

**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-F02-2014-0034 CX

CASEFILE/PROJECT NUMBER (optional):

PROJECT NAME: 2014 RGFO Planting

PLANNING UNIT: Royal Gorge Field Office

LEGAL DESCRIPTION:

Lodgepole Flats Ponderosa Pine Restoration: T.10 S., R.80 W., Section 28, 6th PM.

Royal Gorge Burn Area: T.18 S., R.71 W., Sections 33 & 34, 6th PM.

Wetmore Burn Area: T. 21 S., R. 69 W., Sections 22 & 23, 6th PM.

North Stoney Face Historic Harvest: T. 51 N., R. 11 E., Section 35, NMPPM.

North Stoney Face 2010 Patch Harvests: T. 50 N., R. 11 E., Sections 2,3 & 4, and
T. 51 N., R.11 E., Section 33, NMPPM.

APPLICANT: BLM

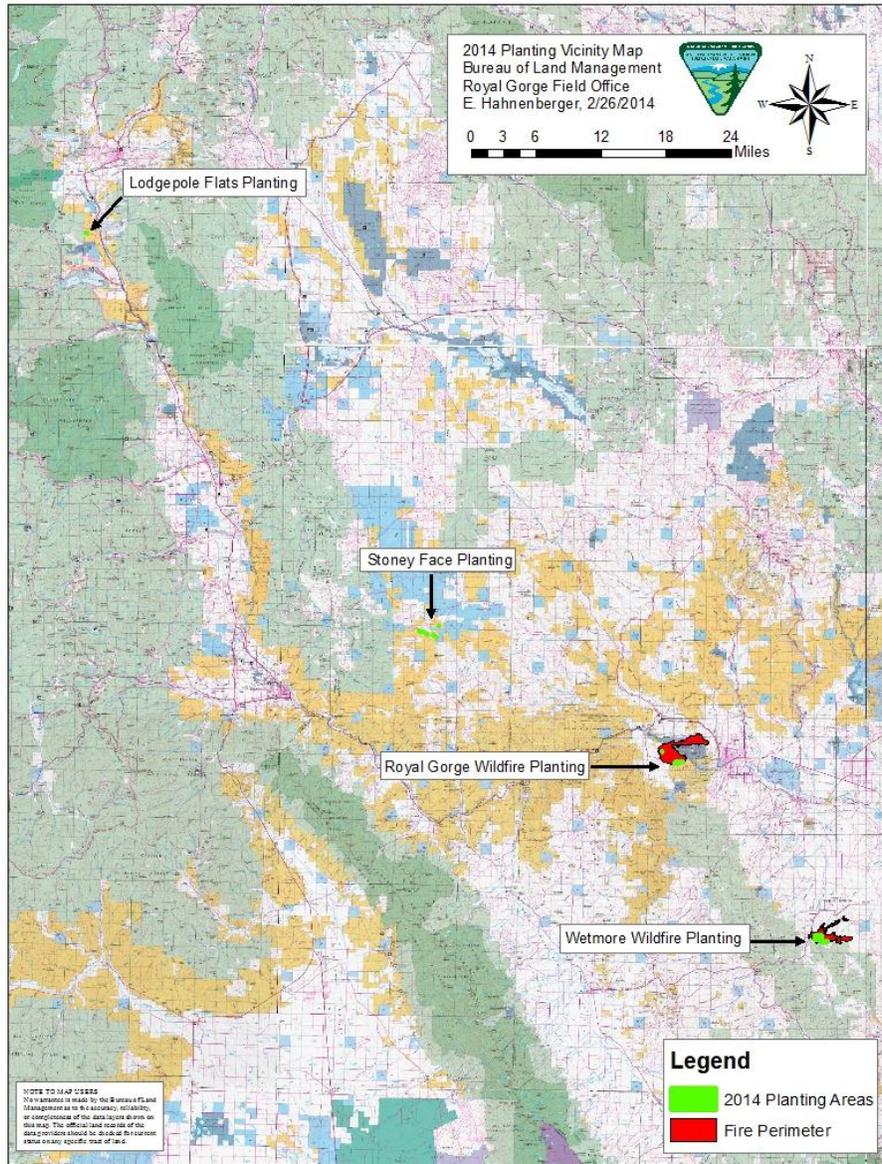
DESCRIPTION OF PROPOSED ACTION: The proposed action is to plant tree seedlings in disturbed areas that need reforestation. The planting will be done by hand with shovels or plant bars by the RGFO forester, BLM employees, students and volunteers. All planting efforts will occur on BLM managed Public Lands.

