

Worksheet
Determination of NEPA Adequacy (DNA)
U.S Department of the Interior, Bureau of Land Management

A. Background

BLM Office: **Prineville**

NEPA Log #: DOI-BLM-OR-P040-2010-0048

Project/Lease/Serial/Case File #:

Applicant: **Alex Robertson**

Location: 20 miles SE of Prineville. 2 Mile NW of Post Oregon.

T15S R19E Sec 35, 36

T15S R20E Sec 31

T16S R19E Sec 1-5, 7-18, 20-28

T16S R20E Sec 5-8, 16-19

Proposed Action Title/Type: **Post-Horse Heaven Prescribed Burn**

Description of the Proposed Action and any applicable mitigation measures:

Prescribed burning on 1,107 acres of BLM land within the 5,402 acre planned burn area located near the town of Post (see attached map). Burning will be implemented by private parties with land ownership surrounding the BLM administered lands. This burn will be done in coordination with the Oregon Department of Forestry (ODF), BLM, and the Crooked River Watershed Council. The BLM lands within the burn area will be surveyed and cleared for treatment before the prescribed fire is allowed to burn through these areas. A prescribed fire plan (burn plan) will be created by the ODF and approved by the BLM prior to burn initiation. The goals of the burn will be to restore the health and diversity of the vegetation and to control the spread of western juniper.

Purpose of and Need for Action: Due to fire exclusion, there is a need to reintroduce fire into the ecosystem. The purpose of this project is to restore and maintain ecosystems consistent with land management uses and historic fire regimes through prescribed fire. The purpose of the project is also to reintroduce fire as a natural process in the ecosystem in order to restore the ecosystem to a healthier, better functioning state.

B. Land Use Plan Conformance

Land Use Plan Name: **Brothers/LaPine Resource Management Plan, 1989.**

The proposed action is in conformance with the applicable plan because it is specifically provided for in the following land use plan decisions:

“Use prescribed fire to meet management objectives throughout the planning area.” (Brothers/LaPine Resource Plan Record of Decision. 1989. Pg 12)

“...the use of prescribed fire (both planned and unplanned ignitions) to reduce fuel loads, manage habitat and forage or control vegetation in rights-of-way, weed infestation areas, etc.” (Brothers/LaPine Resource Management Plan Record of Decision, 1989. Pg. 101)

C. Identify applicable National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) documents and related documents that cover the proposed action

The following NEPA documents cover the proposed action:

High Desert Prescribed Burn Project, EA, 1998. EA # OR-050-98-005

“This action would help restore the health and diversity of the vegetation, control the spread of western juniper, reduce hazard fuels, improve hydrological regimes, and increase forage for wildlife and livestock.”
(High Desert Prescribed Burn Project, EA, 1998, FONSI pg. 1)

“Reduce fuel levels in order to decrease the chance of extreme habitat loss through stand replacing or catastrophic wildfire.” (High Desert Prescribed Burn Project, EA, 1998, Pg. 2)

Brothers/LaPine Final Environmental Impact Statement, 1988.

The following other documentation is relevant to the proposed action (e.g., biological assessment, biological opinion, watershed assessment, allotment evaluation, and monitoring report): None

D. NEPA Adequacy Criteria

1. Is the new proposed action a feature of, or essentially similar to, an alternative analyzed in the existing NEPA document(s)? Is the project within the same analysis area, or if the project location is different, are the geographic and resource conditions sufficiently similar to those analyzed in the existing NEPA document(s)? If there are differences, can you explain why they are not substantial?

- The proposed action is a feature of Alternative 1 of the **High Desert Prescribed Burn EA**.
“This alternative would result in prescribed burning multiple units (to be identified, and surveyed before treatment) within the High Desert. Fire would be reintroduced for several reasons including juniper reduction, aspen regeneration, weed reduction, riparian enhancement and to improve forb and grass cover.” – (page 6 High Desert Prescribed Burn EA)
- This project is within the same analysis area and the geographic and resource conditions are sufficiently similar to those analyzed in the High Desert Prescribed Burn EA - (Map 1 High Desert Prescribed Burn EA)

2. Is the range of alternatives analyzed in the existing NEPA document(s) appropriate with respect to the new proposed action, given current environmental concerns, interests, and resource values?

Yes, the alternatives analyzed in the High Desert Prescribed Burn Project EA considered a range of alternatives adequate for the type and scale of treatment proposed at this time.

