

UNITED STATES
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT
BURNS DISTRICT OFFICE

CATEGORICAL EXCLUSION ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW AND APPROVAL

CX Number: DOI-BLM-OR-B070-2014-0001-CX **Date:** 11/12/13
File Code (Project/Serial Number): Stonehouse Seeding
#2 Project File (RIPS # 0748)
Preparer: Louis E. Clayburn **Applicant:** BLM/Permittee
Title of Proposed Action: Mann Lake Seeding Maintenance

Description of Proposed Action and Project Design Elements (if applicable): The Mann Lake Seedings (three seedings total) are located due north of the Mann Lake Ranch and start on the northern edge of Mann Lake itself. They are located entirely on Bureau of Land Management (BLM) administered public land. The seedings according to record were first established in 1964 and finished in 1965 (RIPS# 0748) as the result of wildfire.

The proposed action is to use an aerator to treat approximately 1,299 acres which is half of the total 2,597 acres that were originally seeded in 1964-65. The purpose and need for this re-seeding maintenance project is to improve forage quality, stabilize soil, prevent invasion by exotic and noxious weeds, and increase diversity and structure within the plant community for wildlife habitat. The three seedings would be treated in strips of 50 feet of seeded ground with 50 feet of untreated ground in between. A range drill or drills would be pulled behind the aerator or by themselves behind a tractor. An equal mixture of non-native-crested wheatgrass, native Blue Bunch Wheatgrass, Fourwing Salt Brush and a small portion of Lewis Flax would be seeded into the ground.

Seeding would begin as early as November 2013 and end as late as December 2014. The seed would be drilled into the ground at a rate of 6 to 7 pounds per acre. The seed would be applied using a rangeland drill or drills with the tubes attached and /or tubes removed. Methods with tubes pulled or removed would replicate broad cast seeding. The permittee will provide labor, fuel and the tractor along with the aerator in a cooperative agreement to assist in treatment implementation and cost. The BLM will provide the seed and rangeland drills. Archaeological sites found within the area to be brush beaten and re-seeded will be flagged with pink flagging in the field. They will be avoided during project operations. The North Mann Lake Seeding pasture is comprised of the Lower Stone WSA and was analyzed for maintenance and upkeep in the "Maintenance of Range, Wildlife, and Wild Horse Improvements in Wilderness Study Areas in The Burns District, DOI-BLM-OR-020-05-080-EA". In the EA, the seeding was previously known as Stonehouse Seeding in the EA under page C-15. The WSA Improvement Maintenance Checklist is attached to this CX.

Legal Description (attach Location Map): See attached map.
Willamette Meridian, Township 31 S., Range 35 E., sec. 29, 30, 31 and 32;
Willamette Meridian, Township 32 S., Range 35 E., sec. 05, 06, 07, 12 and 13.

B. Conformance with Land Use Plan (LUP) (name):
Date Approved/Amended

The proposed action is in conformance with the applicable Steens Mountain Cooperative Management and Protection Area Resource Management Plan, August 2005, even though it is not specifically provided for, because it is clearly consistent with the following LUP decision(s): Implement administrative solutions and rangeland projects to provide proper management for livestock grazing while meeting resource objectives and requirements for S&Gs.

Rangelands

Goal 1- Maintain, restore or improve the integrity of desirable vegetation communities including perennial, native and desirable introduced plant species. Provide for their continued existence and normal function in nutrient, water, and energy cycles.

Objective 2. Manage desirable nonnative seedings to meet resource objectives

BLM Categorical Exclusion Reference (516 DM, Chapter 11): None

DOI Categorical Exclusion Reference (516 DM 2, Appendix 1): 1.7 "Routine and continuing government business, including such things as maintenance and replacement activities having limited context and intensity (e.g. limited size and magnitude or short term effects).

