

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

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**Determination of NEPA Adequacy (DNA)**

**Cache Creek Thinning**

**03/30/15**

**PREPARING OFFICE**

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





**Determination of NEPA Adequacy  
(DNA)  
Cache Creek Thinning**

**DOI-BLM-CO-F02-2014-0068 DNA**

**Prepared by  
U.S. Department of the Interior  
Bureau of Land Management  
Royal Gorge Field Office  
Canon City, CO**

**03/30/15**

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# **Chapter 1. Determination of NEPA Adequacy (DNA)**

*Worksheet*

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

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OFFICE:: Royal Gorge Field Office

TRACKING NUMBER:DOI-BLM-CO-F02–2014–0068 DNA

PROPOSED ACTION TITLE/TYPE: Cache Creek Thinning

LOCATION/LEGAL DESCRIPTION:6th Principle Meridian, T.12S., R.80W., Sec. 1, 2; T.12S., R.79W., Sec. 6

APPLICANT (if any):BLM

## **A. Description of Proposed Action and any applicable mitigation measures**

The Proposed Action is to mechanically treat approximately 125 acres across 4 units, of small diameter lodgepole pine through fuelwood, commercial timber, or post and pole sales, using conventional logging equipment. The objectives of this proposal are to reduce ladder fuels by removing small lodgepole pine; improve forest health by reducing the forest tree density and remove mistletoe infected trees; maintain and increase forest age class diversity; improve wildlife habitat by improving the understory plant species vigor; improve and stabilize soil conditions; and reduce mountain pine beetle risk.

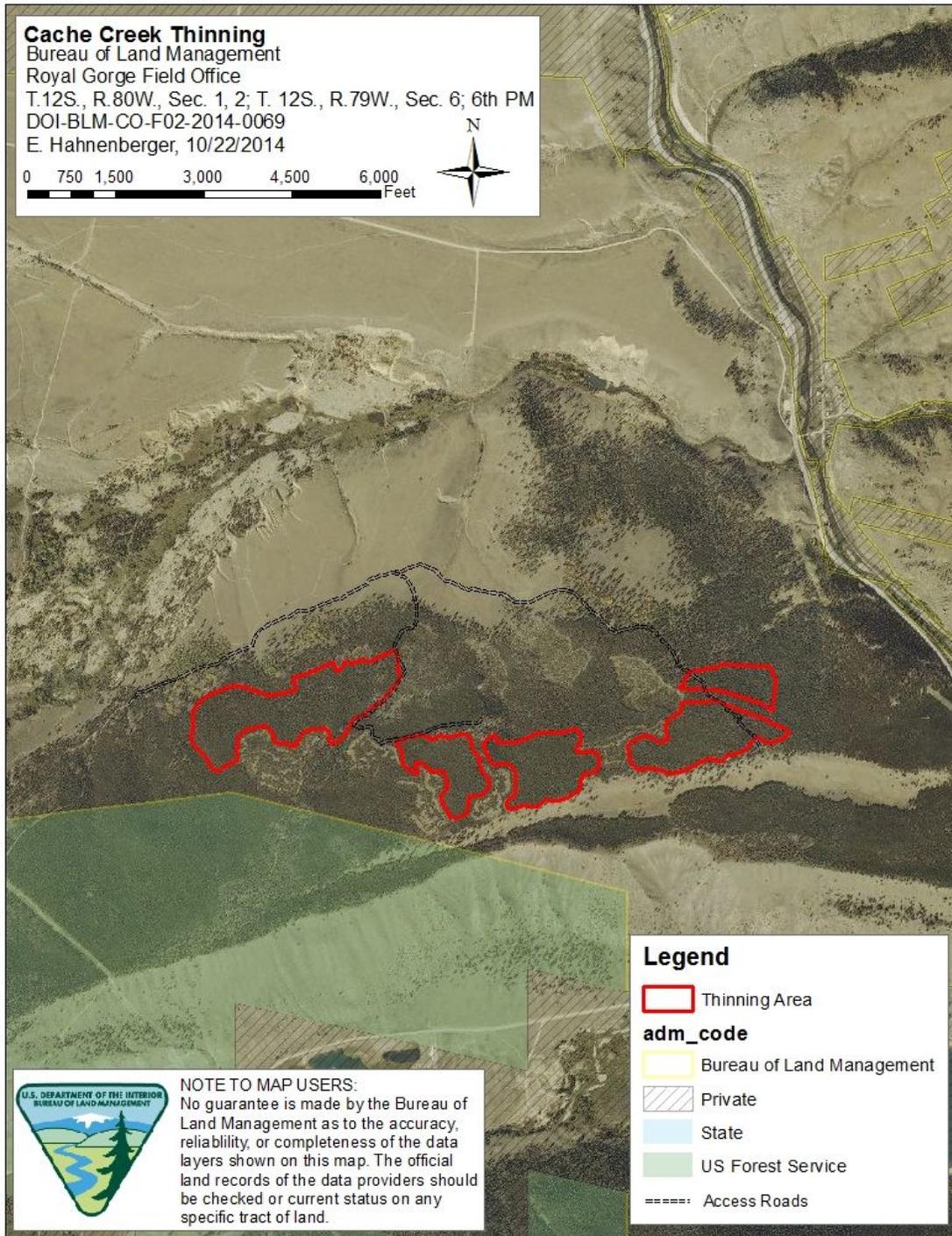
The treatment will involve thinning from below mainly removing smaller trees but also removing larger unhealthy trees such as those with dwarf mistletoe, under mountain pine beetle attack, or with declining crowns. The large healthy trees would be reserved while maintaining a representation of all species and sizes. The work would be completed with chainsaws, skidders or tractors, small log trucks or trailers on slopes less than 35%. Slash from all units shall be lopped and scattered, or removed as biomass.

