



United States Department of the Interior



BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT

Surprise Field Office
PO Box 460
Cedarville, CA 96104
www.ca.blm.gov/surprise

In Reply Refer To:
6700 (LLCAN0700) P

January 13, 2014

Dear Interested Party,

The Surprise Field Office (SFO) Bureau of Land Management (BLM) is proposing a 1,937 acre habitat restoration and hazardous fuels reduction treatment in the North Cowhead Allotment in California, an 871 acre habitat restoration and hazardous fuels reduction treatment in the Calcutta Allotment in Nevada and a 450 acre habitat restoration and hazardous fuels reduction treatment in the Board Corral Allotment in Nevada. These projects would treat sage-steppe plant communities within the sage-steppe ecosystem which are encroached by juniper or declining in vigor and sustainability. All of these projects are within the Vya Sage-Grouse Population Management Unit (PMU).

This proposed action conforms to the 2008 Surprise Field Office Resource Management Plan (RMP) and Final Environmental Impact Statement which states that:

- Fuel treatments would prioritize wildland/urban interface areas of communities situated in the midst of juniper-invaded sagebrush-steppe. Projects would also be designed to enhance important wildlife habitats and protect cultural resources.
- Long-range fuels treatment projects would be developed and implemented to protect high-risk communities; restore, maintain, and improve forest and rangeland ecosystems; enhance wildlife habitats; increase livestock forage; improve recreational opportunities; and enhance traditional gathering areas by broadly reducing hazardous fuels. (Surprise RMP 2.6.3 Objectives).

The proposed action also tiers off the 2008 Sage Steppe Ecosystem Restoration Strategy Final Environmental Impact Statement and Record of Decision and the Vya PMU Habitat Restoration and Fuels Reduction Project Programmatic Environmental Assessment and Decision Record.

The following are the primary needs for action identified by the SFO:

- Maintain existing shrub steppe habitats that are currently providing suitable habitat conditions for sage-grouse and sage-steppe obligate species and improve sage-steppe habitats that are degrading through juniper removal.
- Improved vigor of native sagebrush-bunchgrass communities, and improved habitat for other species associated with open sagebrush habitat.
- Reduce fuel loading and risks of catastrophic fire.
- Improve nesting cover for sage-grouse within mountain big sagebrush communities.
- Reduce juniper cover adjacent to sage-grouse leks.
- Improve bitterbrush and mountain big sagebrush browse communities for mule deer and pronghorn antelope.

- Reduce juniper cover adjacent to sage-grouse brood rearing habitats.

Work would be completed by either Federal or contract personnel. The byproducts of these treatments would be made available for firewood collection or biomass harvest. Within the treatment areas juniper would be lopped and scattered and then burned or piled and then burned on site; in areas of lower juniper density juniper (Phase 1 and early Phase 2 juniper encroachment) would be lopped and scattered and left to decompose naturally.

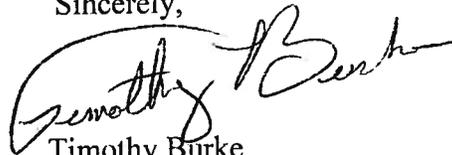
The Surprise Field Office is initiating scoping for planning efforts which will review data and information and complete environmental documentation necessary for these projects. As a first step in this process we are determining public interest and hereby requesting any related data and information you may have which is relevant to the proposed projects. Your information and data will be combined with BLM information and will be used to identify resource concerns related to the projects.

