

**FINAL ENVIRONMENTAL  
IMPACT STATEMENT**

# **Eastside Township Fuels and Vegetation Project**

Volume I



**April 2007**



**USFS  
BLM**

Cottonwood Field Office

It is the mission of the Bureau of Land Management to sustain the health, diversity, and productivity of the public lands for the use and enjoyment of present and future generations.

**BLM/ID/PT-06/004-5000**

**ID-420-2005-EIS-952**



United States Department of the Interior  
BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT



Cottonwood Field Office  
1 Butte Drive  
Cottonwood, Idaho 83522-5200  
<http://www.id.blm.gov/offices/cottonwood>

5000(420)

April 02, 2007

Dear Reader:

Enclosed for your review is the Final Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for the Eastside Township Fuels and Vegetation Project located near Elk City, Idaho. The Final EIS has been prepared following a 60-day public review period in which public comments were received and modifications made to the EIS. Comments received on the Draft EIS and the responses to these comments are included in Chapter 4, section 4.5 of the Final EIS.

This document is being sent to those who either requested to be included in the project mailing list or submitted written comments. The EIS is also available on the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) website at: [www.id.blm.gov/offices/cottonwood/index.htm](http://www.id.blm.gov/offices/cottonwood/index.htm).

The Final EIS discloses potential effects of the proposed action and the alternatives for fuel and vegetation treatments and restoration activities on approximately 1,200 acres of federal land in north central Idaho, administered by the BLM's Cottonwood Field Office. The Nez Perce National Forest (NPNF) is a Cooperating Agency on this project because BLM proposes to use and construct roads on the National Forest to implement the project.

Based on the analysis in the Final EIS, BLM and the NPNF expect to make decisions on this project in the spring of 2007. A Record of Decision will be published in a single Legal Notice in a newspaper(s) of local distribution. If the decision is to proceed with the project, implementation of portions of the project could begin as early as summer 2007.

This Final EIS is available for public review for a 30-day period following publication of the Notice of Availability by the Environmental Protection Agency in the *Federal Register*. Comments on the Final EIS can be sent to the address at the top of this letter, Attention: Eastside Project or send an email to [robbin\\_boyce@blm.gov](mailto:robbin_boyce@blm.gov). Comments will be reviewed to determine if they have merit and if new information should be considered prior to issuing the Record of Decision. Comments will be most useful if they are specific, mention page numbers where appropriate, and cite sources when applicable. Comment letters and emails must include your complete name, address and phone number or they will not be considered. Anonymous comments will also not be considered.

Before including your address, phone number, e-mail address, or other personal identifying information in your comment, you should be aware that your entire comment – including your personal identifying information – may be made publicly available at any time. While you can ask us in your comment to withhold your personal identifying information from public review, we cannot guarantee that we will be able to do so.

I would like to thank the individuals and organizations who participated in the development and review of this project. For additional information or clarification regarding this document, please contact Robbin Boyce, Project Lead, at (208) 962-3594.

Sincerely,

Acting Field Manager

# **Eastside Township Fuels and Vegetation Project**

## **Final Environmental Impact Statement**

1. Responsible Agency: United States Department of the Interior  
Bureau of Land Management
2. Type of Action: Administrative (X) Legislative ( )
3. Document Status: Draft ( ) Final (X)
4. Abstract: This Final Environmental Impact Statement describes and analyzes four alternatives for managing the public lands and resources, within the project area administered by the Bureau of Land Management's Cottonwood Field Office and the Nez Perce National Forest's Red River Ranger District, located in northern central Idaho, in Idaho County. BLM is the Lead Federal Agency and the NPNF is a Cooperating Agency on this project. BLM proposes to use and construct roads on the NF and, as a result of the analysis in this EIS, the NPNF may authorize the use and construction of identified roads.

The Eastside Township Fuels and Vegetation Project (Eastside Project) was developed to address the forest health, fuels, safety, and watershed issues in the Elk City area. The four alternatives include Alternative A (the "no action" alternative), Alternative B (proposed action-preferred alternative), and Alternatives C and D, which are variations of Alternative B developed to respond to issues raised by the public. The project alternatives are designed to address declining forest health issues, accumulation of fuels due to fire suppression, and effects of historic activities such as road construction and mining. Restoration activities are being proposed to address watershed, water quality, and fisheries conditions, and a plan for improved public access. The alternatives address the need for an upward trend in fish habitat condition, as well as the economic and social well being of area users and local residents.

5. The Final EIS for the Eastside Project will be available for public review for 30 calendar days following publication of the Notice of Availability in the *Federal Register* by the Environmental Protection Agency.
6. For further information contact:

Robbin B. Boyce  
Bureau of Land Management  
Cottonwood Field Office  
1 Butte Drive  
Cottonwood, Idaho 83522-5200  
Telephone: (208) 962-3594  
FAX: (208) 962-3275  
Email: [robbin\\_boyce@blm.gov](mailto:robbin_boyce@blm.gov)

## Summary

---

The Bureau of Land Management, (BLM) Cottonwood Field Office of the Coeur d'Alene District, is the lead federal agency in preparing this Environmental Impact Statement (EIS). The Nez Perce National Forest (NPNF) is a Cooperating Agency for this project because access across NPNF lands may be needed to implement the BLM actions proposed in this area.

This EIS was prepared in compliance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and other relevant federal and state laws and regulations. This EIS discloses the direct, indirect, and cumulative environmental impacts that would result from the three action alternatives and the no action alternative.

The project area is located in north central Idaho, near the southern part of the Idaho Panhandle in Idaho County, near the small, isolated town of Elk City, Idaho. The Eastside Township Fuels and Vegetation Project (Eastside Project) is located in the American River watershed, within the larger upper South Fork Clearwater River watershed (Appendix A, Map 1). The majority of the Elk City township occurs in the American River watershed and is completely surrounded by NPNF lands. The project area, which encompasses approximately 3,300 acres, borders the town of Elk City and surrounding wildland urban interface (WUI) areas. Actual BLM-administered acres to be treated total approximately 1,300.

### Purpose & Need for Action

The BLM initiated the project to deal with the increasing fuel load resulting from the combined effects of long-term fire suppression and an ongoing mountain pine beetle epidemic in the Elk City area. Also, aquatic and riparian conditions in the area, particularly fish habitat, have been degraded, primarily by historic mining activities. The Chief Joseph Management Framework Plan (MFP) requires concurrent watershed restoration actions when implementing timber management activities of this scale, to improve the fish habitat conditions and to continue an upward trend. The purpose of this project is to:

- Reduce the risk of high-intensity wildland fire to life, property, and natural resources in the Elk City and surrounding WUI area;
- Manage forest stands to create conditions that will contribute to sustaining long-lived fire tolerant tree species;
- Design a public transportation system that provides safe travel routes for the public, while meeting watershed and fisheries management goals, in a cost effective manner;
- Create an upward trend in fish habitat condition;
- Contribute to the economic and social well being of area users and local residents; and
- Implement intensive forest management decisions from the MFP.

### Proposed Action

The Eastside Township Fuels and Vegetation Project would reduce existing and potential fuel loads through a combination of vegetation manipulation and fuels treatments. The proposed action is the preferred alternative. Vegetation manipulation includes removing mainly dead and dying trees and selectively harvesting live trees in both lodgepole pine and mixed conifer stands. Fuels treatments include biomass utilization, piling and burning, and prescribed burning. The project would treat approximately 1,293 acres requiring approximately 15.1 miles of temporary road construction. Upon completion of the project, including road decommissioning, there would be no net change of road density per square mile in the American River watershed and a decrease of 2.12 miles of permanent road in the project area.

The project implements watershed improvement activities that would provide for an upward trend in aquatic habitat and water quality. These include riparian planting, road decommissioning, relocation of road segments along the American River, stream crossing improvements (ford closures, ford hardening, and ATV bridge replacement), reconnection of Queen Creek to the American River, road to ATV trail

Indicator	Alternative A (No Action)	Alternative B (Proposed)	Alternative C	Alternative D
Winter Rearing Habitat	Well below objective for all streams	Measurable short-term degradation (i.e., greater than 10%) predicted in Whitaker and Queen Creek	No measurable change predicted to existing condition in all subwatersheds	Measurable short-term degradation (i.e., greater than 10%) predicted in Whitaker Creek
<b>Issue 8:</b> The American River has been heavily affected by historic instream mining activities that have reduced fish habitat complexity, e.g., meanders, pools, large woody debris, and pool riffle ratios. Also roads are encroaching on the river channel and are impacting riparian/aquatic habitat.				
Pool riffle ratios & number of pools	Chronic sources of erosion/sediment such as stream fords, roads, and historic dredge mined areas would continue to contribute sediment to stream channels and subsequent pool filling. Existing non-point sediment sources would slowly recover over time and pool habitat would slowly improve.	Would reduce chronic sediment sources attributed to roads, fords, and historic dredge mined areas. Pool quality and quantity would improve in the long-term with restoration actions that improve riparian habitats and large woody debris recruitment to stream channels. Less change than alternative C, but greater than alternative D.	Would reduce chronic sediment sources attributed to roads, fords, and historic dredge mined areas. Pool quality and quantity would improve in the long-term with restoration actions that improve riparian habitats and large woody debris recruitment to stream channels. Greatest beneficial change of alternatives.	Would reduce chronic sediment sources attributed to roads, fords, and historic dredge mined areas. Pool quality and quantity would improve in the long-term with restoration actions that improve riparian habitats and large woody debris recruitment to stream channels. Less change than alternative C, and B.
<b>Issue 9:</b> Proposed stream reconnect and ATV bridge construction activities may affect stream channels and processes. ATV bridge construction has the potential to cause increased sediment delivery to streams in the analysis area and a take of some fish species.				
Fords eliminated	No Change, 2 fords remain on American River, 1 ford remains on Kirks Fork	Middle American River Ford hardened, Lower American River and Kirks Fork fords eliminated.	Middle American River, Lower American River and Kirks Fork fords eliminated.	Same as Alternative C.

