

Appendix C

Biological Evaluations for Special Status Plants and Special Status Fish and Wildlife Species

**Biological Evaluation for
Special Status Plants on BLM Lands in the Medicine Lodge Watershed
(Medicine Lodge Watershed Environmental Assessment)
DOI-BLM-MT-B050-2011-009-EA**

Prepared by
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May 2012

None of the plants currently listed as endangered or threatened under the Endangered Species Act inhabit BLM lands in the Dillon Field Office. However, Ute ladies' tresses, which is listed as threatened in Montana, is known to occur on private and state lands in Beaverhead, Madison, Gallatin, and Jefferson counties. Fifty-three sensitive plant species inhabit BLM-administered lands within the Dillon Field Office. Nine of those species are known to occur within the Cumulative Impact Area of the Medicine Lodge Watershed (MLW) Environmental Assessment. The potential effects that the various alternatives may have on these species are summarized in the following table. A detailed discussion of predicted effects and potential impacts to special status plant species and their habitat is provided in the attached "Supplemental Information on Special Status Plants on BLM Lands in the Medicine Lodge Watershed."

Definitions of Abbreviations used in the Table.

NI - No Impact

BI - Beneficial impact to populations or habitat

MIH - May impact individuals or habitat, but will not likely contribute to a trend towards federal listing or cause a loss of viability to the population or species.

* **WIFV** - Will impact individuals or habitat with a consequence that the action may contribute to a trend toward federal listing or cause a loss of viability to the population or species.

* Consultation with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service will be initiated if an alternative is selected that may contribute to a loss of viability to a population of species reviewed in this evaluation.

Biological Evaluation Summary for Special Status Plants for the Medicine Lodge Watershed Environmental Assessment (DOI-BLM-MT-B050-2011-009-EA)

Common Name <i>Genus species</i>	Does the species occur on Public Lands within the Medicine Lodge Watershed?	Is the species or its habitat found in the Cumulative Impact Area?	Are irreversible or irretrievable resources involved?	What effect could this proposal have? *		
				Alt. A	Alt. B	Alt. C
Ute ladies' tresses <i>Spiranthes diluvialis</i>	NO	NO	--	--	--	--
Cusick's horse-mint <i>Agastache cusickii</i>	NO	NO	--	--	--	--
Western joeype-weed <i>Ageratina occidentalis</i>	YES	YES	NO	NI		
Tapertip onion <i>Allium acuminatum</i>	NO	NO	--			
Sitka columbine <i>Aquilegia formosa</i>	NO	NO	--			
Sapphire rockcress <i>Arabis fecunda</i>	NO	NO	--	--	--	--
Painted milkvetch <i>Astragalus ceramicus var. apus</i>	NO	NO	--	--	--	--
Lesser rushy milkvetch <i>Astragalus convallarius var. convallarius = A. junciformis</i>	NO	NO	--	--	--	--
Bitterroot milkvetch <i>Astragalus scaphoides</i>	YES	YES	NO	MIIH	BI	BI
Railhead milkvetch <i>Astragalus terminalis</i>	NO	NO	--	--	--	--
Large-leafed balsamroot <i>Balsamorhiza macrophylla</i>	NO	NO	--	--	--	--
Red sage <i>Bassia americana</i>	NO	YES	NO	NI		
Mojave brickellbush <i>Brickellia oblongifolia</i>	NO	NO	--	--	--	--
Idaho sedge <i>Carex idaho</i>	YES	YES	NO	MIIH	BI	BI
Lesser Indian paintbrush <i>Castilleja minor ssp. minor</i>	NO	NO	--	--	--	--
Fendler cat's-eye <i>Cryptantha fendleri</i>	NO	NO	--	--	--	--
Beavertip draba <i>Draba globosa</i>	NO	NO	--	--	--	--
Wind River draba <i>Draba ventosa</i>	NO	NO	--	--	--	--
Beaked spikerush <i>Eleocharis rostellata</i>	NO	NO	--	--	--	--
Long-sheath waterweed <i>Elodea bifoliata</i>	NO	NO	--	--	--	--
Idaho fleabane <i>Erigeron asperugineus</i>	NO	NO	--	--	--	--
Linearleaf fleabane <i>Erigeron linearis</i>	NO	NO	--	--	--	--

