

U.S. Department of the Interior
Bureau of Land Management
White River Field Office
220 E Market St
Meeker, CO 81641

ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

NUMBER: DOI-BLM-CO-110-2010-0091-EA

CASEFILE/PROJECT NUMBER: N/A

PROJECT NAME: Timber Gulch HPP Brush Chop 2010

LEGAL DESCRIPTION: T2S, R94W, Section 18

APPLICANT: Colorado Division of Wildlife (CDOW)

ISSUES AND CONCERNS: None

DESCRIPTION OF PROPOSED ACTION AND ALTERNATIVES:

Background/Introduction: Landowners have approached the Colorado Division of Wildlife (CDOW) for assistance in reducing elk use on private property in Timber Gulch in the spring and fall. The proposed habitat improvement project is intended to improve forage conditions and reduce woody cover on adjacent uplands in order to reduce repeated, concentrated use of the bottoms.

Proposed Action: The CDOW proposes to use a hydro-axe mounted on a rubber-tired tractor to remove up to 70% of the mature mountain shrub (i.e. Gambel oak, Utah serviceberry, etc) within the project area in a mosaic pattern. Some scattered islands of mature oak and serviceberry would be left untreated. Slopes of 35-50% may be included in the treatment, but slopes of this nature would typically be avoided. The total project area is 93 acres, of which approximately 70 acres are on BLM land (of which 70% or 49 acres may actually be treated). Access to the project area would be via Rio Blanco County Road 22 (Dry Fork Road), across private property, then to BLM 1084, to a private two-track.

- The entire canopy and bole will be mulched and evenly scattered. The cutting head will be turned off or raised to a minimum of 30 inches when traveling between treatment areas.
- To ensure that this treatment has minimal soil disturbance, equipment operation will not be permitted when muddy conditions exist. Additionally, all equipment used for the project will be washed and free of mud and debris prior to moving the equipment onto public lands to prevent the introduction of noxious weeds.

- Refueling of equipment and rubber-tired tractors will be done with proper protection measures, including a cloth or plastic undercloth to protect soils and in the case of rubber-tired tractors on a flat existing road.
- The release of any chemical, oil, petroleum product, produced water, or sewage, etc, (regardless of quantity) will be reported to the Bureau of Land Management – WRFO Hazardous Materials Coordinator at (970) 878-3800.
- During the summer and fall months the operator of the heavy equipment shall have a shovel and a 10 pound fire extinguisher to suppress any accidental ignition. The chainsaw shall have a spark arrester equipped on the chainsaw and have a shovel to suppress accidental ignitions. All ignitions will be called into Craig Interagency Dispatch (970-826-5037) so that all of the BLM Fire crew can properly inspect and manage the incidents in accordance with the Fire Management Plan.
- Efforts will be made to place vegetative debris in such a way to reduce bare ground while also avoiding suppressing the growth of herbaceous ground cover. Treated areas would be allowed to re-grow naturally. No repeat mechanical treatments or herbicide application would be permitted since the 1997 White River Resource Management Plan does not support long-term seral or type conversions of deciduous shrub communities.

No Action Alternative: There would be no mechanical removal or alteration of mountain shrub communities.

ALTERNATIVES CONSIDERED BUT NOT CARRIED FORWARD: None.

PURPOSE & NEED FOR THE ACTION: The purpose of the proposed action is to manage multiple uses on Public Lands in a manner that avoids, minimizes, reduces, or mitigates potential impacts to other resource values.

PLAN CONFORMANCE REVIEW: The Proposed Action is subject to and has been reviewed for conformance with the following plan (43 CFR 1610.5, BLM 1617.3):

Name of Plan: White River Record of Decision and Approved Resource Management Plan (ROD/RMP).

Date Approved: July 1, 1997

Decision Language and Page Number: “Maintain or enhance the productivity and quality of preferred forages on all big game ranges.” p. 2-26

“Provide the forms, distribution and extent of vegetative cover and forage that satisfy the physiological and behavioral requirements of big game.” p. 2-26

“Forage and cover enhancement measures will be used to help resolve forage conflicts, reduce excessive use, enhance or augment forage availability or quality, or redistribute animal use.” p. 2-27

AFFECTED ENVIRONMENT / ENVIRONMENTAL CONSEQUENCES / MITIGATION MEASURES:

STANDARDS FOR PUBLIC LAND HEALTH: In January 1997, Colorado Bureau of Land Management (BLM) approved the Standards for Public Land Health. These standards cover upland soils, riparian systems, plant and animal communities, threatened and endangered species, and water quality. Standards describe conditions needed to sustain public land health and relate to all uses of the public lands. Because a standard exists for these five categories, a finding must be made for each of them in an environmental analysis. These findings are located in specific elements listed below:

INTERDISCIPLINARY TEAM ANALYSIS RECORD CHECKLIST

DETERMINATION OF STAFF:		
Determination	Resource	Rationale for Determination*
Natural, Biological and Cultural Resources		
NI	Air Quality	There will be some temporary production of dust during the vegetation treatment and due to surface disturbance.
PI	Soils	The proposed treatment area includes some areas with steep and/or unstable slopes.
NI	Wastes (hazardous or solid)	The proposed action includes the immediate clean-up and reporting of any spills associated with mechanical failure, refueling and other activities.
PI	Water Quality (Surface/Ground)	The proposed action will include some surface disturbance and vegetation cover will be removed, therefore there is the potential for increased surface run-off.
NP	Wetlands/Riparian Zones	The nearest intermittent reach of Timber Gulch lies about 1 mile downstream of the nearest point of the project area. The Timber Gulch channel (outside several constructed reservoirs) supports a poorly developed riparian system composed predominantly of facultative bank vegetation (primarily grazing-tolerant Kentucky bluegrass and redtop). Although CDOW intends on avoiding the project area's steeper slopes, those areas identified by BLM for treatment avoidance account for half of those 18 acres on 35-50% slopes. Since all herbaceous ground cover, subsurface root structure, and woody debris would remain in-place, the project would have virtually no potential to influence downstream riparian or channel conditions.
PI	Vegetation	See Vegetation section below
NP	Invasive, Non-native Species	No noxious, non-native species are known to exist at or near the project site.
NP	Threatened, Endangered, and Sensitive Plant Species	The proposed action would have no conceivable influence on special status species or associated habitats.
NI	Threatened, Endangered, and Sensitive Animal Species	No animals listed, proposed, or candidate to the ESA inhabit or derive important benefit from the project vicinity. The only special status animal that occupies the project area is the BLM-sensitive Brewer's sparrow. Influences on this species are discussed in the Migratory Bird section.

