

FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT

Spring Restoration: Burro Spring Allotment and Hillcamp Allotment

EA# OR-010-2004-10

The Bureau of Land Management, Lakeview District, Lakeview Resource Area, has analyzed a proposal and one alternative to restore one spring in the Burro Spring Allotment and four springs in the Hillcamp Allotment. The objectives of the proposal are to restore proper riparian-wetland function to these springs, and their associated riparian areas, and to provide a larger area of riparian habitat for wildlife. Currently, the spring developments and/or the associated riparian enclosure fences are not functioning properly. As livestock water at the spring sites, the quality and quantity of the riparian-wetland area is reduced and the spring site does not function to its potential. To restore proper riparian-wetland function to the springs, spring developments would be maintained, repaired, and/or reconstructed. Part of a spring development would be removed from one spring. Riparian enclosure fences would be maintained and repaired and extensions to existing riparian enclosures would be built at the three spring sites in the Hillcamp Allotment. One new livestock watering facility would be constructed at Burro Spring.

This project is in conformance with the Lakeview Resource Management Plan/Record of Decision (2003) and the Lakeview Resource Area Integrated Weed Management Environmental Assessment (2004). There are no wilderness areas, wild and scenic rivers, areas of critical environmental concern, research natural areas, forests, wild horses, paleontology, hazardous waste areas, areas of religious concern, fisheries, or prime and unique farmlands in the immediate project areas. No significant or disproportionate impacts would occur to low income or minority populations. The risk of noxious weed infestation would be low. There are water, wetland, riparian and soil resources and wildlife in the project area that would be beneficially affected by the project, but not on a regionally significant scale. Livestock management would benefit from the proposed project as well, due to proper functioning spring developments capturing more available water from spring sources in the allotments. Neither adverse nor beneficial impacts are anticipated to air quality, lands, floodplains, visual quality, recreation, or minerals and energy resources. Surveys found no threatened or endangered plants or animals. The proposed project would not be implemented until cultural surveys are completed. If any cultural or paleontological sites are found after surveys are completed, the project would be altered to mitigate potential impacts.

On the basis of the analysis contained in the attached EA and all other available information, my determination is that none of the alternatives analyzed would constitute a major federal action which would adversely impact the quality of the human environment. Therefore, an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) is unnecessary and will not be prepared.



Thomas E. Rasmussen, Manager
Lakeview Resource Area

8/16/07
Date

EA Number: OR-010-2004-10

PROJECT TITLE/TYPE: Spring Restoration: Burro Spring Allotment and Hillcamp Allotment

PROJECT LOCATION: (See attached Map 1).

- 1) Burro Spring - T 40S, R 25E, sec. 34, NW 1/4
- 2) Game Spring - T 41S, R 25E, sec. 10, SW 1/4
- 3) Hidden Spring - T 41S, R 25E, sec. 12, SE 1/4
- 4) Tim Spring - T 41S, R 26E, sec. 18, NW 1/4

BLM OFFICE: Lakeview Resource Area, Lakeview District, 1301 South G Street, Lakeview, OR 97630

LEASE/SERIAL/CASE FILE #: N/A

APPLICANT (if any): N/A

CONFORMANCE WITH APPLICABLE LAND USE PLAN: This is documented in the EA cover sheet.

PURPOSE and NEED FOR ACTION:

The purpose and need of the proposed project in the Burro Spring Allotment and Hillcamp Allotment is to restore proper riparian-wetland function to four springs and their associated riparian areas. Restoring the springs would also provide a larger area of riparian habitat for a variety of wildlife species.

Burro Spring - Burro Spring is developed with pipes leading from the spring source to two livestock watering troughs. There is an enclosure around the spring head, but the riparian area is minimal because the majority of the water is removed from the site of the spring source. Another larger riparian area has been created by the overflow system from the troughs. However, since the current overflow system is not functioning properly, the size of this riparian area has been reduced as livestock water at the site. Algae covers the water in the troughs which clogs the overflow pipes. This causes water to spill over the edges of the first trough into the surrounding area. The water that does flow into the second trough also spills over the edges because its overflow pipe also becomes clogged with algae. In addition, the overflow pipe on the second trough does not extend beyond the area immediately surrounding the trough. Thus, the overflow of water from the troughs is producing standing water and saturated soils at the site. As livestock water at the site, the size and functionality of the riparian area created by overflow from the troughs has been reduced. This riparian area has little remaining riparian vegetation, and the soil is compacted and has postholes and hummocks.

