

**U.S. Department of the Interior  
Bureau of Land Management**

**Kremmling Field Office  
P O Box 68  
Kremmling, CO 80459**

## **ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT**

**NUMBER:** DOI-BLM-CON02000-2013-014-EA

**CASEFILE/PROJECT NUMBER:**

**PROJECT NAME:** Kremmling Timber Sanitation Burn Piles

**LEGAL DESCRIPTION:**

Grand County, CO:

T. 1 N., R. 76 W., Sections 9 and 10, 6<sup>th</sup> P.M.

T. 1 N., R. 81 W., Section 27, 6<sup>th</sup> P.M.;

T. 2 N., R. 76 W., Section 23, 6<sup>th</sup> P.M.;

T. 2 N., R. 77 W., Sections 3, 10, 6<sup>th</sup> P.M.;

T. 2 N., R. 78 W., Sections 19, 20, 30, 6<sup>th</sup> P.M.;

T. 2 N., R. 79 W., Sections 13, 14, 15, 24, 6<sup>th</sup> P.M.;

Eagle/Summit Counties, CO:

T. 2 S., R. 81 W., Sections 10, 11, 6<sup>th</sup> P.M.;

Jackson County, CO:

T. 6 N., R 80 W., Sections 24 and 36, 6<sup>th</sup> P.M.;

T. 6 N., R 79 W., Section 29, 6<sup>th</sup> P.M.

**APPLICANT:** BLM

**PURPOSE & NEED FOR THE ACTION:** The BLM is proposing to burn remaining and to be built slash piles in the Gorewood, Hogback, Walden-Hollow, Fraser River, Grouse Mountain, Black Mountain, Spruce Creek, and Buffalo Creek Ranch Timber Sanitation units. The purpose of the proposed project is to reduce fuel loading left by timber sanitation salvage slash piles in the BLM Kremmling Field Office. The need is to comply with the 1984 Kremmling Resource Management Plan (RMP), and the Northwest Colorado Fire Program Area Fire Management Plan (2011).

**Decision to be made:** The BLM would decide whether or not to burn the piles left from existing and current timber sanitation units.

## **SCOPING, PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT, AND ISSUES:**

**Scoping:** Internal scoping was initiated when the project was presented to the Kremmling Field Office interdisciplinary team on 01/14/2013. External scoping was conducted by posting this project on the KFO's on-line National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) register on 05/28/2013. Scoping was done by running a week to two week long article in Sky Hi Daily News, and or the Jackson County Star Newspaper(s) for each of the following Categorical Exclusions depending on their location;

- Fraser River Sanitation/Salvage/Fuels Reduction
- Buffalo Creek Ranch Sanitation Salvage
- Gorewood Sanitation/Salvage
- Walden Hollow Sanitation Harvest Sale
- Black Mountain Sanitation Salvage/Hazard Tree Removal
- Grouse Mountain Sanitation Salvage/Hazard Tree Removal
- Spruce Creek Thinning\Salvage Sale
- Hogback Road Hazard Tree Removal

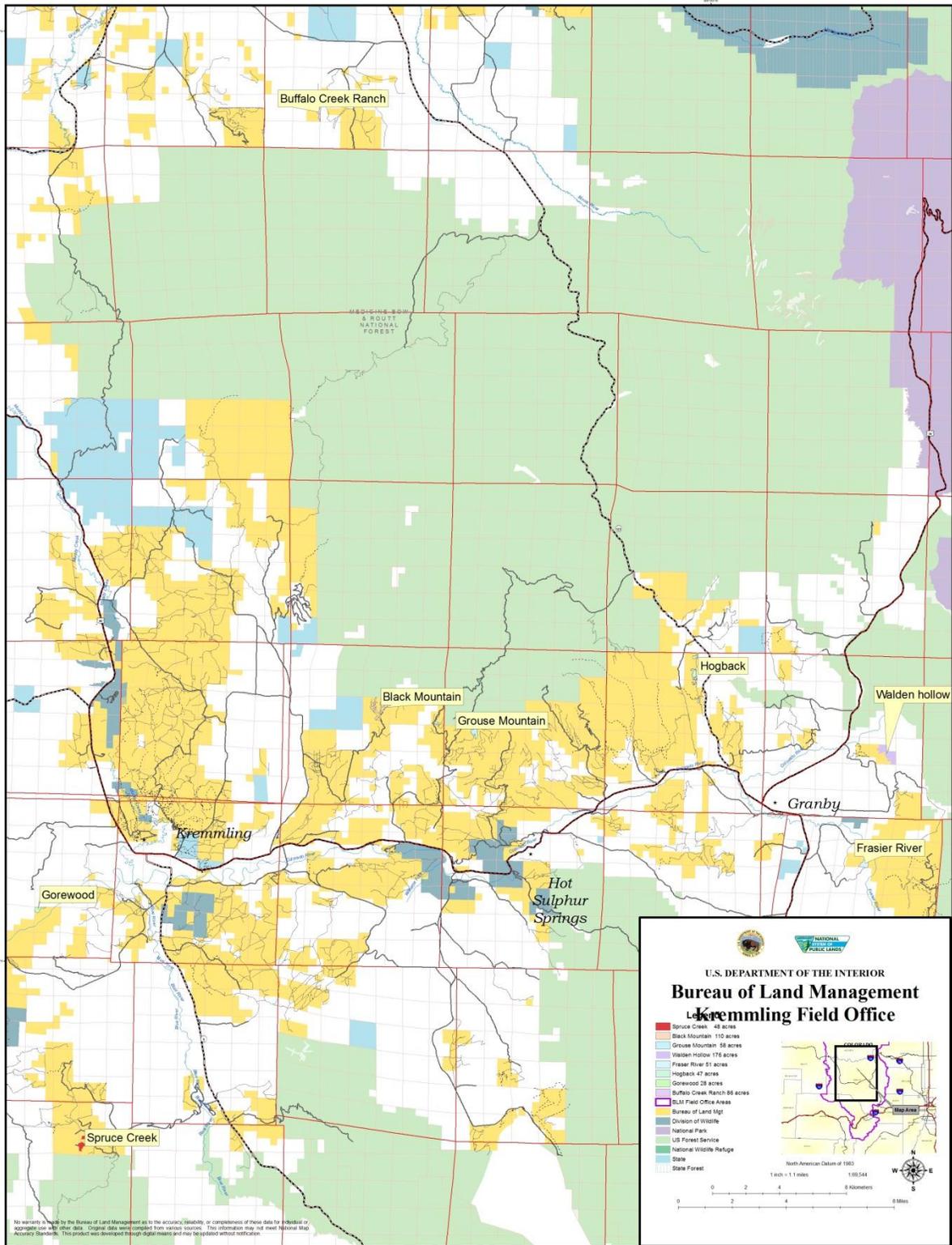
**Issues:** No issues were identified during public scoping.

