

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

## **CATEGORICAL EXCLUSION**

NUMBER: DOI-BLM-LLCON02000-2013-002-CX

CASEFILE/PROJECT NUMBER:

PROJECT NAME: Buffalo Creek Ranch Sanitation Salvage

LEGAL DESCRIPTION: T. 6 N., R 80 W., Sections 24 and 36. T. 6 N., R 79 W., Section 29: Jackson County, Colorado; 6th Principal Meridian.

APPLICANT: BLM

DESCRIPTION OF PROPOSED ACTION: The Buffalo Creek Land and Cattle Company approached the BLM with concerns regarding dead and dying timber, hazardous fuels and other insect and disease activity on public lands, adjacent to ranch property. In 2009/2010 a project between the ranch and the BLM was implemented to address similar issues. The ranch has been actively treating forestland on their property and has identified additional treatment areas on public lands that are isolated from the general public. To address fire/fuel hazards, hazard tree and other insect and disease concerns, the BLM would treat 224 acres through timber sale contracts, service contracts, or by other means (e.g. stewardship contracts, BLM crews).

The Buffalo Creek Land and Cattle Company is proposing to clear hazard trees threatening approximately 2 ½ miles of fence along their property boundary adjacent to public lands. A sanitation harvest sale of approximately 17 acres was previously completed on public land adjacent to the Buffalo Creek Ranch that incorporated a 20 foot fence line corridor along the west boundary (refer to CO120-TS10-2 Little Buffalo Sanitation Harvest Sale). Said corridor was determined to be inadequate as many of the trees are greater than 20 feet tall and are still within striking distance of the fence. The fence would be built between the two completed salvage units, along the ranch's west boundary of T. 6 N., R. 80 W., Section 36 and 25; and the ranch's south boundary of T. 6 N., R. 80 W., Sections 25 and 26. This fence line would serve as an allotment boundary for cattle grazing as well as a deterrent to hunters trespassing onto private property.

Two units have been identified for treatment. The units are primarily comprised of lodgepole pine but other tree species such as subalpine fir, aspen, Engelmann spruce, limber pine and Douglas-fir are scattered within the units. The lodgepole pine has experienced heavy mortality (more than 90% of mature trees) due to the mountain pine beetle (MPB) epidemic. Recent reconnaissance has identified several Engelmann spruce currently infested with spruce beetle. Subalpine fir, limber pine and Douglas-fir trees have also been killed due to insect and disease agents within these stands.

Dead, infested, and beetle or disease-susceptible trees, as well as trees that are likely to be wind thrown, would be designated by the BLM for removal. This sale would most likely be negotiated with the ranch since there is no public access to the sale area. Specifically, lodgepole pine that is five inches or greater DBH, and subalpine fir and Engelmann spruce nine inches or greater DBH, would be designated for removal. Healthy smaller diameter lodgepole pine and other conifer trees, as well as aspen, would be retained where feasible. The primary purpose of the project is to remove dead and dying trees, to reduce the buildup of hazardous fuels, and to clear proposed fence line corridors of wind throw susceptible trees on public lands adjacent to private lands; while, at the same time, retaining live healthy trees that remain on the site. If feasible, in areas where there is an abundance of healthy conifer species other than lodgepole pine, uneven aged silvicultural techniques may be employed to promote stand diversity and resilience. Mechanical treatment would also facilitate the regeneration of the unit. Along fence line corridors, both mechanical and hand crew techniques would be utilized dependent upon access and terrain difficulty.

Some temporary road construction is anticipated. Any roads constructed would be limited to less than half a mile, cumulative. There are currently roads built on private land that access units 3 and 4, and therefore would be no temporary roads built for units 3 and 4. It is assumed that the operator will skid the material to landings on the boundary. If temporary roads are constructed they would be closed following harvest operations. Temporary roads would be outsloped, and roads and landings would be scarified, as necessary. Temporary roads, landings and, as necessary, major skid trails, would be seeded with a BLM-approved mixture of forbs and grasses by the purchaser. Temporary roads, or portions thereof, would also be slashed-in. The existing private road is currently maintained on a regular basis and is a graveled surface. Frequency of maintenance may need to be increased with initiation of logging operations.

Operations would be done with conventional ground-based logging equipment. Remaining slash would be offered for sale as biomass, piled and burned, placed on temporary roads, lopped and scattered, or some combination of the above. Piles would be burned during the winter by the BLM when adequate snow depth is present and consistent with burning permit stipulations.