Game Spring - Game Spring is developed with pipes leading to two troughs. The current overflow system is not functioning properly because the troughs are not level. Water spills over the troughs into the surrounding area. Since the water spills over the edges of the troughs, standing water and saturated soils are created around the troughs. The overflow pipe leads to a riparian area that is excluded. The enclosure fence is down in multiple places. The enclosure is also smaller than the extent of the riparian area. The riparian vegetation that is not included in the enclosure is heavily grazed. The size and functionality of the spring area has been reduced as livestock water at the site. The amount of riparian vegetation at the site has been reduced and the soil around the troughs and in the riparian area is compacted and has postholes and hummocks.

Hidden Spring - Hidden Spring is developed with pipes leading from the spring source to three troughs. The spring source is excluded, but the enclosure does not include the extent of the spring area. The riparian area in the enclosure is approximately 20 feet by 20 feet, while the riparian area outside the enclosure is approximately 30 feet by 100 feet. A large part of the riparian area is located around the troughs and is not excluded. The enclosure fence is down in multiple places, and livestock graze within the enclosure. Riparian vegetation is present around the spring head, but upland vegetation, including Western juniper is present within the enclosure. The overflow pipe from the troughs does not appear to be functioning properly, contributing to standing water and saturated soils around the troughs. The troughs also appear to be leaking water from their bases. Pedestals, postholes and hummocks are present around the troughs.

Tim Spring - Tim Spring is developed with two spring boxes and a pipe leading to two troughs. The development is not functioning properly, and at the time of the site visit (6/23/04), the troughs were dry. The pipe to the trough is not long enough to reach the trough system. The pipe from the upper spring box is broken and no water was flowing through the portion of the pipe that is connected to the spring box. Dead ground squirrels were in the water in the lower spring box. The spring area is excluded, but the enclosure is down in multiple places. The enclosure does not include the extent of the spring area, and riparian vegetation is also present outside the enclosure. Upland vegetation, including sagebrush, is present within the enclosure. Livestock graze inside the enclosure and there is compaction and postholes within and outside of the enclosure. The size and functionality of the riparian area has been reduced due to the nonfunctional spring development and livestock watering at the site.

DESCRIPTION of PROPOSED ACTION:

The proposed action is to restore proper riparian-wetland function to four spring sites and associated riparian areas. This includes maintaining, repairing, and/or reconstructing spring developments at all of the springs and removing part of a non-functioning development from one spring. Riparian enclosure fences would be maintained and repaired. Extensions to existing riparian enclosures would be built at three of the spring sites. One new livestock watering facility would be constructed at Burro Spring.

ALTERNATIVES:

NO ACTION ALTERNATIVE 1- Under this alternative, no changes in management would be made at the springs and their developments. The size and functionality of the springs and the associated riparian area would continue to decrease with the current level of livestock use.

ALTERNATIVE 2 (PREFERRED PLAN) - Under this alternative, the following actions would be completed:

Burro Spring - Maintain the existing trough system and install new trough and overflow pipe. Clean algae and sediment out of the existing troughs. Cover the first trough in the trough system to reduce algae production. Install larger overflow pipes from the existing troughs to allow movement of water, even when some algae is present. Install an overflow pipe from the second trough in the system to a new trough. The new trough would be located on a bench with an existing wooden platform approximately 150 feet Northwest of the existing troughs. From the new trough, install an overflow pipe that leads additional flow to an existing riparian drainage away from the troughs. Install wildlife "escape" ramps in the troughs.

Game Spring - Maintain the existing trough system and expand and stabilize the riparian enclosure. Clean vegetation and sediment out of existing troughs. Level the troughs to prevent water from spilling over the edges. Place rock

around the troughs, as necessary. Install wildlife "escape" ramps in the troughs. Maintain the riparian exclosure fence, such that it excludes livestock and meets standard requirements for wildlife passage. Extend the exclosure by approximately 100 feet to the North to include the extent of the riparian area.

Hidden Spring - Maintain the existing trough system and expand and stabilize the riparian exclosure. This may require replacing the troughs. Place rock around the troughs, as necessary. Clean algae and sediment out of troughs and install a functioning overflow pipe. Install wildlife "escape" ramps in the troughs. Maintain the riparian exclosure fence, such that it excludes livestock and meets standard requirements for wildlife passage. Extend the exclosure by approximately 150 feet to the North.

