

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
Oak Hill Vegetation Treatment
DOI-BLM-CO-130-2012-0044-DNA

A. Purpose and Need:

Many portions of Glade Park were historically open parks consisting of sagebrush and/or grass parks surrounded by PJ hillsides and canyons. Pinon and juniper over the years have encroached upon these parks due to fire suppression or other management activities. Efforts were made back in the 1950's through 1970's to address this encroachment including chaining, brushbeating and plowing and seeding. Forty years later, the dominant vegetation is again pinon and juniper. The presence of this tree community has several management implications. First off, the opportunity for high intensity fires is greater with the presence of the tree community. This is especially important in this area of Glade Park where there is a substantial amount of private land, some with structures and inhabitants. Another implication is that this portion of Glade Park has been identified as being historic range of the Gunnison Sage Grouse. In 2000, the Pinon Mesa Gunnison Sage Grouse Conservation Plan was completed identifying a strategy, objectives and conservation actions needed to improve habitat for the sage grouse. The plan identified the need to treat these pinon-juniper dominated plant communities that once were sagebrush parks occupied by sage grouse. Since 2000, the DPW and BLM have treated areas to optimize the density of sagebrush and increase the grass and forb component to benefit sage grouse. This proposed project is to continue treating areas in an ongoing effort to improve Gunnison Sage Grouse habitat as described in the plan. Active removal of encroaching PJ will help maintain open and healthy sagebrush shrublands that will be available for wildlife habitat. Treatment of encroaching PJ will also help to reduce fuel loading within these sagebrush ecosystems and reduce the chance of uncharacteristically severe and/or frequent wildfires.

B. Proposed Action:

The proposed action is to mechanically treat approximately 210 acres within a sagebrush park which is experiencing PJ encroachment. A rollerchopper would be used to remove the encroaching PJ. Pinon pines above 25 feet in height would be avoided and only areas with sagebrush understory would be treated. Adjacent fuels on private land to the west have already been mitigated in this manner. This project would tie into this prior work and have an overall landscape benefit. Impacts would be similar to the other mechanical projects in the Glade Park area and are analyzed in the Glade Park Wildland Interface (WUI) Scattered Parcels EA (CO-130-2005-045-EA), Miller Canyon Fuels Reduction (CO-130-2006-058-DNA) and Bieser Creek (CO-130-2012-0004-DNA).

The roller chopper is constructed of a heavy steel drum with blades, which crushes and chops woody vegetation. It is pulled with a D-7 or larger dozer with a push bar or blade capable of handling this type of vegetation. The treatment would likely be contracted by the BLM, and mitigation identified, as necessary by the Field Manager, would be carried forward as part of the contract Scope of Work. A baseline for monitoring would be established before the project is implemented. Monitoring for measurable objectives would be carried out at one year (minimum one growing season), three year, and 10 year intervals from implementation to ensure that objectives are met and mitigation for invasive weeds is successful. Access to the site is on existing roads and staging of equipment and crews would occur on existing roads thus no new road construction will occur.

The primary objectives of the project are as follows:

1) Decrease the fuel load of the area which is adjacent to inhabited private lands. Conversion of the area from a pinon/juniper vegetation type to a sagebrush/grass community will reduce the intensity of wildfires if they occur thus reducing the threat to private dwellings in the area.

