

**United States Department of the Interior
Bureau of Land Management**

**Categorical Exclusion
for
Cosgrove Fire Rehabilitation**

Grand Junction Field Office
2815 H Road
Grand Junction, Colorado 81506

DOI-BLM-CO-130-2011-0067-CX

December 2011

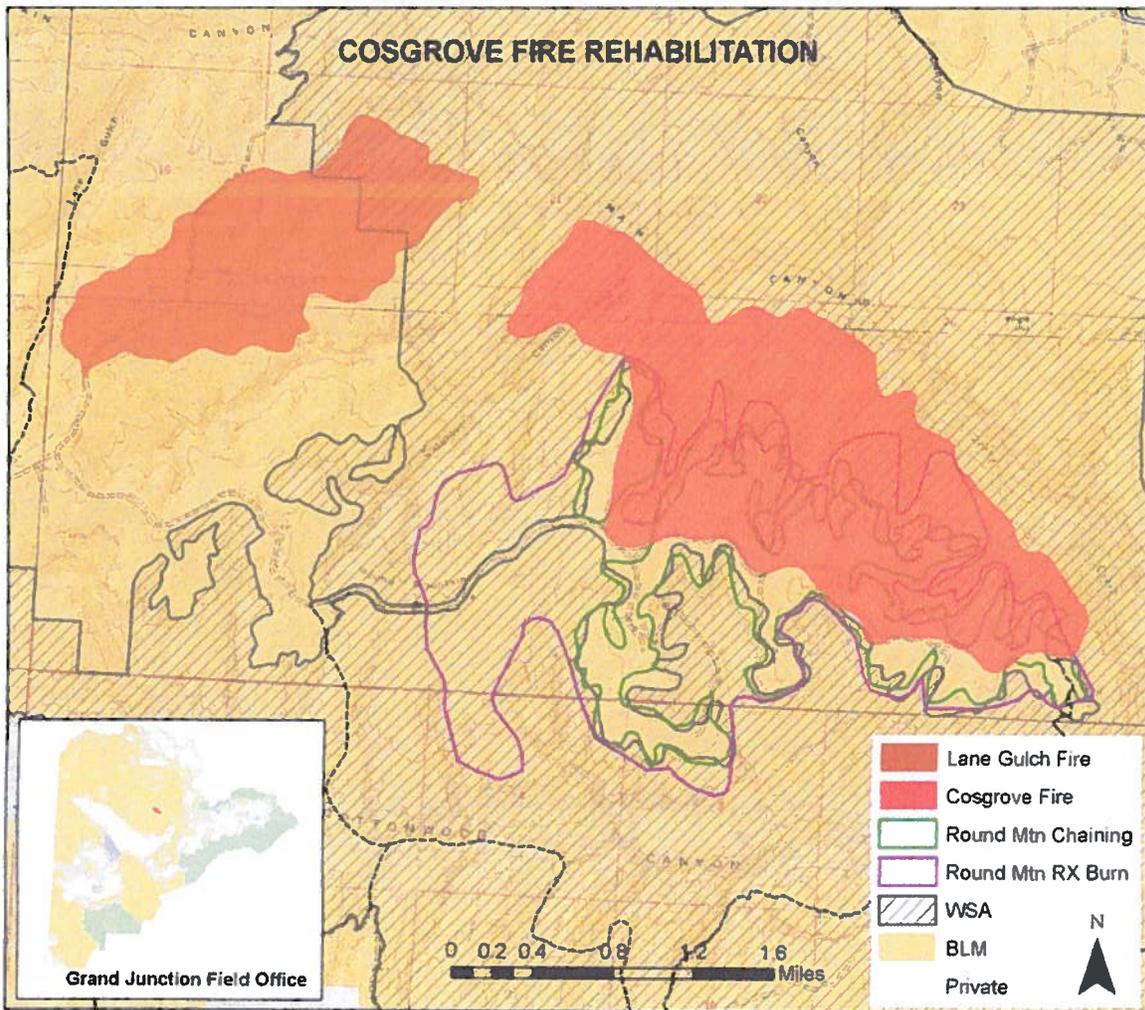


LEGAL DESCRIPTION:

6th Principal Meridian
T. 9 S., R. 99 W.,
sec. 21, SE¹/₄SW¹/₄, SE¹/₄SE¹/₄;
sec. 22, SW¹/₄SW¹/₄;
sec. 26, W¹/₂, SE¹/₄;
sec. 27, All;
sec. 28, N ¹/₂, E¹/₂SE¹/₄;
sec. 33, NE¹/₄NE¹/₄;
sec. 34, N¹/₂;
sec. 35, N¹/₂, N¹/₂S¹/₂;
sec. 36, E¹/₂.

