

**Decision Memorandum on Action and for Application of:  
516 DM 2, Appendix 1  
Departmental Categorical Exclusion 1.12**

**US Department of the Interior  
Bureau of Land Management  
Palm Springs-South Coast Field office**

**Field Office NEPA Reference:** CA-660-05-57

**Project:** Salvatore Fuel Reduction

**Location:** Ramona, San Diego County, California  
T13S, R1W, Section 22 W1/2 SE1/4, SBBM

**Description of Proposed Action and Purpose and Need for the Action:** Mr. Jim Salvatore, resident of Ramona, California has requested to reduce hazardous fuels/vegetation on public lands adjacent to his private property (home). The purpose for the fuel reduction would be to protect Mr. Salvatore's property from the threat of wildfire. The adjacent BLM lands support dense brush interspersed with grasses. Reduction of these fuels would provide Mr. Salvatore with added defensible space next to his property. Due to the major fire event of 2003 in San Diego County, more and more home owners are having difficulty obtaining fire insurance. The fuel reduction on the BLM administered land would help to create open space next to Mr. Salvatore's home. This action would help Mr. Salvatore meet the requirements of the insurance company for insuring his property.

The proposed fuel reduction project is located north of State Route 67 and west of Highland Valley Road in Ramona, California. The BLM parcel is located north of Mr. Salvatore's private property (refer to attached Map). Fuels would be reduced in an area approximately 2.77 acres (318 feet X 380 feet). The project area contains vegetation primarily from the Chamise Chaparral plant community; although, plants from Mixed Chaparral, Coastal Sage Scrub, grasslands and Agricultural plant communities (disturbance-associated weedy species) also occur in the area. The following list contains plants that were observed on the project site or would be expected to occur on this site:

Plants of the Chamise Chaparral Community

Chamise (*Adenostoma fasciculatum*)  
Mission Manzanita (*Xylococcus bicolor*)  
Cleveland Sage (*Salvia clevelandii*)  
Black Sage (*Salvia mellifera*)  
Coast Spice Bush (*Cneoridium dumosum*)

Plants of the Mixed Chaparral Community:

Smooth Mountain-Mahogany (*Cercocarpus minutiflorus*)  
Ramona Lilac (*Ceanothus tomentosus*)

Scrub Oak (*Quercus dumosa*)  
Poison Oak (*Toxicodendron diversilobum*)

Coastal Sage Scrub

Coast Monkey Flower (*mimulus aurantiacus* ssp. *australis*)  
Wild Cucumber (*Marah macrocarpus*)  
Milk Thistle (*Silybum marianum*)

Grasslands/Agricultural

Wild Oat (*Avena fatua*, *Avena barbata*)  
Red Brome (*Bromus madritensis* ssp. *rubens*)  
Barley (*Hordeum* sp.)

With regard to the presence of T&E species or their critical habitat on BLM land in T13S R1W Section 22 W1/2 SE1/4: I searched the California Native Diversity Data Base-Rare Find, the California Native Plant Society website, and reviewed Special Status Species data provided by the Carlsbad Fish and Wildlife Service. At this time, no T&E species or critical habitats have been identified within the 2.77 acres proposed for fuel reduction by Mr. Salvatore.

Vegetation would be removed with light mechanical equipment such as a string cutter, riding mower, deck mower or a Bobcat (type of rubber tracked tractor) with a brush cutting head. No disking, grubbing or removal of tree stumps and or ground disturbing activity would be allowed. Larger live trees (scrub oak) 6" in diameter or more would be limbed only. Cut vegetation could be chipped and spread over the project area. Burning of vegetation would not be authorized. Active bird nests would be left intact. No reseeding, planting or use of herbicide would be allowed on public lands. All fuel powered equipment would have USDA Forest Service approved spark arrestors. Fuel powered equipment would not be used on Red Flag days. Fire suppression tools such as shovels, hoes, a garden hose and a fire extinguisher would be on hand in case of accidental setting of a fire. Upon the discovery of any historical artifacts, BLM would be notified immediately.

**Land Use Plan Conformance:** In compliance with 43 CFR 1610.5-3 and BLM MS1617.3, the proposed action is in conformance with the *South Coast Resource Management Plan (1994)*.

**Compliance with the National Environmental Policy Act:** The Proposed Action is categorically excluded from further documentation under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) in accordance with 516 DM 2, Appendix 1, 1.12. The application of this categorical exclusion is appropriate in this situation because there are no extraordinary circumstances potentially having effects which may significantly affect the environment. These extraordinary circumstances are contained in 516 DM 2, Appendix 2.