Indicator	Alternative A (No Action)	Alternative B (Proposed)	Alternative C	Alternative D
<b>Fisheries – Issue 6:</b> Proposed riparian planting and streambank re-contour activities affect fish and fish habitat by increasing streamside shading and the number of trees that may fall into the stream channels, and affect 303(d) listed streams.				
Large woody debris & Stream Temperature	Expect increased LWD with increased dead and dying lodgepole pine or other trees falling into streams. Lack of vegetation/fuels treatments may contribute to continued accumulation of fuels, potentially resulting in more severe wildfires, which, depending on size, severity, and location, could affect water temperature.	Restoration activities should decrease stream temperature in the long-term with growth of streamside trees and shrubs, and subsequent increased shading. No timber harvest occurs within any RHCAs. Negligible risk of causing adverse impacts from harvest/fuels activities.	Same as Alternative B	Same as Alternative B
<b>Fisheries – Issue 7:</b> Proposed streambank re-contour, harvest, road construction, road reconstruction, and road decommissioning activities have the potential to cause increased sediment delivery to streams in the analysis area, decreasing quantity and quality of spawning, rearing, and over-wintering fish habitat for Federally listed and BLM sensitive species.				
Cobble embeddedness	Amount currently above BO standard all streams	Measurable short-term degradation (i.e., greater than 10%) predicted in Lower Am. River and Queen Creek	No measurable change predicted (i.e., less than 10%) to existing condition in all subwatersheds	Same as Alternative C
Summer Rearing Habitat	Above or near objective for all streams	No measurable change predicted (i.e., less than 10%) to existing condition in all subwatersheds	Same as Alternative B	Same as Alternative B

Indicator	Alternative A (No Action)	Alternative B (Proposed)	Alternative C	Alternative D
<b>Watershed – Issue 5:</b> Proposed activities may increase erosion and sediment yield, which could impair fish habitat, and affect 303(d) listed streams.				
Percent over base sediment yield by subwatershed	No change to slight decrease in some subwatersheds	East Fork Am. River, Little Elk Creek – No increase.  Middle Am. River, Kirks Fork, Lower Elk Creek <5 % increase.  Lower Am. River 7% increase.  Whitaker Creek, Box Sing Creeks 26% increase.  Queen Creek 22% increase.  Whitaker and Queen approaching thresholds set in MFP  All increases short term returning to pre-project levels within 5 years except Mid. Am. And Lower Am. River subwatersheds that decrease to below pre-project levels due to reduction in chronic sources through restoration	East Fork Am. River, Little Elk Creek – No increase.  Middle Am. River, Kirks Fork, Whitaker Creek, Queen Creek, Lower Elk Creek, Lower Am. River <5 % increase.  Box Sing Creek 26% increase.  All increases short term returning to pre-project levels within 5 years except Mid. Am. And Lower Am. River subwatersheds that decrease to below pre-project levels due to reduction in chronic sources through restoration	East Fork Am. River, Little Elk Creek – No increase.  Middle Am. River, Kirks Fork, Queen Creek, Lower Elk Creek, Lower Am. River <3 % increase.  Whitaker Creek, Box Sing Creeks 26% increase.  Whitaker approaching thresholds set in MFP  All increases short term returning to pre-project levels within 5 years except Mid. Am. And Lower Am. River subwatersheds that decrease to below pre-project levels due to reduction in chronic sources through restoration

Indicator	Alternative A (No Action)	Alternative B (Proposed)	Alternative C	Alternative D
<b>Watershed – Issue 4:</b> Proposed vegetation treatment activities may increase water yield and change timing and duration of peak runoff, thereby decreasing stream channel stability.				
Equivalent Clearcut Area % by subwatershed	All nine subwatersheds below 15% ECA	All below 15% except Whitaker at 17%, and Queen at 18%. Risks considered negligible in all subwatersheds because of existing good channel stability	All below 15% except Whitaker at 16%, and Queen at 18%. Risks considered negligible in all subwatersheds because of existing good channel stability	All below 15% except Whitaker at 16%, and Queen at 18%. Risks considered negligible in all subwatersheds because of existing good channel stability

**Table 0.2** Comparison of the Effects of the Eastside Project Alternatives on the Major Issues and Their Indicators

Indicator	Alternative A (No Action)	Alternative B (Proposed)	Alternative C	Alternative D
<b>Hazardous Fuels – Issue 1:</b> Proposed fuel/vegetation activities are not needed and are ineffective in protecting communities, structures, and reducing the effect of wildfire across the landscape. The dead and dying lodgepole pine in the project area are a natural and periodic occurrence.				
<b>Hazardous Fuels – Issue 2:</b> Proposed fuel/vegetation activities are needed to protect the community of Elk City, the American River Subdivision, other subdivisions in the project area, and the natural resources in the area. The large amount of dead and dying lodgepole pine is creating an unacceptable hazard. Doing nothing is irresponsible.				
Area of future fuel model 8 and 8/10	355 acres 17%	1,036 acres 48%	1,036 acres 48%	957 acres 45%
Future area with low flame length potential, <4'	112 acres 5%	472 acres 21%	472 acres 21%	472 acres 21%
Future area with surface fire potential	227 acres 10%	768 acres 35%	768 acres 35%	725 acres 33%
Future area with potential tree mortality <50%	237 acres 11%	644 acres 29%	644 acres 29%	573 acres 26%
Area dominated by lodgepole pine	1,670 acres 53%	879 acres 28%	879 acres 28%	942 acres 30%
<b>Watershed – Issue 3:</b> Proposed road construction, road reconstruction, road decommissioning, and conversion of roads to ATV trails affect water quality in the short and/or long term.				
Total post project road density American River	2.3	2.3	2.3	2.3
Decreased Road miles in RHCAs	0	2.55	3.70	3.57
New miles permanent construction	0	.57	1.13	.56
Miles temporary road construction	0	15.1	10.5	10.7

- <sup>4</sup> This is the replacement of two ATV fords with bridges (one on American River, one on Kirks Fork) with rockings of approaches, +ATV trail crossing Alt D.
- <sup>5</sup> Stream crossing improvements include upgrading or improving culverts and bridges to improve fish passage and peak water flows and are listed as the number of sites, or ford hardening to remove chronic sediment sources.
- <sup>6</sup> This is an access change that closes the current ford on the American River in Section 2.
- <sup>7</sup> This is the miles of anadromous fish habitat that will be reconnected to the American River.
- <sup>8</sup> This is an access change, which reduces the running surface width and restricts use to two wheeled vehicles or snowmobiles over snow or, all terrain vehicle use (ATV) from previous automobile use. Some roads would be replaced by new permanent road.

### Comparison of Alternatives

Table 0.1 compares activities and outputs of the alternatives. Table 0.2 compares the alternatives in terms of environmental effects on the major issues. See Chapter 3 for a complete description of effects and for the scientific basis for the results in the comparison tables.

**Table 0.1** Comparison of Activities and Outputs by alternative

<b>Proposed Activity–Vegetation/Fuels</b>		<b>Alt B (Proposed)</b>	<b>Alt C</b>	<b>Alt D</b>
<b>Acres of Treatment</b>	Tractor Yard/Excavator Pile or Biomass Utilization	770	761	728
	Tractor Yard/Burn	31	31	27
	Cable Yard/Burn	298	194	135
	Helicopter Yard/Burn		244	238
	Helicopter Yard/Hand Pile	54	54	43
	Slash/Burn Fuels Treatment Only	140		
	<b>Total Acres Treated</b>	<b>1293</b>	<b>1284</b>	<b>1171</b>
	Percent Regeneration	82	83	84
	Percent Partial Cut/Thin	18	17	16
Temporary road construction (miles) <sup>1</sup>		15.1	10.5	10.7
Road improvement (for timber harvest) (miles) <sup>2</sup>		2.4	2.4	2.4
Estimated Green Volume Harvested (MMBF)		9.7	11.1	10.4
Estimated Dead Volume Harvested (MMBF)		4.1	4.1	3.6
<b>Proposed Activity–Restoration</b>		<b>Alt B</b>	<b>Alt C</b>	<b>Alt D</b>
Miles of decommissioned roads <sup>3</sup>		1.9	3	1.5
Miles of American River Stream Bank Re-contour		1.2	1.2	1.2
Miles of New Permanent Road		0.6	1.1	0.6
New Automobile River Crossing (Bridge)			1	1
Number of sites of Watershed Trail Improvements <sup>4</sup>		2	2	3
Stream crossing improvements <sup>5</sup>		3	2	2
Stream crossing closures <sup>6</sup>			1	1
Miles of riparian vegetation planting		4.8	4.8	4.8
Miles of Recreation and Trail improvements			0.2	0.2
Miles Queen Creek re-connect to American River and increased fish habitat access <sup>7</sup>		1.35	1.35	1.35
Access change for vehicle use–Automobile use to ATV restricted use (miles) <sup>8</sup>		1.6	1.6	2.4
Acres of Mine Site Reclamation		0.5	0.5	0.5

<sup>1</sup> Temporary roads will be decommissioned within one to three years of construction.