Common Name <i>Genus species</i>	Does the species occur on Public Lands within the Medicine Lodge Watershed?	Is the species or its habitat found in the Cumulative Impact Area?	Are irreversible or irretrievable resources involved?	What effect could this proposal have? *		
				Alt. A	Alt. B	Alt. C
Buff fleabane <i>Erigeron parryi</i>	NO	NO	--	--	--	--
Mat buckwheat <i>Eriogonum caespitosum</i>	NO	NO	--	--	--	--
Railroad Canyon wild buckwheat <i>Eriogonum soliceps</i>	NO	NO	--	--	--	--
Hiker's gentian <i>Gentianopsis simplex</i>	NO	NO	--	--	--	--
Many-flowered viguiera <i>Helioneris multiflora</i> var. <i>multiflora</i>	NO	NO	--	--	--	--
Prostrate hutchensia <i>Hornungia procumbens</i>	NO	NO	--	--	--	--
Ballhead ipomopsis <i>Ipomopsis congesta</i> ssp. <i>crebrifolia</i>	NO	NO	--	--	--	--
Simple bog sedge <i>Kobresia simpliciuscula</i>	NO	NO	--	--	--	--
Beautiful bladderpod <i>Lesquerella pulchella</i>	NO	NO	--	--	--	--
Sand wildrye <i>Leymus flavescens</i>	NO	NO	--	--	--	--
Taper-tip desert-parsley <i>Lomatium attenuatum</i>	YES	YES	NO	NI		
Marsh felwort <i>Lomatogonium rotatum</i>	NO	NO	--	--	--	--
Dwarf purple monkeyflower <i>Mimulus nanus</i>	NO	NO	--	--	--	--
Primrose monkeyflower <i>Mimulus primuloides</i>	NO	NO	--	--	--	--
Low northern – rockcress <i>Neotorularia humilis</i>	NO	NO	--	--	--	--
Small-flowered pennycress <i>Noccaea parviflora</i>	YES	YES	NO	BI	BI	BI
Meadow lousewort <i>Pedicularis crenulata</i>	NO	NO	--	--	--	--
Lemhi beardtongue <i>Penstemon lemhiensis</i>	YES	YES	NO	MIIH	BI	BI
Whipple's beardtongue <i>Penstemon whippleanus</i>	NO	NO	--	--	--	--
Hoary phacelia <i>Phacelia incana</i>	YES	YES	NO	BI	BI	BI
Slender-branched popcorn flower <i>Plagiobothrys leptocladus</i>	NO	NO	--	--	--	--
Spiny skeletonweed <i>Pleiocanthus spinosus</i>	NO	NO	--	--	--	--

Common Name <i>Genus species</i>	Does the species occur on Public Lands within the Medicine Lodge Watershed?	Is the species or its habitat found in the Cumulative Impact Area?	Are irreversible or irretrievable resources involved?	What effect could this proposal have? *		
				Alt. A	Alt. B	Alt. C
Alkali primrose <i>Primula alcalina</i>	NO	NO	--	--	--	--
Mealy primrose <i>Primula incana</i>	NO	NO	--	--	--	--
James stitchwort <i>Pseudostellaria jamesiana</i>	NO	NO	--	--	--	--
Lemmon's alkaligrass <i>Puccinellia lemmonii</i>	NO	NO	--	--	--	--
White-stemmed globe-mallow <i>Sphaeralcea munroana</i>	NO	NO	--	--	--	--
Silver chicken sage <i>Sphaeromeria argentea</i>	NO	NO	--	--	--	--
Rocky Mountain dandelion <i>Taraxacum eriophorum</i>	NO	NO	--	--	--	--
Alpine meadowrue <i>Thalictrum alpinum</i>	NO	YES	--	NI		
Slender thelypody <i>Thelypodium sagittatum</i>	NO	NO	--	--	--	--
Showy townsendia <i>Townsendia florifera</i>	NO	NO	--	--	--	--

