

**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**  
**Bieser Creek Maintenance Vegetation Treatment**  
**DOI-BLM-CO-130-2012-0004-DNA**

**A. Purpose and Need:**

Many portions of Glade Park were historically open parks consisting of sagebrush and/or grass parks surrounded by pinon and juniper hillsides and canyons. PJ 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 DOW 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 retreat and maintain prior treatments 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 retreat and maintain approximately 572 acres within the previous 7.5 road rollerchop project which is experiencing new PJ regrowth. An agency owned and operated Fecon machine would be used to remove the encroaching PJ. Additionally, handcrews with chainsaws may also be used as an alternative or to supplement mechanical measures. Treatment would begin with the Blair Canyon unit in FY 2012 and continue through subsequent years as budgets allow. 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).

The Fecon is a small dozer type machine with a rotary head which will be used to mulch juvenile pinon/juniper which has regenerated in previous treated project areas. The treatment would be completed by BLM force account and mitigation identified by this analysis would be carried forward. 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. 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.

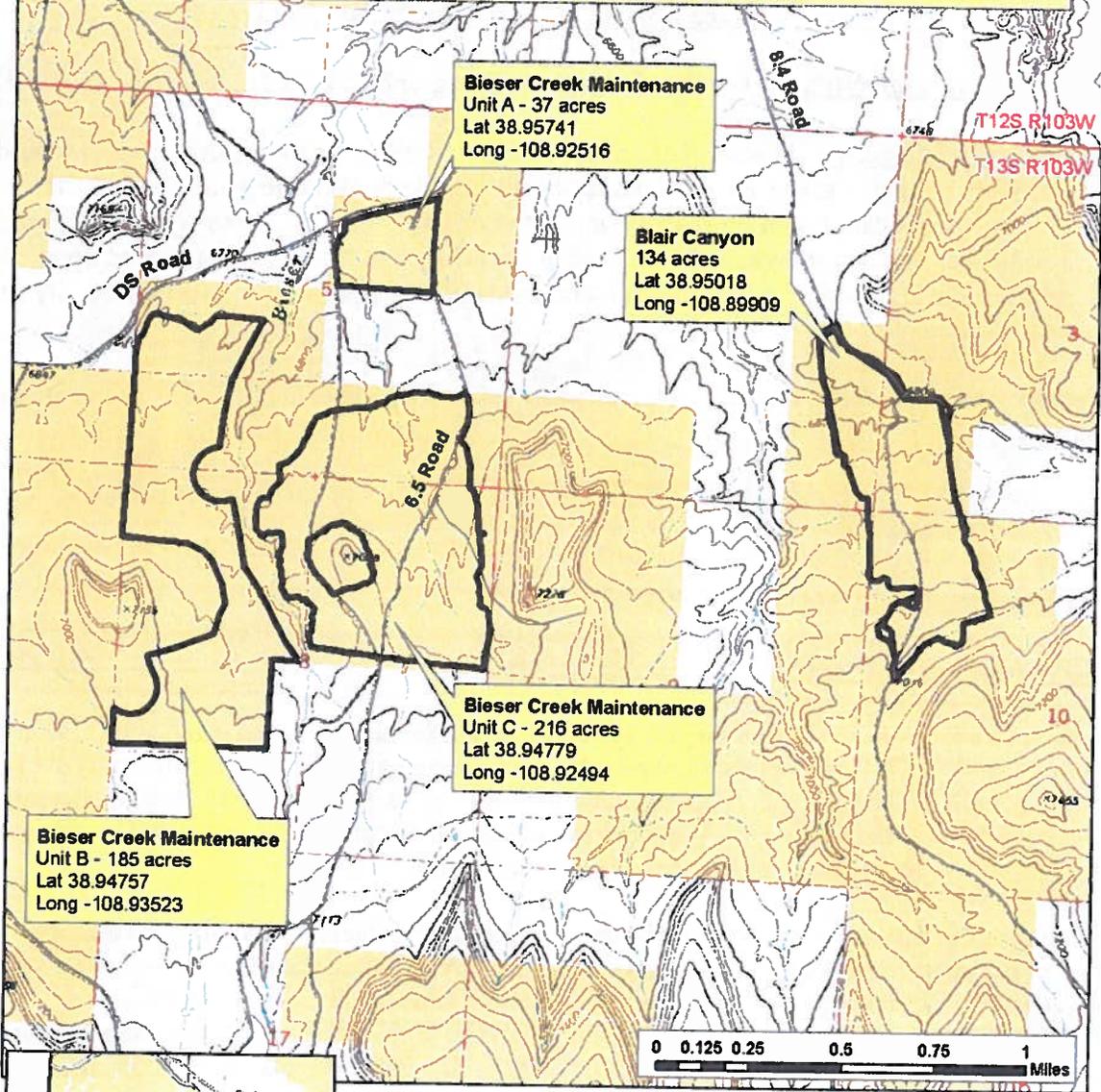
3) Improve the overall vegetative diversity of the area. The treatment areas were once a sagebrush/grass plant community but due to fire suppression and other management activities have converted to pinon and juniper communities as is the case with many areas on Glade Park.