<sup>2</sup> Road improvement covers a range of activities, such as surface blading, drainage repair, and roadway brushing with occasional culvert installations, slump repairs, and stabilization work. Road widening could occur with major reconstruction. Road improvements stated in this table are not to be considered or confused with routine road maintenance that may include but not limited to road prism brushing, clearing, or hazard reduction activities.

<sup>3</sup> Road decommissioning for this project covers a range of activities, from re-contouring to abandonment due to grown-in conditions. Some decommissioned roads would be replaced by new permanent road.

would be irregular shelterwood; 252 acres would be shelterwood; 266 acres would be seed tree; 93 acres would be commercially thinned; and 100 acres would be salvaged. Compared to Alternative B this alternative utilizes the same vegetation/fuels treatments with the exception that 120 acres of slashing and burning would be logged with helicopter. These treatments would also involve fuels treatment, using a combination of biomass utilization, piling and burning or prescribed burning.

Actions planned for improvement of riparian and/or aquatic condition include those noted for Alternative B with the following differences. New construction of 0.56 miles of permanent road, including a bridge of the American River (0.01 miles less than Alt. B, replacing 1.1 mile existing road), construction of 0.5 miles of ATV trail (to circumvent and close an automobile ford of the American River), 1.5 miles of road decommissioning (0.4 miles less than Alt. B) and 2.6 miles of road converted to ATV trail (0.77 miles more than Alt. B).

### **Design Features**

The action alternatives include the required design features listed in Chapter 2, Table 2.3.1.

### **Monitoring and Evaluation**

Appendix E contains the detailed monitoring and evaluation plans.

sensitive plants, soils, wildlife, visual resources, cultural resources, tribal trust and treaty rights, grazing, socio-economics, and recreation.

### **Alternatives Considered in Detail**

**Alternative A (No Action):** Both BLM and CEQ regulations require the development of the No Action alternative. This alternative serves as the baseline for comparison of the effects of all action alternatives.

Under this alternative, there would be no change in current management direction or in the level of ongoing management activities within the project area. No fuel reduction/vegetation treatments associated with this project would be implemented. Also, because of watershed entry criteria and the timing of the FS American and Crooked River Project, the opportunity to treat much of the area, except on a limited basis, would be lost for another 10 years. Future implementation of watershed improvement activities associated with this project would require obtaining funding that is currently not part of the BLM budget and initiation of the NEPA process. Work previously planned within and/or adjacent to the project area would still occur under this alternative.

**Alternative B (Proposed Action-Preferred Alternative):** This alternative reduces existing and potential fuel loads through a combination of vegetation manipulation and fuels treatments on approximately 1,293 acres requiring approximately 15.1 miles of temporary road construction. Actions planned for improvement of vegetative/fuel condition include regeneration treatments that would reserve groups and single trees including: approximately 351 acres would be irregular shelterwood; 284 acres would be shelterwood; 286 acres would be seed tree; 123 acres would be commercially thinned; 140 acres would be slashed and broadcast burned; and 109 acres would be salvaged. These treatments would also involve fuels treatment, using a combination of biomass utilization, piling and burning, or prescribed burning.

Actions planned for improvement of riparian and/or aquatic condition include: 4.8 miles of riparian tree and shrub planting; 1.2 miles of streambank re-contour, planting, and sediment mitigation; reconnect Queen Creek (a 1.35 mile fish-bearing stream) with American River; closing two river/stream fords and replacing with ATV bridges; new construction of 0.57 miles of permanent roads (to replace existing roads); 1.6 miles of road to be converted to ATV trails; and 1.9 miles of road decommissioning.

See Table 0.1 below for a comparison of action alternative activities and outputs.

**Alternative C:** This alternative reduces existing and potential fuel loads through a combination of vegetation manipulation and fuels treatments on approximately 1,284 acres. Compared to Alternative B, there are more acres of helicopter logging (fewer acres of tractor and cable) and less temporary road construction (10.5 miles). Actions planned for improvement of vegetative/fuel conditions include regeneration treatments that would reserve groups and single trees including: approximately 491 acres would be irregular shelterwood; 284 acres would be shelterwood; 286 acres would be seed tree; 123 acres would be commercially thinned; and 100 acres would be salvaged. Compared to alternative B this alternative utilizes the same vegetation/fuels treatments with the exception that 140 acres of slashing and burning would be logged with helicopter. These treatments would also involve fuels treatment, using a combination of biomass utilization, piling and burning, or prescribed burning.

Actions planned for improvement of riparian and/or aquatic condition include those noted for Alternative B with the following differences: new construction of 1.1 miles of permanent road, including a bridge of the American River (0.56 miles more than Alt. B, replacing a 1.1 mile existing road and an automobile ford of the American River); and 3.0 miles of road decommissioning (1.1 miles more than Alt. B).

**Alternative D:** This alternative reduces existing and potential fuel loads through a combination of vegetation manipulation and fuels treatments on approximately 1,171 acres. Compared to Alternative B there are more acres of helicopter logging (fewer acres of tractor and cable) and less temporary road construction (10.7 miles). Actions planned for improvement of vegetative/fuel conditions include regeneration treatments that would reserve groups and single trees including: approximately 460 acres

The Nez Perce Forest Supervisor will make the following decisions and document them in a Record of Decision accompanying or following the Final Environmental Impact Statement (EIS):

Should some roads be improved, constructed, or maintained across NPNF lands to provide access for treatment activities on BLM land? If so, which, and what road standards or restrictions should be applied?

### **Scoping Summary**

In February of 2004, the BLM mailed letters to approximately 200 interested individuals, agencies, the Nez Perce Tribe, organizations, and adjacent landowners. Based on the comments received and further field review, it was determined that analysis using an EIS was appropriate.

The BLM participated in meetings held in the community of Elk City in March and April of 2005 to discuss the project.

In July 2005, a Notice of Intent (NOI) to prepare an EIS was published in the *Federal Register*. Over 250 letters were sent to interested individuals, agencies, the Nez Perce Tribe, and organizations requesting comments on the proposal. A public meeting and two field tours were held.

Based on the public comments and resource specialist concerns, the following concerns or controversies were identified as the major issues to be carried forward for analysis in the EIS.

### **Major Issues**

The Interdisciplinary (ID) Team identified Hazardous Fuels, Watershed, Fisheries, and Road/Trail Access-Transportation System as major issues.

**Hazardous Fuels:** Two differing viewpoints were expressed during scoping about the extent of the project. Issue 1 reflects the view that the current fuels and vegetation conditions are part of a natural cycle, and the proposal would be ineffective. Issue 2 reflects the view that management is needed to protect the community of Elk City, the American River Subdivisions, and the natural resources in the area.

**Watershed:** Three issues are that proposed activities: may affect overall watershed condition in the short and/or long term; may increase water yield and change timing and duration of peak runoff, thereby decreasing stream channel stability; and may increase erosion and sediment yield, which could impair fish habitat, and affect 303(d) listed streams.

**Fisheries:** There are four issues regarding the proposed activities. First is streamside shading and the number of trees that may fall into the stream channels and affect 303(d) listed streams. Second is the potential to cause increased sediment delivery to streams in the analysis area, decreasing quantity and quality of spawning, rearing, and over-wintering fish habitat for Federally listed and BLM sensitive species. Third is the current reduced fish habitat complexity. Fourth is that bridge construction activities may affect stream channels, processes, and has the potential to cause increased sediment delivery to streams in the analysis area and a take of some fish species.

**Road/Trail Access-Transportation System:** Issues include that proposed activities may restrict administrative/public access to Bureau of Land Management lands and affect access routes to homes and private property; and there is a large amount of temporary road construction to access vegetation/fuels treatment areas.

### **Other Issues**

Besides the major issues identified above, the ID Team analyzed the effects of the alternatives on other issues and resources, including air quality, vegetation, noxious weeds, threatened, endangered and

conversion, and re-contouring streambank along the American River. Table 0.1 is a summary of the proposed activities associated with the project by alternative.

### **Conformance with Applicable Land Use Plans**

#### **Chief Joseph Management Framework Plan–North Idaho Timber Management FEIS**

The Chief Joseph MFP and the North Idaho Timber Management FEIS allocate resource management emphasis to areas based on the land's capabilities. The forested areas are divided into three levels of forest management: intensive, extensive, and custodial. The proposed treatment units lie in the Intensive Timber Management land class.

The Fisheries/Water Quality Refinement of the Chief Joseph MFP (USDI-BLM, 1989a) identifies fisheries/water quality objectives by prescription watershed. The project includes portions of eight prescription watersheds, six of which are below the percent habitat potential objective. For those streams, the guideline states that timber management can occur concurrently with habitat improvement efforts that show a positive upward trend.

#### **Nez Perce National Forest Land and Resource Management Plan**

While there are no proposed treatments on Forest Service (FS) land, BLM may need authorization from the NPNF to use existing roads and to construct new temporary roads on the forest. The road use and construction, if determined necessary to implement the Eastside Project, would be in conformance with the NPNF land use plan, and the NPNF would apply their road standards to any authorization.

