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

FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT

McDonald Mountain Allotment Boundary Fence

EA # DOI-BLM-CA-N020-2012-0003-EA

INTRODUCTION

The Bureau of Land Management (BLM), Alturas Field Office, has conducted an environmental assessment (EA # DOI-BLM-CA-N020-2012-0003-EA) for the McDonald Mountain Allotment Boundary Fence, which was damaged in a 2010 wildfire.

Selected Alternative

Fence Reconstruction

The BLM proposes to reconstruct approximately 0.87 miles of fence located on McDonald Mountain at 7900 feet elevation in section 32, T. 36 N., R.14 E (see map). This fence, originally built in 1959 following the Three Peaks Fire has a northerly aspect and has been affected over the years by high accumulations of snow during the winter months causing fence posts to bend and wires to break. Brush has continued to grow taller and thicker along the existing fence line also affecting the integrity of the fence in the years following the 1959 Three Peaks fire.

The fencing crew will access the project using four wheel all-terrain vehicles and a New Holland farm tractor pulling a military trailer that will transport equipment and supplies along the existing fence that will be replaced. Fence posts are 48 inches high and wire will be 38" up from the ground. Steel posts will be driven into the ground or when rock formations prevent driving, holes will be drilled. Rock baskets will be constructed as appurtenances to the fence and built by using native rock on site. Location of gates will be agreed to by BLM and the permittee. Locations of the rock baskets will be discussed with the archeologist before rock baskets are constructed.

Project Design Features

The BLM fence standards in the BLM Manual (H-1741-1) for livestock and wildlife will be implemented. The standards include a three wire fence, 38 inches high with spacing that includes a smooth bottom wire eighteen inches from the ground, a middle wire at ten inches and the top wire at twelve inches from the middle wire. Due to the concerns of snow loading in the area posts may be placed closer together than the 16.5 feet recommended to provide additional strength. Deflectors would be installed on new fences as per Attachment 1.

Fence reconstruction would occur outside of the antelope kidding season (November-March).

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 McDonald Mountain Allotment Boundary Fence 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 any on the ground activities.

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 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 boundary fence construction for the McDonald Mountain Allotment.

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.

No historic properties were located during this inventory.

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.

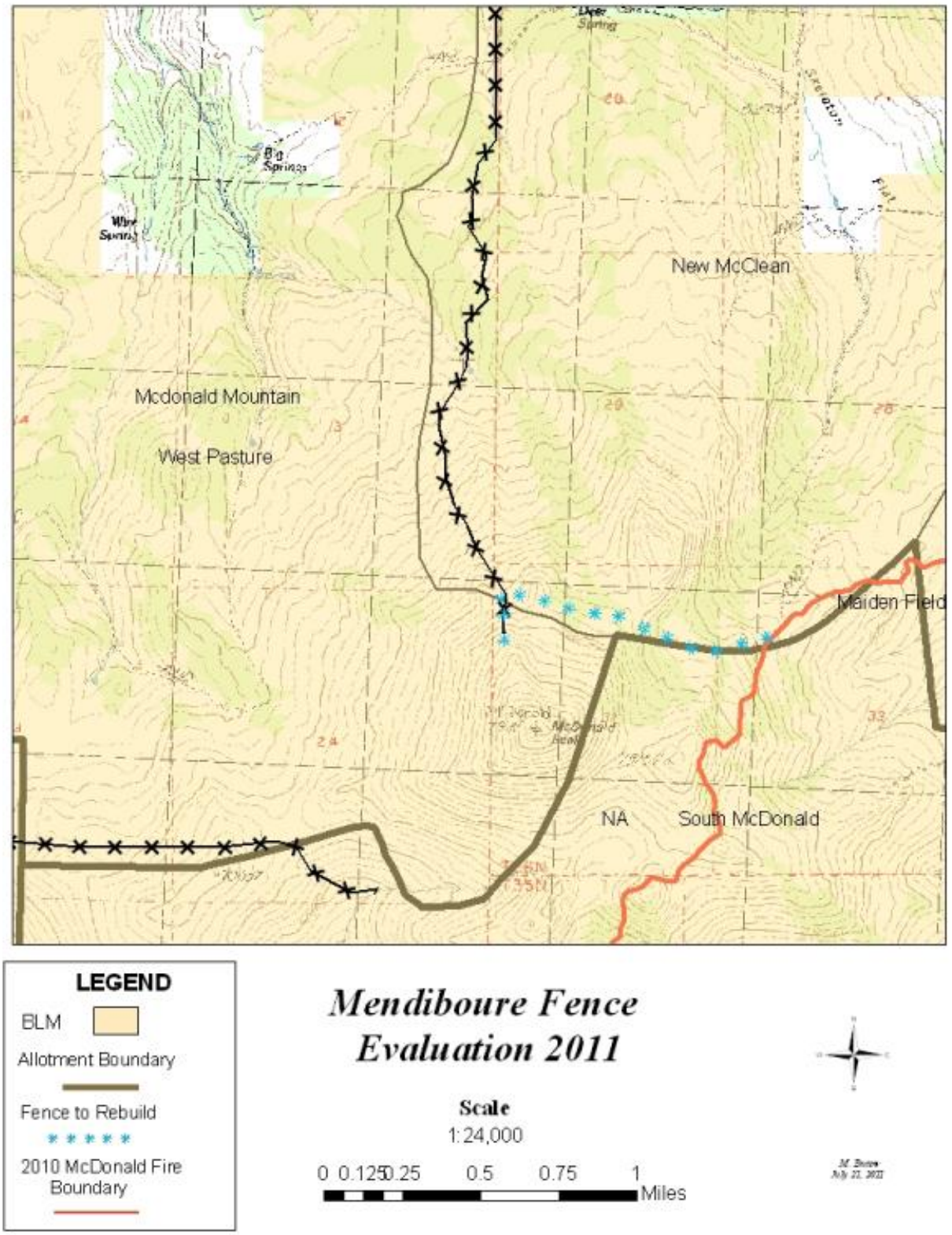
There are no threatened or endangered species occurring within the Project Area that would be affected by the selected alternative.

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.

_____/S/ Timothy Burke_____ _____6/11/2012_____

Timothy J. Burke, Alturas Field Manager Date


New McClean
Mcdonald Mountain
West Pasture
Maiden Field
NA
South McDonald
LEGEND
BLM
Allotment Boundary
Fence to Rebuild
2010 McDonald Fire Boundary
Mendiboure Fence Evaluation 2011
Scale
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0 0.125 0.25 0.5 0.75 1
Miles