Documentation of Land Use Plan Conformance and NEPA Adequacy (DNA)
U.S. Department of the Interior Bureau of Land Management
Grand Junction Field Office, Colorado
Dolores River Mechanical 2015
DOI-BLM-CO-N030-2015-0007-DNA

A. Purpose and Need:

The Dolores River Restoration Partnership is nearing completion of initial woody invasive species treatments along 175 miles of the river from McPhee dam to the confluence of the Colorado River. Once these initial treatments are complete, the Partnership is committed to a maintenance and monitoring phase through 2020, with secondary weed treatments and re-vegetation (where needed). This proposal, described in more detail below, will conclude mechanical treatments of tamarisk along the remaining reach of the river within the Grand Junction Field Office.

B. Proposed Action:

The proposed action is to mechanically treat tamarisk and elm along 5 miles of Highway 141 and the Dolores River between the Montrose/Mesa county line and Roc Creek in the south. Ten units totaling 43.4 acres are identified for treatment. Five units totaling 16 acres are identified for hand cutting due to difficult machine access, one of which is identified for manual treatments to avoid cultural resources. Slash in the manual units would be used to capture sediment on the riverbank, be scattered, or in areas where there is room, be piled and burned. All of the units are between the highway and the river. None of the tamarisk stands on the east side of the river are planned for treatment at this time. East-side stands are identified as biological control units (tamarisk leaf beetle).

Some of the non-native elms will be left standing due to:

- The hazard of removing them.
- An effort to keep soil temperatures down. Re-vegetation efforts (grass, shrubs, and trees) do better where there is some relief from high soil temperatures created by the removal of overstory tamarisk. The elms will provide some shade in these areas.
- Providing overstory canopy in the corridor until boxelder and cottonwood can re-establish.
- Providing shade at pull-outs (primitive rest stops) along the highway.

The equipment that would be used for the treatment is two excavators; one equipped with a mulching head to grind the tamarisk and elm, and one mini excavator with a bucket to mix the wood chips with soil to increase seed-to-soil contact on reseeded areas. On sites where there is adequate pull-off space in the highway right-of-way, crews may stack tamarisk and elm logs for firewood collection by the public; a tactic often used by Colorado Department of Transportation (CDOT) crews.

The units identified for mechanical treatment contain very large and dense tamarisk with very little desirable understory; however, where privet, sumac, rabbitbrush, sage, and other desirable plants exist, they will be avoided. Most of the tamarisk has been top-killed by the tamarisk leaf beetle.

Once complete, the treated units would be scheduled for secondary weed treatments (Russian knapweed, whitetop, kochia, cheatgrass, and musk thistle). The units may also qualify for dormant pole and tall-pot plantings of native woody species using an excavator-mounted stinger if soil and salinity tests indicate a good medium.

A site visit with CDOT road engineers on 12/9/14 identified issues from their perspective. There were no concerns by CDOT about erosion of the road base by removing bank vegetation since the base is predominantly rock. Opening the view shed is a benefit, offering greater site distances on curves. The project would however, require close coordination with the Nucla and Gateway CDOT crews for traffic safety (flaggers and signs).

Schedule: The Partnership would like to implement the mechanical treatments late fall/early winter (Oct. 15-Dec. 31). This time frame was also supported by CDOT since traffic is light during this time of the year, and their crews have greater availability to help with traffic control.

GENERAL LOCATION

The project is located from the Mesa/Montrose county line on the north end, then south to the last curve in the highway before Roc Creek (the UFO/GJFO boundary).

