United States Department of the Interior

BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT
Mother Lode Field Office
5152 Hillsdale Circle
El Dorado Hills, CA 95762-5713
www.blm.gov/ca/motherlode

Juniper Ridge Land Use Authorization
(CA-180-13-32)
Finding of No Significant Impact
June 2013

It is my determination that this decision will not result in significant impacts to the quality of the human environment. Anticipated impacts are within the range of impacts addressed by the Sierra Resource Management Plan (RMP). Thus, the proposed action 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 CEQ's following criteria for significance (40 CFR §1508.27), regarding the context and intensity of the impacts described in the EA and based on my understanding of the project:

1) Impacts can be both beneficial and adverse and a significant effect may exist regardless of the perceived balance of effects. Potential impacts include vegetation removal, soil disturbance and temporary noise and dust.

2) The degree of the impact on public health or safety. No aspects of the proposed action have been identified as having the potential to significantly and adversely impact public health or safety. In fact, the project is designed to enhance public health.

3) Unique characteristics of the geographic area. The project area does not contain any unique characteristics.

4) The degree to which the effects on the quality of the human environment are likely to be highly controversial effects. No anticipated effects have been identified that are scientifically controversial. As a factor for determining within the meaning of 40 C.F.R. § 1508.27(b)(4) whether or not to prepare a detailed environmental impact statement, "controversy" is not equated with "the existence of opposition to a use." *Northwest Environmental Defense Center v. Bonneville Power Administration*, 117 F.3d 1520, 1536 (9th Cir. 1997). "The term 'highly controversial' refers to instances in which 'a substantial dispute exists as to the size, nature, or effect of the major federal action rather than the mere existence of opposition to a use.'" *Hells Canyon Preservation Council v. Jacoby*, 9 F.Supp.2d 1216, 1242 (D. Or. 1998).

5) The degree to which the possible effects on the human environment are likely to be highly uncertain or involve unique or unknown risks. The analysis does not show that the proposed action would involve any 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 proposed action is not precedent setting.

7) Whether the action is related to other actions with individually insignificant but cumulatively significant impacts. No significant site specific or cumulative impacts have been identified. The proposed action is consistent with the Sierra RMP.

8) The degree to which the action may adversely affect National Historic Register listed or eligible to be listed sites or may cause loss or destruction of significant scientific, cultural or historical resources. The proposed action would not adversely affect cultural properties listed on or eligible for the National Register of Historic Places.

9) The degree to which the action may adversely affect ESA listed species or critical habitat. The proposed project is located approximately 1.2 miles from the nearest known population of California red-legged frog and in proximity to suitable aquatic habitat for the frog. In order to reduce potential effects of the proposed project on the frog the BLM is proposing to conduct vegetative clearing activities during the dry season, and avoid all aquatic features by a distance of 300 feet. Since BLM will conduct activities during the dry season when the frog is restricted to aquatic habitats, and all aquatic features will be buffered by a distance of 300 feet, the potential effects to the frog are considered to be insignificant and/or discountable.

10) Whether the action threatens a violation of environmental protection law or requirements. There is no indication that the proposed action will result in actions that will threaten such a violation.

_____ _____

William S. Haigh Date
Field Manager,
Mother Lode Field Office

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Juniper Ridge Land Use Authorization
Determination of NEPA Adequacy (DNA)
June 2013

EA Number: CA-180-13-32

Proposed Action: Juniper Ridge Mountain Misery and Cedar Sapling Clearing Project

Location: T. 17 N., R. 9 E., sections 19, 20, 29 and 30, MDBM within Nevada County, California

A. Description of the Proposed Action and any applicable mitigation measures
The proposed project consists of the clearing of mountain misery and small cedar saplings along existing roads for commercial purposes within the bounds of the Round Mountain Fuel Break Project. This land use authorization will allow Juniper Ridge to clear all mountain misery and small cedar saplings within 100-feet from either side of the existing roads in the area identified on the attached map. An added benefit is that the project would provide maintenance to the existing fuel break by removing vegetation from the roadways making them more fire safe.