The Project Area for the Proposed Action is located approximately 10 miles west 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) 103 West (W), Section's 3, 4, 5, 8, 9 and 10. The shapefile for the Proposed Action is located at:

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\bieser\_creek\_maintenance\beiser\_crk\_maintenance\_prop\_100411\_letter.mxd

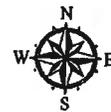
Figure 1. Map of project area.

# Beiser Creek Maintenance/Blair Canyon Projects Proposed FY12, FY13, FY14



**Legend**

- Beiser Creek Maintenance and Blair Canyon Units



Bureau of Land Management - UCRIFMU, 2615 H Road, Grand Junction, CO 81506 11/02/11  
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### **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

Date Approved: August 23, 2005

### **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 Bieser Creek 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 hazardous fuels reduction and 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
Heidi Plank	Wildlife Biologist/ Special Status Species (fish and wildlife)
Nate Dieterich	Hydrologist (Soils, Water Quality, Air)
Christina Stark	Wetlands/Riparian Zones

**REMARKS:**

**Cultural Resources:**

A records search of the general project area, and a Class III field inventory of the Area of Potential Effect, as defined in the National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA), was conducted by the BLM Grand Junction Archaeologists and Uncompahgre Archaeological Consultants a Colorado BLM permitted cultural resource contracting firm (references GJFO CRIR 1084-18, GJFO CRIR 14501-09 and GJFO CRIR 1094-13). The project inventory and evaluation is in compliance with the NHPA, the Colorado State Protocol Agreement, and other federal law, regulation, policy, and guidelines regarding cultural resources. Historic properties recommended as eligible or potentially eligible for the National Register of Historic Places have been avoided by project redesign.

Standard stipulations also should be included in the Statement of Work for the contract for the project implementation and discussed with the implementation contractor at the pre-work meeting:

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 ensure 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)).**

The BLM will relocate activities to avoid the expense of mitigation and delays associated with new discovery described above. This may change the final acres of the implementation and require bilateral agreement of the implementation contract. The BLM authorized officer will provide technical and procedural guidelines for redesign of the project area. Upon verification from the BLM authorized officer that the required mitigation has been completed, the operator will be allowed to resume implementation.

#### **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. There is no known evidence that suggests the project area hold special significance for Native Americans, or is actively used to maintain traditional practices. It is unlikely for site types identified as being of interest to tribes that traditionally used the area to be present in this vegetation community.

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 they have identified sites that are of concern because of their association with Ute occupation of the area as part of their

traditional lands. No further Native American Indian consultation was conducted for the undertaking.

**Wildlife:** This proposed project is to retreat and maintain prior treatments 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, including deer and elk in the area. Nesting raptor activity is unlikely to be disrupted by the proposed action because the size of trees to be removed is smaller than those used by nesting raptors. Impacts to individual nesting migratory birds could occur if vegetation manipulation occurs during the nesting season. To avoid these impacts treatment should not occur between May 15 and July 15 to avoid peak nesting season.