Tim Spring - Restore the spring by removing the upper spring development and maintaining the lower spring development. Remove the spring box and the pipeline from the upper spring source. Clean out the lower spring box and extend the pipe to the troughs. Maintain the existing exclosure around the spring source and extend it to the South and East by approximately 100 feet. Maintain the riparian exclosure fence, such that it excludes livestock and meets standard requirements for wildlife passage. The Tim Spring troughs appear to have been dry for an extended period. During this time, livestock have been utilizing other existing water developments. If the lower spring development does not flow water into the troughs after the spring box is cleaned out, the connecting pipeline and troughs will be removed. Currently, Hidden Spring, Moon Lake, and four other waterholes within one mile of the Tim Spring development are available for livestock in this area.

AFFECTED ENVIRONMENT: Burro Spring and Game Spring are isolated springs in a sagebrush steppe community on the West side of Coleman Rim. The springs are located in elevations ranging from approximately 4600 feet to 4700 feet. Hidden Spring and Tim Spring are also located in a sagebrush steppe community, but are located East of Colman Rim, Southeast of Greaser Canyon. These springs are at an elevation of approximately 6500 feet. Riparian areas associated with the springs are approximately 1/4-acre in size, and include a mix of sedges, rushes, and other riparian vegetation. Upland vegetation, such as Western juniper are intermixed with the riparian vegetation.

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS: The potential environmental impacts resulting from the alternatives relative to the following critical resource values were evaluated. The following is a summary of the results:

Critical Element/ Resource Value	Affected		Critical Element/ Resource Value	Affected	
	Yes	No		Yes	No
Air Quality		X	T & E Species		X
ACEC/RNAs		X	Wilderness		X
Cultural Resources	(?)	X	Wild & Scenic Rivers		X
Farmlands, Prime/Unique		X	Hazardous Wastes		X
Floodplains		X	Water Quality		X
Native American Cultural/ Religious Concerns	(?)	X	Wetlands/Riparian Zones	X	
Low Income/ Minority Populations		X	Noxious Weeds		X

There are no wilderness areas, wild and scenic rivers, areas of critical environmental concern, research natural areas, forests, wild horses, paleontology, hazardous waste areas, areas of religious concern, fisheries, or prime and unique farmlands in the immediate project areas. No significant or disproportionate impacts would occur to low income or minority populations. The risk of noxious weed infestation would be low. Neither adverse nor beneficial impacts are anticipated to air quality, lands, floodplains, visual quality, recreation, or minerals and energy resources. Surveys found no threatened or endangered plants or animals.

DESCRIPTION of OTHER IMPACTS: In the long term, the proposed project would have positive effects on the springs and the associated riparian areas. Livestock would be excluded from the springs and their riparian area, lessening compaction, potholes, and hummocks. This would aid in improved capture, storage, and release of water at the site. The size and functionality of the riparian area would increase. This would provide both a water source and a larger area of riparian habitat for wildlife. Livestock management would benefit from the proposed project as well, due to proper functioning spring developments capturing more available water from spring sources in the allotments. In time, the springs would be functioning at a level closer to their potential for the site.

Cultural surveys have been conducted at Burro Spring and Game Spring. Cultural surveys will be conducted at Hidden Spring and Tim Spring before implementation of the proposed project. If cultural sites are found, the project would be altered to mitigate potential impacts.

DESCRIPTION of MITIGATION MEASURES and RESIDUAL IMPACTS:

VISUAL RESOURCE MANAGEMENT CONSIDERATIONS:

Burro Spring - The proposed project is located in a VRM Class III area and meets the objectives of Class III.

Class III Objective. The objective of this class is to partially retain the existing character of the landscape. The level of change to the characteristic landscape should be moderate. Management activities may attract attention but should not dominate the view of the casual observer. Changes should repeat the basic elements found in the predominant natural features of the characteristic landscape.

If feasible, efforts should be made to minimize the visual impacts of the above ground pipeline, troughs and trough cover by using non-reflective materials and/or colors that match the existing landscape/vegetation. This is not a requirement.

Game Spring, Hidden Spring, and Tim Spring - The proposed projects are located in a VRM Class IV area and meet the objectives of Class IV.

Class IV Objectives. The objective of this class is to provide for management activities which require major modifications of the existing character of the landscape. The level of change to the characteristic landscape can be high. These management activities may dominate the view and be the major focus of viewer attention. However, every attempt should be made to minimize the impact of these activities through careful location, minimal disturbance, and repeating the basic elements.

If feasible, efforts should be made to minimize the visual impacts of the above ground pipeline and troughs by using non-reflective materials and/or colors that match the existing landscape/vegetation. This is not a requirement.