### **Decisions to be Made**

The BLM Cottonwood Field Manager will make the following decisions and document them in a Record of Decision following the Final Environmental Impact Statement (EIS):

Should the BLM do fuels/vegetation treatments to create a fuel reduction area on BLM lands in the project area to protect adjacent subdivisions, private property, and natural resources from the risks associated with wildland fire? If so:

- What vegetation treatment methods should be used?
- How many acres should be treated?
- Should management activities occur in RHCAs? If so, how?
- If timber is harvested, how should harvest unit slash be treated?
- Should some roads be improved, constructed, or maintained to provide access for treatment activities? If so, which?
- Should some roads be obliterated/decommissioned/seasonally closed in order to meet the MFP requirements for a concurrent upward trend of aquatic/riparian areas? If so, which?
- Should some roads be converted to ATV trails with restricted running surface widths in order to meet the MFP requirements for a concurrent upward trend of aquatic/riparian areas? If so, which?
- Should some roads be improved, constructed, or maintained to provide access and escape routes for residential areas? If so, which?
- What design features and mitigation measures should be required to meet MFP standards and guidelines for all resources?
- What monitoring requirements are appropriate to evaluate implementation and effectiveness of this project?

Indicator	Alternative A (No Action)	Alternative B (Proposed)	Alternative C	Alternative D
Additional anadromous fish habitat accessible	No Change	Queen Creek re-connected to American River, 1.35 miles of increased habitat.	Same as Alternative B.	Same as Alternative B.
<b>Issue 10:</b> Proposed activities (road to trail conversions, road relocation and obliteration, and new road construction) may restrict administrative/public access to Bureau of Land Management lands, and affect access routes to homes and private property.				
Miles new permanent Road	None	0.57 in Lower American River	0.57 in Lower American River, 0.56 in Middle American River	0.56 in Middle American River
Decreased Highway Vehicle Miles	None	2.12	2.62	2.48
Miles of road to ATV trail conversion	None	1.62	1.62	2.39
Number of public bridges (highway vehicle)	No change, 1 bridge on road 1809, 1 bridge on road 443	No change, one bridge on road 1809, 1 bridge on road 443	New bridge in Middle American River, bridge on road 1809, bridge on road 443 total 3	Same as Alternative C
<b>Issue 11:</b> Access to complete management activities requires a transportation network. Proposed activities include a large amount of temporary road construction. Designing a transportation system that balances implementing projects cost effectively versus the environmental impacts from the transportation system is an important project consideration.				
Miles of temporary road on BLM	None	12.97	8.43	10.28
Miles of temporary road on Private	None	0.19	0.19	0.19
Miles of temporary road on Forest Service	None	2.15*	1.89*	0.26
Areas with roadless characteristics (applies to Forest Service lands only)	None	One affected area, American-2, impact to unroaded character	Same as Alternative B.	None

\* Includes 1.89 miles that was included in the FEIS for the American and Crooked River Project

# Table of Contents

<b>Summary</b> .....	<b>i</b>
<b>Table of Contents</b> .....	<b>xiv</b>
<b>List of Appendices</b> .....	<b>xvi</b>
<b>1. Purpose and Need for Action</b> .....	<b>1</b>
1.1 Introduction.....	1
1.1.1 Changes in the Document Between Draft and Final EIS .....	1
1.2 General Location .....	2
1.3 Purpose & Need for Action .....	3
1.4 Proposed Action .....	4
1.5 Conformance with Applicable Land Use Plans.....	5
1.6 Relationship to non-BLM Policies, Plans, and Programs.....	5
1.7 Relationships to Laws, Regulations and Statutes .....	7
1.8 Decisions to be Made .....	7
1.9 Scoping and Issues.....	8
1.9.1 Scoping Summary .....	8
1.9.2 Major Issues .....	9
1.9.3 Other Issues .....	13
1.10 Permits and Licenses.....	16
1.11 Project Record .....	16
<b>2. Alternatives Including the Proposed Action</b> .....	<b>18</b>
2.1 Introduction.....	18
2.2 Description of Alternatives .....	18
2.2.1 Alternatives Considered but Eliminated From Detailed Study .....	18
2.2.3 Alternative A (No Action Alternative) .....	20
2.2.4 Alternative B (Proposed Action–Preferred Alternative) .....	20
2.2.5 Alternative C.....	22
2.2.6 Alternative D.....	23
2.3 Design Criteria, Mitigation, and Monitoring .....	26
2.4 Comparison of Alternatives on Major Issues.....	33
<b>3. Affected Environment–Environmental Consequences</b> .....	<b>40</b>
3.0 Introduction.....	40
3.0.1 Scope of the Analysis .....	40
3.0.2 Cumulative Effects Analysis .....	40
3.0.3 American River Historic Activities .....	43
3.0.4 Environmental Effects.....	44
3.1 Fire and Fuels .....	45
3.1.1 Introduction.....	45
3.1.2 Indicator 1–Fuels .....	47
3.1.3 Indicator 2–Predicted Fire Behavior .....	49
3.1.4 Indicator 3–Tree Mortality .....	51
3.1.5 Cumulative Effects–Fuels, Potential Fire Behavior, Potential Tree Mortality.....	53
3.2 Air Quality .....	55
3.2.1 Introduction.....	55
3.2.2 Indicator–Particulate Matter and Visibility .....	56
3.3 Vegetation .....	59
3.3.1 Introduction.....	59

3.3.2	Indicator 1–Forest Cover Types .....	64
3.3.3	Indicator 2–Structure (Size Classes, Density, and Crown Cover) .....	69
3.3.4	Threatened, Endangered, and Sensitive Plants .....	75
3.3.5	Indicator 4–Weeds .....	82
3.4	Watershed .....	86
3.4.1	Introduction .....	86
3.4.2	American River .....	90
3.4.3	Mainstem South Fork Clearwater River .....	105
3.5	Soils .....	112
3.5.1	Introduction .....	112
3.5.2	Existing Condition .....	113
3.5.3	Soil Compaction and Displacement .....	116
3.5.4	Surface and Substratum Erosion .....	118
3.5.5	Mass Erosion .....	121
3.5.6	Soil Chemical and Biological Properties .....	122
3.6	Fisheries .....	124
3.6.1	Introduction .....	124
3.6.2	Existing Conditions .....	140
3.6.3	Environmental Effects .....	156
3.7	Wildlife .....	190
3.7.1	Introduction .....	190
3.7.2	Existing Habitat Conditions .....	197
3.7.3	Indicator 1–Threatened or Endangered Species .....	200
3.7.4	Indicator 2–BLM Sensitive Species .....	209
3.7.5	Indicator 3–Other Species of interest .....	234
3.7.6	Wildlife Habitat Associations and Guilds .....	247
3.7.7	Irreversible, Irrecoverable Effects (All Terrestrial Species) .....	258
3.8	Roads .....	259
3.8.1	Introduction .....	259
3.8.2	Indicators - Road Decommissioning, Road Conversion, Miles of Road (Permanent and Temporary), and Bridges .....	261
3.8.3	Indicator–Miles of Trails .....	264
3.8.4	Inventoried Roadless Areas, and Areas with Unroaded Characteristics .....	266
3.9	Visual Resource Management .....	271
3.9.1	Introduction .....	271
3.9.2	Indicator–Class III Visual Resource Objective .....	272
3.10	Cultural Resources .....	276
3.10.1	Introduction .....	276
3.10.2	Existing Condition .....	277
3.10.3	Environmental Effects .....	278
3.10.4	Cumulative Effects .....	278
3.10.5	Irreversible or Irrecoverable Effects .....	279
3.11	Tribal Trust and Treaty Rights .....	280
3.11.1	Introduction .....	280
3.11.2	Existing Conditions .....	280
3.11.3	Environmental Effects .....	281
3.12	Grazing .....	282
3.12.1	Existing Environment .....	282
3.12.2	Environmental Effects .....	282
3.12.3	Cumulative Effect .....	283
3.13	Socio Economic .....	284

3.13.1	Introduction .....	284
3.13.2	Indicator 1–Local Employment .....	285
3.13.3	Indicator 2–Revenues and Costs.....	286
3.14	Recreation .....	291
3.14.1	Introduction.....	291
3.14.2	Indicator 1–Resource Opportunity Spectrum Class.....	291
3.14.3	Indicator 2–Recreational Activities .....	292
<b>4.</b>	<b>Consultation and Coordination .....</b>	<b>295</b>
4.1	List of Preparers .....	295
4.2	Distribution List for Final EIS .....	296
4.3	Consultation.....	297
4.4	Public Scoping Synopsis .....	297
4.5	Comments Received on the Draft EIS and BLM Responses .....	297

## List of Appendices

- Appendix A – Maps
- Appendix B – Glossary
- Appendix C – References
- Appendix D – Treatments by Alternative
- Appendix E – Monitoring Plan
- Appendix F – Descriptions of Fuel Models
- Appendix G – Modeling Assumptions
- Appendix H – Support Information for the Watershed and Fisheries Analysis
- Appendix I – Watershed, Riparian, and Fish Habitat Improvements
- Appendix J – Road and Trail Access Table
- Appendix K – Key Observation Point Photos and FVS-FVS Model Representation

# Chapter 1. Purpose and Need for Action

## 1.1 Introduction

---

The Bureau of Land Management (BLM), Cottonwood Field Office of the Coeur d'Alene District, is the lead federal agency in preparing this Environmental Impact Statement (EIS). The Nez Perce National Forest (NPNF) is a Cooperating Agency for this project because temporary road construction across NPNF lands will be needed to implement the BLM actions proposed in portions of the project area.

This EIS was prepared in compliance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and other relevant federal and state laws and regulations. This EIS discloses the direct, indirect, and cumulative environmental impacts that would result from the three action alternatives and the no action alternative.

The document is organized into four chapters:

**Chapter 1:** Purpose and Need for Action: This chapter includes an introduction of the proposed project, the purpose of and need for the project, and the agency's proposal for achieving that purpose and need. This section also details how the BLM scoped the project, including obtaining public input.

