

**ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT (OR-035-01-07)
AND
EMERGENCY FIRE REHABILITATION PLAN
FOR THE
ROGERSBURG FIRE**

**BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT
VALE DISTRICT
BAKER RESOURCE AREA**

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**Rogersburg Emergency Fire Rehabilitation Plan
Environmental Assessment No. OR-035-01-07**

Fire Number N0.98

I. INTRODUCTION

A human-caused wildfire started ½ mile southeast of Rogersburg, Washington on Lime Hill near the confluence of the Grande Ronde and Snake Rivers (T.7N., R.47E., Section 19), on May 19, 2001 (refer to Map 1, appendix). Rogersburg is a small community consisting of approximately 10 homes, some of which are occupied year-round. This fire consumed approximately 638 acres of public land administered by the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) and 5 acres of Washington State land administered by the Washington State Department of Fish and Wildlife, before being controlled on May 22, 2001. No private land was involved in the fire. Due to high temperatures, high winds and dry fine fuel condition, the rate of spread was very fast. As the wind settled and temperatures dropped in late afternoon, the fire slowed considerably, but continued to spread in a southerly direction from “Snake River Flat” to the backside of Lime Hill. The fire’s level of intensity was low with a few isolated hot spots

Although the area is no longer within a grazing allotment, historical overgrazing and regular fire intervals have transformed the vegetation within Snake River Flat into annual grasses and weedy species. Approximately 65 to 70 percent of Snake River Flat is dominated by cheatgrass, tumble mustard and purple hairy vetch. The remaining 30 percent of the vegetation in Snake River Flat consists of perennial grasses such as sand dropseed, bluebunch wheatgrass and sandberg’s bluegrass. Rush skeletonweed, and yellowstar thistle, both very aggressive noxious weed invaders, can be found abundantly growing within and adjacent to the fire boundary (Map 2, appendix). Other noxious weed species within or adjacent to the project area include knapweed, dalmatian toadflax and scotch thistle. The remainder of the fire (upland slopes and Lime Hill) burned in a slow-moving mosaic pattern. Recent inspections of these areas indicate that many of the plants (including desirable and undesirable) are beginning to “green- up” due to recent rains.

II. REHABILITATION OBJECTIVES (PURPOSE AND NEED)

Objectives for the Rogersburg Rehabilitation Plan are as follows:

1. Minimize soil erosion resulting from increased exposure of the soil surface to rainfall impact and wind, by maximizing perennial canopy cover by May, 2002. As a short term soil stabilization objective, maximize total ground cover (including litter and rock) by October, 2003.
2. Re-establish perennial plant species for use by wildlife by limiting the invasion of annual grasses and weeds, through the seeding of native perennial species (grass and shrubs). Limit the composition of annual grasses and weeds from the current 65-70 percent to 25 percent within three years.
3. Establish a deep rooted shrub component in portions of the plant community to reduce soil erosion, restore perennial cover, improve vegetative structure, protect

heritage resources, capture and hold snow during the winter months and to increase cover especially for wildlife.

4. Treat and monitor noxious weed species (rush skeleton weed and yellowstar thistle) over a three year period. Reduce the incidence of spread and noxious weed population by 25 percent over a three-year period.
5. Reduce overall fire hazard by seeding perennial grass species within and adjacent to the fire perimeter that are currently dominated by annual grass and weedy species (cheatgrass, medusa wildrye, rush skeleton weed and yellowstar thistle). This includes BLM-managed lands located next to the community of Rogersburg.

III. CONFORMANCE WITH APPLICABLE LAND USE PLANS

The proposed rehabilitation needed as a result of the Rogersburg Fire is subject to the Wallowa/Grande Ronde river management plan, Baker Resource Area Resource Management Plan Record of Decision (July, 1989) and the Lime Hill Coordinated Activity Plan - Grande Ronde ACEC (September, 2000). These plans have been reviewed to determine if the proposed actions conform with the terms and conditions of these planning documents as required by 43 CFR 1610.5. Rehabilitation of wildfire impacts to protect soil, water, and vegetative resources or to prevent unacceptable on-site or off-site damages is consistent with these land use plans and BLM policy as outlined in the Emergency Fire Rehabilitation Handbook H-7142-1.