If you would like to be involved in this planning process or have information concerning this proposal please send it to:

Bureau of Land Management
Attn: Scott Soletti
Surprise Field Office
PO Box 460
Cedarville, CA 96104

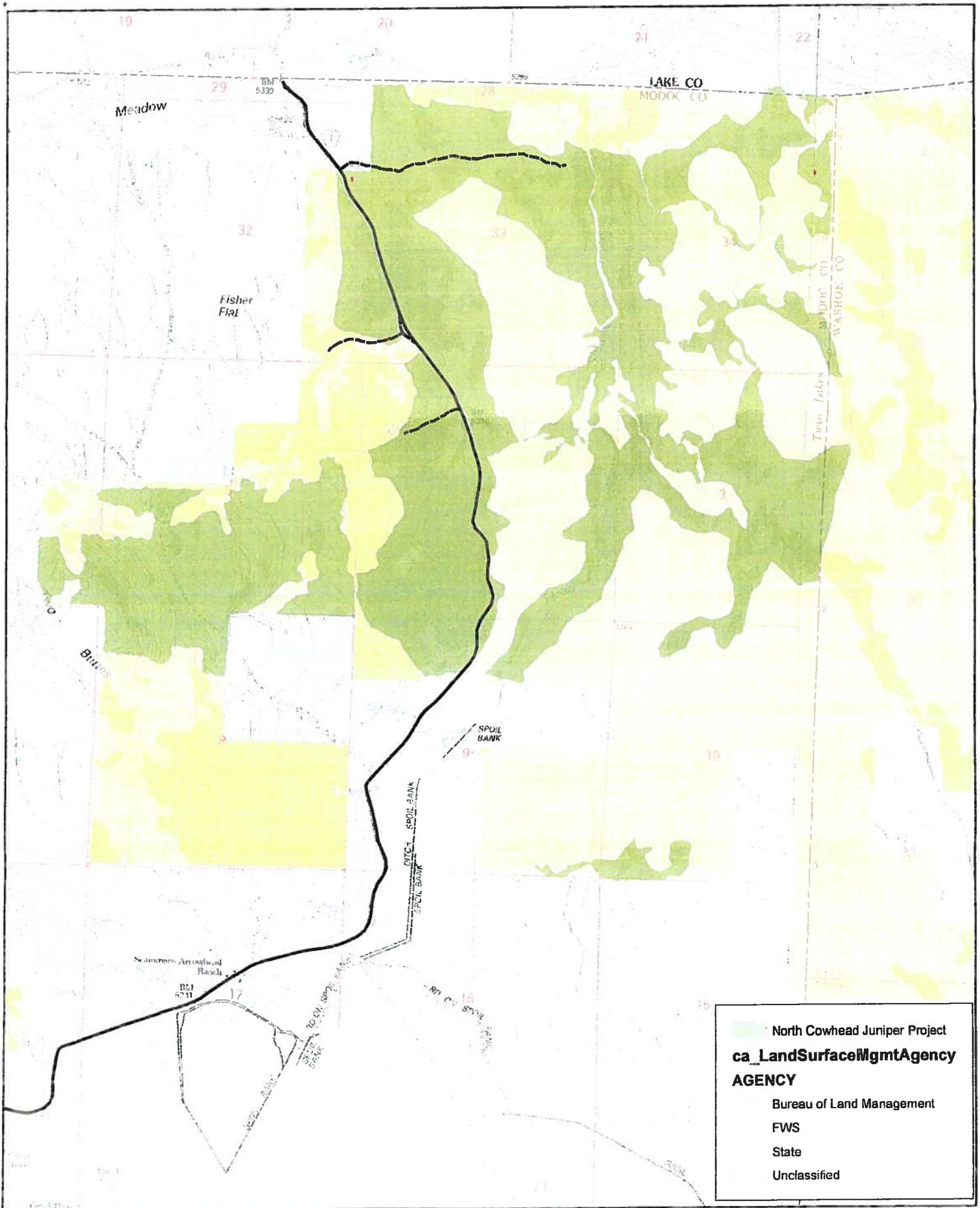
Your comments should be submitted by **Thursday February 13, 2014** to insure consideration. If you do not respond to this letter, we will not include you in follow-up correspondence relating to this project. You will however remain on our coordination list for future projects. If you are not interested in receiving information relating to BLM actions or if you wish to be removed from our mailing list, please contact us at the above address or you may call Scott Soletti at (530) 279-6101.

