



United States Department of the Interior

BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT

Yuma Field Office
2555 East Gila Ridge Road
Yuma, AZ 85365
www.az.blm.gov



CATEGORICAL EXCLUSION (CX) FORM

CX-AZ-320-2008-004

Case/Project No.: n/a

PROJECT NAME: *San Luis Fire Rehabilitation*

TECHNICAL REVIEW:

(X)	Program	Reviewer	Signature	Date
X	Air Quality	Reichhardt	/s/ Karen Reichhardt	8/12/08
	Areas of Critical Environmental Concern			
X	Botanical, including T & E Species	Reichhardt	/s/ Karen Reichhardt	8/12/08
	Communications (Dispatch)			
X	Cultural Resources	Arnold	/s/ Sandra Arnold	8/5/08
	Energy Policy			
X	Environmental Justice	Reichhardt	/s/ Karen Reichhardt	8/12/08
	Farm Lands (Prime or Unique)			
X	Fire Management	Dawson	/s/ Erica Dawson	8/4/08
X	Floodplain	Reichhardt	/s/ Karen Reichhardt	8/12/08
	Hazardous Material			
X	Lands/Realty	Briceno	/s/ Vanessa Briceno	8/4/08
	Land Law Examiner			
	Law Enforcement			
	Minerals			
X	Native American Religious Concerns	Arnold	/s/ Sandra Arnold	8/5/08
X	Non-Native Invasive Species	Reichhardt	/s/ Karen Reichhardt	8/12/08
	Operations			
	Recreation			
X	Soils	Oyler	/s/ Roger Oyler	8/4/08
X	Socioeconomic	Reichhardt	/s/ Karen Reichhardt	8/12/08
X	Standards for Rangeland Health	Reichhardt	/s/ Karen Reichhardt	8/12/08
	Surface Protection			
	Visual Resources			
	Wastes, Hazardous or Solid			
X	Water Rights	Reichhardt	/s/ Karen Reichhardt	8/12/08
X	Water Quality, Drinking or Ground	Reichhardt	/s/ Karen Reichhardt	8/12/08
X	Wetlands/Riparian Zones	Reichhardt	/s/ Karen Reichhardt	8/12/08
	Wild & Scenic Rivers			
	Wilderness			
	Wild Horses and Burros			
X	Wildlife including T & E Species	Young	/s/ Jeff Young	8/6/08

Prepared by: _____ /s/ Karen Reichhardt _____
Karen Reichardt, Resources Team Lead

Date: ___ 8/12/08 ___

Reviewed by: _____ /s/Dave Daniels _____
Dave Daniels, Planning & Environmental Coordinator

Date: ___ 8/5/08 ___

Reviewed by: _____ /s/Timothy Duck _____
Tim Duck, Fire Management Officer

Date: ___ 8/12/08 ___

**YUMA FIELD OFFICE
NATIONAL ENVIRONMENTAL POLICY ACT (NEPA)
COMPLIANCE RECORD FOR CATEGORICAL EXCLUSIONS (CX)**

Proposed Action Title/Type: San Luis Fire Rehabilitation Project **NEPA#:** AZ-320-2008-004
Related#: AZA-

Location of Proposed Action: T. 10 S., R. 25 W., Section 26, lots 3, 4, 6 W½SW¼; Section 27 SW¼, SE¼; Section 34 Lot 6 and 8; Section 35 Lots 3 and 4; G&SRM, Yuma County, Arizona.

Description of Proposed Action:

The 68 acre San Luis Fire occurred on October 26, 2007. This fire was controlled on December 17, 2007. Of the 68 acres, 58 acres occurred upon BLM managed lands. An initial Emergency Stabilization Plan was submitted on November 11, 2007. The fire burned through an area known as Hunter's Hole that contained a riparian plant community consisting predominantly of cottonwoods (*Populus fremontii*), willows (*Salix spp.*), mesquite (*Prosopis spp.*), arrowweed (*Pluchea sericea*), salt cedar (*Tamarix ramosissima*), as well as phragmites (*Phragmites australis*), cattails (*Typha spp.*) and bulrush (*Scirpus spp.*) in the marsh areas.