DETERMINATION OF STAFF:		
Determination	Resource	Rationale for Determination*
PI	Migratory Birds	See Migratory Birds below
NP	Wildlife, Aquatic	The nearest aquatic habitat consists of an in-channel reservoir, constructed in the mid-1970s, situated about 1 mile downstream of the project area in Timber Gulch. This seasonal reservoir supports a rudimentary aquatic community composed of aquatic invertebrates and tiger salamanders. The reservoir site, formerly enclosed by a 4-strand fence, supports patchy obligate growth, including sedges and introduced coyote willow and narrowleaf cottonwood. As addressed in the Riparian/Wetland section above, the project would have virtually no potential to generate sediment that may alter downstream channel or aquatic conditions.
PI	Wildlife, Terrestrial	See Terrestrial Wildlife section below
NP	Wild Horses	The project area is not located within the Piceance-East Douglas Herd Management Area.
NI	Cultural Resources	The project area has been inventoried by BLM archaeologists (WRFO report # 10-10-09) and found to contain no historic properties potentially eligible for NRHP listing. Avoidance of 5RB.6573 (Not Eligible) is recommended.
NI	Paleontology	With minimal soil disturbance expected, the potential to impact important fossils is very slight. Additionally, archaeologists examined the area during cultural survey and found no obvious, potentially important fossil remains.

NP = not present in the area impacted by the proposed or alternative actions

NI = present, but not affected to a degree that detailed analysis is required

PI = present with potential for impact analyzed in detail in the EA

NATURAL, BIOLOGICAL, AND CULTURAL RESOURCES

SOILS (includes a finding on Standard 1)

Affected Environment: The soils analysis identified many areas that have steep slopes in the treatment area. The majority of the treatment area is in Parachute Loam soils, which are moderately deep well drained soils on ridges formed in residuum derived primarily from sandstones. Runoff on these soils is medium and the potential for water erosion is very high. There is a small portion of Parachute-Roan Loam soils with more moderate slopes in the southern portion of the treatment area.

Environmental Consequences of the Proposed Action: Soil productivity near hydro-axe treatments may be reduced initially due to the deposition of organic debris from the treatment. However, as this mulch breaks down and since it will help soil retain soil moisture, these localized areas are likely to become more productive in the future. Soil disturbance will occur from the rubber-tired tractors. Overall impacts are expected to be localized and dispersed with the long-term impact of improving soil productivity. Since these soils have a very high potential for water erosion, it would be good to have these sites stabilized by the time late summer severe storms are more prominent. These storms can also occur in the early summer, but are less

common. If the wrong storm occurred, such as a local microburst in Timber Gulch, before the early seral vegetation can respond to the treatment there is the potential for localized erosion. These storms would typically occur on average every 25 to 50 years, therefore this event is unlikely. This method of masticating brush in place is preferable to other methods such as chaining that disturb the soil by mechanically removing the stumps, since the root mass stays in place and due to the mulch produced. Mulch of this type has shown to protect bare ground from rainsplash erosion as well as effectively increasing surface runoff and damming up surface runoff in rills to allow for infiltration.

Environmental Consequences of the No Action Alternative: None identified however overall soil productivity may be less that with the vegetation treatment.

Mitigation: None Identified.

Finding on the Public Land Health Standard for upland soils: The vegetation treatment is likely to improve long-term soil productivity and therefore should improve upland soil conditions. Soil disturbance will be localized, dispersed and generally low impact and therefore should recover within 2-5 years at most.

WATER QUALITY, SURFACE AND GROUND (includes a finding on Standard 5)

Affected Environment: Treatment sites are located in Timber Gulch and Timber Gulch drains into the Dry Fork of the Piceance. The proposed action will include travel on existing roads to worksites, off-road travel of mechanical equipment to treatment areas, as well as the operation of the hydro-axe within the treatment sites in a mosaic pattern. There are significant portions of the treatment area that have slopes steeper than 35% and a few portions of the treatment areas with slopes over 50%, and the soils have a very high risk of erosion from water. Most of these areas coincide with the treatment avoidance areas described in the treatment area maps. These locations with steep slopes and have the highest potential for erosion are not targeted for treatment nor is it safe or efficient to work in these areas with the equipment, therefore if vegetation treatment occurs in these locations it is likely to be very limited and on the edges of the steeper slopes.

Environmental Consequences of the Proposed Action: Travel of hydro-axes mounted on rubber-tired tractors will crush vegetation, decrease infiltration by compacting the soil, and in some locations create preferential flow paths for surface runoff. Impacts are likely to be dispersed and localized. Since most of the off-road travel will be only one pass, ruts from vehicle travel are unlikely to occur. Impacts from the rubber-tired tractors are likely to be temporary and limited. Bull hogs and hydro-axes will shred trees to mulch sized pieces. This mulch will protect soils from rainsplash erosion and larger pieces of trees will reduce rilling and disperse overland flow. Disbursement of mulch will be random and can be far from the source. The size and type of mulch is conducive to providing surface roughness and slowing surface runoff and allowing for infiltration on the hillslope.

Short-term impacts will include localized small scale dispersed erosion; however long-term impacts are likely to result in early successional brush ecosystem plant communities that in general should reduce bare ground compared to pre-treatment conditions. Therefore, long-term impacts should reduce upland erosion and improve upland hydrologic conditions.

Environmental Consequences of the No Action Alternative: No impacts identified.

Mitigation: None identified

Finding on the Public Land Health Standard for water quality: It is unlikely that these vegetation treatments would result in an exceedance of state water quality standards.

