

## Attachment 10E(1)

### Explanatory Note for the Bureau of Land Management November 5, 2010

Attached is the Bureau of Land Management's (BLM) National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) report for projects that are funded under Section 1609 (c) of the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 (ARRA). The BLM NEPA report documents the NEPA status for all BLM ARRA projects through September 30, 2010.

The NEPA reporting procedures and requirements have been completed for BLM ARRA projects. NEPA compliance for BLM ARRA funded projects consist of the following NEPA actions: Categorical Exclusions (CEs), Environmental Assessments (EAs), and Environmental Impact Statements (EISs).

BLM has completed all the NEPA actions (100%) that were associated with Recovery Act projects. The BLM has 818 NEPA actions for Recovery Act projects for 610 ARRA projects. In our previous report, we reported 464 actions. After follow-up discussions with CEQ, we determined that BLM was under reporting the number of NEPA actions. We historically had been reporting only one action per project when in some cases there were multiple NEPA actions associated with each project. The correct number of NEPA actions associated with each project is now reflected in our *NEPA ARRA Section 1609 Report Data* submission.

The BLM submits the following explanations summarizing BLM's changes from the previous report.

Progress towards obligating funds - For the period ending 6/30/2010, we had obligated \$276,230,015. At the end of this reporting period (9/30/2010), we have obligated \$296,692,893. This is an increase of \$20,462,878 in a 3 month period. The amounts reflected on Recovery.gov are lower than the amounts reflected in this report. This report includes agreements with other agencies to accomplish various components of the ARRA projects which are not included in the amounts reported on Recovery.gov.

Total ARRA appropriations for MLR and Construction Funds – The appropriation totals reflected in this report are only for the project categories and do not include the funds allocated towards administrative support of ARRA.

NEPA Not Applicable – The BLM has a total of 14 projects where NEPA was determined to be not applicable. This is a decrease of 141 projects (previous total was 155). After discussions with CEQ, we determined that many of the project actions that we were reporting not applicable on, actually are covered under a categorical exclusion. The 14 ARRA projects that are still listed as not applicable are in the *Remediation of Abandoned Mines* category and are now covered under the Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation, and Liability Act (CERCLA) and not NEPA.

Withdrawn Projects - The BLM withdrew nine projects this quarter due to scheduling issues and overbudget bids encountered during the funding process. No project was withdrawn because of environmental or NEPA-related issues.

**ARRA Project example(s) that benefitted from the NEPA process**

The Lakeview District's Klamath Falls Resource Area (KFRA) submitted two American Recovery and Reinvestment Act biomass utilization projects totaling \$1,400,000 (LLORL00000 LRHR10000 LXHAB1310000 & LXHAB1380000). Implementation of these projects hinged on completing a thorough NEPA analysis (EAs) on approximately 5,000+ acres of cut and piled western juniper and the subsequent decision on what to do with the piles. The first EA, 2008 Juniper Disposal EA No. OR 014-08-06, was signed on June 11, 2009, and the second EA, 2009 Juniper Disposal EA No. DOI-BLM-OR-L040-2009-0008, was signed on February 5, 2010. Under the leadership of Donald Holmstrom, Field Manager for the KFRA, the interdisciplinary team analyzed three alternatives; leave the piles lay, burn the piles, or utilize all or a portion of the piles for a variety of forest products including biomass. The two EAs analyzed the potential resource impacts as a result of the three proposed alternatives. Some of the key resource issues analyzed included; noxious weeds, soils, air quality, and socioeconomic benefits.

Since the initiation of the National Fire Plan, the Lakeview District has been aggressively treating juniper woodlands for primarily two purposes; rangeland restoration and fuel hazard reduction. Over the past 10 years, the KFRA has treated over 30,000 acres of western juniper woodlands. With a growing emphasis on biomass utilization and concerns to reduce green house gases resulting from smoke emissions, the Lakeview District has been working with local entrepreneurs, industry, and the general public to develop markets for western juniper. Through a combination of available funding, stewardship contracting, and innovative contractors, the KFRA has been successful in utilizing western juniper since 2004. The EAs and NEPA assisted the resource area specialists in determining areas where it would be ecologically appropriate to remove the juniper. Of the 5,000+ acres analyzed in the EAs, the decision was made to utilize approximately 3,000 acres and burn approximately 2,000 acres.

The public was notified about these proposed treatments and public comments were received and incorporated. No protests or appeals were received on these decisions.

Key contacts regarding this project and the NEPA process are: Madeline Campbell (541-885-4130) and Shane Durant (541-885-4123).

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