## **DESCRIPTION OF PROPOSED ACTION AND ALTERNATIVES:**

**Background/Introduction:** Gorewood Sanitation/Salvage, Hogback Road Hazard Tree Removal, Grouse Mountain Sanitation Salvage/Hazard Tree Removal, Black Mountain Sanitation Salvage/Hazard Tree Removal, Walden Hollow Sanitation Harvest, Fraser River Sanitation/Salvage/Fuels Reduction, Spruce Creek Thinning\Salvage Sale, and Buffalo Creek Ranch Sanitation Salvage were all done under BLM Forestry Categorical Exclusions (CX). The BLM Forestry CXs currently do not incorporate prescribed burning; therefore an Environmental Assessment (EA) is needed in order to burn the remaining and future slash piles. The Hogback unit has 21 slash piles, while the other units are currently in or close to timber salvage operations and are expected to be completed in the next couple of years and would have numerous slash piles.

**Proposed Action:** The BLM is proposing to use prescribed fire to treat 604 acres of slash piles, reducing the slash piles by 80-100 percent. Burning would take place in the fall, winter, and or spring as long as there was a minimum of three inches of snow cover around the slash piles. A burn plan with a map of each unit, number of piles, contact list, communication list, and medical plan would be accomplished before ignitions. There are Four Class 1 air sheds within 30 miles of the burn units; Rocky Mountain National Park; Rawah Wilderness; Eagle Nest Wilderness, and Mount Zirkel Widerness. Rocky Mountain National Park and the Rawah Wilderness are the most likely to be affected, some units are within 5 miles of Rocky Mountain National Park. Other Areas of concern are the towns of Grand Lake, Kremmling, Hot Sulphur, and Granby. To help reduce the impact of smoke the Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment Air Pollution Control Division (ACPD) Pile Standard Permit Condition Worksheet ([http://www.colorado.gov/airquality/smoke\\_docs.aspx?action=open&file=WorksheetPileSmoke.pdf](http://www.colorado.gov/airquality/smoke_docs.aspx?action=open&file=WorksheetPileSmoke.pdf)) would be used to determine numbers of piles to be burnt doing certain weather conditions

and the distance from homes. The ACPD uses the previous mentioned worksheet to determine State of Colorado smoke permits. A smoke permit through the State of Colorado would need to be approved before ignitions. A smoke permit would help ensure that public health and safety are considered by limiting the number of piles ignited, and burning when air ventilation is favorable (ventilation adjective of Fair or better, ventilations adjectives are determined by National Weather Service).



### Design Features:

- Devices for ignitions include but not limited to; Driptorches and Fusees,
- All fuel transported and used on site would follow the guide lines in the April 2011 Interagency Transportation guide for gasoline, mixed gas, drip-torch, and diesel to help mitigate the risk of hazardous material.
- All prescribed burns in the area would have signs posted on county roads and the public would be excluded from the area for public safety.
- Contacts would be made to agencies and land owners that have interest as per the burn plan.
- All personnel would wear proper PPE when in the project area during burning.
- Slash piles that are burned, would be monitored for natural re-vegetation, if natural re-vegetation is not successful then a BLM approved seed mix would be applied.
- The BLM would monitor the project area for the establishment or spread of invasive, non-native species after the project is completed. If invasive, non-native species become established as a result of the Proposed Action; BLM would be responsible for their control.
- Risk Assessment must be done prior to ignitions.
- Vehicles and machinery may not stop or pull over on GCR 2 two miles before BLM Rd. 2757 and no stopping or pulling over on the first two miles of BLM Rd. 2757 to prevent damage to listed plant species.
- Operations would be limited to frozen ground or soil conditions such that soil rutting greater than two inches does not occur.
- Public would be notified by newspaper and or radio at least one week before ignitions.