VEGETATION (includes a finding on Standard 3)

Affected Environment: The site of the proposed action is a mid and late seral mountain brush vegetation community dominated by Utah serviceberry and Gambel oak. Snowberry and mountain big sagebrush are the principal subdominant shrubs. The herbaceous component of the site includes a diverse mixture of perennial grasses and forbs. The corresponding ecological site is Brushy Loam.

Typically, on a site such as this with a North aspect, Utah serviceberry may comprise 30-40 % of the plant composition by weight. Serviceberry at the site ranges from 3-8 feet in height. The following is a list of the principal plant species found on this site:

Life form	Scientific name	Common name
Forbs	Erysimum asperum	Western wallflower
	Balsamorhiza saggitata	Arrowleaf balsamroot
	Lupinus argenteus	lupine
	Delphinium	low larkspur
	Mertensia	bluebells
	Crepis acuminata	hawksbeard
	Trifolium gymnocarpon	clover
Shrubs	Quercus gambeli	Gambel oak
	Amelanchier utahensis	Utah serviceberry
	Symphoricarpos oreophilus	snowberry
	Artemisia tridentata ssp vaseyana	Mountain big sagebrush
	Prunus virginiana	chokecherry
Trees	Juniperus osteosperma	Rocky Mountain juniper
Grasses/grass like	Stipa lettermanii	Letterman needlegrass
	Stipa columbiana	Columbia needlegrass
	Agropyron subsecundum	bearded wheatgrass
	Bromus polyanthus	polyanthus brome
	Carex geyeri	elk sedge
	Carex douglasii	Douglas sedge

Environmental Consequences of the Proposed Action: The effect of the proposed treatment will be to reduce dominance of the site by Utah serviceberry and Gambel oak, allowing the principal subdominant shrubs snowberry and mountain big sagebrush and perennial grasses

and forbs to express their potential in cover and production. This will create an earlier seral state in the vegetation.

It is probable that due to the small size of the treatment area relative to the watershed that this treatment could have the effect of a “magnet”; i.e., it would attract and receive significantly more grazing utilization than the surrounding untreated area. This would have the effect of retarding succession to a more advanced, brush dominated (Utah serviceberry and Gambel oak) state over both the short and long term. The preferred time for mechanical treatment is fall, after several freezes, October or November. This is because most herbaceous plants at this elevation are either dormant or will soon be dormant. This impact to herbaceous species would be minimized if the project were implemented at this time. Treatment on slopes greater than 35% is questionable from the standpoint of equipment operator safety.

Environmental Consequences of the No Action Alternative: There will be no change from the present situation.

Mitigation: 1) In order to minimize negative impacts to herbaceous species the proposed treatment should be completed in the fall (October 1 to November 30).

2) Promptly revegetate all areas of earthen disturbance with Native seed mix #6 and monitor the project area for a minimum of three years post disturbance to insure that no noxious weeds or invasive species to establish on site.

Native Seed Mix 6		
Beardless wheatgrass (Whitmar)	2	Alpine Meadow, Alpine Slopes, Aspen
Slender wheatgrass (Pryor)	2	Woodlands, Brushy Loam, Deep Clay
Big bluegrass (Sherman)	1	Loam, Douglas-fir Woodland, Loamy
Canby bluegrass (Canbar)	1	Park, Mountain Loam, Mountain
Mountain brome (Bromar)	2	Meadows, Mountain Swale, Shallow
Alternates: Columbia needlegrass, Letterman needlegrass, Blue flax ¹ , Rocky Mountain penstemon ² , balsamroot		Subalpine, Spruce-fir Woodland, Subalpine Loam

Finding on the Public Land Health Standard for plant and animal communities (partial, see also Wildlife, Aquatic and Wildlife, Terrestrial): Plant communities in the project area currently meet the Standard on a site, watershed and landscape basis and are expected to meet or exceed the Standard in the future following project implementation.

MIGRATORY BIRDS

Affected Environment: These mixed shrub communities serve as breeding habitat for a number of migratory birds, most commonly including dusky flycatcher, green-tailed towhee, Virginia’s warbler, MacGillivray’s warbler, and Brewer’s sparrow, as the only bird recognized as a U.S. Fish and Wildlife Bird of Conservation Concern. The core nesting season for this community of birds extends from mid-May through mid-July.

Environmental Consequences of the Proposed Action: This project, for a number of administrative reasons (i.e., HPP contractor scheduling, CDOW fiscal year budgeting, and

landowner commitments to their NRCS Conservation Plan) is scheduled to take place in mid-June, at the peak of the migratory bird nesting season. It is likely that treatment practices would result in the failure of most nest attempts on up to 50 acres of mixed shrub habitats. Although this treatment would occur at an inopportune time, the treatment and its effects would remain localized and would involve about 3% of like-habitats available within a 1-mile radius of the project site. In the case of BLM-sensitive Brewer's sparrow, project effects would only influence the current breeding season. Since sagebrush is not specifically targeted for treatment, habitat available in subsequent nesting seasons would remain static.

The project is expected to perform as an ecological surrogate for fire in the mixed shrub community at an interval consistent with average natural perturbation regimes. Although some short term shifts in abundance and distribution among the migratory bird community would be expected, these patterns of successional flux are considered integral to the continued long-term availability of suitable mixed shrub habitat. Untreated parcels within and peripheral to the project area would remain a reservoir for recolonization of functionally equivalent shrubland habitat within 5-10 years.

Environmental Consequences of the No Action Alternative: The no action alternative would maintain present conditions that represent near-optimal habitat conditions for shrub-steppe avian communities, however, it would also fail to make use of an opportunity to address successional advance on a small, but equitable portion of the landscape consistent with the continued long-term availability of habitat best suited for this species group.

Mitigation: See Terrestrial Wildlife section.