IV. DESCRIPTION OF PROPOSED ACTION AND ALTERNATIVES

A. *PROPOSED ACTION*

The proposed action is as follows:

1. Broadcast seed (through the use of ATVs) approximately 45 acres of public land using ATV-mounted seeders during the fall of 2001. This area would include the burned area immediately south of Rogersburg which is dominated by annuals and weedy species. Reseeding it with perennials will reduce fine fuels build up and fire hazards and stabilize the soil resource.
2. A rangeland drill would be used to seed approximately 50 acres of deteriorated (burned) rangeland located in the NW 1/4 of Section 19. Reseeding this portion of the fire would accomplish the same desirable outcomes as described in #1, above.

3. The third area to be seeded is located approximately ½ mile outside the fire perimeter, adjacent to the newly constructed parking lot west of Rogersburg. This area includes 7 acres dominated by cheatgrass and annual weed species that create high fuels hazards. Crested wheatgrass would be seeded exclusively on this site because it has shown to be effective at stabilizing soils and reducing fuels build. A standard rangeland drill would be used because of the gentle topography and effectiveness.
4. The final seeding area includes portions of Snake River Flat. This area is relatively flat, and will be seeded using a combination of methods including broadcast seeding by hand, rake and harrow and rangeland drill. The primitive airstrip would not be seeded. Even though this area consists of 95 acres, only those portions that burned very hot or are comprised of annuals and weedy species would be seeded. Table 1 below summarizes the proposed seeding mix, plant species, application rate and total number of pounds needed to implement the seeding program:

TABLE 1. Summary of Proposed Seeding for the Rogersburg Fire

Seed Mix	Location	lbs/acre	No. Acres	Seeding Method
Crested Wheat	NW of Rogersburg	12	7	Rangeland Drill
Bluebunch WG Great Basin WR	South of Rogersburg	18	45	ATV/Broadcast
Bluebunch WG Great Basin WR	NW 1/4, Section 19	12	50	Rangeland Drill
Bluebunch WG Great Basin WR	Airstrip Flats	18	95	Combination Broadcast/Drill /Hand Method

5. Transplant great basin wildrye plants within portions of Snake River Flat (approximately 10 acres).
6. Collect sumac seed to use during the rehabilitation effort in 2003. Sumac is a native, deep rooted perennial shrub that stabilizes soils, and provides hiding and thermal cover for wildlife species.
7. Follow-up with noxious weed treatment and monitoring of yellowstar

thistle and rush skeletonweed over the next three year period (2002-2004).

8. It may be necessary in the future to plant hardwoods after the first full year of the fire if accelerated erosion is occurring near the rivers edge as the result of fire-related activities. Monitor the effect and establishment of riparian hardwoods along the Snake River. By the fall of 2002, determine if riparian hardwood planting is necessary.
9. Unauthorized access to Snake River Flat has occurred in the past. Placing a new steel gate at the access point (T.7N., R.47E, NW1/4, NE1/4, Section 19), would reduce the probability of fire occurrence.

B. *ALTERNATIVES*

Alternative A - Restoration Alternative. Under this alternative, a total of 197 acres within or adjacent to the fire parameter would be seeded with perennial grass to prevent soil movement, reduce the risk of a catastrophic range fire, and restore the health and vigor of the existing plant community. Crested wheatgrass would be seeded on approximately 7 acres of BLM administered lands located ½ mile outside of the fire boundary to reduce the risk of fire to the Rogersburg community. Cultural resources would be further protected under this alternative. This alternative also provides for the treatment and monitoring of noxious weeds.

Alternative B - No Action Alternative. Under this alternative, no emergency rehabilitation would be completed. The burned area would be allowed to naturally rehabilitate itself without seeding or planting of perennial grasses and shrubs.

