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Appendix B

Rochester Basin and North Tobacco Root Watershed Biological Evaluations

BLM DILLON FIELD OFFICE
Biological Evaluation for Special Status Fish and Wildlife Species.
Species List Updated May 2009

Project: Rochester Basin and North Tobacco Roots Watershed E.A. DOI-BLM-MT-050-2009-0003-EA

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?	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
Mammals								
Canada Lynx (<i>Lynx canadensis</i>)	Threatened	NO	NO					
Fluvial arctic grayling (<i>Thymallus arcticus</i>)	Candidate	NO	NO					
Fisher (<i>Martes pennanti</i>)	Sensitive	NO	NO					
Fringed myotis (<i>Myotis thysanodes</i>)	Sensitive	YES	YES	NO				
Gray Wolf (<i>Canis lupus</i>)	Sensitive	YES	YES	NO				
Great Basin pocket mouse (<i>Perognathus parvus</i>)	Sensitive	NO	NO					
Grizzly Bear (<i>Ursus arctos horribilus</i>)	Sensitive	NO	YES	NO				
Long-eared Myotis (<i>Myotis evotis</i>)	Sensitive	YES	YES	NO				
Long-legged Myotis (<i>Myotis volans</i>)	Sensitive	YES	YES	NO				
North American Wolverine (<i>Gulo gulo luscus</i>)	Sensitive	NO	YES	NO				
Pygmy Rabbit (<i>Brachylagus idahoensis</i>)	Sensitive	NO	NO					
Townsend's Big-eared Bat (<i>Plecotus townsendii</i>)	Sensitive	YES	YES	NO				

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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?	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	YES	YES	NO				
Black Tern (<i>Chlidonias niger</i>)	Sensitive	NO	YES	NO				
Black-backed Woodpecker (<i>Picoides arcticus</i>)	Sensitive	NO	NO					
Black-crowned Night Heron (<i>Nycticorax nycticorax</i>)	Sensitive	NO	NO					
Bobolink (<i>Dolichonyx orysivorus</i>)	Sensitive	YES	YES	NO				
Brewer's sparrow (<i>Spizella breweri</i>)	Sensitive	YES	YES	NO				
Burrowing Owl (<i>Athene cunicularia</i>)	Sensitive	NO	NO					
Common Loon (<i>Gavia immer</i>)	Sensitive	NO	NO					
Ferruginous Hawk (<i>Buteo regalis</i>)	Sensitive	YES	YES	NO				
Flammulated Owl (<i>Otus flammeolus</i>)	Sensitive	YES	YES	NO				
Franklin's Gull (<i>Larus pipixcan</i>)	Sensitive	NO	NO					
Golden Eagle (<i>Aquila chrysaetos</i>)	Sensitive	YES	YES	NO				
Great Gray Owl (<i>Strix nebulosa</i>)	Sensitive	YES	YES	NO				
Greater Sage Grouse (<i>Centrocercus urophasianus</i>)	Sensitive	YES	YES	YES	NO	NI	BI	BI
Harlequin Duck (<i>Histrionicus histrionicus</i>)	Sensitive	NO	NO					
Loggerhead Shrike (<i>Lanius ludovicianus</i>)	Sensitive	YES	YES	NO				

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?	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
Long-billed Curlew (<i>Numenius americanus</i>)	Sensitive	YES	YES	NO				
Marbled Godwit (<i>Limosa fedoa</i>)	Sensitive	NO	NO					
McCown's longspur (<i>Calcarius mccownii</i>)	Sensitive	YES	YES	NO				
Northern Goshawk (<i>Accipiter gentilis</i>)	Sensitive	NO	YES	NO				
Peregrine Falcon (<i>Falco peregrinus anatum</i>)	Sensitive	NO	YES	NO				
Sage Sparrow (<i>Amphispiza belli</i>)	Sensitive	YES	YES	NO				
Sage thrasher (<i>Oreoscoptes montanus</i>)	Sensitive	YES	YES	NO				
Sedge Wren (<i>Cistothorus platensis</i>)	Sensitive	NO	NO					
Swainson's Hawk (<i>Buteo swainsoni</i>)	Sensitive	YES	YES	NO				
Three-toed Woodpecker (<i>Picoides tridactylus</i>)	Sensitive	NO	NO					
Trumpeter Swan (<i>Cygnus buccinator</i>)	Sensitive	NO	NO					
White-faced Ibis (<i>Plegadis chihi</i>)	Sensitive	NO	NO					
Amphibian/reptiles								
Boreal/Western toad (<i>Bufo boreas</i>)	Sensitive	NO	NO					
Plains Spadefoot (<i>Spea bombifrons</i>)	Sensitive	NO	NO					
Northern leopard frog (<i>Rana pipiens</i>)	Sensitive	YES	YES	NO				
Fish								
Westslope cutthroat trout (<i>Onchorhynchus clarkii lewisi</i>)	Sensitive	YES	YES	NO	NO	NI	NI	NI

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, state the location of the narrative describing these recommendations:

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.

