



# United States Department of the Interior

BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT  
Glenwood Springs Field Office  
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## ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

NUMBER: CO140-2008-067

CASEFILE NUMBER:

PROJECT NAME: Peach Valley Tamarisk Removal Project

LEGAL DESCRIPTION: T06S R92W Section 1 NW1/4

APPLICANT: BLM

### DESCRIPTION OF PROPOSED ACTION AND ALTERNATIVES

**Proposed Action:** The BLM and Garfield County will be working together to eradicate a 1 acre stand of tamarisk in the Peach Valley area of Garfield County (Pic 1). The project is located approximately 2 miles northeast of Silt, CO (Map 1). The infestation is approximately 300 yards east of the Peach Valley county road (Map 2). Access would be off of Peach Valley county road onto a two-track road through private land owned by John Bellio. Permission has been granted by John for BLM employees to cross for the purpose of treating tamarisk on BLM controlled land. Tamarisk plants would be cut near the base with a variety of hand tools including chainsaws, handheld rotary saws, hand saws, and loppers. All dead and downed woody material would be piled and later burned. Residual plant stumps would be sprayed with Garlon 4 immediately following cutting. The applicator would follow instructions safety directions on the herbicide label and will comply with BLM policy.

During the pile burning process, the BLM Glenwood Springs Field Office Pile Burn Plan (valid 2007-2011) would be followed and adequate moisture in adjacent fuel and ground would be present to safely conduct the burn. Pile burning would take place between the dates of November 1<sup>st</sup>, 2008 and February 28<sup>th</sup>, 2009. A BLM representative would be present at the time of the project to provide guidance and answer questions to crew leaders conducting the work.

Monitoring would occur over the next five years to insure complete eradication of tamarisk and would entail evaluation of treatment success. Any regenerated tamarisk sprouts would be spot-sprayed with BLM approved herbicides.



**Pic 1: Tamarisk Infestation (taken from Peach Valley Road)**

**No Action Alternative:** Under the No Action Alternative, no management action would take place to remove tamarisk at the proposed location. The size and amount of tamarisk present in the area will continue to grow over time and would provide a continual seed source establishing new infestations throughout the area by means of wind, water, and wildlife.

ALTERNATIVES CONSIDERED BUT NOT CARRIED FORWARD: None

NEED FOR THE ACTION:

Tamarisk (*Tamarix ramosissima*) is identified as a noxious weed on the Colorado Noxious Weed B List. List B species include plants whose continued spread should be stopped. Garfield County also identifies Tamarisk as a noxious weed and prioritizes control of this plant. Tamarisk has few natural biological controls, thus giving the plant a distinct competitive advantage in dominating and crowding out native plant species to the extent that plant diversity and ecosystem integrity are threatened. Recent drought conditions and corresponding lack of high spring flows have exasperated the problem by creating an environment favorable for tamarisk establishment and growth. Implementation of the Proposed Action would complement adjacent and connected tamarisk eradication efforts and increase overall program effectiveness by reducing the current population and seed source of tamarisk within the watershed.

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

Name of Plan: Glenwood Springs Resource Management Plan.

Date Approved: Jan. 1984, revised 1988, amended in November 1991 - Oil and Gas Leasing and Development - Final Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement; amended Nov. 1996 - Colorado Standards and Guidelines; amended in August 1997 - Castle Peak Travel Management Plan; amended in March 1999 - Oil and Gas Leasing & Development Final Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement; amended in November 1999 - Red Hill Plan Amendment; and amended in September 2002 – Fire Management Plan for Wildland Fire Management and Prescriptive Vegetation Treatment Guidance.

Decision Number/Page: The proposal implements land use plan decision Terrestrial Habitat Management, Chapter 2 – page 18.

Decision Language: Priorities of Implementation states “Priority 2. Monitor, maintain, or improve riparian habitat as identified in the resource management plan.”

Decision Number/Page: The proposal also implements Glenwood Springs Resource Area-Wide Management Goals identified in the Fire Management Plan for Wildland Fire Management and Prescriptive Vegetation Treatment Guidance, Part 6 – page 12.

Decision Language: Management goals include “In addition to the GSFO RMP resource specific objectives, the GSFO will manage wildland fire; use prescribed fire; and use mechanical, chemical, hand, and animal vegetation treatment to:”

- Protect existing and improve degraded riparian vegetation for long term health.
- Limit the spread of noxious and invasive plants, insect infestations and disease.

Standards for Public Land Health: In January 1997, Colorado Bureau of Land Management (BLM) approved the Standards for Public Land Health. The five standards cover upland soils, riparian systems, plant and animal communities, threatened and endangered species, and water quality. Standards describe conditions needed to sustain public land health and relate to all uses of the public lands.

Standards for Public Land Health: The Glenwood Springs Field Office is in the ongoing process of completing Land Health Assessments on a landscape basis. The proposed action occurs within the Elk Creek Landscape Unit, which had the land health assessment field work conducted in 2007. The determination document has not yet been completed. As such, no formal determination of conformance with the standards will be made.