V. AFFECTED ENVIRONMENT

A. *VEGETATION*

1. Range Sites

The range grasslands on upland steep slopes are in good to excellent condition, dominated by healthy bluebunch wheatgrass. Mid-slope areas and the gravel ridges are mixtures of good-condition sites and fair-condition, recovered range sites. The fair-condition range is dominated by sand dropseed and three awn, with minor components of bluebunch wheatgrass becoming re-established. A few great basin wildrye are surviving on Snake River Flat, and in swales and drainages. Shoreline flats are in an early seral stage, with an abundance of non-native annual grasses and small noxious weed infestations.

2. Species Composition

Historic livestock grazing on Snake River Flat and upland basins resulted in heavy use near water sources, which led to changes in vegetation composition. Annual grasses, forbs and weeds increased while perennial grasses and riparian species sensitive to grazing decreased. Grazing has been less intense to non-existent in the past 20 years, commencing a process of competitive re-establishment of perennial grasses and riparian species. Small and scattered stands of Douglas-fir and ponderosa pine are located in the upland basins and mountain slopes, and along the shoreline of the Snake River.

B. *SOILS*

There are two general types of soils within the burned area. The lower portion of the fire on Snake River Flat consist of sandy loams, which are deep, well drained soils. The remaining soils are typically very dark brown in color in surface layers, greater than 30 inches deep, and formed in colluvium and/or alluvium derived from predominantly basalt rock. Surface layers have silt loam or loam textures with fragments and clay loam or loam textures. Rooting depth varies from 20 to 60 inches and the surface soil depth varies from 4 to 36 inches. These type of soils are generally considered stable, but can be erosive if weedy or introduced annuals dominate the range plant community.

C. *HYDROLOGY AND CLIMATE*

The fire occurred near the confluence of the Snake and Grande Ronde Rivers. The northern perimeter of the fire borders the Snake River in Section 19. There are two short intermittent drainages within the fire perimeter, both of which flow into the Snake River. Yearly precipitation averages between 12 to 18 inches, most of which falls in the form of rain rather than snow, resulting in a low snow pack. The elevation within the fire perimeter itself varies considerable from 840 feet on Snake River Flat to 2,815 feet on Lime Hill.

D. *WILDLIFE*

BLM-managed lands provide high quality upland and riparian habitat for both big game and non-game species, in conjunction with the adjacent Chief Joseph Wildlife Area. Some of the wildlife using these lands include mule deer, resident elk, bighorn sheep, coyote, bear, bobcat, mountain lion, river otter, rough-legged hawk, peregrine falcon, bald eagle, golden eagles, osprey, heron, mountain quail, Lewis' woodpeckers, short-eared owl, chuckars, Hungarian partridge, blue and ruffed grouse, introduced wild turkeys, meadowlarks, vesper sparrows, and other migratory birds.

E. *THREATENED AND ENDANGERED (T&E) PLANTS*

No known or suspected threatened and endangered plants are known to occur within the burned area. Although it is found elsewhere in Hells Canyon, no habitat for Macfarlans 4-o'clock (*Mirabilis macfarlanei*), a federally listed threatened plant, is known to occur on BLM lands within the fire perimeter.

There is an on-going problem with invasion by noxious weeds, including rush skeletonweed, knapweed and yellowstar thistle. In particular, these type of weeds pose a primary long-term threat for taking over the habitat for native plants and special status species.

F. *FISHERIES AND THREATENED/ENDANGERED FISH HABITAT*

The Grande Ronde and Snake Rivers provide habitat for spring chinook, fall chinook, steelhead trout, and bull trout. The spring and fall chinook were listed as threatened by the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) under the Endangered Species Act in April 1993. The US Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) listed the Columbia River bull trout population as a threatened species in June, 1999. Steelhead trout were federally listed as threatened on October 16, 1997.

Although there are no known rearing or spawning perennial streams on BLM-managed land within the fire perimeter, intermittent streams contribute to the water quality for the Grande Ronde and Snake Rivers.