**Wetlands/Riparian Zones:**

The proposed action is located within and immediately adjacent to the riparian zone on Bieser Creek. The condition riparian zone between the two treatments was last assessed in 1993. This reach of Bieser Creek was determined to be in Proper Functioning Condition (PFC) during this assessment. Removal of upland vegetation near Bieser Creek would cause short-term increases in sediment transport into the riparian zone, which could temporarily reduce the health and vigor of riparian vegetation. Long-term health of the riparian zone affected by this project would improve due to increased plant cover in the uplands that would reduce sediment transport. Increased forage in the uplands would also attract cattle and wildlife away from the riparian zone which would be beneficial. Short-term impacts to the riparian zone could be reduced by phasing the project. Delaying the removal of vegetation within and immediately adjacent or within a 200 meter buffer of the creek would be beneficial to health of the riparian zone. This approach would allow for density and cover of upland vegetation to increase prior to removing vegetation in close proximity to the creek. Vegetation in close proximity to the creek would help to slow and reduce the transport of sediment into the riparian zone.

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

Resources	Not Present On Location	No Impact	Potentially Impacted	Mitigation necessary	Comments included in DNA text	BLM Evaluator Initial & Date
<b>PHYSICAL RESOURCES</b>						
Air and Climate	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	ND 10/24/11
Geological	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	SG 10/5/11
Mineral Resources	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	SG 10/5/11
Soils	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	ND 10/24/11
Water (surface & subsurface, floodplains)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	ND 10/24/11
<b>BIOLOGICAL RESOURCES</b>						
Invasive, Non-native Species	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	MT 10/22/11
Sensitive Species	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	ARL 10/17/11
Threatened or Endangered Species	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	HLP 10/19/11
Vegetation, Forestry	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	JAM 10/17/11
Wetlands/Riparian Zones	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	CARS 10/31/11
Wildlife	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	HLP 10/19/11
<b>HERITAGE RESOURCES AND HUMAN ENV.</b>						
Cultural or Historical	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	ALR 10/25/11
Paleontological	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	SG 10/5/11
Tribal & American Indian Religious Concerns	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	ALR 10/25/11
Visual Resources	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	JP 10/11/11
Social	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	JP 10/11/11
Economic	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	JP 10/11/11
Environmental Justice	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	JP 10/11/11
Transportation and Access	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	CPP 10/12/11
Wastes, Hazardous or Solid	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	AEK 10/5/11
<b>LAND RESOURCES</b>						
Prime or Unique Farmlands	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	JP 10/11/11
Recreation	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	CPP 10/12/11
Special Designations (ACEC, SMAs etc.)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	CPP 10/12/11
Wild and Scenic Rivers	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	JP 10/11/11
Wilderness	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	JP 10/11/11
Range Management	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	JRD 10/14/11
Wild Horse and Burros	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	JRD 10/14/11
Land Tenure, ROW, Other Uses	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	RBL 10/17/11

NAME OF ENVIRONMENTAL COORDINATOR: Collin Ewing *CE*

DATE: 12/6/2011

**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:

*for Wayne Wadsworth*  
Grand Junction Field Manager

DATE SIGNED: 12/8/11

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.

Stipulations:

- 1) 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)
- 2) **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 ensure in place preservation is not necessary).**

- 3) **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)).**
- 4) The BLM will relocate activities to avoid the expense of mitigation and delays associated with new discovery described above. This may change the final acres of the implementation and require bilateral agreement of the implementation contract. The BLM authorized officer will provide technical and procedural guidelines for redesign of the project area. Upon verification from the BLM authorized officer that the required mitigation has been completed, the operator will be allowed to resume implementation.
- 5) Short-term impacts to the riparian zone could be reduced by phasing the project. Delaying the removal of vegetation within and immediately adjacent or within a 200 meter buffer of Bieser Creek would be beneficial to health of the riparian zone. This approach would allow for density and cover of upland vegetation to increase prior to removing vegetation in close proximity to the creek. Vegetation in close proximity to the creek would help to slow and reduce the transport of sediment into the riparian zone.

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 15<sup>th</sup> and July 15<sup>th</sup>, which would comply with measures to protect species identified by the Migratory Bird Treaty Act.
8. Coordinate with the Colorado Department of 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.