1. Lodgepole Flats Ponderosa Pine Restoration: In 2013, the forestry program completed 20 acres of fuelwood thinning on the south end of Lodgepole Flats. The main species removed was lodgepole pine and the few ponderosa pine found on site were designated protected reserve trees. Several small openings were created by removing lodgepole pine heavily infected with dwarf mistletoe. These small openings shall be planted with ponderosa pine which is shade intolerant. This proposed planting will move the treatment area towards a more diverse forest and desired forest type. This area has a wildlife closure from December 1 through June 1 each year. The planting crew will have to access the area for 1 day during May shortly after the seedlings are delivered.
2. Royal Gorge Burn Area: In 2013 the Royal Gorge Wildfire burned 3218 acres of pinyon and juniper forest. A majority of the burn area was on lands owned by Canon City Royal Gorge Park but there are adjacent BLM lands that were impacted. Pinyon pine seedlings will be planted in suitable locations on

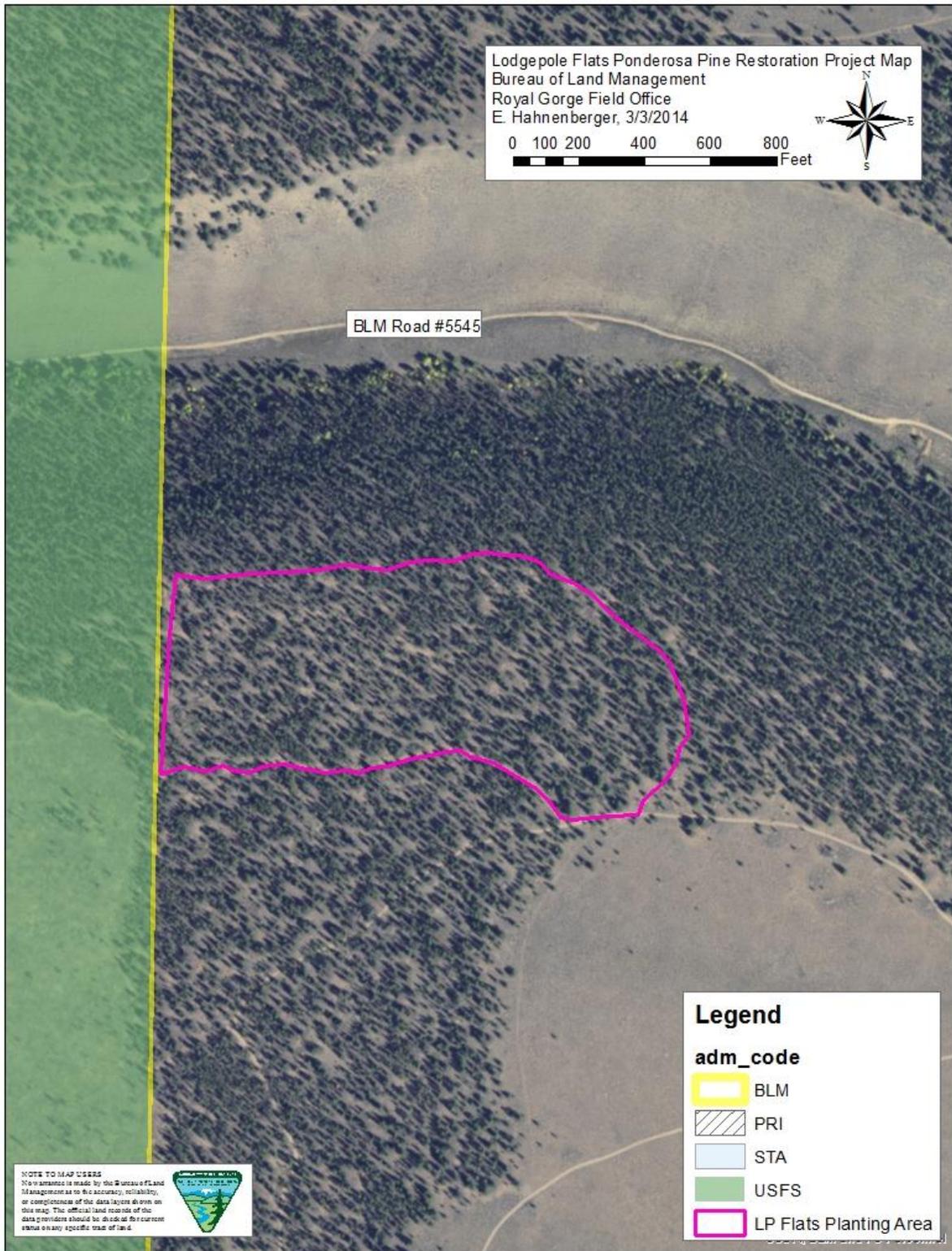
the southeast side of the wildfire area and in clumps away from the edge of the wildfire or green trees. The seedlings that survive should help speed up the recovery of these BLM lands.

