

Interim
Documentation of Land Use Plan Conformance and NEPA Adequacy
(DNA)
Danebo Demonstration Area Treatment Plots

U.S. Department of the Interior
Bureau of Land Management
Eugene District Office

A. Description of the Proposed Action

This proposed action would allow the BLM to continue wetland vegetation research at the West Eugene Wetland Project Danebo Demonstration Area Treatment Plots. The West Eugene Wetlands (WEW) Project is a cooperative venture by the Eugene District, Bureau of Land Management (BLM), to protect and restore historic wetland ecosystems in the southern Willamette Valley of Oregon. This unique project involves federal, state and local agencies and organizations in partnership to manage lands and resources in an urban area for multiple public benefits. Major partners in the WEW Project include the BLM, City of Eugene, The Nature Conservancy, and the Lane Council of Governments.

The Danebo Demonstration Area Treatment Plots are situated in a 3-acre tufted hairgrass (*Deschampsia cespitosa*) prairie near the corner of Danebo Road and West 11th Avenue. The proposed action would continue a vegetation management research project initiated in 1994. The project assesses native wetland plant responses to three treatments, including removal of woody shrubs and vines, haying, and prescribed burning of small-scale research plots (approximately 5 by 15 meters). These activities were described in detail and evaluated under Environmental Assessment No. OR090-94-29.

B. Land Use Plan (LUP) Conformance

LUP Name: West Eugene Wetlands Plan (Dec. 1992) Date Approved March 23, 1993*

Other document: Eugene District Record of Decision and Resource Management Plan (RMP)
Date Approved May 23, 1995

* The West Eugene Wetlands Plan (WEWP), a City of Eugene land use planning document, was formally adopted by the Bureau as a land use plan under 43 CFR 1610.5-7 in March 1993, and guides management actions within the West Eugene Wetlands Plan area. The proposed action is in conformance with the West Eugene Wetlands Plan.

: The proposed action is in conformance with the LUP, even though it is not specifically provided for, because it is clearly consistent with the following LUP decisions (objectives, terms, and conditions):

1. Improved Plant and Animal Habitats (WEWP p. 6). The proposed action is a scientific research experiment to determine appropriate management for enhancing and restoring native Willamette Valley prairie grassland plant communities.
2. Recommended Action 3.4 (WEWP p. 24) and Policy 7.1 (WEWP p. 63). The proposed action will provide information for the development of native Willamette Valley wetland prairie restoration policy and techniques, particularly for the removal of invasive nonnative plants and restoration of native plant communities (WEWP p. 74).
3. Eugene District Record of Decision and Resource Management Plan (p. 16). This RMP specifies that the West Eugene Wetlands Plan governs the management of BLM lands within the “West Eugene Wetlands Study Area” shown on Map 2, page 17 of the WEWP. Except for the provisions of the RMP found in the Resource Program sections for Energy and Minerals, Land Tenure Adjustments, Rights-of-Way, and Access and Withdrawals, this RMP does not apply to the West Eugene Wetlands.

C. Applicable NEPA documents and other related documents that cover the proposed action.

List by name and date all applicable NEPA documents that cover the proposed action.

<u>Danebo Demonstration Area Treatment Plots, EA No. OR090-94-29</u>	<u>June 24, 1994</u>
<u>West Eugene Wetlands Danebo Demonstration Area, EA No. OR090-95-13</u>	<u>May 16, 1995</u>

D. NEPA Adequacy Criteria

1. Is the current proposed action substantially the same action (or is a part of that action) as previously analyzed? Is the current proposed action located at a site specifically analyzed in an existing document?

Yes. The proposed action would continue the same research project that was analyzed under Environmental Assessment (EA) No. OR090-94-29. The proposed action is located at the same treatment plots identified in that EA.

2. Is the range of alternatives analyzed in the existing NEPA document(s) appropriate with respect to the current proposed action, given current environmental concerns, interests, and resource values?

Yes. Willamette Valley wetlands and grassland prairies evolved with frequent fires. The questions

addressed by this research are expected to help the BLM and other cooperating parties determine the best management techniques for maintaining these native communities under modern conditions within the West Eugene Wetlands project area. Three alternatives were identified within EA No. OR090-94-29. Alternative A was adopted, and included three treatments (plus control plots). Alternative B proposed to conduct all treatments except the prescribed fire treatment. Alternative C was a no action alternative. Potential issues analyzed included air quality, encroachment of woody vegetation into native prairie communities, and the need to answer management questions; these issues are still current and no new issues have arisen.

3. Is the existing analysis valid in light of any new information or circumstances?

Yes. There is increasing evidence that Willamette Valley prairies require periodic fires to prevent encroachment by shrubs and trees, and that native wetland communities will be lost without appropriate management. The proposed continuation of this research project is an important part of answering questions regarding best management techniques.

