

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

Twin Falls District
Shoshone Field Office
400 West F Street
Shoshone, ID 83352

DECISION RECORD

For the

**West Camas Forest Restoration and Timber Sale
Environmental Assessment ID-230-2009-EA-3913**

I. Background /Context

The BLM has completed an Environmental Assessment (EA) for the West Camas Forest Restoration and Timber Sale project in order to identify and document the expected outcome and impacts of implementing the project. Additionally, a Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) has been prepared and has identified that neither the proposed action or alternatives would result in impacts that meet the definition of significance in context or intensity as defined in 40 CFR 1508.27. Therefore, an environmental impact statement is not needed.

II. PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT

This project has been listed on the Idaho NEPA Database since October 20, 2009. Additionally, on this date a scoping packet was mailed to interested publics, the purpose of this packet was to inform parties of the proposal and to solicit comments to assist with meeting NEPA requirements. The scoping information was also presented to the Shoshone-Paiute tribe on October 22, 2009 with follow up information also presented on November 25, 2009; January 28, 2010; July 22, 2010; and September 23, 2010. Additionally, the project was toured and discussed by the Twin Falls District Resource Advisory Council (RAC) in July 2010. A subcommittee of the RAC further discussed this project and gave recommendations at the September 2010 RAC meeting. The Shoshone-Bannock tribe was also briefed on this project during a meeting with their resource staff on January 20, 2011.

Comments received from scoping focused around potential impacts to water quality caused by increased sedimentation into streams, the quality and quantity of wildlife habitat, and the placement and the continued use of existing and temporary roadways. Scoping comments provided suggestions to develop an alternative that did not include new or temporary road construction and to remove existing roads after treatments were accomplished. Also, comments encouraged the BLM to develop alternatives that did not rely on biomass utilization or pile burning as the only components of removing slash. Other comments expressed concerns over the introduction and spread of noxious weeds, identified the need to assess cumulative impacts to resources, and suggested that an alternative be considered that expanded aspen treatments outside of commercial stands. The comments that were received were used to help identify issues to be analyzed and to further formulate the proposed action and action alternatives.

A pre-decisional version of the EA was posted to the BLM NEPA web page and made available for comment from Feb 25, 2011 through March 21, 2011. Comments on the pre-decisional EA were submitted by Idaho Conservation League (ICL) on March 21, 2011.

In order to address ICL's comments, a meeting was held on May 9, 2011. At this meeting many of ICL's questions were addressed and visit the West Camas project area was tentatively scheduled. The site visit occurred on July 6, 2011. The site visit allowed ICL to gain a better understanding of conditions on the ground and to express the organizations concerns. As a result of the site visit ICL submitted additional comments on July 10, 2011 that refined their concerns and suggested changes to commercial harvest prescriptions. ICL's comments were used to refine the proposed action and alternatives, particularly concerning the location of harvest treatments near the South Fork of Lime Creek and how these trees will be selected for removal.

IV. ALTERNATIVES CONSIDERED

The EA describes the proposed action, no action, and three additional action alternatives. Alternative 1 identified actions that were similar to the proposed action, but would occur on less area and would not include any new road construction. Alternatives 2 and Alternative 3 proposed additional treatments to be included with the Proposed Action or Alternative 1. Alternative 2 address non-commercial removal of conifer from aspen stands and Alternative 3 address the rerouting of a user created trail to reduce impacts to stream and riparian health. A table comparing the acreage of treatments and impacts to riparian resources across alternatives is located in Attachment 1.

No Action

Under the no action alternative, no forest treatments would occur and the area would continue to incur current uses and be managed as described in the Sun Valley Management Framework Plan as amended.

Alternative 1 – No temporary road construction

Alternative 1 identifies treatments that would be accomplished without any new road construction. The alternative would thin approximately 175 acres and complete regeneration harvests on approximately 12 acres; the total area proposed for treatment is about 113 acres less then the proposed action.

V. DECISION

I have decided to implement the Proposed Action in combination with Alternative 2 and Alternative 3 in order to complete a full range of treatments. The addition of Alternative 2 and Alternative 3 to the Proposed Action will add aspen treatments that will address forest health issues in non-commercial forests and will decommission a trail segment to improve riparian areas. These actions will be implemented as described in the West Camas Forest Restoration and Timber Sale Environmental Assessment except no commercial harvest will be completed in Unit 12b. These actions would treat approximately 290 acres with forest harvest treatments, remove conifer encroachment from 150 acres of aspen stands, and re-route a recreation trail. These actions meet the purpose and need without directly and indirectly impacting local resources on a level that would result in significant effects. Additionally, in the long term, as forest health and diversity improve the impacts incurred will be negated.

I reviewed the guidance approved in the Sun Valley Management Framework Plan (MFP) on December 14, 1981 and as amended in 2008 by the Fire, Fuels, and Related Vegetation

Management Direction Plan Amendment (FMDA). I found that completing the West Camas project as identified within this decision is in conformance with these plans as the project specifically addresses forest health and management objectives identified.

As disclosed in the FONSI, I have determined that the approved actions described in this decision and the EA will not have any significant impact, individually or cumulatively, on the quality of the human environment. Because there would not be any significant impacts, an environmental impact statement is not required. I also considered public input from the scoping effort as outlined in the public involvement section of this decision and the EA and have incorporated suggestions into selected alternatives.

Having read the EA, considered public comments, reviewed the elements of the human environment as developed by the Interdisciplinary Team (IDT) and approved the FONSI, I have concluded that the approved actions have been studied in sufficient detail to allow me to make an informed decision to implement the project.