* The livestock management and project proposals are not consistent across alternatives. For example, the season of use for one allotment under Alternative B may not be the same as the season of use for another allotment under the same alternative. For the purposes of this biological evaluation if a proposed grazing treatment (numbers, duration, time of year, frequency of rest), project or vegetative treatment within a given alternative is likely to adversely affect a sensitive plant or its habitat, then that effect is reflected in the table.

Supplemental Information on Special Status Plants on BLM Lands in the Medicine Lodge Watershed

The Dillon Resource Management Plan provides guidance that requires project sites in high probability habitats to be surveyed for sensitive plants prior to any ground disturbing activities. This reduces the possibility that sensitive plant species would be accidentally or inadvertently impacted by BLM activities.

Western joeye-weed and taper-tip desert-parsley won't be negatively impacted under any of the proposed alternatives. These populations are being maintained under currently authorized livestock management.

Bitterroot milkvetch, Idaho sedge, and Lemhi beardtongue are palatable to both livestock and wildlife, therefore; action alternatives that include deferred-grazing and/or rest rotation (Hansen Creek, Hansen East Side, Medicine Lodge, Pass Creek, Ellis Peak, Little Divide, and Porcupine) or no grazing (Pass Creek) may allow for potential population expansion of these three sensitive plant species where suitable habitat exists, by reducing the opportunity for livestock to graze these plants. Continuing the currently authorized livestock management on the Hansen East Side and Pass Creek Allotments may impact the known population(s) of these plant species.

The prescribed fires proposed under Alternatives B and C would improve habitat conditions for Lemhi beardtongue by removing accumulated litter and reducing competition with conifers and sagebrush. The deferred and/or rest-rotation grazing proposed under these two action alternatives would allow for seed production and seedling establishment on an annual basis. The local Lemhi beardtongue population would be expected to increase in both size and number under both Alternatives B and C.

Hoary phacelia and small-flowered pennycress flourish with moderate livestock grazing. Hoary phacelia prefers moderate disturbance of any kind; therefore moderate grazing should have a positive effect on its population growth. Small-flowered pennycress is a very small plant; livestock typically favor broad leaved forbs at the expense of graminoids like small-flowered pennycress, which would benefit from the removal of dominant grass canopy. Beneficial impacts to the known populations and the habitat of both species are anticipated under all alternatives, except the no grazing alternative.

Alpine meadowrue and red sage are known only on private lands within the Medicine Lodge Watershed. No impacts to these populations are anticipated under any of the action alternatives.

During the summer of 2010, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service announced a 90-day finding on a petition to list whitebark pine (*Pinus albicaulis*) as endangered or threatened and to designate critical habitat. In July of 2011, the finding was released; whitebark was given a warranted but precluded listing with a priority of 2 and is currently on the candidate species list (For a complete description of whitebark pine in the MLW see Forest and Woodland Health section 3.2.3).

Cumulative Considerations:

High probability habitats will be surveyed for sensitive plants prior to any ground disturbing activities on federal land but botanical surveys aren't required on private and state lands even on cooperative projects (e.g. a pipeline that crosses multiple ownerships). It's possible that sensitive plant species could be accidentally or inadvertently impacted by construction or placement of range improvement projects on non-federal lands.

The invasion of introduced species and noxious weeds near and into special plant species habitat across all ownerships poses a direct threat to these plants through competition, habitat degradation and the potential impact of herbicides. The use of insecticides on private lands within the MLW to control grasshoppers or other insects may affect pollinators that visit sensitive plant species on BLM lands.

Signature

Date

Printed Name and Title: Kelly Urresti , Rangeland Management Specialist/TES Plants

References:

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Lesica, P. 1998. Conservation status of *Carex parryana ssp. idahoa* in Montana. Unpublished report to the Beaverhead National Forest. Montana Natural Heritage Program. Helena, MT.