**Chapter 2:** Alternatives, including the Proposed Action: This chapter provides a more detailed description of the agency's Proposed Action, as well as alternative methods for achieving the stated purpose. These alternatives were developed based on major issues raised by the public and other agencies. This discussion also includes design features. Finally, this section provides a summary table of the environmental effects associated with each alternative.

**Chapter 3:** Affected Environment–Environmental Effects: This chapter combines two major parts of a NEPA analysis: the Affected Environment and the Environmental Effects associated with the proposed action and the alternatives. The physical, biological, and human resources of the environment that may be affected by the proposed action and the alternatives are examined. Affected Environment and Environmental Effects have been combined to give the reader a more thorough explanation of the resources and how they may be affected by the proposed action and the alternatives. Chapter 3 analyzes the issues used to generate the alternatives, as well as potential effects to other resources.

**Chapter 4:** Consultation and Coordination: This chapter provides a list of preparers, individuals and agencies consulted, and a synopsis of the public comments received during scoping which were used in the development of the Environmental Impact Statement. A list of recipients of this Final EIS is provided.

**Appendices:** The appendices provide maps and more detailed information to support the analyses presented in the EIS.

Additional documentation, including more detailed analyses of project-area resources, may be found in the project planning records located at the BLM Cottonwood Field Office (CotFO), Cottonwood, Idaho.

### 1.1.1 Changes in the Document Between Draft and Final EIS

As the result of internal review and comments received on the Draft EIS, changes have been made to both Volumes I and II of Final EIS. Substantial changes are detailed below. Most of the changes were minor and involve corrections of typographical errors, formatting, grammar, and sentence structure. The changes in the document are not physically highlighted or noted (such as strike-through and underlined text to show deletions and additions).

The reader should take note of the following substantial changes:

**Chapter 1** – Section 1.1.1, was added to highlight the changes between the Draft and the Final EIS.

**Chapter 2** – Some design Criteria were modified to provide more concise information. New design criteria were added (3, 27 and 32) that were inadvertently left out of the Draft.

**Chapter 3** – Additional information has been included in the discussion regarding the Clean Water Act and the Idaho State Water Quality Standards.

**Appendix A** – Four Maps were updated, three had corrections to symbols, and one has additional information.

- Map 5 – Corrected road shown as decommissioning to proposed ATV.
- Map 6 – Corrected road shown as decommissioning to proposed ATV.
- Map 7 – Corrected road shown as decommissioning to proposed ATV.
- Map 15 – NPNF areas with unroaded characteristics were added as shown the American and Crooked River Project FEIS (USDA-FS, 2005a).

**Appendix B** – Term definitions were refined to provide more concise information.

**Appendix C** – Literature used in analysis or responding to comments to the DEIS was added.

**Appendix H** – Additional information has been added to the following sections.

- **Fisheries/Water Quality Objectives**
- **Upward Trend**
- **Aquatic Model Disclosures**
  - **Equivalent Clearcut Area (ECA)**
  - **NEZSED**
- **Aquatic Trend Analysis**
  - Updated information in **Table H.3**
  - Updated information in **Table H.4**
  - Inserted new section **Effectiveness Monitoring and Trend**. This provides additional information regarding current and ongoing monitoring and trend.

**Appendix I** – Additional information has been added to the following sections.

- **Description of Restoration Projects**
  - Updated information in **Table I.3**
  - Updated information in **Table I.4**
  - Added new information about Queen Creek channel reconnect in **Improved Fish Passage** section.

## 1.2 General Location

---

The project area is located in north central Idaho, near the southern part of the Idaho Panhandle. The project is located in Idaho County, near the small, isolated town of Elk City, Idaho. The Eastside Township Fuels and Vegetation Project (Eastside Project) occurs in the American River watershed, within the larger upper South Fork Clearwater River watershed (Appendix A, Map 1). The Elk City township is completely surrounded by NPNF lands. Ownership within the township includes 12,859 acres BLM (53%), 10,100 acres private (42%), and 80 acres Forest Service (3%). The Eastside Project is located in the American River watershed that is approximately 58,500 acres in size, and extends from the confluence with the South Fork Clearwater River near Elk City to an area near Beargrass Mountain. NPNF lands comprise 72% of the watershed, followed by 15% private lands, and 13% BLM lands. BLM lands are adjacent to NPNF lands and intermingled with private lands within the immediate project area. The Eastside Project area encompasses approximately 3,273 acres, of which 3,121 acres are managed by the BLM, and 152 acres are privately owned.

## 1.3 Purpose & Need for Action

---

The purpose of this project is to:

- Reduce the risk of high-intensity wildland fire to life, property, and natural resources in the Elk City and surrounding WUI area;
- Manage forest stands to create conditions that will contribute to sustaining long-lived fire tolerant tree species;
- Design a public transportation system that provides safe travel routes for the public, while meeting watershed and fisheries management goals, in a cost effective manner;
- Create an upward trend in fish habitat condition;
- Contribute to the economic and social well being of area users and local residents; and
- Implement intensive forest management decisions from the MFP.

The forest vegetation in the Elk City area is dominated by lodgepole pine that established following wildfires occurring in the late 1800s and early 1900s. These stands have reached maturity (80–130 years old) and are well into the cycle where mountain pine beetles attack and kill individuals and groups of trees. Aerial surveys supporting the 2003 Zone Entomologist report for the Nez Perce National Forest (NPNF) indicate that the mountain pine beetle activity is currently intense and expanding (USDA-FS, 2005a). The bark beetle activity continues to kill trees that will accumulate as standing and down fuels over the next 10–20 years. The potential for high-intensity stand replacing fire to occur in the project area, and potentially impact the WUI (Appendix A, Map 17) is high and increasing. The associated risk to firefighter and public safety is also increasing. The fuels reduction activities proposed are needed to reduce this potential.

Fire suppression has limited the extent of wildfire in the area in the past 70 years. The resultant stands have an excessively dense, small tree component of shade tolerant trees (i.e., grand fir, subalpine fir) with multi-storied conditions creating a fuel ladder situation. The dead and dying lodgepole pine, combined with the dense small trees, creates conditions conducive for intense fires. In order to reduce the likelihood of high-intensity wildland fires, these stands need to be changed to increase the presence of long-lived, fire tolerant species. This would result in reduced fire behavior and create a forest stand that is more resilient to insects, disease, and other forest disturbances.

The primary ingress and egress to subdivisions in the project area is a portion of the American River road that crosses private and BLM land. This is the primary route that would be used in the event of an evacuation of these residential areas. Another portion of this road across BLM land is considered by residents as a secondary escape route. Both road portions are adjacent to the American River. Both road portions are a chronic source for sediment delivery into the river, limit the amount of vegetation along the river, and restrict the river flow to a narrow channel. BLM needs to consider/manage a transportation system that provides, in a cost-effective manner, safe travel routes for public and firefighter safety, and allows for management of the public resources.

Fish habitat in portions of the analysis area is currently below the desired future condition identified in the Chief Joseph MFP Addendum 1 (USDI-BLM, 1989a). Streams in the area support both resident and anadromous fisheries, including two species listed as threatened (steelhead and bull trout) and BLM sensitive fish species (spring/summer chinook salmon, westslope cutthroat trout, and Pacific lamprey). Aquatic and riparian conditions in the area, particularly fish habitat, have been degraded through a variety of human uses, but primarily historic mining activities. Natural recovery in these systems is very slow, although several actions are ongoing or have been implemented by the BLM and FS to improve these conditions. Watershed restoration actions are needed to improve the fish habitat conditions from poor/fair and to continue an upward trend.

Elk City is a community dependent on forest products and recreation, due to the remoteness of this area and the large federal land ownership surrounding the town. Elk City relies heavily on the revenues

generated from forest products and recreational activities including hunting, fishing, snowmobiling, and camping. Revenues generated from the federal lands support the community, schools, and other businesses. BLM and NPNF play a major role in the future of Elk City. Wildland fires have the potential to destroy private property and the resources Elk City relies upon. The effects from a wildland fire would be felt for many years into the future. BLM needs to actively manage the public land resources (i.e., forest, wildlife, fisheries, recreation, weeds) in a manner that will benefit the resources and the local economy.

## 1.4 Proposed Action

---

The following is an overview of the Eastside Project. The project area is 3,273 acres in the east portion of the Elk City township (see Appendix A, Map 1). Additional project details are further described in Chapter 2 and Appendix D.

The proposed project would include treatments and restoration activities on BLM administered land only. Existing roads and construction of temporary roads across NPNF and private lands would be necessary to reach the treatment areas. The NPNF would make a decision about the BLM constructing temporary roads based on this EIS.

The proposed project would treat about 1,293 acres of public land to create current and future stand conditions that reduce the potential for, and the extent of, high-intensity wild fires within wildland urban interface (WUI) areas on BLM lands. The project would create an area where there would be less crown fire hazard, lower potential flame lengths, and lower ember potential (effects spotting) on BLM lands adjacent to Elk City and the American River Subdivisions. Methods for accomplishing the project include: combinations of commercial timber harvest; understory thinning; prescribed burning and hand or machine piling and burning; and biomass utilization. Treatments would: remove surface and ladder fuels; reduce crown and stand density; reduce the amount of area dominated by lodgepole pine; increase the proportion of Douglas-fir, western larch, and ponderosa pine of current stands and planting these species following fuel treatments.

