Decision Notice and Finding of No Significant Impact
Deep Creek Watershed Improvement Project

USDA Forest Service
Westside Ranger District
Curlew National Grassland
Oneida County, Idaho

Introduction

The purpose of this initiative is to improve overall riparian vegetation and stream channel conditions along Deep Creek. Action is needed to protect and restore the diversity and productivity of native and other desirable riparian communities along Deep Creek. This project directly responds to the goals and objectives outlined in the Land and Resource Management Plan (LRMP) for the Curlew NG. In particular, one goal for the Riparian/Wetland Area Prescription (2.8.8) is to:

- *Maintain or restore diversity and productivity of native and desired non-native deep-rooted plant communities that assist in regulating surface and bank erosion and support native and desired non-native populations that contribute to the viability of riparian dependent communities* (page 4-7).

The environmental assessment (EA) documents the analysis of the proposed action to meet this need.

Decision

Based upon my review of the Deep Creek Watershed Improvement EA, I have decided to implement the Proposed Action. The following actions are included in my decision:

Russian olive removal: The Forest Service will mechanically remove and treat approximately eleven acres of Russian olive. Any saltcedar encountered will be treated similarly. Removal will be implemented in phases over multiple years to ensure proper revegetation. Phased removal treatments will be based on the revegetation and monarch butterfly habitat monitoring results described on the next page (see revegetation efforts).

Specific removal actions will include mechanically cutting the tree with chainsaws or heavy machinery designed for tree removal (e.g. feller buncher). In areas that are densely infested or located along streambanks proposed for stabilization, heavy machinery, such as an excavator, may be used to remove trunks, stems, and roots. Where necessary, heavy equipment will transport the woody biomass to disposal areas for burning or other treatments.

Biomass treatments are necessary given the amount of material that will be generated. Russian olive can develop new roots from adventitious buds that come in contact with the soil so it is important to remove as much of the plant material as possible. Root and stem remnants will be removed or piled and will be destroyed by shredding, chipping, masticating, or by burning. The removal and disposal methods may include the use of multiple pieces of heavy machinery designed for cutting, masticating, clearing, mowing, transporting, and piling woody material.

Designated disposal areas will be identified by an interdisciplinary team as the project is phased. Sensitive resource areas (e.g. heritage sites, riparian vegetation, & sensitive soils) will be avoided. Pile burning disposal areas will be limited to 0.25 acre; at large pile burn sites, the top soil will first be removed and salvaged for replacement on the site after the pile is burnt. Disposal sites will be rehabilitated.