Mesa County, Colorado

Round Mountain, Colorado, United States Geological Service Quadrangle
Winter Flats, Colorado, United States Geological Service Quadrangle



INTRODUCTION:

The Cosgrove Fire was reported on August 7, 2011 as a lightning ignited fire following thunderstorms. The fire burned approximately 1,744 acres of land that is managed entirely by the Bureau of Land Management (BLM). The fire was located inside of the Little Book Cliffs Wilderness Study Area, which includes the Little Book Cliffs Wild Horse Management Area, and inside of previous vegetation treatments that are excluded from the WSA boundary. Approximately 817 acres of the fire were located inside of the WSA and 927 acres were located in the historic vegetation treatments. The fire was declared contained and controlled on 9/8/2011.



Cosgrove Fire August 11, 2011

Vegetation treatments that previously occurred within Cosgrove fire boundary include Round Mountain Chaining, and the Round Mountain Prescribed Fire that was completed in 1993. These vegetation treatments were completed to increase forage for the wild horse herd and wildlife.

Lane Gulch fire was located to the northwest of the Cosgrove fire. The Lane Gulch fire was aerial seeded in the February of 2004 with a seed mix that is very similar to the proposed mix for the Cosgrove fire. The revegetation efforts on the Lane Gulch fire were highly successful with high grass and forb density and vigor observed during post treatment monitoring.

During fire suppression efforts vegetation along the Round Mountain Road and on some of the other fire lines vegetation was pruned, thinned, or removed. Vegetation removal outside of the WSA included cutting pinyon and juniper trees with chain saws. Some cut stumps may remain along these fire lines adjacent to the WSA boundary.

DESCRIPTION OF PROPOSED ACTION:

Rehabilitation for the Cosgrove fire would include aerially seeding in the winter and the removal of cut stumps along fire lines that are located adjacent to the Little Book Cliffs WSA. Seeding would occur between January 15, 2012 and February 28, 2012 when there is still snow on the ground. The seed would be applied at approximately 3 times the regular drilling rate. The following is the seed mix that would be applied to the burned area:

Species	% of Mix	lbs PLS /acre
Indian Ricegrass, Paloma	3	1.5
Prairie Junegrass	6	0.75
Western Wheatgrass, Arriba	25	3
Slender Wheatgrass, San Luis	20	3
Intermediate Wheatgrass, Luna	18	2
Small Burnet, Delar	3	1
Lewis Flax Blue, Appar	3	0.5
Fourwing Saltbush	9	1
Thisckspike Wheatgrass, Critana	10	1.5
Yarrow	3	0.4
Totals	100	14.65

The seeded areas would be monitored for success for 5 years following the treatment. Additional seeding treatments will be considered if the seeding is not found to be a success. The seeding will be determined to be successful if basal cover of seeded species or other naturally recruited native species is at least 80% of basal cover on adjacent or nearby undisturbed areas where vegetation is in a healthy condition.

During restoration efforts trees and tree stumps would be treated to reduce any visual impacts from firefighting efforts. Stumps would be cut as close to the ground as possible and large trees would be lopped and scattered. Crews would use the Round Mountain Road to access the site and would travel by foot through the burned area to cut the trees and stumps. Chain saws would be used by hand crews to low cut stumps and cutting downed trees.

The access road that was used on the north end of the fire would be raked to remove any visible tire tracks. If highly visible vehicle tracks resulting from firefighting activities are found in the historic vegetation treatments then they will be raked during restoration activities. These areas will be monitored following aerial seeding. If vegetation is found to be sparse in these areas additional seed may be applied with a seed broadcaster attached to an ATV.

PLAN CONFORMANCE REVIEW:

The Proposed Action is subject to and has been reviewed for conformance with (43 CFR 1610.5, BLM 1617.3) the following plan:

Name of Plan:

- 1) GRAND JUNCTION Resource Management Plan

- 2) Grand Junction Fire Management Plan
- 3) Normal Fire Year Rehabilitation Plan and Environmental Assessment (CO-130-2005-79-EA)

Date Approved:

- 1) JANUARY, 1987
- 2) 2000 (updated February 2008)
- 3) June, 2005

Decision Number/Page:

- 1) 2 – 4, 2 – 31
- 2) 17, 34, and 83 – 85
- 3) 1

Decision Language:

- 1) Maintain or improve existing water quality in the resource area when possible. To minimize the cost and loss, compliment resource management objectives, and sustain the productivity of the biological ecosystems through fire management.
- 2) Rehabilitation and Restoration - Rehabilitation and restoration efforts will be undertaken to protect and sustain ecosystems, public health, and safety, and to help communities protect infrastructure.
- 3) Fire rehabilitation actions are intended to balance biotic communities and minimize unacceptable change to ecosystem structure and function of public lands.