Screening for Exceptions: The following extraordinary circumstances (516 DM 2, Appendix 2) may apply to individual actions within the categorical exceptions. The indicated specialist recommends the proposed action does *not*:

CATEGORICAL EXCLUSION EXTRAORDINARY CIRCUMSTANCES DOCUMENTATION	
2.1	Have significant impacts on public health or safety.
Specialist – John Petty, Safety Officer	
Signature and Date:	<i>[Signature]</i> 12/3/13
Rationale: No significant impact on public health or safety.	
2.2	Have significant impacts on such natural resources and unique geographic characteristics as historic or cultural resources; park, recreation or refuge lands; wilderness areas; wild or scenic rivers; national natural landmarks; sole or principal drinking water aquifers; prime farmlands; wetlands (Executive Order 11990); flood plains (Executive Order 11988); national monuments; migratory birds; and other ecologically significant or critical areas.
<u>Migratory Birds</u>	
Specialist – Andrew Daniels, Wildlife Biologist	
Signature and Date:	<i>[Signature]</i> 03 Dec 2013
Rationale: This project would alter a small portion of the available shrub-steppe habitat with a large area and would do so in alternating strips, leaving adequate unaltered habitat for migratory birds that use the available forage. The time frame of the project would be outside migratory bird active period for North America (early April to late July). Due to these reasons there will be no effect to migratory birds or their habitat.	
<u>Historic and Cultural Resources</u>	
Specialist – Scott Thomas, District Archeologist	
Signature and Date:	<i>[Signature]</i> 12-3-13
Rationale: No historic or cultural resources would be affected by this proposed action.	
<u>Areas of Critical Environmental Concern/Research Natural Areas</u>	
Specialist – Caryn Burri, Natural Resource Specialist (Botany)	
Signature and Date:	<i>[Signature]</i> 12/3/13
Rationale: There are no ACECs or RNAs within the project area; therefore there will be no impact.	
<u>Water Resources/Flood Plains</u>	
Specialist – Daryl Bingham, Natural Resource Specialists (Riparian and Fisheries)	
Signature and Date:	<i>[Signature]</i> 27 NOV 2013
Rationale: There are no perennial water resources in the proposed project area, nor does the project area lie within a floodplain.	
<u>Soils, Biological Soil Crust, Prime Farmlands</u>	
Specialist – Caryn Burri, Natural Resource Specialist (Botany)	
Signature and Date:	<i>[Signature]</i> 12/3/13
Rationale: Soils and BSCs will be impacted temporarily by brush beating and seeding equipment; however, these impacts will be short term and as vegetation grows, soils and BSCs will stabilize and return to pre-disturbance conditions or improve. There is no prime farmland within the project area.	
<u>Recreation/ Visual Resources</u>	
Specialist – Eric Haakenson, Outdoor Recreation Specialist	
Signature and Date:	<i>[Signature]</i> 11-27-13
Rationale: There would be no effect to the recreational activities because of the proposed action. The proposed area was classified as VRM Class II and III. There would be a visual effect to the area but the proposal to maintain the seeding would meet VRM Class II and III.	
<u>Wilderness/Wilderness Study Areas Resources</u>	
Specialist – Tom Wilcox, Wilderness Specialist	
Signature and Date:	<i>[Signature]</i> 11/15/2013
Rationale: The project has no effect to wilderness characteristics in the WSA. The action is within the scope of the “Grandfathered uses” exception to the non-impairment standard and does not impair the suitability of the WSA for wilderness designation.	
2.3	Have highly controversial environmental effects or involve unresolved conflicts concerning alternative uses of available resources [NEPA Section 102(2) (E)].
Specialist – Holly Orr, District Planning and Environmental Coordinator	
Signature and Date:	<i>[Signature]</i> 11/26/13
Rationale: There are no known highly controversial environmental effects or unresolved conflicts concerning alternative uses of available resources. The seedings has existing on the landscape since 1964 and 1965. Implementation is to perform routine and continuing maintenance of existing seedings.	