### **No Action Alternative:**

Under the No Action Alternative, the current slash piles would remain unburned, and the current timber salvage operation would continue producing more slash piles. The piles would create habitat for small wildlife. The biggest concern would be risk of wildland fire, due to the large amount of fuel loading of dry compacted material. If the piles were to ignite, by natural and or human related ignitions with no snow cover, there is the potential for a large wildfire. Once a pile got established due to the size it is unlikely to be put out, unless an unforeseen amount of water is available. Once the piles are established, it is likely that hot embers from one pile would spot to the next or even up to 0.5 mile away. Under the No Action Alternative, impacts would likely be minimal, unless the piles were ignited during no snow cover times.

### **ALTERNATIVES CONSIDERED BUT NOT CARRIED FORWARD:**

An Alternative considered would be to have the material loaded and hauled away. Under this Alternative, the average cost per ton per mile is \$35.00. At this rate, it would cost \$72,765 for loading and hauling the piles one mile from the Hogback unit. The cost of this is not feasible and since the material left is determined to have no commercial value, there is not a way to aid in reducing the cost. Since the material has no value, it is likely that the material would be hauled to the nearest private lands to be dumbered and piled to be burned, thus have the same or greater safety and health concerns.

**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: Decision 6, Pages 9 and 10, sections b. and c.

Decision Language: “The planned actions will emphasize improving forest vigor and growth as well as minimizing losses caused by insects, disease, or fire.” “Intensive management activities could include timber harvesting techniques, artificial regeneration, stand conversion, stand improvement, pre-commercial thinning, and commercial thinning. Limited management activities will involve primarily custodial practices such as fire protection and salvage.”

The fuel treatment is located in the Kremmling Field Office Fire Management Unit, described in the Northwest Colorado Fire Program Area Fire Management Plan (2011). Fire Management guidance for this unit includes:

- Reduce accumulations of hazardous fuels in the wildland-urban interface in order to protect life and property and provide for firefighter safety.

The National Fire Plan, Review and Update of the 1995 Federal Wildland Fire Management Policy (January 2001) – states in part: Fire Management and Ecosystem Sustainability - The full range of fire management activities would be used to help achieve ecosystem sustainability, including its interrelated ecological, economic, and social components.

This EA was prepared in accordance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and is in compliance with applicable regulations and laws passed subsequently, including the President’s Council of Environmental Quality Regulations, US Department of Interior requirements, and guidelines listed in BLM Manual Handbook H-1790-1. The EA assesses the potential environmental impacts of the Proposed Action and reasonable alternatives and documents public participation as well as the decision making process.

## **AFFECTED ENVIRONMENT & ENVIRONMENTAL CONSEQUENCES**

**Standards for Public Land Health:** In January 1997, the Colorado BLM approved the Standards for Public Land Health. These standards cover upland soils, riparian systems, plant and animal communities, special status species, and water quality. Standards describe conditions needed to sustain public land health and relate to all uses of the public lands. Because a standard exists for these five categories, a finding must be made for each of them in an environmental analysis (EA). These findings are located in specific elements listed below.

**Cumulative Effects Analysis Assumptions:** Cumulative effects are defined in the Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ) regulations (40 CFR 1508.7) as “...the impact on the environment

that results from the incremental impact of the action when added to other past, present, and reasonably foreseeable actions regardless of what agency (Federal or non-Federal) or person undertakes such other actions.” Table 1 lists the past, present, and reasonably foreseeable future actions within the area that might be affected by the Proposed Action; for this project the areas considered was the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) 6<sup>th</sup> Level Watersheds.

Gorewood-- 6<sup>th</sup> - Gore Canyon  
 Spruce Creek- 6<sup>th</sup>- Deep Creek- Blue River  
 Black Mtn- 6<sup>th</sup>- Corral Creek and Waste Creek- Troublesome  
 Grouse Mtn- 6<sup>th</sup>- Corral Creek- Colo. River  
 Hogback- 6<sup>th</sup>- Middle Willow Creek and Lower Willow Creek  
 Walden Hollow- 6<sup>th</sup>- Smith Creek- Colo. River  
 Fraser - 6<sup>th</sup>- Lower Fraser River  
 Buffalo –6<sup>th</sup>- Friends Draw- Buffalo Crk.

However, the geographic scope used for analysis may vary for each cumulative effects issue and is described in the Affected Environment section for each resource.

**Table 1. Past, Present, and Reasonably Foreseeable Actions**

Action Description	STATUS		
	Past	Present	Future
Livestock Grazing	X	X	X
Recreation	X	X	X
Invasive Weed Inventory and Treatments	X	X	X
Spring or Water Developments	X	X	X
Wildfire and Emergency Stabilization and Rehabilitation	X	X	X
Wind Energy Met Towers			X
Oil and Gas Development: Well Pads Access Roads Pipelines Gas Plants Facilities			X
Power Lines	X	X	
Oil Shale			X
Seismic			X
Vegetation Treatments	X	X	X

**Affected Resources:**

The CEQ Regulations state that NEPA documents “must concentrate on the issues that are truly significant to the action in question, rather than amassing needless detail” (40 CFR 1500.1(b)). While many issues may arise during scoping, not all of the issues raised warrant analysis in an environmental assessment (EA). Issues will be analyzed if: 1) an analysis of the issue is necessary to make a reasoned choice between alternatives, or 2) if the issue is associated with a significant direct, indirect, or cumulative impact, or where analysis is necessary to determine the

significance of the impacts. Table 2 lists the resources considered and the determination as to whether they require additional analysis.