G. *LIVESTOCK GRAZING*

In the early 1900s, domestic sheep grazed the area, but were later replaced by cattle and horse operations. The Chief Joseph Wildlife area lands adjacent to the BLM-managed lands have not been grazed by livestock since the 1970's, and riparian and range conditions on State lands have improved. On adjoining BLM-managed lands along the Snake River breaks, livestock grazing has not been authorized since the mid to late 1970s.

H. *RECREATION AND VISUAL RESOURCES*

Hunting, sight-seeing, wildlife viewing, camping, and fishing are the primary recreation activities within the BLM-managed lands. There are no developed camping, or boat launch/take-out facilities on BLM-managed lands. There is a

newly constructed (2000) visitor parking area located west of Rogersburg. Access to these lands for the general public has been limited to boating and hiking. Physical access exists for vehicles over improved roads, but is presently limited by locked gates. With the limited vehicle access, public recreation use on BLM-managed land has been light.

The Snake River shoreline, north of the fire perimeter is used by both float and power boaters. During the summer, the two small beaches on BLM-managed lands receive high use for fishing, camping, and swimming.

I. *CULTURAL RESOURCES*

Cultural resources on the BLM-managed lands are within the Snake River National Register Archaeological District. Few inventories have been conducted on the uplands or tributaries. No known paleontological resources are present or would be affected by the proposed rehabilitation. A class III (intensive) cultural resource inventory of the gravel pit located outside the fire boundary was conducted in the late 1990's.

Historic cultural resources on the BLM-managed lands within the management area include isolated homestead features, farm equipment, historic mining features, and structures in the Snake River canyon and adjacent uplands. Rogersburg, named after the Rogers Family, was established as a post office in 1912. The post office was discontinued in 1939.

J. *TREATY RIGHTS AND TRADITIONAL USES*

The lower Grande Ronde River is located within the traditional homeland of the Nez Perce Indians, whose numerous villages were located on the lower Grande Ronde and Snake Rivers. The area was historically important for winter occupation, fishing, horse grazing, and hunting by the Nez Perce. These lands were ceded to the US government by the Nez Perce Treaty of 1855. Under the terms of the 1855 Treaty, the Nez Perce retained specific rights and privileges on the ceded lands, including the right to take fish at all usual and accustomed stations; the privilege of hunting, gathering roots and berries; and grazing stock on unclaimed lands in common with citizens. A number of plant and animal species present are known to have been traditionally used by Native Americans within the area. No treaty grazing privileges is currently exercised on the subject lands.

K. *OTHER MANDATORY ELEMENTS*

The following mandatory elements are either not present or would not be affected by the proposed action or alternatives:

- | | | |
|----|------------------------------------|--------------|
| 1. | Air Quality | Not Affected |
| 2. | Water Quality | Not Affected |
| 3. | Wild and Scenic Rivers | Not Present |
| 4. | Native American Religious Concerns | Not Affected |
| 5. | Hazardous Wastes | Not Affected |
| 6. | Prime or Unique Farmlands | Not Affected |

7.	Floodplains	Not Affected
8.	Wilderness Study Areas	Not Present
9.	Areas of Critical Environ. Concern	Not Affected
10.	Wetlands/Riparian Zones	Not Affected

VI. **ENVIRONMENTAL CONSEQUENCES (Proposed Action)**

A. *VEGETATION*

Listed below is the rationale for the rehabilitation treatment described in the proposed action (section IV-A):

1. The area proposed for rehab was in a early-seral condition prior to burning. Therefore, an adequate seed source from native perennials does not exist on this site for natural recovery.
2. The history of past fires in an early seral condition range in this area that have not been reseeded, are now dominated by annual species such as cheatgrass, tumble mustard and purple hairy vetch and noxious weeds such as rush skeletonweed, yellowstar and scotch thistle. As cheatgrass matures it becomes a fine fuel that is easily ignited.
3. Future fire frequency is expected to increase dramatically in this area if cheatgrass is allowed to become dominant once again.

If the fire frequency increases, the frequency of the site being open to erosion also increases.