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 (NO) or whether the species is a resident or migratory species that fulfills a portion of their life history here (YES). Step 2 is satisfied by field visits or enough knowledge of local conditions from previous visits, resulting in 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: “habitat” means the potential for occupancy within the project boundary or cumulative effects area.
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).

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Signed _____ **Date** _____ **Signed** _____ **Date** _____

Printed Name and Title: Kelly Bocking, Wildlife Biologist Paul Hutchinson, Fisheries Biologist

Definitions of Abbreviations for the Short Form

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

NARRATIVE of POTENTIAL IMPACTS

Bald Eagle: Bald Eagle protection is guided by the Bald and Golden Eagle Protection Act (BGEPA). Bald eagle winter surveys and nest monitoring are accomplished on a yearly basis within the Dillon Field Office. There are known bald eagle nest sites in the cumulative effects area of the watershed. None of the proposed activities in the RNTW EA will impact bald eagles its prey base or its habitat.

Gray Wolf:

All grazing permits in the RNTW will be modified to state that livestock depredations may occur from gray wolves. Since the de-listing of the gray wolf, MT FWP is proposing a hunting season which also has the potential to reduce livestock depredation in the future. Actions proposed under any alternatives would not result in the destruction or adverse modification of existing habitat or prey base.

Greater sage grouse:

Improved riparian condition and increased availability of succulent forage with improved riparian habitats would enhance brood-rearing habitat for sage grouse. Improving sagebrush steppe habitat where it occurs within the watershed would benefit nesting and winter sage grouse habitat. No core habitat has been defined for sage grouse within the RNTW, however, actions proposed under alternative B or C to improve the riparian habitat and overall sagebrush grasslands in the watershed would have a beneficial impact (BI) to sage grouse.

West Slope cutthroat trout (WCT):

Current management has achieved suitable habitat conditions to maintain the population of WCT in Mill and Wickum Creeks. Both of these Creeks are currently rated as being in proper functioning condition. There are no proposed changes to current BLM management on WCT streams within the RNTW and as such it is expected that current conditions on these streams.

Biological Evaluation for Special Status Plants
on BLM Lands in the
Rochester Basin & North Tobacco Roots Watershed

(Rochester Basin & North Tobacco Roots Watershed Environmental Assessment)
DOI-BLM-MT-050-2009-0003-EA

Prepared by
Brian Hockett, Rangeland Management Specialist
April - May 2009

None of the plants currently listed as endangered or threatened under the Endangered Species Act are known from BLM lands in the Dillon Field Office. However Ute ladies' tresses which is listed as threatened in Montana is known from private lands within the Rochester Basin & North Tobacco Roots Watershed (RNTW). Only two other special status plants are known from within the RNTW. Another nine species are known to occur within the greater affected area for which cumulative effects will be considered for the Rochester Basin & North Tobacco Roots Watershed Environmental Assessment. The potential effects that the various alternatives may have on these species are summarized in the following table. A brief 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 Rochester Basin & North Tobacco Roots 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 Rochester Basin & North Tobacco Roots Watershed Environmental Assessment (DOI-BLM-MT-050-2009-0003-EA)

Common Name <i>Genus species</i>	Does the species occur within the East Bench Watershed?	Is the species or its habitat found in the greater affected area?	Are irreversible or irretrievable resources involved?	What effect could this proposal have?		
				Alt. A	Alt. B	Alt. C
Ute ladies' tresses <i>Spiranthes dilivialis</i>	YES	YES	NO	NI		
Cusick's horse-mint <i>Agastache cusickii</i>	NO	NO	--	--	--	--
Western snakeroot <i>Ageratina occidentalis</i>	NO	NO	--	--	--	--
Tapertip onion <i>Allium acuminatum</i>	NO	NO	--	--	--	--
Sitka columbine <i>Aquilegia formosa</i>	NO	NO	--	--	--	--
Sapphire rockcress <i>Arabis fecunda</i>	NO	YES	NO	NI		
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>	NO	NO	--	--	--	--
Railhead milkvetch <i>Astragalus terminalis</i>	NO	NO	--	--	--	--
Large-leafed balsamroot <i>Balsamorhiza macrophylla</i>	NO	NO	--	--	--	--
Red sage <i>Bassia americana</i>	NO	NO	--	--	--	--
Mojave brickellbush <i>Brickellia oblongifolia</i>	NO	YES	NO	NI		
Idaho sedge <i>Carex idaho</i>	NO	YES	NO	NI		
Lesser Indian paintbrush <i>Castilleja minor ssp. minor</i>	YES	YES	NO	NI		
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	YES	NO	NI		
Long-sheath waterweed <i>Elodea bifoliata</i>	NO	NO	--	--	--	--
Idaho fleabane <i>Erigeron asperugineus</i>	NO	YES	NO	NI		
Linearleaf fleabane <i>Erigeron linearis</i>	NO	NO	--	--	--	--
Buff fleabane <i>Erigeron parryi</i>	YES	YES	NO	MIH	BI	BI
Mat buckwheat <i>Eriogonum caespitosum</i>	NO	NO	--	--	--	--
Railroad Canyon wild buckwheat	NO	NO	--	--	--	--