**Table 2.** Resources and Determination of Need for Further Analysis

Determination <sup>1</sup>	Resource	Rationale for Determination
<b>Physical Resources</b>		
PI	Air Quality	See Air Quality Section in the Environmental Assessment
NI	Geology and Minerals	The proposed action and no action alternative would have no impact on geologic or mineral resources.
NI	Soil Resources*	Burn piles' impacts to soils are dependent on the completeness of the burn. Intense burns that consume the pile can result in the underlying soils being sterilized and a hydrophobic layer created. A less intense fire that leaves woody debris would generally still have some small areas where soils are scorched. On a landscape scale, however, these areas are very small and do not affect the timber unit from meeting the Land Health Standard for soils. The design features of adequate snow cover, seeding, and not working when soil rutting occurs protects longterm soil health. The No Action Alternative increases the potential for a wildfire that would completely burn the piles and the surroundings, including erosive soils on steep slopes, increasing the extent and severity of soil impacts.
NI	Surface and Ground Water Quality*	The proposed slash pile burning is primarily located in the Upper Colorado River basin in various watersheds. The Buffalo Ranch piles are in the headwaters of the North Platte River basin, in the Grizzly Creek watershed. Potential water quality impacts from each salvage treatment were considered prior to using a categorical exclusion to approve the treatments. The treatment areas are generally meeting the land health standard for water quality, with no areas of concern on the Colorado 303(d) List or the Monitoring and Evaluation List for water quality concerns or impairments, it is unlikely that these treatment units' burn piles would measurably affect the water quality. Managing the lodgepole stands within the watersheds in the longterm would benefit water quality and overall watershed conditions. The No Action Alternative would not affect the water quality, but would forego an opportunity to help treat the dead material in each unit. Reducing the wildfire potential would help protect water quality within the specific areas and across adjacent watersheds.
<b>Biological Resources</b>		
NI	Wetlands and Riparian Zones*	The Proposed action would occur in upland areas with a vegetated buffer between the piles and any wetland or riparian zone. There would be no direct or indirect impact to these zones. The No Action Alternative would not impact wetland and riparian zones.
NI	Vegetation*	Perennial vegetation would fill in the areas where piles currently exist.
NI	Invasive, Non-native Species	The proposed action would create temporary vegetation and soil disturbance which could create an avenue for the spread or introduction of Noxious or invasive plant species. However the areas do not contain any significant communities of noxious or invasive plants. The Design features of the proposed action would also limit any new populations of Noxious or invasive species from

Determination <sup>1</sup>	Resource	Rationale for Determination
		establishing.
NI	Special Status Plant and Animal Species*	The Proposed Action would not have any impact on Special Status Plant and Animal Species. If Canada Lynx are in the vicinity of the pile burning, they may be temporarily displaced. However, these animals would use adjacent undisturbed habitat and could return to the project area following completion of pile burning operations.
NI	Migratory Birds	Most migratory birds complete nesting activities from May 15 to July 15. This is outside the proposed time period for burning piles. Therefore, the chance of wounding, killing, or disturbing a migratory bird species or their nests is very low to none. No impacts are expected to occur to migratory bird populations as a whole.
NI	Aquatic Wildlife*	Aquatic wildlife such as muskrat, beaver, amphibians, and cold water fish are not expected to be impacted by the Proposed Action. Most waterfowl complete nesting activities from May 15 to July 15. This is outside the proposed time period for burning piles. Therefore, impacts to nesting waterfowl are not expected to occur.
NI	Terrestrial Wildlife*	The Proposed Action would not impact terrestrial animals or their habitats. Wildlife species using the project area may be temporarily displaced during pile burning, especially during winter when animals are more concentrated and food is scarce. However, these animals would use adjacent undisturbed habitat and return to the project area following completion of pile burning operations.
<b>Heritage Resources and the Human Environment</b>		
NP	Cultural Resources	Class III cultural clearances have been conducted for the Proposed Action in BLM reports: Black Mountain (CR-12-06); Grouse Mountain (CR-07-07, CR-08-03, and CR-11-09); Gorewood (CR-13-09); Spruce Creek (CR-10-31); Hogback (CR-08-12 and CR-12-0-9); Walden Hallow (CR-13-05); and Fraser River (CR-13-18); Buffalo Creek (CR-13-08). The Proposed Action is a <b>no effect</b> ; there are <b>no historic properties</b> that would be affected.
NI	Paleontological Resources	The geologic formations within the Proposed Actions are: Middle Park Formation, Windy Gap Member with fossil plants in a Potential Fossil Yield Classification (PFYC) 3, condition 2; Volcanic Rocks in Northwestern Colorado with no known fossils is PFYC 1, condition 3; Sundance Formation with Ammonites, belemnites, and oysters in a PFYC 3, condition 2; Dakota Formation in a PFYC4, condition 1; Granitic Rocks with a PFYC 1, condition 3; Pierre Shale, Undivided with Ammonites, baculites, nautilus, bivalves, clams, gastropods, mosasaurs, marine reptiles, scaphites, baculites, and oysters in a PFYC 3, condition 2; Coalmont formation with fish, fresh water fish, fishbones and scales, beetles and other insects, plant remains, pollen and spores, leaf and seed pod imprints, seams of coal, but no petrified wood or fossil logs are known in a PFYC 3, condition 2. Those areas in a PFYC 3 have fossiliferous sedimentary geologic units where fossil content varies in significance, abundance, and predictable occurrence; or sedimentary units of unknown fossil potential. Areas in a PFYC 4 are geologic units containing a high occurrence of significant fossils. Vertebrate fossils or scientifically significant invertebrate or plant fossils are known to occur and have been documented, but may vary in occurrence and predictability. The potential for the Proposed Action to be sited on or impact a significant fossil locality is low. Condition

