

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

CATEGORICAL EXCLUSION REVIEW AND APPROVAL

Project Title: NLCS Cottonwood Plantings
DOI-BLM-MT-L070-2013-005-CX

Location: Chouteau County - T23N R16E sections 24 and 25 (Judith
Landing Campground)
Fergus County - T22N R16E section 3

Applicant/Address: N/A

Project Contact:

Name: Chad Krause
Title: Hydrologist
Office: Upper Missouri River Breaks National Monument
Telephone No.: (406)-538-1908

Central Montana District Office
920 NE Main Street
Lewistown, MT 59457
Phone: 406-538-1900



CATEGORICAL EXCLUSION REVIEW AND APPROVAL

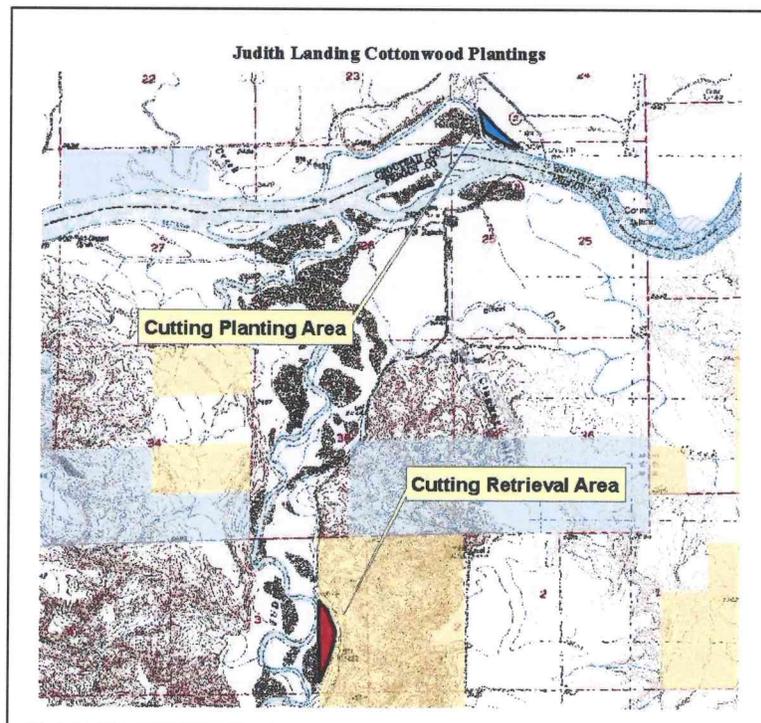
A. Background

Lease/Serial/Case File No.:

Description of Proposed Action:

The BLM would harvest up to 50 plains cottonwood (*Populus Deltoides*) cuttings from the Judith River floodplain in T22N R16E section 3. (See the map below.) The cuttings would be roughly one to two inches diameter breast height and eight to 12 feet in length, and they would be harvested with hand tools such as loppers, shears, and/or hand saws. It would be necessary to harvest the cuttings while the trees are dormant, so collection prior to mid-April would be required.

The cuttings would be transplanted to Judith Landing campground. (See the map below.) A bobcat with an auger attachment would be used to drill up to 50 holes roughly eight inches in diameter and seven feet in depth. The cottonwood cutting and a seven foot length of perforated PVC pipe would be installed in the hole. Then, the hole would be backfilled with mud slurry. Last, protective fencing consisting of metal t-posts and chicken wire would be installed around each tree.



B. Land Use Plan Conformance (*select all that apply*)

- Headwaters RMP (approved in July 1984)
- West HiLine RMP (approved in September 1988 and on January 29, 1992 for the Upper Missouri National Wild and Scenic River)
- Judith-Valley-Phillips RMP (approved on September 9, 1994)
- Standards for Rangeland Health and Guidelines for Livestock Grazing Management Final EIS for Montana and North and South Dakota (approved on August 7, 1997)
- Off-Highway Vehicle EIS and Proposed Plan Amendment for Montana, North Dakota and South Dakota (approved on June 18, 2003)
- Fire/Fuels Management EA/Plan Amendment for Montana and the Dakotas (approved on September 26, 2003)
- Upper Missouri River Breaks National Monument Approved Resource Management Plan (approved on December 4, 2008)
- Other (*specify name/date approved*)

Conformance:

The proposed action is in conformance with the land use plan(s) selected above, which states as follows: (*If more than one plan applies, include the page no. and language from all applicable plans*):

<i>Page No.</i>	<i>Language</i>
45	“In areas that have potential to support riparian vegetation, BLM may restore or establish native riparian vegetation.”

C. Compliance with NEPA:

The proposed action is categorically excluded from further documentation under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) in accordance with (select one):

43 CFR 46.210, *or*

516 DM 11.9

Appropriate CX Number and Text, or Paraphrase of the Text:

C. Forestry

1. Land cultivation and silvicultural activities (excluding herbicide application) in forest tree nurseries, seed orchards, and progeny test sites.
7. Harvesting live trees not to exceed 70 acres, requiring no more than 0.5 mile of temporary road construction.