Unit 124c Typical tamarisk and elm along Hwy 141

Excavator-mounted mulcher planned for this project

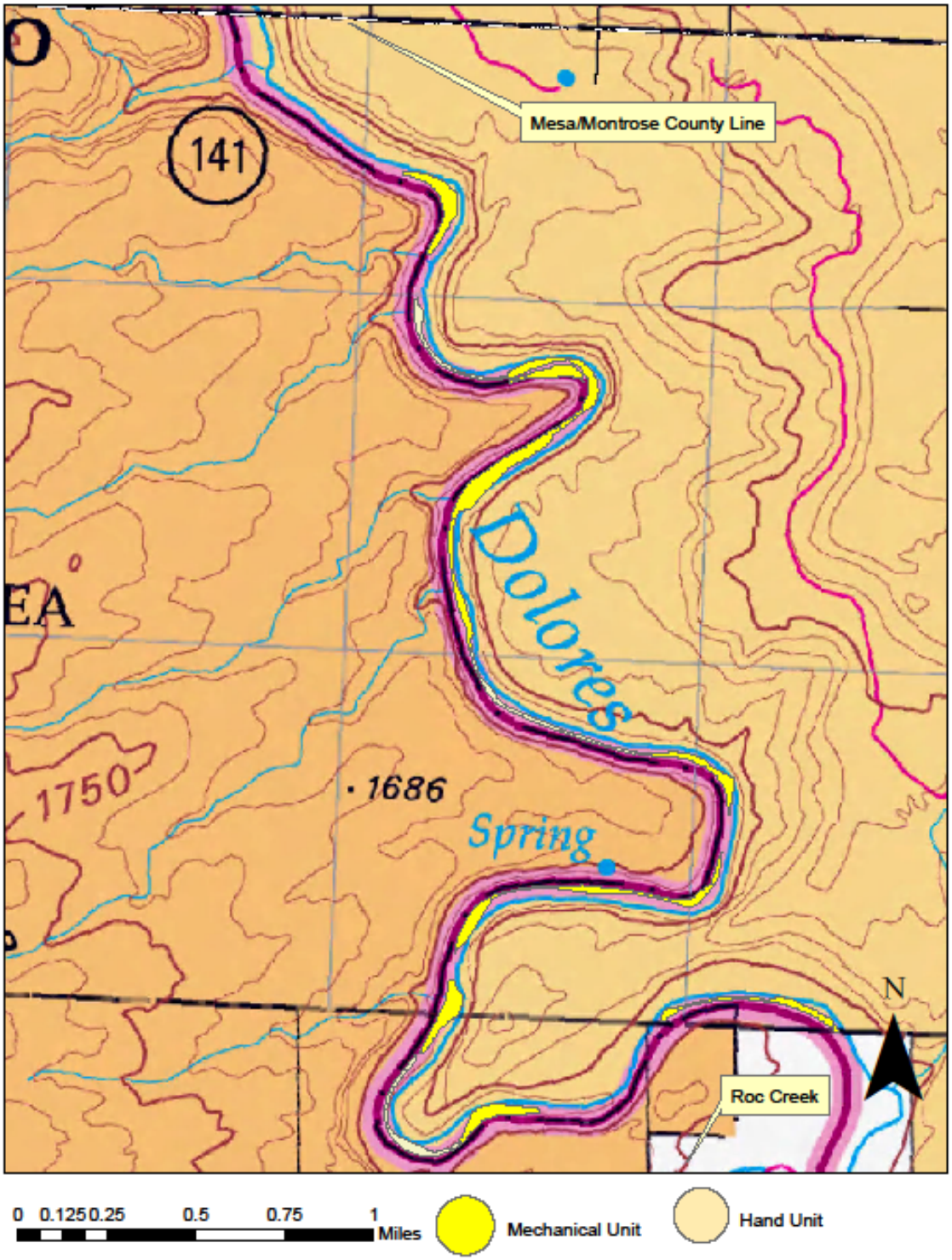
Excavator planned for planting and mulch manipulation

Map Documents:

See Appendix A for site-specific maps

Vicinity Map:

Dolores Partnership 2015 Proposed Mechanical Tamarisk Units



C. Location
The project is located along Highway 141 south of Gateway, Colorado. The specific units for treatment are between Roc Creek on the south end, and the Mesa/Montrose county line at the north end.

D. Land Use Plan (LUP) Conformance

LUP Name: Grand Junction Resource Area RMP Date Approved: January 1987

Decision Language and Page Numbers: The Proposed Action is in conformance with providing quality habitat conditions within Emphasis Areas of the Field Office. Area K-2 is specific to the Gateway area:

K-2, page 2-50 in Wildlife section: "Maintain woody riparian habitat to favor the tallest plant species native to each site while promoting diversity in plant heights and species".

K-2, page 2-51 in Special Management Areas section: " Emphasize protection of natural and scenic values of the outstanding natural area".

K-2, page 2-51 in Recreation Section: "Manage the Dolores River Canyon to provide for recreation use (primarily for float-boating, highway oriented sightseeing, and hiking) and protection of natural values".

E. Identify applicable NEPA documents and other related documents that cover the proposed action.

Name of Document: Grand Junction Resource Area Resource Management Plan Environmental Impact Statement

Date Approved: January 1987

Name of Document: DOI-BLM-CO-130-2010-0031-EA, The Integrated Weed Management (IWM) Plan and programmatic EA, which includes mechanical treatments of woody invasive species in riparian areas.

Date Approved: December 2010

F. NEPA Adequacy Criteria

1. Is the current proposed action substantially the same action (or is a part of that action) as previously analyzed? Is the current proposed action located at a site specifically analyzed in an existing document?

