

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-P060-2013-0018-DNA

Location: the Rickman Spring Unit is 20 airmiles northeast of Hampton, Oregon (T20S, R24E, Section 30); the Shaw Table Unit is 10 airmiles east of Paulina, Oregon (17S, R25E, Section 18); the Soda Table Unit is 13 airmiles east of Paulina (T17S, R25E, Section 14 and 15); the Coyote Springs Highway Unit is 12 airmiles east of Paulina (T17S, R25E, Section 21).

Proposed Action Title: Sage-grouse Habitat Enhancement Juniper Cuts

Description of the Proposed Action: This project will cut approximately 1,920 acres of young juniper that are encroaching into sagebrush plant communities. Young juniper will be cut with chainsaws and the limbs will be scattered so that cut junipers do not exceed 4 feet when laid on the ground. Chainsaw operators will use existing roads to access the project area, then travel by foot to cut juniper. Juniper cutting will not occur during the sage-grouse breeding/nesting season March 1 – July 1. Juniper cutting during December 1 – April 30 will be completed within a two week period to minimize disturbance to mule deer, elk, and pronghorn on winter range. Old-growth trees will not be cut. Also, all juniper trees with two or more of the following characteristics will not be cut: round tops, yellow foliose lichen, deep furrowed bark, low spreading branches, or spiked dead tops. Wildlife trees that contain either cavities, nests, or both will not be cut. Stumps from cut trees will be 12 inches or less in height, or no higher than surrounding vegetation to maintain visual aesthetics of the open, sagebrush-steppe community. Pastures will not be rested following juniper cuts, because they are in good to excellent ecological condition, juniper cutting will have a low impact to soils, and the existing vegetation community is resistant and resilient to disturbance.

B. Land Use Plan Conformance

Land Use Plan Name: Brothers/LaPine Resource Management Plan

Date approved (ROD): July 5, 1989

The proposed action is in conformance with the applicable plan, even though it is not specifically provided for, because it is clearly consistent with the following land use plan decisions (objectives, terms, conditions):

- Page 12, objective, "Provide optimum habitat diversity for game and non-game wildlife species."

- Page 90, standard operating procedures, e.g., "All actions will be consistent with the BLM's Visual Resource Management criteria," "In crucial wildlife habitat...work will be scheduled during the appropriate season to avoid or minimize disturbances," "Surface disturbance at all project sites will be held to a minimum."

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

The following NEPA documents (EA, DEIS, FEIS) cover the proposed action:
High Desert Shrub Steppe Restoration Environmental Assessment.(HDSSREA), April 2011

The following other documentation is relevant to the proposed action (e.g., biological assessment, biological opinion, watershed assessment, allotment evaluation, and monitoring report):

Biological Evaluation for Listed, Proposed, and Special Status Wildlife Species, November, 2012; Special Status Plant Survey Report, November, 2012; Waiver for Cultural Resource Survey, March 7, 2013.

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)? Yes. The proposed action is to cut juniper with chainsaws which is analyzed in the HDSSREA under alternative 2, Pages 13-20. The current proposed action includes design features from the existing EA, page 30-39. 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)? Yes. The project area is located in occupied sage-grouse habitat and the vegetation community is shrub-steppe, pages 5, 13-20. If there are differences, can you explain why they are not substantial? There are no differences.

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 looked at a no action alternative (Alt. 1) and an alternative that emphasized mechanical treatments (Alt. 2).

- Page 8 of the HDSSREA, Alternative 2: "Cut, mow, or crush young juniper and/or shrubs on 10,200 acres annually. Pile or scatter the downed vegetation, including juniper limbs".

Acres treated annually	Alternative 1	Alternative 2	Alternative 3
Cut, mow or crush vegetation	0	10,200	3,400

3. Is the existing analysis valid in light of any new information or circumstances (such as rangeland health standard assessment, recent endangered species listings, and 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 existing analysis is valid because no new information is available. No updated Wilderness Characteristic Inventory has been conducted on the tracts of public land proposed to enhance sage-grouse habitat by thinning juniper. However, all of these tracts of public land are less than 5,000 acres, so wilderness values do not exist on these public lands. Additionally, all project areas are within a VRM Management Class IV area. The project proposal is consistent with this VRM Management Class and will provide for leaving old growth and big trees in the landscape within these tracts of public land.

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)? The direct and indirect effects of the proposed action are similar to those analyzed in the EA on pages 13-20.

5. Are the public involvement and interagency review associated with existing NEPA document(s) adequate for the current proposed action? Yes. The existing EA and subsequent decision were posted on the BLM's public web site on April 15, 2011 and mailed to agencies, local governments, organizations and interested public. The current permittee has been notified about the proposed action.

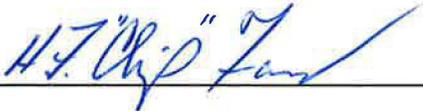
E. Persons/Agencies/BLM Staff consulted

<u>Name</u>	<u>Title</u>	<u>Resource/Agency represented</u>
Christopher R. Anthony	Natural Resource Specialist	Wildlife, Botany, Weeds
Cari Taylor	Rangeland Management Specialist	Range
Barry Phelps	Recreation	Recreation, Visual, Wilderness
Ryan Griffin	Archeology Technician	Archeology
Teal Purrington	NEPA Coordinator	NEPA
Bill Dean	Assistant Field Manager	Manager

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: 

3/4/13
Date

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: Christopher R. Anthony, Natural Resource Specialist, Prineville Field Office, 3050 NE 3rd Street, Prineville, OR 97754, telephone (541) 788-7925, cranthon@blm.gov.