3. Wetmore Burn Area: In 2012 the Wetmore Wildfire burned 2,000 acres including 371 acres of BLM lands. This was a mixed conifer forests with ponderosa pine, Douglas-fir, white fir, pinyon pine and juniper found on this site. Ponderosa pine and Douglas-fir will be planted in suitable locations.
4. North Stoney Face Historic Harvest: This was a small timber sale which was probably harvested in the 1980's. A small portion of the harvest area has not adequately regenerated and requires planting to speed up reforestation efforts and meet BLM's reforestation requirements. Douglas-fir will be the species planted on this site.
5. North Stoney Face 2010 Patch Harvests: These cuts were completed in 2010 and they appear to be adequately reforested. The Douglas-fir planting here will speed up recovery and ensure that the desired future species mix is attained.

VICINITY MAP

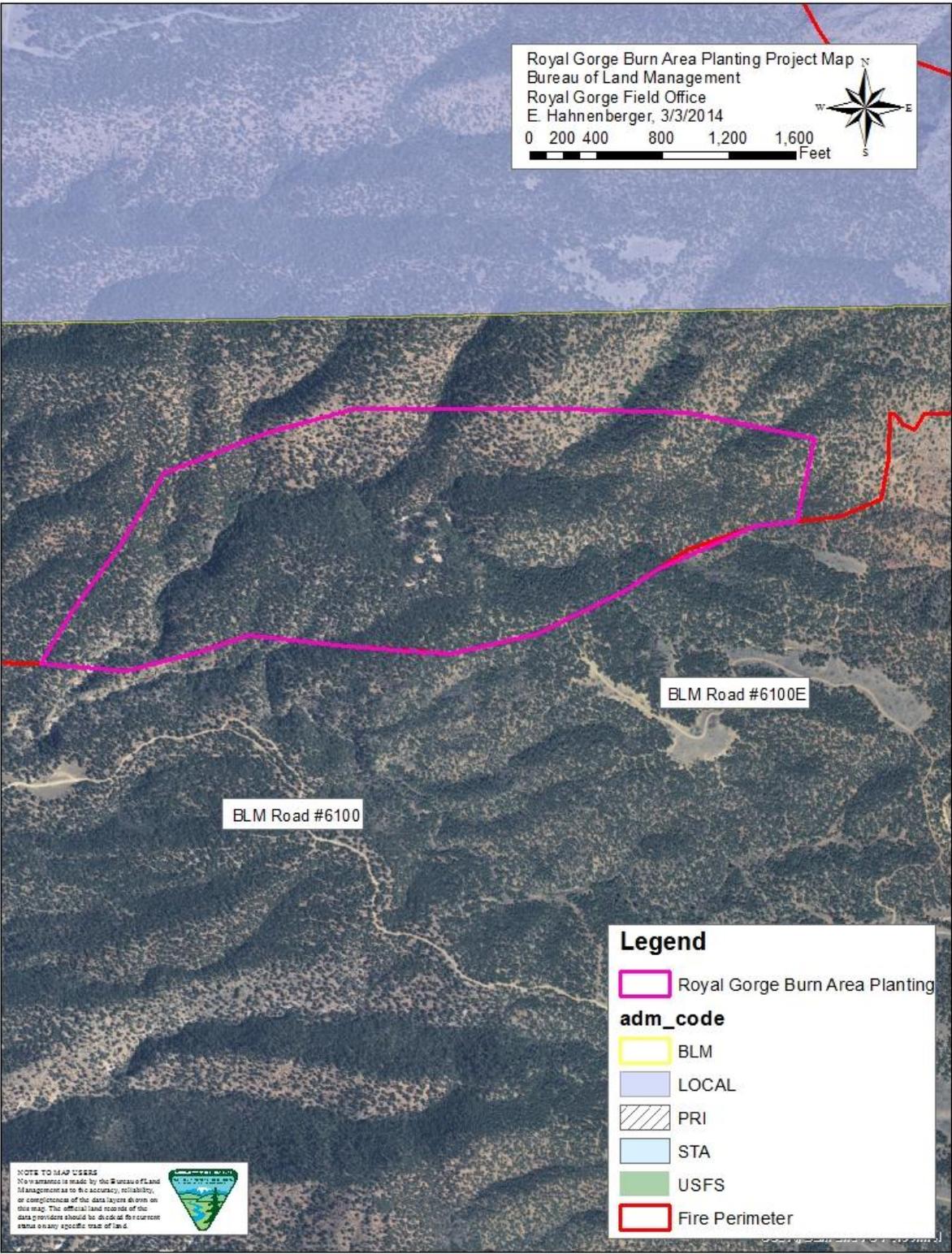


PROJECT MAPS



Royal Gorge Burn Area Planting Project Map
 Bureau of Land Management
 Royal Gorge Field Office
 E. Hahnenberger, 3/3/2014

