



File Code: 1950

Date: April 15, 2016

Dear Reader:

The Mountain City, Ruby Mountains, and Jarbidge Ranger District is proposing the Bear Creek No. 1 Hazardous Fuels Reduction Project near the town of Jarbidge, Nevada (please refer to the attached map.) Improvement/Creation of this defensible barrier around the municipal watershed will create a mosaic vegetation pattern within the heavy concentrations of brush and timber and will reduce the threat of catastrophic fire and loss of values to the community of Jarbidge. It will also help protect the watershed while improving the health of the vegetation within the watershed.

This project builds upon the past fuel reduction work in the area and is expected to be the first of several projects planned for future years.

The proposed project area includes certain sections or portions of sections within:

Mount Diablo Meridian
T46N; R9E; sections 7-8, 17-20, 28-31
T45N; R9E; SEC 1, 12-13, 24-25, 36

Fuel Break

One fuel break will be created along Forest System Road #58277. This fuel break would be up to 100 feet wide (fifty feet on each side of the center line) and be approximately 4 miles long. This fuel break would total approximately 50 acres in size. Work would be accomplished by hand cutting, mastication and chipping. Cut material would be spread or chipped and left on site or it may be piled and burned.

Thinning Corridor

Thinning of vegetation along the Jarbidge-Charleston Road would be done along a five mile portion of the road from Bear Creek Meadows to the town of Jarbidge. This break would be 200 feet wide (100 feet on each side from the center line; except where that area intercepts riparian areas) and be approximately 120 acres in size. Work would be accomplished by hand cutting and chipping. Cut material would be spread and left on site or it may be piled and burned. Within this corridor no more than 50% of the vegetation would be cut. No work would be done on private land.



Prescribed Burning

A moderate intensity broadcast burn would be used within one unit in the Bear Creek municipal Watershed. This unit is approximately 230 acres in size. The treatment is intended to reduce hazardous fuels and improve insect/disease resistance.

Mitigation Measures

The following mitigation measures and design features are proposed to reduce the impacts of the project and protect other important resources.

Roads and Access

- Short term road closures may be implemented during operations for public safety.
- Road closures and other project information would be posted and made available to the public.
- Minimal road maintenance would be done within the existing road prisms as needed to allow for vehicle access during project implementation.

Cultural Resources

- Cultural clearances would be obtained prior to any ground disturbance and all significant cultural sites will be avoided.

Prescribed fire Measures

- A burn permit would be obtained from the state of Nevada prior to the broadcast burn.
- A region 4 approved Burn Plan would be prepared prior to burning activities
- Prescribed burning will only occur in fall, winter and spring months when site conditions are favorable and burn windows are acceptable.

Wildlife

- Avoid project implementation from May 1 to July 15 to avoid disturbing nesting migratory birds. If project implementation needed to occur in that time period, such as for public safety reasons, a nest search would be completed and nests avoided as much as possible.
- Flammulated owl nests would have a 200 meter no disturbance buffer from May 1 to August 15, except for instances of public safety. Nest boxes will be installed outside of the project to help mitigate any habitat loss.
- Raptor nests would have a 202 meter no-disturbance buffer March 1 to August 31, except for instances of public safety.

- Bat roosts and winter hibernacula would be buffered appropriately depending on the species' requirements, as much as project objectives and public safety allows.

Fisheries

- Timber cutting within the Jarbidge River and Deer Creek Riparian Habitat Conservation Areas would be limited so as not to prevent attainment of riparian management objectives, and to minimize disturbance of riparian ground cover and vegetation.

Other Measures

- Where feasible cut trees would be made available for firewood gathering in accordance with Forest Service regulations.

Based upon my preliminary review of this project I expect that this project can be categorically excluded from review under an environmental assessment or an environmental impact statement. The appropriate category for this project is:

“Timber stand and/or wildlife habitat improvement activities that do not include the use of herbicides or do not require more than 1 mile of low standard road construction”. (36 CFR 220.6(e)(6)).

Public involvement in the NEPA process is essential. Scoping is performed as one of the first steps to receive input from interested individuals, organizations and government agencies including federal, state, and local agencies. We invite you to submit written comments stating your concerns and issues that are relevant to the proposed project. We are currently in the early stages of planning on this project and your comments will help us to refine the proposal. We will utilize your comments to assist us in determining how and where to implement treatments. We will also use the comments we receive from you to analyze the effects of implementing this project.

To be most useful, comments are requested by May 15, 2016. Comments received, including the names and addresses of those who comment, will be considered part of the public record on this proposal and will be available for public inspection. You must submit written comments or contact us if you want to ensure that you remain on the mailing list for this project.


