

**RECORD OF PLAN CONFORMANCE AND  
CATEGORICAL EXCLUSION (CX) DETERMINATION  
Bureau of Land Management (BLM)**

Project Name: **Dog Hollow and Lower Midway WS**

CX Log #: CX-09-04

Project Location: T40S 14E Sec 13, 24; T40S 14.5E Sec 7, 14, 15, 16,17, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23, 29, 30

Lease or Serial #: N/A

BLM Office: Lakeview District, Klamath Falls Resource Area

County: Klamath County, Oregon

### **A. Background**

#### Description of Proposed Action:

#### **Meadow and Sage Steppe Restoration**

The proposed action includes cutting western juniper within low sage and meadow habitat. The project area is approximately 3814 acres (Map 1). Within the project area there are approximately 2000 acres of meadow and low sage habitat that has been encroached by western juniper. The juniper has encroached into habitat that it formerly did not occupy. The proposed action would consist of cutting the juniper, then cutting and lopping the limbs and boles of the tree so that they are below four feet in height and leaving the juniper on site. The juniper cutting would be conducted using hand operated devices primarily chainsaws. No juniper considered to be "old" juniper (see Appendix B for description) would be cut. The focus of the proposed action is to cut and lop the juniper that has encroached into the meadow and open sage habitat.

#### **Juniper Maintenance**

There are approximately 4770 acres of previously treated units identified in this CX (Map 2) where young junipers are starting to encroach back into the units. Within those units approximately 3000 acres are in need of additional juniper removal. These junipers are typically those that have sprouted or were small (below or within the sagebrush vegetation) and missed during the initial treatment. The juniper cutting would be conducted using hand operated devices (i.e. chainsaws, hand shears, etc.). The juniper would be cut and left on-site.

#### Purpose and Need for the Project:

The purpose of the proposed action is to remove western juniper within meadow habitat and restore sage grouse and pronghorn habitat. This meets the management direction in the 2008 Resource Management Plan (USDI BLM 2008 pp 63) to implement the Oregon Sage Grouse Conservation Strategy. Juniper management was one of the action items addressed in the conservation strategy (pp 77) to restore sage brush habitat.

#### Proposed Implementation:

This project is expected to be implemented in FY 2009. Depending on funding and environmental parameters this project could last over a period of five years.

### **B. Land Use Plan Conformance**

#### Land Use Plan Name, Date Approved:

- Klamath Falls Resource Area Record of Decision and Resource Management Plan (KFRA ROD/RMP), approved December 2008

The proposed action is in conformance with the applicable LUP because it is specifically provided for in the following LUP decision(s):

The proposed action (juniper management in sage grouse habitat) is recommended in the Greater Sage Grouse Conservation Assessment and Strategy for Oregon.

The RMP clearly states "Implement the Greater Sage Grouse Conservation Assessment and Strategy for Oregon." (PP. 63 KFRA RMP 2008) and additionally states; "Thin, pile and burn, or remove encroaching western juniper that hinders attainment of desired forage conditions to maintain and improve forage for big

game. Protect old juniper during these treatments. Maintain or enhance wildlife habitat on rangelands. Priority will be given to maintaining or enhancing habitat for special status and big game species” (PP. 65 KFRA RMP 2008).

The proposed project has been reviewed and found to be in conformance with one or more of the following BLM plans, programmatic environmental analyses or policies:

- Vegetation Treatment on BLM Lands in Thirteen Western States FEIS and ROD (1991)
- Northwest Area Noxious Weed Control Program FEIS and ROD (1985) and Supplement (1987)
- Integrated Weed Control Plan (IWCP) 1993
- Lakeview District Fire Management Plan – Phase 1 (1998)
- National Fire Plan (A Collaborative Approach for Reducing Wildland Fire Risks to Communities and the Environment 10-Year Comprehensive Strategy) (2001)
- Wildland and Prescribed Fire Management Policy (1998)
- Emergency Fire Rehabilitation Plan (see Interagency Burned Area Emergency Stabilization and Rehabilitation Handbook - 2001)
- Rangeland Reform '94 FEIS and ROD (1995)
- Standards for Rangeland Health and Guidelines for Livestock Grazing Management for Public Lands Administered by the Bureau of Land Management in the States of Oregon and Washington (1997)
- Standards for Land Health for Lands Administered by the Bureau of Land Management in the States of Oregon and Washington (1998)
- Interior Columbia Basin Strategy Scientific Documentation (2003)
- National Sage-Grouse Habitat Conservation Strategy (2004)
- Greater Sage-Grouse Conservation Strategy and Assessment for Oregon, (2005)