4. Annual grass ranges serve as a very undependable forage base for livestock, wild horses and wildlife, due to extreme fluctuations in annual forage production. During drought years, forage production is greatly reduced and the erosion hazard increases as annual cover decreases.
5. Reseeding is the only feasible and economical technique available which will achieve objectives outlined in section II, by establishing adapted perennial plants that will preclude invasion of annual grasses and weedy species, including noxious weeds such as rush skeletonweed, yellow star and scotch thistle.
6. Without reseeded, less than 10 percent perennial grass or annual forb cover would be expected by the end of the second growing season. Observations on previous high intensity fires support this conclusion.
7. Generally speaking, perennial plants will not burn as easily as the annual

grasses and many reseeded plants will recover after being burned.

8. The general species mix listed in section IV, A-4 was selected after consultation with experienced professionals in the range rehabilitation field. Considerations during seed selection included drought resistance, ease of establishment, competitive characteristics with cheatgrass, resistance to fire, soil stabilization characteristics, species diversity, and overall productivity. Economic considerations were also taken into account. It is believed the species selected for rehab operations are best suited to climatic and on site conditions as well as achieving all the objectives of this plan.

B. *SOILS AND WATERSHED*

Major impacts to soils would be sheet erosion from wind and water, since most of the vegetative cover has been burned away leaving exposed soils. In the short-term (fall of 2001), losses of surface soil would increase slightly due to drilling. However, by June 2002, the seeded plants would be established and holding the soil in place. Seeding the ridgetops with shrubs in a north-south direction will aid in soil stabilization since winds prevail out of the west. Continuing to restrict vehicle access to Snake River Flat will reduce use and impacts to the soil and vegetation resources.

C. *WILDLIFE*

The use of a mixture of perennial grasses, forbs and shrubs species would provide more plant diversity than planting a monoculture of one or two species and would benefit wildlife, and other small animals. Seeding of perennial species will improve cover for big game and non game species. Avian biodiversity is also expected to increase with the planting and seeding of shrubs.

D. *LIVESTOCK*

There are no environmental consequences associated with livestock grazing within the fire perimeter since livestock are not authorized to graze the area. Livestock trespass has not been an issue since the BLM acquired these lands in 1993.

E. *RECREATION AND VISUAL RESOURCES*

Impacts to dispersed recreation activities would be insignificant. Should

rehabilitation activities occur during game hunting seasons, any wildlife close to the activities would be temporarily disturbed. Surface impacts of the proposed rehabilitation efforts do not exceed objectives for VRM Class II. Long term visual evidence of the drilled seedings would remain present for some time.

F. *CULTURAL*

The fire rehabilitation area is within the boundaries of the Snake River National Register District. Intensive cultural resource updates and inventory have been initiated within the project area. Final inventories, recording and rehabilitation implementation measures would be conducted in consultation with the Washington State Historical Preservation Office and Nez Perce Tribe.

VII. **ENVIRONMENTAL CONSEQUENCES (Rehabilitation Alternative)**

Under the Rehabilitation Alternative (see section IV, B), all of the Objectives under Chapter II are expected to be achieved over time. Perennial grasses would increase from current levels by approximately 50% (within Snake River Flat). Wildfire intervals would probably remain the same over the short-term, however as perennial plants are established, the fire interval would decrease over time. Wildlife habitat (including increased cover) and species diversity would probably improve slightly over the long-term as the result of improved plant species diversity. The noxious weed population would decrease over time as we continue to treat and monitor existing populations. Soils would remain stable or improve under this alternative due perennial grass seeding efforts. A reduction of fine fuels are expected to occur under this alternative.

Prior to project implementation, cultural resources would be identified for avoidance by any ground disturbance that may be associated with proposed rangeland drilling. There would be no affect to cultural resources from mechanized equipment. Burned areas in the vicinity of any sites would be re-vegetated by hand broadcast, raking, transplanting and limited use of a shallow harrow to create a 1 inch deep seedbed for establishment of native great basin wildrye and bluebunch wheatgrass. Implementation monitoring would be required.