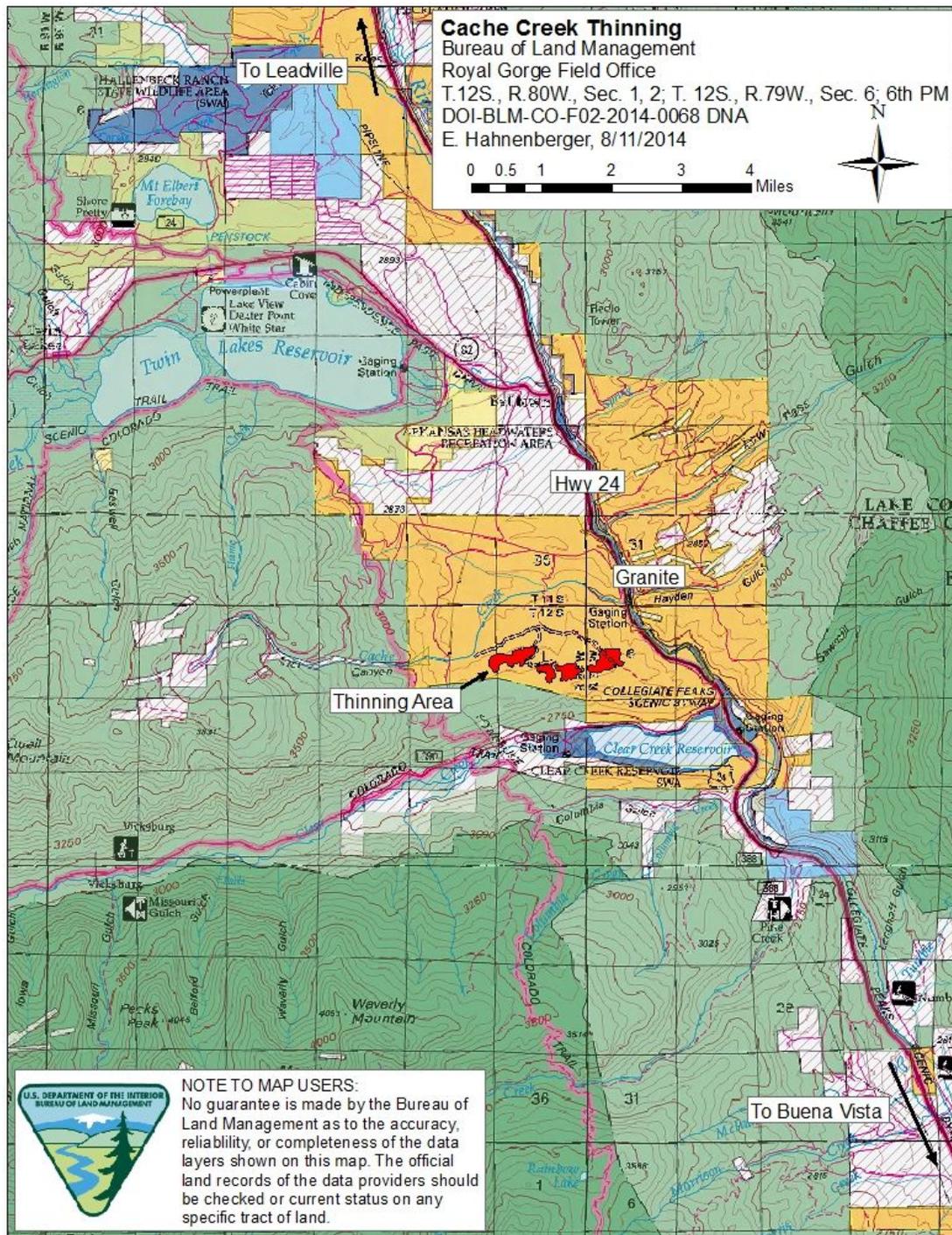
Existing temporary roads would be used to access the unit(s). No new permanent roads would be created by this proposal. All temporary roads used for access and forest product removal would be closed upon completion of the treatment. Road closures would be done with natural surrounding materials such as large rocks or logs, tank traps, buck and rail fences where appropriate, and posted as closed to vehicle access. Treatments and hauling of forest products will be done when the ground is either frozen or dry to prevent soil and road damage. Operators would be required to stop work during the wet periods. Temporary access roads, major skid trails and landings will be reseeded after the completion with native seed.