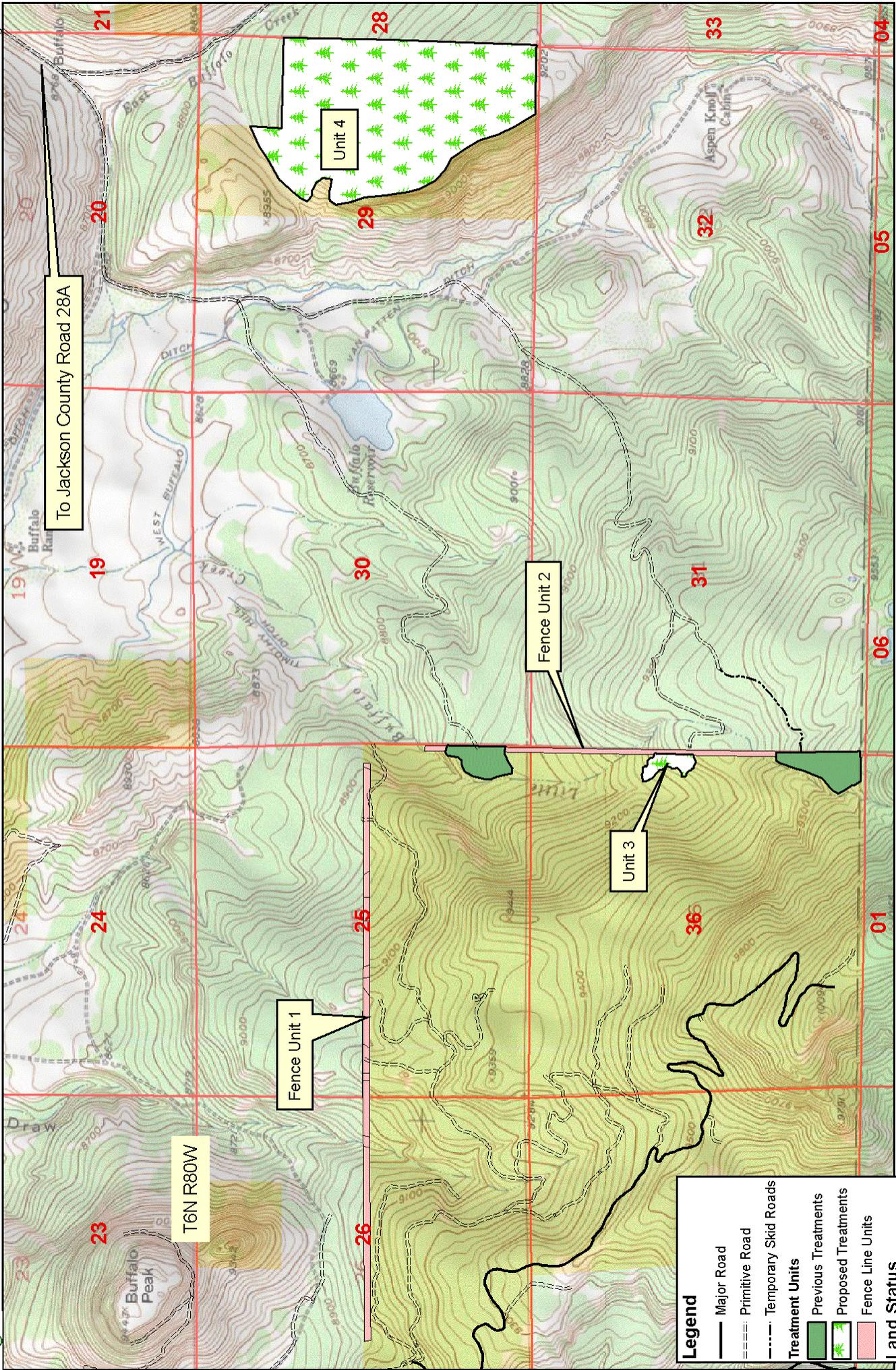
Post-harvest treatments may include a release and weed/thinning treatment (i.e. felling of residual undesirable live trees), and noxious weed control. The BLM would monitor disturbed areas for noxious weeds for two growing seasons after project completion. If noxious weed control is found necessary, actions would be coordinated by the BLM.

