

#### IV. DECISION

It is my decision to implement the Pinto Horse Rehabilitation Plan as described by the proposed action in the Pinto Horse Emergency Stabilization and Rehabilitation (ESR) Plan (N237) Environmental Assessment EA No. OR-030-02-032.

Environmental Assessment #OR-030-02-032 for the Pinto Horse Emergency Stabilization and Rehabilitation (ESR) Plan adequately analyzes the impacts of the proposed action and indicates there will be no significant adverse effects on the quality of the human environment. The Proposed Action would not create any irretrievable or irreversible commitment of resources, as the seeding proposed would merely augment existing native perennials plants in an attempt to fill open niches left by the loss of dense sagebrush cover.

This action would meet the ESR objectives as follows: help to preclude the invasion of cheatgrass; maintain normal fire frequencies; maintain or improve rangeland, soil and watershed health and function; maintain wildlife habitat; maintain or improve Wilderness Study Area naturalness; maintain recreational opportunities; and ensure a more stable forage base. This would be accomplished by augmenting existing native perennial plants by seeding native perennials and by precluding livestock use until recovery of native plants have occurred.

If the proposed seeding fails there will be no greater long term impact than if the no action alternative was followed and no seeding occurred.

Following the No Action alternative identified in the Environmental Assessment #OR-030-02-032 for the Pinto Horse Emergency Stabilization and Rehabilitation (ESR) Plan could result in cheatgrass and associated weeds dominating the open niches of areas to be seeded under the proposed action. If these open niches are dominated by cheatgrass or weeds then fire frequencies, fire hazards and fire suppression costs would increase. Rangeland, soil, and watershed health and function would be degraded. Wildlife habitat would be degraded. Recreational opportunities would be impaired. Permitted livestock grazing would be interrupted more frequently by the loss of forage to more frequent wildfire, and drought impacts would be greater if the forage base was dominated by annual plants rather than more stable perennials.

The direct impacts of drilling, under the Proposed Action, would be short term and not significant. Cultural sites would be inventoried and protected by mitigation measures to avoid any surface resources encountered needing protection (such as rock structures, historic dump sites, etc.). The drilling activity itself would not significantly impact site integrity of buried sites, as the drills would not cut below the 10 cm "zone of disturbance".

All fencing actions proposed would have minimal, short term impacts to the human environment with no lasting effects once removed.

Tom Miles, Acting Jordan Field Manager

October 3, 2002

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Approving Official

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Date