Determination <sup>1</sup>	Resource	Rationale for Determination
		<p>2 areas with exposures of geological units or settings may have high potential to contain vertebrate fossils or noteworthy occurrences of invertebrate or plant fossils. Condition 3 areas are those locals that are very unlikely to produce vertebrate fossils or noteworthy occurrences of invertebrate or plant fossils.</p> <p>Geologic formations sensitive for fossil resources are present, but would not be impacted by the proposed action. BLM standard “discovery” stipulation is part of the environmental assessment and is to be attached to any authorization allowing project to proceed.</p>
NI	Native American Religious Concerns	Tribal Consultation was initiated for each of Proposed Actions: Black Mountain (February 17, 2011); Grouse Mountain (September 9, 2010 and November 26, 2007); Gorewood (June 7, 2012); Hogback (December 2007 and June 23, 2011); Walden Hallow (February 7, 2012 and March 28, 2012); and Fraser River (December 12, 2011); Buffalo Creek (January 22, 2011 and June 7, 2012). To date no tribe has identified any area of traditional cultural or spiritual concern
NI	Visual Resources	The proposed project is in a Visual Resource Inventory (VRI) Class III area. Since the 1984 Resource Management Plan (RMP) did not designate Visual Resource Management (VRM) classes, BLM manages visual resources to protect the VRI by applying management class objectives to the inventory. Objectives for VRM Class III are to partially retain the existing landscape. Changes to the landscape should be moderate and may attract attention, but should not dominate the landscape. The project is designed to reduce contrast in the landscape. Visual resources would not be impacted by the proposed action (except for smoke on the day/s of the burn) or the no action alternative.
NP	Hazardous or Solid Wastes	There are no quantities of wastes, hazardous or solid, located on BLM-administered lands in the proposed project area, and there would be no wastes generated as a result of the Proposed Action or No Action alternative.
NI	Fire Management	The Proposed action would have small to no impacts on fire behavior and fire management decisions such as: suppression strategy and tactics. The biggest impact would be cost to implement, but this would be reduced to due large piles built or being built and with snow on the ground negating the need for holding resources.
NI	Social and Economic Conditions	There would not be any substantial changes to local social or economic conditions.
NP	Environmental Justice	According to the most recent Economic Census Bureau statistics (2009), there are minority and low income communities within the Kremmling Planning Area. There would be no direct impacts to these populations.
NI	Cadastral	The purposed action would not have any effect on public land survey corners.
<b>Resource Uses</b>		
NI	Forest Management	The proposed action and no action alternative would have no impact on forest management or forest and woodland resources.
NI	Rangeland Management	Removal of the piles will aid in livestock management, as the old timber is removed.

Determination <sup>1</sup>	Resource	Rationale for Determination
NI	Floodplains, Hydrology, and Water Rights	The potential impacts from salvage operations were done for each location to determine if there were hydrologic concerns at the time of the salvage logging CXs. There were none identified, as the pile locations are in the uplands, and do not affect floodplains or water rights. There would be no impact from the No Action alternative.
NI	Realty Authorizations	There are four road ROWs: COC-71356 to the Little Ho Ranch, COC-25882 to the Forest Service, COC-22959 to the BLM, and COC-25090 easement to the BLM. There would be no impacts from the proposed or no action alternatives.
NI	Recreation	General recreation activities within Grand County and areas identified within the Proposed Action include but are not limited to hunting, fishing, hiking, camping, Off-Highway Vehicle riding, mountain biking, horseback riding, driving for pleasure, wildlife viewing and scenic viewing. Locations of slash piles are dependent on future salvage logging which would have site specific analysis conducted. The burning of slash piles is an accepted practice for land management agencies and private entities as a way to reduce fuel loads and has become commonplace within Grand County. There are no impacts from the Proposed Action or No Action alternatives.
NI	Access and Transportation	There are several designated and maintained roads and a mixture of travel management designations within the Proposed Action project area. The Proposed Action does not identify the need to close or limit travel and access during the burning of slash piles. There are no impacts from the Proposed Action or No Action alternatives.
NP	Prime and Unique Farmlands	There are no Prime and Unique Farmlands within the project area.
<b>Special Designations</b>		
NP	Areas of Critical Environmental Concern	There are no Areas of Critical Environmental Concern in the proximity of the proposed project area.
NI	Wilderness and Lands with Wilderness Characteristics	There are no Wilderness or Wilderness Study Areas within the area of the Proposed Action or No Action Alternatives. The Strawberry and Drowsy Water areas possessing Wilderness Characteristics are adjacent to areas that pile burning would occur. Piles proposed to be burned are outside of each area's boundaries and there would be no impacts.
NP	Wild and Scenic Rivers	There are two eligible segments of Wild and Scenic River on the Colorado River from Confluence to State Bridge. These eligible segments would not be impacted by the proposed action or the no action alternative.
NI	Scenic Byways	The Colorado River Headwaters National Scenic Byway runs from Grand Lake on Hwy 34 South to Granby then heads west on Hwy 40 to Kremmling. In Kremmling the byway follows Hwy 9 for about a mile then follows Trough Road (Grand County CR 1) to State Bridge. The byway would not be impacted by the proposed action (except for smoke on the day/s of the burn) or the no action alternative.