**C. Compliance with NEPA**

The Proposed Action is categorically excluded from further documentation under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) in accordance with 516 DM 11.9-C 4 (Pre-commercial thinning and brush control using small mechanical devices.).

The proposed action is categorically excluded from further analysis or documentation under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) provided none of the Extraordinary Circumstances listed in 516 Departmental Manual 2, Appendix 2 (5/27/04) are met. The proposed action will:

<b>CX Extraordinary Circumstances Documentation</b>		
<b>The proposed categorical exclusion action will:</b>	<b>YES</b>	<b>NO</b>
2.1 Have significant impacts on public health or safety.		X
Rationale: The proposed action is the cutting and lopping of small diameter juniper. No issues to public health or safety will arise from this action.		
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); floodplains (Executive Order 11988); national monuments; migratory birds; and other ecologically significant or critical areas.		X
Rationale: There are no ecological or significant areas or features within the project area.		
2.3 Have highly controversial environmental effects or involve unresolved conflicts concerning alternative uses of available resources [NEPA Section 102(2)(E)].		X
Rationale: Juniper management is common practice with meadow habitat and would not result in controversial effects or unresolved conflicts		
2.4 Have highly uncertain and potentially significant environmental effects or involve unique or unknown environmental risks.		X
Rationale: Juniper management is common practice with meadow habitat and would not result in unique or unknown environmental risks.		
2.5 Establish a precedent for future action or represent a decision in principle about future actions with potentially significant environmental effects.		X

Rationale: There would be no significant environmental effects from the cutting and lopping of juniper		
2.6 Have a direct relationship to other actions with individually insignificant but cumulatively significant environmental effects.		X
Rationale: The proposed hand cutting of juniper would not result in significant impacts when consider with other actions.		
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.		X
Rationale: The project has been reviewed by the local archeologist, sites have been identified and will be avoided during implementation of the project. Approximately 270 acres need to be inventoried in the western unit. This will be inventoried and sites flagged for avoidance prior to implementation.		
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.		X
Rationale: No Threatened or Endangered species occur or will be affected by the project.		
2.9 Violate a Federal law, or a State, local, or tribal law or requirement imposed for the protection of the environment.		X
Rationale: The proposed action will be completed in accordance with all applicable laws and regulations		
2.10 Have a disproportionately high and adverse effect on low income or minority populations (Executive Order 12898).		X
Rationale: There will be no effect on low income or minority population		
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).		X
Rationale: There are no such sites within the project boundary. Therefore access would not be limited.		
2.12 Contribute to the introduction, continued existence, or spread of noxious weeds or non-native invasive species known to occur in the area or actions that may promote the introduction, growth, or expansion of the range of such species (Federal Noxious Weed Control Act and Executive Order 13112).		X
Rationale: Appendix A of this document addresses weed mitigation measures. The proposed action would limit disturbance and therefore the spread of noxious weeds because no large machinery will be used.		

The proposed action would not meet any of the above extraordinary circumstances, or fail to comply with Executive Order 13212 (Actions to Expedite Energy-Related Projects) – to avoid direct or indirect adverse impact on energy development, production, supply, and/or distribution.