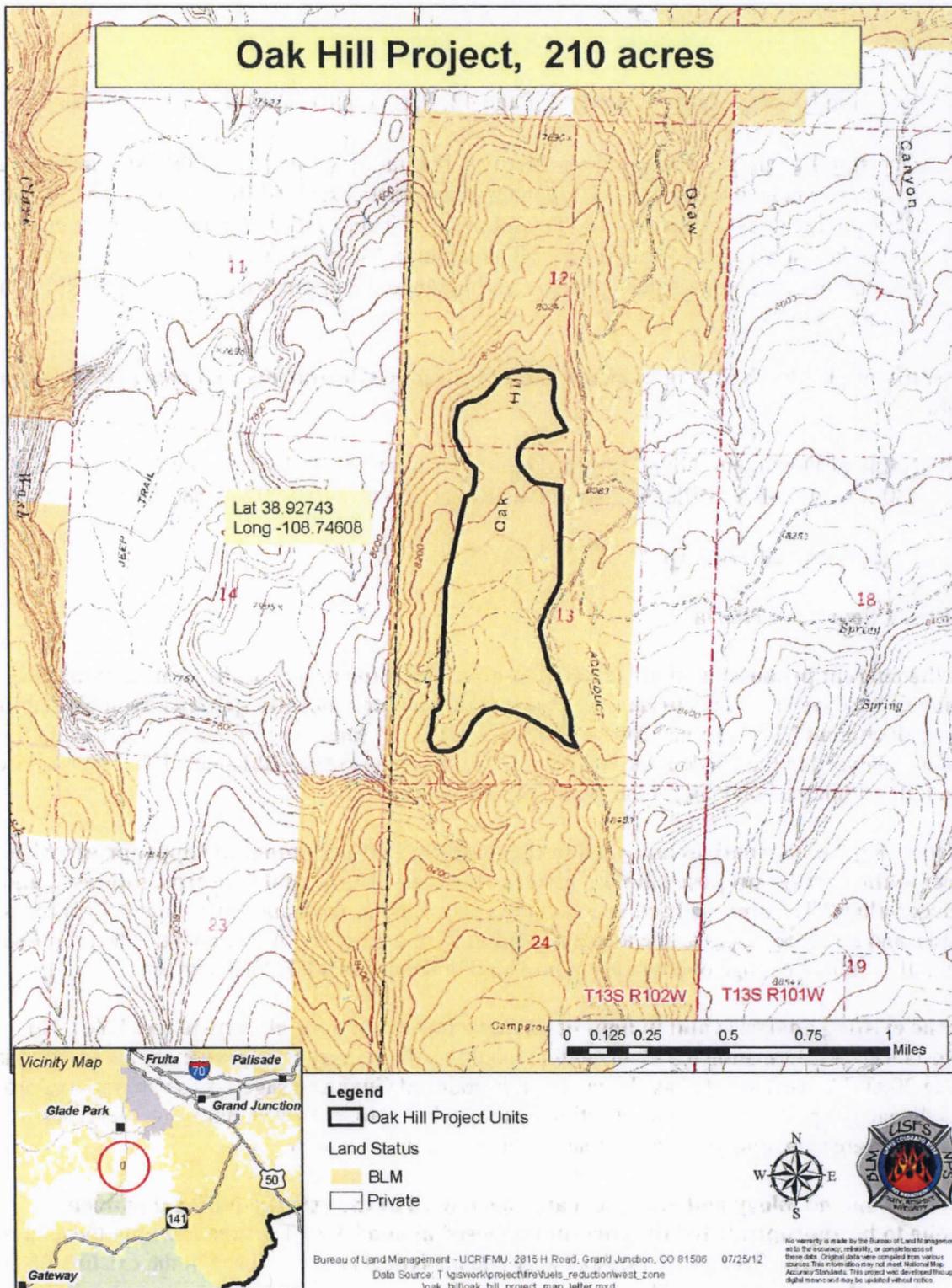
2) Improve habitat for the Gunnison Sage Grouse. Eliminating pinon and juniper trees from the treatment area will encourage a sagebrush/grass vegetative community which is desired habitat for the Gunnison Sage Grouse. Removing these tree species within sagebrush parks eliminates roosts for raptors which prey upon the sage grouse.

3) Protect cultural resources throughout all stages of project planning and implementation.

4) Improve the overall vegetative diversity of the area. The treatment areas were once a sagebrush/grass plant community but due to fire suppression and other management activities have converted to pinon and juniper communities as is the case with many areas on Glade Park.

The Project Area for the Proposed Action is located approximately 5 miles south of the Glade Park store at an elevation of approximately 6,800 feet. More specifically the Project Area is located in Township (T) 13 South (S), Range (R) 102 West (W), Section's 12 and 13.

Figure 1. Map of Oak Hill project area.



C. Land Use Plan (LUP) Conformance

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

Decision Number/Page: Chapter 2, Page 42, Paragraph 1; WM-5-2-14, and FM-4-2-32

Decision Language: Under all alternatives, habitat of the major wildlife species would be actively managed using standard management practices; Wildlife Management: Actively manage the areas shown on Map 10 and listed in Table 11 placing management emphasis on the key species shown, and Fire Management: Assign levels to areas based upon protection of resource values present, and manage or suppress fires as prescribed by the assigned levels.