The proposed project will help to maintain existing fuel breaks on public lands in the vicinity of Round Mountain in Nevada County, California. Hand operated power equipment will be used for the treatment and removal of the mountain misery and cedar saplings. The mountain misery will be transported offsite to be chipped for the commercial use and the cedar saplings will be chipped onsite with a small commercial chipper which will remain on the existing road bed. Removal of the mountain misery and cedar saplings will reduce the potential of the spread of wild-land fire within the existing fuel break with minimal impact to the environment or cost to the government. The roads involved include Rock Creek Road, Hudson Way, Deerhaven Way, and the Trailhead Road. The land use authorization will stretch from the south end of Moonlight Trail on the east to the BLM boundary at the end of Trailhead road on the west. The lands are managed by the Bureau of Land Management, and are located between North Bloomfield Road and Purdon Crossing Road.

The portion of the project that affects the BLM managed lands covers a 40 acre area with a 100 foot width on either side of the existing roads and within the bounds of the existing fire break. Staging equipment and materials will remain within the existing road bed. The permit is for a 90-day period and the area of disturbance involves no ground disturbance will be rehabilitated in a manner consistent with the rehabilitation outlined in the EA.

The proposed project is located approximately 1.2 miles from the nearest known population of California red-legged frog and in proximity to suitable aquatic habitat for the frog. In order to reduce potential effects of the proposed project consultation was conducted with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service for the Round Mountain Fuel Break Maintenance project in 2011. Mitigation measures outlined in the 2011 consultation will be followed therefore, BLM will grant the permit stipulating that the holder conduct activities during the dry season when the frog is restricted to

aquatic habitats and all aquatic features will be buffered by a distance of 300 feet. With the incorporation of the above stipulations potential effects to the frog are considered to be insignificant and/or discountable therefore, further consultation with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is not required.

B. Land Use Plan (LUP) Conformance

The Sierra Resource Management Plan (RMP), February 2008, covers land use planning decisions for the subject area. This ROW proposal has been reviewed to determine that the proposed action conforms to the land use plan terms and conditions as required by 43 CFR 1610.5. The parcel is in conformance with the RMP as outlined on page 32 which states that the goal of the Land and Realty program is to respond to demand for land use authorizations as mandated by FLPMA.

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

Round Mountain Fuel Bread Project, Environmental Assessment, Folsom Field Office CA-018-98-15.

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?

Documentation of answer and explanation: The project is essentially similar to the Round Mountain Fuel Project Environmental Assessment which covered the whole area of the land use authorization.

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?

Documentation of answer and explanation: Yes the NEPA document is appropriate to the proposed action and its potential current environmental concerns, interests and resource values for the proposed area.

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 new information and new circumstances would not substantially change the analysis of the new proposed action?

Documentation of answer and explanation: The NEPA document did not identify or analyze the California red-legged frog, a federally listed under the Endangered Species Act as being within the project area. Since then the area was identified as being located approximately 1.2 miles from the nearest known population of California red-legged frog and in proximity to suitable aquatic habitat for the frog. In order to reduce potential effects of the proposed project consultation was conducted with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service for the Round Mountain Fuel Break Maintenance project in 2011. Since this project falls within the bounds of the fuel break project and BLM will conduct activities during the dry season when the frog is restricted to aquatic habitats, and all aquatic features will be buffered by a distance of 300 feet, the potential effects to the frog are considered to be insignificant and/or discountable therefore, further consultation with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is not required.

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?
Documentation of answer and explanation: Yes the effects are similar. The NEPA document both quantitatively and qualitatively covered the area sufficiently.

5. Are the public involvement and interagency review associated with existing NEPA document(s) adequate for the current proposed action?
Documentation of answer and explanation: Yes the Round Mountain Fuel Break Project EA was available in BLM Folsom Field Office and made available for a formal 15-day public comment period in 1998.

E. Persons/Agencies /BLM Staff Consulted

Reviewers:

/s/ Jeff Horn *6/6/13*

Jeff Horn
Outdoor recreation planner/VRM specialist

/s/ Beth Brenneman *5/28/13*

Beth Brenneman
Botanist

/s/ James Barnes *6/6/13*

James Barnes
Cultural resource specialist

/s/ Peggy Cranston *5/29/13*

Peggy Cranston
Wildlife biologist

Conclusion

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

/s/ Brian Mulhollen *6/5/13*

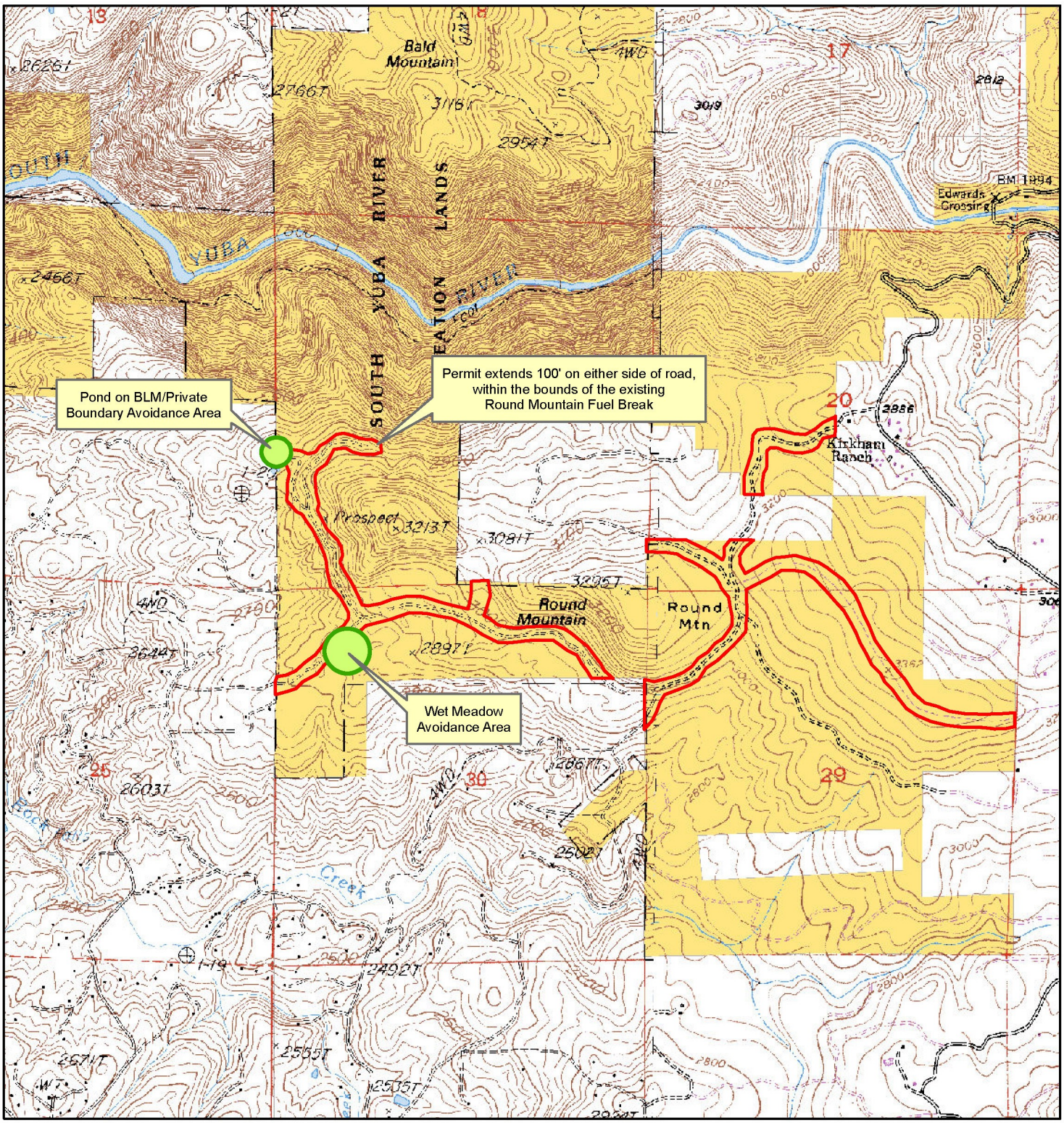
Brian Mulhollen
Preparer/Project Lead Date

/s/ James Barnes *6/6/13*

James Barnes
NEPA Reviewer Date

William S. Haigh Date
Field Manager
Mother Lode Field Office

Juniper Ridge Land Use Authorization



Vegetative Material Contract # 85262779

T 17 N., R 9 E., within sections 19, 20, 29 and 30, MDBM

N W E S

1 inch = 2,000 feet

Legend

- Bureau of Land Management
- Private
- Permit Area

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Date Prepared: 6/12/2013
Project: JuniperRidgeAuthWeb