#### D. Surveys and Consultation

Surveys and/or consultation may be needed for special status plants and animals, for cultural resources, and other resources as necessary (appropriate fields are Initialed and Dated by responsible resource specialist):

Surveys	Are Completed	Will Be Completed	Are Not Needed
SS Animals			SGH 03/02/09
SS Plants	MJB 3/18/09		
Cultural Resources		BMB 3/3/09	
Consultation	Is Completed	Will Be Completed	Is Not Needed
SS Animal Consultation*	SGH 03/02/09		
Botanical Consultation			MJB 3/18/09
Cultural Consultation	BMB 3/3/09		
*(SS = Special Status)			

#### Remarks:

**E. Decision**

The proposed action would not create adverse environmental impacts or require the preparation of an environmental assessment (EA) or environmental impact statement (EIS). The proposed action has been reviewed against the criteria for extraordinary circumstances (listed above) as identified in 516 DM 2, Appendix 2. The application of this categorical exclusion is appropriate, as there are no extraordinary circumstances potentially having effects that may significantly affect the environment. The proposed action is, therefore, categorically excluded from additional NEPA documentation.

It is my decision to proceed with the Proposed Action.

**F. Signature**

Authorizing Official: /s/ Donald J. Holmstrom  
(Signature)

Date: 4/30/09

Name: Donald J. Holmstrom

Title: Manager, Klamath Falls Resource Area

**G. Contact Person**

For additional information concerning this CX review, contact:

Steve Hayner, Klamath Falls Resource Area, 2795 Anderson Avenue, Building 25, Klamath Falls, Oregon 97603-7891 or telephone: 541-883-4126.

## **Appendix A – Weed Mitigation Measures**

All vehicles and equipment will be cleaned off prior to operating on BLM lands. Removal of all dirt, grease, and plant parts that may carry noxious weed seeds or vegetative parts is required and may be accomplished with a pressure hose.

All equipment and vehicles operating off of main roads shall be cleaned off prior to leaving the job site when the job site includes noxious weed populations. Removal of all dirt, grease, and plant parts that may carry noxious weed seeds or vegetative parts is required and may be accomplished with a pressure hose.

## **Appendix B – “Old” Juniper Description**

Older juniper: Juniper that originated in the “presettlement” period, before 1870. It is assumed that these trees are growing on sites that they are adapted to, since they began growing there under “natural conditions” when natural processes (including lightning fires) determined vegetation patterns. Older junipers are usually found in rocky areas where vegetation is sparse and natural fire frequency is low. Some typical characteristics of older juniper are: • Crown is flat, rounded, broad at top, or irregular (as opposed to the more pointed tops of younger trees) • Spike top • Numerous dead branches • Branches covered with a coarse, bright yellow-green lichen (*Letharia*, or wolf lichen) • Large diameter lower branches • Large diameter trunk relative to height • Trunk has spirally-twisted bark, deep furrows • Hollow trunk. It is rare for an older juniper to have all of the above features, but more commonly will have at least three or four. Also, older juniper is not always the largest trees; on drier, rocky sites, they can be short, stubby, gnarly trees.

## **Appendix C – General Project Design Features**

Juniper flagged with yellow and white striped flagging will be reserved from cutting

Off road use would be limited to dry or frozen conditions

During wet periods vehicles would be limited to roads

During wet periods vehicle use would be stopped when ruts greater than 4 inches occur on roads