4. Do the methodology and analytical approach used in the existing NEPA document(s) continue to be appropriate for the current proposed action?

Yes. The current proposed action is identical to that previously analyzed. The methodology and analytical approach used in the existing NEPA documents are still applicable.

5. Are the direct and indirect impacts of the current proposed action substantially unchanged from those identified in the existing NEPA document(s)? Does the existing NEPA document analyze site-specific impacts related to the current proposed action?

Yes. The direct and indirect impacts of the current proposed action are anticipated to be identical to those identified in the existing NEPA documents. The existing NEPA document analyzes potential site-specific impacts to plants, wildlife, cultural resources, threatened and endangered species, and air quality. Mitigation of soil disturbance is discussed in the existing document, and is incorporated into the timing and design of the proposed action.

6. Are the cumulative impacts that would result from implementation of the current proposed action substantially unchanged from those analyzed in the existing NEPA document(s)?

Yes. Cumulative impacts are expected to be unchanged from those analyzed in the existing NEPA documents. The BLM anticipates the cumulative impacts of these treatments to be beneficial to the native prairie composition of this site. Air pollution impacts are not expected to exceed Department of Environmental Quality ambient air pollution standards during the implementation of prescribed fire in the five designated burn plots (each plot is 5 by 15 meters).

7. Are the public involvement and interagency review associated with existing NEPA document(s) adequate for the current proposed action?

Yes. The existing NEPA documents were reviewed by specialists from The Nature Conservancy and researchers from the Botany Department of Oregon State University. They were advertised in the Eugene Register Guard, and the BLM provided for a 30-day public comment period prior to issuing decisions. Copies of the proposed EAs were sent to interested parties, including the Oregon Natural Resources Council, Confederated Tribes of Coos, Lower Umpqua, and Siuslaw Indians, the Pacific Rivers Council, and others.

E. Interdisciplinary Analysis: Identify those team members conducting or participating in the NEPA analysis and preparation of this worksheet.

<u>Name</u>	<u>Title</u>
Jeanne Ponzetti	Botanist, BLM
Kathy Pendergrass	Botanist, BLM
Ryan Turner	Botanist, BLM
Gary Hoppe	Planner, BLM
Nancy Wogen	Botanist, BLM
Nancy Ashlock	Asst. Fire Management Officer, BLM

Conclusion

: Based on the review documented above, I conclude that this proposal conforms to the applicable land use plan and that the NEPA documentation fully covers the proposed action and constitutes BLM’s compliance with the requirements of NEPA

/S/ Diana Bus
Signature of the Responsible Official

8-1-00
Date

Note: The signed Conclusion on this Worksheet is part of an interim step in the BLM’s internal decision process and does not constitute an appealable decision.

**United States Department of the Interior
Bureau of Land Management, Eugene District Office**

DECISION RECORD

Decision and Rationale

Based on the information presented in the previous Environmental Assessment No. OR090-94-29, the previous Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI), and the current Danebo Demonstration Area Treatment Plots Documentation of Land Use Plan Conformance and NEPA Adequacy, my decision is to continue with the proposed action, described as Alternative A.

It is my decision to implement this project because it will result in the enhancement and restoration of wetlands; control invasive nonnative and woody plant species; and provide valuable information regarding best management practices for maintenance and restoration of native wetland prairies. Alternative A best meets the objectives of the proposed action. This project may help determine if fire is critical to the maintenance of native Willamette Valley prairie communities only if prescribed fire treatments are included in the research project.

Prescribed fire would be conducted in a manner consistent with State and local smoke management regulations, and in accordance with approved burn plans. This action would occur in late August or September, when the clay soils of the prairie are dry and hard, and can support fire-fighting equipment and personnel. Fire control equipment, personnel and vehicles would be carefully managed to avoid impacts to the native prairie communities.

Administrative Review Opportunities

The decision to implement this project may be appealed to the Office of Hearings and Appeals, Office of the Secretary, U.S. Department of the Interior, in accordance with the regulations contained in 43 CFR Part 4. If an appeal is taken, the notice of appeal must be filed in this office within 30 days of the publication of the notice of this decision in the Eugene Register-Guard for transmittal to the Board. A copy of the notice of appeal and any statement of reasons, written arguments, or briefs must also be served upon the Regional Solicitor, Pacific Northwest Region, U.S. Department of the Interior, 500 NE Multnomah Street, Suite 607, Portland, Oregon, 97323, within the same time frame. In taking an appeal, there must be strict compliance with the regulations. In accordance with 43 CFR 4.21, an appellant has the right to petition the Office of Hearing and Appeals to stay the implementation of the decision; however, an appellant must show standing and present reasons for requesting a stay of the decision. The petition for stay must be filed together with a timely notice of appeal (43 CFR 4.21(a)(2)).

Approved by: /S/ Diana Bus _____ Date: 8-1-00 _____
Field Manager, Coast Range Resource Area