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Utah State University Extension. 2009. Range Plants of Utah. (Available online @ <http://extension.usu.edu/rangeplants/>)

BLM DILLON FIELD OFFICE
Biological Evaluation for Special Status Fish and Wildlife Species
 Form Revised May 2009 - Updated Oct 2011

Project: Medicine Lodge Watershed Assessment

C-7

Step 1a.	Step 1b.	Step 1c.	Step 2	Step 3.	Step 4.	Step 5.	Step 5.	Step 5.
List of all Special Status Species that are known or suspected to occur on the DFO.	Current Management Status of the Species.	Does the species occur on this portion of the Field Office?	Is the species or its habitat found in the surrounding area?	Could this proposal have any effect?	Are Irreversible or Irretrievable Resources involved?	Alt A level of effect	Alt B level of effect	Alt C level of effect
Canada Lynx (<i>Lynx canadensis</i>)	Threatened	N	N					
Grizzly Bear (<i>Ursus arctos horribilus</i>)	Threatened	N	Y	Y	N	NI	BE	BE
Greater Sage Grouse (<i>Centrocercus urophasianus</i>)	Canidate	Y	Y	Y	N	NLJ	NLJ	NLJ
Mammals								
Fisher (<i>Martes pennanti</i>)	Sensitive	N/A	N/A					
Fringed myotis (<i>Myotis thysanodes</i>)	Sensitive	N/A	Y	N				
Gray Wolf (<i>Canis lupus</i>)	Sensitive	Y	Y	N				
Great Basin pocket mouse (<i>Perognathus parvus</i>)	Sensitive	N/A	Y	N				
Long-eared Myotis (<i>Myotis evotis</i>)	Sensitive	Y	Y	N				
Long-legged Myotis (<i>Myotis volans</i>)	Sensitive	Y	Y	N				
North American Wolverine (<i>Gulo gulo luscus</i>)	Sensitive	Y	Y	N				
Pygmy Rabbit (<i>Brachylagus idahoensis</i>)	Sensitive	Y	Y	Y	N	NI	MIH	MIH
Townsend's Big-eared Bat (<i>Plecotus townsendii</i>)	Sensitive	N/A	Y	N				

(cont.) List of all Special Status Species that are known or suspected to occur on the DFO.	Current Management Status of the Species.	Does the species occur on this portion of the Field Office?	Is the species or its habitat found in the surrounding area?	Could this proposal have any effect?	Are Irreversible or Irretrievable Resources involved?	Alt A level of effect	Alt B level of effect	Alt C level of effect
Birds								
Bald Eagle (<i>Haliaeetus leucocephalus</i>)	Sensitive	Y	Y	N				
Black Tern (<i>Chlidonias niger</i>)	Sensitive	N/A	N/A					
Black-backed Woodpecker (<i>Picoides arcticus</i>)	Sensitive	N/A	Y	N				
Black-crowned Night Heron (<i>Nycticorax nycticorax</i>)	Sensitive	N/A	N/A					
Bobolink (<i>Dolichonyx orysivorus</i>)	Sensitive	N/A	Y	N				
Brewer's sparrow (<i>Spizella breweri</i>)	Sensitive	Y	Y	Y	N	NI	MIH	MIH
Burrowing Owl (<i>Athene cunicularia</i>)	Sensitive	N	Y	N				
Common Loon (<i>Gavia immer</i>)	Sensitive	N/A	N/A					
Ferruginous Hawk (<i>Buteo regalis</i>)	Sensitive	Y	Y	N				
Flammulated Owl (<i>Otus flammeolus</i>)	Sensitive	N/A	Y	N				
Franklin's Gull (<i>Larus pipixcan</i>)	Sensitive	N/A	N/A					
Golden Eagle (<i>Aquila chrysaetos</i>)	Sensitive	Y	Y	N				
Great Gray Owl (<i>Strix nebulosa</i>)	Sensitive	Y	Y	Y	N	NI	MIH	MIH
Harlequin Duck (<i>Histrionicus histrionicus</i>)	Sensitive	N/A	N/A					
Loggerhead Shrike (<i>Lanius ludovicianus</i>)	Sensitive	Y	Y	Y	N	NI	MIH	MIH