0 200 400 800 1,200 1,600 Feet

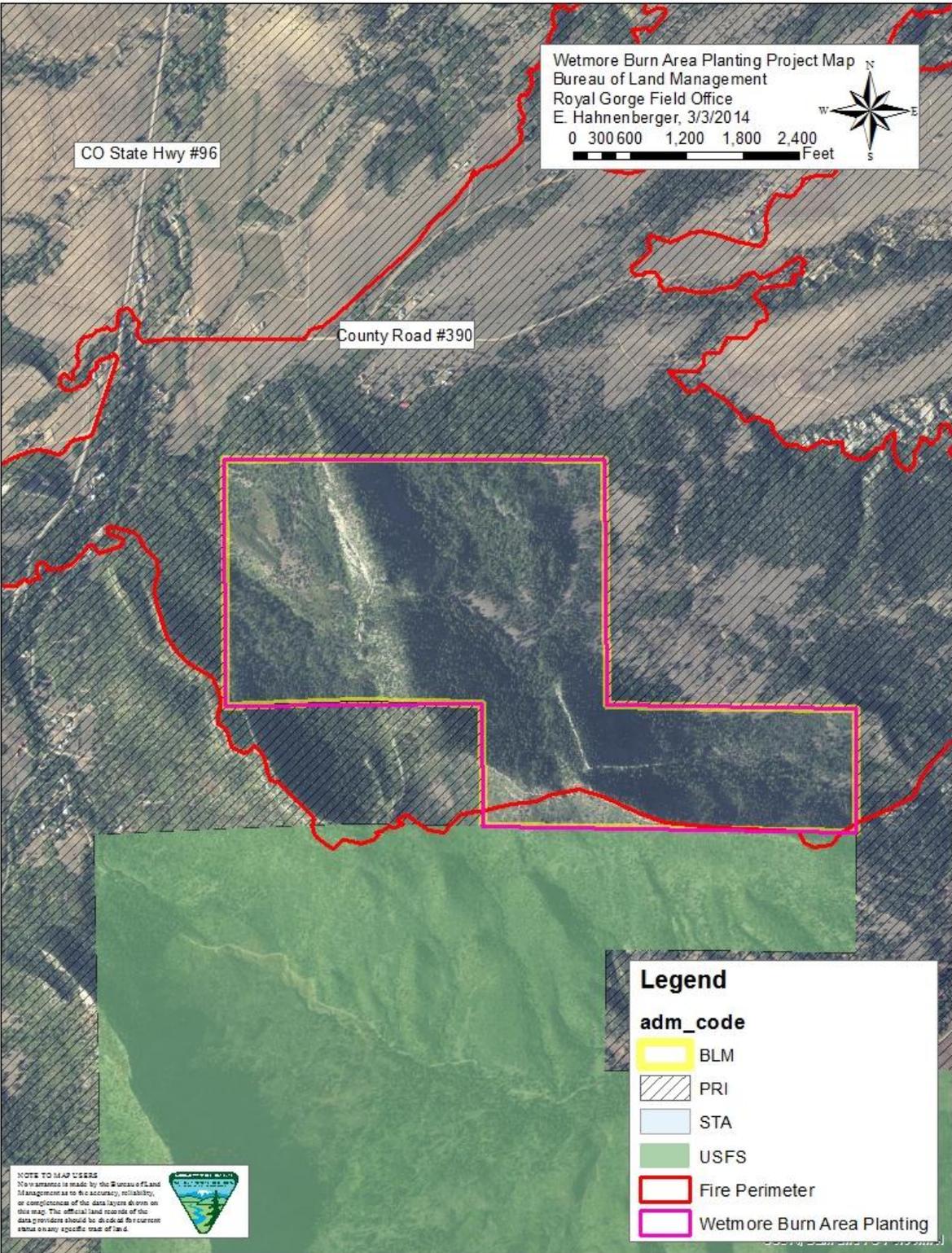



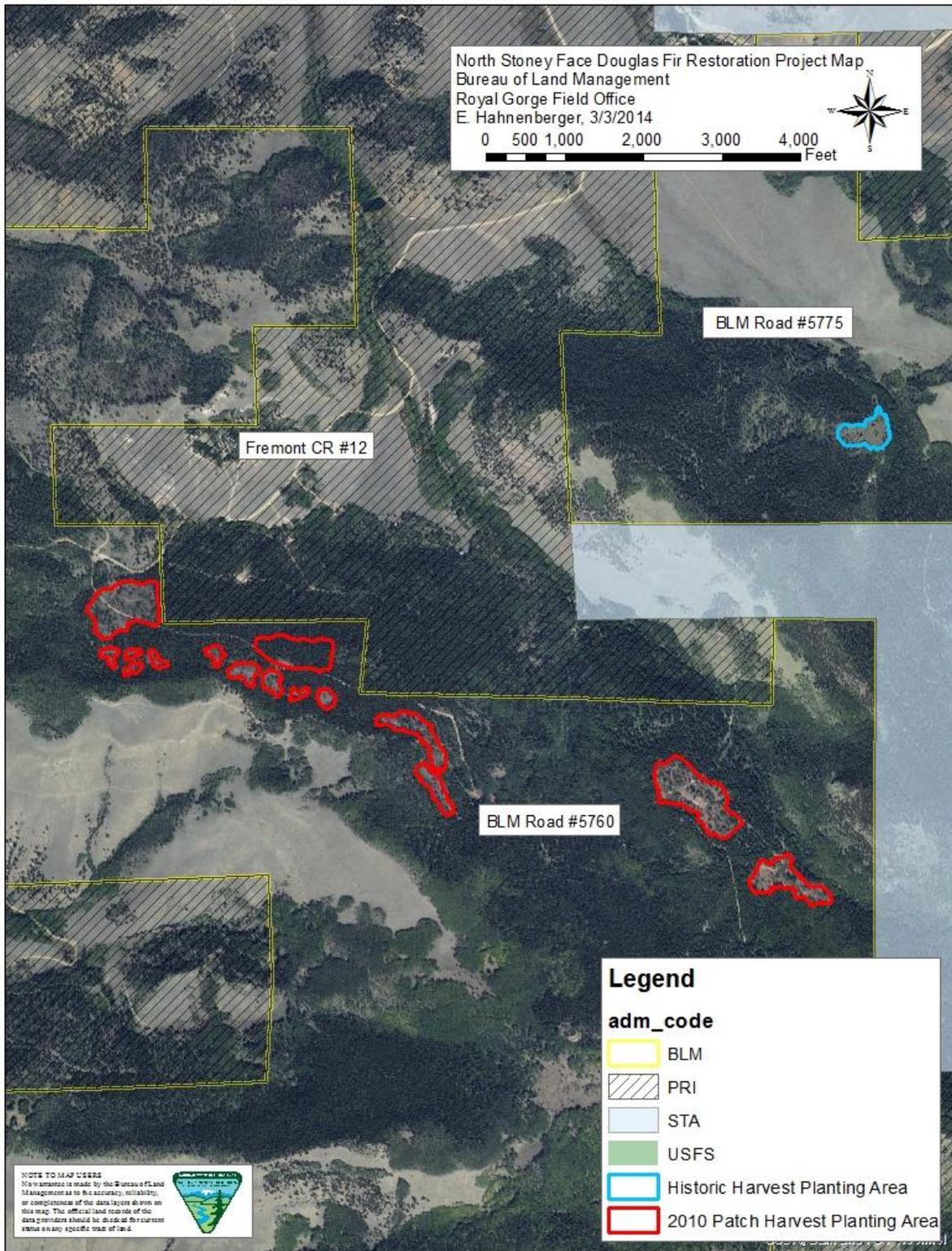
Legend

-  Royal Gorge Burn Area Planting
- adm_code**
-  BLM
-  LOCAL
-  PRI
-  STA
-  USFS
-  Fire Perimeter

NOTE TO MAP USERS
 No warranty is made by the Bureau of Land Management as to the accuracy, reliability, or completeness of the data layers shown on this map. The official land records of the data providers should be checked for current status on any specific tract of land.