#### Design Features of the Proposed Action:

- Fences damaged from the timber salvage operation would be fixed by the contractor.
- During fence construction or reconstruction, no gates are permitted to be installed.
- No mechanical equipment would be allowed to travel in a wetland or riparian area. If areas must be crossed, best management practices would be required to reduce alteration of the hydrology or vegetation.
- Survey monuments (brass cap monuments, bearing trees, mineral claim posts, etc.) would be located, flagged and protected by BLM personnel during project layout and by purchaser during operations.
- If significant fossils are discovered during the preliminary inventory or during monitoring, a professional Paleontologist would be hired by BLM to complete a professional inventory and/or complete any needed mitigation.
- Harvesting operations would be limited to frozen ground or soil conditions such that excessive rutting would not occur (summer/fall).
- If an active goshawk nest is located within a timber sale unit, a 1/8th mile buffer around the nest site would be required.

- Temporary road construction/reconstruction would not occur during periods of wet or frozen soils.
- After harvest operations, temporary roads would be outsloped, and roads and landings would be scarified, as necessary. All roads on BLM-administered lands used for the project, or portions thereof, would be slashed in.
- Inspect disturbed areas for noxious weeds for two growing seasons after the project is completed. BLM Forestry staff would monitor this and coordinate weed control, as needed.
- Flag or paint trees along the boundaries of the treatment areas near private lands prior to implementation to avoid trespass onto private lands.

# Little Buffalo 2 Proposed Salvage Sale Area



To Jackson County Road 28A

T6N R80W

Fence Unit 1

Fence Unit 2

Unit 3

Unit 4

**Legend**

- Major Road
- Primitive Road
- Temporary Skid Roads
- Treatment Units**
- Previous Treatments
- Proposed Treatments
- Fence Line Units
- Land Status**
- Bureau of Land Mgt
- US Forest Service
- Private
- Sections

Unit 3: 5 Acres  
 Unit 4: 190 Acres  
 Fence Unit 1: 21 Acres  
 Fence Unit 2: 8 Acres  
 Total: 224 Acres

1:24,000



No Warranty is made by the Bureau of Land Management as to the Accuracy, Reliability, or Completeness of this Data for Individual Use or Aggregate Use with Other Data.

Mapper: Matt Schiltz  
 Date: 06/18/2012  
 BLM Kremming FO  
 USGS Maps: Buffalo Peak  
 T:\giswork\Forstry\Buffalo Creek  
 \little\_buff\_2\Little\_Buffalo\_2\_NEPA

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: Kremmling Resource Management Plan (RMP), Record of Decision (ROD)

Date Approved: December 19, 1984; Updated February 1999

Decision Number/Page: II-6, page 10

Decision Language: *“To manage all productive forest land that is suitable for producing a variety of forest products on a sustained yield basis. This action will create a healthy forest environment through continued forest management practices.”*

The Proposed Action was designed in conformance with bureau standards and incorporates the Colorado BLM Standards for Public Land Health.

CATEGORICAL EXCLUSION REVIEW: The Proposed Action qualifies as a categorical exclusion under 516 DM 11, Number: 11.9 (C)(9), *“Commercial and non-commercial sanitation harvest of trees to control insects or disease not to exceed 250 acres, requiring no more than 0.5 miles of temporary road construction.”* None of the following extraordinary circumstances in 516 DM 2, Appendix 2, apply.

The Proposed Action has been reviewed with the list of extraordinary circumstances (43 CFR 46.215) described in the table below.

Extraordinary Circumstance	YES	NO
a) Have significant adverse effects on public health and safety.		X
b) Have significant impacts 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.		X
c) Have highly controversial environmental effects or involve unresolved conflicts concerning alternative uses of available resources.		X
d) Have highly uncertain and potentially significant environmental effects or involve unique or unknown environmental risks.		X
e) Establish a precedent for future action or represent a decision in principle about future actions with potentially significant environmental effects.		X
f) Have a direct relationship to other actions with individually insignificant but cumulatively significant environmental effects.		X
g) Have significant impacts on properties listed, or eligible for listing, in the National Register of Historic Places as determined by either the		X

<b>Extraordinary Circumstance</b>	<b>YES</b>	<b>NO</b>
bureau of office.		
h) Have significant impacts 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.		X
i) Violate a Federal law, or a State, local or tribal law or requirement imposed for the protection of the environment.		X
j) Have a disproportionately high and adverse effect on low income or minority populations		X
k) Limit access to and ceremonial use of Indian sacred sites on Federal lands by Indian religious practitioners or significantly affect the physical integrity of such sacred sites.		X
l) 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.		X

**INTERDISCIPLINARY REVIEW:**

The Proposed Action was presented to, and reviewed by, the Kremmling Field Office interdisciplinary team on 10/11/2012. A complete list of resource specialists who participated in this review is available upon request from the Kremmling Field Office. The table below lists resource specialists who provided additional remarks concerning cultural and paleontological resources, hydrology, invasive species, access and transportation, and special status species.