The forests in these areas are characterized as second growth lodgepole pine with heavy mistletoe. Trees were harvested from these areas during the settlement of the nearby town of Leadville around the time minerals were discovered and the railroad was built. Trees infected with dwarf mistletoe and under mountain pine beetle attack would be a priority for removal. Dwarf mistletoe is a parasitic plant that takes moisture and nutrients from the tree causing stunted form and premature death. Current forest densities in the project area are ideal for a bark beetle epidemic or catastrophic wildfire. There are numerous studies that conclude that thinning can reduce bark beetle risk.

There are no active grazing allotments in the project area at this time, therefore there will be no impacts to any grazing operation. All known improvements such as property corners shall be protected from the thinning activity.

**Map 1.1. Project Map**





Map 1.2. Vicinity Map

## B. Land Use Plan Conformance

Resource Management Plan	05/13/96
Other Document	Date Approved
Other Document	Date Approved

The proposed action is in conformance with the applicable LUP because it is specifically for, because it is clearly consistent with the following LUP decisions (objectives, terms, and conditions).

Decision Number: 1-1, 1-14, 1-15

**The proposed action is in conformance with the LUP, even though it is not specifically provided for, because it is clearly consistent with the following LUP decisions (objectives, terms, and conditions):**

### **C. Identify applicable National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) documents and other related documents that cover the proposed action.**

**List by name and date all applicable NEPA documents that cover the proposed action.**

Vegetation Manipulation Management: Chaffee and Lake County Planning EA

DOI-BLM-CO-200-2013-0050 EA

August, 2013

### **D. NEPA Adequacy Criteria**

**1. Is the new proposed action a feature of, or essentially similar to, an alternative analyzed in the existing NEPA document(s)? Is the project within the same analysis area, or if the project location is different, are the geographic and resource conditions sufficiently similar to those analyzed in the existing NEPA document(s)? If there are differences, can you explain why they are not substantial?**

Yes. The Proposed Action is within the same analysis area and will follow the guidelines that were established in the Vegetation Manipulation Management: Chaffee and Lake County Planning EA (DOI-BLM-CO-200-2013-0050 EA).

**2. Is the range of alternatives analyzed in the existing NEPA document(s) appropriate with respect to the new proposed action, given current environmental concerns, interests, and resource value?**

Yes. Two alternatives were evaluated in the Vegetation Manipulation Management: Chaffee and Lake County Planning EA (DOI-BLM-CO-200-2013-0050 EA). The two alternatives were analyzed including the proposed action and no action. The analysis appropriately considered current environmental concerns, interests, and resource values.

The Proposed Action is to improve forest health by reducing tree densities in overstocked stands and removing unhealthy trees. Improve forest or stand resiliency to natural disturbances by reducing stand densities and favoring healthy trees for retention. Increase forest age class diversity in all forest types by applying group selection or patch cutting treatments, and promote

species diversity by favoring uncommon tree species for retention in treatment areas. Reduce bark beetle risk in overstocked stand by reducing stand densities. Finally, to support the local forest product industry by providing a continual supply of desired forest products. Simultaneously, forestry practices will create a mosaic of seral stages in the understory which will favor browsing and habitat beneficial to a variety of wildlife. Furthermore, fuel loads will be decreased, and the risk of crown fire will be lessened as gaps are created in the continuous forest canopy.

Under the No Action Alternative, forest health or fuels reduction treatments would not occur. Forest health will continue to decline with trees dying due to competition with neighboring trees for limited soil moisture. The no action alternative, lacking forest health or fuels reduction treatments, fails to consider the need to protect adjacent land owners, protect the area from potential beetle infestations, promote the growth of declining aspen stands and, in general, work towards a healthier forest.

**3. Is the existing analysis valid in light of any new information or circumstances (such as, rangeland health standard assessments, recent endangered species listings, updated lists of BLM sensitive species)? Can you reasonably conclude that new information and new circumstances would not substantially change the analysis of the new proposed action?**

Yes. The information in the existing EA remains valid and relevant to the Proposed Action. There is no known new information or circumstances that would change the analysis.

**4. Are the direct, indirect, and cumulative effects that would result from implementation of the new proposed action similar (both quantitatively and qualitatively) to those analyzed in the existing NEPA document?**

Yes. The direct, indirect, and cumulative effects of the Proposed Action are the same and remain unchanged as those analyzed in the existing EA (DOI-BLM-CO-200-2013-0050 EA), both quantitatively and qualitatively.

**5. Are there public involvement and interagency reviews associated with existing NEPA document(s) adequate for the current proposed action?**

Yes. The public involvement and review associated with the existing EA (DOI-BLM-CO-200-2013-0050 EA) remains adequate for the Proposed Action.

**E. Persons/Agencies/BLM Staff Consulted**

**Table 1.1. Interdisciplinary Team**

INTERDISCIPLINARY TEAM REVIEW			
NAME	TITLE	AREA OF RESPONSIBILITY	Initials/date
Matt Rustand	Wildlife Biologist	Terrestrial Wildlife, T&E, Migratory Birds	MR, 8/19/2014
Jeff Williams	Range Management Spec.	Range, Vegetation, Farmland	JW, 8/19/14
Chris Cloninger	Range Management Spec.	Range, Vegetation, Farmland	N/A
John Lamman	Range Management Spec.	Weeds	JL, 8/15/2014