CATEGORICAL EXCLUSION REVIEW:

The proposed action qualifies as a categorical exclusion under: 516 DM 11: I. Emergency Stabilization (1), (4), and (6). When no extraordinary circumstances apply, the following types of Bureau actions normally do not require the preparation of an EA or EIS: “Planned actions in response to wildfire, floods, weather events, earthquakes, or landslips that threaten public health or safety, property, and/or natural and cultural resources, and that are necessary to repair or improve lands unlikely to repair to a management-approved condition as a result of the event.”

EXTRAORDINARY CIRCUMSTANCES

There are no extraordinary circumstances having effects, which may significantly affect the environment. I considered the following resource conditions in determining whether extraordinary circumstances related to the proposed action warranted further analysis and documentation in an EA or EIS (516 DM 2, Appendix 2):

1. Have significant adverse effects on public health and safety.

The proposed action is not expected to impact public health and safety. The project area is removed from populated areas and areas with intense recreation use. The project would expedite the stabilization of the soils and reduce transport of sediment to the Colorado River, which would protect public health and safety.

2. Have adverse effects on such natural resources and unique geographic characteristics as historic or cultural resources; park, recreation, or refuge lands; wilderness areas; wild or scenic rivers; national natural landmarks; sole or principal drinking water aquifers; prime farmlands; wetlands, floodplains; national monuments; migratory birds; and other ecologically significant or critical areas.

There are no significant impacts to riparian vegetation, parklands, prime farmlands, wetlands, or wild and scenic rivers within the project area. There are no municipal water supplies in the project area. The project is located within the Little Book Cliffs Wilderness Study Area and the Wild Horse Management Area. The project would have positive impacts on both of these resources. This project would not negatively impact wilderness character. It would help to reduce minor impacts in areas adjacent to the WSA resulting from firefighting activities. It would also help to enhance the quality of habitat and reduce the potential for the spread of invasive weeds.

3. Have highly controversial environmental effects or involve unresolved conflicts concerning alternative uses of available resources.

The impacts of fire rehabilitation projects are generally well known and documented in the academic and practicing communities. Therefore the environmental effects are not likely to be controversial.

4. Have highly uncertain and potentially significant environmental effects or involve unique or unknown environmental risks.

Fire rehabilitation projects have a long history in the region and pose no unique or unknown risks.

5. Establish a precedent for future action or represent a decision in principle about future actions with potentially significant environmental effects.

This decision is like one of many that have previously been made and will continue to be made by BLM responsible officials regarding post fire rehabilitation on public lands. The decision is within the scope of the Resource Management Plan and is not expected to establish a precedent for future actions. The decision does not represent a decision in principle about a future consideration.

6. Be directly related to other actions with individually insignificant but cumulatively significant environmental effects.

This is a standalone project. There are no projects with significant environmental impacts known to BLM that would result directly or indirectly from implementation of this project.

7. Have adverse effects on properties listed, or eligible for listing, in the National Register of Historic Places.

Four Class III inventories have been conducted in the project area. There were no cultural resources identified within the project area by these surveys. The project would have no adverse effects on features that would contribute to the eligibility of any unrecorded cultural resources in the project area.

8. Have adverse effects on species listed, or proposed to be listed, on the List of Endangered or Threatened Species, or have adverse effects on designated Critical Habitat for these species.

There are no listed or proposed species or critical habitat located within the immediate project area. Critical habitat for four federally listed fish species occurs downstream of the project area, the intent of the project is to avoid adverse impacts to the Critical habitat of the Razorback Sucker, Bonytail Chub, Colorado Pikeminnow, and Humpback Chub.

9. Have the potential to violate a Federal law, or a State, local or tribal law or requirement imposed for the protection of the environment.

This decision complies with other Federal, State, or local laws and requirements imposed for the protection of the environment.

10. Have the potential for a disproportionately high and adverse effect on low income or minority populations.

The project is located in a very remote location that is not near any communities. The minority and low-income populations of the county are small relative to state-wide averages and such populations are dispersed throughout the county. Therefore, no minority or low-income populations would suffer disproportionately high and adverse effects as a result of the Proposed Action.

11. Restrict access to and ceremonial use of Indian sacred sites by Indian religious practitioners or adversely affect the physical integrity of such sacred sites.

There is no other known evidence that suggests that the project area holds special significance for Native Americans.

12. Significantly, contribute to the introduction, continued existence, or spread of noxious weeds or non-native invasive species known to occur in the area or actions that may promote the introduction, growth, or expansion of the range of such species.

This project is designed to minimize disturbance to avoid new infestation of noxious weeds. The field office routinely treats weed infestations when they are

found, therefore we do not expect this project to contribute to invasive species infestation.