Yes. The Programmatic IWM EA developed in 2010 identified the same equipment and the Dolores River corridor as potential restoration sites.

2. Is the range of alternatives analyzed in the existing NEPA document(s) appropriate with respect to the current proposed action, given current environmental concerns, interests, and resource values?

Yes. The EA address integrated methods of invasive species control, which this proposed action encompasses (mechanical, chemical, and revegetation).

3. Is the existing analysis valid in light of any new information or circumstances?

Yes. The existing EA is valid for all resources except the hazardous waste section; specifically the fueling of machines. The protocols for fueling operations on this project are addressed in the mitigation section.

Is this project in an area we inventoried for wilderness characteristics? No. Does it have them? No. Would wilderness characteristics be impacted? No. The project area is immediately adjacent (within the ROW) of CO Highway 141.

4. Do the methodology and analytical approach used in the existing NEPA document(s) continue to be appropriate for the current proposed action?

Yes. The protocols and sequencing of treatments are the same as the EA.

5. Are the direct and indirect impacts of the current proposed action substantially unchanged from those identified in the existing NEPA document(s)? Does the existing NEPA document analyze site-specific impacts related to the current proposed action?

Yes. The section of the EA addressing mechanical treatments of woody invasive species is the same as this proposed action, and impacts are addressed in resource sections.

6. Are the cumulative impacts that would result from implementation of the current proposed action substantially unchanged from those analyzed in the existing NEPA document(s)?

Yes. As more riparian areas are treated for invasive woody plants throughout the Field Office, more benefits to critical resources are realized.

7. Are the public involvement and interagency review associated with existing NEPA document(s) adequate for the current proposed action?

Yes. The Dolores River Restoration Partnership is a collaboration of federal, private, and non-profit entities. The Partnership, via the Implementation Subcommittee, provided input for and approval of this proposed action.

G. Interdisciplinary Analysis: Team members conducting or participating in the documentation of NEPA adequacy and preparation of this worksheet.

Name	Title
Alissa Leavitt-Reynolds	Archaeologist
Natalie Clark	Archaeologist
Paula Belcher	Hydrologist
Christina Stark	Planning & Environmental Coordinator
Amanda Ewing	Ecologist/Biologist
Jim Dollerschell	Rangeland Mgt. Specialist
Andy Windsor	Natural Resource Specialist
Alan Kraus	Natural Resource Specialist
Robin Lacy	Realty Specialist
Jeff Phillips	Fuels Mgt. Specialist
Scott Gerwe	Geologist

Table 1– Potentially Impacted Resources

Resources	Not Present On Location	No Impact	Potentially Impacted	Effects sufficiently analyzed/ mitigated in previous NEPA document?	BLM Evaluator Initial & Date	Comments
PHYSICAL RESOURCES						
Air and Climate	☐	☒	☐	Y☐ N☐	PLB 1/30/15	
Water (surface & subsurface, floodplains)	☐	☐	☒	Y☒ N☐	PLB 1/30/15	
Soils	☐	☐	☒	Y☒ N☐	PLB 1/30/15	
Geological/Mineral Resources	☐	☐	☒	Y☐ N☐	DSG 12/16/14	Watch out for mining claim stakes, and could we plant trees for shade?
BIOLOGICAL RESOURCES						
Special Status Plants	☐	☐	☒	Y☒ N☐	ALE 1/6/15	
Special Status Wildlife	☐	☐	☒	Y☒ N☐	ALE 1/6/15	
Migratory Birds	☐	☐	☒	Y☒ N☐	ALE 1/6/15	
Other Important Wildlife Habitat	☐	☐	☒	Y☒ N☐	ALE 1/6/15	
Vegetation, Forestry	☐	☐	☒	Y☒ N☐	JRD 12/17/14	
Invasive, Non-native Species	☐	☐	☐	Y☒ N☐	MT 2/24/15	
Wetlands/Riparian Zones	☐	☐	☒	Y☒ N☐	CS 1/7/15	
HERITAGE RESOURCES AND HUMAN ENV						
Cultural or Historical	☐	☒	☐	Y☐ N☐	ALR 1/5/2015	Will require prefield cultural discussion with weeds crew prior to project implementation.
Paleontological	☐	☒	☐	Y☐ N☐	DSG 12/16/14	