<sup>1</sup> NP = Not present in the area impacted by the Proposed Action or Alternatives. NI = Present, but not affected to a degree that detailed analysis is required. PI = Present with potential for impact analyzed in detail in the EA.

\* Public Land Health Standard

## AIR QUALITY

*Affected Environment:* The Proposed Action occurs across the Middle Park basin and a small area in the southern portion of North Park. Air quality information for the areas is limited, but there are few stationary emission sources and the areas are assumed to be meeting the National Ambient Air Quality Standards (NAAQS).

Slash pile burning (or any other fire) can produce several pollutants; including nitrogen oxides, particulate matter, volatile organic compounds (VOCs), carbon monoxide, sulfur oxides, and greenhouse gas (GHG). The amount of emissions depends on the size and the intensity of the fire, which is determined by weather conditions at the time of the burn, composition of the pile, and the total mass of the pile. In the Middle Park area, there has been a large increase in the amount of slash pile burning in response to the mountain pine beetle epidemic. Treated stands include acreage on private, state, and federal lands.

Public lands in North and Middle Park are surrounded by many designated wilderness areas, three of which are designated Class I areas. The federal prevention of significant deterioration (PSD) program designated some National Parks and federal wilderness areas as Class I areas where air quality was significantly better than the NAAQS. Class I areas are protected from almost any additional nitrous oxide, particulate matter, and sulfur dioxide degradation, in addition to detectable changes to air quality resource values, such as changes to visibility, flora, fauna, water, and soil chemistry due to emission increases. The Table below summarizes each location's distances to Class I areas, and populations that could be affected by smoke. Note: the nearest areas of concern are listed, but the prevailing winds from the southwest and the terrain make the expected affected areas to be fewer than those listed.

<b>Pile Burn Area</b>	<b>Distance to Class I Areas</b>	<b>Distance to Town or Community</b>	<b>Sensitive Receptors</b>
<i>Gorewood</i>	<i>15 miles SE to Eagles Nest 35 miles NE to RMNP</i>	<i>4 miles E/NE to Kremmling</i>	<i>Kremmling schools, assisted living center, hospital, senior apartments, airport</i>
<i>Spruce Creek</i>	<i>6.5 miles S/SE to Eagles Nest 37 miles NE to RMNP</i>	<i>6 miles SE to Heeney 10 miles N to Kremmling 7.6 miles west to Radium 2 miles east to Spring Creek Subdivision</i>	<i>Kremmling (see above)</i>
<i>Black Mountain</i>	<i>21 miles NE to RMNP</i>	<i>7 miles SE to Hot Sulphur Springs 6 miles S/SE to Parshall 3.5 miles NW to Bighorn Subdivision</i>	
<i>Grouse Mountain</i>	<i>19 miles NE to RMNP</i>	<i>4 miles SE to Hot Sulphur Springs 4 miles S to Parshall</i>	
<i>Hogback</i>	<i>9 miles NE to RMNP</i>	<i>5 miles S/SE to Granby 11 miles NE to Grand Lake 0.7 miles NE to C Lazy U Guest Ranch/Homes</i>	<i>Granby- schools, medical center, senior apartments, small airport</i>
<i>Walden Hollow</i>	<i>4-6 miles N to RMNP</i>	<i>4 miles SW to Granby 5 miles N to Grand Lake 4 miles NE to RMNP 0.5 miles W to Legacy Subdivision</i>	<i>Granby (see above)</i>
<i>Fraser</i>		<i>0.8 miles SW to SolVista 3 miles NW to Granby</i>	<i>1.7 miles N to Granby Medical Center</i>

			<i>Granby (see above)</i>
<i>Buffalo Peak</i>	<i>20 miles E/NE to Rawahs 16.5 miles E to RMNP</i>	<i>5 miles E to Rand 18 miles N to Walden</i>	<i>Walden- school, clinic, small airport</i>

Grand County’s Natural Resource Department and the Colorado Air Quality Control Division regulate slash pile burning to help reduce air quality resource value impacts, including limiting burning operations to periods with the best smoke dispersal conditions and efficient fuel consumption. The BLM also has a Smoke Management Memorandum of Understanding with the state, and their own policies to help minimize impacts to air resources. The most effective means of controlling air pollutant emissions from wildfire is to inhibit large catastrophic fires by using fuel treatments, including slash pile burning, to reduce hazardous fuel loadings. Managed fire causes fewer air quality impacts both in the short and in the long term.

*Environmental Consequences of the Proposed Action:*

Direct and Indirect Effects: Impacts likely to be associated with burning are visibility and irritation to eyes, nose, and mouth. Smoke sensitive organizations are listed in the above table. In general, due to the prevailing winds and distances involved, the individual home owners that are nearest to the public lands would be the most likely to be affected from the proposed burns, rather than the larger communities and towns.

