

# Determination of NEPA Adequacy (DNA)

U.S. Department of the Interior  
Bureau of Land Management  
San Luis Valley Field Office  
46525 Highway 114  
Saguache, CO 81212

OFFICE: San Luis Valley Field Office – LLCOF03000

PROJECT NUMBER: DOI-BLM-CO-FO3-2014-014-DN

CASEFILE: (if applicable)

PROPOSED ACTION TITLE/TYPE: Buffalo Pass Prescribed fire

LOCATION/LEGAL DESCRIPTION: T. 45 N., R. 4 E., Sections 12, 13 & 24

APPLICANT (if any): BLM/USFS

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

The Rio Grande National Forest has proposed a prescribed burn on the lands directly west of these proposed BLM lands. These are timber covered lands that continue out onto BLM lands and are part of much larger stands on the National Forest. Ecologically it makes sense to apply fire to the entire ecosystem as opposed to stopping fire on the BLM/FS boundary, a straight-line, north to south and up a slope but bisecting the stands. Including these lands (approximately 122 acres) would require fewer resources for holding the prescribed fire as well as improve the timber stands in a similar fashion as the adjoining NF lands.



# Buffalo Pass Prescribed Fire

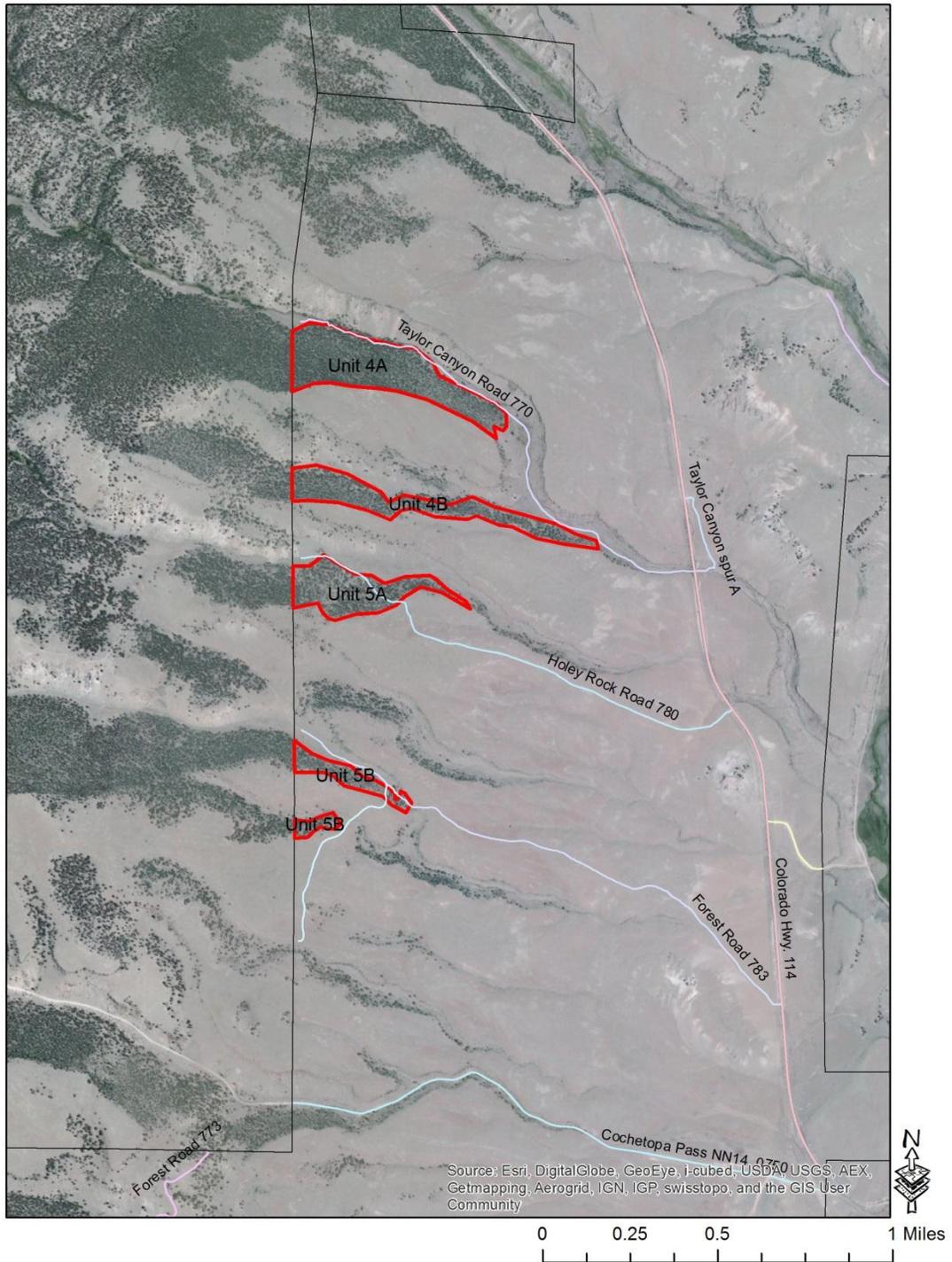


Figure 2. Aerial photo with units

## B. Land Use Plan (LUP) Conformance

San Luis Resource Area Resource Management Plan (RMP)	Date Approved <b>12/18/1991</b>
CO-210-2002-0013 EA San Luis Valley Fire and Fuels Management Plan	Date Approved <b>2003</b>

The proposed action is in conformance with the applicable LUP because it is specifically provided for in the following LUP decisions:

Vegetation 1-5: Allow vegetative manipulation such as mechanical, chemical, or fire practices to aid in accomplishing the over-all objective and the desired plant communities described in activity plans.