An important part of the project involves watershed restoration activities designed to support an upward trend toward fair to good condition in the long term for riparian/aquatic habitats within the American River watershed. The proposed action includes riparian tree and shrub planting on reaches of the American River where there is a current deficit of woody vegetation. Streambank re-contouring, along with riparian tree and shrub planting, would occur on reaches of the American River. Queen Creek (a 1.35 mile fish-bearing stream) would be reconnected with American River. River and stream fords would be replaced with ATV bridges and/or hardened. Some existing roads along the American River would be replaced with new roads, converted to ATV trails, or decommissioned.

Implementation of the Eastside Project is expected to begin in early 2007 and could take five to ten years to complete, depending on available funding. Restoration work would take place concurrently with vegetation and fuels treatments.

Timing of some portions to the project would be closely coordinated with the NPNF and implementation of their American and Crooked River Project, which involves similar treatments. Seasonal road closures, road construction, restoration work, and restrictions on entry frequencies in some subwatersheds would require the most coordination.

The project would be implemented through a combination of traditional service contracts, timber sale contracts, stewardship contracts (exchanging goods for services) and local partnership.

## 1.5 Conformance with Applicable Land Use Plans \_\_\_\_\_

### **BLM Chief Joseph Management Framework Plan–North Idaho Timber Management FEIS**

The Chief Joseph MFP, as amended, and the North Idaho Timber Management FEIS allocate resource management emphasis to areas based on the land’s capabilities. The forested areas are divided into three levels of forest management: intensive, extensive, and custodial. The proposed treatment units lie in the Intensive Timber Management land class. The MFP (p. II-4 and 6) and North Idaho Timber Management FEIS (p. 2–11) state that lands classified for Intensive Timber Management would be managed to maximize timber production on a sustained yield basis. Timber would be the primary goal of management activities.

The MFP (p. II-36–41) outlines visual resource management (VRM) controls. The Eastside Project contains VRM Class III designated lands, where management activities may repeat the dominant qualities common in the landscape and may visually change the essential character of existing dominance factors. However, changes are generally subordinate to the visual strength of the natural landscape.

The Fisheries/Water Quality Refinement of the Chief Joseph MFP (USDI-BLM, 1989a) identifies fisheries/water quality objectives by prescription watershed and includes a set of guidelines to identify potential improvement opportunities or areas needing protection. The Eastside Project includes portions of eight prescription watersheds, seven of which are below the percent habitat potential objective stated in this supplement. For those streams that are below carrying capacity because of a lack of diversity and/or instream cover, the guideline states that timber management can occur concurrent with habitat improvement efforts that show a positive upward trend.

Actions identified in the MFP that can result in an upward trend include reconstructing stream channels, removing migration barriers, rehabilitating stream banks, and imposing recreation use restrictions for intensive aquatic wildlife habitat management (p. II-35 and 36).

### **Nez Perce National Forest Land and Resource Management Plan**

National forest management must be consistent with forest plans prepared under authority of the National Forest Management Act (NFMA) [16 U.S.C. 1604 and CFR 219.10]. Forest Plan implementation includes the identification and scheduling of resource activities (site specific projects) that meet the direction provided by the Forest Plan. The road construction and use proposed by BLM across NPNF lands, if approved, would be in conformance with the Forest Plan and would include FS road standards.

### **The Northern Idaho Grazing EIS (1981) Record of Decision, and North Idaho Range Management Program (1988)**

There are two grazing allotments within the project area that were established as a result of these planning documents.

## 1.6 Relationship to non-BLM Policies, Plans, and Programs

### **PACFISH**

The Environmental Assessment for the *Implementation of Interim Strategies for Managing Anadromous Fish-producing Watershed in Eastern Oregon and Washington, Idaho and portions of California* (PACFISH) (USDA-USDI, 1995) amended the NPNF Land and Resource Management Plan (Amendment 20). The MFP was not amended by PACFISH; however, BLM implements PACFISH in conformance with the Terms and Conditions of the 1998 Biological Opinions on the MFP for steelhead and bull trout. The Riparian Habitat Conservation Areas (RHCAs) are areas where management activities are subject to specific standards and guidelines in PACFISH and would be applied in the Eastside Project.

### **North Idaho Fire Management Plan**

The North Idaho Fire Management Plan (FMP) (USDI, 2005) recommends objectives and fuels treatment strategies to achieve National Fire Plan and MFP guidance by Fire Management Unit (FMU). The Eastside Project is in the Elk City FMU. The FMP ranks the Elk City FMU as a HIGH priority for allocating prescribed fire and non-fire fuel reduction resources. Fuel treatment priorities include reduction of ground, ladder, and surface fuels within and adjacent to WUI intermix, as well as reduction of stand densities. Objectives for the FMU are 500–1500 acres of prescribed fire in any 5-year period, and 1,300–3,000 acres of mechanical treatments in any 5-year period.

### **National Fire Plan**

The Eastside Project implements key components of the National Fire Plan, as addressed in the 10-Year Comprehensive Strategy (USDA-USDI, 2002), including the reduction of hazardous fuels. The Comprehensive Strategy assigns the highest priority for hazardous fuels reduction to communities at risk, readily accessible municipal watersheds, threatened and endangered species habitat, and other important local features where conditions favor uncharacteristically intense fires.

Following the extreme fire season of 2000, Congress directed Federal land management agencies to work with State governments to develop a national strategy for the restoration of fire-adapted ecosystems. The National Fire Plan was intended to respond to severe wildland fires, reduce impacts on rural communities, and ensure effective firefighting capacity. The result is a 10-Year Comprehensive Strategy (USDA-USDI, 2002) that represents the joint effort of federal, state, tribal, and local governments and non-governmental representatives. The Strategy is meant to facilitate collaboration between fire management organizations and communities to reach local and landscape-level goals, such as protection of property and restoration of fire-prone ecosystems, and to establish cost effective measures and reporting procedures to ensure accountability.

The goals of the 10-Year Strategy are to improve prevention and suppression, reduce hazardous fuels, restore fire-adapted ecosystems, and to promote community assistance. Specific actions designed to reach those goals include: prioritizing management activities so that communities that are most at risk in the wildland urban interface receive priority for hazardous fuels treatments; developing strategies to address fire-prone ecosystem problems that augment fire risk or threaten sustainability; and promoting public knowledge of wildland fire and its role in natural ecosystem processes.

### **Idaho County Wildfire Mitigation Plan (2005)**

The Proposed Action implements recommendations from the Idaho County Wildland Fire and Mitigation Plan (CRCD, 2005), which recommends the project area as a high priority for fuels reduction within the Wildland Urban Interface (WUI).

In 2005, Idaho County completed the Wildfire Mitigation Plan, which identifies communities at risk and the WUI, evaluates the risks, establishes mitigation priorities, and develops mitigation strategies for all communities at risk within the county. This plan identifies Elk City as a community at risk and lists all current and proposed fuels treatment projects within the Elk City region, including the Eastside Project, as high priority.

This plan defines WUI based on four conditions: interface, intermix, occluded, and rural. These WUI conditions were delineated for the county based on structure density and using mathematical formulas and population density indexes to create concentric circles showing high density areas of interface and intermix WUI, as well as rural conditions. Most of the Elk City township, including the entire Eastside Project area, falls within interface and intermix WUI (Appendix A, Map 17).

## 1.7 Relationships to Laws, Regulations and Statutes \_\_\_\_\_

### **Federal Land Policy and Management Act of 1976 (FLPMA), as Amended**

The Eastside Project was developed in accordance with the Federal Land Policy and Management Act of 1976 (FLPMA), as amended, and the National Forest Management Act (NFMA). The project would be implemented in accordance with the regulations found in 43 Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) 5003 (BLM) and 36 CFR 219 (Forest Service). This EIS is prepared in accordance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) of 1969, as amended, and the Council on Environmental Quality regulations at 40 CFR 1500.

Other laws and regulations pertaining to this project include, but are not limited to:

- American Indian Religious Freedom Act of 1978; Executive Order 13007, Indian Sacred Sites; Executive Order 13175, Consultation and Coordination with Indian Tribal Governments
- Clean Air Act of 1970, as amended
- Clean Water Act (Federal Water Pollution Control Act Amendments) of 1972 as amended. The Clean Water Act is addressed through Project Design Features (Table 2.3.1), using Best Management Practices (BMPs) and monitoring (Appendix E). For more information, see Regulatory Framework in the Watershed, and Fisheries Sections in Chapter 3.
- Endangered Species Act of 1973, as amended
- Executive Order 13112, Invasive Species
- Executive Orders 11988 and 11990, providing for protection and management of floodplains and wetlands.
- Executive Order 12898, Environmental Justice
- Executive Order 13186, Migratory Birds
- Federal Noxious Weed Act (1974), as amended
- Idaho Forest Practices Act of 1974
- Idaho Stream Channel Protection Act
- Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act of 1966
- Migratory Bird Treaty Act (MBTA) of 1918
- National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA) of 1966 and amendments. Implementation of Section 106 is codified under 36 CFR 800

## 1.8 Decisions to be Made \_\_\_\_\_

The BLM Cottonwood Field Manager will make the following decisions and document them in a Record of Decision following the final environmental impact statement (FEIS):

Should the BLM do fuels/vegetation treatments to create a fuel reduction area on Bureau of Land Management lands to protect adjacent subdivisions, private property, and natural resources from the risks associated with wildland fire? If so:

- What vegetation treatment methods should be used?
- How many acres should be treated?
- Should management activities occur in RHCAs? If so, how and where?
- If timber is harvested, how should harvest unit slash be treated?
- Should some roads be improved, constructed, or maintained to provide access for treatment activities? If so, which?
- Should some roads be obliterated/decommissioned/seasonally closed in order to meet the MFP requirements for a concurrent upward trend of aquatic/riparian areas? If so, which?