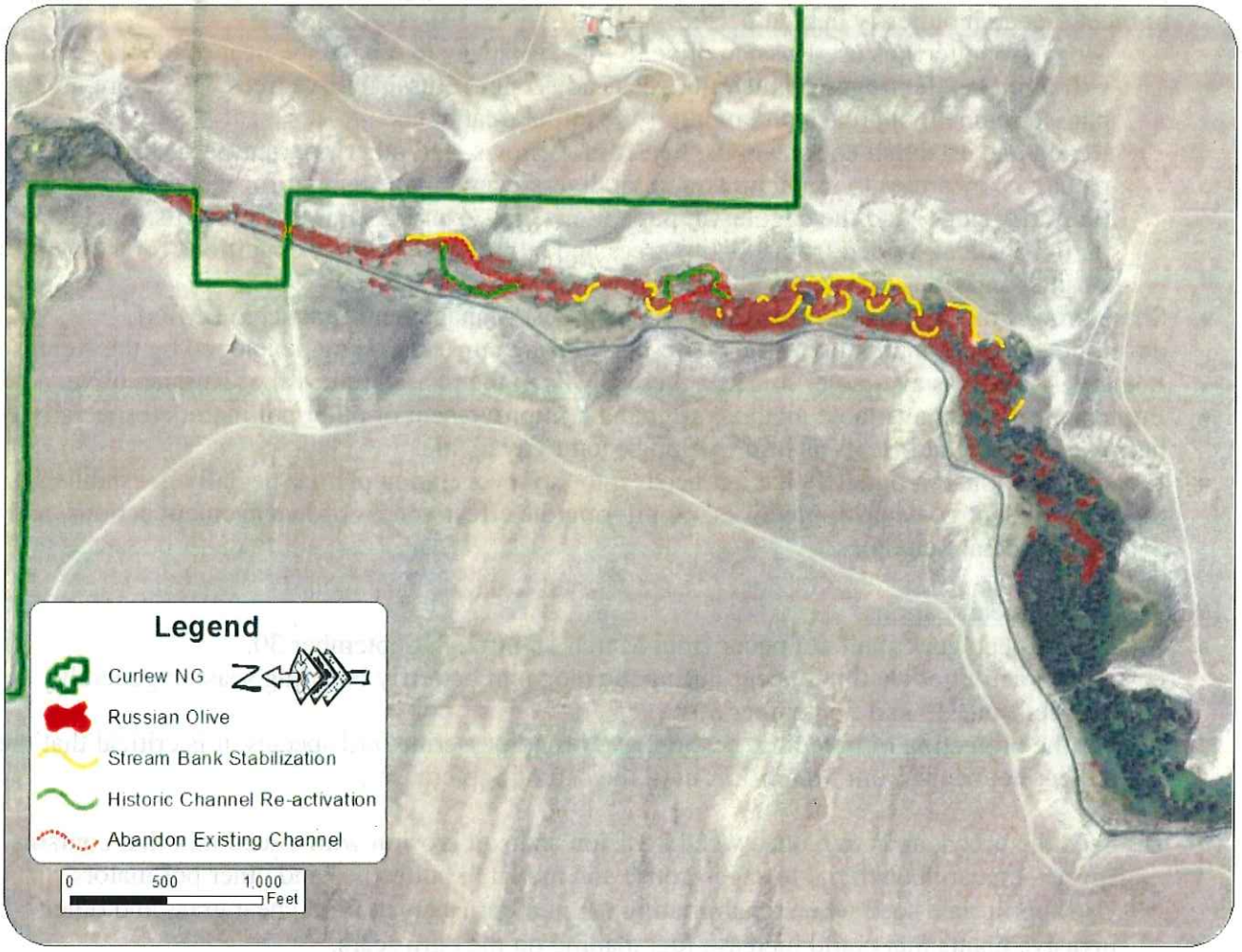
Revegetation Efforts: Revegetation efforts will vary depending on Russian olive density. Less dense areas will not require much effort as the desirable surrounding vegetation will be available to colonize the site (i.e. passive restoration). Areas of dense Russian olive will require more monitoring, potential follow-up treatments, and revegetation/planting measures (i.e. active restoration). A combination of passive and active revegetation methods will be employed based upon the site-specific revegetation plan, which considers the following:

- Revegetation and monarch butterfly habitat monitoring results. Specifically, the agency will monitor the following to ensure that the desired results are achieved: 1) the density of showy milkweed and other nectar plants; 2) the establishment of desirable woody plants (e.g. willows and cottonwoods); and 3) noxious weed response.
- Temporary electric fencing will be used to exclude livestock grazing in revegetated areas to meet the LRMP standard: "Allow no livestock grazing before seed set of the second growing season after rangeland planting or seeding. If monitoring shows that this is not adequate to meet resource needs, defer livestock grazing as necessary" (page 3-18).
- Disturbed areas will be seeded to reduce weed invasion and soil erosion with a seed mix that contains species that are beneficial to sage-grouse and monarch butterflies and other pollinators.
- Follow-up treatments will follow the agency's Integrated Pest Management Strategy (IPMS)
- Bare-root or containerized woody plants would be planted in key areas to meet monarch butterfly habitat needs.

Stream Restoration and Stabilization: Heavy equipment will be used to reshape and stabilize several steep eroding streambanks along approximately two miles Deep Creek. Heavy equipment and bio-engineering techniques will be used to re-shape the stream banks to a more stable angle. The constructed streambanks will be armored with whole willow transplants, willow staking, and sedge mat transplants. Riparian re-vegetation efforts will include transplanting whole willow clumps and sedge-mats, willow staking, and seeding.

Streambank stabilization will result in excess material (soil) as the streambanks are "peeled back" to a stable angle. As with the disposal of the Russian olive biomass, designated disposal areas for excess streambank material would be identified by an interdisciplinary team. Sensitive resource areas (e.g. heritage sites and riparian vegetation) would be avoided. Some of these disposal areas may coincide with biomass disposal areas. Others may be identified as well. Excess material would also be disposed of in the existing channel where it is abandoned in conjunction with the historic channel re-activation. All disturbed disposal sites will be seeded and rehabilitated.

Figure 1: Map of proposed stream work and Russian olive areas along Deep Creek.



