

**U.S. Department of the Interior  
Bureau of Land Management  
Royal Gorge Field Office  
3028 E. Main Street  
Canon City, CO 81212**

## **CATEGORICAL EXCLUSION**

NUMBER: DOI-BLM-CO-200-2013-041 CX

CASEFILE/PROJECT NUMBER (optional):

PROJECT NAME: Elkhorn Mountain Firewood Salvage

PLANNING UNIT: Other Lands Sub-region #10

LEGAL DESCRIPTION: Sixth Principle Meridian, T. 20 S., R. 73 W., Sec. 23, SE1/4NE1/4;  
Sec. 24, SW1/4NW1/4.

APPLICANT: BLM

DESCRIPTION OF PROPOSED ACTION The Elkhorn Mountain Firewood Salvage area is an 80 acre isolated BLM parcel. It is located approximately 7 miles northwest of De Weese Reservoir (See vicinity map) in Fremont County. The forests in this area were catastrophically burned in the Iron Mountain Wildfire in 2002. This parcel has an on-going history of firewood theft and off-road vehicle violations.

The proposed action is to salvage 68 acres of fire hardened pinyon pine, juniper, and ponderosa pine trees, if the wood has not deteriorated beyond utilization standards. This action would help mitigate on-going timber theft and off-road vehicle violations by removing the wood through legal sales and identifying temporary roads to access the wood. Due to local interest in this firewood by the neighbors, a portion of the area will be set up for personal use but a majority of the area will be set up for a commercial firewood harvester.

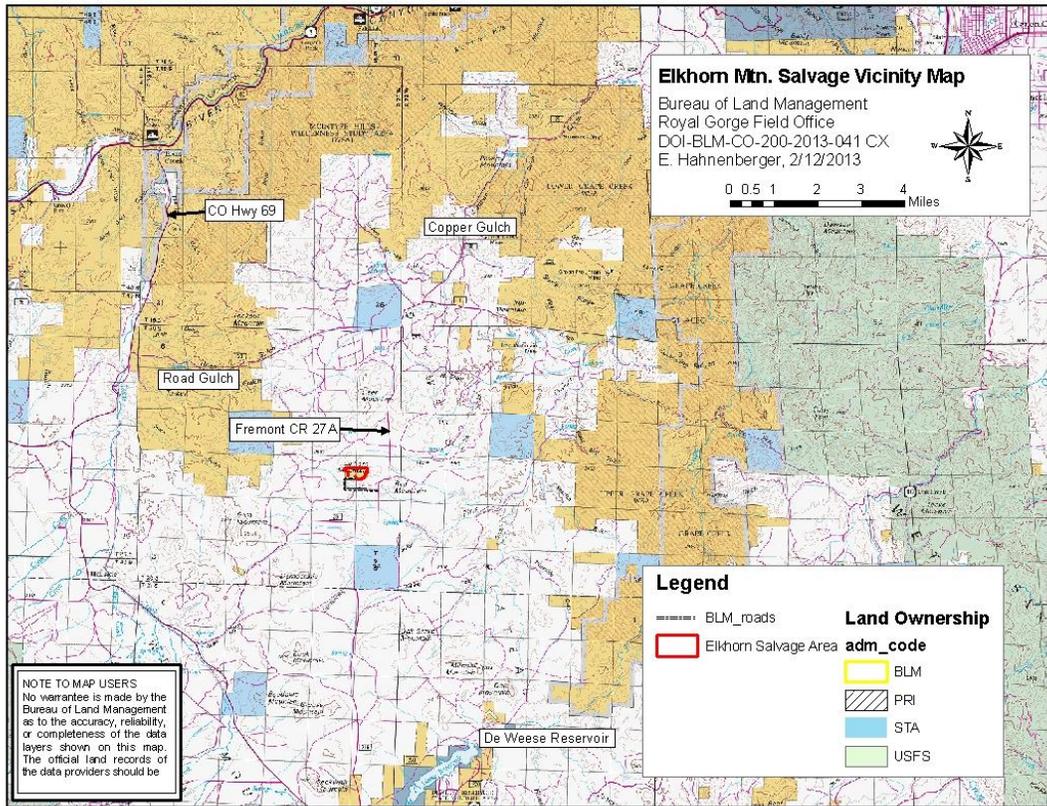
The objectives of the Elkhorn Mountain Firewood Salvage proposal are to reduce heavy fuels or large diameter wood from the site, improve aesthetics by removing a portion of the standing dead trees, improve wildlife habitat by creating piles of non-merchantable materials, provide a desired forest product to local residents, and attempt to resolve on-going timber theft and off-road vehicle violations.