No vehicle use within 100 ft of riparian or spring areas

No refueling within 100ft of riparian or spring areas

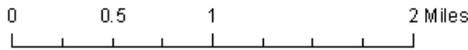
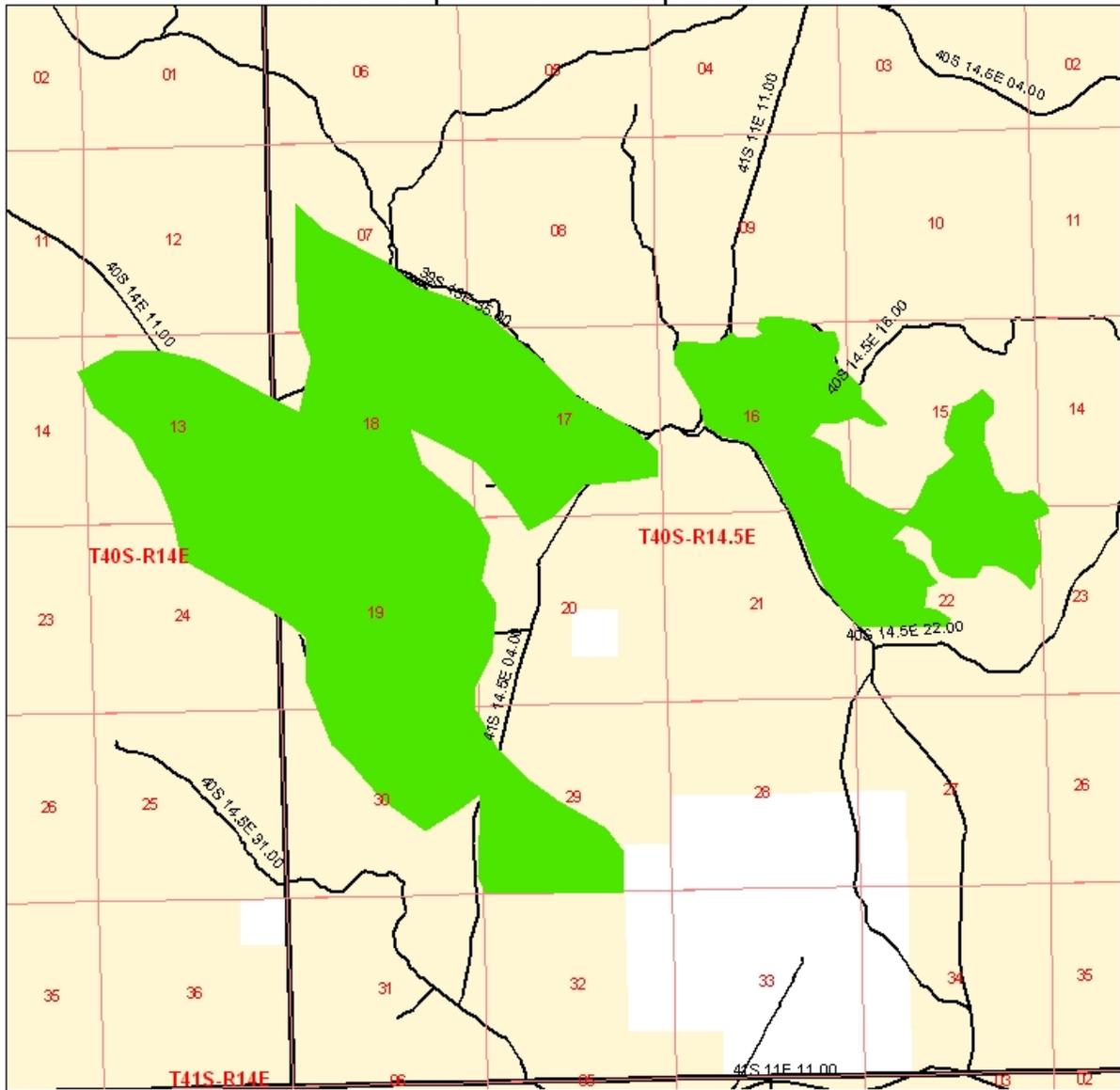
### **Fences**

During manual tree felling operations, trees will be directionally cut to fall away from fences. This includes allotment and pasture fences and enclosure fences around springs, water developments, and study sites. If trees do damage fence components including wires, posts, stays, clips, rock cribs, gates, or brace structures these will be repaired immediately. During all juniper treatments, living junipers or juniper stumps that are being used as fence posts will not be cut down or “topped”.

### **Special Status Species**

There is a rare plant population present around the edges of Dog Hollow Reservoir. This area should be avoided.