Project Design Features: My decision also includes the project design features detailed in Appendix D of the EA. These include: 1) Revegetation Plan Measures; 2) Project Design Specifications; and 3) Other Management Considerations.

Revegetation Plan Measures:

- To the extent possible, retain showy milkweed rhizomes in disturbed areas for revegetation uses.
  - Showy milkweed can be propagated from rhizome cuttings. The rhizomes can be directly placed during active riparian restoration implementation or can be propagated in plots for future planting.
- Include species adapted to the site conditions. Locally collected native plants have preference.
- Retain nectar plants that are not noxious weeds.
  - Nectar plants documented in the project area that will not be herbicide sprayed include, but are not limited to: showy milkweed, Aster spp., skunkbush sumac, shinning willow, coyote willow, bull thistle, Rocky Mountain beeplant, curlycup gumweed, alfalfa, sunflower, catnip, salt spring checkerbloom, common dandelion and yellow salsify.
  - Follow IPMS principles for weed treatments. Chose the most effective & economical tactic, with the least impact on non-target species and the environment.
- Retain existing cottonwoods and shrubs and include trees and shrubs in revegetation efforts. This may require leaving some patches of Russian olive until other desirable species establish to

provide shaded micro-sites. Bare-root or containerized woody plants will be planted in key areas to meet monarch butterfly habitat needs.
  - Monarch butterflies use Russian olive to roost as a way to escape the heat of the day and will often lay their eggs on the milkweeds adjacent to Russian olive trees. Therefore, use a phased removal approach and monitor the initial treatments.
  - Retain and establish cottonwoods, tree-form willows, and other riparian trees/shrubs in patches (key areas) to maintain structural diversity and niche habitat for monarch adults (butterfly stage) and the egg, larva, pupa life stages. During summer hot spells, shade and partial shade provided from existing trees and tall shrubs optimize conditions for a diversity of site conditions to help ensure the survival of monarch larva.
- Share project monitoring information to support Best Management Practices (BMPs) development for monarch butterflies. These BMPs are currently being developed by the Xerces Society. As soon as available, consider these BMPs in the phased removal of Russian olive.
- Implement the best available methods for habitat improvement of other pollinators (especially bees) and beneficial insects as information becomes available.
- Incorporate monarch butterfly habitat needs into the revegetation plan, especially in establishing the management goals and objectives, monitoring the effectiveness of management actions, and evaluating actual outcomes.

Project Design Specifications:
- Timing: Project work shall not occur from March 15 through September 30.
  - Project activities shall not occur during the monarch butterfly breeding season: generally between June 1st and September 30th.
  - For the protection of breeding, nesting, and brood passerine bird species, it is critical that the project not occur from March 15th until the end of September
- Seed:
  - Seed disturbed areas to reduce weed invasion and soil erosion with a seed mix that contains species that are beneficial to sage-grouse and monarch butterflies and other pollinators.
  - Use appropriate seed when rehabilitating the pile burn sites to limit cheat grass and other invasive plants that could increase fuel loading on the burn scars.
- Conduct mechanical operations when soils are dry to prevent detrimental rutting/displacement. Little to no rutting in heavy equipment or masticator tracks should occur. If rutting begins to occur, and especially if it exceeds 4 inches, operations will cease until conditions improve or operations can be modified to avoid such rutting. No equipment operation should take place when ground conditions are wet enough that there is a risk of rutting. Avoid operations if soil is saturated.
- Ensure all equipment is washed prior to entering the activity area to limit introduction of invasive species
- Stream Channel Work:
  - Instream work will be conducted during low flow periods and in accordance with the necessary permits (e.g. stream channel alteration and §404 permits). Instream work will be conducted in accordance with Memorandum of Understanding with the Idaho Department of Water Resources.
  - A Forest Service hydrologist will be on site during all in stream construction activities.
  - Schedule operations during periods when the probabilities for rain and runoff are low.
  - Place Woodstraw or organic debris on disturbed areas during rehabilitation efforts in order to provide immediate ground cover and accelerate recovery.
  - Obliterate, re-contour, seed, and replant disturbed areas.