(cont.) List of all Special Status Species that are known or suspected to occur on the DFO.	Current Management Status of the Species.	Does the species occur on this portion of the Field Office?	Is the species or its habitat found in the surrounding area?	Could this proposal have any effect?	Are Irreversible or Irrecoverable Resources involved?	Alt A level of effect	Alt B level of effect	Alt C level of effect
Long-billed Curlew (<i>Numenius americanus</i>)	Sensitive	Y	Y	N				
Marbled Godwit (<i>Limosa fedoa</i>)	Sensitive	N/A	N/A					
McCown's longspur (<i>Calcarius mccownii</i>)	Sensitive	Y	Y	N				
Northern Goshawk (<i>Accipiter gentilis</i>)	Sensitive	Y	Y	Y	N	NI	MIIH	MIIH
Peregrine Falcon (<i>Falco peregrinus anatum</i>)	Sensitive	Y	Y	N				
Sage Sparrow (<i>Amphispiza belli</i>)	Sensitive	Y	Y	Y	N	NI	MIIH	MIIH
Sage thrasher (<i>Oreoscoptes montanus</i>)	Sensitive	Y	Y	Y	N	NI	MIIH	MIIH
Sedge Wren (<i>Cistothorus platensis</i>)	Sensitive	N/A	N/A					
Swainson's Hawk (<i>Buteo swainsoni</i>)	Sensitive	Y	Y	N				
Three-toed Woodpecker (<i>Picoides tridactylus</i>)	Sensitive	Y	Y	Y	N	NI	MIIH	MIIH
Trumpeter Swan (<i>Cygnus buccinator</i>)	Sensitive	N/A	N/A					
White-faced Ibis (<i>Plegadis chihi</i>)	Sensitive	N/A	N/A					
Amphibian/reptiles								
Boreal/Western toad (<i>Bufo boreas</i>)	Sensitive	N	Y	N				
Plains Spadefoot (<i>Spea bombifrons</i>)	Sensitive	N	N					
Northern leopard frog (<i>Rana pipiens</i>)	Sensitive	N	N					
Fish								
Westslope cutthroat trout (<i>Onchorhynchus clarkii</i>)	Sensitive	Y	Y	Y	N	NI	BI	No Alt. C

<i>lewisii</i>								
Fluvial arctic grayling (<i>Thymallus arcticus</i>)	Sensitive	N	N					

Step 6. Are there any specific recommendations to avoid significant effects (if any)? These are mitigation measures needed to avoid determinations of: LAA, LJ, WIFV. If so, the narrative describing these recommendations would be discussed in the NEPA document.

Step 7. Documentation: This short form is intended to follow a seven-step process to provide basic biological evaluations. Judgments must not be arbitrary but should be reasoned. This form provides a “road map” of that reasoning and assumes the judgments are drawn from numerous sources. Any species-specific impacts should be discussed in the NEPA document or below under the Narrative of Potential Impacts.

The signature below certifies that:

1. The wildlife biologist has reviewed the proposed action and its alternatives, but may or may not have provided input to alternative design, depending on the issues.
2. The wildlife biologist has an understanding of the specific conditions found in the affected area. Column 1a lists all possible Special Status Species in the Dillon Field Office. Column 1b identifies the species’ current management status. Column 1c indicates whether there are no records (N/A), or whether the species is considered a Transient (T) or Resident (R) {for our purposes, resident includes migratory species that fulfill a portion of their life history here}. Step 2 is satisfied by field visits or knowledge of local conditions from previous visits resulting in enough information to determine if the area is potential habitat for species listed in Step 1. Extensive surveys are not necessary if the conservative approach is taken that: “suitable habitat” means the potential for occupancy.
3. The wildlife biologist has an understanding of the species habitat needs and other attributes important to the determination. This can be a combination of literature review, professional experience, and consultation with others.
4. The wildlife biologist has assimilated the above information in making the “determinations” (i.e. final judgments about the scientific significance of the effects).