- Should some roads be converted to ATV trails with restricted running surface widths in order to meet the MFP requirements for a concurrent upward trend of aquatic/riparian areas? If so, which?
- Should some roads be improved, constructed, or maintained to provide access and escape routes for residential areas? If so, which?
- What design features and mitigation measures should be required to meet MFP and PACFISH standards and guidelines for all resources?
- What monitoring requirements are appropriate to evaluate the implementation and effectiveness of this project?

The Nez Perce Forest Supervisor will make the following decisions and document them in a Record of Decision accompanying or following the environmental impact statement (FEIS):

Should some roads be improved, constructed, or maintained across NPNF lands to provide access for treatment activities on BLM land? If so, which, and what road standards or restrictions should be applied?

## 1.9 Scoping and Issues

---

### 1.9.1 Scoping Summary

In February of 2004, the BLM mailed letters to approximately 200 interested individuals, agencies, the Nez Perce Tribe, organizations, and adjacent landowners regarding the proposal to complete fuels treatments and forest management in the project area. Based on the comments received and further field review, it was determined that analysis using an EIS was appropriate.

The BLM participated in meetings held in the community of Elk City in March and April of 2005 to discuss the project. The meetings were open to all, and the sponsors invited several regional environmental groups. These meetings were attended by 25–30 local residents, landowners, and business representatives.

In July 2005, a Notice of Intent (NOI) to prepare an EIS was published in the *Federal Register*. Over 250 letters were sent to interested individuals, agencies, the Nez Perce Tribe, and organizations requesting comments on the proposal. A public meeting and field tour were held in August 2005. An additional field trip was conducted with a representative from the NOAA, the Nez Perce Tribe, and the Idaho Conservation League in August 2005.

The Interdisciplinary (ID) Team analyzed comments from the public and BLM resource specialists and developed the list of issues and concerns raised about the proposed project. Many of the comments disagreed with, or debated the potential environmental impacts of, the Proposed Action. As such, they influenced the design and evaluation of alternatives to the Proposed Action. Chapter 4 of the EIS contains a synopsis of public comments received during scoping and the Eastside Fuels/Vegetation Project Record contains additional information on the scoping and issue development process.

The Issues are assigned to one of three categories: major issues, other issues, and issues not analyzed in detail. Major issues are used to formulate alternatives, mitigation measures, or project design elements to address the effects of proposed activities. Other issues include resources affected that do not lead to a new alternative but are analyzed in terms of environmental consequences. Issues not analyzed in detail are issues that: are addressed through the project design; were considered to be outside the scope of the analysis; are already decided by law, regulation, the MFP; or are mitigated as standard operating procedures. Issues not analyzed in detail do not require tracking throughout the document.

The major issues carried forward in this document are grouped below by resource and described using an issue statement, brief background information, and a list of indicators that were used to determine/

measure the effects of the proposed activities. Chapter 2 includes a summary that compares the effects of the alternatives on major issues and their indicators. Chapter 3 describes the consequences of the alternatives in terms of the issues.

## 1.9.2 Major Issues

The BLM defines major issues as those that require project-specific alternatives, mitigation measures, or design elements to address the effects of proposed activities. The Eastside Fuels/Vegetation Project ID Team identified hazardous fuels, water quality, riparian/aquatic habitat, and access management as the major issues.

### 1.9.2.1 Hazardous Fuels

Two differing viewpoints were expressed during scoping regarding the primary purpose and need for the project, and the extent of the project. Issues 1 and 2 reflect these.

**Issue 1:** Proposed fuel/vegetation activities are not needed and are ineffective in protecting communities, structures, and reducing the effect of wildfire across the landscape. The dead and dying lodgepole pine in the project area are a natural and periodic occurrence. Removing fuels, tree, and understory vegetation within 200 feet has proven effective in protecting structures. Thinning and logging activities can allow for greater fire spread and severity. The stands in this area have evolved within a fire regime that historically sustained large scale moderate- to high-severity fires.

**Background:** Models and observation of landscape scale fire behavior and the impacts of fuel treatments clearly suggest that a landscape approach is more likely to have significant overall impacts on fire spread, intensity, perimeters, and suppression capability. Models, field observations, and experiments indicate that for a given set of weather conditions, fire behavior is strongly influenced by fuel structure and composition. Fuels/vegetation treatments adjacent to structures are not a part of the project and are being accomplished through Firewise and defensible space programs funded in part by the BLM. Both existing fuels and those generated through vegetation management activities would be treated on site or utilized off site. Large intense fires within the wildland urban interface are not an acceptable management philosophy. The National Fire Plan was initiated in direct response to large intense fires occurring within WUI areas.

**Issue 2:** Proposed fuel/vegetation activities are needed to protect the community of Elk City, the American River Subdivision, other subdivisions in the project area, and the natural resources in the area. The large amount of dead and dying lodgepole pine is creating an unacceptable hazard. Doing nothing is irresponsible.

**Background:** In recent years there have been several large scale fires on the adjacent Nez Perce National Forest. For example, the Slims Fire was near Elk City, and its projected movement pattern showed it coming into the township. It is what generated the evacuation plan and the construction of a contingency line on Anderson Butte. The recent 4,500 acre Blackerby fire occurred in the wildland urban interface near the community of Mount Idaho. At one point, this fire was the number-one priority for wildland fire suppression resources in the country. The fire was suppressed at a cost of approximately 2.5 million dollars. Maps of fire severity made following the fire illustrate that most of the impact occurred in harvested areas with residual slash on private lands, and in areas that have not had any type of fuels/vegetation treatments for several years or not at all.

#### Indicators:

- Area and distribution of current and future fuel model conditions
- Area and distribution of stands susceptible to fires with high flame lengths and susceptible to high intensity crown fires

- Area and distribution of stands with high potential for wildfire-caused tree mortality
- Acres dominated by lodgepole pine stands susceptible to mountain pine beetle

### 1.9.2.2 *Watershed*

**Issue 3:** Proposed road construction, road reconstruction, road decommissioning, and conversion of roads to OHV trails affect **watershed condition** in the short and/or long term.

**Background:** Road density (miles of road per square mile of area) affects hydrologic function by increasing surface flow due to soil compaction, channeling flow through ditches and cross drains, and by intercepting subsurface water, thereby increasing the potential for surface erosion.

Project design features and Best Management Practices can greatly reduce impacts from roads, road construction, and reconstruction. Decommissioning roads can eliminate most of the watershed impacts from roads. Conversion of roads to trails can greatly reduce the impacts from roads.

#### **Indicators: Watershed Condition**

- Total road density (miles/square mile)
- Road miles within RHCAs
- Miles of new construction, reconstruction, decommissioning

**Issue 4:** Proposed vegetation treatment activities may increase **water yield** and change timing and duration of peak runoff, thereby decreasing stream channel stability.

**Background:** Management activities can affect water yield and the timing and duration of peak flow through alterations in forest canopy. Analysis of changes in forest canopy closure can be used to assess potential changes in mobilization of both large and small materials, causing increased erosion and deposition in downstream areas.

#### **Indicator: Water Yield**

- Equivalent Clearcut Area

**Issue 5:** Proposed activities may increase erosion and **sediment yield**, which could impair fish habitat, and affect 303(d) listed streams.

**Background:** Many watersheds have been affected by past activities such as mining, timber harvest, road building, and grazing. These historic activities have affected water quality through increased sediment delivery to streams. Harvest, fuels reduction, and roadwork have the potential to increase sediment production and delivery into streams. Some watershed improvement projects have the potential to produce sediment in the short-term but are designed to result in long-term reductions in sediment yield.

#### **Indicators: Sediment Yield**

- Sediment yield percent over base as modeled by NEZSED
- Sediment yield not modeled by NEZSED—streambank recontour, stream crossing alterations, stream re-connect
- Sediment reductions not modeled by NEZSED

### 1.9.2.3 Fisheries

**Issue 6:** Proposed riparian planting and streambank re-contour activities affect fish and fish habitat by increasing streamside shading and the number of trees that may fall into the stream channels, and affect 303(d) listed streams.

**Background:** Many watershed riparian areas have been heavily affected by past mining activities that have reduced meanders, removed streamside vegetation and created dredge piles with limited potential to support vegetation. Water temperature controls the rate of biologic process, is of critical concern for fish populations, and is a primary indicator of habitat conditions. Past and foreseeable restoration activities in this watershed have and may contribute to an upward trend.

**Indicators:**

- Stream temperature
- Estimated large woody debris
- Qualitative assessment of debris recruitment, cycling, and how the project could affect future riparian trends concerning this element

**Issue 7:** Proposed streambank re-contour, harvest, road construction, road reconstruction, and road decommissioning activities have the potential to cause increased short-term sediment delivery to streams in the analysis area, decreasing quantity and quality of spawning, rearing, and over-wintering fish habitat for Federally listed and BLM sensitive species.

**Background:** Historically, increased sediment yield to the American River watershed has resulted in high levels of deposited sediment in many streams, including mainstream American River. The American River watershed has been identified as a priority watershed for anadromous fish. High levels of deposited sediment reduce the biological carrying capacity for fish and other aquatic organisms and quality of spawning habitat.

Short-term increases in sediment yield from proposed activities may contribute to degraded substrate conditions and further reduce carrying capacity and quality of spawning habitat. Past and foreseeable restoration activities in this watershed have and will contribute to an upward trend. Long-term reduction in sediment yield could result in long-term improvement of substrate conditions.