Other Management Considerations:

- Minimize the mechanized treatment of wood residue in Riparian/Wetland Area to what is needed in order to avoid creating excessive fuel loads.
- Do not dispose of or burn material within the bankfull channel or irrigation ditch.
- Do not remove existing dead & down material from the Riparian/Wetland Area for burning or mastication.
- When felling trees, lop and/or scatter as much material as practical. That is, do not remove material for burning or mastication unless excessive material is present. If excessive material is present move material as far from stream channels as practical given the local terrain. Attempt to utilize other means of slash disposal before burning piles (i.e. lop & scatter, chipping, biochar, etc.). When lopping and scattering, attempt to arrange fuels into less dense areas to avoid the need for mastication or burning. Locate piles on flat areas to decrease erosion potential
- Fell trees in a way that protects residual vegetation from damage. Minimize ground-disturbing activities to the extent practicable.
- *Avoid locating... staging areas... and other centers for incident activities within* RWA unless approved by hydrologist or soil scientist (LRMP pg 4-8). If necessary, burn pile locations will be identified by an interdisciplinary team consisting of a fuels specialist, soil scientist, botanist, hydrologist, and archeologist.
- Minimize new soil/vegetation disturbances by using existing disturbances as much as practicable.
- Burning should occur only when soils are wet from snow or rain to limit impacts on soil organic matter, physical properties and soil organisms.
- After jackpot or pile burning is complete, rake the burned area to disrupt any hydrophobic layer, incorporate the ash to reduce erosion, mix in charcoal to benefit soil and chemical properties and incorporate any adjacent duff/litter over the burned site.
- If feasible, drag slash from other lopping & scattering efforts to cover the burn soils in an attempt to avoid erosion, provide woody material for site rehabilitation and increase soil moisture from shading.
- Implement phased treatments in dense Russian olive stands, when possible, to maintain stream cover and shading (applies to reaches lacking other woody vegetation/riparian canopy).
- When utilizing broadcast burning to dispose of biomass, make sure to limit fire effects to desirable vegetation by burning under desirable conditions. Herbicide use may still be needed to eliminate Russian olive sprouts.
- If material is left to protect rehabilitated sites, make sure that fuel bed is not continuous and will not act as a wick facilitating wildfire spread in the riparian zone.
- Plan to provide for stabilization of top soil stock piles to prevent erosional loss.
- Plan to identify arterial routes of use within the riparian areas and to access pile locations.

Decision Rationale

The purpose for this project is to improve overall riparian vegetation and stream channel conditions along Deep Creek while the need for action is to protect and restore the diversity and productivity of native and desirable riparian communities along Deep Creek.

In making the decision to authorize the Deep Creek Watershed Improvement Project, I reviewed the existing environmental conditions and the direct, indirect and cumulative effects for the proposal and the No Action Alternative. I considered comments received from the public and considered how each alternative: 1) met the purpose and need, 2) responded to the issues, and 3) addressed public comments.

Specifically, the selected alternative best meets the purpose and need to improve overall riparian vegetation and stream channel conditions that move the project area towards the desired conditions. The public comments that were received on the Proposed Action were addressed throughout the EA and the project record.

The EA documents the environmental analysis and conclusions upon which this decision is based.

Other Alternatives Considered

In addition to the selected alternative, I considered the no action alternative. Two other alternatives were considered but eliminated from detailed analysis. A comparison of these alternatives can be found in the EA (see pages 15-16).

Public Involvement and Scoping

The need for this action arose in the summer of 2013. The Deep Creek Watershed Improvement proposal was first listed in the Schedule of Proposed Actions (SOPA) in October 2013. The project was "cancelled" in October 2015 because it was incorporated into a larger proposal called the Curlew Invasive Plant Control Project (CIPCP). The Forest Service later determined that the Deep Creek proposal is a distinct project separate from other weed management strategies on the Grassland (see pages 9 & 10 of the EA). Therefore, the Deep Creek proposal was again listed as "in progress" on January 1, 2016 SOPA.

The original proposal was provided to the public and other agencies for comment during scoping on February 18, 2014; the proposal was also scoped as part of the larger CIPCP on May 24, 2015. In addition, as part of the public involvement process, the agency published legal notices in the Idaho State Journal on February 23, 2014 and May 24, 2015 (CIPCP).

Also as part of the public involvement process, the agency presented the proposal to the US Fish & Wildlife Service at the 2013 and 2014 annual consultation meetings; to the US Army Corps of Engineers, Idaho Department of Water Resources, Idaho Department of Environmental Quality, Idaho Fish & Game at the 2015 & 2016 Stream Channel Protection MOU meetings; and to the Delmore Canal Company (Special Use Permit holder) in February 2016. The Forest Service also participated in Tribal Government Consultation with the Shoshone-Bannock Tribes in 2015 and again on April 15, 2016.