WILDLIFE, TERRESTRIAL (includes a finding on Standard 3)

Affected Environment: The project area consists predominantly of a mixed shrub community at elevations of 7900-8200 feet. The north and north-eastly exposures at the drainage heads support variably sized stands of chokecherry (2 and 10 acres) and aspen (1 and 4 acres). The remainder of the project area consists of a complex Utah serviceberry/Gambel oak/mountain big sagebrush community interspersed at low density with young juniper. There exists no evidence that the project area ever supported a mature woodland or forest stand and the juniper encroachment suggests that the community is at or beyond its typical fire-return interval. Herbaceous ground cover is well-developed and bore slight traces of ungulate grazing use in late May. Mature douglas-fir stands occur on the steep north-facing slopes of Timber Gulch less than 0.75 mile from the project site.

The project site is used throughout the year by deer and elk, although use is typically limited by snow conditions from February through April. Heavy seasonal use by elk, particularly on the privately-owned headwater meadows of Timber Gulch, is the impetus for this project.

The project area is used by dusky grouse for all reproductive and summer/fall use functions, with several birds, including a nesting hen, encountered during a site visit in late May. It is likely that local birds winter in the nearby stand of douglas-fir. Dusky grouse are managed as a game

species by the Colorado Division of Wildlife and are considered a Bird of Conservation Concern (Southern Rocky Mountains Physiographic Region 62) in the multi-organizational (including BLM) Partners-in-Flight program.

Although not well documented, the area's small mammal community is likely rich and abundant owing to the pasture's well-developed herbaceous understories and varied shrubland composition. Less common species that are best associated with well developed ground cover may include: Merriam's and montane shrews, and long-tailed and sagebrush voles.

Environmental Consequences of the Proposed Action: Removing aerial shrub canopies is intended to help reduce elk concentrations in the valley by reducing the availability of adjacent security cover and bolstering the availability of off-site herbaceous forage. Although presently in near-optimal condition as a higher elevation shrubland complex, encroaching juniper suggest that this fire disclimax community has reached the point of maturity where perturbation normally recurs. In the absence of fire, mechanical canopy removal is a reasonable surrogate for achieving successional setback. The proposed treatment of BLM-administered surface would involve up to 50 acres of the mixed shrub type, which represents about 3% of the like-habitat (as a source of big game forage and cover) within a 1-mile radius of the project area. In summary, the project is expected to perform as an ecological surrogate for fire in the mixed shrub community at an interval consistent with average natural perturbation regimes. It is expected that shrub canopies would redevelop structural properties similar to current conditions in 5-10 years for serviceberry and 25-50 years for Gambel oak.

The chokecherry stands identified in the attached map provide a relatively scarce local source of favored late summer/fall forage, derived both from fruit (chokecherries) and owing to its density and moisture regimes, succulent forbs. These attributes are important as forage and cover sources for a number of nongame wildlife species, but particularly dusky grouse. This limited habitat component becomes value added considering its close association with the project area's well developed understory cover, compatible livestock grazing regimen, and privately-owned mesic valley bottoms. Chokecherry, once the top-growth is removed, takes 3-4 years to regain a productive fruit-bearing state. Substantial removal of this as a forage and cover source, though temporary, would be expected to detract from the project area's interim utility (5-10 years as mature shrub crowns redevelop) for these species. It is recommended that those 2 chokecherry-dominated stands identified during a field visit (~12 acres) be removed from areas subject to treatment. Similarly, it is recommended that 2 small aspen stands (~5 acres) within the project area, which provide similar qualities for non-game species and dusky grouse, and do not constitute a cover source for big game, also be omitted from treatment consideration.

Removing a majority of the shrub canopy on up to 50 acres of this parcel would likely prompt a temporary shift in the abundance and composition of small mammals. However, untreated parcels within and peripheral to the project area would remain a reservoir for recolonization of treated shrublands within 5-25 years—a rejuvenation process considered consistent with the long-term maintenance of habitat suited for these species.

Environmental Consequences of the No Action Alternative: Private lands would continue to be exploited by seasonal concentration of elk and juniper expression would continue to expand

in extent and increase in stature in these fire-disclimax communities. With increasing frequency and canopy cover of conifer canopies, the suitability of habitat for blue grouse and less common small mammals would undergo subtle rates of decline, as would the herbaceous and woody forage resources available for seasonal big game use.

Mitigation: It is recommended that 4 parcels, totaling ~17 acres be removed from treatment consideration due to their inordinately high value as sources of forage and cover for nongame species and dusky grouse (see attached map). These polygons have been provided to the CDOW’s project manager in electronic format for field GPS use.

Finding on the Public Land Health Standard for plant and animal communities (partial, see also Vegetation and Wildlife, Aquatic): At the present time, the project area fully meets the land health standard. The proposed project would be expected to perform as an ecological surrogate for fire in the mixed shrub community at an interval consistent with average natural perturbation regimes. Although some short term shifts in abundance and distribution among small game and nongame wildlife would be expected, these patterns of successional flux are considered integral to the continued long-term availability of suitable mixed shrub habitat. As conditioned, these short term effects would be moderated with maintenance of specialized habitat components, including small interspersed stands of aspen and chokecherry. The no action alternative would maintain present conditions that achieve the land health standards, but would fail to make use of an opportunity to address successional advance on a small, but equitable portion of the landscape.

ELEMENTS NOT PRESENT OR NOT AFFECTED:

No flood plains, prime and unique farmlands, exist within the area affected by the proposed action. There are also no Native American religious or environmental justice concerns associated with the proposed action.

OTHER ELEMENTS: For the following elements, only those brought forward for analysis will be addressed further.