2.4	Have highly uncertain and potentially significant environmental effects or involve unique or unknown environmental risks.
Specialist - Holly Orr, District Planning and Environmental Coordinator	
Signature and Date:	<i>Holly Orr</i> 11/26/13
Rationale:	There are no known highly uncertain or potentially significant environmental effects or unique or unknown environmental risks. The seedings has existing on the landscape since 1964 and 1965. The action is to perform routine and continuing maintenance of this existing seedings.
2.5	Establish a precedent for future action or represent a decision in principle about future actions with potentially significant environmental effects.
Specialist - Holly Orr, District Planning and Environmental Coordinator	
Signature and Date:	<i>Holly Orr</i> 11/26/13
Rationale:	Implementation would not set precedence for future actions or represent a decision in principle about future actions with potentially significant environmental effects. The BLM routinely performs seeding maintenance and these seedings currently exist on the landscape and have been there since 1964 and 1965.
2.6	Have a direct relationship to other actions with individually insignificant but cumulatively significant environmental effects.
Specialist - Holly Orr, District Planning and Environmental Coordinator	
Signature and Date:	<i>Holly Orr</i> 11/26/13
Rationale:	Implementation would not have any known direct relationship to other actions with individually insignificant but cumulative significant environmental effects. The seedings have existed on the landscape since 1984 and 1985. The action is to perform routine and continuing maintenance of this existing seedings.
2.7	Have significant impacts on properties listed, or eligible for listing, on the National Register of Historic Places as determined by either the bureau or office.
Specialist - Scott Thomas, District Archeologist	
Signature and Date:	<i>Scott Thomas</i> 12-3-13
Rationale:	National Register listed or eligible sites would not be affected by the proposed project.
2.8	Have significant impacts on species listed, or proposed to be listed, on the List of Endangered or Threatened Species, or have significant impacts on designated Critical Habitat for these species.
<u>Endangered or Threatened Species-Fauna</u>	
Specialist - Andrew Daniels, Wildlife Biologist	
Signature and Date:	<i>Andrew Daniels</i> 03 Dec 2013
Rationale:	There are no known T&E fauna species or designated Critical Habitat within the proposed project area. Special Status Species: The area is in PGH and has no known leks anywhere near it (nearest is Ham Brown Lake #1 at just over ten miles away). There is no pygmy rabbit habitat within the seeding, or spotted frog habitat. From a wildlife stand point there is no reason this project should not go forward.
<u>Endangered or Threatened Species-Aquatic</u>	
Specialist - Daryl Bingham, Natural Resource Specialists (Riparian and Fisheries)	
Signature and Date:	<i>Daryl Bingham</i> 27 NOV 2013
Rationale:	There are no known T&E aquatic species or critical habitat within the proposed project area.
<u>Endangered or Threatened Species-Flora</u>	
Specialist - Caryn Burri, Natural Resource Specialist (Botany)	
Signature and Date:	<i>Caryn Burri</i> 12/3/13
Rationale:	There are no documented T & E or Special Status plant species or designated critical habitat within the proposed project area.
2.9	Violate a Federal law, or a State, local, or tribal law or requirement imposed for the protection of the environment.
Specialist - Holly Orr, District Planning and Environmental Coordinator	
Signature and Date:	<i>Holly Orr</i> 11/26/13
Rationale:	Implementation would not violate any known law or regulation imposed for the protection of the environment. The seedings are existing features on the landscape since 1964 and 1965. The action is to perform routine and continuing maintenance on existing seedings.
2.10	Have a disproportionately high and adverse effect on low income or minority populations (Executive Order 12898).
Specialist - Holly Orr, District Planning and Environmental Coordinator	
Signature and Date:	<i>Holly Orr</i> 11/26/13
Rationale:	Implementation would not have a disproportionately high or adverse effect on low income or minority populations as such populations do not exist within the project area.

<p>2.11 Limit access to and ceremonial use of Indian sacred sites on Federal lands by Indian religious practitioners or significantly adversely affect the physical integrity of such sacred sites (Executive Order 13007).</p> <p>Specialist – Scott Thomas, District Archeologist</p> <p>Signature and Date: <u>Scott Thomas 12-3-13</u></p> <p>Rationale: Access to or integrity of Indian sacred sites would not be affected by the proposed project.</p>
<p>2.12 Contribute to the introduction, continued existence, or spread of noxious weeds or nonnative invasive species known to occur in the area or actions that may promote the introduction, growth, or expansion of the range of such species (Federal Noxious Weed Control Act and Executive Order 13112).</p> <p>Specialist – Lesley Richman, Natural Resource Specialist (Weeds)</p> <p>Signature and Date: <u>Lesley Richman 12/3/2013</u></p> <p>Rationale: Noxious weeds are known to be present in or in close proximity to this area. Treatments are on-going. The weeds are not present in sufficient quantity to be considered a significant impact at this time.</p>