A primary goal of the proposed seeding is to minimize the establishment of noxious weeds and non-native invasive weeds, which are primarily Russian knapweed and cheatgrass. Other untreated wildfires at this similar elevation have resulted in a dominance of cheatgrass.

INTERDISCIPLINARY REVIEW:

<u>Name</u>	<u>Title</u>	<u>Area of Responsibility</u>
Aline Laforge	Archaeologist	Cultural Resources, Native American Religious Concerns
Anna Lincoln	Ecologist	Special Status Species
Heidi Plank	Wildlife Biologist	Wildlife, Fisheries, Special Status Species
Jim Dollerschell	Rangeland Management	Wild Horses
Mark Taber	Natural Resource Specialist	Weed Management
Chris Pipkin	Outdoor Recreation Planner	Wilderness Study Areas
Nate Dieterich	Hydrologist	Soils, Water Quality, Hydrology
Lathan Johnson	Fuels Specialist	Fire and Fuels

REMARKS:

CULTURAL RESOURCES

Current Conditions:

Four Class III inventories have been conducted in the project area. There were no cultural resources identified within the project area by these surveys. Although this is a small sample, typically north facing and steep slopes in this environment and soil setting do not yield sites of a type that would be affected by the proposed action. The area where most of the hand tool work would occur was previously chained and treated with prescribed fire. This area was not surveyed for cultural resources prior to the treatments. Surface integrity of cultural resources would have been affected by these historic treatments. Because of this project history no additional Class III inventory is being required. The project would have no adverse effects on features that would contribute to the eligibility of any unrecorded cultural resources in the project area. Minimal

surface disturbance is expected from use of hand tools along cleared lines or vehicle tracks. Stabilization of soils from the proposed seeding and eliminating the potential for further vehicle impacts to the area by obliterating access routes will benefit cultural resources.

Impacts:

Cultural resources are exposed and become highly visible in conditions that are found in burned areas. A tailgate session for all crews who will be conducting on-the-ground rehab operations should be held and 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)

NATIVE AMERICAN RELIGIOUS CONCERN

Current Conditions:

There is no other known evidence that suggests that the project area holds special significance for Native Americans. Consultations with the Ute tribes regarding proposed hazardous fuel treatments at Round Mountain were conducted with no comments received. No further consultation was conducted for this project.

Impacts:

Implementation of the proposed action will have no effect on access to any known sacred sites or impede the conduct of any known traditional religious practices nor will it affect the preservation of important cultural properties. Restoring native vegetation and preventing invasive and noxious weeds from establishing themselves following the fire is in keeping with informal comments made by tribal members on other field visits in the GJFO.

SPECIAL STATUS SPECIES

PLANTS:

Current Conditions:

The project area is not known to contain any federally listed or BLM Special Status plant Species.

Impacts:

While no impacts to Special Status plant Species are expected, as none are known to occur in the area, the seeding is expected to benefit the vegetative community, and improve habitat conditions.

ANIMALS:

Current Conditions:

The immediate project area is not known to contain any federally listed, BLM Special Status wildlife species, or aquatic habitat. The area is likely to support nesting migratory birds. The Colorado River downstream of the action area contains critical habitat for the Razorback sucker, Humpback chub, Colorado Pike minnow and Bonytail chub.

Impacts:

The seeding is expected to benefit the vegetative community, and improve habitat conditions for wildlife in general including migratory bird habitat. Biologists suspect the selenium is causing reproductive failure in both fish and birds inhabiting the study area. Research conducted by Dr. Steve Hamilton (Environmental and Contaminants Research Center) suggests that selenium is adversely affecting reproduction and recruitment of endangered razorback suckers. Without the implementation of the proposed action erosion at the site could lead to increased selenium levels in the Colorado River (see water quality section below), which has the potential to negatively impact critical habitat for the listed fish as a result.

WILDLIFE

Current Conditions:

The action area contains habitat for Rocky Mountain Bighorn sheep, mule deer, elk, mountain lion and numerous small mammals, reptiles and resident birds.

Impacts:

Implementation of the proposed action is expected to beneficially impact wildlife habitat by decreasing the likelihood that the area will become dominated by nonnatives such as cheatgrass, and generally improving the vegetation composition.

WILD HORSES

Current Conditions:

The majority of the Cosgrove fire is located within the boundaries of the Little Book Cliffs Wild Horse Range. The previously treated areas are utilized by the wild horses but the majority of the burned area that was pinon-juniper woodland was used sparingly by the horses, mainly for cover. Two undeveloped springs used by the horses are located within the fire boundary but were not damaged. Unburned islands within the fire boundary will provide cover for the horses.