However, the impact analysis must address whether the proposed action or any alternatives being analyzed would result in impacts that would maintain, improve, or deteriorate land health conditions for each of the five standards. These analyses are located in specific elements listed below:

**AFFECTED ENVIRONMENT /ENVIRONMENTAL CONSEQUENCES / MITGATION MEASURES:**

**CRITICAL ELEMENTS**

This section provides a description of the human and natural environmental resources that could be affected by the proposed action and no action alternative. In addition, the section presents comparative analyses of the direct and indirect consequences on the affected environment stemming from the implementation of the various actions.

A variety of laws, regulations, and policy directives mandate the evaluation of the effects of a proposed action and alternative(s) on certain critical environmental elements. Not all of the critical elements that require inclusion in this EA are present, or if they are present, may not be affected by the proposed action and alternative (Table 2). Only those mandatory critical elements that are present and affected are described in the following narrative.

In addition to the mandatory critical elements, there are additional resources that would be impacted by the proposed action and alternative. These are presented under **Other Affected Resources.**

<b>Table 1 - Critical Elements of the Human Environment</b>									
<i>Critical Element</i>	<i>Present</i>		<i>Affected</i>		<i>Critical Element</i>	<i>Present</i>		<i>Affected</i>	
	Yes	No	Yes	No		Yes	No	Yes	No
Air Quality	X		X		Prime or Unique Farmlands		X		X
ACECs		X		X	Threatened or Endangered Species		X		X
Cultural Resources		X		X	Wastes, Hazardous or Solid	X		X	
Environmental Justice	X			X	Water Quality, Drinking and Ground	X		X	
Floodplains		X		X	Wetlands and Riparian Zones		X		X
Invasive, Non-native Species	X		X		Wild and Scenic Rivers		X		X
Native American Religious Concerns		X		X	Wilderness		X		X

**AIR QUALITY**

Affected Environment: The proposed action area (Garfield County) has been described as an attainment area under CAAQS (Colorado Ambient Air Quality Standards) and NAAQS (National Ambient Air Quality Standards). An attainment area is an area where ambient air pollution amounts are determined to be below NAAQS standards. For more information on air quality in the area,

refer to the Roan Plateau RMPA and EIS which describes potential effects from oil and gas development (BLM 2006:4-26 to 4-37).

*Proposed Action:*

Environmental Consequences/Mitigation: The proposed action would result in short-term localized emissions associated with chainsaw operation, vehicle operation, and burning activities. While the effects of burning activities appear to be minor, they could affect individuals in the vicinity sensitive to smoke such as the elderly, infants and young children, and those with breathing problems. Others that may be at risk include pregnant women, those active outdoors, and people with allergies or diabetes.

Burning activities would be conducted in accordance with the BLM Glenwood Springs Field Office Burn Plan and the current State of Colorado Smoke Management Plan and would be permitted by open burning permits issued by the Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment Air Pollution Control Division. Given the scale, location, and the timing of the proposed activities; it is anticipated that impacts to local air quality would be minimal and no additional mitigation is recommended at this time.

*No Action Alternative:*

Environmental Consequences: The no action alternative would have no effect on air quality.

## AREAS OF CRITICAL ENVIRONMENTAL CONCERN

Affected Environment: There are no Areas of Critical Environmental Concern within the project area.

Environmental Consequences/Mitigation: N/A

## CULTURAL RESOURCES

Affected Environment: No cultural resource inventory has been undertaken for the project. It is not considered necessary since as planned this project will have no potential to affect historic properties within the Area of Potential Effect.

Environmental Consequences/Mitigation: The action does not have the potential to affect historic properties since tamarisk is considered an invasive weed, less than 50 years old, and no large mechanical equipment will be used to cut the tamarisk. There would be no direct impacts to cultural resources from the implementation of the proposed action. However, indirect long-term cumulative impacts from increased access and the presence of project personnel could result in a range of impacts to known and undiscovered cultural resources in the vicinity of the location. These impacts could range from illegal collection and excavation to vandalism.

Mitigation:

A standard Education/Discovery/NAGPRA Stipulation for cultural resource protection should be stressed to all participants informing them of their responsibilities to protect and report any cultural resources encountered

Education/Discovery/NAGPRA Stipulation

The National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA) requires that if newly discovered cultural resources are identified during project implementation, work in that area must stop and the agency Authorized Officer notified immediately (36 CFR 800.13). The Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act (NAGPRA), requires that if inadvertent discovery of Native American Remains or Objects occurs, activity must cease in the area of discovery, a reasonable effort made to protect the item(s) discovered, and immediate notice 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)). Further actions also require compliance under the provisions of NHPA and the Archaeological Resource Protection Act.

ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE

Affected Environment: Review of 2004 data from US Census Bureau indicates the median annual income of Garfield County averages \$50,119 and is neither an impoverished or wealthy county. U.S. Census Bureau data from 2006 shows the minority population of Garfield County comprises less than 0.7 % of the total population of Colorado<sup>1</sup>.

Garfield County
Median Household Income (2004)
Estimate
\$50,119

Environmental Consequences/Mitigation: The proposed action and alternatives are not expected to create a disproportionately high and adverse human health impact or environmental effect on minority or low-income populations within the area.

INVASIVE, NON-NATIVE SPECIES

Affected Environment: Along with the tamarisk that is proposed for treatment in this EA; Russian knapweed has been identified in the adjacent area.