The specific actions associated with this categorical exclusion would involve mechanical treatments within the 58 acre burn area on sites which were predominantly covered with saltcedar and arrowweed (Figure 1). These treatments would include mastication of standing dead salt cedar, resprouting live salt cedar and arrowweed stems with a subsequent subsurface root removal treatment "rootknifing" to discourage salt cedar resprouting. The mastication would involve the use of a rubber tired or tracked vehicle with a mastication head that would cut the standing dead salt cedar, live resprouting salt cedar, and arrowweed down to the surface of the soil and scatter the "chips" sized 12 inches in length or less across the soil surface. The mastication and "rootknifing" treatments would initially reduce the density of the culturally significant species arrowweed at the site; however, this species responds well to disturbance and would vigorously resprout. This temporary reduction in the density of arrowweed would also have the added benefit of allowing other native species as listed in Table 1 to become established. The subsurface root removal treatment would involve a tracked vehicle dragging root rippers across the soil down to a depth of 12 to 18 inches. The root masses would be piled at the perimeter of the treatment area. The root masses would be incorporated into the design and planning of the future proposed Hunter's Hole Concept Plan.

Where appropriate, within the burned area, native species would be established by seeding, plugging, or planting treatments. The site would be analyzed for soil characteristics, especially soil salinity and depth to the water table to determine which species would be suited for the different site conditions found within the burned area. Table 1 indicates the potential native species that would be used for this rehabilitation project.

Table 1. Potential native plant species to be used for rehabilitation.

Plant Species	Scientific Name	Establishment Method	Plant Type
Inland saltgrass	<i>Distichlis spicata</i>	Plug	Grass
Alkali sacaton	<i>Sporobolus airoides</i>	Seed	Grass
Vine Mesquite	<i>Panicum obtusum</i>	Seed	Grass
Four Wing Saltbush	<i>Atriplex canescens</i>	Seed	Shrub
Quailbush	<i>Atriplex lentiformis</i>	Seed	Shrub
Sea purslane	<i>Sesuvium portulacastrum</i>	Seed	Shrub
Salt heliotrope	<i>Heliotropium curassavicum</i>	Seed	Grass
Marsh Fleabane	<i>Sesuvium verrucosum</i>	Seed	Grass
Salicornia	<i>Heliotropium curassavicum</i>	Seed	Grass
Screwbean Mesquite	<i>Pluchea Odorata</i>		Tree
Velvet Mesquite	<i>Prosopis velutina</i>		Tree
Seep Willow	<i>Prosopis pubescens</i>	Seed	Tree
Giant bulrush	<i>Baccharis glutinosa</i>	Seed	Tree
Olney threesquare	<i>Schoenoplectus americanus</i>		Shrub
Creeping Spikerush	<i>Scirpus californicus</i>	Plugs	Shrub
Yerba Manza	<i>Schoenoplectus americanus</i>	Plugs	Grass
Sandbar willow	<i>Eleocharis palustris</i>	Plugs	Grass
Inkweed	<i>Anemopsis californica</i>	Cuttings/Plugs	Shrub
Honey Mesquite	<i>Salix exigua</i>	Cuttings	Tree
Emory baccharis	<i>Baccharis emoryi</i>	Cuttings	Tree
Desert Broom	<i>Baccharis sarothroides</i>	Cuttings	Tree
Mulefat	<i>Baccharis salicifolia</i>	Cuttings	Tree
Wolfberry	<i>Lycium andersonnii</i>	Root Cuttings	Tree
Coyote Willow	<i>Populus exigua</i>	Pole	Tree
Gooding Willow	<i>Populus goodingii</i>	Pole	Tree
Cottonwood	<i>Populus fremontii</i>	Pole	Tree

These native plant establishment treatments would involve wheeled and tracked equipment. Seeding treatments would be broadcast spread with the soil being imprinted with a roller-chopper attachment to improve moisture capture and ensure the seed is in contact with soil that is not salt encrusted. Seeding treatments could also utilize a seed drill to accomplish similar effects. Either treatment would disturb the soil surface to a depth of up to 8 inches. The plug treatments would involve plugs of grass being planted in the soil manually with a shovel or digging bar and cause soil disturbance to a depth of up to 12 inches. Pole planting treatments would occur utilizing an auger or digging bar and poles would be planted to a

depth of up to three feet.

These treatments would be intended to give the native riparian species onsite a competitive advantage and prevent reinvasion and domination of the site by salt cedar until the Hunter’s Hole Concept Plan can be developed and implemented.

PART I - PLAN CONFORMANCE REVIEW. This proposed action is subject to the following land use plan: *Name of Plan:* Yuma District RMP. *Decision and page no.:* 7,8,14,15. *Date approved:* August 1987. This proposed action has been reviewed for conformance with this plan (*43 CFR 1610.5-3, BLM Manual 1601.04.C.2*).

