



United States Department of the Interior



BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT

Battle Mountain District Office

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http://www.blm.gov/nv/st/en/fo/battle_mountain_field.html

In Reply Refer To:
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OCT 20 2016

Dear Interested Parties,

The Bureau of Land Management (BLM), Battle Mountain District is seeking public comments and input for a proposed action to improve sagebrush ecosystem health throughout the district. The BLM will be preparing an Environmental Assessment (EA) under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) to analyze the environmental effects. The proposed District-wide programmatic action would incorporate projects to sustain and improve sagebrush plant communities and reduce wildfire susceptibility through the use of mechanical and herbicide treatments. These treatments would reduce hazardous fuel loads, promote native vegetation, and improve wildlife and wild horse and burro habitat. The proposed action would:

- Reduce hazardous fuels including invasive non-native plant species through ground and aerial treatment methods to support landscape resiliency in the event of wildfire;
- Reduce potential damages from wildfire to critical infrastructure, habitat, and natural and cultural resources;
- Protect sage grouse habitat and herd management areas;
- Provide for health and productivity of rangelands;
- Maintain vigor of pinyon-juniper woodlands;
- Promote native vegetation and reduce infestations of non-native vegetation such as *Bromus tectorum* (cheatgrass);
- Manage sagebrush communities for ecological and habitat benefits; and
- Restore riparian areas and plant communities;

The treatments of the proposed action would consist of:

- Thinning pinyon-juniper stands that have been encroaching upon historical sagebrush plant communities, riparian areas and springs, primarily using chainsaws;
- Herbicide treatments to reduce non-native annual grass fine fuel loadings;
- Seeding and planting native plants; and
- Collecting native seed.

Information gained during this public comment period assists the BLM in identifying potential environmental issues, alternatives to the proposed action, and mitigation measures associated with the Sagebrush Ecosystem project. The process provides a mechanism for determining the scope and the potential issues associated with the project so that the EA can focus the analyses on areas of interest and concern. Therefore, public participation during the comment period is a

vital component to preparing a comprehensive EA and the BLM encourages and appreciates public input.

General area maps for the proposed action can be viewed at <http://bit.ly/2enK6jX>. The public comment period will begin on Monday, October 24, 2016 and all comments will be accepted for the record until Wednesday, November 23, 2016. Comments can be emailed to blm_nv_bmd_sagebrushecosystem@blm.gov or written and submitted to the BLM:

BLM - Battle Mountain District Office
ATTN: Sagebrush Ecosystem Management Project Lead
50 Bastian Road
Battle Mountain, NV, 89820

Before including your address, phone number, email address, or other personal identifying information (PII) in your comment, be aware that your entire comment including your PII may be made publicly available at any time. While you can ask in your comment to withhold from public review your PII, the BLM cannot guarantee it will be able to do so. All submissions from organizations and businesses, and from individuals identifying themselves as representatives or officials of organizations or businesses, will be available for public inspection in their entirety.

If you have any questions, please contact Todd Erdody at (775) 635-4109 or Darcy McDaniel (775) 623-1748.

Sincerely,



Douglas W. Furtado
District Manager
Battle Mountain District Office

cc: District interested parties mailing list