

**Decision Record and Finding of No Significant Impact
For Vegetation Restoration Programmatic EA
EA#OR130-06-EA-001**

Decision

It is my decision to Implement Alternative 2 (Proposed Action), including all design features, as described in EA#OR130-06-EA-001 for the Vegetation Restoration Programmatic EA. This decision provides for the restoration of shrub steppe native habitats in the range of the sage-grouse (Figure 1) from disturbed areas such as burned areas, CRP lands, and areas of excessive fuels.

Alternatives

The EA team considered a range of alternatives, but concluded that only the proposed alternative (Alternative 2) and the no action alternative (Alternative 1) were practical to implement in the context of this program of work. The proposed action (Alternative 2), considered the potential impacts of an accelerated vegetation restoration program across the range of the sage-grouse, while the no action alternative would take no specific action to change the program as it presently exists. The proposed vegetation management alternative recognizes the urgent need for action while balancing competing resource values and uses.

Public Involvement

A BLM interdisciplinary team of natural resource specialist in fuels, archeology, wildlife, and rangeland management convened and completed their own internal scoping effort. The issues, concerns and opportunities that the specialists identified were used to develop the public involvement statement. An internal draft of EA was sent to all resource professional on the Spokane District, inviting them to participate and soliciting comments, which completed the internal scoping effort. The public is invited to comment on the EA and to provide comments through the comment card on the web site or through phone call or office visit. on issues or concerns about the action.

Rationale for Decision

The decision to authorize the proposed action, as described in the Environmental Assessment (EA), is based on the following:

- ✓ Proposed management is in accordance with the EA's stated purpose and need.
- ✓ Proposed management will not result in any undue or unnecessary environmental degradation.
- ✓ The management plan was developed with public involvement and meets public interest.
- ✓ The proposed action is in conformance with the Approved Resource Management Plan for the Public Lands Administered by the Bureau of Land Management (BLM), Spokane District Office.

- ✓ Proposed management recognizes the rapidly deteriorating condition of shrub steppe habitats across the historic range of the sage-grouse and the implications for populations of many native species of plants and animals, especially sage dependent species.

This project will improve the ecosystem wide health of shrub steppe lands in the project area. Improving the health of this habitat will lead to a wide variety of resource benefits, especially for sagebrush dependent wildlife and associated native plants, as well as many other potential benefits such as recreation, cultural resources, weed suppression, soil erosion and improved watershed function to name a few.

Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI)

I have examined the 1) Management Actions and Project Design Features to be implemented, 2) the analysis of the potential environmental impacts as described in Environmental Assessment EA#OR134-06-EA-02, and 3) other information available to me, including a Biological Assessment. I have carefully considered the impacts associated with the increased scale of project accomplishment that will be facilitated by this EA, and I have compared these impacts with not implementing this program of work. Any resulting impacts resulting from the proposed action are not expected to be significant.

The protective measures include actions to reduce soil impacts, reduce weeds and to minimize disturbance to wildlife in the project area. No critical elements will be adversely affected. The EA determined that there would not be a significant impact to any resource. In accordance with the National Environmental Policy Act and implementing the Council on Environmental Quality regulations (40 CFR 1500-1508), I find that the proposed Vegetation Restoration Programmatic EA Proposed Alternative is not a major Federal action significantly affecting the quality of the human environment. Therefore, no Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) will be prepared.

Implementation Date and Appeal Opportunity

In accordance with 43 CFR 4, persons have the right to appeal this decision to the Interior Board of Land Appeals. A person who wishes to appeal to the Board must file a Notice of Appeal in the Spokane District - BLM Office. A person must transmit the Notice of Appeal within 30 days after public notification of this decision.

If you have questions concerning the environmental assessment, or decision please contact Sally Sovey, Wenatchee Field Office Manager (509) 665-2100, or Kevin Devitt, Border Field Office Manager (509) 536-1200.

<p>/s/ Kevin R. Devitt</p> <p>_____/S/_____ Kevin R. Devitt, Field Manager Border Resource Area</p>
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<p>/s/ Sally Sovey</p> <p>_____/S/_____ Sally Sovey, Field Manager Wenatchee Field Office</p>
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