildland and prescribed fire operations positions, including Burn Boss, Ignition Specialist, Field Observer, and Burn Plan Writer.

The following action would be implemented:

- 1) Prescribe burn the 1200 acres along fencelines in the NCA annually or as-needed, to reduce Russian thistle, and other fuel accumulations. Methods of ignition would include drip torches and terra-torch (vehicle-mounted ignition device). Engines would be driven adjacent to the burn areas, to help control fire spread, especially into adjacent sagebrush areas, if any are present. The burn site would be patrolled until the fire is declared out by the Burn Boss, to mitigate risk of escape and to ensure that any wooden fence posts are protected. If fence posts are burned by the prescribed fire, they will be replaced by the BLM. In addition, any interested permittees

would be notified prior to burning. The site would be monitored one year after implementation, to see if objectives were met, and for re-invasion of noxious weeds and exotic annuals.

Populations of *Lepidium pap.* exist in various locations adjacent to the project area. Prior to implementation, these areas will be identified on a map and will be avoided during burning. Vehicles will not be driven in these locations, and the areas will be protected from any escaped fire that might occur.

No Action Alternative:

The no action alternative would consist of no changes to the existing management: no fencelines would be burned, fuels would not be reduced, and no training would occur for this type of project.

III. AFFECTED ENVIRONMENT:

The areas generally consist of a sandy loam 8-10" ecological site that has been burned repeatedly by wildfires and prescribed fires and consists primarily of Russian Thistle and other litter accumulations with no soil crusts.

The affected environment has been well described in the 1996 Snake River Birds of Prey NCA Management Plan, the 1987 Kuna Planning Unit Normal Fire Rehabilitation Plan, and the 1979 Snake River Birds of Prey Special Research Report to the Secretary of the Interior. The reader is directed to those publications for more specific descriptions of the NCA and the project area. Compliance for Sec 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act is being completed for the project.

Populations of *Lepidium pap* exist in various locations adjacent to the project area. A map will be provided to the Burn Boss, prior to implementation.

IV. ENVIRONMENTAL CONSEQUENCES AND EFFECTS ON THE ENVIRONMENT

Proposed Actions (Direct and Indirect Effects):

A. Hazard Reduction:

The environmental effects of prescribed fire are well analyzed in the 1990 Shrub Restoration Plan and EA for the Snake River Birds of Prey National Conservation Area, the 1991 Vegetation Treatment on BLM Lands in 13 Western States Final Environmental Impact Statement. The repeated burning will not eliminate the invasion of cheatgrass into the project area. Cheatgrass will probably re-invade the project area and levels will probably remain the same or increase slightly. However, the prescribed fire will decrease the fuel depth by reducing the buildup of tumbleweeds and other fuel accumulations against fence lines; which will, in turn, reduce potential fire intensity and overall wildland fire hazard in the immediate vicinity of the fences and along roads where fuel treatment occurs.

Prescribed burning can successfully reduce fuels, and when conducted on a regular schedule, during the appropriate season, is a relatively low-risk, cost-effective method of hazard reduction. If objectives are met, the proposed action would also reduce the potential risk of future ignitions, spread and intensity of wild or accidental fire.

Cumulative Effects:

The proposed action is part of a comprehensive, multi-year hazard reduction program, and would contribute a minor amount of fuels reduction to the overall fire hazard on the NCA.

No Action Alternative (Direct and Indirect Effects):

This alternative would result in no fuels reduction, continued accumulation of highly-flammable fuels, increased fire hazard, and the possible loss of additional shrub habitat and threat to public and private lands in the area, as documented in the 1996 Snake River Birds of Prey NCA Management Plan. If no burning occurs, fences may also have to be replaced if they collapse under the weight of the additional accumulated fuels.

Cumulative Effects:

If the proposed action does not occur, fuels would continue to accumulate over the long-term in Canyon Creek. However, overall hazard to the NCA would not change, because the fencelines represent a very minor portion of high-hazard fuels within the NCA.