516 DM 2, appendix 1, 1.12, Hazardous Fuel Reduction Actions – Activities using mechanical methods for crushing, piling, thinning, pruning, cutting, chipping, mulching, and mowing can be categorically excluded if they do not include more than 1,000 acres. Such activities:

- Shall be limited to areas in the wildland-urban interface or to areas in Condition Classes 2 or 3 in Fire Regime Groups I, II, or III outside the wildland-urban interface.
- Shall be identified through a collaborative framework as described in A Collaborative Approach for Reducing Wildland Fire Risks to Communities and the Environment: 10-Year Comprehensive Strategy Implementation Plan.
- Shall be consistent with agency and departmental procedures and applicable resource management plans.
- Shall not be in wilderness areas or impair the suitability of wilderness study areas for preservation as wilderness.
- Shall not include the use of herbicides or pesticides or the construction of new permanent roads or other new permanent infrastructure, but may include the sale of vegetative material if the primary purpose of the activity is to reduce hazardous fuel.

**Screening for Exceptions:** The following exceptions apply to individual actions within categorical exclusions (516 DM, Appendix 2). The preparer and/or indicated specialist must verify that the Proposed Action does not:

2.1	Have significant adverse effects of public health or safety?	No
2.2	Have adverse effects on such unique geographic characteristics as historic or cultural resources, park, recreation or refuge lands, wilderness areas, wild or scenic rivers, sole or principal drinking water aquifers, prime farm lands, wet lands, flood plains, or ecologically significant or critical areas, including those listed on the Department’s National Register of National Landmarks?	No
2.3	Have highly controversial environmental effects?	No
2.4	Have highly uncertain and potentially significant environmental effects or involve unique or unknown environmental risks?	No
2.5	Establish a precedent for future actions or represent a decision in principle about future actions with potentially significant environmental effects?	No
2.6	Be directly related to other actions with individually insignificant but cumulatively significant environmental effects?	No
2.7	Have adverse effects on properties listed or eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places?	No
2.8	Have adverse effects on species listed or proposed to be listed on the List of Endangered or threatened Species or have adverse effects on designated critical habitat for these species?	No
2.9	Require compliance with Executive Order 11988 (Floodplain Management), Executive Order 11990 (Protection of Wetlands), or	No

	the Fish and Wildlife Coordination Act?	
2.10	Threaten to violate a Federal, State, or local or tribal law or requirement imposed for the protection of the environment?	No

I considered all pertinent situations during the design of the project and found that there is no potential for significant effects to the human or natural components of the environment.

**Persons and Agencies Consulted:**

This project was initiated and requested by Jim Salvatore, 16627 Highland Valley Road, Ramona, CA 92065-5713.

**Decision and Rationale on Action:**

I have decided to implement the Salvatore Fuel Reduction Project, including mitigation measures listed in the proposed action. These actions meet the need for action. In addition, I have reviewed the plan conformance statement and have determined that the proposed action is in conformance with the approved land use plan and that no further environmental analysis is required.

**Implementation Date:**

This project will be implemented on or after May 21, 2005.

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 Field Manager  
 Palm Springs-South Coast Field office  
 Bureau of Land Management  
 U.S. Department of the Interior  
 690 W. Garnet Avenue; P.O. Box 581260  
 North Palm Springs, CA 92258-1260

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 Date

**Administrative Review or Appeal Opportunities**

This decision may be appealed to the Interior Board of Land Appeals, Office of the Secretary, in accordance with the regulations at Title 43 of the Code of Federal Regulations (CFR), Part 4, and the information provided in Form 1842-1 (enclosed). If an appeal is taken, your notice of appeal must be filed in the Palm Springs-South Coast Field Office, Bureau of Land Management, U.S. Department of the Interior, 690 West Garnet Avenue, P.O. Box 581260, North Palm Springs, California 92258, within 30 days from receipt of this decision. The appellant has the burden of showing that the decision appealed from is in error.

If you wish to file a petition for a stay of the effectiveness of this decision during the time that your appeal is being reviewed by the Board, pursuant to Title 43 of the Code of Federal Regulations, Part 4, Subpart E, the petition for a stay must accompany your notice of appeal. A petition for a stay is required to show sufficient justification based on the standards listed below. Copies of the notice of appeal and petition for a stay must also be submitted to each party named in this decision and to the Interior Board of Land Appeals and to the appropriate Office of the Solicitor (see 43 CFR 4.413) at the same time the original documents are filed with this office. If you request a stay, you have the burden of proof to demonstrate that a stay should be granted.

#### Standards for Obtaining a Stay

Except as otherwise provided by law or other pertinent regulations, a petition for a stay of a decision pending appeal shall show sufficient justification based on the following standards:

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

#### **Contact Person**

For additional information concerning this decision, contact:

Janaye Byergo  
San Diego Project Manager  
10845 Rancho Bernardo Road, Ste. 200  
San Diego, CA 92127  
(858)451-1767

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May 18, 2005

Janaye,

With regard to the presence of T&E species or their critical habitat on BLM land in T13S R1W Section 22 W1/2 SE1/4: I searched the California Native Diversity Data Base-Rare Find, the California Native Plant Society website, and reviewed Special Status Species data provided by the Carlsbad Fish and Wildlife Service. At this time, no T&E species or critical habitats have been identified within the 2.77 acres proposed for fuel reduction by Mr. Salvatore.

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