Using the comments from the public, other agencies, Delmore Canal Company, and Idaho State University, the interdisciplinary team identified several issues regarding the effects of the proposed action. Main issues of concern included monarch butterfly habitat, sage-grouse habitat, and water quality along Deep Creek (see EA pages 10-12). To address these concerns, the Forest Service developed the project design features incorporated into the proposed action (see EA Appendix D and the project design features included in this Decision Notice).

A legal notice was published on July 14, 2016 in the Idaho State Journal initiating the 45-day pre-decisional review process for the draft Decision Notice and FONSI. No objections were received during this period.

FINDINGS REQUIRED BY OTHER LAWS AND REGULATIONS

This decision is consistent with the LRMP for the Curlew NG. The project was designed in conformance with Grassland plan direction.

A finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) has been prepared based upon the analysis summarized in the EA, and is incorporated into this document. I determined these actions will not have a significant

effect on the quality of the human environment, and an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) will not be prepared.

National Environmental Policy Act: The EA and Decision Notice/Finding of No Significant Impact document are in compliance with NEPA and the Council on Environmental Quality regulations (40 CFR 1500 – 1508) for implementing the NEPA.

National Forest Management Act (NFMA): This act guides development and revision of National Forest and Grassland Land Management Plans. This decision is consistent with the intent of the Land and Resource Management Plan (LRMP) for the Curlew National Grassland and its long term goals and objectives for Riparian/Wetland Areas listed on page 4-7 of the LRMP. This project incorporates all applicable LRMP standards and guidelines and management area prescriptions as they apply to the project area and comply with LRMP goals and objectives. This includes additional direction contained in all amendments. All required interagency review and coordination has been accomplished (EA, BA, BE, and Specialist Reports).

Clean Water and State Water Quality Standards: Beneficial impacts are expected with the implementation of the Selected Alternative. The selected alternative would be in compliance with the applicable hydrology related standards and guidelines from the LRMP. The decision incorporates Best Management Practices (BMPs) to ensure the protection and improvement of soil and water resources (Hydrology Report, Project Record). The Forest presented the project to the US Army Corps of Engineers, Idaho Department of Water Resources (IDWR), Idaho Fish and Game, and IDEQ at 2015 & 2016 Stream Channel Protection MOU meetings. The Forest will submit a joint application for permit to the Corps and IDWR before implementation of the streambank stabilization work. All necessary permits would be secured prior to project implementation.

Wetlands Executive Order 11990: This order requires the Forest Service to take action to minimize destruction, loss, or degradation of wetlands to preserve and enhance the natural and beneficial values of wetlands. In compliance with this order, Forest Service directives require that an analysis be completed to determine whether adverse impacts would result. Based on the analysis contained within the project record, no adverse impacts to wetlands are expected with the implementation of the Selected Alternative. The selected alternative will benefit wetlands in the project area.

Floodplains Executive Order 11988: This order requires the Forest Service to provide leadership and to take action to: (1) minimize adverse impacts associated with occupancy and modification of floodplains and reduce risks of flood loss, (2) minimize adverse impacts of floods on human safety, health and welfare, and (3) restores and preserve the natural and beneficial values served by floodplains. The selected alternative complies with this executive order by maintaining floodplain integrity. Based on the analysis contained within the project record, no adverse impacts to floodplains are expected with the implementation of the selected alternative. The selected alternative will improve floodplains in the project area.

Executive Order 12898, "Environmental Justice": Executive Order 12898, Federal Actions to Address Environmental Justice in Minority Populations and Low-Income Populations, and Departmental Regulation 5600-2 directs federal agencies to integrate environmental justice considerations into federal programs and activities. Environmental justice means that, to the greatest extent practicable and permitted by law, all populations are provided the opportunity to comment before decisions are rendered on, are allowed to share in the benefits of, are not excluded from, and are not affected in a disproportionately high and adverse manner by, governmental programs and activities affecting human health or the environment. Implementation of any of these alternatives will be consistent with this Order

and will not have a discernible effect on minorities, American Indians, women or the civil rights of any United States citizen. Nor will it have a disproportionate adverse impact on minorities or low-income individuals. No civil liberties will be affected. Public involvement and comment was sought and incorporated into this document. The Forest Service has considered all public input from individuals or groups regardless of age, race, income status, gender, or other social/economic characteristics. Executive Order 12898 also directs agencies to consider patterns of subsistence hunting and fishing when an agency action may affect fish or wildlife. The decision would not alter opportunities for subsistence hunting by Native American tribes. Native American tribes holding treaty rights for hunting and fishing on the Curlew National Grassland were provided an opportunity to comment on the proposal (Tribal Consultation Meeting Notes, Project Record). Based on experience with similar projects on the Westside Ranger District, none of the alternatives would substantially affect minority low-income individuals, women or civil rights.