<sup>1</sup> Source U.S. Census Bureau: State and County QuickFacts. Data derived from Population Estimates, Census of Population and Housing, Small Area Income and Poverty Estimates, State and County Housing Unit Estimates, County Business Patterns, Nonemployer Statistics, Economic Census, Survey of Business Owners, Building Permits, Consolidated Federal Funds Report  
Last Revised: Wednesday, 02-Jan-2008 15:11:03

#### Environmental Consequences/Mitigation:

**Proposed Action:** The proposed action would remove tamarisk from the project area. Tamarisk is on Colorado's noxious weed list and has been targeted in east Garfield County for eradication because of the limited populations. The proposed action would remove this localized population as a seed source. Russian knapweed populations would increase immediately following tamarisk removal invading and capturing resources once occupied by tamarisk.

**Mitigation:** Any noxious weeds, specifically Russian knapweed, within the project area or in the general vicinity would be controlled using BLM approved techniques. Specifically Russian knapweed would be sprayed the following fall using BLM approved herbicides.

**No Action:** Under the no action alternative tamarisk treatment would not take place. The current tamarisk population would continue to enlarge and provide a seed source to the surrounding area. Russian knapweed would continue to increase in the general vicinity.

#### MIGRATORY BIRDS

**Affected Environment:** The dominant woody vegetation within the project area consists of tamarisk, greasewood, and Basin big sagebrush. Understory vegetation is primarily annual forbs and some native perennial grasses. Although some bird species will nest in tamarisk, this is not the preferred habitat for any of the bird species listed on the USFWS's Birds of Conservation Concern List.

#### Environmental Consequences/Mitigation:

**Proposed Action:** The Proposed Action would have minimal impacts to migratory birds. The removal of tamarisk shrubs would increase the herbaceous component of the ecosystem. This would allow native vegetation to become re-established and would improve habitat for migratory bird species. Herbicides would be applied to tamarisk stumps after hand cutting. Triclopyr is slightly toxic to birds if ingested and can slightly influence reproductive success ([www.epa.gov/oppsrrd1/REDS/2710red.pdf](http://www.epa.gov/oppsrrd1/REDS/2710red.pdf) - May 2, 2008). This impact is expected to be minimal and isolated and would not influence populations of migratory birds on a landscape level.

**No Action Alternative:** There would be no impacts to migratory birds from the No Action Alternative, however, the Proposed Action would improve habitat for several migratory bird species.

#### NATIVE AMERICAN RELIGIOUS CONCERNS

**Affected Environment:** The Ute tribes claim this area as part of their ancestral homeland. At present, no Native American concerns are known within the project

area. If new data are disclosed, new terms and conditions may have to be negotiated to accommodate their concerns.

Environmental Consequences/Mitigation: Although there would be no direct impacts from the proposed action, indirect impacts from increased access and personnel in the vicinity of the proposed project could result in impacts to unknown Native American resources ranging from illegal collection to vandalism. The standard Education/Discovery/NAGPRA Stipulation for cultural resource protection would be attached and stressed to all participants informing them of their responsibilities to protect and report any cultural resources encountered.

#### THREATENED, ENDANGERED, AND SENSITIVE SPECIES (includes a finding on Standard 4)

Affected Environment: According to the latest species list from the U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service (<http://mountain-prairie.fws.gov/endspp/CountyLists/COLORADO.pdf>), the following Federally listed, proposed, or candidate plant and animal species may occur within or be impacted by actions occurring in Garfield County: Uinta Basin hookless cactus (*Sclerocactus glaucus*), Ute Ladies' Tresses (*Spiranthes diluvialis*), Parachute beardtongue (*Penstemon debilis*), DeBeque phacelia (*Phacelia submutica*), Canada lynx (*Lynx canadensis*), Mexican spotted owl (*Strix occidentalis*), yellow-billed cuckoo (*Coccyzus americanus*), razorback sucker (*Xyrauchen texanus*), Colorado pikeminnow (*Ptychocheilus lucius*), bonytail chub (*Gila elegans*), and humpback chub (*Gila cypha*).

There are no known occurrences of or any suitable habitat for any threatened, endangered, candidate or BLM sensitive plant or wildlife species within the Peach Valley tamarisk area.

Environmental Consequences/Mitigation: Due to a lack of occupied or suitable habitat, the proposed action and no action alternatives would have "No Effect" to any listed species and "No Impact" to any BLM sensitive species.

Finding on the Public Land Health Standard for Threatened & Endangered Species: A formal Land Health Assessment was completed for the area in 2007. A final report is not yet completed, but the watershed was generally meeting Standard 4 for threatened, endangered and other special status species due to the absence of any affected habitat. The proposed project should have no bearing on the ability of the area to meet this standard.

#### WASTES, HAZARDOUS OR SOLID

Affected Environment: Vehicle and equipment fuel and lubricants would be used for vehicle and chainsaw operations during project implementation. In addition,

the herbicide triclopyr, which is sold under the trade name Garlon 4, would be used to treat cut stumps to slow re-growth.