Written comments should be sent to:

John Baldwin
District Ranger
Mountain City, Ruby Mountains and Jarbidge Ranger District
2035 Last Chance Road,
Elko, NV 89815

Office hours for those hand delivering written comments are Monday through Friday from 7:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., excluding federal holidays. Electronic comments submitted using plain text (.txt), rich text format (.rtf), and/or Word (.doc) can also be sent to:

comments-intermtn-humboldt-toiyabe-rubymtns-jarbidge@fs.fed.us

Sincerely,









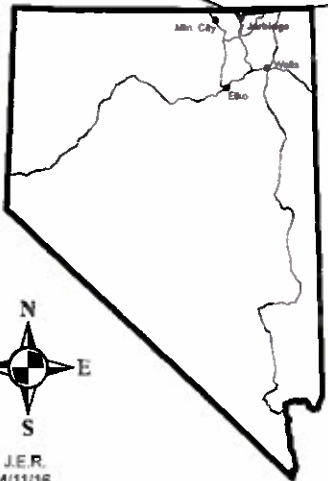
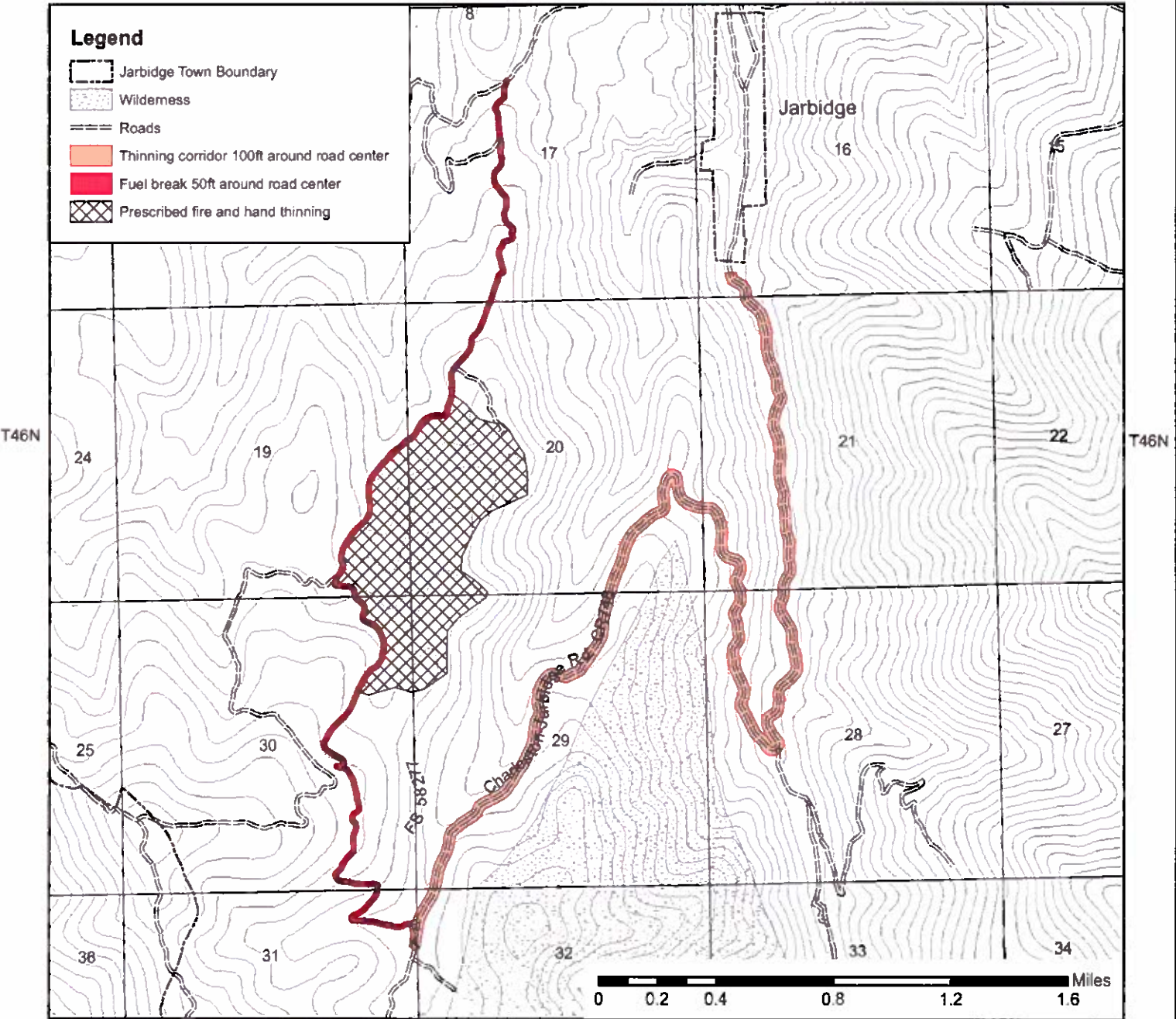
JOHN R. BALDWIN
District Ranger

Enclosure

R58E

Legend

-  Jarbidge Town Boundary
-  Wilderness
-  Roads
-  Thinning corridor 100ft around road center
-  Fuel break 50ft around road center
-  Prescribed fire and hand thinning



**Bear Creek No. 1 - Hazardous Fuels Project
 Jarbidge Ranger District
 Humboldt-Toiyabe National Forest
 Location Map**

This GIS product was compiled from various sources and may be corrected, updated, modified, or replaced at any time. For more information contact: Elko Zone Office, Elko, Nevada (775) 738-5171.

J.E.R.
4/11/16