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

Name of Document: Glade Park Wildland Urban Interface (WUI) Scattered Parcels, CO-130-2005-045-EA. Miller Canyon Fuels Reduction CO-130-2006-058-DNA.

Date Approved: August 23, 2005, November 6, 2006.

E. NEPA Adequacy Criteria

1. Is the current proposed action largely the same action (or a part of the same action) that was previously analyzed? Is the current proposed action located at a site specifically analyzed in an existing document? The current proposed action will use the same type of mechanical treatments that were analyzed in the Glade Park Wildland Urban Interface Scattered Parcels EA. The proposed action falls within the boundary of the area analyzed in that EA.

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? The proposed action area within Oak Hill has the same environmental concerns, interests, and resource values as the area analyzed in the existing NEPA document. The proposed action falls within the range of alternatives provided in the original NEPA document.

3. Is the existing analysis valid in light of any new information or circumstances? Yes. No circumstances or information has changed that would result in impacts that were not analyzed in the existing 2005 EA. Recent data has shown that reintroduced Gunnison sage-grouse are moving around across the landscape and the proposed action would be likely to improve Gunnison sage-grouse habitat in the area, creating more areas that the birds could disperse to.

4. Does the methodology and analytical approach used in the existing NEPA document(s) continue to be appropriate for the current proposed action? Yes. The area is within the analysis area for the referenced EA and the methodology and analytical approach used in the existing 2005 EA would be the same if a new EA was written.

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 direct and indirect impacts of the proposed action are the same as those identified in the existing NEPA document, because the proposed action is the same as the action in the preferred alternative of the referenced EA and the resources and resource concerns are the same.

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. This action combined with the actions analyzed in the existing EA would contribute to landscape-scale improvements to Gunnison sage-grouse habitat. Cumulative impacts in the area are limited and would remain the same as those analyzed in the referenced EA.

7. Are the public involvement and interagency review associated with existing NEPA document(s) adequate for the current proposed action? This proposed action is consistent with the actions of the existing 2005 EA, in which scoping and a public meeting was held. Annual meetings continue to be held with interested parties in the Glade Park area to discuss progress and the results of vegetative treatments.

F. Interdisciplinary Analysis: Team members conducting or participating in the NEPA analysis and preparation of this worksheet.

<u>Name</u>	<u>Title</u>
Alissa Leavitt-Reynolds	Archaeologist
Sparky Taber	Weed Coordinator, Invasive, Non-Native Species

REMARKS:

Cultural Resources: A records search of the general project area, and Cultural Resource Class III Surveys have been completed within the Area of Potential Effect (APE), as defined in the National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA) by Colorado BLM permitted cultural resource contracting firms: (BLM GJFO CRIR 15411-02/OAHP ME.LM.R740 and BLM GJFO CRIR 1102-17/OAHP MC.LM.R322). A total of three (3) cultural sites (5ME18347, 5ME18344.1 and 5ME13315) and 15 isolated finds (5ME13316 - 5ME13319, 5ME13324, 5ME18349 - 5ME18353 and 5ME18355 - 5ME18359) are within the APE. These sites consist of two prehistoric sites (open lithic) 5ME18347 and 5ME13315, that have been determined to be officially not eligible for the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP). These sites could possibly be impacted by the rollerchopping activity, but as they are considered to be non-significant, no further work is needed. Additionally, a historic road and stock pond are found within the project area (5ME18344.1). This cultural resource has also been determined to be not eligible for the NRHP, but will likely not be impacted by the project. The project area also contains 15 isolated prehistoric finds. All isolated finds are not eligible for the NRHP. The project boundaries have been modified through planning in such a way to avoid significant cultural resources and no further work is required.

The following standard stipulations would protect any cultural resources not currently known to the agency:

All persons in the area who are associated with this project shall be informed that any person who, without a permit, injures, destroys, excavates, appropriates or removes any historic or prehistoric ruin, artifact, object of antiquity, Native American remains, Native American cultural item, or archaeological resources on public lands is subject to arrest and penalty of law (16 USC 433, 16 USC 470, 18 USC 641, 18 USC 1170, and 18 USC 1361). Strict adherence to the confidentiality of information concerning the nature and location of archeological resources would be required of the proponent and all of their subcontractors (Archaeological Resource Protection Act, 16 U.S.C. 470hh)

Inadvertent Discovery: The National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA) [16 USC 470s., 36 CFR 800.13], as amended, requires that if newly discovered historic or archaeological materials or other cultural resources are identified during the Proposed Action implementation, work in that area must stop and the BLM Authorized Officer (AO) must be notified immediately. Within five working days the AO will determine the actions that will likely have to be completed before the site can be used (assuming in place preservation is not necessary).

The Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act (NAGPRA) [25 USC 3001 et seq., 43 CFR 10.4] requires that if inadvertent discovery of Native American Human Remains or Objects of Cultural Patrimony occurs, any activity must cease in the area of discovery, a reasonable effort made to protect the item(s) discovered, and immediate notice be made to the BLM Authorized Officer, as well as the appropriate Native American group(s) (IV.C.2). Notice may be followed by a 30-day delay (NAGPRA Section 3(d)).

Antiquities, historic ruins, prehistoric ruins, and other cultural or paleontological objects of scientific interest that are outside the authorization boundaries but potentially affected, either directly or indirectly, by the proposed action shall also be included in this evaluation or mitigation. Impacts that occur to such resources as a result of the authorized activities shall be mitigated at the operator's cost, including the cost of consultation with Native American groups.

ALR 8/20/12

Native American Religious Concerns: American Indian religious concerns are legislatively considered under several acts and Executive Orders, namely the American Indian Religious Freedom Act of 1978 (PL 95-341), the Native American Graves Environmental Assessment Protection and Repatriation Act of 1990 (PL 101-601), and Executive Order 13007 (1996; Indian Sacred Sites). In summary, these require, in concert with other provisions such as those found in the NHPA and ARPA, that the federal government carefully and proactively take into consideration traditional and religious Native American culture and life and ensure, to the degree possible, that access to sacred sites, the treatment of human remains, the possession of sacred items, the conduct of traditional religious practices, and the preservation of important cultural properties are considered and not unduly infringed upon. In some cases, these concerns are directly related to "historic properties" and "archaeological resources". In some cases elements of the landscape without archaeological or other human material remains may be involved. Identification of these concerns is normally completed during the land use planning efforts, reference to existing studies, or via direct consultation.

The Ute have a generalized concept of spiritual significance that is not easily transferred to Western models or definitions. As such the BLM recognizes that the Ute have identified sites that are of concern because of their association with Ute occupation of the area as part of their traditional lands. No traditional cultural properties, unique natural resources, or properties of a type previously identified as being of interest to local tribes, were identified during the cultural resources inventory of the project area. No additional Native American Indian consultation was conducted for the proposed project.

The project would not alter or limit any access if there were traditional uses that are not known to the agency. No additional Native American Indian consultation was conducted for the proposed project.

ALR 8/20/12

Invasive, Non-Native Species:

The thorough cleaning of the dozer and roller chopper prior to the start of work should provide adequate prevention of noxious weed introduction.

MT 8/16/12

Table 1– Potentially Impacted Resources (double click on boxes to check)

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	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Y <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> N <input type="checkbox"/>	ND 6/27/12	
Water (surface & subsurface, floodplains)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Y <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> N <input type="checkbox"/>	ND 6/27/12	
Soils	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Y <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> N <input type="checkbox"/>	ND 6/27/12	
Geological/Mineral Resources	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Y <input type="checkbox"/> N <input type="checkbox"/>	7/9/12	
BIOLOGICAL RESOURCES						
Special Status Plants	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Y <input type="checkbox"/> N <input type="checkbox"/>	ARL 6/22/12	
Special Status Wildlife	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Y <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> N <input type="checkbox"/>	HLP 6/20/12	
Migratory Birds	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Y <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> N <input type="checkbox"/>	HLP 6/20/12	
Other Important Wildlife Habitat	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Y <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> N <input type="checkbox"/>	HLP 6/20/12	
Vegetation, Forestry	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Y <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> N <input type="checkbox"/>	JAM 7/9/12	
Invasive, Non-native Species	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Y <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> N <input type="checkbox"/>	MT 6/27/12	
Wetlands/Riparian Zones	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Y <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> N <input type="checkbox"/>	CARS 6/22/12	
HERITAGE RESOURCES AND HUMAN ENV.						
Cultural or Historical	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Y <input type="checkbox"/> N <input type="checkbox"/>	ALR 6/22/12	Boundaries will need to be

