



United States Department of the Interior

BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT

Egan Field Office
HC33 Box 33500 (702 N. Industrial Way)
Ely, Nevada 89301-9408
http://www.blm.gov/nv/st/en/fo/ely_field_office.html



In Reply Refer to:
9214 (NVL00440)
1020 (NVL01000)

Dear Interested Party:

The Egan Field Office is beginning the planning stages and public scoping period to conduct a sagebrush restoration and fuels reduction treatment in Jakes Valley, in the Indian Jake Grazing Allotment, in the Jakes Valley Watershed (129), entirely within White Pine County (see attached map). All of the lands within the project area parameter are public lands administered by the BLM. Our records indicate that you are currently an interested party for projects in the proposed action area.

The main goals of the treatment are to restore or improve sagebrush ecological sites, improve habitat and forage availability for livestock and wildlife including sage grouse, elk, and deer, reduce fuel loading, and improve watershed functionality and health. The vegetation restoration project is needed to:

1. Make progress towards achieving the Standards for Rangeland Health as published by the Northeastern Great Basin Area Resource Advisory Council (RAC).
2. Implement the Management Actions for Vegetation Resources and Management Actions for Fire as presented in the Ely District Record of Decision and Resource Management Plan (ROD/RMP – August, 2008).

The Jakes Valley Sagebrush Restoration Project would facilitate the following National goals:

- *A Collaborative Approach for Reducing Wildland Fire Risks to Communities and the Environment, Ten-Year Comprehensive Strategy* was a policy developed in 2001 that placed emphasis on reducing risk to communities and the environment by managing wildland fire, hazardous fuels and ecosystem restoration and rehabilitation on both forests and rangelands. Three of the four goals outlined in this policy include: (1) Improve fire prevention and suppression; (2) Reduce hazardous fuels and (3) Restore fire adapted ecosystems.
- *The Healthy Forests Restoration Act (HFRA) (2003)* was signed into law on December 3, 2003. It is designed to improve the capacity of the Department of Interior and the Department of Agriculture to implement the National Fire Plan and to conduct hazardous fuels reduction projects to protect communities, watersheds and other at-risk lands from catastrophic wildfire.

The following are long-term goals identified for the sagebrush restoration treatment:

1. Reduce decadent shrub cover on sagebrush ecological sites to allow for appropriate and vigorous shrub and herbaceous (grass & forb) plant communities.
2. Improve available habitat for sage grouse and other wildlife species.
3. Reduce fuel loading and continuity.
4. Restore the historic disturbance regime within the project area.

The proposed action is to restore Wyoming sagebrush ecological sites on selected polygon areas in south Jakes Valley, near Jakes Wash, using a mowing mechanical treatment with seeding of a portion of the polygon areas. Up to 2,000 acres within an "ecological polygon area footprint" of 2,474 acres would be treated. The treatment would occur as a mosaic that would leave untreated areas and wildlife edge areas within the overall treatment area. Approximately 60% of the land area to be treated (1,200 acres) would be seeded. The seed would be distributed using small, low impact all terrain vehicles (ATVs). The seed mixture would include perennial grass and forb species adapted to the ecological site. Approximately 40% of the land area currently produces an appropriate amount of native shrub, grass, and forb seed so that further seeding is not needed. The proposed restoration sites have high restoration potential, and were chosen due to factors including decadent sagebrush, the amount of perennial grasses and forbs in the understory, and pinyon and juniper trees encroaching onto the site. Project implementation could occur as early as summer or fall, 2010 and may be phased in over a two year period, depending on funding. The biomass (cut sagebrush shrubs or other shrubs and small trees) would be left on site to degrade by natural means.

The Jakes Valley Sagebrush Restoration Project would be a cooperative proposal whereby the BLM and the grazing permittee would be partners in funding and implementation. An agreement to rest the treated area from livestock grazing for a minimum of two growing seasons or until vegetative objectives are met would be implemented between the grazing permittee and BLM.

A project summary of the Jakes Valley Sagebrush Restoration Project is expected to be posted on the Ely Field Office Website in the near future. Once complete, the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) document for this project will also be posted on the website for a 30 day comment period. Please respond if you would like to receive a hard copy mailing of the appropriate NEPA document for public review and comment.

To access the Ely District Office Project Scoping and NEPA list:

Go to <http://www.blm.gov/nv>
Click on Ely District

Thanks in advance for participation in the scoping for this project. Please contact Mark Lowrie, Rangeland Management Specialist of my staff at (775) 289-1888, or Cody Coombs, Fuels Program Manager at (775) 289-1854 if (1) you would like to submit comments on the goals of this project, suggest treatment options, or identify issues for consideration; or (2) you would like to remain on the mailing list to continue participating in the planning process. Written comments can be submitted to the address listed above on the letterhead. Please submit comments by March 31, 2010.

Sincerely,

/s/ Jeff Weeks

Jeffrey A. Weeks
Field Manager
Egan Field Office

Enclosure: Map of Sagebrush Restoration Treatment Area

cc:

Interested Publics Mailing List (Name Only) Rangeland Actions Mailing List & Fuels Mailing List

Rangeland Actions List

Steve Foree
Eureka County Dept. of Natural Resources
Western Watersheds Project
Steven Carter
Sustainable Grazing Coalition
Eastern Nevada Landscape Coalition
Craig C. Downer
Robert Dickenson
Karen Rajala
Carl Slatkowski
Frank Reid
Charlie Brown
Gracian Uhalde
Blue Diamond Oil Corporation
White Pine Conservation District
Nevada Land and Resource Co.
Humboldt Toiyabe National Forest – Ely Ranger District

Nevada State Clearinghouse (electronic copy only)

Fuels Actions List

Gordon Foppiano
Nevada Division of Forestry
Nevada Land and Resource Co.
Nevada Department of Wildlife
Steve Carter
Betty Baker
White Pine Conservation District
White River Ranch

Confederated Tribes of the Goshute Reservation
Eureka County Dept. of Natural Resources
Southern Nevada Water Authority c/o Brandon Humphries
Southern Nevada Water Authority c/o Maria Ryan
Sustainable Grazing Coalition
Western Watersheds Project
White Pine County EDC
Curt Leet
Eastern Nevada Landscape Coalition
Resource Concepts, Inc.
Michael K. McBeath
White Pine County Commission
Frank Reid
Great Basin National Park

Nevada State Clearinghouse (electronic copy only)