Other Elements	NA or Not Present	Applicable or Present, No Impact	Applicable & Present and Brought Forward for Analysis
Visual Resources	X		
Fire Management		X	
Forest Management			X
Hydrology/Water Rights		X	
Rangeland Management			X
Realty Authorizations			
Recreation	X		
Access and Transportation	X		
Geology and Minerals	X		

Other Elements	NA or Not Present	Applicable or Present, No Impact	Applicable & Present and Brought Forward for Analysis
Areas of Environmental Concern	X		
Wilderness	X		
Wild and Scenic Rivers	X		
Cadastral	X		
Socio-Economics	X		
Law Enforcement	X		

RANGELAND MANAGEMENT

Affected Environment: The proposed action will take place in the east Hyberger pasture of the Hyberger allotment (06009) Buckles Ranch. This pasture is primarily deeded land and includes the BLM lands where the treatment is proposed. The pasture is used as follows annually:

Allotment #	Livestock		Grazing		% Public Lands	AUMs
	Number	Kind	Begin	End		
06009	85	cattle	10/1	10/31	11	10

Environmental Consequences of the Proposed Action: The proposed treatment will act to remove site dominance by Utah serviceberry and Gambel oak and allow the subdominant shrub and herbaceous species to increase both their cover and production. In general, the treatment would be beneficial for livestock and could improve cattle distribution.

Environmental Consequences of the No Action Alternative: There will be no change from the present situation.

Mitigation: see *Vegetation Section above*

FOREST MANAGEMENT

Affected Environment: The proposed area has some invading Juniper intermixed within the mountain brush community and a small aspen stand on the southeast portion of the area.

Environmental Consequences of the Proposed Action: The project would directly impact the juniper trees located within the project area. The amount of juniper removed from the site is small in count and volume. The removal will not be negative impact on the area since the juniper is in a young stage and does not make a significant contribution to the ecosystem in within the project area. The mosaic design and percent of removal for the project would allow for the

ability to avoid the aspen stand on the southeast portion of the proposed project area and any individual aspen trees growing out of that stand location.

Environmental Consequences of the No Action Alternative: No mechanical treatment to the vegetation would take place and the juniper would persist until removed by fire.

Mitigation: Leave the aspen stand on the southeast portion of the project area undisturbed and avoid individual aspen trees in close proximity of the stand if it is possible during the layout of the project.

CUMULATIVE IMPACTS SUMMARY: Cumulative impacts from vegetation manipulations were analyzed in the White River Resource Area PRMP/FEIS. There was no limit placed on how much acreage could be treated in situations where pinyon-juniper was encroaching into shrublands or mountain shrub communities. It was projected that vegetation disturbance and manipulation for wildlife objectives could be as much as 4,000 acres in pinyon-juniper communities and 25,000 acres in mountain shrub communities (p.D-6).

PERSONS / AGENCIES CONSULTED: Colorado Division of Wildlife (DWM Tom Knowles, DWM Bailey Franklin), livestock permittee (Chad Carter).

INTERDISCIPLINARY REVIEW:

Name	Title	Area of Responsibility	Date Signed
Bob Lange	Hydrologist	Air Quality, Water Quality, Surface and Ground Hydrology and Water Rights, Wastes, Hazardous or Solid and Soils	06/08/2010
Jill Schulte	Botanist	Areas of Critical Environmental Concern, Threatened and Endangered Plant Species	5/24/2010
Geoffrey Haymes	Archeologist	Cultural Resources, Paleontological Resources	06/02/2010
Mark Hafkenschiel	Rangeland Management Specialist	Invasive, Non-Native Species, Vegetation , Rangeland Management	06/08/2010
Ed Hollowed	Wildlife Biologist	Migratory Birds, Threatened, Endangered and Sensitive Animal Species, Terrestrial and Aquatic Wildlife, Wetlands and Riparian Zones	06/07/2010
Jim Michels	Forester/ Fire / Fuels Technician	Wilderness, Access and Transportation, Recreation	06/02/2010
Jim Michels	Forester/ Fire / Fuels Technician	Fire Management, Forest Management	06/02/2010
Paul Daggett	Mining Engineer	Geology and Minerals	05/10/2010
Linda Jones	Realty Specialist	Realty Authorizations	03/16/2010
Jim Michels	Forester/ Fire / Fuels Technician	Visual Resources	06/02/2010
Melissa J. Kindall	Range Technician	Wild Horse Management	03/24/2010

Finding of No Significant Impact/Decision Record (FONSI/DR)

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FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT (FONSI)/RATIONALE: The environmental assessment and analysis of the environmental effects of the proposed action have been reviewed. The approved mitigation measures (listed below) result in a Finding of No Significant Impact on the human environment. Therefore, an environmental impact statement is not necessary to further analyze the environmental effects of the proposed action.

DECISION/RATIONALE: It is my decision to approve the proposed action with the addition of the mitigation listed below.

MITIGATION MEASURES:

1. Avoidance of 5RB.6573 (Not Eligible) is recommended.
2. Promptly revegetate all areas of earthen disturbance with Native seed mix #6 and monitor the project area for a minimum of three years post disturbance to insure that no noxious weeds or invasive species to establish on site.

Native Seed Mix 6		
Beardless wheatgrass (Whitmar)	2	Alpine Meadow, Alpine Slopes, Aspen
Slender wheatgrass (Pryor)	2	Woodlands, Brushy Loam, Deep Clay
Big bluegrass (Sherman)	1	Loam, Douglas-fir Woodland, Loamy
Canby bluegrass (Canbar)	1	Park, Mountain Loam, Mountain
Mountain brome (Bromar)	2	Meadows, Mountain Swale, Shallow
Alternates: Columbia needlegrass, Letterman needlegrass, Blue flax, Rocky Mountain penstemon, balsamroot		Subalpine, Spruce-fir Woodland, Subalpine Loam

3. It is recommended that 4 parcels, totaling ~17 acres be removed from treatment consideration due to their inordinately high value as sources of forage and cover for nongame species and dusky grouse (see attached map). These polygons have been provided to the CDOW's project manager in electronic format for field GPS use.
4. Leave the aspen stand on the southeast portion of the project area undisturbed and avoid individual aspen trees in close proximity of the stand if it is possible during the layout of the project.

COMPLIANCE/MONITORING: Compliance checks and monitoring to determine whether the project ultimately meets the resource goals will be ongoing by the wildlife and range staff.