Table 1– Potentially Impacted Resources (double click on boxes to check)

Resources	Not Present On Location	No Impact	Potentially Impacted	Effects sufficiently analyzed/mitigated in previous NEPA document?	BLM Evaluator Initial & Date	Comments
						modified slightly.
Paleontological	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Y <input type="checkbox"/> N <input type="checkbox"/>	7/9/12	
Tribal & American Indian Religious Concerns	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Y <input type="checkbox"/> N <input type="checkbox"/>	ALR 6/22/12	Boundaries will need to be modified slightly.
Visual Resources	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Y <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> N <input type="checkbox"/>	CPP 7/05/12	
Social/Economic	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Y <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> N <input type="checkbox"/>	JP 7/05/12	
Transportation and Access	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Y <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> N <input type="checkbox"/>	CPP 7/05/12	
Wastes, Hazardous or Solid	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Y <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> N <input type="checkbox"/>	AEK 7/9/12	
LAND RESOURCES						
Recreation	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Y <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> N <input type="checkbox"/>	CPP 7/05/12	
Special Designations (ACEC, SMAs, WSR)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Y <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> N <input type="checkbox"/>	CPP 7/05/12	
Wilderness & Wilderness Characteristics	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Y <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> N <input type="checkbox"/>	CPP 7/05/12	
Range Management	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Y <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> N <input type="checkbox"/>	JAM 7/9/12	
Wild Horse and Burros	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Y <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> N <input type="checkbox"/>	JAM 7/9/12	
Land Tenure, ROW, Other Uses	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Y <input type="checkbox"/> N <input type="checkbox"/>	RBL 7/9/12	
Fire/Fuels	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Y <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> N <input type="checkbox"/>	JP 6/22/12	

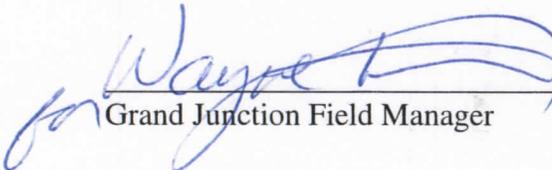
NAME OF ENVIRONMENTAL COORDINATOR: Collin Ewing

DATE: 9/18/12

Conclusion

X 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.

SIGNATURE OF AUTHORIZED OFFICIAL:


 Grand Junction Field Manager

DATE SIGNED: 9-19-12

The signed Conclusion on this Worksheet is part of an interim step in the BLM's internal decision process and does not constitute an appealable decision.

The following mitigation measures are also part of the Proposed Action:

1. Locate, flag, and protect any survey monuments (brass cap monuments, bearing trees, private monuments) that may exist in this project area.
2. Areas to be avoided by equipment to protect other resource values would be flagged prior to project implementation. In areas with significant cultural resources, project boundaries will be designed as to avoid such areas.
3. To prevent the spread of noxious weeds equipment would be cleaned through established procedures as part of the Statement of Work.
4. Fueling and maintenance activities should not be conducted within 100 feet of any drainage or watercourse. All spills of fuel and lubricants should be reported to the BLM and should be cleaned up promptly. Fueling of machinery and storage of fuel would be accomplished through established BLM procedures.
5. Determine boundaries of the treatment areas near private lands prior to fuel reduction to avoid treatment of private lands.
6. Existing roads and trails would be used by agency personnel to eliminate development of new routes and trails. When driving off roads, personnel would avoid repeatedly driving back and forth via the same route.
7. Schedule project work outside of the dates May 15th and July 15th, which would comply with measures to protect species identified by the Migratory Bird Treaty Act.
8. Coordinate with Colorado Parks and Wildlife to best determine timing and operation procedures to limit any possible wildlife winter range issues.
9. All road, telephone, and power line rights-of-way's and facilities will be located and flagged prior to commencement of the project to assure that no damage will occur.
10. Heavy equipment use will not occur when soils are saturated to a depth of three inches or more. All drainage courses will be protected from any impacts associated with operation of heavy equipment (e.g. bank shearing, de-stabilization of existing drainage patterns, etc...). In these areas closest to drainages, alternative methods for treating vegetation (e.g. hand crews) will be used.