VI. APPEALS

The decision to implement this forest management project may be protested under 43 CFR 5003-Administrative Remedies. As outlined in 43 CFR 5003.3 (a) and (b), protests of a forest management decision may be made within 15 days of the publication date of the decision notice in a newspaper of general circulation and shall contain a written statement of the reasons for protesting the decision. In accordance with the regulations, a notice is anticipated to be published in the Times News on January 30, 2012 and will constitute the notice of decision for the purpose of protests. Any protest received after 15 days of this publication date is not timely filed and shall not be considered.

Protests shall be filed with the authorized officer, Ruth A. Miller, at Shoshone Field Office, 400 West F Street, Shoshone, ID 83352 by the close of business (4:15 pm) within 15 days of the publication of the notice of decision. Protests shall be in the form of a written statement of reasons for protesting the decision, signed, and delivered to the physical address listed above. Therefore, e-mail, verbal, or other facsimile protests will not be accepted. Upon the timely filing of a protest, the authorized officer shall reconsider the decision to be implemented in light of the statement of reasons for the protest and other pertinent information available to her. The authorized officer shall, at the conclusion of her review, serve a decision in writing on the protesting party. Upon denial of a protest filed under CFR 43 subpart 5003.3 the authorized officer may proceed with implementation of the decision.

A served decision may then be appealed to the Interior Board of Land Appeals, Office of the Secretary, in accordance with the regulations contained in 43 CFR Part 4. A notice of appeal must be filed in the office of the authorized officer at 400 West F Street, Shoshone, Idaho 83352 within 30 days of this decision. If a statement of reasons for the appeal is not included with the notice, it must be filed with the Interior Board of Land Appeals, 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 the authorized officer.

If you wish to file a petition for stay pursuant to 43 CFR Part 4.21(b), the petition for stay should accompany your notice of appeal and 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 irreparable harm to the appellant or resources if the stay is not granted,
and
- (4) Whether the public interest favors granting the stay.

If a petition for stay is submitted with the notice of appeal, a copy of the notice of appeal and petition for stay must be served on each party named in the decision from which the appeal is taken, and with the IBLA at the same time it is filed with the authorized officer.

A copy of the notice of appeal, any statement of reasons and all pertinent documents must be served on each adverse party named in the decision from which the appeal is taken and on the Office of the Regional Solicitor, U.S. Department of the Interior, 6201 Federal Building, 125 South State Street, Salt Lake City, Utah 84138-1180, not later than 15 days after filing the document with the authorized officer and/or IBLA.

For more information you may contact Kasey Prestwich, Forester, at (208) 732-7200 or via e-mail at kprestwich@blm.gov

/s/ Ruth A. Miller

1/24/2012

Ruth A. Miller
Shoshone Field Manager

Date

Attachment 1 -Summary and Comparison of Alternatives

	No Action	Proposed Action**	Alternative 1	Alternative 2	Alternative 3
<u>Forest Resources</u>					
Total Footprint	No Treatment	290 acres	187 acres	150 acres	No Treatment
Crown Thinning	No Treatment	80 acres	80 acres	Non Commercial	Non Commercial
Selection Thinning	No Treatment	95 acres	95 acres	Commercial	Non Commercial
Regeneration Harvest	No Treatment	115 acres	12 acres	Commercial	Non Commercial
High Mistletoe Rating	No Treatment	95 acres	12 acres	No Rating	No Rating
Moderate Mistletoe Rating	No Treatment	20 acres	0 acres	No Rating	No Rating
Low Mistletoe Rating	No Treatment	175 acres	175 acres	No Rating	No Rating
<u>Riparian Habitat Conservation Areas (RHCA)</u>					
Treatment Actions W/in RHCA	No Treatment	Less than 36 acres	Less than 19 acres	0 acres	0 acres
Trails w/in RHCA	2 miles of active single track trails	No proposed change to single track trails	No proposed change to single track trails	No proposed change to single track trails	Remove 0.2 miles of active single track trail from RHCA
Existing Roads w/in RHCA	1 mile of existing roads within the RHCA in unmaintained conditions	Improve and temporarily maintain 0.7 miles of existing road. Use 0.3 miles of existing road with for access only (no hauling) without improvement or maintenance.	Improve and temporarily maintain 0.7 miles of existing road.	No Proposed changes to roads.	No Proposed changes to roads.

Road Closure w/in RHCA	No road closures	0.8 miles will have access limited to motorcycles, bicycles, horse and foot traffic.	0.8 miles will have access limited to motorcycles, bicycles, horse and foot traffic.	No road closures	No road Closures
Stream Crossings	Multiple fording areas contributing to sediment load	Replace ford on with a culvert on Ear Creek and tributary to South Fork of Lime Creek	Replace ford on with a culvert on Ear Creek and tributary to South Fork of Lime Creek	No Changes proposed to stream crossings	Remove and rehabilitate 1 ford on Ear Creek and 1 ford on a tributary to Ear Creek
<u>Fuel Loading</u>					
Short Term	No change in fuel loading	Increase in 1 and 10 hr surface fuels and a decrease in canopy and overall fuel loadings	Increase in 1 and 10 hr surface fules and a decrease in canopy and overall fuel loadings (In treated areas) No change in fuel loads in no treatment areas	Increase in surface fuel loading	No change in fuel loadings
Long Term	Increase in large surface fuels and an Increase in standing dead fuels	Decrease the potential for standing dead	Decrease the potential for standing dead in treated areas. Increase large surface fuels and standing dead in untreated areas	Maintain aspen communities with low fire potential	No change in fuel loadings
** Acreage reflects no commercial treatments within Unit 12b					