Impacts:

The proposed seeding will benefit the wild horse herd by providing additional forage. Areas that were previously treated had lost much of its forage value as the woody species had returned thus reducing the herbaceous cover. The reseeding effort will provide the forage base that was lost as well as provide additional forage from areas that were previously pinon-juniper woodlands with sparse herbaceous cover. The proposed action will help maintain the current upper level of the Appropriate Management Level at 150 horses. Establishing a perennial plant cover is also much more beneficial to wild horses versus an area dominated by annuals such as cheatgrass.

WILDERNESS STUDY AREA

Current Conditions:

The Little Book Cliffs Wilderness Study Area is located in Mesa County, Colorado, approximately 10 miles northeast of Grand Junction. The WSA contains 26,525 acres of public land administered by BLM. The WSA is made up of a gently upward sloping plateau dissected by four major canyon systems. The Cosgrove fire burned along the south side of the upper reaches of Main Canyon in the northern portion of the WSA. The predominant vegetation is scattered pinyon-juniper woodlands. The WSA is popular for horseback riding, hiking and wild horse viewing. Wildfires have been a frequent occurrence in the WSA.

Impacts:

The winter timeframe for the WSA overflights will minimize impacts, since that is the area's lowest use season. Cutting stumps and raking out tracks left from firefighting activities will reduce the imprints of man in areas adjacent to the WSA. Successful revegetation would also enhance wildlife habitat and reduce the potential for the spread of invasive weeds.

INVASIVE SPECIES/NOXIOUS WEEDS

Current Conditions:

The Field Office Weed program has conducted noxious weed treatments on the periphery and within the boundaries of the Cosgrove Fire. Treated species included Russian knapweed and hoary cress. Isolated patches of these weeds are likely in the general area of the fire. Locally abundant annual weeds such as cheatgrass, tumble mustard, Russian thistle are also in the general area.

Impacts:

If the burned areas are not seeded then the potential exists for weeds to spread throughout the burned area. Potential for the spread of Russian knapweed has been increased by the removal of native vegetation in infested areas. Removal of vegetation from the fire has decreased the competition for resources such as water and soil nutrients, which is beneficial for highly competitive plants such as noxious and invasive weeds. Given that vegetation cover has been removed by the fire, unutilized resources (e.g nitrogen, phosphorus, and moisture) are likely to become more available within the burned area, giving any noxious weed propagules present within the burned area a window of opportunity to become established (Davis et al. 2000).

The non-native invasive annual grass, cheatgrass (*Bromus tectorum*), is present in the vicinity of the burned area, and was present in low densities within the burned area pre-fire. It is likely that seeds of this species remain viable within the seedbank in the burned area post-fire. These invasive annual grasses often increase in abundance following fire, and cause burned areas to become more susceptible to future fires, promoting increased fire frequency and further degradation of the native plant community (D'antonio and Vitousek 1992, Brooks et al. 2004). Without treatments, non-native species infestations may spread into new areas and establish over larger acreages.

A similar seeding following the 2004 nearby Lane Gulch fire was very successful in minimizing noxious weed invasion, and stabilizing soils. Figure 3 shows a burned area immediately adjacent to the Cosgrove fire that was not seeded. This area has low plant diversity and dense cheatgrass. Cheatgrass is an annual plant with small root system that is not highly effective in stabilizing soils.

WATER QUALITY/SOILS:

Current Conditions:

The Cosgrove Fire burned the headwaters of Cosgrove Canyon which is a steep ephemeral watershed tributary to Main Canyon. Main Canyon is also a steep ephemeral watershed tributary to the Colorado River near the town of Palisade, Colorado. Both Cosgrove Canyon and Main Canyon are located within water quality stream segment 13b while the Colorado River from Rapid Creek to the Gunnison River is situated in stream segment 2b as defined by the State of Colorado. Stream segment 13b of the Colorado River basin currently does not meet water quality standards for selenium impairments. Stream segment 2b is identified on the State's Monitoring and Evaluation List for sediment and selenium. Selenium impairments are thought to largely result from the application of irrigation water over Mancos shale. However, increased erosion of Mancos shale is also thought to contribute to water quality impairments in the Colorado River and non-point source contributions of sediment are thought to be the primary contributor to sediment impairments.

Characteristics of the soils located within the area that was burned by the Cosgrove fire are listed below in Table 1. These characteristics described below include Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS) classifications for off-road erosion hazard, potential for damage by fire, and hydrologic soil group. These soils characteristics are defined by NRCS as:

Off-Road Erosion Hazard:

The ratings in this interpretation indicate the hazard of soil loss from off-road and off-trail areas after disturbance activities that expose the soil surface. The ratings are based on slope and soil erosion factor K. The soil loss is caused by sheet or rill erosion in off-road or off-trail areas where 50 to 75 percent of the surface has been exposed by logging, grazing, mining, or other kinds of disturbance.