Table 1– Potentially Impacted Resources

Resources	Not Present On Location	No Impact	Potentially Impacted	Effects sufficiently analyzed/ mitigated in previous NEPA document?	BLM Evaluator Initial & Date	Comments
Tribal& American Indian Religious Concerns	☐	☒	☐	Y☐ N ☐	ALR 1/5/2015	Will require pre-field cultural discussion with weeds crew prior to project implementation
Visual Resources	☐	☐	☒	Y☒ N ☐	AW 2/25/15	
Social/Economic	☐	☒	☐	Y☐ N ☐	CS 1/7/15	
Transportation and Access	☐	☒	☐	Y☐ N ☐	AW 2/25/15	
Wastes, Hazardous or Solid	☐	☐	☒	Y☐ N ☒	AK 12/23/14	Fuel mgt. needs to be addressed
LAND RESOURCES						
Recreation	☐	☐	☒	Y☒ N ☐	AW 2/25/15	
Special Designations (ACEC, SMAs, WSR)	☐	☐	☒	Y☒ N ☐	AW 12/16/14	The project is within the suitable section (PRMP) of the Dolores River.
Wilderness & Wilderness Characteristics	☒	☐	☐	Y☐ N ☐	AW 12/16/14	
Range Management	☐	☐	☒	Y☒ N ☐	JRD 12/17/14	
Wild Horse and Burros	☒	☐	☐	Y☐ N ☐	JRD 12/17/14	
Land Tenure, ROW, Other Uses	☐	☐	☒	Y☐ N ☐	RBL 3/9/15	Locate buried telephone line along hwy ROW, and notify Nucla-Naturita Telephone Co. prior to project implementation.
Fire/Fuels	☐	☐	☒	Y☒ N ☐	JP 1/22/15	

NAME OF ENVIRONMENTAL COORDINATOR: Christina Stark

DATE:

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DOLORES RIVER MECHANICAL

DOI-BLM-CO-N030-2015-0007-DNA

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 constitutes BLM's compliance with the requirements of NEPA.

_____Based on the review documented above, I conclude that either the proposal does not conform with the land use plan, or that additional NEPA analysis is needed.

SIGNATURE OF AUTHORIZED OFFICIAL:

_____
Grand Junction Field Manager

DATE SIGNED:

The signed Conclusion on this document 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.

SITE-SPECIFIC STIPULATIONS:

1. **Fueling Operations for Heavy Equipment:** Equipment will be fueled as far as possible from the river in any given unit. Delivery nozzles will not be left un-attended during fueling process.

2. **Mining Claim Stakes:** Claim stakes will be identified and avoided during treatment operations.

3. **Telephone Line Location:** The Nucla-Naturita Telephone Company will be notified prior to project implementation, and the line within the Highway ROW located before mechanical work begins.

4. **Cultural Discussion:** A pre-field cultural discussion will occur with the weed crew prior to implementation (conducted in March 2015).

5. **Cultural Protection:** Convert Site 119a south-RL from mechanical to manual treatment to protect historic placer mine.

6. **Special Status Plants:** At the intersection of Sites 121b and 121c, all activities will be kept on the treatment side of the highway.