#### *Proposed Action*

Environmental Consequences/Mitigation: Fuels and lubricants would be stored in appropriate containers and refueling would occur in designated areas. The herbicides would be promptly applied to cut stumps using daubers and/or hand sprayers. These herbicides could also be sprayed on re-sprouting leaves the following growing season. The product Garlon 4 would be mixed with mentholated seed oil. An approved Pesticide Use Proposal (PUP) is required as standard BLM policy to apply herbicides on public land. The approval of a PUP requires that all personnel applying herbicides must be licensed by the Colorado State Department of Agriculture or be under the direct supervision of a licensed applicator. In addition, the PUP contains other specifications as needed to address environmental concerns using the specific herbicide. The Specimen label and Material Safety Data Sheet for Garlon 4 would be followed for application procedures and safety measures.

Based on the distance of the proposed treatment unit from area drainages, the existing slope angle, and good vegetative cover; it is unlikely that fuels, lubricants, or herbicides would be transported to area drainages. In addition, the proposed treatment area is separated from major drainages by existing road features and pastures.

#### *No Action*

Environmental Consequences/Mitigation: Under the no action alternative there would be no fuel or lubricants present associated with vehicles and equipments and herbicide application would not occur.

### WATER QUALITY, SURFACE AND GROUND (includes an analysis on Standard 5)

Affected Environment: Proposed activities would be located approximately 1.5 miles north of the Colorado River in between the Towns of Silt and New Castle within the 42,317 acre Colorado River above Rifle Creek 6<sup>th</sup> field watershed. Within the project area is a poorly defined unnamed ephemeral drainage that is intersected by a diversion ditch south of the project area.

The State of Colorado has developed *Stream Classifications and Water Quality Standards* (CDPHE, Water Quality Control Commission, Regulation No. 37) ) that identify beneficial uses of water and numeric standards used to determine allowable concentrations of water quality parameters, a *303(d) List of Water Quality Limited Segments Requiring TMDLS* (CDPHE, Water Quality Control Commission, Regulation No. 93) that identifies stream segments that are not currently meeting water quality standards with technology based controls alone, and a *Monitoring and Evaluation List* (CDPHE, Water Quality Control Commission, Regulation No. 94) that identifies waterbodies suspected to have water quality problems. At this time, the unnamed

ephemeral drainage mentioned above is not within any segment on the State lists. In addition, there are no current water quality data available for this drainage.

*Proposed Action*

Environmental Consequences/Mitigation: Proposed activities would remove some vegetation and could alter soil conditions through compaction, displacement, and the development of a hydrophobic soil layer associated with foot traffic and burning activities. These impacts would be minor but could result in an increase in erosion potential, possible offsite sedimentation, and potential nutrient loading offsite. Additionally, there is a potential for contaminants associated with fuel and lubricant spills and herbicide application to be transported out of the project area.

Based on the distance of the proposed activities from perennial drainages or connected drainages, the existing slope angle, and good vegetative cover; it is unlikely that sediment, fuels, lubricants, or herbicides would be transported out of the project area. In addition, the proposed activities are separated from hydrologic features by existing road features and pastures. Furthermore, no site specific mitigation is being recommended besides following the burn plan, the terms of the PUP, and basic BMPs associated with burning activities and erosion control.

*No Action*

Environmental Consequences/Mitigation: The no action alternative would have no effect on water quality.

Analysis on the Public Land Health Standard for Water Quality: The proposed action and no action alternative would not likely prevent Standard 5 for Water Quality from being achieved. In 2007 the BLM Glenwood Springs Field Office conducted the Elk Creek Land Health Assessment in the area. During that time, it was determined that area water quality was good.

NON-CRITICAL ELEMENTS

The following elements **must** be addressed due to the involvement of Standards for Public Land Health:

SOILS (includes a finding on Standard 1)

Affected Environment: According to the *Soil Survey of Rifle Area, Colorado: Parts of Garfield and Mesa Counties* (USDA 1985), the proposed activities would be located on the soil map unit Heldt clay loam. This deep, well drained soil is found on alluvial fans and sides of valleys at elevations ranging from 5,000 to 6,000 feet and on slopes of 3 to 6 percent. Parent material for this soil is shale and sandstone alluvium. Surface runoff for this soil is medium and the erosion hazard is moderate. Primary uses for this soil include irrigated hay and crops, and some grazing.

*Proposed Action:*

Environmental Consequences/Mitigation: Proposed treatment activities would remove some vegetation and could alter soil conditions through compaction, displacement, and the development of a hydrophobic soil layer associated with foot traffic and burning activities. These impacts would result in an increase in erosion potential, possible offsite sedimentation, and potential nutrient loading offsite. These impacts would be short term and minor based on the size of the treatment area, the existing vegetative cover, the topography, and the distance from hydrologic features.

*No Action Alternative:*

Environmental Consequences: The no action alternative would have no effect on soil resources.

Analysis on Public Land Health Standard 1 for Upland Soils: The proposed action and the no action alternative would not likely prevent Standard 1 for Upland Soils from being met. In 2007 the BLM Glenwood Springs Field Office conducted the Elk Creek Land Health Assessment in the area. During that time, it was determined that Standard 1 was being met at all upland sites evaluated.

