



United States Department of the Interior



BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT

Ely District 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 (NVL0044)

FEB 05 2013

Dear Interested Public,

This letter is to notify you of a public scoping period for a proposed habitat restoration and fuels reduction project. The Bureau of Land Management (BLM), Ely District Office is proposing a hazardous fuels reduction and habitat improvement project within Egan and Johnson Basins. The Egan and Johnson Basin project encompasses approximately 14,000 acres. Important wildlife habitat for Greater sage-grouse as well as other wildlife has been identified to within the project area. The purpose of the proposed project is to improve sage-grouse and other wildlife habitat, improve vegetation community resistance and resilience to natural disturbance and reduce the risk of wildland fire to adjacent wildlife habitat located within Egan and Johnson Basins. The proposed action consists of the removal and thinning of pinyon and juniper trees from sagebrush sites as well as woodland sites through manual and mechanical methods.

The project area has been divided into treatment units (see attached maps). Manual methods of tree removal would include the use of hand crews and chainsaws to remove the trees. Mechanical methods would include the use of machinery to remove individual trees or groups of trees and may include mastication and/or chaining.

Biomass resulting from the removal of the pinyon and juniper may be available for fuelwood and the slash may be piled and burned to remove excess fuels from the sites.

The objectives for the proposed action are to:

- Move the Fire Regime Condition Class (FRCC) rating for Egan and Johnson Basin closer to FRCC1.
- Improve habitat for nesting and early brood rearing/yearlong sage-grouse use.
- Improve and protect valuable mule deer and elk habitat within the watersheds.
- Conduct hazardous fuels reduction projects to create a mosaic of vegetation types and seral classes that would improve shrub and herbaceous composition, enhance community resistance and resilience and slow potential fire progression and aid fire suppression.
- Conform to VRM class II objectives adjacent to the Pony Express Historical Trail.

The Bureau of Land Management (BLM) will use the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) public participation requirements to assist the agency in satisfying the public involvement requirements under Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA)

(16 U.S.C. 470(f) pursuant to 36 CFR 800.2(d)(3). The information about historic and cultural resources of value within the area potentially affected by the proposed action will assist the BLM in identifying and evaluating impacts to such resources in the context of both NEPA and Section 106 of the NHPA. Tribal or individual concerns, including impacts and potential impacts to culturally valued areas, will be given due consideration.

Following this public scoping period, the BLM will prepare an Environmental Assessment (EA) to analyze potential effects of the proposed action as well as other possible alternatives. Public comments are always appreciated and are an important step in the NEPA process. Scoping comments on this proposed action and requests for additional information should be sent to the Ely District Office, attn: TJ Mabey at HC 33 Box 33500 Ely, NV 89301 or call at (775) 289-1867 or by email at tmabey@blm.gov.

Before including address, phone number, email-address, or any other personal identifying information in your comments, be advised that your entire comment, including personal identifying information, may be made publicly available at any time. While individuals may request that the BLM withhold personal identifying information from public view, the BLM cannot guarantee it will be able to do so. If you wish us to withhold your personal information you must state this prominently at the beginning of your comment. We will make all submissions from organizations or businesses, available for public disclosure in their entirety.

If you have any questions, please contact TJ Mabey, Ely District Forester at (775) 289-1867. If you would like to remain on the mailing list for this project, please indicate this in your comments. Please submit comments by **March 1, 2013**.

Please note that future planning and EA documents will only be sent to those who respond by the above listed due date. However, all documents will be posted on the BLM Ely District Website at the address shown in the above letterhead.

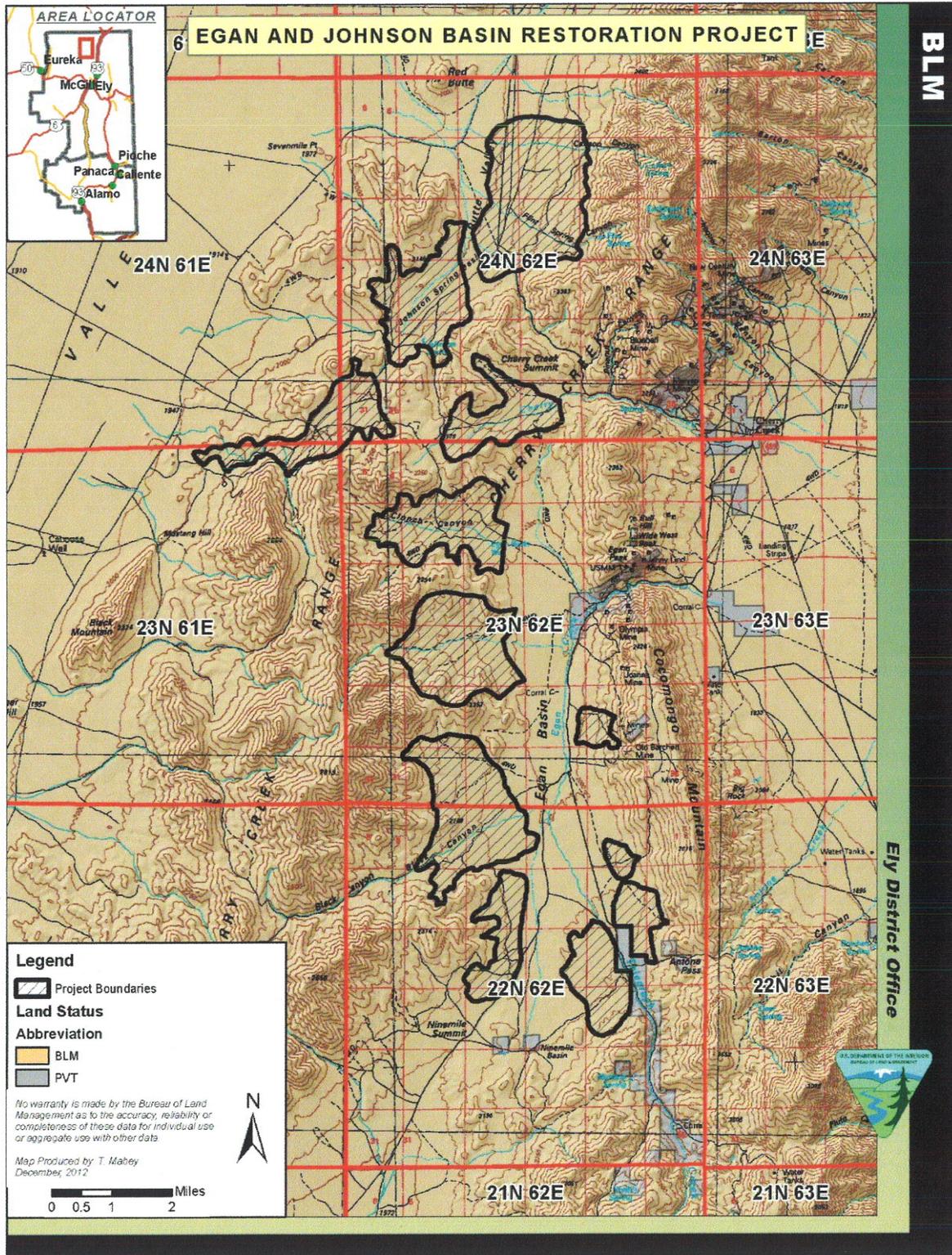
Thank you for participating in the planning process for this project.

