

**United States Department of the Interior  
Bureau of Land Management**

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**Finding of No Significant Impact  
Environmental Assessment  
DOI-BLM-CO-S010-2014-0005**

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**November, 2014**

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**Summit Reservoir Fuels Management Project**

***Location: Montezuma County, CO, Township 36 N, Range 14 W, Section 3***

***Applicant/Address: Tres Rios Field Office, 29211 Highway 184, Dolores, CO, 81323***

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**FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT**  
**Environmental Assessment**  
***DOI-BLM-CO-S010-2014-0005***  
***Summit Reservoir Fuels Management Project***

**INTRODUCTION:**

The Bureau of Land Management (BLM) has conducted an environmental analysis (DOI-BLM-CO-S010-2014-0005) for a proposed action to address fuels management concerns in the Summit Reservoir area in Montezuma County. The project will reduce hazardous fuels through a combination of hand thinning, mastication, and prescribed fire on approximately 137 acres, located 8 miles southeast of Dolores, Colorado.

The 250 acre project area is located on BLM land in part of Township 36 North, Range 14 West, Section 3. The EA considered the Proposed Action with design features and a No Action Alternative; no other alternatives were needed to respond to alternative uses of resources.

**FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT:**

Based upon a review of the Summit Reservoir Fuels Management Project EA (DOI-BLM-CO-S010-2014-0005) (October, 2014) and the supporting documents, I have determined that the proposed action (Selected Alternative) is not a major federal action and will not significantly affect 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 in 40 CFR 1508.27 and do not exceed those effects described in the San Juan/San Miguel RMP FEIS. Therefore, an environmental impact statement is not needed.

This finding is based on the context and intensity of the project as described:

**Context:** The Selected Alternative is a site-specific action directly involving approximately 137 acres of BLM administered land that by itself does not have international, national, regional, or state-wide importance. The vegetation type is ponderosa pine with Gambel oak, serviceberry, juniper, and shrub understory. Most fuels in the area can be categorized as being in fire regime condition class two or three. This indicates that compared to historical conditions, vegetative conditions and natural disturbances have been altered to a degree that is abnormal for the area. A small previous mechanical treatment in 2005 has moved a small part of the stand toward a more appropriate FRCC and the proposed mechanical treatments and prescribed fire will move the project area closer to FRCC I, indicating that the vegetation structure and fire regimes would be closer to historical values following treatment than they are currently. The project area is approximately 250 acres, with approximately 137 acres targeted for treatment. Treatments will occur during 2014 to 2019.

**Intensity:** The following discussion is organized around the Ten Significance Criteria described in 40 CFR 1508.27.

The following have been considered in evaluating intensity for this proposal:

**1. Impacts may be both beneficial and adverse.** The EA analyzed effects to resources that may be both beneficial and adverse. Measures to reduce impacts to all affected resources were incorporated in the design of the Selected Alternative. None of the environmental effects discussed in detail in the EA and associated appendices are considered significant (EA at Chapter 4).

**2. The degree to which the selected alternative will affect public health or safety**

The Selected Alternative, including its design features (EA at Section 2.3) is not expected to significantly impact public health and safety. Design features such as, “A smoke permit would be obtained from the State of Colorado, Air Pollution Control Division; the smoke permit would identify standards and conditions under which the burn could be implemented.” would be followed as part of the Selected Alternative (EA at 2.3).

**3. Unique characteristics of the geographic area such as proximity to historic or cultural resources, park lands, prime farm lands, wetlands, wilderness, wild and scenic rivers, or ecologically critical areas.**

Impacts to historic and cultural resources, park lands, prime farmlands, wetlands, wild and scenic rivers, and ecologically critical areas were all considered when designing the Selected Alternative. The proposed action will not have a significant impact on historic and cultural resources. The following components of the Human Environment and Resource Issues are not affected because they are not present in the project area; areas of critical environmental concern, park lands, prime and unique farm lands as defined by 7 CFR 657.5, caves designated under 43 CFR 37, wetlands, wilderness, wilderness study areas, lands with wilderness characteristics, wild and scenic rivers, or ecologically critical areas.

**4. The degree to which the effects on the quality of the human environment are likely to be highly controversial.**

There is no scientific controversy over the nature of the impacts that would result from implementation of this project. A scoping letter was mailed to potentially impacted individuals within one mile of the project area, tribes, individuals and groups who have expressed an interest in participating in hazardous fuels reduction projects, and Colorado Parks and Wildlife. The project proposal was also posted on the Tres Rios NEPA website on November 11, 2013. Eleven comments were received as a result of the scoping letter. As a result of internal and external scoping, preliminary issues and concerns were addressed in the EA. Effects resulting from the proposed treatments are not likely to be highly controversial.

**5. The degree to which the possible effects on the human environment are highly uncertain or involve unique or unknown risks.**

The project is not unique or unusual. The BLM has experience implementing similar actions in the Tres Rios Field Office, and on some of the same land as covered by the proposed action. Since 2001, there have been 2,433 acres of mechanical fuels reduction on BLM administered land within five miles of the project area, representing

approximately 19% of all BLM land within 5 miles. The environmental effects to the human environment are analyzed in the EA (EA at chapter 4). There are no predicted effects on the human environment that are considered to be highly uncertain or involve unique or unknown risks.

**6. The 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 effects considered in the Selected Alternative were considered by the interdisciplinary team within the context of past, present, and reasonably foreseeable future actions. Significant cumulative effects are not predicted (see analysis, EA at Section 4.3). A complete analysis of the direct, indirect, and cumulative effects of the Selected Alternative is described in Chapter 4 of the EA.

**7. Whether the action is related to other actions with individually insignificant but cumulatively significant impacts – which include connected actions regardless of land ownership.**

The interdisciplinary team evaluated the possible effects in context of past, present and reasonably foreseeable actions. Significant cumulative effects are not predicted. A complete disclosure of the effects of the project is contained in Chapter 4 of the EA.

**8. The degree to which the action may adversely affect districts, sites, highways, structures, or other objects listed in or eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places or may cause loss or destruction of significant scientific, cultural, or historical resources.**

The project will not impact districts, sites, highways, structures, or other objects listed in or eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places, nor will it cause loss or destruction of significant scientific, cultural, or historic resources.

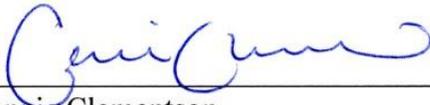
**9. The degree to which the action may adversely affect an endangered or threatened species or its habitat that has been determined to be critical under the Endangered Species Act of 1973, or the degree to which the action may adversely affect: 1) a proposed to be listed endangered or threatened species or its habitat, or 2) a species on BLM's sensitive species list.**

Design features to reduce impacts to wildlife and fisheries have been incorporated into the proposal as part of the Selected Alternative (EA at 2.3).

There are no Threatened, Endangered, and Candidate plant species present in the project area.

**10. Whether the action threatens a violation of a federal, state, local, or tribal law, regulation or policy imposed for the protection of the environment, where non-federal requirements are consistent with federal requirements.**

The project does not violate any known federal, state, local or tribal law or requirement imposed for the protection of the environment. State, local, and tribal interests were given the opportunity to participate in the environmental analysis process. In addition, the project is consistent with applicable land management plans, policies, and programs (EA at 1.3 and 1.4).

  
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Connie Clementson  
Field Manager  
Tres Rios Field Office

12-3-14  
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Date