Sincerely,



Timothy Burke
Surprise Field Manager

Enclosures (3): Maps of Project Areas

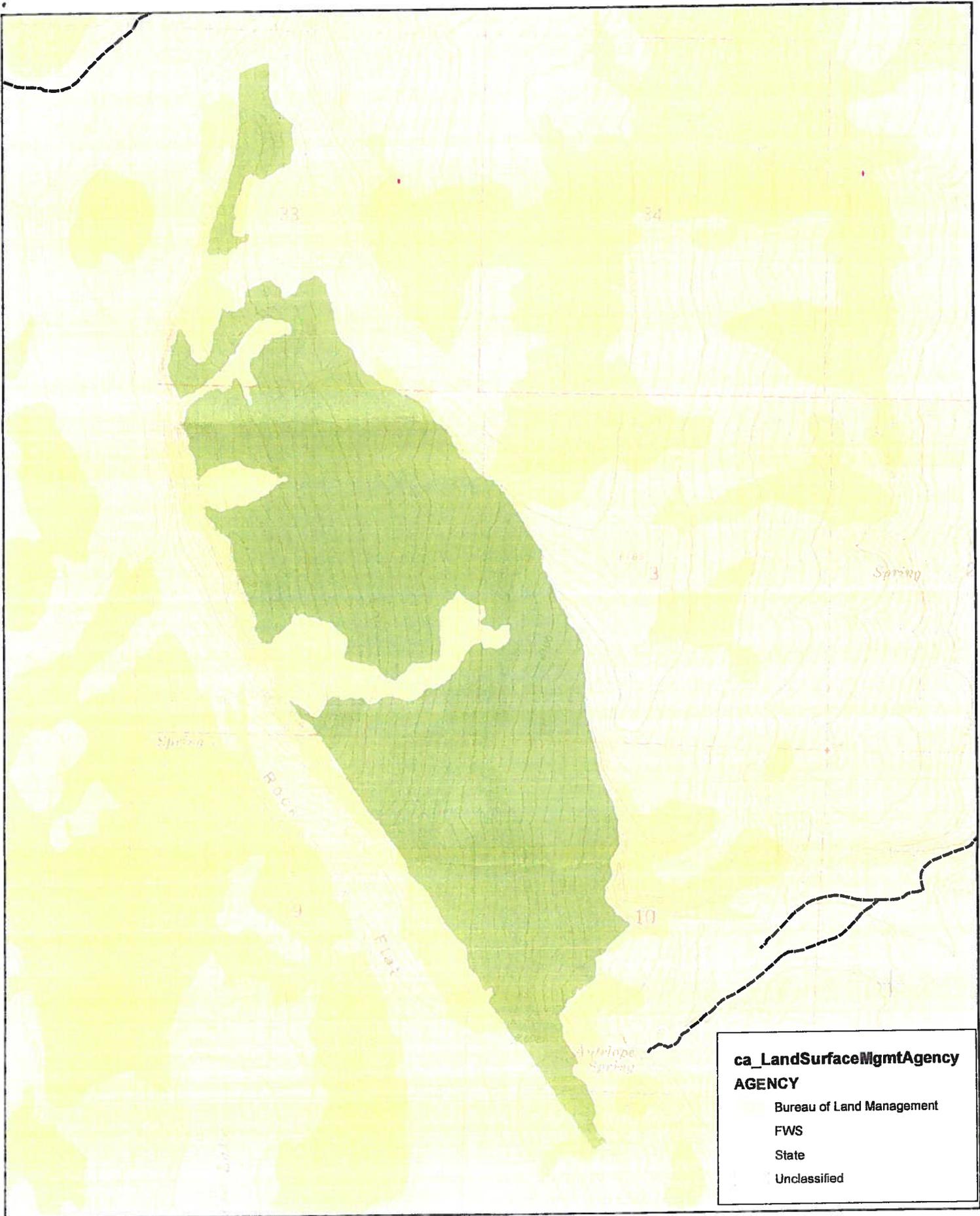


 North Cowhead Juniper Project
ca_LandSurfaceMgmtAgency
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North Cowhead Allotment
NRCS Juniper Cutting




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 Project: sa_maintaining_flag_polya.mxd