Sincerely,

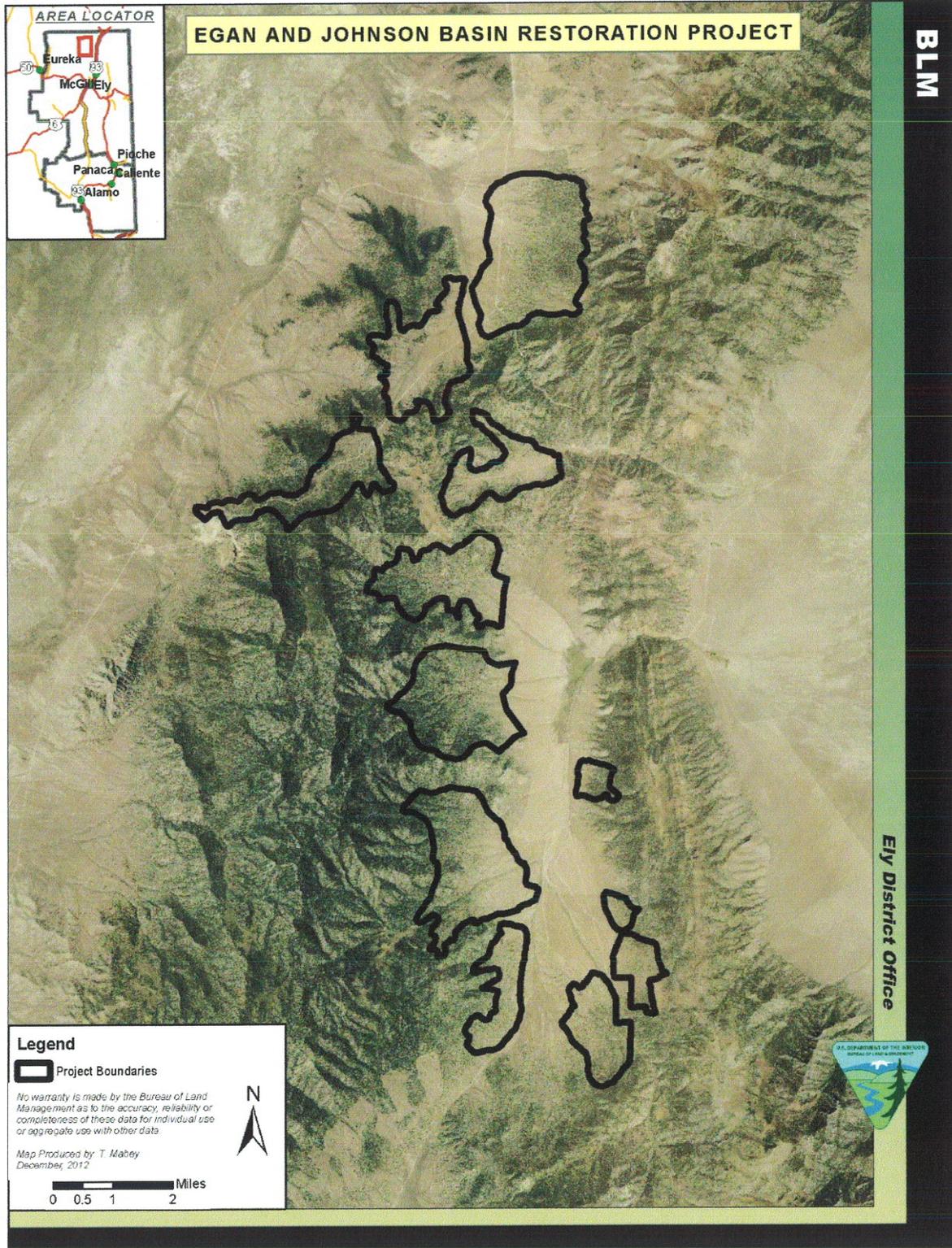


Tye Petersen
Fire Management Officer
Ely District Office

Enclosure



Map 1: Proposed Project Layout



Map 2: Proposed Project Layout, Aerial View