Appendix A
Site Specific Maps

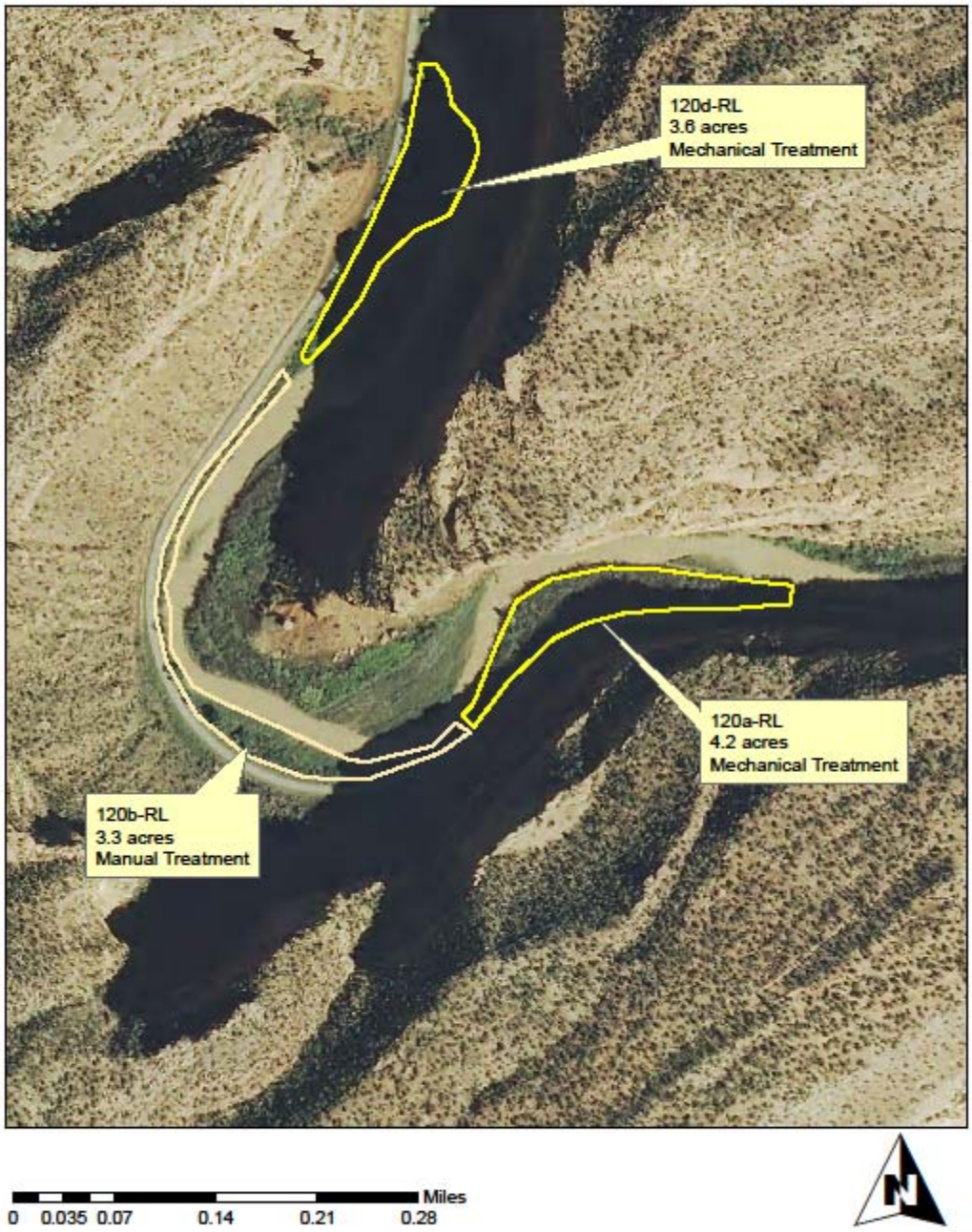
119a south-RL

Miles
0 0.035 0.07 0.14 0.21 0.28

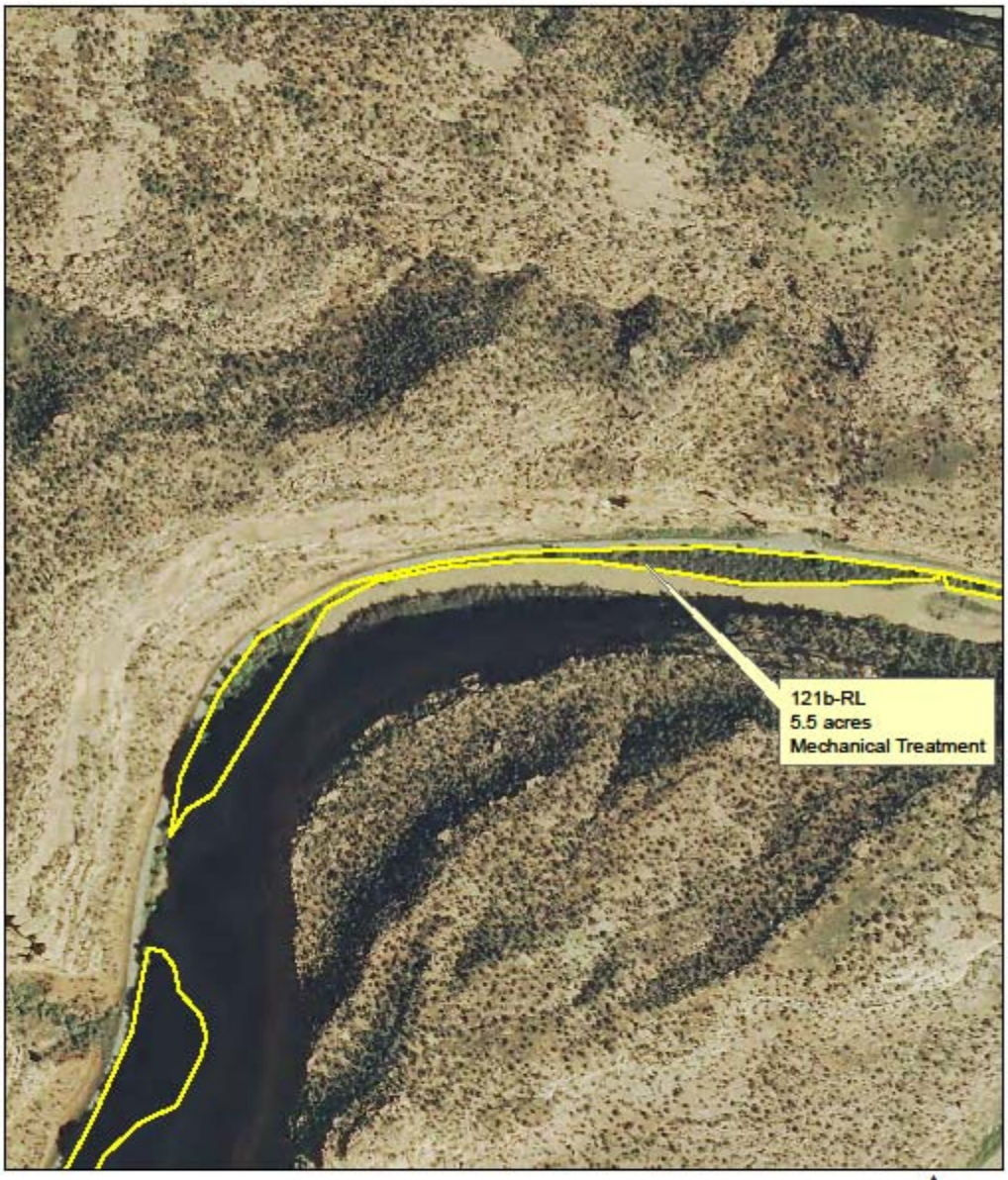