National Historic Preservation Act: A cultural resource survey was conducted within the project's Area of Potential Effect. Four cultural properties were identified, three of which are recommended as eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places. Two of these historic properties are intersected by existing roads that will be used as access routes for project equipment and vehicles. No parking will be allowed off established roads within the sites' boundaries. Due to its current use, the third historic property will also be avoided by all project activities. The Forest Archaeologist will be consulted prior to designating the biomass treatment areas. Following these protective measures, the Forest Service has determined that the project will have no adverse effect on historic properties. The Idaho State Historic Preservation Office concurred with this determination on July 13, 2016 (see EA, page 34; Project Record).

American Indian Religious Freedom Act and Grave Protection and Repatriation Act: The Forest Service also participated in Tribal Government Consultation with the Shoshone-Bannock Tribes in 2015 and again on April 15, 2016. The Shoshone-Bannock Tribes' staff did not voice objections to the proposed action at that time.

Migratory Bird Treaty Act: Riparian bird species richness, which includes passerines/migratory birds, was evaluated in the Biological Evaluation (BE) & Wildlife and Rare plant Specialist Report (see EA, pages 28-29). The project contains timing measures to protect migratory birds. The selected alternative was found to be in compliance with direction to protect migratory birds.

Endangered Species Act: This decision is consistent with the Endangered Species Act. A "No Effect" determination was made for any relevant species (see EA, pages 26 & 27).

Regional Forester's Sensitive Species: It was determined that the project would benefit sage-grouse and Columbian sharp-tailed grouse by opening up crucial riparian habitat that is not currently available to them (see EA, page 21, 22, & 26-29).The BE prepared for this project resulted in a determination of "no impacts" for all other sensitive species.

Management Indicator Species (MIS): Consistent with regulations at 36 CFR 219.19, the analysis evaluated potential impacts (direct, indirect, and cumulative) to Riparian bird species richness. Riparian bird species richness along Deep Creek is expected to decrease as a result of project. However, it is important to realize that the majority of the species using the area now are capitalizing on the non-native woody tree cover. All of these species are very common in southeast Idaho. Therefore, the simple number of species counted in Deep Creek will likely decrease, but the species native to sagebrush-steppe riparian systems will likely increase. Therefore, the intent of riparian habitat management on the

Grassland and the use of riparian bird species richness in the LRMP would be met by implementation of the proposed action (see EA, pages 28-29 and BE & Wildlife and Rare plant Specialist Report).

Idaho Roadless Rule (36 CFR 294): The project area does not include any areas identified as Roadless Areas in the LRMP, or Final Rule for Roadless Area Conservation: Applicability to the National Forests in Idaho.

Finding of No Significant Impact

The following is a summary of the project analysis to determine significance, as defined by Forest Service Handbook 1909.15_05. "Significant" as used in NEPA requires consideration of both context and intensity of the expected project effects.

Context means that the significance of an action must be analyzed in several contexts (i.e. local regional, worldwide), and over short and long time frames. For site-specific actions, significance usually depends upon the effects in the local rather than in the world as a whole. This project is limited in scope and duration. The project was designed to minimize environmental effects by including revegetation efforts, adaptive management criteria, and other project design features in the proposed action.

Intensity refers to the severity of the expected project impacts and is defined by the 10 points below.

Context

The project is not of international, national, region-wide or state-wide importance. This discussion of the significance criteria that follows applies to the intended action and is within the context of local importance in the area associated with the Deep Creek Watershed Improvement Project. This project would occur on the Curlew National Grassland of the Westside Ranger District. The resource effects sections in the EA (pages 16-34) reveal that environmental effects are confined to the project area.

Intensity

The following factors were considered to evaluate intensity.