The ratings are both verbal and numerical. The hazard is described as "slight," "moderate," "severe," or "very severe." A rating of "slight" indicates that erosion is unlikely under ordinary climatic conditions; "moderate" indicates that some erosion is likely and that erosion-control measures may be needed; "severe" indicates that erosion is very likely and that erosion-control measures, including revegetation of bare areas, are advised; and "very severe" indicates that significant erosion is expected, loss of soil productivity and off-site damage are likely, and erosion-control measures are costly and generally impractical.

Potential for Damage by Fire:

The ratings in this interpretation indicate the potential for damage to nutrient, physical, and biotic soil characteristics by fire. The ratings involve an evaluation of the potential impact of prescribed fires or wildfires that are intense enough to remove the duff layer and consume organic matter in the surface layer. The ratings are based on texture of the surface layer, content of rock fragments and organic matter in the surface layer, thickness of the surface layer, and slope.

The ratings are both verbal and numerical. The soils are described as having a "low," "moderate," or "high" potential for this kind of damage. "Low" indicates that fire damage is unlikely. Good performance can be expected, and little or no maintenance is needed. "Moderate" indicates that fire damage can occur because one or more soil properties are less than desirable. Fair performance can be expected, and some maintenance is needed. "High" indicates that fire damage can occur because of one or more soil properties and that overcoming the unfavorable properties requires special design, extra maintenance, and costly alteration.

Hydrologic Soil Group:

Group B – Soils having a moderate infiltration rate when thoroughly wet. These consist chiefly of moderately deep or deep, moderately well drained or well drained soils that have moderately fine texture to moderately coarse texture. These soils have a moderate rate of water transmission.

Group D – Soils having a very slow infiltration rate (high runoff potential) when thoroughly wet. These consist chiefly of clays that have a high shrink-swell potential, soils that have a high water table, soils that have a claypan or clay layer at or near the surface, and soils that are shallow over nearly impervious material. These soils have a very slow rate of water transmission (NRCS, Soil Data Mapper).

Table 1: Soil Characteristics

Soil Type	Map Unit Symbol	% Slope	% of Project Area	Erosion Hazard (Off-trail)	Potential for Damage by Fire	Hydrologic Soil Group
Redcreek-Rentsac Complex	60	5 – 40	34	Moderate	High	D
Torriorthents, cool Rock-outcrop complex	65	30 – 90	27	Very Severe	High	D
Torriorthents, warm Rock-outcrop complex	66	35 – 90	7	Very Severe	High	D
Yamo, moist-Redcreek complex	77	3 - 25	32	Slight	Moderate	B

Impacts:

Upland areas which have experienced high intensity wildfire often times lack essential soil stabilizing agents leading to excessive hill slope erosion. Increased hill slope erosion from burned areas contributes to increased sedimentation to area drainages which can deteriorate water quality in receiving waters. If left untreated (no-rehabilitation), it is anticipated that increased erosion from the burned area will result in incremental increases in sediment loading to the Colorado River system deteriorating water quality in both stream segment 13b and 2b. However, with rehabilitation of the burned area it is anticipated that recovery of desirable soil stabilizing agents would occur over a shorter time period. As a result, soil erosion and sedimentation to area drainages would be minimize at or near natural levels.

WILDLAND FIRE/FUELS

Current Conditions

The Cosgrove fire burned with high intensity like many other fires in this area within the pinyon juniper fuels type. While the fuels were significantly reduced there is potential for post fire cheat grass infestation without proper rehab efforts. Similar too many fires in cheatgrass susceptible areas across the Great Basin if this fire is not reseeded there is a highly likelihood to become dominated by cheatgrass. This will then cause the frequency of fire to change from long return interval system, such as pinyon juniper, to having short interval fire every couple years.

Impacts

Successful seeding would limit the likelihood of future cheatgrass infestation. Thus lowering the risk of having reoccur fires in short duration. Seeding with native species produces perennial vegetation that will hold live fuel moisture longer in the growing season reducing the potential to support wildland fires. Seeding would potentially lower future fire suppression costs in this area if seeding prevented the fire area from becoming a cheatgrass monoculture.

NAME OF PREPARER: Christina Stark

NAME OF ENVIRONMENTAL COORDINATOR: Collin Ewing

DATE:

12/8/11

DECISION:

I have reviewed the environmental effects of the proposed Cosgrove Fire Emergency Stabilization Project. This project is categorically excluded from documentation in an EA or EIS under 516 Department Manual 11 (I).