# Dog Hollow and Lower Midway Waterspreader Juniper Units

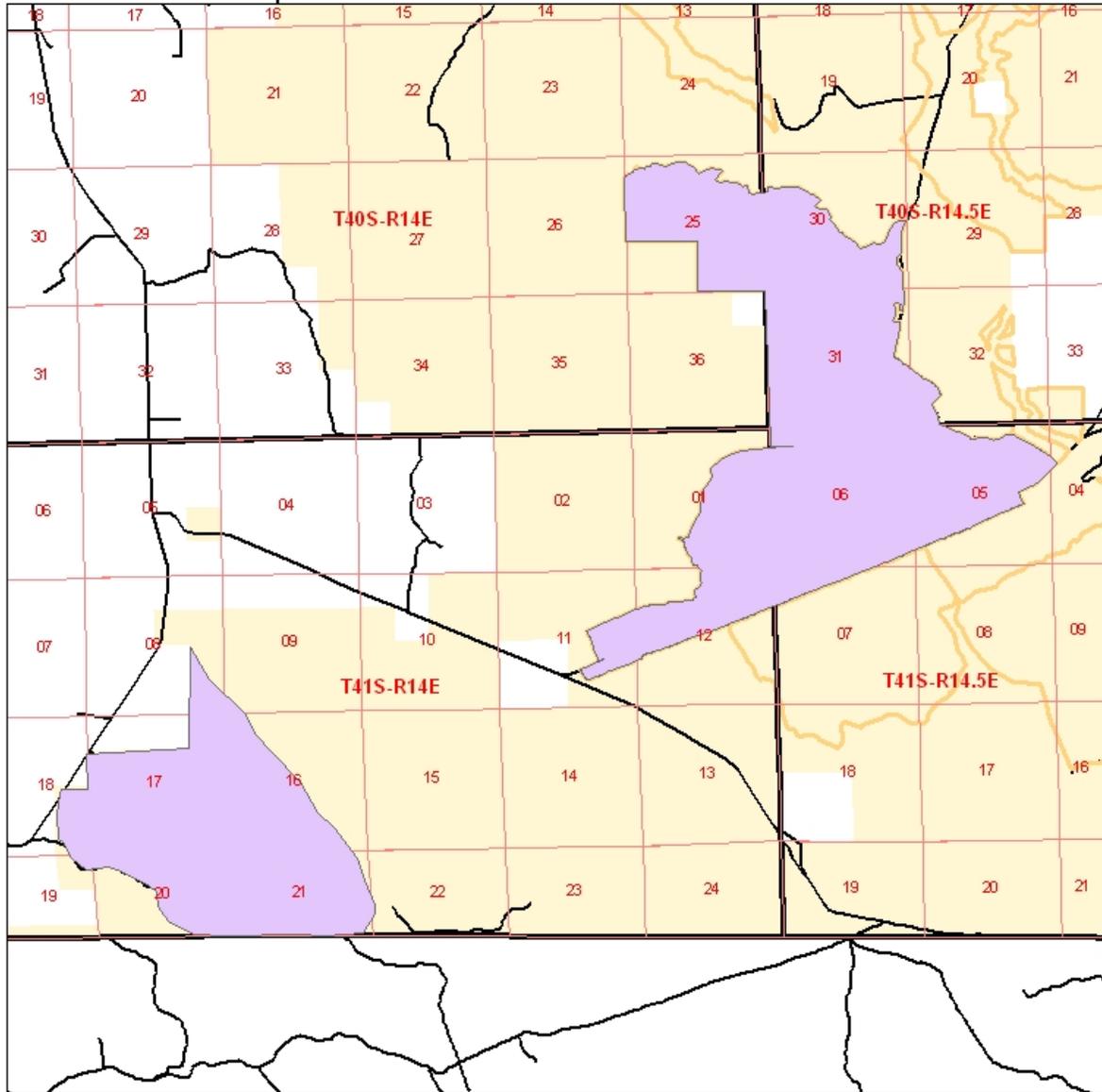


### Legend

- Dog Hollow and Lower Midway Waterspreader
- KFRA Section Lines
- KFRA Township Range Lines
- KFRA Roads by Surface Type

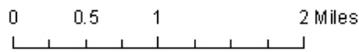
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# Juniper Maintenance Units South Gerber



## Legend

-  Juniper Maintenance
-  KFRS Section Lines
-  KFRS Township Range Lines
-  Completed Fuel Treatments - Shear
-  KFRS Roads by Surface Type



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Map of Juniper Maintenance Units South Gerber, prepared by KFRS, 2010. The map is based on the 2010 KFRS map of the area. The map is not to be used for any other purpose without the express written permission of KFRS. The map is not to be used for any other purpose without the express written permission of KFRS. The map is not to be used for any other purpose without the express written permission of KFRS.