VEGETATION (includes a finding on Standard 3)

Affected Environment: The dominant woody vegetation within the project area consists of tamarisk, greasewood, and Basin big sagebrush. Understory vegetation is primarily annual forbs and some native perennial grasses. The noxious weed, Russian knapweed, was also observed within the project vicinity.

*Proposed Action:*

Environmental Consequences/Mitigation: The proposed action would involve hand-cutting of tamarisk and hand-spraying the exposed stumps with Garlon4 (triclopyr) herbicide to inhibit resprouting. Tamarisk limbs would be piled and burned during the fall or winter when non-target vegetation would be dormant.

Triclopyr is a broadleaf herbicide that imitates a plant hormone, causing the growing tips of the plant to elongate, followed by distortion, withering, and the death of the plant. Triclopyr is selective (most toxic to broadleaf plants) because grasses are quickly able to transform triclopyr into compounds that do not have hormonal activity. Although triclopyr may damage non-target broadleaf plants (such as forbs), these plants are expected to recover fairly rapidly since the persistence of the herbicide is less than two years.

The proposed treatment would change the structure and composition of the vegetative community in the project area. Tamarisk trees and shrubs would be removed, opening up the site to more light and moisture. Grasses and forbs would likely increase following treatment due to the removal of competition from shrubby species. Russian knapweed may also invade the project area since it is present immediately adjacent to the site and is a highly competitive plant species.

**Mitigation:** In order to prevent Russian knapweed from invading the project area following tamarisk treatment, the adjacent Russian knapweed infestation should be sprayed in the fall when it is most susceptible to herbicides. The project area should also be seeded in the fall with native grasses which are adapted to the site and are certified weed-free.

*No Action Alternative:*

**Environmental Consequences:** Under the No Action alternative, no tamarisk plants would be cut and burned and no herbicides would be applied. The project area would continue to be dominated by tamarisk, a non-native, woody species which inhibits the ability of the area to support native vegetation and does not contribute towards meeting the Standard for healthy plant communities. Herbicides would not be applied which would eliminate any risk of damage to non-target vegetation and any risk of contamination of local soils and water quality.

**Finding on the Public Land Health Standard for plant and animal communities (partial, see also Wildlife, Aquatic and Wildlife, Terrestrial):** A formal Land Health Assessment was completed for the area in 2007. The final report is not yet completed, however, the preliminary evaluation indicates that Standard 3 for healthy plant communities is not being met in this portion of the watershed. Invasive species such as tamarisk and cheatgrass are contributing to the failure to achieve the standard. The proposed action should have a positive effect on land health by removing an invasive, non-native species and providing conditions favorable for native species to reestablish in the area.

**WILDLIFE, AQUATIC (includes a finding on Standard 3)**

**Affected Environment:**

The proposed project is located within a small ephemeral drainage that feeds Ware and Hinds Ditch. The Colorado River is located within 1.25 miles of the project but due to the presence of ditches is not hydrologically connected to the project drainage. No aquatic wildlife is present at or within the area of influence of the project.

**Environmental Consequences/Mitigation:**

The cutting of tamarisk should have no negative impacts to aquatic wildlife. No aquatic wildlife is present at or in the area of influence of the project. The project site would likely provide better aquatic habitat upon the completion of the project as tamarisk plants use a lot of water. Removing these plants will provide for more water yield in the area and allow for establishment of native riparian species.

**Finding on the Public Land Health Standard 3 for Plant and Animal Communities (partial, see also Vegetation and Wildlife, Terrestrial):**

A formal Land Health Assessment was completed for the area in 2007. A final report is not yet completed, but the watershed was generally meeting Standard 3 for aquatic wildlife. The proposed project should help to improve watershed conditions and help to further meet the standard.

**WILDLIFE, TERRESTRIAL** (includes a finding on Standard 3)

**Affected Environment:** The dominant woody vegetation within the project area consists of tamarisk, greasewood, and Basin big sagebrush. Understory vegetation is primarily annual forbs and some native perennial grasses. The overall area provides habitat for big game species as well as small mammals, reptiles and birds. Both mule deer and elk utilize the area during moderate and severe winters.

**Environmental Consequences/Mitigation:**

The Proposed Action would have minimal impacts to terrestrial wildlife species. The removal of tamarisk shrubs would increase the herbaceous component of the ecosystem. This would allow native vegetation to become re-established and would improve habitat for wildlife. Herbicides would be applied to tamarisk stumps after hand cutting. Triclopyr is slightly toxic to birds and practically non-toxic to mammals. This herbicide can slightly influence reproductive success for both birds and mammals (<http://www.epa.gov/oppsrrd1/REDs/2710red.pdf> - May 2, 2008). This impact is expected to be minimal and isolated and would not influence wildlife populations on a landscape level.

It is likely that noise and an increase in human presence during treatment implementation would result in some short term disturbance to resident wildlife. Some species will be temporarily displaced from the area to adjacent habitats, but would return once the treatment is completed.

*No Action Alternative:* There would be no impacts to terrestrial wildlife species or their habitat from the No Action Alternative. However, the Proposed Action would improve habitat for wildlife species.