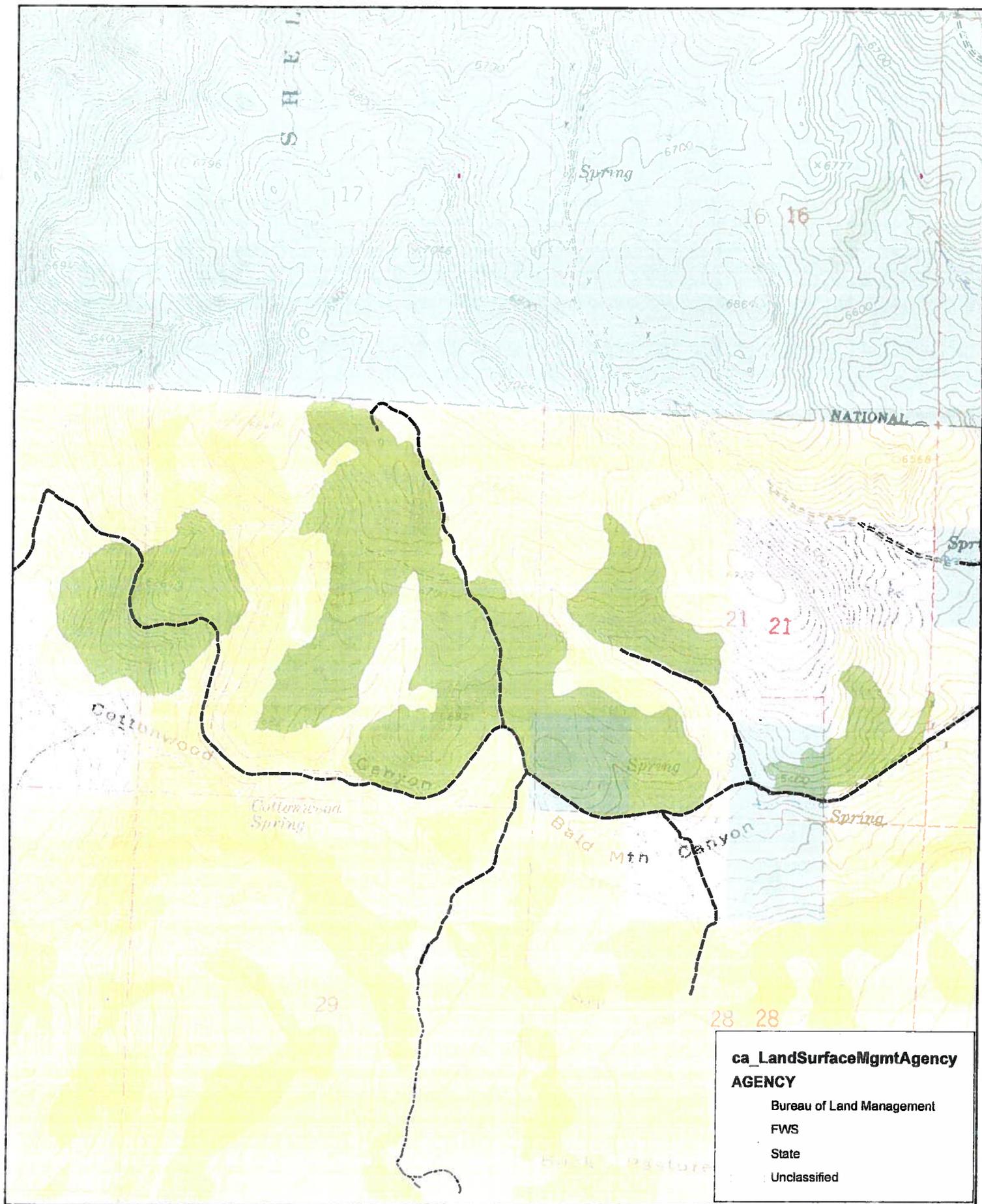
**Calcutta Allotment
NRCS Juniper Cutting**



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**Board Corral Allotment
 NRCS Juniper Cutting**




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