

Categorical Exclusion Review
U.S. DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT
Boise District Office
Owyhee Field Office

Castlehead Lambert Research CE

CE No.: ID-130-2007-CE-3461

Purpose and Need for Action:

The **purpose** for the proposed action is to allow for data collection, inventory, study, research, and monitoring activities in conjunction with the Castlehead Lambert Prescribed Burn.

The **need** for the proposed action is to gain knowledge and understanding of how the sagebrush-steppe, mountain shrub, and aspen ecosystems respond to various juniper management actions; as well as how the biotic and abiotic components of these ecosystems respond to prescribed burning as compared to areas with no burning.

Description of Proposed Action:

- (1) Construct 3 protective enclosures in and adjacent to the Castlehead Lambert Prescribed Burn project area. Each enclosure would be approximately 30 acres in size and constructed with steel posts, wood posts, and barbed wire.
- (2) Establish vegetation subplots associated with song bird point counts. At each subplot, vegetation would be measured within a rectangle of 90 x 99 feet using 5 measuring tapes temporarily held in place with two nails (diameter = 0.3"; length = 10"). The nails would be removed after sampling is completed. Each subplot would be visited once a year until 2010.
- (3) Establish intensive bird sampling areas to study nesting success and overlay territory area with a map of the current vegetation. In order to delineate territories, birds would be captured by using mist nets that are temporarily held in place by two 3 ft-long fence posts spaced 36 feet apart. Fence posts would be pounded into the ground approximately 5 inches and would be removed when bird capture is completed. Approximately 100 nets would be erected (and removed) each year until 2010.
- (4) Establish rainfall simulation sites, one within the burn perimeter and one immediately adjacent to the burn. Each site would consist of 20 small plots where a 0.5 m² metal border would be pounded into the ground approximately 2 inches. A small hole, approximately 2 feet across and up to 1 foot deep will be dug on the down slope end of each plot to sample for runoff. The holes would be filled when sampling is completed.
- (5) Soil core samples, 2 inches in depth, would be collected at each rainfall simulation site. Three soil core samples, 3 inches in diameter and down to approximately 4 feet deep, would be collected in each of the three fenced enclosures.
- (6) In conjunction with the rainfall simulation sites, a small trench for water penetration times would be dug to a depth of 20 cm. The trench would be filled when sampling is completed.
- (7) A rainfall simulator would be placed at various locations throughout each of the rainfall simulation sites.
- (8) Establish twelve large rainfall simulation sites (6 x 22 ft) by pounding sheet metal plot boarders into the ground to a depth of 2-3 inches. A small hole would be dug at the bottom of each plot to collect runoff samples. The holes would be filled when sampling is completed.
- (9) Establish four water penetration trenches (10 x 50 x 20 cm) in conjunction with each of the large rainfall simulation sites. The trenches would be filled when sampling is completed.
- (10) Establish a 1,000 yard long butterfly transect in each of the fenced enclosures. Pink flagging

- would be placed at 50 m intervals along the transect.
- (11) Establish fifteen ant pitfall traps in each fenced enclosure. The traps would consist of 150 ml test tubes (7" long and 3/4" diameter) filled halfway to the top with anti-freeze and buried in the ground to where the top of the test tube is level with the ground surface. Each trap would be marked with a blue pin flag.
 - (12) Establish staging areas for equipment and vehicles along the road.
 - (13) Establish a placement site for a 9,000 gallon water tank. The tank would be removed when sampling is completed.
 - (14) Establish a camp site for approximately 15 people during data collection. The camp site would be used twice a year for 8 days each time.
 - (15) Establish three control plots for placement of three weather stations prior to the burn. Two sites would only sample soil moisture by inserting probes into the ground at various depths. The third site would also include an electronic rain gauge and air temperature sensor. After the burn, six additional weather stations would be established. Each weather station would be in place until 2010.

Project Location:

The Castlehead Lambert project area falls within the 288,000 acre Juniper Mountain Landscape Restoration Strategy area, and more specifically in T.11S., R.4W., in portions of sections 14, 15, 21-23, 26-28, and 33-34 Boise Meridian. This area lies in portions of Pasture 1A of the Castlehead Lambert Grazing Allotment and pastures 10 and 13 of the Nickel Creek Grazing Allotment.

Applicant (if any):

Part 1 – Plan Conformance Review

This proposed Action is subject to the following land use plan: Owyhee Resource Management Plan

Date Plan Approved: December 30, 1999

The Proposed Action has been reviewed for conformance with the plan (43 CFR 1610.5, BLM MS 1617.3).