**Finding on the Public Land Health Standard 3 for Plant and Animal Communities** (partial, see also **Vegetation and Wildlife, Terrestrial**): The field portion of a Formal Land Health Assessment was completed for the general area was completed in 2007. Preliminary evaluation indicates that Standard 3 for healthy animal communities is not being met in this portion of the watershed. The proposed action would have a positive effect on land health by removing an invasive, non-native species and would move towards meeting this standard.

**OTHER NON-CRITICAL ELEMENTS:** For the following elements, those brought forward for analysis will be formatted as shown above.

<b>Table 2. Other Resources Considered in the Analysis.</b>			
<i>Resource</i>	<i>NA or Not Present</i>	<i>Present and Not Affected</i>	<i>Present and Affected</i>
Access and Transportation		X	
Cadastral Survey	X		

Fire/Fuels Management	X		
Forest Management	X		
Geology and Minerals	X		
Law Enforcement	X		
Paleontology	X		
Noise		X	
Range Management	X		
Realty Authorizations	X		
Recreation	X		
Socio-Economics		X	
Visual Resources		X	
Water Rights	X		

## NOISE

**Affected Environment:** The proposed treatment area would be in close proximity to a couple of homesteads. Noise generation would primarily be associated with chainsaw operations.

### *Proposed Action*

**Environmental Consequences/Mitigation:** Due to the size of the treatment unit, noise generated by chainsaw operations would be short term and would have little impact on nearby residences.

### *No Action*

**Environmental Consequences/Mitigation:** The no action alternative would result in no additional noise generation.

## CUMULATIVE IMPACTS SUMMARY:

Treatment would contribute only minor amounts of pollutants to the air. Fire use would increase particulate matter in the air, but the amount of pollutants generated by fire use, and their effects on human health, would be minimal. Treatment would lead to cumulative loss of soil from removal of vegetation and erosion, but improvement in vegetative quality should slow soil loss on public lands. Erosion has led to poor water quality on portions of public lands. Treatments that slow erosion would also benefit water quality and slow the cumulative loss of water quality. Over half of the wetland in the U.S. have been lost since settlement by Europeans. Treatments would improve wetland and riparian area functions and values and slow erosion, which contributes to wetland degradation on public lands. With improvement in these areas, habitat for fish and other aquatic organisms would also improve.

The spread of weeds have degraded vegetation function and quality on public land and have led to a cumulative loss of vegetative productivity. Treatments would restore ecosystem processes and slow this loss. Some species that have adapted to degraded ecosystems could lose habitat as native vegetation was restored, but most species would benefit. Factors that have led to the loss of native vegetation and ecosystem health have adversely impacted rangelands used by domestic livestock. Treatments should improve rangelands for these animals, and ensure that public lands can support a healthy ranching industry.

Treatments would result in some short-term and temporary loss of visual, recreational and wilderness and other special area value due to vegetation being killed. These impacts would be short-term and any values affected would be restored within two growing seasons.

Treatments could harm the health of workers and the public. Most herbicides, however, would pose few risks to workers, and even fewer risks to the public, when applied at the typical application rate. If the treatment slowed the spread of weeds, human health would benefit.

Treatments could result in short-term loss of some resources, including soil, vegetation, wildlife, and livestock forage opportunities. Over the long term, loss of resource values would be slowed, and in some cases, would be reversed. Short-term losses in resource functions would be compensated for by long-term gains in ecosystem health.

## PERSONS / AGENCIES CONSULTED:

Steve Anthony – Garfield County Weed and Pest Coordinator  
John Bellio – Private Landowner

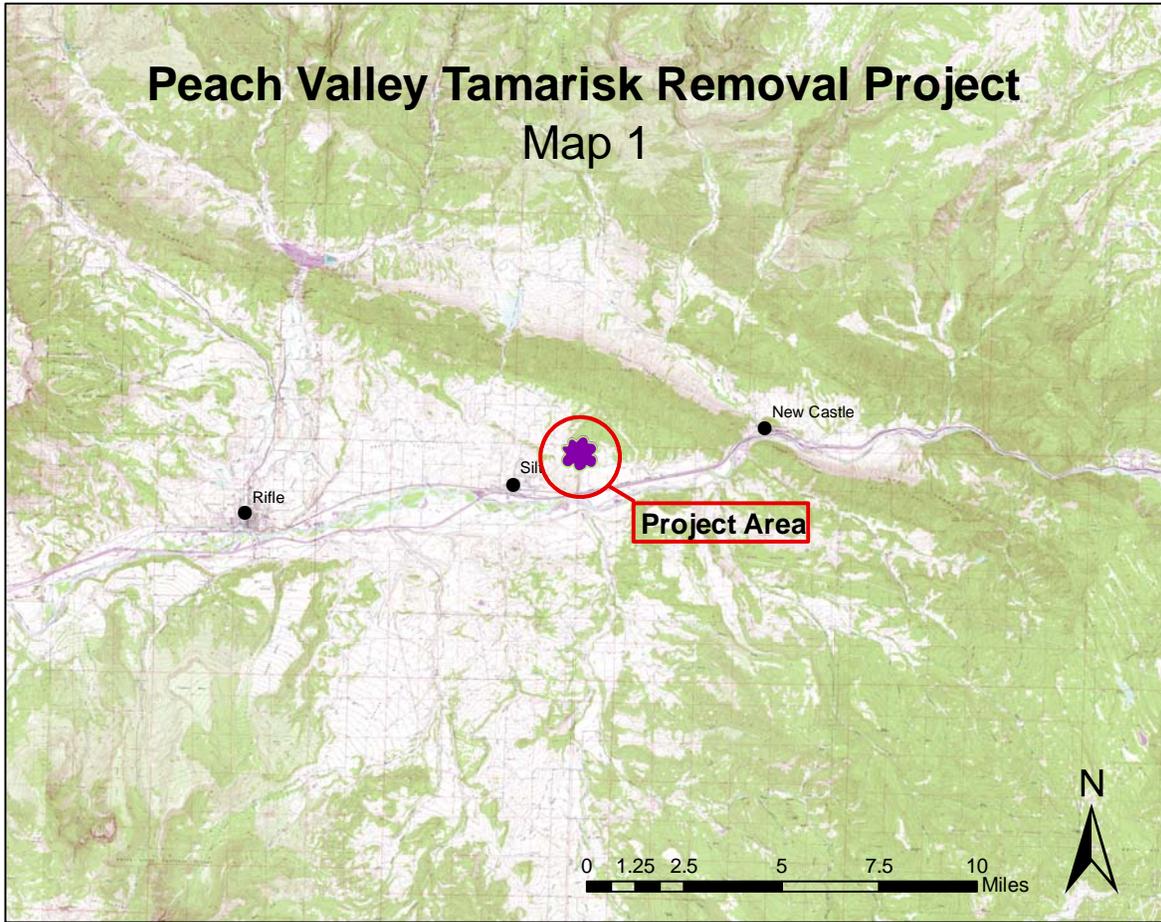
INTERDISCIPLINARY REVIEW:

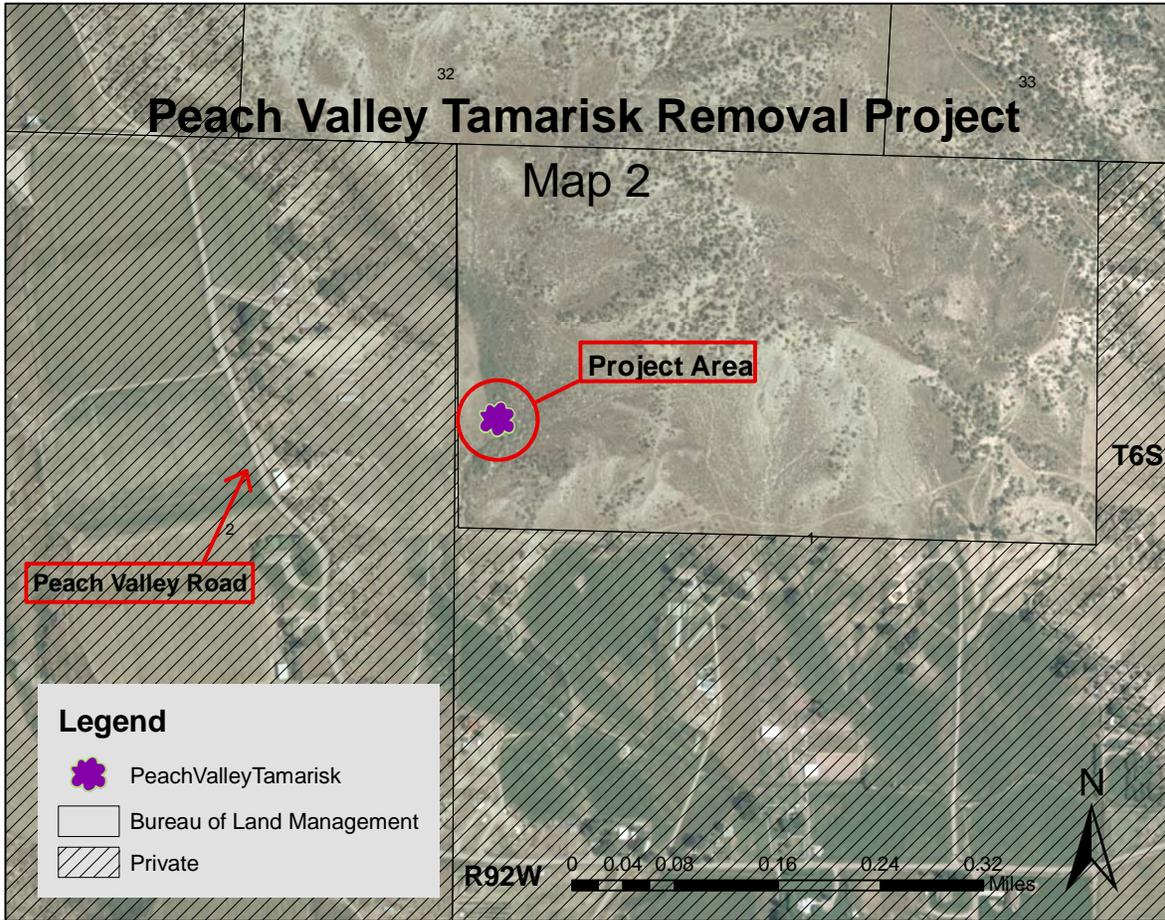
<i>Name</i>	<i>Title</i>	<i>Responsibility</i>
Dereck Wilson	Rangeland Management Specialist	NEPA Lead; Invasive, Non-native Species
Jeff O'Connell	Hydrologist	Soil, Air, Water, Geology
Cheryl Harrison	Archaeologist	Cultural Resources and Native American Concerns
Desa Ausmus	Wildlife Biologist	Migratory Birds, Special Status Animals, Aquatic and Terrestrial Wildlife
Carla DeYoung	Ecologist	Special Status Plants, Vegetation, Land Health Stds, ACEC
Tom Fresques		
Kay Hopkins	Outdoor Recreation Planner	WSR, Wilderness, VRM
Mike Kinser	Rangeland Management Specialist	Wetlands and Riparian Zones, Range Management
Ody Anderson	Fuels Specialist	Fire and Fuels Management

