

Appendix C

Biological Evaluations for Special Status Plants

**Biological Evaluation for
Special Status Plants on BLM Lands in the Upper Horse Prairie Watershed
(Upper Horse Prairie Watershed Environmental Assessment)
DOI-BLM-MT-B050-2013-010-EA**

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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. Six of those species are known to occur within the Cumulative Impact Area of the Upper Horse Prairie Watershed (UHPW) 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 Upper Horse Prairie Watershed Environmental Assessment (DOI-BLM-MT-B050-2013-010-EA)

Common Name <i>Genus species</i>	Does the species occur on Public Lands within the Upper Horse Prairie 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 joepywe-weed <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	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	NI	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	NO	--	--	--	--
Mojave brickellbush <i>Brickellia oblongifolia</i>	NO	NO	--	--	--	--
Idaho sedge <i>Carex idaho</i>	NO	NO	--	--	--	--
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 Upper Horse Prairie 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>	YES	YES	NO	NI		
Hiker's gentian <i>Gentianopsis simplex</i>	NO	NO	--	--	--	--
Many-flowered viguiera <i>Heliomeris multiflora var. multiflora</i>	NO	NO	--	--	--	--
Prostrate hutchensia <i>Hornungia procumbens</i>	NO	NO	--	--	--	--
Ballhead ipomopsis <i>Ipomopsis congesta ssp. 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	--	--	--	--
Small-flowered pennycress <i>Noccaea parviflora</i>	NO	NO	--	--	--	--
Meadow lousewort <i>Pedicularis crenulata</i>	NO	NO	--	--	--	--
Lemhi beardtongue <i>Penstemon lemhiensis</i>	YES	YES	NO	MIH	BI	BI
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>	YES	YES	NO	NI		
Spiny skeletonweed <i>Pleiacanthus spinosus</i>	NO	NO	--	--	--	--

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				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>	YES	YES	NO	NI		
White-stemmed globe-mallow <i>Sphaeralcea munroana</i>	NO	NO	--	--	--	--
Chicken sage <i>Sphaeromeria argentea</i>	YES	YES	NO	NI		
Rocky Mountain dandelion <i>Taraxacum eriophorum</i>	NO	NO	--	--	--	--
Alpine meadowrue <i>Thalictrum alpinum</i>	NO	NO	--	--	--	--
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 Upper Horse Prairie 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.

Railroad Canyon wild buckwheat, slender-branched popcorn flower, Lemmon's alkaligrass, and chicken sage won't be negatively impacted under any of the proposed alternatives. These populations are being maintained under currently authorized livestock management.

Bitterroot milkvetch and Lemhi beardtongue are palatable to both livestock and wildlife, therefore; action alternatives that include deferred-grazing and/or rest rotation (Bear Creek, Bloody Dick, Brenner, Coyote Creek, Coyote Flat, Exchange, Leadman, Lemhi Pass, North Black Canyon, Rape Creek, Selway, and South Black Canyon) may allow for potential

population expansion of these two sensitive plant species where suitable habitat exists, by reducing the opportunity for livestock to graze these plants. 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.

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 UHPW 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 UHPW to control grasshoppers or other insects may affect pollinators that visit sensitive plant species on BLM lands.

/s/ Kelly Urresti
Signature

Date

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