Printed Name and Title: Katie Iverson, Wildlife Biologist Signed _____ Date _____

Paul Hutchinson, Fisheries Biologist Signed _____ Date _____

Definitions of Abbreviations for the Short Form – Page 5 of 5

N/A – “Not Applicable.” Indicates this species does not occur in the project area or that the project would have no bearing on its potential habitat. These species were removed from detailed analysis after field review of existing and potential habitats and consideration of distribution records.

FEDERALLY LISTED SPECIES

NE - No Effect

***LAA** - May Effect - Likely to Adversely Affect (formal consultation required)

NLAA - May Effect, Not Likely to Adversely Affect (informal consultation - concurrence with determination - required)

BE - Beneficial Effect (informal consultation - concurrence with determination - required)

SPECIES PROPOSED FOR LISTING

NE - No Effect

NLJ - Not likely to Jeopardize the continued existence of the species or result in the destruction or adverse modification of proposed critical habitat

***LJ** - Likely to Jeopardize the continued existence of the species or result in the destruction or adverse modification of proposed critical habitat

SENSITIVE SPECIES

NI - No Impact

MIH - May Impact Individuals or Habitat, but will not likely contribute to a trend towards federal listing or cause a loss of viability to the population or species.

***WIFV** - Will Impact Individuals or habitat with a consequence that the action may contribute to the need for federal listing or cause a loss of viability to the population or species.

BI - Beneficial Impact

* triggers formal consultation process

revised 10/11

NARRATIVE OF POTENTIAL IMPACTS

FEDERALLY LISTED SPECIES:

Grizzly Bear:

Grizzly bear are not known to inhabit the MLW, however potential future habitat exists within the MLW. The MLW is outside of the Yellowstone grizzly bear distinct population segment and suitable grizzly bear habitat areas. Whitebark pine seeds are an important component of grizzly bear diets. Actions for whitebark pine trees under alternatives B and C include protecting individual trees, cutting competing conifers around healthy whitebark pine trees, and contributing cones to the genetic breeding program would promote habitat and the food source for grizzly bear. These treatments would have a beneficial effect for potential future grizzly bear habitat within the MLW.

CANDIDATE SPECIES:

Greater Sage Grouse:

If any of the prescribed burns occurred as proposed under alternatives B and C, it may effect, not likely to adversely affect (NLAA) the population or species. The burn would cause a short-term loss of sagebrush cover in the treated area, but sagebrush cover is available adjacent to the treated area and in the long-term sagebrush habitat would be enhanced once conifer encroachment is eliminated. Sage grouse typically nest within two miles of a lek. In areas where burn unit boundaries are within two miles of a lek, nesting and hiding cover would be reduced and sage grouse would avoid nesting in burned areas. If sage grouse nesting habitat is an issue, burn unit boundaries can be altered to increase distance from the lek. However, nesting habitat is not a limiting factor within two miles of the lek or beyond. Sage grouse habitat would be restored in the long-term, as opposed to conversion to forest habitat. After the burn, sage grouse brood-rearing habitat would be enhanced with the increase in forbs in the treated area.

Suitable habitat conditions exist for sagebrush obligate species within sagebrush habitat on MLW allotments. BLM would maintain existing sagebrush habitat so that 75% or more of big sagebrush communities provide vegetative composition and structure for sagebrush obligate species. BLM will maintain nesting/early brood rearing canopy cover of 15–25% sagebrush and an average of 6 to 7 inches herbaceous understory within site potential, maintain brood rearing canopy cover of 15–25% sagebrush near riparian areas or wet meadows while maintaining available forbs in the wet meadows, and maintain or increase composition of highly nutritious forbs (e.g., composites and legumes) in nesting/early brood rearing habitat. Residual grass cover following grazing is important for sage grouse nesting habitat. Light to moderate cattle grazing or managed grazing systems can improve quantity and quality of summer forage (i.e. forbs) for sage grouse (MFWP 2005). Implementing an annual utilization guideline of 50% on cool season bunchgrasses to maintain plant health and vigor would provide residual herbaceous nesting cover.