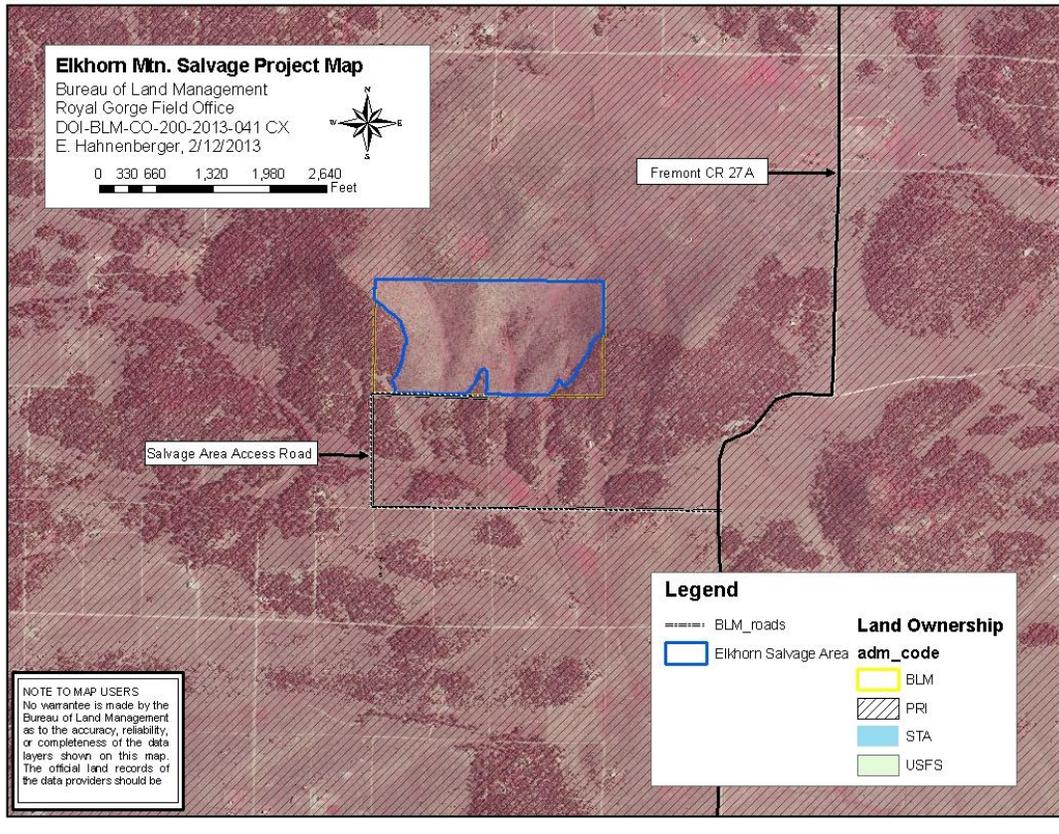
An estimate of 4-5 cords per acre of dead firewood would be harvested. All green live trees would be protected reserves. Access into the salvage unit is by county road which travels along the southern boundary of this BLM parcel. The access to the firewood would be by temporary roads which would be closed to vehicles once the harvest is completed.

All live trees and snags with visible wildlife use would be protected reserves. Slash shall be piled a minimum of 6 X 6 feet in size or lopped and scattered. Piles will either be burned under ideal conditions or left for wildlife habitat. Highly disturbed areas will be seeded with native seed and monitored for

noxious weeds upon completion of the project. The work would be completed with chainsaws, small tractors, pickup trucks, and trailers on slopes less than 35%. Any small tractors or skid-steers would be clean and inspected prior to moving the equipment onto the project area. Access points shall be monitored during and after project completion to ensure no new roads develop.

The area is currently unallotted for cattle grazing. All existing fences, property corners and other improvements shall be protected.





**PLAN CONFORMANCE REVIEW:**

Name of Plan: Royal Gorge Resource Area Approved Resource Management Plan

Date Approved: 05/13/1996

Decision Number: 10-1, 10-12, 10-13

Decision Language: Vegetation management will be as follows: vegetation will be managed to accomplish other BLM initiatives i.e., riparian, wildlife, etc.; management of forest lands will be for enhancement of other values. Productive forested lands will be managed for sustained yield. A portion of the forested lands will be available for intensive management.

CATEGORICAL EXCLUSION REVIEW: This proposed action is listed as a Categorical Exclusion in DOI Departmental Manual Part 516 Chapter 11.9 (C.8). None of the following exceptions in 516 DM 2, Appendix 2, apply.

Exclusion Criteria	YES	NO
1. Have significant impacts on public health or safety.		X
2. Have significant impacts on such natural resources and unique geographic characteristics as historic or cultural resources; park, recreation, or refuge lands; wilderness areas; lands with wilderness characteristics; wild or scenic rivers; national natural landmarks; sole or		X

principal drinking water aquifers; prime farmlands; wetlands; floodplains; national monuments; migratory birds; and other ecologically significant or critical areas.		
3. Have highly controversial environmental effects or involve unresolved conflicts concerning alternative uses of available resources.		X
4. Have highly uncertain and potentially significant environmental effects or involve unique or unknown environmental risks.		X
5. Establish a precedent for future action or represent a decision in principle about future actions with potentially significant environmental effects.		X
6. Have a direct relationship to other actions with individually insignificant but cumulatively significant environmental effects.		X
7. Have significant impacts on properties listed, or eligible for listing, on the National Register of Historic Places as determined by either the bureau or office.		X
8. Have significant impacts on species listed, or proposed to be listed, on the List of Endangered or Threatened Species, or have significant impacts on designated Critical Habitat for these species.		X
9. Violate a Federal law, or a State, local or tribal law or requirement imposed for the protection of the environment.		X
10. Have a disproportionately high and adverse effect on low income or minority populations.		X
11. Limit access to and ceremonial use of Indian sacred sites on Federal lands by Indian religious practitioners or significantly adversely affect the physical integrity of such sacred sites.		X
12. 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

