

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT - ALTURAS FIELD OFFICE

FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT

Sally Mountain Juniper Removal

EA # DOI-BLM-CA-N020-2010-0023-EA

INTRODUCTION

The Bureau of Land Management (BLM), Alturas Field Office, has conducted an environmental assessment (EA # DOI-BLM-CA-N020-2010-0023-EA) for the Sally Mtn. Juniper Removal.

PROPOSED ACTION

The Proposed Action is to include 200 acres of public land as part of a private land juniper treatment on Sally Mountain. The permittee of the North Ash Valley Allotment has arranged with the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) to assist with funding an approximately 1000 acre juniper treatment project. The AFO wishes to work in cooperation with the private land owner and the NRCS to include the public land as a part of the overall treatment and help the BLM meet its overall objectives for Sage Steppe Restoration. Current funding covers approximately 200 acres of private land and approximately 200 acres of public land.

PLAN CONFORMANCE AND CONSISTENCY

This proposed action is subject to the following use plan(s): Alturas Resource Management Plan (RMP) and Record of Decision (ROD), approved on April 17, 2008. The proposed action has been determined to be in conformance with this plan as required by regulation (43 CFR 1610.5-3(a)).

FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT DETERMINATION

It is my determination that the proposed action will not result in significant impacts to the quality of the human environment. Thus, the project does not constitute a major federal action having a significant effect on the human environment. Therefore, an environmental impact statement (EIS) is not necessary and will not be prepared. This conclusion is based on my consideration of the Council on Environmental Quality's criteria for significance (40 CFR §1508.27) regarding the context and intensity of the impacts described in the Barrows Allotment Livestock Grazing Permit Renewal Environmental Assessment (EA). The criteria include:

1. Impacts may be both beneficial and adverse. A significant effect may exist even if the Federal agency believes that on balance the effect will be beneficial.

I have determined that none of the direct, indirect or cumulative impacts are significant individually or combined.

2. The degree to which the selected alternative will affect public health or safety.

The proposed action is located within a rural setting. There are no actions that are proposed that would affect public health or safety.

3. Unique characteristics of the geographic area such as proximity to historic or cultural resources, park lands, prime farm lands, wetlands, wilderness, wild and scenic rivers, or ecologically critical areas.

A discussion of cultural resources is located in chapter 3 of the EA. Adequate measures have been taken to identify any potential resources and implement protective measures prior to treatments.

4. The degree to which the effects on the quality of the human environment are likely to be highly controversial.

An interdisciplinary team reviewed the proposed action and the impacts that would result on the identified issues/resources. No anticipated effects have been identified that are controversial.

5. The degree to which the possible effects on the human environment are highly uncertain or involve unique or unknown risks.

The actions that would be implemented do not involve unique or unknown risks. The BLM has experience implementing similar actions in similar areas. Based on the attached EA, there are no predicted effects on the human environment that are considered to be highly uncertain or involve unique or unknown risks.

6. The degree to which the action may establish a precedent for future actions with significant effects or represents a decision in principle about a future consideration.

The alternatives described in the EA are not precedent setting and are limited in scope to Western Juniper removal within the Sally Mountain Project Area.

7. Whether the action is related to other actions with individually insignificant but cumulatively significant impacts – which include connected actions regardless of land ownership.

The actions considered in the selected alternative were considered by the interdisciplinary team within the context of past, present, and reasonably foreseeable future actions. Significant cumulative effects are not predicted on the identified issues. An analysis of the cumulative effects of the selected alternative and all other alternatives is described in chapter 4 of the EA.

8. The degree to which the action may adversely affect districts, sites, highways, structures, or other objects listed in or eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places or may cause loss or destruction of significant scientific, cultural, or historical resources.

The Sally Mountain Project Area has 200 BLM managed acres of which approximately 200 acres have been surveyed for cultural resources. In general, the BLM parcel is considered to have low sensitivity due to the relative lack of water on BLM lands and the prevailing topography. Two sites were found and will be flagged and avoided during the mechanical treatment.

9. The degree to which the action may adversely affect an endangered or threatened species or its habitat that has been determined to be critical under the Endangered Species Act of 1973, or the degree to which the action may adversely affect: 1) a proposed to be listed endangered or threatened species or its habitat, or 2) a species on BLM's sensitive species list.

There are no threatened or endangered species occurring within the Sally Mountain Project Area that would be affected by the selected alternative. The project area does not occur within habitat for BLM sensitive species.

10. Whether the action threatens a violation of a federal, state, local, or tribal law, regulation or policy imposed for the protection of the environment, where nonfederal requirements are consistent with federal requirements.

The project does not violate any known federal, state, local or tribal law or requirement imposed for the protection of the environment. Local tribes were contacted and are listed in the EA. In addition, the project is consistent with applicable land management plans, policies, and programs.