Common Name <i>Genus species</i>	Does the species occur within the East Bench Watershed?	Is the species or its habitat found in the greater affected area?	Are irreversible or irretrievable resources involved?	What effect could this proposal have?		
				Alt. A	Alt. B	Alt. C
<i>Eriogonum soliceps</i>						
Hiker's gentian <i>Gentianopsis simplex</i>	NO	NO	--	--	--	--
Many-flowered viguiera <i>Heliomeris 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>	NO	NO	--	--	--	--
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	--	--	--	--
Meadow pennycress <i>Noccaea parviflora</i>	NO	YES	NO	NI		
Meadow lousewort <i>Pedicularis crenulata</i>	NO	NO	--	--	--	--
Lemhi beardtongue <i>Penstemon lemhiensis</i>	NO	YES	NO	NI		
Whipple's beardtongue <i>Penstemon whippleanus</i>	NO	NO	--	--	--	--
Hoary phacelia <i>Phacelia incana</i>	NO	NO	--	--	--	--
Slender-branched popcorn flower <i>Plagiobothrys leptocladus</i>	NO	NO	--	--	--	--
Spiny skeletonweed <i>Pleiacanthus spinosus</i>	NO	NO	--	--	--	--
Alkali primrose <i>Primula alcalina</i>	NO	NO	--	--	--	--
Mealy primrose <i>Primula incana</i>	NO	YES	NO	NI		
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	--	--	--	--

Common Name <i>Genus species</i>	Does the species occur within the East Bench Watershed?	Is the species or its habitat found in the greater affected area?	Are irreversible or irretrievable resources involved?	What effect could this proposal have?		
				Alt. A	Alt. B	Alt. C
Rocky Mountain dandelion <i>Taraxacum eriophorum</i>	NO	YES	NO	NI		
Alpine meadowrue <i>Thalictrum alpinum</i>	NO	NO	--	--	--	--
Slender thelypody <i>Thelypodium sagittatum</i>	NO	NO	--	--	--	--
Showy townsendia <i>Townsendia florifera</i>	NO	NO	--	--	--	--

Supplemental Information on Special Status Plants on BLM Lands in the Rochester Basin & North Tobacco Roots 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.

Redeveloping Iron Rod Spring #1 under alternative B may increase livestock use of habitat supporting Buff fleabane. Buff fleabane is probably not palatable and likely benefits from disturbances such as grazing that reduces the dominant vegetation. However Buff fleabane often occurs on ridge tops and outcrops which are preferred locations for placing livestock supplements. Indiscriminate or random placement of these supplements could cause trampling of individual plants or subpopulations. Requiring livestock supplements to be placed at least 300 feet from Buff fleabane plants as proposed under alternatives B and C would alleviate potential trampling concerns.

Ute ladies' tresses and Lesser Indian paintbrush are known to occur in private wetlands within the RNTW. Mealy primrose is known from wetland habitat just outside the RNTW and most likely occurs in wetlands on private land within the watershed. These three species aren't expected to be impacted by any of the alternatives since the projects, vegetative treatments and changes in grazing management proposed on public lands won't affect or alter the hydrology of their river-bottom habitat.

Idaho sedge, Sapphire rockcress, Meadow pennycress, Rocky Mountain dandelion, Mojave brickellbush, Beaked spikerush, Idaho fleabane and Lemhi beardtongue are known from various habitats and ownerships outside the RNTW boundary. None of these sensitive plant populations are expected to be influenced or impacted by BLM activities in the RNTW. They either occupy habitats not normally frequented by cattle or are located far enough away from the project area that the livestock management, range improvement projects or vegetation treatments proposed on allotments in the RNTW will be of little or no consequence.

Cumulative Considerations:

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 used to treat invasive species. The use of insecticides on private lands within the RNTW to control grasshoppers or other insects may affect pollinators that visit sensitive plant species on BLM lands.

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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Montana Natural Heritage Program (MNHP). 2009. Montana Rare Plant Field Guide. (Available online @ <http://mtnhp.org/SpeciesOfConcern/Default.aspx>)

United States Department of the Interior, Bureau of Land Management, Dillon Field Office. 2009. Montana BLM Sensitive Plant Species Found on or Near BLM Lands Administered by the Dillon Field Office. List prepared for the Dillon Field Office based on Instruction Memorandum No. MT-2009-039