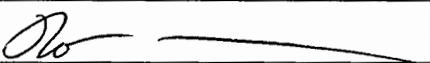
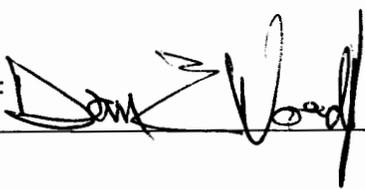
Remarks: Consistent with 516 DM 2.3A(2)(1.6) and 516 DM 11.5H(9)

Part 11 – NEPA Review

- A. Categorical Exclusion Review: This proposed action qualifies as a categorical exclusion under 516 DM2, Appendix 1 **ID-130-2007-CE-3461** or 516 DM6, Appendix 5.4.**ID-130-2007-CE-3461**Category description:
- B. Exceptions Review (Departmental List of Extraordinary Circumstances Review): Review the twelve exceptions which apply to individual actions within categorical exclusion. Environmental documents (EA or EIS) must be prepared for any actions involving these exceptions. (The following Departmental List of Extraordinary Circumstances apply to individual actions. Departmental instructions mandate that environmental documents **MUST BE PREPARED** for actions which may: (Mark applicable answer for each item. If "yes", prepare an EA/EIS and append this form to it.))

List of Exceptions	Specialist Signature/Date	Comments/Explanation
1. Have significant impacts on public health or safety.	Dan Woodruff	This action will not have significant impacts on public health and safety. (Dan W.)

<p>2. 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; or ecologically significant or critical areas, or is not in compliance with the Fish and Wildlife Coordination Act.</p>	<p>Brian McCabe, Ryan Homan, Rich Jackson, Jill Holderman, Kathi Kershaw</p>	<p><i>No. - BMA, KAK</i></p>
<p>3. Have highly controversial environmental effects or involve unresolved conflicts concerning alternative uses of available resources [NEPA Section 102(2)(E)].</p>	<p>Brian McCabe, Ryan Homan, Rich Jackson, Jill Holderman, Kathi Kershaw, Raul Trevino, Dan Woodruff</p>	<p>The collection of this research data will not have highly controversial environmental effects or involve unresolved conflicts concerning alternative uses of available resources (Dan W) <i>KAK</i></p>
<p>4. Have highly uncertain and potentially significant environmental effects or involve unique or unknown environmental risks.</p>	<p>Brian McCabe, Ryan Homan, Rich Jackson, Jill Holderman, Kathi Kershaw, Raul Trevino, Dan Woodruff</p>	<p>Numerous research activities have been conducted on BLM lands in the past. The potential impacts associated with the activities themselves are well known and generally negligible (Matt M) <i>KAK</i> The environmental effects of the action at the proposed scale will not be significant (Dan W)</p>
<p>5. Establish a precedent for future actions or represent a decision in principle about future actions with potentially significant environmental effects.</p>	<p>Matt McCoy</p>	<p>Results obtained from the proposed research could be used to reduce impacts of future potential juniper management projects; however, the decision to implement future juniper management projects would not be predicated solely on this research. Research results would provide information, but would not represent decisions. (Matt M)</p>
<p>6. Have a direct relationship to other actions with individually insignificant, but cumulatively significant environmental effects.</p>	<p>Matt McCoy</p>	<p>The impacts of the proposed project should be negligible or unnoticeable upon the completion of the project. They would not add, in any noticeable way, to any impacts from other activities in the area administered by the BLM. (Matt M)</p>
<p>7. Have significant impacts on properties listed or eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places as determined by either the bureau or office.</p>	<p>Brian McCabe</p>	<p><i>There are no listed or eligible sites w/in the proposed project's boundaries.</i> <i>- NO</i></p>

8. Have significant impacts on species listed or proposed to be listed on the List of Endangered or Threatened Species, or on designated Critical Habitat for these species.	Plants: Kathi Kershaw	No SSP are known to occur in these areas - KKK
	Wildlife: Jill Holderman	TA 8/30/07
	Aquatics: Rich Jackson	
9. Violate a Federal, State, local, or tribal law or requirement imposed for the protection of the environment.	Brian McCabe	NO. (CERCLA VIOLATED)
10. Have a disproportionately high and adverse effect on low income or minority populations (Executive Order 12898).	Matt McCoy	There are no low income or minority populations living in the area. Low income or minority visitors to the area would not be affected any differently by the proposed activities than any other visitor. (Matt M)
11. 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).	Brian McCabe	no.
12. 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).	Pat Kane	Those standard operating procedures (SOPs), outlined in the Juniper Mountain Landscape Restoration Strategy will be followed during this project, to prevent the introduction of noxious and invasive weeds into the proposed project area. There are currently no known populations of noxious weeds located within the proposed project area. Any noxious weeds encountered during project layout or implementation would be treated, monitored, and retreated as necessary, consistent with established BLM procedures, to prevent infestations from establishing and spreading within the project area. (Pat K)
I certify that none of the Departmental exceptions (Extraordinary Circumstances) listed in the above Part B (516 DM 2, Appendix 2) apply to this action. Remarks:		
Preparer(s):  Date: 8/4/07		

Part III - Decision

I have reviewed this plan conformance and NEPA compliance record and have determined that the proposed project is in conformance with the approved land use plan and that no further environmental analysis is required. It is my decision to implement the project, as described, with the mitigation measures either identified below or stipulation(s) attached in this case file.

Mitigation Measures/Other Remarks:

Remarks:

Authorized Official:



Date:

Sept. 4, 2007