NAME OF PREPARER: Ed Hollowed

NAME OF ENVIRONMENTAL COORDINATOR: Caroline Hollowed

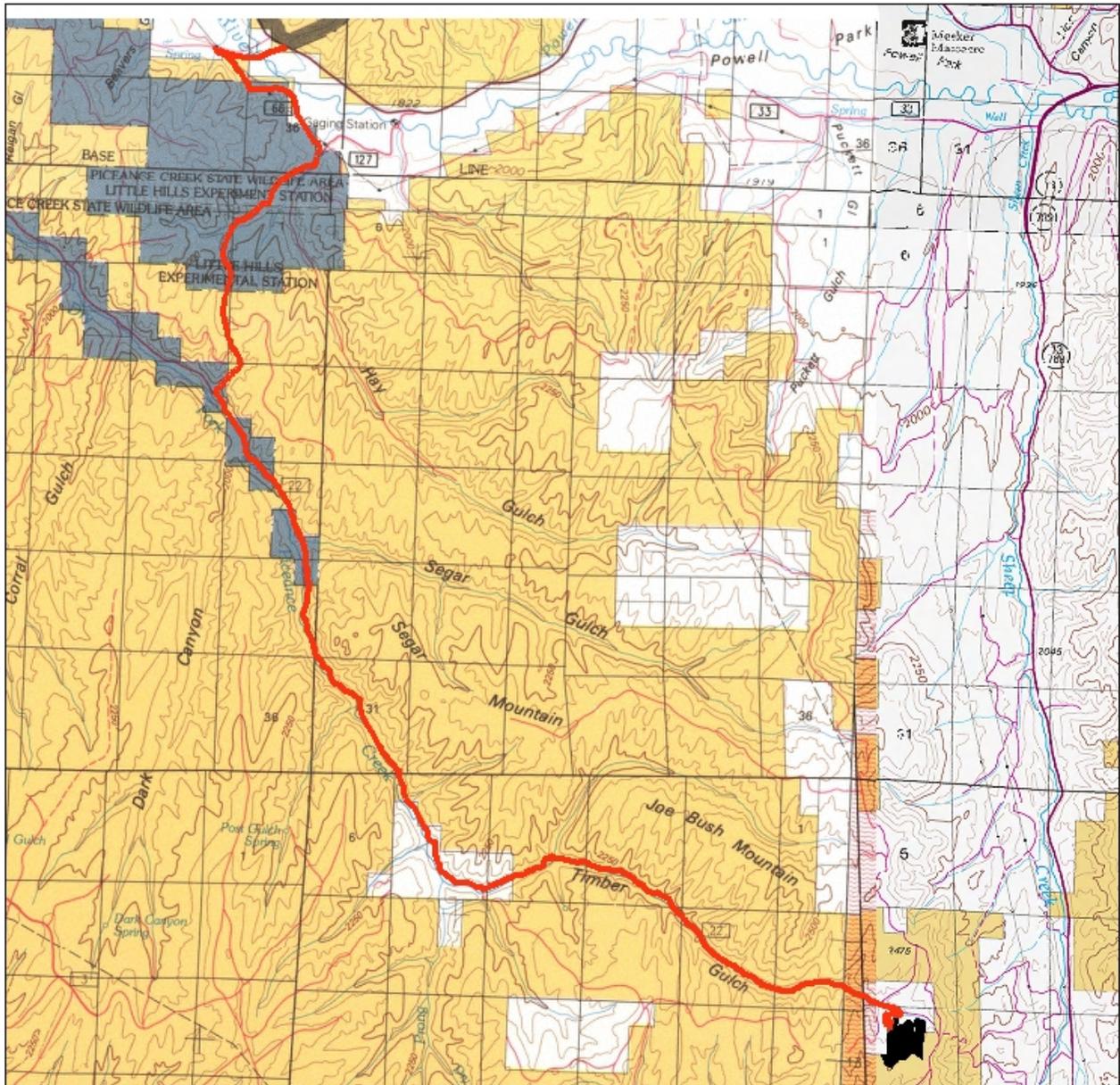
SIGNATURE OF AUTHORIZED OFFICIAL:


Acting Field Manager

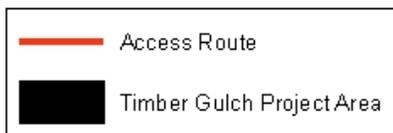
DATE SIGNED: 6/8/2010

ATTACHMENTS: Map 1 – Access to Treatment Area
Map 2 – Project Area Map
Map 3 – Avoidance Areas on Topographic Map
Map 4 - Avoidance Areas on Ortho-photo Map