VIII. **ENVIRONMENTAL CONSEQUENCES (No Action Alternative)**

Under the No Action Alternative (see section IV, B), annual grasses and weedy vegetation would continue to dominate. Over time, the plant composition is likely to continue improving, but not as rapidly as the Restoration Alternative. Soils would remain

susceptible to sudden, heavy thunder showers. Noxious weeds would continue to spread at a rapid rate, especially in Airstrip Flats. Fire hazard would increase over time as annual and weedy species continue to dominate the landscape.

There would be no affect to cultural resources from mechanized equipment as a result of the no action alternative. Surface disturbance to sites may be greater from natural erosional factors without sufficient native vegetation to provide surface and bank stability.

IX. DESCRIPTION OF MITIGATING MEASURES AND RESIDUAL IMPACTS

A new steel gate will be placed at the entrance of the Snake River Flat Road (NW 1/4, Section 19) and will be locked and properly signed to prevent unauthorized vehicle access of the area.

The BLM will temporarily suspend aircraft landing operations during the time the rehabilitation work is being implemented. Official notification to the Right-of-Way permittee(s) will be made prior to the time the rehabilitation work begins.

The BLM will not impact the primitive airstrip (Snake River Flat Road) during the rehabilitation period (e.g. the airstrip will not be drilled).

The Rogersburg residences will be notified in advance of rehabilitation work.

The BLM will treat and monitor noxious weed infestation that are located inside or adjacent to the fire perimeter. There is a total of approximately 50 “net” acres that will be treated over the next 3 years.

“Greenline” approximately 7 acres of annual grasses and weedy species that are causing a fuels hazard adjacent to the community of Rogersburg. Reduce fuels hazards on approximately 95 additional acres east of Rogersburg by seeding perennial grasses.

Monitor the effect and establishment of riparian hardwoods along the Snake River, near Mile 170. By the fall of 2002, determine if riparian hardwood planting is necessary.

Prior to project implementation, cultural resources would be identified for avoidance by any ground disturbance that may be associated with proposed rangeland drilling.

X. ANNUAL WORK PLAN SECTION

A cost/risk assessment is attached as Appendix 2. Listed below by fiscal year is a summary of funding needs for the proposed action:

Fiscal Year	Description	Work Months	Cost by Activity 2822	Comments
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FY 2002	Cultural Surveys	1.25 Wms	\$6,250	Possible Contract
	Seed Purchase	-----	\$9,500	Combined Total
	Rangeland Drill	-----	\$3,500	Contract
	Rehab Monitoring	1.0 Wms	\$5,250	BLM Workforce
	Nox. Weed Monitoring	.5 Wms	\$2,625	BLM Workforce
	Seed Collection	.5 Wms	\$2,625	Possible Contract
	Gate Purchase & Labor	-----	\$1,000	BLM Workforce
	Nox. Weed Treatment	2.0 Wms	\$10,500	Possible Contract
	Vehicle Costs	-----	\$500	Vehicle Use
	Broadcast Seed	1.5 Wms	\$7,875	BLM Workforce
	Seeding Equipment	-----	\$1,500	ATV Seeders
	Nox. Weed Supplies	-----	\$1,000	Supplies
	Hand Labor	1.0 Wms	\$5,250	Possible Contract
FY 2003	Seed Purchase	-----	\$7,500	Combined Total
	Hand Labor	1.0 Wms	\$5,500	Possible Contract
	Rangeland Drill	-----	\$3,500	Contract
	Nox. Weed Monitoring	.5 Wms	\$2,750	BLM Workforce
	Noxious Weed Supplies	-----	\$1,000	Supplies
	Nox. Weed Treatment	1.0 Wms	\$5,500	Possible Contract
	Vehicle Costs	-----	\$500	Vehicle Costs
FY 2004	Nox. Weed Treatment	1.0 Wms	\$5,775	Possible Contract
	Nox. Weed Monitoring	.25 Wms	\$1,500	BLM Workforce
	Total Funding Request	Wms 11.5	\$90,900	Over 3 Year Period