Under both the Proposed Action, all fire activities must comply with the applicable air quality regulations required by FLPMA and the Clean Air Act. All prescribed fire would be conducted in accordance with the State of Colorado Smoke Management Plan and MOU, and would be regulated under Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment, Air Pollution Control Division, approved open burning permits, which must be issued in advance of the fire. Air pollutant dispersion predictions would be conducted for all prescribed burn plans and would be reviewed by the State. Open burning permits specify the conditions that must be present for burning to occur and to continue. If air quality concerns arise, the fires must be suppressed. This alternative provides the greatest management flexibility to control smoke production and impacts in smoke-sensitive and high visibility areas.

The planned prior notification of smoke sensitive organizations and local communities would help protect individuals from health related concerns that can occur during the burning period. The air quality impacts would be of short duration and would not persist into the long term.

Cumulative Effects: Following the standard slash pile burning techniques to minimize smoke production and enhance dispersion, including any terms or conditions in the burning permit, help insure that overall air quality is not impacted by the prescribed burns occurring within the same areas. Reduced visibility or other observed impacts would not persist and have no long term air quality impacts.

*Environmental Consequences of the No Action Alternative:*

Direct and Indirect Effects: Under the No Action Alternative, created slash piles would remain on site. This would result in no immediate impact to air quality. There would be, however, an amount of hazardous fuel loading that could increase the potential for a wildfire. Uncontrolled wildfire typically causes greater air pollution emission levels and occurs under

unfavorable smoke dispersion conditions. Impacts to air quality and visibility could potentially be greater and cause more widespread respiratory problems than the Proposed Action.

Cumulative Effects: As the dead lodgepole stands continue to deteriorate over time, the production of non-harvestable vegetation (slash) continues to increase. Under the No Action alternative, this slash could be piled or scattered on site, reducing the overall fire reduction efforts of the treatments. Hazardous fuel loading on the public lands would continue to pose a severe wildfire risk, which could bring large short term air quality impacts.

*Mitigation:* none

**INTERDISCIPLINARY REVIEW:**

<b>Name</b>	<b>Title</b>	<b>Area of Responsibility</b>	<b>Date Signed</b>
Paula Belcher	Hydrologist	Air Quality; Surface and Ground Water Quality; Floodplains, Hydrology, and Water Rights; Soils; Wetland and Riparian Zones	03/20/2013
Bill B. Wyatt	Archaeologist	Cultural Resources; Native American Religious Concerns; Paleontological Resources	2/20/2013
Zach Hughes	Natural Resource Specialist	Invasive, Non-Native Species; Vegetation	03/21/2013
Megan McGuire	Wildlife Biologist	Migratory Birds; Special Status Plant and Animal Species; Terrestrial and Aquatic Wildlife; Areas of Critical Environmental Concern	02/20/2013
Kelly Elliott	Natural Resource Specialist	Hazardous or Solid Wastes; Geology and Minerals	03/26/2013
John Monkouski	Outdoor Recreation Planner	Wilderness; Recreation; Access and Transportation	06/07/2013
Hannah Schechter	Outdoor Recreation Planner	Visual Resources; Scenic Byways, Wild and Scenic Rivers	5/17/2013
Tom Adamson	Forester	Forest Management	03/26/2013
Annie Sperandio	Realty Specialist	Realty	03/26/2013
Kevin Thompson	Fire Management	Project Lead – Document Preparer	02/01/2013
Susan Cassel	Planning & Environmental Coordinator	NEPA Compliance	05/28/2013

**ATTACHMENTS:** Tribal Names and Addresses

## Attachment 1

### **TRIBES, INDIVIDUALS, ORGANIZATIONS, OR AGENCIES CONSULTED:**

Mike LaJeunesse, Chairman  
Shoshone Business Council  
Shoshone Tribe  
P O Box 538  
Ft. Washakie, WY 82514

Mr. Wilford Ferris  
Tribal Historic Preservation Officer  
Shoshone Tribe, Cultural Center  
P.O. Box 538  
Fort Washakie, WY 82514

Gary Hayes, Chairman  
Ute Mountain Ute Tribe  
P O Box JJ  
Towaoc, CO 81334

Mr. Terry Knight, Sr., THPO Director  
Ute Mountain Ute Tribe  
P O Box 468  
Towaoc, CO 81334

Jim Shakespeare, Chairman  
Northern Arapaho Business Council  
P O Box 396  
Fort Washakie, WY 82514

Darlene Conrad, THPO Director  
Northern Arapaho Tribe  
P O Box 396  
Fort Washakie, WY 82514

Robert Goggles, NAGPRA Representative  
Northern Arapaho Tribe  
328 Seventeen Mile Road  
Arapaho, WY 82510

Irene Casias, Chairman  
Southern Ute Indian Tribe  
P O Box 737  
Ignacio, CO 81137

Neil Cloud, NAGPRA Representative  
Southern Ute Tribe  
Mail Stop #73  
Ignacio, CO 81137

Irene Cuch, Chairman  
Uintah & Ouray Tribal Business Committee  
P O Box 190  
Ft. Duchesne, UT 84026