- Alternative 1 – Proposed Action (prescribed burn)
- Alternative 2 – No Action; (no prescribed burning)
- Alternative 3 – Chaining to control shrubs and trees and release herbaceous species. This alternative was considered but eliminated from detailed analysis in the EA. This alternative was eliminated from detailed analysis because “...chaining is less economically efficient than burning and is not a natural process in the ecosystem.” - (page 6-7 High Desert Prescribed Burn EA)

- Alternative 4 – Wait for natural fire starts to burn to proposed area. This alternative was eliminated from consideration “...because natural fire would be unlikely to achieve the stated objectives in a reasonable amount of time...” - (page 7 High Desert Prescribed Burn EA)

3. Is the existing analysis valid in light of any new information or circumstances (such as rangeland health standard assessment, recent endangered species listings, updated lists of BLM sensitive species)? Can you reasonably conclude that all new information and new circumstances would not substantially change the analysis of the new proposed action?

Yes. The High Desert Prescribed Burn EA analyzed the effects of using prescribed fire to ... “1) restore the health and diversity of the vegetation, 2) control the spread of western juniper, 3) reduce hazard fuels, 4) improve decadent aspen communities, 5) improve long-term hydrological regimes (water quality, flow, timing etc.) and 6) increase forage for wildlife and livestock.” - (page 1 High Desert Prescribed Burn EA).

The existing analysis is still valid in light of new Green House Gas information and circumstances. Green House Gas (GHG) emissions produced from this project will be well below the 25,000 metric tons of CO₂ equivalent that the EPA has established as being a guide for determining significance, and thus would not have been an Issue that was analyzed in the EA, even with existing information and under existing circumstances.

4. Are the direct, indirect, and cumulative effects that would result from implementation of the new proposed action similar (both quantitatively and qualitatively) to those analyzed in the existing NEPA document(s)?

Yes, the direct, indirect and cumulative effects of the proposed action are similar to those analyzed in the High Desert Prescribed Burn EA. Section IV of the EA (page 15 – 23) covers the Environmental Consequences of Alternative 1. This includes the impacts on; Vegetation, Livestock Grazing Management, Wildlife, Special Status Species, Soils and Water, Noxious Weeds, Cultural and Paleontological Resources, Visual Resource Management, Recreation, Natural Areas, Air Quality, and Wetland and Riparian Areas.

- Additionally Section VII of the EA (page 23) discusses the Residual Impacts. “It is not known exactly what the cumulative impacts of multiple prescribed burns would be. However, since fire is a natural occurring event in the High Desert, it is thought that prescribed fire conducted at low-intensities in a mosaic pattern should not add any major impact to the area.” - (page 23 High Desert Prescribed Burn EA)

5. Are the public involvement and interagency review associated with existing NEPA document(s) adequately for the current proposed action?

Yes. Many of the individuals/organizations on our current “interested publics” list are the same as those on the mailing list for the High Desert Prescribed Burn EA. A copy of this DNA is/will be posted on the Prineville District internet page.

For detailed information regarding “Public Involvement”, see page 7 of the Brothers/LaPine Resource Management Plan.

E. Persons/Agencies/BLM Staff consulted

Cultural/Historic- John Zancanella
Wildlife-Rick Demmer
Fire/fuels-Alex Robertson
Hydrology – Anna Smith
Assistant Field Manager-Bill Dean

Range-Cari Taylor
Special Status Plants-Chris Anthony
Recreation/Visuals/Wilderness-Berry Phelps
Fisheries – Jeff Moss
Environmental Coordinator-Teal Purrington

Conclusion

Based on the review documented above, I conclude that this proposal conforms to the applicable land use plan and that the documentation fully covers the proposed action and constitutes BLM's compliance with the requirements of the NEPA.

Signature

Responsible official:

H.F. "Chip" Faver 8.30.10
H.F. "Chip" Faver Date
Field Manager, Central Oregon Resource Area

Note: The signed Conclusion on this Worksheet is part of an interim step in the BLM's internal decision process and does not constitute an appealable decision. However, the lease, permit, or other authorization based on this DNA is subject to protest or appeal under 43 CFR Part 4 and the program specific regulations.

Contact Person

For additional information concerning this review, contact: Alex Robertson – Fire Management Officer, telephone 541-416-6754. Prineville District Office, 3050 NE 3rd Street, Prineville, OR 97754

Horse Heaven 2010 Private Rx