Timber Gulch HPP Brush Chop - Access Map DOI-BLM-CO-110-2010-0091-EA



3/1/2010

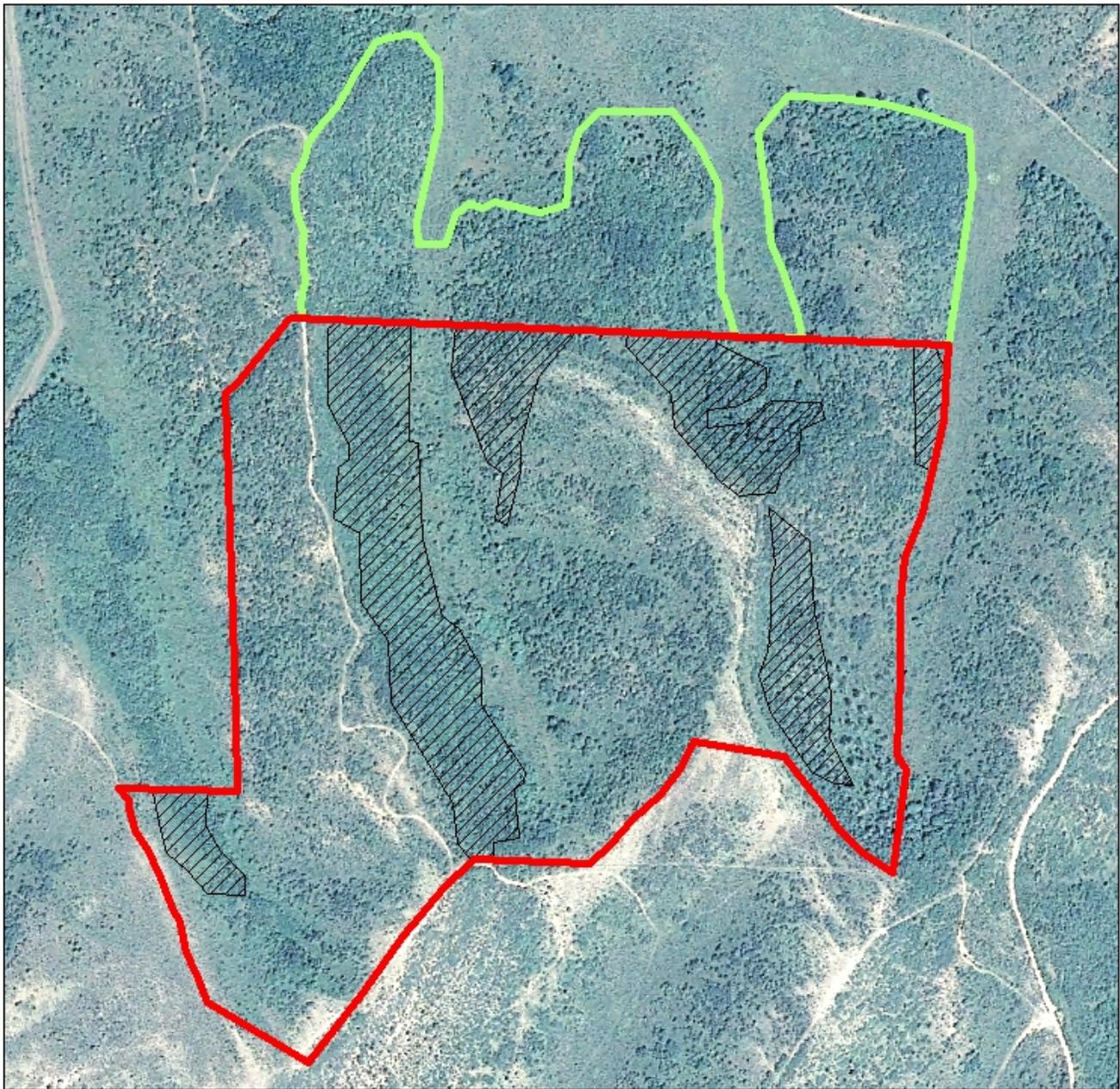


Sources:
BLM, USGS, CDOW, etc.

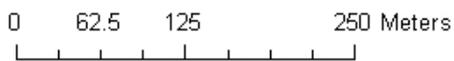
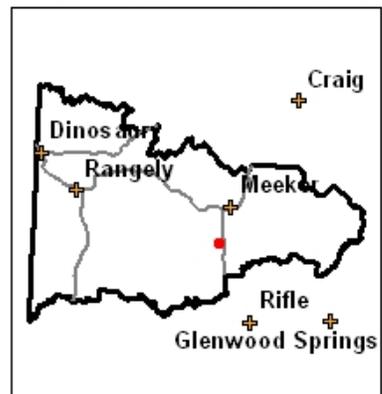
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Timber Gulch HPP Brush Chop - Detailed Project Area Map DOI-BLM-CO-110-2010-0091-EA



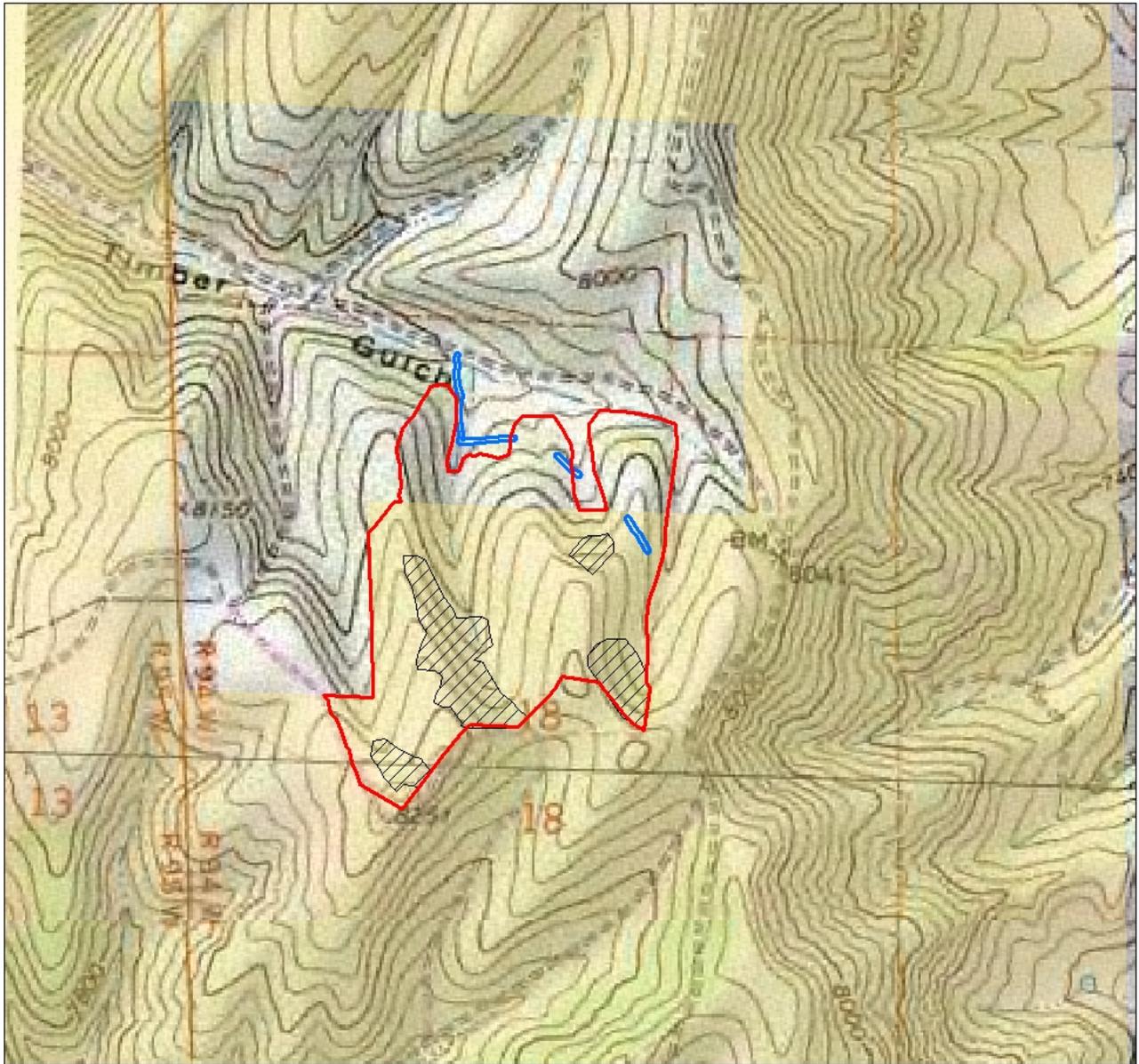
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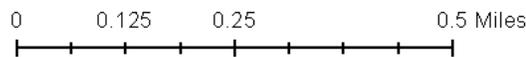
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**T2S, R94W, 6th PM
Section 18**