XI. EFR PROJECT SUMMARY

Fire Name: Rogersburg Fire
Fire Number: N098
Fire Control Date: 5-22-2001

Acres BLM Burned in Washington: 638
Start of Rehabilitation Project (Mo./Yr.): 11/2002
Completion of Rehabilitation Project (Mo./Yr.): 9/2004
Miles of Temporary Fence: 0
Miles of Fence Rebuilt: 0
No. of Soil/Watershed Structures:0
Acres Reforestation: 0
Acres of Revegetation: 197 Acres
Acres of Burned Area Protection for Natural Regeneration: 0
Total Acres Rehabilitated: 250 Acres (includes noxious weeds)
Estimated Funding Current Year (FY 2002): \$57,375
Estimated Funding Second Year (FY 2003): \$26,250
Estimated Funding Third Year (FY 2004): \$7,275
Total Cost of Rehabilitation Projects: \$90,900 (over three years)

XII. PERSONS/AGENCIES CONSULTED

Asotin County Board of Commissioners
National Marine Fisheries Service
US Fish and Wildlife Service
US Forest Service, Wallowa-Whitman National Forest
Washington Division of Aeronautics
Rogersburg lot owners
Nez Perce Tribe
Washington State Department of Fish and Wildlife

XIII. BLM REHAB TEAM MEMBERS

Rubel Vigil, Jr, Supervisory Natural Resource Specialist
Jackie Dougan, Fisheries Biologist
Mary Oman, Cultural Resource Specialist
Mike Woods, Natural Resource Specialist (Weeds)
Todd Kuck, Hydrologist
Clair Button, Botanist/Wildlife Biologist
Tami Buchanan, GIS Specialist

XIV. FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT

I have reviewed this environmental assessment including the explanation and resolution of any potentially significant environmental impacts. I have determined that the proposed action with the mitigation measures described below will not have any significant impacts on the human environment and that an EIS is not required. I have determined that the

proposed project is in conformance with the approved land use plan.

XV. MITIGATION MEASURES/REMARKS

Mitigation measures described in this EA (OR-035-01-07) address the environmental impacts for this proposed action. The proposed action contains measures to off-set impacts.

AUTHORIZED OFFICIAL: _____ DATE: _____

XVI. DECISION RECORD

On the basis of the information contained in this Environmental Assessment and all other information available, it is my determination that the proposed action (Restoration Alternative) is in conformance with the land use plan for the area and does not constitute a major federal action significantly affecting the quality of the human environment and that as EIS is not required. It is my decision to implement the proposed action as described in this EA (OR-35-01-07).

AUTHORIZED OFFICIAL: _____ DATE: _____

APPENDIX

Rogersburg Fire Rehabilitation

**ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT (OR-035-01-07)
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VALE DISTRICT
BAKER RESOURCE AREA**

Appendix I

NATIVE PLANT WORKSHEET

Proposed Native Plants in Seed Mixture

1. Are the native plants proposed for seeding adapted to the ecological sites in the burned area?

Yes No Rationale: Proposed native seed mix species are present in and adjacent to the project area and adapted to the site proposed for the native seed mix.

2. Is seed or seedlings of native plants available in sufficient quantity for the proposed project?

Yes No Rationale: Sufficient seed is being held in the Boise Seed Warehouse for the proposed drilling and broadcast seeding. The Baker Resource Area has approximately 150 lbs. of seed on-hand.

3. Is the cost and/or quality of the native seed reasonable given the project size and Land Use and rehabilitation plan objectives and the guidance in BLM Manual 1745.

Yes No Rationale: Although the native seed is more costly than comparable introduced species it use is reasonable given the project size and direction in BLM Manual 1725 and 1745 on the use of native seed.

4. Will the native plants establish and survive given the environment conditions and the current or future competition from other species in the seed mix or from exotic plants?

Yes No Rationale: Native plants should have a reasonable chance for establishment and survival in those areas proposed for the native plant mix.