<b>Name</b>	<b>Title</b>	<b>Resource</b>	<b>Date</b>
Bill Wyatt	Archaeologist	Cultural Resources, Native American Religious Concerns	12/4/2012
Bill B. Wyatt	Archaeologist	Paleontology	12/4/2012
Megan McGuire	Wildlife Biologist	Special Status Wildlife Species	11/15/12
Neilie Goodwin	Rangeland Management Specialist	Vegetation and Range Mgt	12/3/2012
Paula Belcher	Hydrologist	Soil, Water, Air, and Riparian	11/5/12
Zach Hughes	Natural Resource Specialist	Invasive Species	11/13/2012
John Monkouski	Outdoor Recreation Planner	Access/Transportation, Recreation, Noise, Wilderness	12/3/2012
Hannah Schechter	Outdoor Recreation Planner	Visual Resources	1/7/13

REMARKS:

*Cultural Resources:* A cultural resource inventory (BLM#CR-13-08) was completed and located no new historic properties within the area of potential effect. The project is a **no effect**, there are **no historic properties** that would be affected.

*Native American Religious Concerns:* Tribal consultation was initiated on January 22, 2011, and on June 7, 2012. To date no American Indian tribe has identified any area of traditional cultural concern.

COMPLIANCE PLAN: Contract administration would occur on an on-going basis throughout the life of a sale, service, or stewardship contract. Purchasers and/or contractors would be subject to the stipulations and provisions contained within their contracts. On-going compliance inspections and monitoring would be conducted by the BLM Kremmling Field Office staff during and after construction. The BLM would monitor disturbed areas for noxious weeds for two growing seasons after project completion. If noxious weed control is necessary, BLM would coordinate that treatment. Monitoring would also occur after the project to ensure that there is no unauthorized motorized use occurring within the area.

NAME OF PREPARER: Tom Adamson, Forester

NAME OF ENVIRONMENTAL COORDINATOR: Susan Cassel

COMPLIANCE WITH NEPA

The Proposed Action is categorically excluded from further documentation under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) in accordance with 516 DM 11.9, (C)(9). “Commercial and non-commercial sanitation harvest of trees to control insects or disease not to exceed 250 acres, requiring no more than 0.5 miles of temporary road construction.” None of the following extraordinary circumstances in 516 DM 2, Appendix 2, apply. This categorical exclusion is appropriate in this situation because there are no extraordinary circumstances potentially having effects that may significantly affect the environment. The Proposed Action has been reviewed, and none of the extraordinary circumstances described in 43 CFR 46.215 apply.

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P O Box 81  
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**DECISION RECORD**

**PROJECT NAME:** BUFFALO CREEK RANCH SANITATION SALVAGE

**CATEGORICAL EXCLUSION NUMBER:** DOI-BLM-LLCON02000-2013-0002-CX

**DECISION**

It is my decision to implement the Proposed Action, as mitigated in DOI-BLM-LLCON02000-2013-0002-CX, authorizing the sanitation harvest sale. The BLM would treat up to 224 acres through timber sale contracts, service contracts, or by other means (e.g. stewardship contracts, BLM crews).

**Mitigation Measures: None**

**COMPLIANCE WITH LAWS & CONFORMANCE WITH THE LAND USE PLAN**

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: Kremmling Resource Management Plan (RMP), Record of Decision (ROD)

Date Approved: December 19, 1984; Updated February 1999

Decision Number/Page: II-6, page 10

Decision Language: *“To manage all productive forest land that is suitable for producing a variety of forest products on a sustained yield basis. This action will create a healthy forest environment through continued forest management practices.”*

The Proposed Action was designed in conformance with bureau standards and incorporates the Colorado BLM Standards for Public Land Health.

**PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT:** the Buffalo Creek Ranch sanitation harvest project was listed in the Kremmling Field Office NEPA register on 12/21/2012.

**RATIONALE**

The Proposed Action is categorically excluded from further documentation under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) in accordance with 516 DM 11.9, (C)(9). This categorical