<b>INTERDISCIPLINARY TEAM REVIEW</b>			
<b>NAME</b>	<b>TITLE</b>	<b>AREA OF RESPONSIBILITY</b>	<b>Initials/date</b>
Matt Rustand	Wildlife Biologist	Terrestrial Wildlife, T&E, Migratory Birds	MR, 2/22/2013
Jeff Williams	Range Management Spec.	Range, Vegetation, Farmland	NA
Chris Cloninger	Range Management Spec.	Range, Vegetation, Farmland	NA
John Lamman	Range Management Spec.	Range, Vegetation, Farmland, Weeds	JL, 02/22/2013
Dave Gilbert	Fisheries Biologist	Aquatic Wildlife, Riparian/Wetlands	DG, 2/22/2013
Stephanie Carter	Geologist	Minerals, Paleontology, Waste Hazardous or Solid	SSC, 3/5/13
Melissa Smeins	Geologist	Minerals, Paleontology	-----
John Smeins	Hydrologist	Hydrology, Water Quality/Rights, Soils	JS, 2/25/13

Ty Webb	Prescribed Fire Specialist	Air Quality	TW, 2/22/13
Jeff Covington	Cadastral Surveyor	Cadastral Survey	JC, 2/21/13
Kalem Lenard	Outdoor Recreation Planner	Recreation, Wilderness, LWCs, Visual, ACEC, W&S Rivers,	KL, 2/26/2013
John Nahomenuk	River Manager	Recreation, Wilderness, LWCs, Visual, ACEC, W&S Rivers	-----
Ken Reed	Forester	Forestry	2/21/2013
Martin Weimer	NEPA Coordinator	Environmental Justice, Noise, SocioEconomics	mw, 4/22/13
Monica Weimer	Archaeologist	Cultural, Native American	NA
Erin Watkins	Archaeologist	Cultural, Native American	EW, 3/19/2013
Vera Matthews	Realty Specialist	Realty	VM, 2/28/13
Steve Craddock	Realty Specialist	Realty	NA
Steve Cunningham	Law Enforcement Ranger	Law Enforcement	SC, 4/11/13
Bob Hurley	Fire Management Officer	Fire Management	BH, 2/22/2013

**REMARKS:**

**Cadastral:** The project area has a BLM survey that was completed in 1970. The corners that need to be located and protected are ¼ of sections 23 and 24, N1/16 of sections 23 and 24, the CW 1/16 of section 24 and the CE 1/16 of section 23. The NE 1/16 of section 23 has been set by a private surveyor in 2003. GCDB reliability in the area is +/- 5 feet.

**Cultural Resources:** No historic properties were found in the area of potential effect [see report CR-RG-91-05 (P)]. Therefore, the proposed undertaking will have no effect on any historic properties (those eligible for the NRHP).

**Native American Religious Concerns:** No possible traditional cultural properties were located during the cultural resources inventory (see above). There is no other known evidence that suggests the project area holds special significance for Native Americans.

**Threatened and Endangered Species:** There are no records of any federally listed or BLM sensitive species within or near the project area. The Proposed Action will not result in impacts to TES species.

**Migratory Birds:** To be in compliance with the Migratory Bird Treaty Act (MBTA) and the Memorandum of Understanding between BLM and USFWS required by Executive Order 13186, BLM must avoid actions, where possible, that result in a “take” of migratory birds. The breeding and brood rearing season for most Colorado migratory birds is from May 15-July 15. Therefore, standing dead timber that has a cavity should not be harvested from May 15-July 15 to protect cavity nesting birds.

**Lands and Realty:** There are no authorizations that will be affected by this project, land status verified as BLM lands.

Wastes, Hazardous or Solid: If the project involves oil or fuel usage, transfer or storage, an adequate spill kit and shovels are required to be onsite during project implementation. The project proponent will be responsible for adhering to all applicable local, State and Federal regulations in the event of a spill, which includes following the proper notification procedures in BLM's Spill Contingency Plan.

COMPLIANCE PLAN (optional):

NAME OF PREPARER: Ken Reed

SUPERVISORY REVIEW: Melissa K.S. Garcia

NAME OF ENVIRONMENTAL COORDINATOR: /s/ Martin Weimer

DATE: 4/22/13

DECISION AND RATIONALE: I have reviewed this Categorical Exclusion and have decided to implement the Proposed Action.

This action is listed in the Department Manual as an action that may be categorically excluded. I have evaluated the action relative to the 10 criteria listed above and have determined that it does not represent an exception and is, therefore, categorically excluded from further environmental analysis.

SIGNATURE OF AUTHORIZED OFFICIAL:

/s/ Keith E. Berger  
Keith E. Berger, Field Manager

DATE SIGNED: 4/24/13