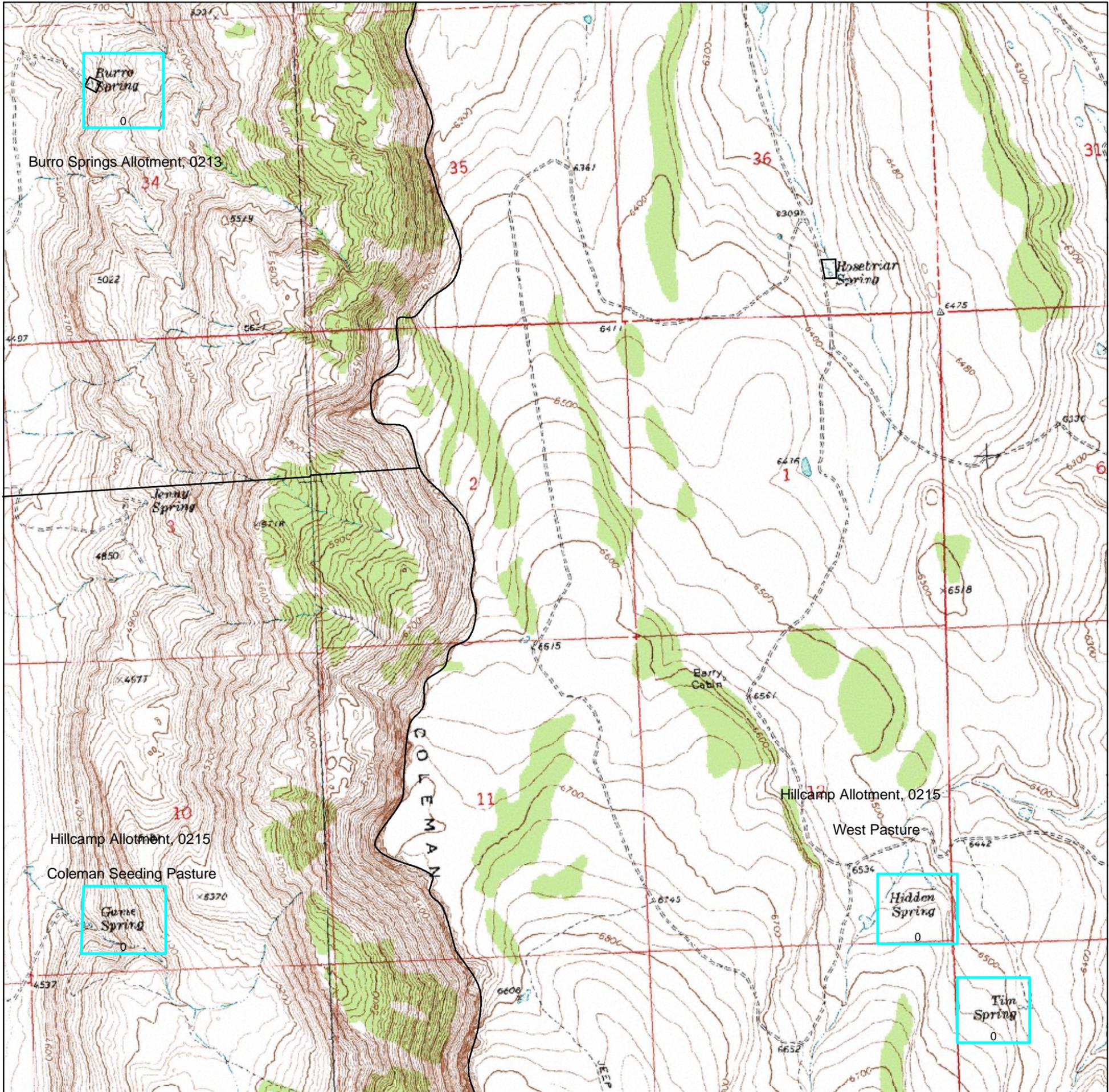
Removal of the troughs for the Tim Spring portion of the proposed project should actually enhance the visual quality of the area.

NOXIOUS WEED CONSIDERATIONS: High priority noxious weeds currently do not exist at these spring sites. Best management practices to reduce the risk of introduction of new weeds would be employed during ground disturbing activities associated with the restoration work. These practices are described in Appendix D of the Lakeview Resource Management Plan/Record of Decision (2003), and the Lakeview Resource Area Integrated Weed Management Environmental Assessment (2004).

PREPARER(S) :

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Erin McConnell	Noxious Weeds
Vern Stofleth	Wildlife

Map 1- Spring Restoration Sites



Legend

Spring_Restoration_Site

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