Unit 119a north-RL

0 0.05 0.1 0.2 0.3 0.4 Miles

120a-RL, 120b-RL, 120d-RL

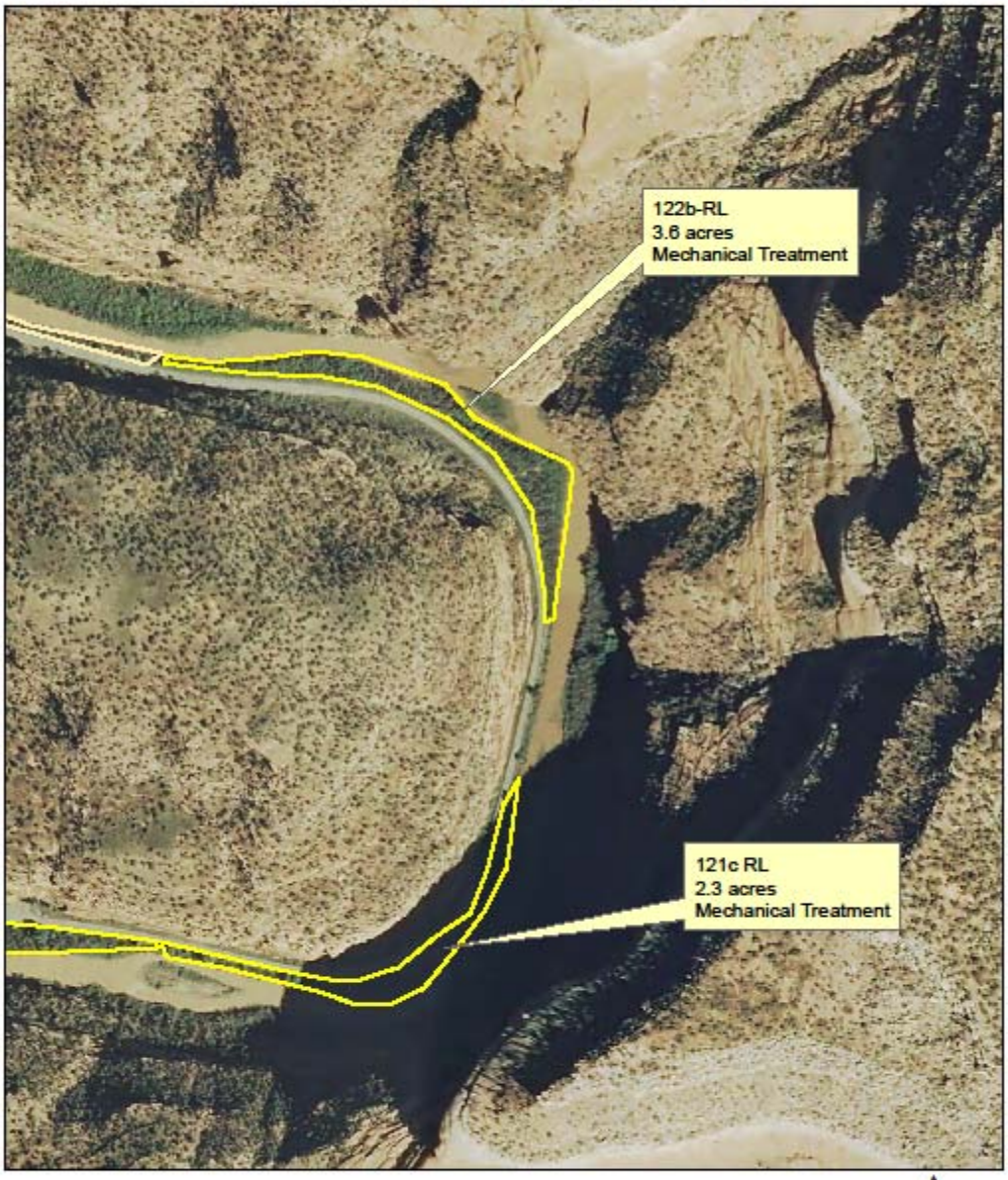


121b-RL



0 0.035 0.07 0.14 0.21 0.28 Miles