Betsy Chapoose, Director  
Cultural Rights & Protection Specialist  
Uintah & Ouray Tribe  
P O Box 190  
Fort Duchesne, UT 84026

Ernest House, Jr., Executive Secretary  
Colorado Commissioner of Indian Affairs  
130 State Capitol  
Denver, Colorado 80203

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

**Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI)  
DOI-BLM-CON02000-2013-0014-EA**

**BACKGROUND**

Gorewood Sanitation/Salvage, Hogback Road Hazard Tree Removal, Grouse Mountain Sanitation Salvage/Hazard Tree Removal, Black Mountain Sanitation Salvage/Hazard Tree Removal, Walden Hollow Sanitation Harvest, Fraser River Sanitation/Salvage/Fuels Reduction, Spruce Creek Thinning\Salvage Sale, and Buffalo Creek Ranch Sanitation Salvage were all done under BLM Forestry Categorical Exclusions (CX). The BLM Forestry CXs currently do not incorporate prescribed burning; therefore an Environmental Assessment (EA) is needed in order to burn the remaining and future slash piles. The BLM is proposing to use prescribed fire to treat 604 acres of slash piles, reducing the slash piles by 80-95 percent. Burning would take place in the fall, winter, and or spring as long as there was a minimum of 3” of snow cover around the slash piles.

**FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT**

Based upon a review of the EA and the supporting documents, I have determined that the Proposed Action is not a major federal action and would not have a significant effect on the quality of the human environment, individually or cumulatively with other actions in the general area. No environmental effects meet the definition of significance in context or intensity, as defined at 40 CFR 1508.27 and do not exceed those effects as described in the Kremmling Record of Decision and Approved Resource Management Plan (1984). Therefore, an environmental impact statement is not required. This finding is based on the context and intensity of the project as described below.

**Context**

The project is a site-specific action directly involving BLM administered public lands that do not in and of itself have international, national, regional, or state-wide importance. The proposed action would have positive long term impacts with a few adverse short term impacts. The short term adverse impacts are mitigated and are outweighed by the long-term positive impacts.

**Intensity**

The following discussion is organized around the 10 Significance Criteria described at 40 CFR 1508.27. The following have been considered in evaluating intensity for this Proposed Action:

**1. Impacts that may be both beneficial and adverse.**

Reduce fuel loading from timber sanitation units. There could be adverse impacts in the form of smoke to the general public.

**2. The degree to which the Proposed Action affects public health or safety.**

The smoke impacts would be short term due to smoke concerns, and would be mitigated and regulated by a smoke permit through the State of Colorado.

**3. Unique characteristics of the geographic area such as proximity to historic or cultural resources, park lands, prime farmlands, wetlands, wild and scenic rivers, or ecologically critical areas.** There are no areas meeting these criteria.

**4. Degree to which the possible effects on the quality of the human environment are likely to be highly controversial.** With the Mountain Pine Beetle infestation in the last 10-15 years there has been a high number of Timber Sanitation operations in Jackson, Summit, and Grand County. The Public is becoming accustomed to see pile burning and therefore it is not likely to be highly controversial.

**5. Degree to which the possible effects on the quality of the human environment are highly uncertain or involve unique or unknown risk.**

No highly uncertain or unknown risks to the human environment were identified during analysis of the Proposed Action.

**6. Degree to which the action may establish a precedent for future actions with significant effects or represents a decision in principle about a future consideration.**

The Proposed Action neither establishes a precedent for future BLM actions with significant effects nor represents a decision in principle about a future consideration. 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: Decision 6, Pages 9 and 10, sections b. and c.

Decision Language: “The planned actions will emphasize improving forest vigor and growth as well as minimizing losses caused by insects, disease, or fire.” “Intensive management activities could include timber harvesting techniques, artificial regeneration, stand conversion, stand improvement, pre-commercial thinning, and commercial thinning. Limited management activities will involve primarily custodial practices such as fire protection and salvage.”

The fuel treatment is located in the Kremmling Field Office Fire Management Unit, described in the Northwest Colorado Fire Program Area Fire Management Plan (2011). Fire Management guidance for this unit includes:

- Reduce accumulations of hazardous fuels in the wildland-urban interface in order to protect life and property and provide for firefighter safety.

**7. Whether the action is related to other actions with individually insignificant but cumulatively significant impacts.** The action is not related to other actions with individually insignificant but cumulatively significant impacts.

**8. The degree to which the action may adversely affect districts, sites, highways, structures, or objects listed on the National Register of Historic Places or may cause loss or destruction of significant scientific, cultural, or historical resources.** The proposed action may have an effect on Colorado Highway 125 due to smoke, this would be short term and signs would be posted and CDOT would be contacted if the problem became large. Nothing else would be affected.

**9. The degree to which the action may adversely affect an endangered or threatened species or its habitat that has been determined to be critical under the Endangered Species Act (ESA) of 1973.** The proposed plan would have no impact on Endangered Species Act (ESA) of 1973.

**10. Whether the action threatens a violation of Federal, State, or local law or requirements imposed for the protection of the environment.**

Neither the Proposed Action nor impacts associated with it violate any laws or requirements imposed for the protection of the environment.

**SIGNATURE OF AUTHORIZED OFFICIAL:**  /s/ Susan Cassel\_\_\_\_\_  
Field Manager

**DATE SIGNED:** 6/10/13