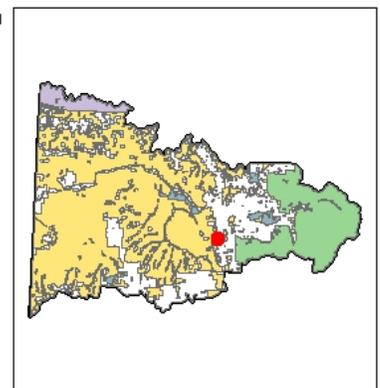
06/07/2010



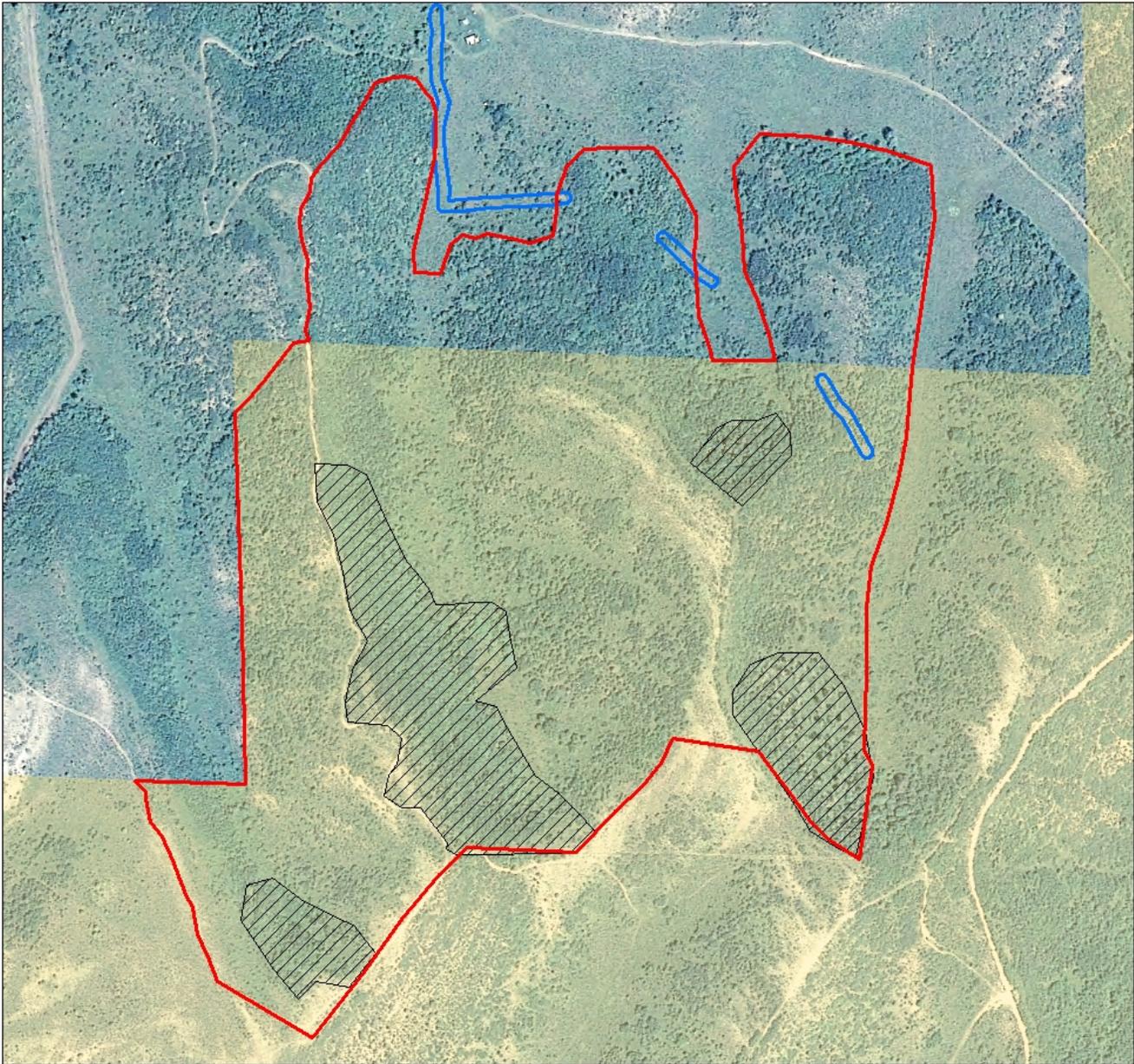
- Treatment Avoidance Area
- Brush Chop Area
- Historic Fenceline

Sources:
BLM, USGS, CDOW, etc.

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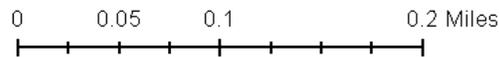
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**T2S, R94W, 6th PM
Section 18**



06/07/2010



-  Treatment Avoidance Area
-  Brush Chop Area
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