BLM SENSITIVE SPECIES:

Pygmy Rabbit:

If any of the prescribed burns occurred as proposed under alternatives B and C, they may impact individuals or habitat (MIIH), but will not likely contribute to a trend towards federal listing or cause a loss of viability to the population or species. If burn unit boundaries encompass active pygmy rabbit burrow systems, this area will be removed from the burn unit. The burn would cause a short-term loss of sagebrush cover in the treated area, but in the long-term sagebrush habitat would be enhanced once conifer encroachment is eliminated. Sagebrush habitat would be restored in the long-term, as opposed to conversion to forest habitat. Suitable habitat conditions exist for sagebrush obligate species within sagebrush habitat on MLW allotments. Sagebrush habitat is suitable for pygmy rabbits throughout MLW, with conifer expansion threatening conversion to forest habitat in some areas.

Loggerhead Shrike, Sage Thrasher, Brewer's Sparrow, and Sage Sparrow:

Site specific sagebrush losses from prescribed burns proposed under alternatives B and C could displace loggerhead shrike, sage thrasher, sage sparrow, and Brewer's sparrow but adjacent suitable habitat is available. While sagebrush cover would be lost in the treatment area in the short-term, sagebrush habitat would be restored to the area with the elimination of conifer expansion. The treated area would be converted to early seral sagebrush habitat and progress to mid-late seral in about 20 years. This would provide for seral and structural diversity within sagebrush steppe habitat on a landscape level. This project MIIH, however in the long-term the prevention of sagebrush habitat from becoming conifer habitat would benefit these species'.

Great Gray Owl and Northern Goshawk:

Northern goshawks and great gray owls occupy forest habitat. Great gray owls nest on broken topped dead trees or take over the existing nest of another species, including Northern goshawk nests. Goshawks nest in larger mature trees. Commercial and non-commercial timber harvest proposed under alternatives B and C MIIH, with the loss of nesting habitat. However, opening these

canopies could enhance foraging opportunities. Prior to any timber treatments, surveys for goshawks and great gray owls would identify nesting stands. If either of these species are nesting in the area, yearly monitoring would determine occupancy before harvest activities and timing stipulations would be applied to avoid disturbance during the nesting season.

Three-toed Woodpecker:

Under alternatives B and C, if the prescribed burns occurred, it would have a beneficial impact (BI) for this woodpecker species. The increase in wood-boring beetles in burned areas attracts three-toed woodpeckers. If the salvage harvest of dead/dying timber in alternatives B and C occur, it MIH with a loss in foraging habitat for wood boring beetle larvae, but will not likely contribute to a trend towards federal listing or cause a loss of viability to the population or species, especially since there is adequate beetle-impacted timber acreage throughout the watershed.

Westslope Cutthroat Trout

There are two streams that support WCT populations within the MLW. Habitat on both streams was found to be in proper functioning condition as a result of current management. Proposed changes to current management are not expected to have any impact on the current condition of WCT habitat on these two streams. Continuation of nonnative removal in Craver Creek will allow for a fair to moderate increase in WCT population size. Ensuring that the fish barrier on Craver is a complete passage barrier will improve the effectiveness of the nonnative removal. Without efforts to expand current populations into additional habitat and re-introduction efforts back into historic habitat, the long term persistence of WCT in the watershed is unlikely.

References:

Montana Fish, Wildlife, & Parks (MFWP). 2005. Management Plan and Conservation Strategies for Sage Grouse in Montana; Helena, MT. 130 pp.

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