V. CONSULTATION AND COORDINATION:

NCA interdisciplinary team

State Historic Preservation Office

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT

SPECIAL STATUS PLANT CLEARANCE WORKSHEET

Part I. Project Description and Location (To be completed by Requestor)

Project Title: Fenceline Russian Thistle Burn EA No. 02025
Project No. FA14

Project Description: To burn Russian thistle which has accumulated along approximately ____ miles of fence in the Snake River Birds of Prey National Conservation Area. The weed buildup presents a fire hazard.

Legal Description (attach map): See EA and Burn Plan maps.

Project Lead: Irene Saphra Date Requested By: 3/20/02

**Part II. Clearance Findings/Section 7 Consultation Recommendations
(To be completed by Resource Specialist)**

This section based on conclusions from the reverse side of form.

- Full Clearance - To the best of my knowledge, this project will not adversely impact any special status plant species or its habitat.
- Conditional Clearance - Special status plant species may exist within the area of impact of this project. Further investigation is necessary and will be done prior to _____ (date), or project modification must be implemented. **See stipulations in EA, Burn Plan, and reverse**
- Negative Clearance - To the best of my knowledge, this project is likely to adversely impact special status plant species or their critical habitat.
- Section 7 Consultation/Conferencing with FWS is needed (listed, proposed, and C1 candidate species only).
- Technical Assistance from the FWS is recommended (C2 candidate species only).

Jimm DeBolt 3/19/02
Signature of person conducting clearance Date

continued on reverse

ID-01-6850-1 (April 1995)

Part III. Species List and Biological Evaluation

Actions taken to assess the project area for presence of special status plants or their habitat.

CDC database consulted Yes No RA maps consulted Yes No

Other _____

Physical examination of the area Yes No

Date(s) examined N/A Time spent N/A FO Four Rivers

Special status plant species within the project area (list if applicable):

Confirmed Suspected None

Slickspot peppergrass, Davis peppergrass, and white eatonella have all been observed adjacent to some portion of the proposed fence line burn areas.

Dominant plant species or community type in the project area:

Historically this area was largely Wyoming sagebrush habitat, with some areas of salt desert shrub.

Much of it is now dominated by annuals, though segments of native or seeded range are also present.

Based upon the field exam, no special status plants or their critical habitat exist within the project area.

Based upon the field exam, special status plants or their critical habitat exist within the project area (see above) **Based on databases/maps, rather than a project specific field exam**

The field exam was conducted at an inappropriate season.

No field exam was conducted (see justification below).

Biological Evaluation (Project Impact Assessment and Recommendations)

Three special status plants are known from adjacent to the proposed treatment areas, including slickspot peppergrass, Davis peppergrass, and white eatonella. These areas have been identified on EA maps and in the Burn Plan either for "burning avoidance" or as "no driving" segments. As long as these stipulations are adhered to, impacts to special status plants would not be expected.

Part III. Species List and Biological Evaluation

Actions taken to assess the project area for presence of special status animals or their habitat.

CDC database consulted ____ Yes X No RA maps consulted X Yes ____ No

Other _____

Physical examination of the area ____ Yes ____ No

Date(s) examined _____ Time spent _____ RA _____

Special status animal species within the project area (list if applicable):
____ Confirmed ____ Suspected X None

Dominant plant species or community type in the project area:
annual and exotic perennial grasses, Big Sagebrush - winterfat native grass and forbes.

- Based upon the field exam, no special status animals or their critical habitat exist within the project area.
- Based upon the field exam, special status animals or their critical habitat exist within the project area (see above).
- No field exam was conducted (see justification below).

Biological Evaluation (Project Impact Assessment and Recommendations)

I have drawn all of these fence lines in the past. The area burned will not affect any T&E animals. This project is necessary to aid in proper grazing management and will increase the proficiency of our professional fire management organization.