PART II - CATEGORICAL EXCLUSION DETERMINATION

A. Verification of Listing: This proposed action qualifies as a categorical exclusion under Department Manual 516 DM 2, Appendix 1, 1.2 and 1.3.

B. Exception Review: 516 DM 2, Appendix 2 provides for the review of the following criteria to determine if exceptions apply to this project.

IMPORTANT: Appropriate staff should determine exception, comment and initial for concurrence. If exceptions apply to the action or project, and existing NEPA documentation does not address the exception, then further NEPA analysis is required.

CRITERIA	COMMENT (yes/no)	STAFF INITIAL
1. Has significant adverse effects on public health and safety.	NO	
2. Adversely affects unique geographic characteristics as historic or cultural resources, parks, recreation or refuge lands, wilderness areas, wilderness study areas, wild and scenic rivers, sole or principal drinking water aquifers, prime farmlands, wetlands, flood plains, or ecologically significant or critical areas, including those listed on the Department of the Interior National Register of Natural Landmarks.	NO	
3. Has highly controversial environmental effects.	NO	
4. Has highly uncertain and potentially significant environmental effects or involves unique or unknown environmental risks.	NO	
5. Establishes a precedent for future action or represents a decision in principle about a future action with potentially significant environmental effects.	NO	
6. Is related to other actions with individually insignificant, but cumulatively significant effects.	NO	
7. Adversely affects properties listed or eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic places.	NO	
8. Adversely affects a species listed or proposed to be listed in the List of Endangered or Threatened Species or adversely affects the species critical habitat.	NO	
9. Requires compliance with Executive Order 11988 Flood Plain Management, 11990 Protection for Wetlands, or the Fish and Wildlife Coordination Act.	NO	

10. Threatens to violate a Federal, State, local, or Tribal law or requirement imposed for the protection of the environment	NO	
--	----	--

PART III - SIGNATURES FOR COMPLIANCE

PREPARER: _____/s/ Karen Reichhardt_____ DATE: ____ 8/12/08_____

PLANNING/ENVIRONMENTAL SPECIALIST: ____/s/Dave Daniels_____ DATE: ____ 8/5/08_____

PART IV - DECISION. I have reviewed this plan conformance and NEPA compliance record and have determined that the proposed project is in conformance with the approved land use plan and that no further environmental analysis is required. It is my decision to implement the project, as described, with the mitigation measures identified below.

MITIGATION MEASURES/OTHER REMARKS:

Required Stipulations

The standard operating procedures outlined in the Vegetation Treatments on BLM Lands in Western U.S. Final Programmatic Environmental Report (pp. 2.20-2.49) would be followed. These actions would prevent the spread of noxious weeds and or invasive species.

Biological Stipulations

The prescription areas have been inventoried for Threatened and Endangered Species. A qualified biologist would be on site during all construction activities to monitor compliance. If a listed species is observed during construction or preparation, all work in the area will stop and will not be allowed to resume if there is any possibility that activities could adversely affect the species. If it is determined that the project would affect any listed species, the project would halt and consultation with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service would occur.

The project would follow applicable Conservation Measures from the *Arizona Statewide Land Use Plan Amendment for Fire, Fuels, and Air Quality Management* (September 2004). Conservation measures WF-7 and CR-2 would be followed after the inception of the first treatment season. The treatment season would extend until April 30, 2008. All other treatment seasons would follow the timeframes specified in WF-7 and CR-2. Applicable conservation measures are listed below with alpha-numeric coding.

Fuels Treatments

FT-1 Biologists will be involved in the development of prescribed burn plans and vegetation treatment plans to minimize effects to Federally protected species and their habitats within, adjacent to, and downstream from proposed project sites. Biologists will consider the protection of seasonal and spatial needs of Federally protected species (*e.g.*, avoiding or protecting important areas or structures and maintaining adequate patches of key habitat components) during project planning and implementation.

FT-3 Pre-project surveys and clearances (biological evaluations/assessments) for Federally protected species will be required for each project site before implementation. All applicable Conservation measures will be applied to areas with unsurveyed suitable habitat for Federally protected species, until a survey has been conducted by qualified personnel to clear the area for the treatment activity.

FT-4 Use of motorized vehicles during prescribed burns or other fuels treatment activities in suitable or occupied habitat will be restricted, to the extent feasible, to existing roads, trails, washes, and temporary fuelbreaks or site-access routes. If off-road travel is deemed necessary, all cross-country travel paths will be surveyed prior to use and will be closed and rehabilitated after the prescribed burn or fuels treatment project is completed.