Additional review (As determined by the Authorized Officer): None

RMP conformance and CX review confirmation:

Specialist (Print Name and Title): Holly Orr, District Planning and Environmental Coordinator

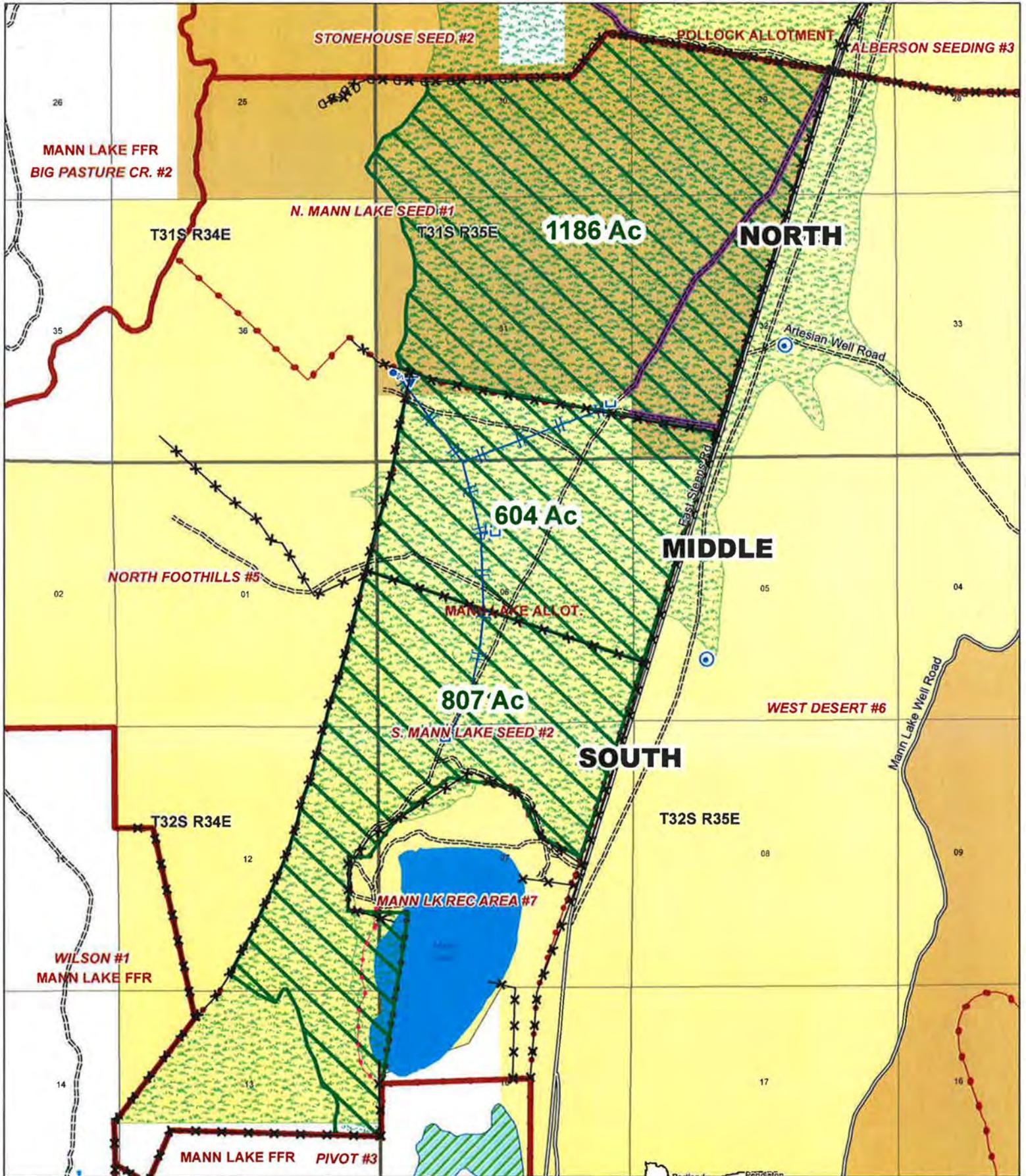
Signature: Holly Orr Date: 10/3/13

Management Determination: Based upon review of this proposal, I have determined the Proposed Action is in conformance with the LUP, qualifies as a categorical exclusion and does not require further NEPA analysis.