121c-RL and 122b-RL

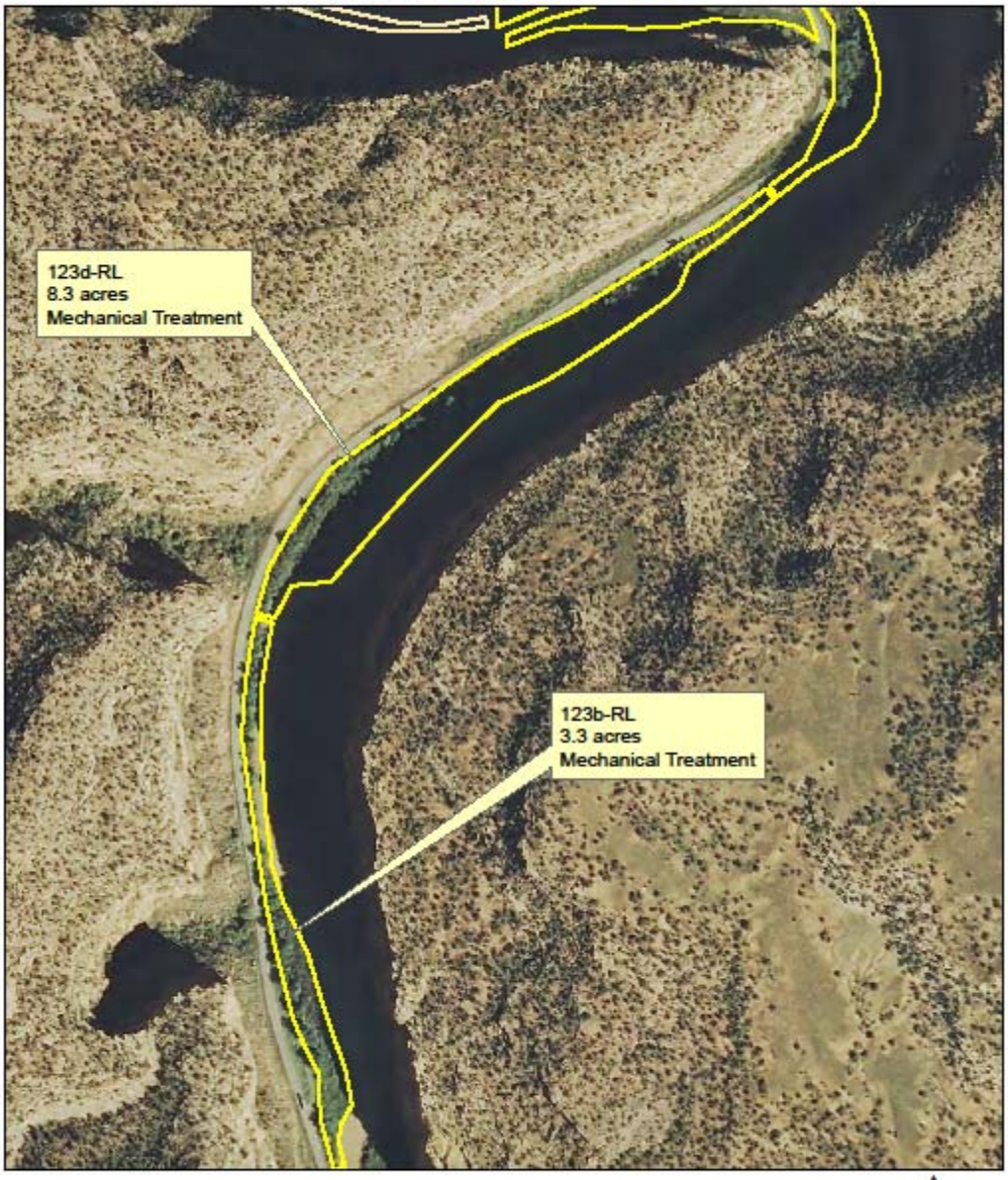


Miles
0 0.035 0.07 0.14 0.21 0.28

122c-RL

Miles
0 0.035 0.07 0.14 0.21 0.28

123b and 123d-RL

