



## United States Department of the Interior

### BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT

Ely District Office  
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[http://www.blm.gov/nv/st/en/fo/ely\\_field\\_office.html](http://www.blm.gov/nv/st/en/fo/ely_field_office.html)



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DEPARTMENT OF ADMINISTRATION  
OFFICE OF THE DIRECTOR  
BUDGET AND PLANNING DIVISION

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DEC 18 2009

### NOTICE OF PROPOSED ACTION LANDS IN WILDERNESS

**STATE:** Nevada

**COUNTY:** Lincoln

**DISTRICT OFFICE:** Ely District Office  
HC 33 Box 33500  
702 North Industrial Way.  
Ely, Nevada 89301

**WILDERNESS AREA:** White Rock Range

**PROPOSED ACTION:** Quaking Aspen Fire Rehabilitation

#### Background

The lightning caused Quaking Aspen fire started on September 28, 2009, and was contained on October 19, 2009. The fire burned a total of 274 acres, all within the White Rock Range Wilderness, approximately 50 miles north-east of Pioche, Nevada. All acres that burned were on BLM administered land. Based on the field visit, the dominant vegetation in the burn area pre-fire was Pinyon-Juniper (*Pinus monophylla* and *Juniperus osteosperma*) and mountain big sagebrush (*Artemisia tridentata vaseyana*). Mountain mahogany (*Cercocarpus ledifolius*), white fir (*Abies concolor*), and Aspen (*Populus tremuloides*) were also pre-fire components of the vegetation community. According to the NRCS Ecological Site Descriptions, the dominant species in the lower elevations of the burn area should be mountain big sagebrush (*Artemisia tridentata* ssp. *vaseyana*), antelope bitterbrush (*Purshia tridentata*), low sagebrush (*Artemisia arbuscula*), bluebunch wheatgrass (*Pseudoroegneria spicata*), Thurber Needlegrass (*Achnatherum thurberianum*), Indian Ricegrass (*Achnatherum hymenoides*), slender wheatgrass (*Elymus trachycaulus*), mountain brome (*Bromus marginatus*), and muttongrass (*Poa fendleriana*). Upper elevations of the burn should be dominated by a mixed stand of white fir, Douglas fir, quaking aspen, creeping barberry, mountain snowberry, Greenleaf Manzanita, and a variety of bluegrasses. Cheatgrass (*Bromus tectorum*) was observed in the adjacent unburned areas.

### **Description of the Proposed Action**

The proposed treatment is to aerially seed approximately 119 acres with a mixture of native grass, forb, and shrub seeds in the lower elevation areas of the burn. Aerial seeding would occur ahead of or concurrent with fall or winter moisture.

Given the extent of vegetation mortality on the site and the burn intensity, the burned area is not expected to recover naturally. The purpose of this treatment is to locally stabilize sagebrush habitats by aerial seeding. This treatment adds a needed source of perennial seeds to the burned area.

The burned area will be closed to grazing until monitoring data indicates that vegetation recovery objectives have been met. The closure will be by an agreement. The burn area will not be fenced, so close coordination with the permittees will occur. If livestock continue to utilize the burn area, management will determine appropriate actions for future management of the area.

The proposed treatment is to survey the burned area for newly introduced noxious weed populations, particularly Dalmatian toadflax (*Lineria dalmatica*), in conjunction with aerial seeding treatment effectiveness monitoring. Identified populations would be mapped using Ely District Office weed mapping protocols. These data would be immediately provided to the ES&R Coordinator and Noxious Weed Coordinator so that treatments and plan amendments can be proposed. If single plants are found in the area, and hand removal would successfully eliminate the population, then crews will remove the plants by hand. If multiple plants are establishing, the ES&R Coordinator and the Noxious Weed Coordinator will be notified immediately, and a plan amendment will be written to address the weed establishment.

### **Expected Decision and Implementation**

It is expected that the BLM, Ely District Office will make a decision to allow the aerial seeding on the Quaking Aspen Fire in January, 2010 with the application occurring in January 2010.

### **Public Comment**

The public comment period for this action will begin on December 18, 2009. A Documentation of NEPA Adequacy is being prepared for the proposed action. For more information contact, Karen Prentice 775-289-1828 or at [karen\\_prentice@blm.gov](mailto:karen_prentice@blm.gov)

**All comments are to be sent directly to the District Manager for consideration and use in evaluating and processing the proposed action at the address above within the 30 day comment period ending January 18, 2010.**



Rosemary Thomas  
District Manager  
Ely District Office