1. **Impacts may be both beneficial and adverse. A significant effect may exist even if the Federal agency believes that on the balance the effects will be beneficial.** Beneficial and adverse impacts of this decision are addressed in the Environmental Consequences section of the EA (pages 16-34). No significant impacts were identified. My finding of no significant environmental effect is not biased by the beneficial effects of the action. No adverse effects could be considered significant even if considered separately from any beneficial effects

2. **The degree to which the proposed action affects public health or safety.** There will be no significant effects on public health and safety in implementing the proposed action because all applicable state and federal laws, policy and regulations will be followed, and design criteria would be followed and implemented (see EA Pages 13-15 and Appendices B & D).

3. **Unique characteristics of the geographic area such as proximity to historic or cultural resources, park lands, prime farmlands, wetlands, wild and scenic rivers, or ecologically critical areas.** The project area does not contain any park lands or ecologically critical areas; nor would it impact any prime farmlands. The proposed action is in conformance with the Wild and Scenic River Act and will not impact the eligibility of area river segments for Wild and Scenic River status. It was determined that the project will have no adverse effect on historic properties. The Idaho State Historic Preservation Office concurred with this determination on July 13, 2016

(see EA, page 34; project record). Based on field review and information contained in the EA and Project Record, I conclude there will be no significant effects on the unique characteristics of the area, because potential effects will be avoided with implementation of project design criteria described earlier in this document and in Appendix D of the EA.

4. **The degree to which the effects on the quality of the human environment are likely to be highly controversial.** The effect on the quality of the human environment is not likely to be highly controversial. There is no known credible scientific controversy over the impacts of the selected alternative. Project design features have been incorporated to minimize potential impacts.

5. **The degree to which the possible effects on the human environment are highly uncertain or involve unique or unknown risks.** The Agency has considerable experience with stream stabilization, stream restoration, vegetation treatments, and woody biomass removal. The analysis shows the effects are not uncertain, and do not involve unique or unknown risk (see EA pages 16-34).

6. **The degree to which the action may establish precedent for future actions with significant effects, or represents a decision in principle about a future consideration.** The action is not likely to establish a precedent for future actions with significant effects.

7. **Whether the action is related to other actions with individually insignificant but cumulatively significant impacts.** The cumulative impacts are not significant (see EA pages 16-34).

8. **The degree to which the action may adversely affect districts, sites, highways, structures, or objects listed, or eligible for listing, in the National Register of Historic Places or may cause loss or destruction of significant scientific, cultural, or historic resources.** The action will have no significant adverse effect on districts, sites, highways, structures, or objects listed in or eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places (see EA page 34).

9. **The degree to which the action may adversely affect an endangered species or threatened species or its habitat that has been determined to be critical under the Endangered Species Act of 1973.** This decision is consistent with the Endangered Species Act. A "No Effect" determination was made for any relevant species (see EA, pages 26 & 27). We consulted/conferenced with the USFWS on this project through the Section 7 informal streamlining process. There were no anticipated effects to endangered or threatened species (Level 1 streamlining report/notes 3/27/2013).

10. **Whether the action threatens to violate Federal, State or local law or requirements imposed for the protection of the environment.** The action will not violate Federal, State, and local laws and requirements for the protection of the environment. Applicable laws and regulations were considered in the EA and the action is consistent with the LRMP for the Curlew NG.

Conclusion

After considering the environmental effects described in the EA and specialist reports, I have determined that Alternative 2 will not have significant effects on the quality of the human environment considering the context and intensity of impacts (40 CFR 1508.27). Thus, an environmental impact statement will not be prepared.

Administrative Review and Objection Rights

The Deep Creek Watershed Improvement Project EA and Draft DN and FONSI were subject to a pre-decisional objection period, pursuant to 36 CFR 218. Legal notice to initiate the 45-day objection period was published in the Idaho State Journal on July 14, 2016. No objections were received for this proposal.

Implementation

No objections to this proposal were received during the 45-day objection period. The Final DN/FONSI has been signed, indicating approval of the project, and the project may be implemented 5 business days following the end of the objection filing period. Implementation is defined as actually doing the ground-disturbing actions as described in this notice. Per 36 CFR 218, no legal notice is required to notify the public of the availability of the signed DN/FONSI. However, the Forest Service may notify any interested parties of the availability of the final decision documents.

For further information concerning the Deep Creek Watershed Improvement Project, please contact Brad Higginson at 208-557-5786 or bhigginson@fs.fed.us during normal business hours.

Approved by:

Lori A. Bell

Lori A. Bell
District Ranger
Westside Ranger District
Curlew National Grassland

9-15-2016
Date

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