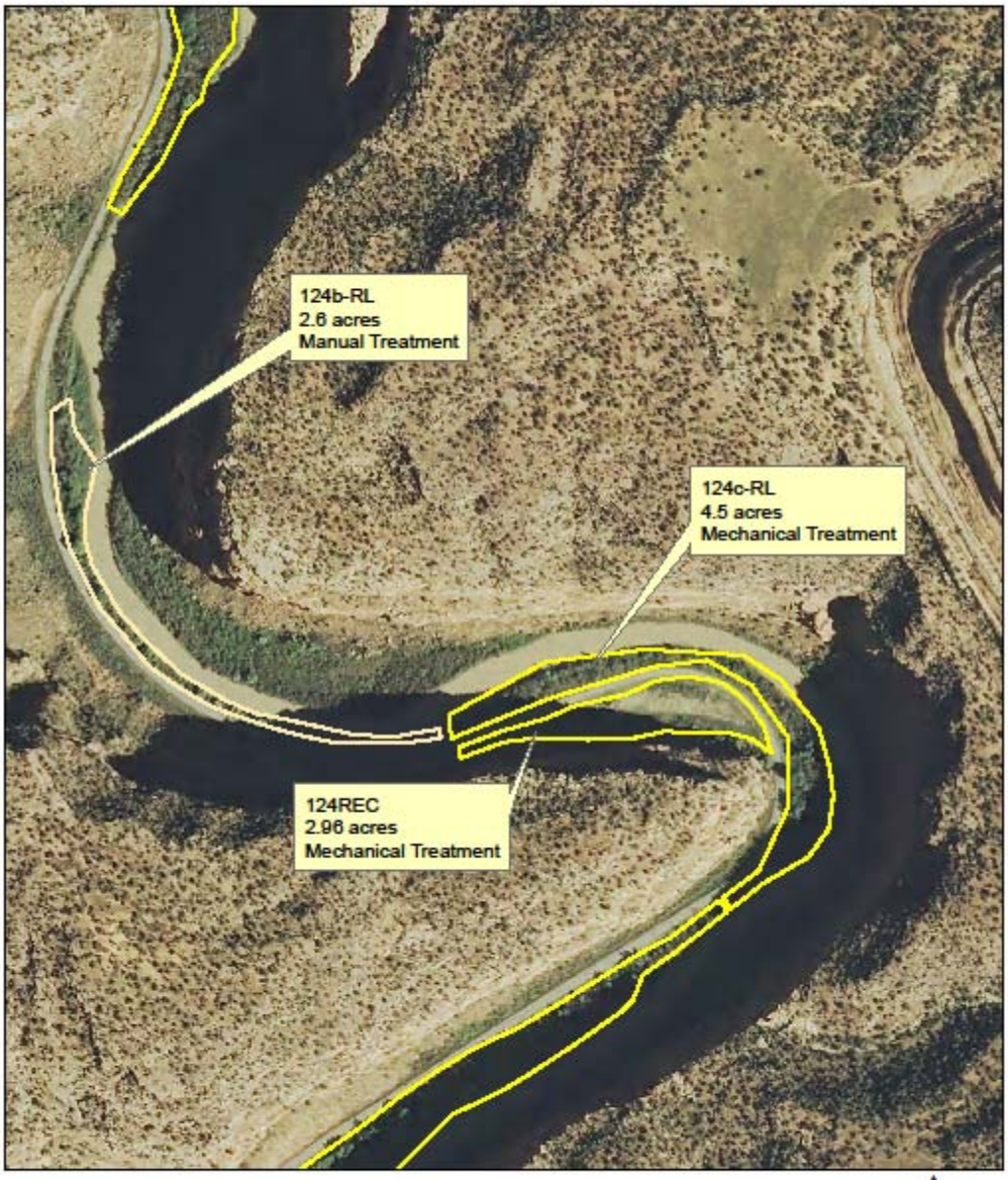


0 0.035 0.07 0.14 0.21 0.28 Miles

124c-RL

Miles
0 0.035 0.07 0.14 0.21 0.28

124REC, 124b-RL, 124c-RL



0 0.035 0.07 0.14 0.21 0.28 Miles