**Indicators:**

- Cobble embeddedness (past and present)
- Quality of summer and winter rearing habitat carrying capacity as modeled by FISHSED

**Issue 8:** The American River has been heavily affected by historic instream mining activities that have reduced fish habitat complexity, e.g., meanders, pools, large woody debris, and pool riffle ratios. Also roads are encroaching on the river channel and are impacting riparian/aquatic habitat.

**Background:** With reduction in large woody debris, accelerated sediment yield, and impacts to stream channels from instream mining activities, road encroachment, and timber harvest, there are fewer high quality pools in the American River watershed.

Some proposed activities may result in a short-term reduction in pool quality from increased sediment yield. Other proposed activities may result in direct improvement in the number of and quality of pools. Sediment reduction actions should result in long-term improvement in pool quality.

**Indicators:**

- Poolriffle ratios (past and present)
- Number of pools

**Issue 9:** Proposed stream reconnect and bridge construction activities may affect stream channels and processes. Bridge construction has the potential to cause increased sediment delivery to streams in the analysis area and a take of some fish species.

**Background:** The mainstream American River has been heavily affected by past instream mining activities, effectively blocking several tributary streams to fish passage/connectivity and isolating fish populations. Road encroachment has created several sediment producing fords of the American River.

Some proposed activities may in the short-term increase sediment yield, but in the long-term, overall sediment yield should decrease. Other proposed activities would result in direct increase in the number of miles of accessible stream.

**Indicators:**

- Fords eliminated and erosive banks stabilized
- Additional miles of stream accessible

#### **1.9.2.4 Road/Trail Access Transportation System**

**Issue 10:** Proposed activities (road to trail conversions, road relocation and obliteration, and new road construction) may restrict administrative/public access to Bureau of Land Management lands and affect access routes to homes and private property.

**Background:** The road segment along the American River in the north end of the project area is considered by local residents to be an escape route from residences along the American River. The road segment from Forest Service road 1809 north along the American River is the primary access route to homes and property along the American River. Some routes, the road segment along the American River on the south end of the project, and few smaller routes are used heavily by off highway vehicles, both winter and summer.

**Indicators:**

- Miles of new permanent road
- Miles of road decommissioning
- Miles of road converted to ATV trail
- Number of bridges on American River

**Issue 11:** Proposed activities include temporary road construction to access vegetation/fuels treatment areas. Access to complete management activities requires a transportation network. Designing a transportation system that balances implementing projects cost effectively versus the environmental impacts from the transportation system is an important project consideration.

**Background:** The BLM lands in the east portion of the Elk City township have had very little active management applied to them in the last 50 years. None of the primary access routes are owned and maintained by the BLM. Except for the area near the Alamance Mine, there are no secondary roads on BLM into any of the fuels/vegetation proposed treatment units. The NPNF has dropped two temporary roads from the American and Crooked River Project that would access BLM lands on the north end of the project. These two temporary roads are now part of this project.

**Indicators:**

- Miles of temporary road on BLM
- Miles of temporary road on private land
- Miles of temporary road on Forest Service land
- Areas with roadless characteristics (applies to Forest Service lands only)

### 1.9.3 Other Issues

Other issues do not drive the development of an alternative, but warrant an effects analysis. These issues are tracked in this document and analyzed in the Environmental Effects section in Chapter 3.

#### 1.9.3.1 Air Quality

**Issue 12:** All the alternatives have potential to affect air quality in Airshed 13 for Class I and Class II areas.

**Background:** The no action alternative carries the risk of large-scale wildfire, while the action alternatives would reduce the risk. Although wildfires are not subject to air quality regulations, they will have major impacts on air quality. Prescribed burning as proposed in the action alternatives is subject to air quality regulations.

**Indicator:**

- Particulate matter and visibility

#### 1.9.3.2 Vegetation

**Issue 13:** Proposed activities can affect vegetative conditions for forest cover types, stand structure (size classes, density, and crown cover).

**Background:** The proposed activities occur on land identified as within the intensive timber management land class. Timber is the primary goal on these lands, to be managed on a sustained yield basis. Proposed vegetation/fuels treatments can have an effect on timber and non-timber species. The area is sustaining a mountain pine beetle epidemic that is altering the forest conditions throughout the project and adjacent areas.

**Indicators:**

- Forest cover types
- Stand structure (size classes, density, crown cover)

**Issue 14:** Proposed activities can affect the habitat and populations of Threatened, Endangered, and Sensitive Plant Species.

**Background:** Historically vegetation/fuels activities along with road construction altered vegetation habitat conditions and affected individual plants or plant populations.

**Indicators:**

- Identity and location of Threatened or Endangered Species
- Identity and location of BLM Sensitive Species

**Issue 15:** Proposed activities can affect the potential for current populations of weeds to expand and for the introduction of new weed species into the project area.

**Background:** Invasive plants can expand following human caused or natural disturbances and invade degraded as well as intact habitats. There are two known noxious weeds in the projects area. There is the potential for other invasive species considered noxious to become established in the area.

**Indicators:**

- Identity and location of noxious weeds.
- Amount and location of vegetation and soil disturbance activities

### **1.9.3.3 Soils**

**Issue 16:** The proposed vegetation/fuels activities may decrease long-term soil productivity and affect soil physical properties.

**Background:** Random movement of heavy equipment, skyline yarding, site preparation, and slash disposal activities may alter soil properties by compacting, displacing, or puddling. Slope failure can occur in response to management activities, particularly roads.

**Indicators:**

- Soil compaction and displacement
- Surface and substratum erosion
- Mass erosion

### **1.9.3.4 Wildlife**

**Issue 17:** Proposed activities can affect the habitat and populations of threatened, endangered, and sensitive wildlife species.

**Background:** There are three federally listed species, and eight BLM sensitive species, whose home range may include the Eastside Project area. Proposed activities will alter habitat conditions that could increase or decrease wildlife use and populations.

**Indicators:**

- Threatened or Endangered Species
- BLM sensitive species
- Other species of interest

### **1.9.3.5 Visual Resource Management**

**Issue 18:** Proposed vegetation activities may affect the ability to meet Visual Resource Management goals for main travel routes through and adjacent to the project area.

**Background:** Vegetation activities will generate more open forest than currently exists and would alter the visual appearance considerably. Although the visual appearance of the forest would be altered with proposed activities, it could be much less than if an intense wildfire were to occur in the area.

**Indicator:**

- Class III Visual Resource Objective

### **1.9.3.6 Cultural Resources**

**Issue 19:** Proposed activities may affect Nez Perce Tribe cultural resources or Traditional Cultural Properties in the analysis area. They may also affect historic properties in the area that may be eligible for the National Register of Historic Places.

**Background:** Vegetation/fuels activities, road construction, and restoration activities would disturb the surface and could impact prehistoric and historic sites in the project area. Project design would be implemented to avoid or do as little disturbance as possible.

**Indicator:**

- Number, location, and type of sites

### **1.9.3.7 Tribal Trust and Treaty Rights**

**Issue 20:** The Project is within the original Nez Perce territory.

**Background:** Consultation was initiated specifically with the Nez Perce Tribe Cultural Department regarding identification of any cultural resources or Traditional Cultural Properties in the analysis area. The Nez Perce Tribe Natural Resource Subcommittee has also been consulted.

**Indicator:**

- Cultural resources and treaty rights

### **1.9.3.8 Grazing**

**Issue 21:** Vegetation and fuels activities may affect the ability of permittees to utilize BLM land for a period of time.

**Background:** Livestock grazing is currently being done on portions of the project area. Proposed vegetation and fuels activities will interfere with grazing during the implementation of the project. Also, restrictions could be placed on grazing portions of the project area for several years until tree seedlings have an opportunity to become established.

**Indicator:**

- Number of permittees and restricted use time period

### **1.9.3.9 Socio Economic**

**Issue 22:** The proposal has potential to influence income and jobs.

**Background:** The cost of implementing a fuels/vegetation and restoration project compared to the economic benefits of the project is a concern. The economies of communities near the project are influenced by resources from the forest—primarily timber and recreation. Fuels/vegetation projects, and the associated sale of timber, provide economic and socio-economic values and opportunities to local communities. This includes jobs and income.

**Indicators:**

- Local employment
- Revenues and costs

### **1.9.3.10 Recreation**

**Issue 23:** Proposed fuels/vegetation treatments and restoration activities may affect existing and future recreation uses and opportunities within the project area.

**Background:** The proposal may change the existing use patterns by changing road access and reducing tree density. Proposed road management may reduce areas for highway vehicles. Reducing the tree density may allow snowmobiles to enter new areas.

**Indicators:**

- Resource Opportunity Spectrum Class
- Recreational activities

## **1.10 Permits and Licenses** \_\_\_\_\_

All proposed treatment activities are on BLM lands. Any work altering a stream channel, such as the installation of a culvert, would require appropriate permits and authorizations from the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Idaho Department of Water Resources, and Idaho Department of Water Quality.

Most of the temporary road construction is on BLM and National Forest System lands. A road license agreement with the NPNF would be necessary to implement all action alternatives.

Access across private land will require the survey, design, and acquisition of temporary easements to implement all action alternatives.

## **1.11 Project Record** \_\_\_\_\_

This Final EIS hereby incorporates by reference the complete Project Record, located at the BLM Cottonwood Field Office, to reduce paperwork without repeating detailed analysis and background information available elsewhere. The Project Record contains draft Specialist Reports and other technical documentation used to support the analysis and conclusions in this Final EIS. The record also documents the comments received during scoping, that includes meetings, field trips as well as written correspondences.