Riparian

RA-13 Fire management treatments within or adjacent to riparian and aquatic habitats will be designed to provide long-term benefits to aquatic and riparian resources by reducing threats associated with dewatering and surface disturbance, or by improving the condition of the watershed and enhancing watershed function.

Southwestern Willow Flycatcher

WF-1 Implement the Conservation Measures for Fire Management Activities in Riparian and Aquatic Habitats.

WF-4 Implement activities to reduce hazardous fuels or improve riparian habitats (prescribed burning or vegetation treatments) within occupied or unsurveyed suitable habitat for southwestern willow flycatchers only during the non-breeding season (October 1 to March 31).

WF-5 Avoid developing access roads that would result in fragmentation or a reduction in habitat quality. Close and rehabilitate all roads that were necessary for project implementation (see **RR-5**).

WF-7 Vegetation treatment projects adjacent to occupied or unsurveyed suitable habitat will only be conducted when willow flycatchers are not present (October 1 – March 31).

Yuma Clapper Rail

CR-1 Implement the Conservation Measures for Fire Management Activities in Riparian and Aquatic Habitats.

CR-2 Any prescribed fire or vegetation treatment project in occupied or suitable marsh habitat would only occur between September 1 and March 15 to avoid the Yuma clapper rail breeding and molting seasons.

Bald Eagle

BE-4 No tree cutting within the area immediately around winter roost sites as determined by BLM biologists.

BE-7 Provide reasonable protective measures so fire prescription or fuels treatment will not consume dominant, large trees as identified by the Resource Advisor or qualified biologist approved by BLM within ½ mile of known nests and roosts of bald eagles. Pretreatment efforts should provide reasonable protection of identified nesting and roosting trees (see Conservation Measure FT-4).

Yellow Billed Cuckoo

YC-1 Implement the Conservation Measures for Fire Management Activities in Riparian and Aquatic Habitats.

Cultural Resource Stipulations

The onsite BLM supervisor will notify the contractor of cultural resource laws and regulations, and monitor contractor compliance.

Project implementation will avoid adverse impacts to any historic resources, such as features associated with the canal system, railroad, utility lines, and levees.

Should cultural and/or paleontological resources be encountered during project ground-disturbing activities, work will cease in the area of the discovery and the YFO will be notified immediately. Work may not resume until written authorization to proceed is issued by BLM.

The BLM is coordinating and consulting with approximately 15 Native American tribes and groups for this proposed action. Pursuant to applicable cultural resource laws and regulations, the proposed action will not be implemented until input from tribal representatives has been considered and addressed as appropriate.

National Historic Preservation Act

Pursuant to Section 106 and 36 CFR 800, BLM has determined that this undertaking would have no effect on historic properties. The Area of Potential Effect was inventoried for cultural resources, and none were identified (see BLM Cultural Resource Project Record BLM-AZ-320-2008-016). This proposed action is covered under the National Programmatic Agreement and Arizona Protocol, and no further consultation with the Arizona State Historic Preservation Office or the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation is required.

Endangered Species Act

This proposed action will not affect a federally listed species or designated critical habitat. That is, the BLM has made a “no effect” determination on all federally listed species and designated critical habitat that may reasonably occur within Yuma Field Office because the proposed action:

would not occur in the habitat of federally listed species or designated critical habitat