The Cosgrove Fire Emergency Stabilization Project would allow for aerial seeding the entire burned area. It would also allow for hand raking and ground seeding of areas disturbed by fire suppression vehicles, and lopping and scattering of tree stumps that were created during fire suppression activities. Under the proposed action follow up monitoring for noxious and invasive weeds and revegetation success would be authorized.

It is my decision to authorize the Cosgrove Fire Emergency Stabilization Project as described in the attached CX. The approved emergency stabilization activities are located in:

6th Principal Meridian
T. 9 S., R. 99 W.,
sec. 21, S½;
sec. 22, SW¼SW¼;
sec. 26, W½, and S½;
sec. 27, All;
sec. 28, N½, and E½;
sec. 33, NE¼NE¼;
sec. 34, N½;
sec. 35, All;
sec. 36, W½.

RATIONALE:

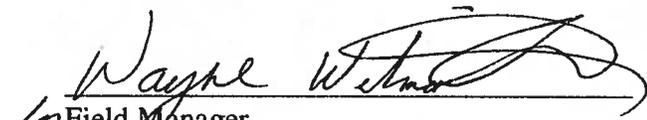
This action is listed in the Department Manual as an action that may be categorically excluded. I have evaluated the action relative to the 12 criteria listed above and have determined that no extraordinary circumstances exist.

In making this decision, I have reviewed the cost and benefits associated with emergency stabilization and natural rehabilitation of the area burned by the Cosgrove Fire. Reduction of pinyon and juniper in the project area has allowed for habitat improvement for wildlife and wild horses through the natural process of fire. Some of the areas burned by the fire and adjacent unburned areas provide important winter habitat for wildlife and wild horses. Concern with increased erosion and weed invasion are the primary reason for initiating rehabilitation efforts. Seeding the burned area will reduce soil erosion and sediment transport into Colorado River. Reduction of sediment transport into the Colorado River will help to protect sensitive aquatic species and water quality. Seeding the area burned by the Cosgrove fire will also reduce the potential for invasion and spread of noxious and invasive weeds, such as knapweed and cheatgrass that are located within or adjacent to the project. Expediting the establishment of native plant species through seeding is critical. The proposed rehabilitation efforts will help to ensure that high habitat quality is retained in the area burned by the fire.

The immediate project area is not known to contain any federally listed, BLM Special Status wildlife species, or aquatic habitat. The Colorado River downstream of the action area contains critical habitat for the Razorback sucker, Humpback chub, Colorado Pike minnow and Bonytail chub. Reduction of sediment transport into the Colorado River will help to protect the habitat for the endangered razorback suckers. The area is also likely to support nesting migratory birds.

Four Class III inventories have been conducted in the project area. There were no cultural resources identified within the project area by these surveys. Although this is a small sample, typically north facing and steep slopes in this environment and soil setting do not yield sites of a type that would be affected by the proposed action. The project would have no adverse effects on features that would contribute to the eligibility of any unrecorded cultural resources in the project area. Consultation with the State Historic Preservation Officer is not required for this project. Negative impacts on any unidentified or known cultural resources will be mitigated through the standard stipulations for this project.

No formal public comments were received for this project. Colorado Parks and Wildlife and the Rock Mountain Bighorn Society expressed concern over recovery of vegetation within the burned area.


for Field Manager
Grand Junction Field Office

12-8-11
Date

ATTACHMENTS:

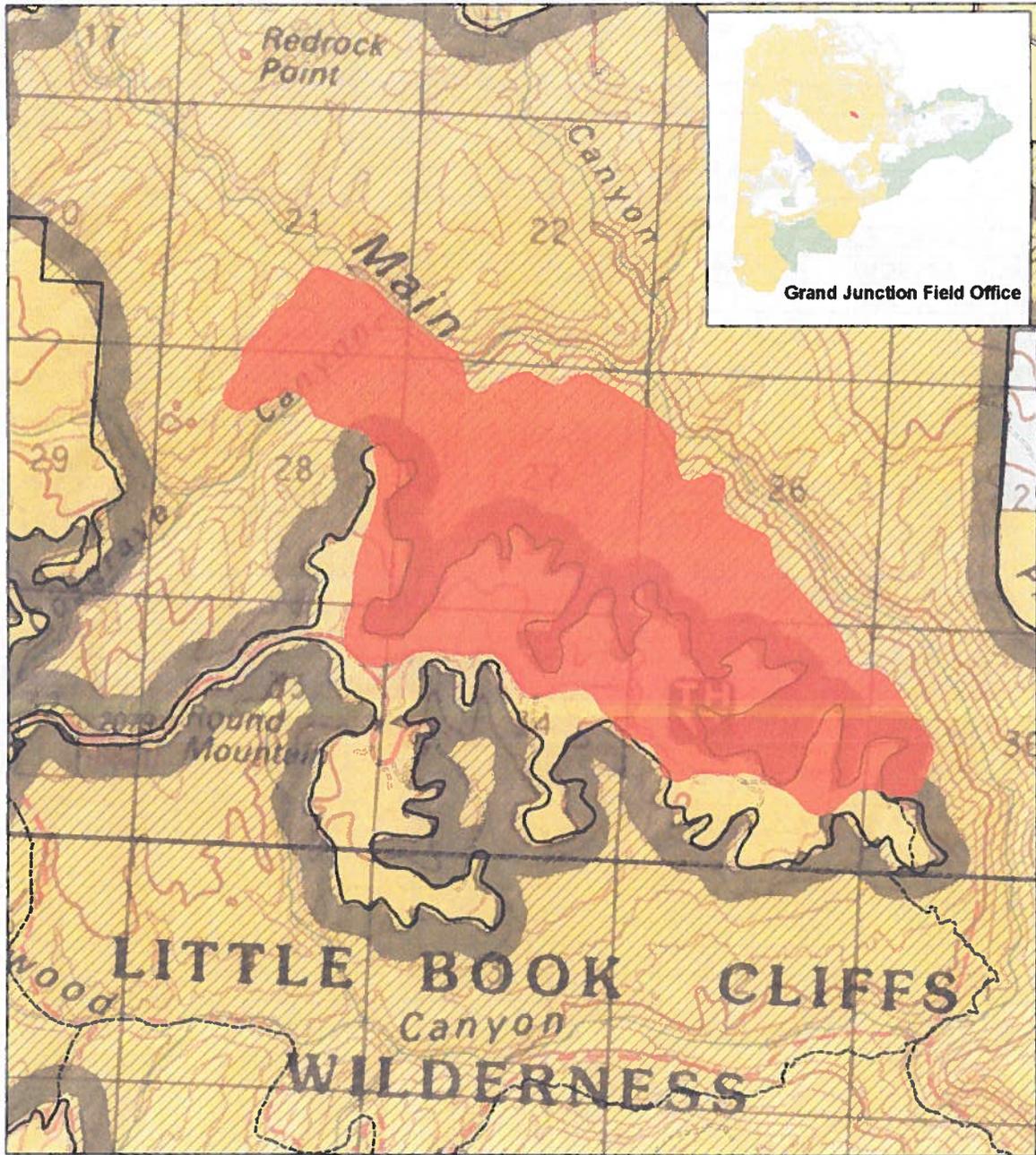
Table 1: Potentially Impacted Resources

Exhibit A: Project Map.

Table 1- Potentially Impacted Resources

Resources	Not Present On Location	No Impact	Potentially Impacted	Mitigation necessary	Comments included in DNA text	BLM Evaluator Initial & Date
PHYSICAL RESOURCES						
Air and Climate	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Geological	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Mineral Resources	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Soils	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	ND 11-7-11
Water (surface & subsurface, floodplains)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	ND 11-7-11
BIOLOGICAL RESOURCES						
Invasive, Non-native Species	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	MT 11/2/11
Sensitive Species	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	HLP 9/26/11
Threatened or Endangered Species	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	ARL 9/23/11 HLP 9/26/11
Vegetation, Forestry	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Wetlands/Riparian Zones	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	CARS 9/19/11
Wildlife	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	HLP 9/26/11
HERITAGE RESOURCES AND HUMAN ENV.						
Cultural or Historical	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	AIL 10/7/11
Paleontological	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Tribal & American Indian Religious Concerns	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	AIL 10/7/11
Visual Resources	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	CPP 9/22/11
Social	<input type="checkbox"/>	CARS 9/19/11				
Economic	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	CARS 9/19/11
Environmental Justice	<input type="checkbox"/>	CARS 9/19/11				
Transportation and Access	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	CPP 9/22/11
Wastes, Hazardous or Solid	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
LAND RESOURCES						
Prime or Unique Farmlands	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	CARS 9/19/11
Recreation	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	CPP 9/22/11
Special Designations (ACEC, SMAs etc.)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	CPP 9/22/11
Wild and Scenic Rivers	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	CPP 9/22/11
Wilderness	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	CPP 9/22/11
Range Management	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	JRD 11/4/11
Wild Horse and Burros	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	JRD 11/4/11
Land Tenure, ROW, Other Uses	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	CARS 9/19/11

Exhibit A



6th PM,
T 9 S, R. 99 W,
Sections: 21, 22, 26, 27, 28,
33, 34, 35, and 36

Mesa County, Colorado

Round Mountain & Winter Flats,
Colorado USGS Quadrangles

COSGROVE FIRE
DOI-BLM-CO-130-2011-0067-CX

Fire Boundary: 1,744 Acres



-  Cosgrove Fire
-  WSA
-  BLM
-  Private