## 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.

Rabbit Canyon and Taylor Canyon Modification, DOI-BLM-CO-300-2013-0001-EA

List by name and date other documentation relevant to the proposed action (e.g., biological assessment, biological opinion, watershed assessment, allotment evaluation, and monitoring report). None found.

## 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 fire management plan EA analyzed on a programmatic scale the need and uses of vegetation treatments to maintain vegetative resources in a healthy state.

**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 values?** Yes. The fire management EA changed the RMP to where it allowed for a broader range of treatments allowed with fire. Prescribed fire was always allowed in the RMP. The proposed action alternative described the major procedural change for wildland fires as well as serving as a programmatic analysis for “fuel hazard reduction” vegetation treatments and vegetation treatments to benefit resources. The no action alternative did not address the treatment

of vegetation with prescribed fire or mechanical treatments, instead it continued the guidance from the Resource Management Plan where all fires were to be suppressed and gave no further advice on vegetation treatments. One other alternative was considered but eliminated from consideration, to allow fire to burn with no fire management response. This would likely lead to unnecessary loss of life, property, and resources.

**3. Is the existing analysis valid in light of any new information or circumstances (such as, rangeland health standard assessment, recent endangered species listings, and 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?** The information and circumstances surrounding proposed prescribed fire are unchanged from the previous analysis. No new evidence or circumstances have arisen 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. There are no negative direct or indirect impacts associated with the proposed action. The impacts analyzed in the fire management EA remain unchanged.

**5. Are the public involvement and interagency review associated with existing NEPA document(s) adequate for the current proposed action?** Yes. Public scoping was conducted for the previous NEPA analysis. Letters were sent out to 156 interested parties requesting comments and listing date and locations of scheduled public workshops. A news release as sent to SLV newspapers and the Pueblo Chieftain and the Denver Post. Local radio stations were supplied with a news release. Two public workshops were held in Saguache and Alamosa on June 10 and June 13, respectively. A Notice of Intent to change the RMP was published in the Federal Register on May 8, 2002 (Volume 67, Number 89, and page 30959). The EA does not indicate as to the number of responses from the scoping or whether or not they were favorable or negative. It just simply states that scoping was done prior to publication of the EA.

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

<b>INTERDISCIPLINARY TEAM REVIEW</b>			
<b>NAME</b>	<b>TITLE</b>	<b>AREA OF RESPONSIBILITY</b>	<b>Initials/date</b>
Alyssa Radcliff	Wildlife Biologist	Terrestrial Wildlife, T&E, Migratory Birds, Fisheries	ANR, 5/9/14
Jeff Williams	Range Management Spec.	Range, Vegetation, Farmland	JW, 5/7/14
Eduardo Duran	NRS	Riparian, T&E species	END 5/6/14
Andrew Archuleta	Physical Scientist	Minerals, Paleontology, Waste Hazardous or Solid	ASA 5/6/14
Negussie Tedela	Hydrologist	Hydrology, Water Quality/Rights, Soils, Air Quality	NT 5/07/14
Sean Hines/Leon Montoya	Cadastral Surveyor	Cadastral Survey	SJH 05/12/14
	Outdoor Recreation Planner	Recreation, Wilderness,	STN, 5/2/14

Sean Noonan		LWCs, Visual, ACEC, W&S Rivers,	
Alyssa Radcliff	Invasive Plants Coordinator	Invasive Plants	ANR 5/9/14
Martin Weimer	NEPA Coordinator	Environmental Justice, Noise, SocioEconomics	MW, 5/13/14
Angie Krall/Jeff Brown	Archaeologist	Cultural, Native American	AK, 5/1/14
Leon Montoya	Realty Specialist	Realty	LM 5-5-14

**REMARKS:**

**Air Quality:** Permits are obtained from and required by the Colorado Air Pollution Control Division. A requirement of the permit is that all directional constraints for smoke be followed if there are any and burning with a smoke adjective of fair or greater. If there are impacts to local residents or highways that need to be reduced, ignitions will be stopped and mop-up will be initiated so that further impacts to sensitive individuals or infrastructure can be mitigated.

**Cultural Resources:** A reconnaissance of the BLM units was completed by archaeologist Angie Krall in 2012. No fire-sensitive cultural resources, such as Culturally Modified Trees (CMTs) were identified and the area has a low potential for cultural resources. The project has the opportunity to result in positive indirect effects by reducing fuel loads and therefore protecting fire-sensitive sites on both BLM and USFS Forest Service lands.

**Native American Religious Concerns:** CMTs are culturally important to the three Ute Tribes and the Jicarilla Apache Nation. The Rio Grande National Forest and the San Luis Valley Field Office BLM have developed a protection and treatment plan for the inadvertent discovery of CMTs during prescribed burns (Appendix A).

**Threatened and Endangered Species:**

No Threatened and Endangered Species or their habitat exists within the project area. No TES concerns.

**Cadastral Survey:** A record search was made and only one section corner will be in the area – sec. cor. to secs. 11, 12, 13 & 14. Records and instructions for corner protection were given to the project lead.

**MITIGATION:**

Riparian resources – Protect the spring enclosure on Taylor canyon from fire. It is located at: NAD 83, UTM 13S 370320 4224988.

## CONCLUSION

### DOI-BLM-CO-F03-2014-0014 DN

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 requirements of the NEPA.

SIGNATURE OF PROJECT LEAD: /s/ Paul Minnow

SIGNATURE OF NEPA COORDINATOR: /s/ Martin Weimer

SIGNATURE OF NEPA SUPERVISOR: N/A

SIGNATURE OF AUTHORIZED OFFICIAL:                    /s/ Andrew Archuleta  
Andrew Archuleta, Field Manager

DATE SIGNED:    5/19/2014

**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. 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.