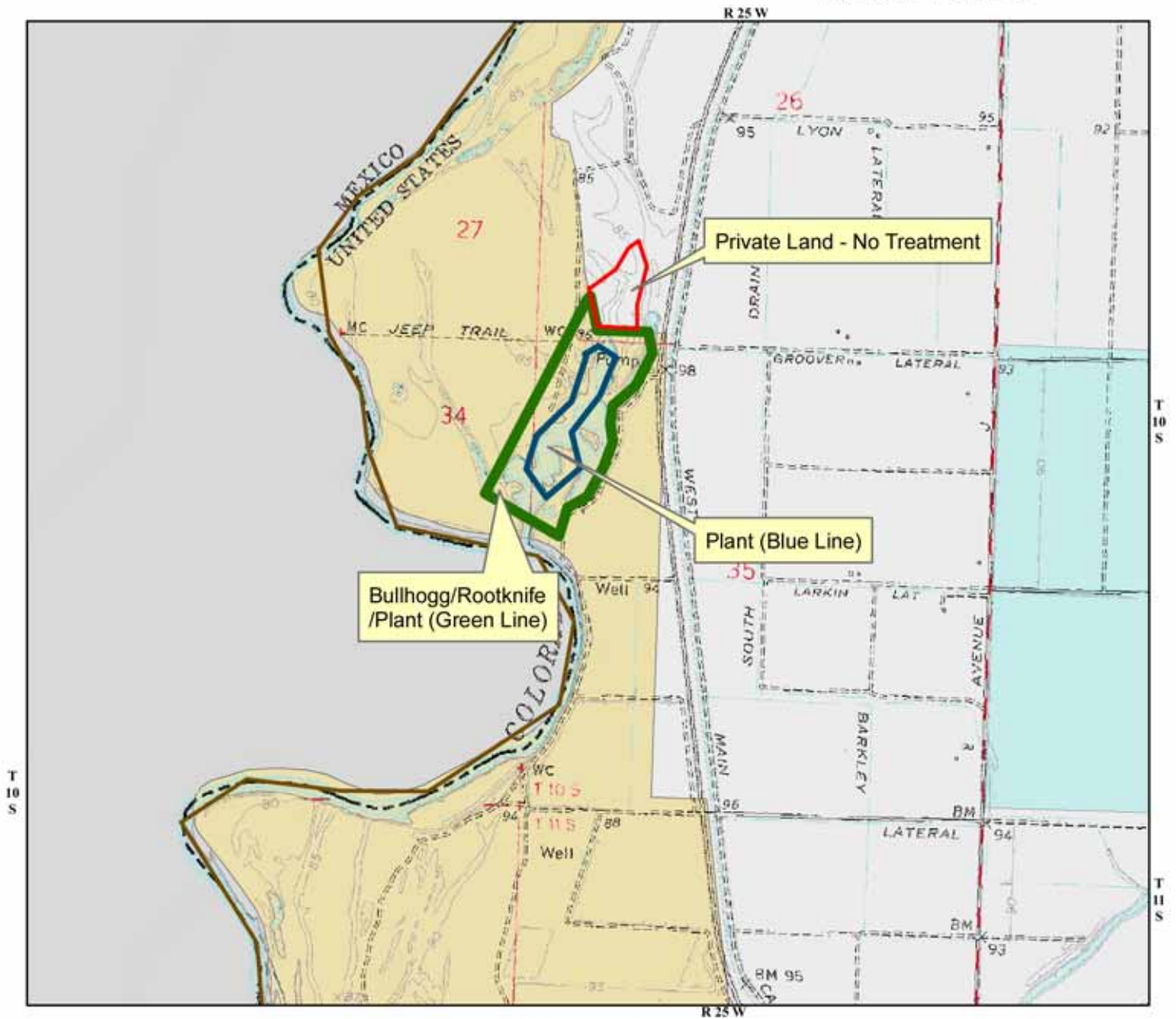
would not affect individuals of a federally listed species

other _____

This proposed action “may affect”, but “is not likely adversely affect” a federally listed species or designated critical habitat because the effects are expected to be discountable, insignificant, or completely beneficial (see attached U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service concurrence letter).

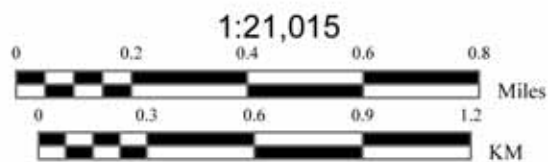
APPROVING OFFICIAL: /s/James Shoaff

DATE: 8/4/08



Legend

- | | | | |
|---------------------------|---|--------------------------------|--|
| Private Lands | Bureau of Land Management (BLM) | BLM Wilderness Area | BLM National Monument |
| State Lands | National Forest Lands (USFS) | Forest Service Wilderness Area | National Conservation Area |
| State Wildlife Area | National Park Service (NPS) | NPS Wilderness Area | Military Reservations/Corps of Engineers |
| City, State, County Parks | USFW Service, National Wildlife Refuges | USFW Service Wilderness Area | Bureau of Reclamation (BOR) |
| County Lands | Indian Lands or Reservations | | |



United States Department of the Interior
Bureau of Land Management
Arizona State Office

Map created on May 14, 2008
Land Status Updated February 20, 2007



CAUTION:
Land ownership data is derived from less accurate data than the 1:24000 scale base map. Therefore, land ownership may not be shown for parcels smaller than 40 acres, and land ownership lines may have plotting errors due to source data.

No warranty is made by the Bureau of Land Management for the use of the data for purposes not intended by the BLM.