5. Will the current or proposed land management (livestock, recreation use, wildlife populations, etc.) after the seeding establishment period maintain the seeded native plants in the seed mixture?

Yes No Rationale: Seeded plants should be able to be maintained on the project area under the proposed uses. The burned area is not being grazed by livestock.

SUMMARY

The costs of the project and probability of success of the proposed treatments are compared with the risks to resource values if: 1) no action is taken, and 2) the proposed action is successfully implemented. Alternatives may be included in this analysis to assist in the selection of the treatments that will cost effectively achieve the EFR objectives. Answer the following questions to determine which proposed EFR treatments should be selected and implemented.

1. **Are the risks to natural resources and private property *acceptable* as a result of the fire if the following actions are taken?**

Proposed Action Yes No Rationale for answer: The threat of weed invasion will be greatly reduced with a successful seeding. The potential for soil erosion will be reduced. The threat of repeated wildfire will be reduced with a more diverse perennial vegetation that will meet wildlife needs and rangeland health standards. Seeding and fencing reconstruction costs are satisfactory considering seed mixtures and demand.

No Action Yes No Rationale for answer: the threat of weed invasion, erosion and potential for reoccurring wildfire will be increased without treatment. Wildlife habitat and Rangeland health standards will not be met.

2. **Is the probability of success of the proposed action and no action acceptable given their costs?**

Proposed Action Yes No Rationale for answer: Recent seedings in similar environments and soil sites have been successful under normal climatic conditions and protection from grazing for 2-3 growing seasons. Sites previously dominated by Wyoming big sagebrush and limited perennial and annual species in the understory, have been successfully seeded to similar native species mixes within the Vale District.

No Action Yes No Rationale for answer: Adjacent areas with similar soils and vegetation that have not been seeded following fire have become dominated by less desirable perennials and annuals that do not meet wildlife and Rangeland Health needs.

3. **Which approach will most cost-effectively and successfully attain the EFR objectives and therefore is recommended for implementation from a Cost/Risk Analysis standpoint?**

Proposed Action , **Alternative(s)** , or **No Action**

Comments: The proposed action best meets the need for reducing weed invasion and potential for reoccurring wildfire while providing forage/structure for wildlife as well as enhancing site conditions for meeting standards for Rangeland health.

Notice of Decision
Environmental Assessment (OR-035-01-07)
and
Rogersburg Emergency Fire Rehabilitation Plan
United States Department of the Interior
Bureau of Land Management
Baker Resource Area
3165 10th Street, Baker City, Oregon 97814

Notice is hereby given that on July 24, 2001, Penelope Dunn Woods, Baker Resource Area Field Manager, Bureau of Land Management, issued a decision to authorize the implementation of the Rogersburg Emergency Fire Rehabilitation Plan near Rogersburg, Washington, Asotin County, Washington. This decision authorizes the implementation of a 197 acre rehabilitation plan to minimize soil erosion, re-establish perennial plant species, treat and monitor noxious weed infestations and reduce hazardous fuels buildup on these lands. Measures to mitigate rehabilitation operations will be implemented as identified in the Rogersburg Emergency Fire Rehabilitation EA (OR-035-01-07).

This project is consistent with the BLM's 1989 Baker Resource management Plan and the Lime Hill Coordinated Activity Plan-Grande Ronde ACEC (September, 2000). The location of the project area is as follows: Township 7 North, Range 47 East, Section 19. A copy of the Decision Record and Environment Assessment may be obtained by writing to the Baker Resource Area, Bureau of Land Management, 3165 10th Street, Baker City, Oregon 97814 or by calling (541) 523-1438. It can also be viewed on the BLM Vale District website at www.or.blm.gov/Vale.

Project implementation may start the day after the Decision Notice is published in the Lewiston Morning Tribune. The immediate implementation of this rehabilitation plan is necessary to prevent resource deterioration (43 CFR Part 4).

Dated: 07/24/2001 Baker Resource Area Field Manager: s/Penelope Dunn Woods