APPENDICES: Location map, drawings and specifications

# Peach Valley Tamarisk Removal Project

## Map 1





## **FONSI CO-140-2008-067**

The environmental assessment and analyzing the environmental effects of the proposed action have been reviewed. The proposed action with any approved mitigation measures result in a Finding of No Significant Impact on the human environment. Therefore, an environmental impact statement is not necessary to further analyze the environmental effects of the proposed action.

### **DECISION RECORD**

DECISION: It is my decision to approve the removal of tamarisk in Peach Valley as stated in the proposed action of the environmental assessment (EA) CO-140-2008-067.

RATIONALE:

1. Approval of the proposed action will remove a localized tamarisk population which has been targeted for eradication in east Garfield County which will improve land health on public land.
  
2. The environmental impacts have been mitigated with measures included in the attached stipulations.

MITIGATION MEASURES:

AIR QUALITY

Burning activities would be conducted in accordance with the BLM Glenwood Springs Field Office Burn Plan and the current State of Colorado Smoke Management Plan and would be permitted by open burning permits issued by the Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment Air Pollution Control Division. Given the scale, location, and the timing of the proposed activities; it is anticipated that impacts to local air quality would be minimal and no additional mitigation is recommended at this time.

CULTURAL RESOURCES & NATIVE AMERICAN RELIGIOUS CONCERNS

A standard Education/Discovery/NAGPRA Stipulation for cultural resource protection should be stressed to all participants informing them of their responsibilities to protect and report any cultural resources encountered

Education/Discovery/NAGPRA Stipulation

The National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA) requires that if newly discovered cultural resources are identified during project implementation, work in that area must stop and the agency Authorized Officer notified immediately (36 CFR 800.13). The Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act (NAGPRA), requires that if inadvertent discovery of Native American Remains or Objects occurs, activity must cease in the area of discovery, a reasonable effort made to protect the item(s) discovered, and immediate notice 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)). Further actions also require compliance under the provisions of NHPA and the Archaeological Resource Protection Act.

**INVASIVE, NON-NATIVE SPECIES**

Any noxious weeds, specifically Russian knapweed, within the project area or in the general vicinity would be controlled using BLM approved techniques. Specifically Russian knapweed would be sprayed the fall using BLM approved herbicides.

**WASTES, HAZARDOUS OR SOLID**

Fuels and lubricants would be stored in appropriate containers and refueling would occur in designated areas. The herbicides would be promptly applied to cut stumps using daubers and/or hand sprayers. These herbicides could also be sprayed on re-sprouting leaves the following growing season. The product Garlon 4 would be mixed with mentholated seed oil. An approved Pesticide Use Proposal (PUP) is required as standard BLM policy to apply herbicides on public land. The approval of a PUP requires that all personnel applying herbicides must be licensed by the Colorado State Department of Agriculture or be under the direct supervision of a licensed applicator. In addition, the PUP contains other specifications as needed to address environmental concerns using the specific herbicide. The Specimen label and Material Safety Data Sheet for Garlon 4 would be followed for application procedures and safety measures.

**VEGETATION (includes a finding on Standard 3)**

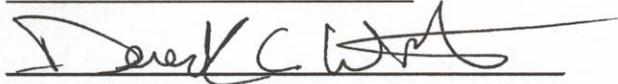
In order to prevent Russian knapweed from invading the project area following tamarisk treatment, the adjacent Russian knapweed infestation should be sprayed in the fall when it is most susceptible to herbicides. The project area should also be seeded in the fall with native grasses which are adapted to the site and are certified weed-free.

**COMPLIANCE/MONITORING:**

Monitoring would occur over the next five years to insure complete eradication of tamarisk and would entail evaluation of treatment success. Any regenerated tamarisk sprouts would be spot-sprayed with BLM approved herbicides.

**NAME OF PREPARER:** Dereck Wilson

**SIGNATURE OF PREPARER:**

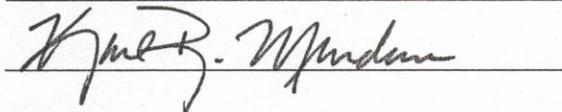


5-7-08

Date

**NAME OF AUTHORIZED OFFICIAL:** Karl Mendonca

**SIGNATURE OF AUTHORIZED OFFICIAL:**



5/7/2008

Date