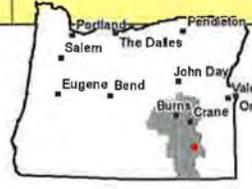
Authorized Officer (Print Name and Title): Rhonda Karges, Andrews/Steens Resource Area Manager

Signature: Rhonda Karges Date: 12/4/13

Mann Lake Seeding Maintenance



- | | | | |
|---------------------|--------------------|------------------------------|---------------------------|
| Seeding Maintenance | Waterhole | Pastures | BLM Wilderness Study Area |
| Previous Seedings | Spring Development | Allotments | Bureau of Land Management |
| Fence | Trough | Non-Paved Improved Road | Private/Unknown |
| Drift Fence | Water Pipeline | Natural/Unknown Road Surface | Perennial Lake |
| Reservoir | | Closed Roads | Intermittent Lake |
| | | Open WSA Ways | Marsh |




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 Bureau of Land Management
 Burns District, Oregon
 Note: No warranty is made by the Bureau of Land Management as to the accuracy, reliability or completeness of these data for individual or aggregate use with other data. Original data was compiled from various sources and may be updated without notification.
 DOI-BLM-OR-B070-2014-0001-CX
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WSA IMPROVEMENT CHECKLIST

(for use with EA OR-020-05-080)

Use one form for each improvement.

Improvement Name: <u>Mann Lake seeding maintenance.</u>	Improvement Number: <u>0748</u>
WSA Name: <u>Lower stonehouse</u>	WSA Number: <u>OR-2-23M</u>
Dates maintenance proposed to be done: <u>11/1/13 to 12/31/14</u>	
Who's doing the maintenance? <input type="checkbox"/> BLM <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Permittee <input type="checkbox"/> Contractor <input type="checkbox"/> Other	
Has the Permittee been notified? <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	
Have private landowners along access route(s) been notified? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	
Describe what's going to be done and how it will be done: <u>The north Mann Lake seeding is being proposed for a seeding maintenance project. The permittee which is Mann Lake Ranch would pull a lawson pasture aerator behind a tractor to smash down vegetation in 50' wide strips followed by a 50' wide strip of untreated vegetation, this process would be repeated across half the pasture or less. A Rangeland drill maybe pulled behind the lawson aerator or pulled by it's self in order to plant seeds into the ground. The permittee will provide all equipment, man power and supplies except for the seed Rangeland drills.</u>	
List types of equipment and vehicles to be used: <u>50 to 150 hp tractor</u> <u>lawson pasture aerator</u> <u>Rangeland seed drills</u>	
Describe access route(s) or attach a map showing route(s): <u>Access will be from the south thru the Mann Lake Rec site</u>	
Is a cultural resources inventory needed? <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	
Has an inventory been completed? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No	
Archaeologist Initials: <u>CP</u>	
Is a Special Status plant or animal inventory needed? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No	
Has an inventory been completed? <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	
Botanist/Wildlife Biologist Initials: <u>JB</u>	
Is a noxious weed inventory needed? <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	
Has an inventory been completed? <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <u>GIS data</u>	
Weed Specialist Initials: <u>HR</u>	
Is proposed maintenance in conformance with EA OR-020-05-080 analysis and the WSA IMP? <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	
Any required mitigation: <u>The tubes on the Rangeland drills will be pulled in order to prevent drill rows across the landscape.</u>	
WSA Specialist Initials: <u>[Signature]</u>	
Range Lead Initials: <u>[Signature]</u>	
Area Manager Signature: <u>[Signature]</u>	Date: <u>11/13/13</u>

No previous surveys in area. No cultural clearance will be needed prior to ground disturbing activities.

Plant: No
Animal: Yes
Based on surveys in surrounding areas there are no suspected SSS or TIE Flora species of documented critical habitat.

A copy of this form must be placed in the WSA case file and the improvement project file.