The proposed action has been reviewed and none of the extraordinary circumstances described in 43 CFR 46.215 apply. This categorical exclusion is appropriate in this situation because there are no extraordinary circumstances potentially having significant effects on the environment.

Explanation of Why There is no Potential for Significant Impacts:

Field reconnaissance of the project area revealed that nearly all of the proposed cuttings would be from beaver-cut resprouts. These trees have already proven their ability to resprout from being cut, and there is no obvious reason that they would not again. Furthermore, the Judith River floodplain has a tremendous amount of cottonwood forest of all age classes. Removal of 50 cuttings would not be a measurable effect.

The cottonwood forest at Judith Landing campground is nearing the end of their life expectancy. Even under the best of natural circumstances, the cottonwood forest would not be expected to regenerate at this location. The proposed project is merely replacing cottonwood forest where one currently exists.

The Judith Landing area is culturally important. No ground disturbance would occur at the cutting retrieval site. At Judith Landing campground, the surface is already disturbed at the planting site. However, the possibility exists that during auger use, subsurface objects may be revealed. An archeologist would be on site when the holes are augured.

D: Signature

I considered this review and determined that the proposed action is in conformance with the land use plan and is categorically excluded from further environmental analysis. It is my decision to approve the proposed action.

Pertinent design features, stipulations or mitigation (if applicable):

Authorizing Official: Michael Kania Date: 3/20/2013
(Signature)

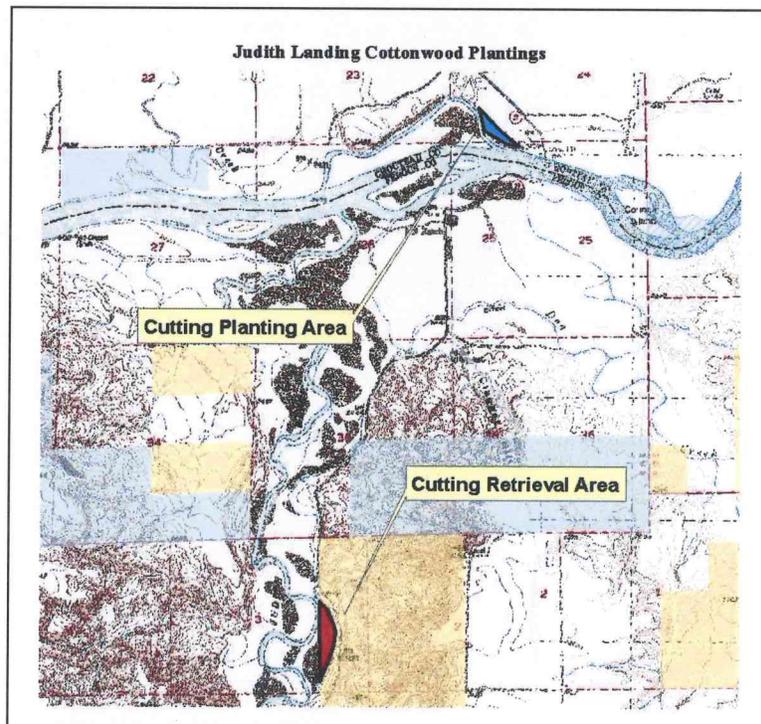
Name: Michael Kania
Title: Upper Missouri River Breaks National Monument Manager

Decision
DOI-BLM-MT-L070-2013-0005-CX

Decision and Rationale on Action

The BLM would harvest up to 50 plains cottonwood (*Populus Deltoides*) cuttings from the Judith River floodplain in T22N R16E section 3. (See the map below.) The cuttings would be roughly one to two inches diameter breast height and eight to 12 feet in length, and they would be harvested with hand tools such as loppers, shears, and/or hand saws. It would be necessary to harvest the cuttings while the trees are dormant, so collection prior to mid-April would be required.

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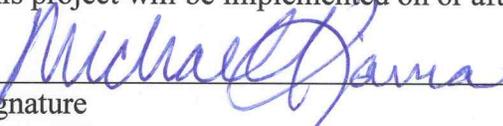
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The Judith Landing area is culturally important. No ground disturbance would occur at the cutting retrieval site. At Judith Landing campground, the surface is already disturbed at the planting site. However, the possibility exists that during auger use, subsurface objects may be revealed. An archeologist would be on site when the holes are augured.

In addition, I have reviewed the plan conformance statement and have determined that the proposed action is in conformance with the approved land use plan and that no further environmental analysis is required under the National Environmental Policy Act (as documented in the attached CX, NEPA Compliance [Section C]).

Implementation Date

This project will be implemented on or after March 29, 2013



Signature



Date

Michael Kania

Upper Missouri River Breaks National Monument (UMRBNM) Manager

Administrative Review or Appeal Opportunities

The decision is not subject to administrative appeal.

Contact Person

For additional information concerning this decision, contact Michael Kania, UMRBNM , 920 NE Main, Lewistown, Montana 59457 or 406-538-1900.