

**U.S. Department of the Interior
Bureau of Land Management
Kremmling Field Office,
P O Box 68
Kremmling, CO 80459**

DECISION RECORD

PROJECT NAME: GRAND COUNTY HAZARD TREE REMOVAL PROGRAMMATIC
EA

ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT NUMBER: DOI-BLM-LLCON02000-2012-0031-EA

DECISION

It is my decision to implement the Proposed Action (Alternative A), as mitigated in DOI-BLM-LLCON02000-2012-0031-EA, authorizing the implementation of the Grand County Hazard Tree Removal Project.

Mitigation Measures: None

COMPLIANCE WITH LAWS & CONFORMANCE WITH THE LAND USE PLAN

This decision is in compliance with the Endangered Species Act; the Native American Religious Freedom Act; other cultural resource management laws and regulations; Executive Order 12898 regarding Environmental Justice; and Executive Order 13212 regarding potential adverse impacts to energy development, production, supply and/or distribution. It is also in conformance with the 1984 Kremmling Field Office Record of Decision/Approved Resource Management Plan.

ENVIRONMENTAL ANALYSIS AND FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT

The Proposed Action was analyzed in DOI-BLM-LLCON02000-2012-0031-EA and it was found to have no significant impacts, thus an EIS is not required.

PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT

External scoping was conducted by sending out postcards to Landowners, Government Agencies, Outfitters, and the public (see Appendix C for complete list) with information on how to look at the proposed action on the Kremmling BLM webpage on 11/06/2013 and by posting this project on the KFO's on-line National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) register on 4/12/2014.

BLM received the following comments:

Mountain Parks Electric sent a comment via email asking for copies of specific mapped areas if any of the proposed areas have trees within 150 feet of MPEI power lines or are within reaching and falling distance of their power lines.

BLM response: Design feature 46 in the EA: If treatment areas have Mountain Parks Electric power lines within the treatment area, Mountain Parks Electric would be contacted prior to start of any treatment operation.

The Grand County Board of Commissioners commented, “ We hope that the length of time to harvest the various sale areas could be in long duration to allow harvest by smaller operators to take advantage of the sale during what could be limited times annually of dry conditions. Many times smaller timber harvesters are financially eliminated from the sales due to the time frame allowed to complete the harvest. Only very large timber harvesters can mobilize the manpower and equipment necessary to complete the contract. We believe that the duration for completion would widen the competition and guarantee a better sale.”

BLM response: The BLM contracts can go up to 3 years and this has usually been enough time in previous sales for both large and small operations, and allows for competition.

The Grand County Board of Commissioners commented, “Where removal is not feasible, trees will be cut by hand and left on site or burned. If there is any less damaging method for removing this product that could be considered, we would encourage you to consider as all wood products have a market and should be utilized if all possible.”

BLM response: All tree materials are planned to be utilized, only where wood quality and/or volumes are not feasible for utilization would areas be piled and burned, or in areas where there is a resource concern.

The Grand County Board of Commissioners commented, “Grand County has burning regulations that are authorized through the State of Colorado. Prescribed burns should be coordinated with Grand County Department of natural Resources.”

BLM response: The Colorado Air pollution Control Division Form D that is required to be sent prior to burning via the smoke permit contains a section for County Air Quality Agency and this form is sent to the State and the county.

Colorado Parks and Wildlife (CPW) commented, “Some of the areas involved have heavy concentrations of mule deer, elk, and moose in the winter. These areas include Wolford Mountain, Dice Hill, Black Mountain, Grouse Mountain, Smith Mesa, and Kinney Creek. Winter activity in these areas would likely displace deer and elk to lower elevations, resulting in increased conflicts, CPW recommends that this timber removal project in the areas mentioned above occur between July and September.

BLM response: these impacts would be short term, and only allowing operations from July to September would lengthen the duration of the project by years.

Colorado Parks and Wildlife commented, “CPW is concerned about public safety in regards to hauling and heavy traffic on the project access roads... We would add that that prohibition on hauling should be extended for at least 2 days prior to the opening days of the cited seasons to minimize impact to hunters that come into the area prior to those seasons”

BLM response: In design feature 24 of the EA, the following was added: “and 2 days prior to second and third rifle seasons.” This was added to the busiest rifle seasons,

RATIONALE

Analysis of the Proposed Action has demonstrated that there are no significant negative impacts and that it meets Colorado Standards for Public Land Health. Based on information in the EA, the project record, and consultation with my staff, I have decided to approve for implementation the Proposed Action as described in the EA. The project is not expected to adversely impact any resources long term and the benefits of the treatments outweigh the short-term adverse impacts such as soil erosion. There are many benefits to vegetation and wildlife habitat with fuel treatments before a catastrophic wildfire will occur and have long-term adverse impacts to these resources.

ADMINISTRATIVE REMEDIES

Administrative remedies may be available to those who believe they will be adversely affected by this decision. Appeals may be made to the Office of Hearings and Appeals, Office of the Secretary, U.S. Department of Interior, Board of Land Appeals (Board) in strict compliance with the regulations in 43 CFR Part 4. Notices of appeal must be filed in this office within 30 days after publication of this decision. If a notice of appeal does not include a statement of reasons, such statement must be filed with this office and the Board within 30 days after the notice of appeal is filed. The notice of appeal and any statement of reasons, written arguments, or briefs must also be served upon the Regional Solicitor, Rocky Mountain Region, U.S. Department of Interior, 755 Parfet Street, Suite 151, Lakewood, CO 80215.

The effective date of this decision (and the date initiating the appeal period) will be the date this notice of decision is posted on BLM’s Kremmling Field Office internet website.

SIGNATURE OF AUTHORIZED OFFICIAL: /s/ Susan Cassel_____
Acting Field Manager

DATE SIGNED: 6/16/2014