<b>INTERDISCIPLINARY TEAM REVIEW</b>			
<b>NAME</b>	<b>TITLE</b>	<b>AREA OF RESPONSIBILITY</b>	<b>Initials/date</b>
Dave Gilbert	Fisheries Biologist	Aquatic Wildlife, Riparian/Wetlands	DG 8/14/14
Stephanie Carter	Geologist	Minerals, Paleontology, Waste Hazardous or Solid	SSC, 9/23/14
Melissa Smeins	Geologist	Minerals, Paleontology	N/A
John Smeins	Hydrologist	Hydrology, Water Quality/Rights, Soils	JS, 8/21/14
Ty Webb	Fire Management Officer	Air Quality	TW, 9/28/14
Jeff Covington	Cadastral Surveyor	Cadastral Survey	JS, 8/28/14
Kalem Lenard	Outdoor Recreation Planner	Recreation, Wilderness, LWCs, Visual, ACEC, W&S Rivers	KL, 1/7/2015
John Nahomenuk	River Manager	Recreation, Wilderness, LWCs, Visual, ACEC, W&S Rivers	N/A
Ken Reed	Forester	Forestry	KR, 8/11/14
Monica Weimer	Archaeologist	Cultural, Native American	MMW, 10/27/14
Michael Troyer	Archaeologist	Cultural, Native American	NA
Greg Valladares	Realty Specialist	Realty	N/A
Rich Rotte	Realty Specialist	Realty	RAR, 10/22/14
Ty Webb	Fire Managemnet Officer	Fire Management	TW, 9/28/14
Steve Cunningham	Law Enforcement Ranger	Law Enforcement	N/A

### Note

Refer to the EA/EIS for a complete list of the team members participating in the preparation of the original environmental analysis or planning documents.

### REMARKS:

**Cadastral Services:** A modern survey is located around the project area. GCDB point reliability is +/- 10 ft. throughout the project. Corners 6 and 7 of the Monitor Placer Tract B in Section 2, T. 12 S. R. 80 W. will need to be located and protected.

**Cultural Resources:** No historic properties were found in the area of potential effect [see report CR-RG-15-30 (P)], because the project area was redesigned to avoid a site. 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:** The project area is located within a current Canada lynx Lynx Analysis; however, the project location is not located within any lynx primary or secondary habitat, therefore have no effect on this 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. Pursuant to BLM Instruction Memorandum 2008-050, to reduce impacts to Birds of Conservation Concern (BCC), no habitat disturbance (removal of vegetation such as timber, brush, or grass) is allowed during the periods of May 15 - July 15, the breeding and brood rearing season for most Colorado migratory birds. The provision will not apply to completion activities in disturbed areas that were initiated prior to May 15 and continue into the 60-day period.

An exception to this timing limitation will be granted if nesting surveys conducted no more than one week prior to vegetation-disturbing activities indicate no nesting within 30 meters (100 feet) of the area to be disturbed. Surveys shall be conducted by a qualified breeding bird surveyor between sunrise and 10:00 a.m. under favorable conditions.

**Wastes, Solid or Hazardous:** 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.

MITIGATION:

## Conclusion

Based on the review documented above, I conclude that this proposal conforms to the applicable land use plan and that the NEPA documentation fully covers the proposed action and constitutes BLM's compliance with the requirement of NEPA.

Miles Spong  
Signature of Project Lead

Ken Reed for Melissa Garcia  
Signature of NEPA Supervisor

/s/ Martin Weimer  
Signature of NEPA Coordinator

/s/ Keith E. Berger  
Signature of the Responsible Official

4/9/15  
Date

**Note:**

The signed Conclusion on this Worksheet is part of an interim step in the BLM's internal decision process and does not constitute an appealable decision process and does not constitute an appealable decision. However, the lease, permit, or other authorization based on this DNA is subject to protest or appeal under 43 CFR Part 4 and the program-specific regulations.