PLAN CONFORMANCE REVIEW:

Name of Plan: Royal Gorge Resource Management Plan

Date Approved: 5/13/1996

Decision Number: C-51, 1-1, 6-1, 10-1

Decision Language: Determine desired plant community in all disturbed sites. Vegetation will be managed to accomplish other BLM initiatives i. e., riparian, wildlife, etc..

CATEGORICAL EXCLUSION REVIEW: This proposed action is listed as a Categorical Exclusion in DOI Departmental Manual Part 516 Chapter 11 9 (C3). 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 principal drinking water aquifers; prime farmlands; wetlands; floodplains; national monuments; migratory birds; and other ecologically significant or critical areas.		X
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

INTERDISCIPLINARY TEAM REVIEW			
NAME	TITLE	AREA OF RESPONSIBILITY	Initials/date
Matt Rustand	Wildlife Biologist	Terrestrial Wildlife, T&E, Migratory Birds	MR, 3/7/2014
Jeff Williams	Range Management Spec.	Range, Vegetation, Farmland	JW, 3/10/14
Chris Cloninger	Range Management Spec.	Range, Vegetation, Farmland	-----
John Lamman	Range Management Spec.	Weeds	JL, 03/21/2014
Dave Gilbert	Fisheries Biologist	Aquatic Wildlife, Riparian/Wetlands	DG, 3/6/2014
Stephanie Carter	Geologist	Minerals, Paleontology, Waste Hazardous or Solid	SSC, 3/24/14
Melissa Smeins	Geologist	Minerals, Paleontology	-----
John Smeins	Hydrologist	Hydrology, Water Quality/Rights, Soils	JS, 3/10/14
Ty Webb	Prescribed Fire Specialist	Air Quality	TW, 3/7/14
Jeff Covington	Cadastral Surveyor	Cadastral Survey	JC, 3/13/14
Kalem Lenard	Outdoor Recreation Planner	Recreation, Wilderness, LWCs, Visual, ACEC, W&S Rivers,	KL, 3/11/2014
John Nahomenuk	River Manager	Recreation, Wilderness, LWCs, Visual, ACEC, W&S Rivers	NA
Ken Reed	Forester	Forestry	3/6/14
Monica Weimer	Archaeologist	Cultural, Native American	NA
Michael Troyer	Archaeologist	Cultural, Native American	MDT 4/15/2014
Greg Valladares	Realty Specialist	Realty	GDV 04/09/2014
Steve Cunningham	Law Enforcement Ranger	Law Enforcement	NA
Dennis Page	Acting Fire Management Officer	Fire	DP, 3/20/14

REMARKS:

Cadastral: The project areas are combined with both antiquated surveys and modern surveys. The project areas dealing with antiquated surveys have an uncertainty of where the boundaries are located. These boundaries currently cannot be identified without an investigation or Cadastral Survey. Upon request I will provide monument records and coordinates for these corners located around and within the project area.

Multiple cultural resources inventories have been conducted in the area of potential effect (see reports CR-RG-80-4 P, CR-RG-01-57 P, CR-RG-08-1 N, CR-RG-09-36 N, CR-RG-13-89 N, and CR-RG-14-101 P) Although cultural resources were found near the area of potential effect, no sites determined to be eligible for the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP) were found. Therefore, the proposed project 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 proposed action will result in no impact to TES species.

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.

Minerals: The federal minerals in the proposed project area are open to mineral location, therefore requiring coordination between surface uses as applicable. If there are unpatented mining claims that are active in the proposed project location, any associated claim markers encountered during project implementation cannot be disturbed (reference CO-2012-013). As of March 2014, the only active claims noted in within the footprint of this proposed project were located at the Lodgepole Flats site.

COMPLIANCE PLAN (optional):

NAME OF PREPARER: Ken Reed

SUPERVISORY REVIEW: Melissa K. S. Garcia

NAME OF ENVIRONMENTAL COORDINATOR: /s/ Martin Weimer

DATE: 5/1/14

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/ Melissa KS Garcia
For Keith E. Berger, Field Manager

DATE SIGNED: 5/2/14