



# United States Department of the Interior

## BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT

Elko Field Office  
3900 E. Idaho St.  
Elko, Nevada 89803-4611  
<http://www.nv.blm.gov>

In Reply Refer To:  
2824 (NV014)

RECEIVED  
SEP 02 2003  
DEPARTMENT OF ADMINISTRATION  
OFFICE OF THE DIRECTOR  
BUDGET AND PLANNING DIVISION

Dear Interested Public:

Based on input received through the consultation, coordination, and cooperation process and after reviewing Western Watershed Project and Committee for Idaho's High Desert protest points and on the analysis of the potential impacts resulting from implementation of the proposed action, it is my **Final Full Force and Effect Decision** to:

Implement the Proposed action described within the South Fork Little Humboldt River Basin, Little Humboldt Allotment Hazardous Fuels Reduction Project as described in the EA (BLM/EK/PL2003/004). The specific objectives of the proposed action include:

1. Reduce existing foliar cover of mountain big sagebrush (*Artemisia tridentata* spp.) within the project area to 10-20% foliar cover for the benefit of wildlife, including sage grouse. Shrub foliar cover ranged from 32 to 55% in the summer of 1997.
2. Improve habitat diversity for wildlife by creating small areas of early or mid successional stages of ecological condition within range sites currently in late seral or potential natural community.
3. Break up contiguous fuels to reduce the potential for catastrophic fire within the basin.
4. Create foraging areas for livestock away from surrounding riparian areas.

The proposed action consists of using Spike 20P to thin mountain big sagebrush and/or prescribed fire to create mosaics of burned vegetation within specific treatment block boundaries. All treatments would take place within the North and South Basin Pastures of the SFLHR Basin portion of the Little Humboldt Allotment. Up to 1,500 acres in the South Basin Pasture (17%) and 500 acres in the North Basin Pasture (10%) are proposed for treatment. Up to 1,500 acres of the treatment would be with Spike 20P, and up to 500 acres in the South Basin Pasture would be burned. No prescribed fire treatment would be used in the North Basin Pasture. Aspen will not be treated with fire or Spike 20P.

The treatments would be conducted while the two pastures are closed to livestock grazing until they reach specific riparian objectives described in the Little Humboldt Allotment Evaluation. Any burned areas within the South Basin Pasture would have at least one year of rest, depending upon when the pastures achieve management objectives. Spike 20P treatment areas change

gradually over a period of years as mountain big sagebrush dies as a result of Spike 20P, and is not as dependent upon rest to achieve restoration objectives of 15-20% foliar cover from its current 35-50%.

The action is needed to reduce fuel loading and the hazard of a major fire near the town of Midas and the Midas Mine and to increase the ability to manage wildland fires in the locality. The project would also reduce the risk and hazards of uncontrolled wildfire in the area that could impact Lahontan cutthroat trout (LCT), a Federally listed threatened species. LCT streams within the SFLHR Basin are at substantial risk of risk of wildfire burning vegetation within the steep, narrow canyons within the basin and increasing the risk of serious erosion and other damage due to wildlife. The extensive stands of tall, dense mountain big sagebrush are a substantial risk for a rapidly moving fire in an area difficult to access.

Therefore: after a thorough review and consideration of all protest points, it my **Final Full Force and Effect Decision** to implement the proposed action for the South Fork Little Humboldt River Basin Hazardous Fuels Treatment Project.

This wildfire management decision is issued under 43 CFR 4190.1 and is effective immediately. The BLM has made the determination that the vegetation, soil, or other resources on the public lands are at substantial risk of wildfire due to drought, fuels buildup, or other reasons, or immediate risk of erosion or other damage due to wildfire. Thus, notwithstanding the provisions of 43 CFR 4.21 (a)(1), filing a notice of appeal under 43 CFR Part 4 does not automatically suspend the effect of the decision. The Interior Board of Land Appeals must decide an appeal of this decision within 60 days after all pleadings have been filed, and within 180 days after the appeal is filed. (43 CFR 4.416.

Sincerely,



CLINTON R. OKE  
Assistant Field Manager  
Renewable Resources

cc:

Barrick Goldstrike Mines, Inc.  
Bureau of Land Management, Winnemucca, NV  
Commission for the Preservation of Wild Horses  
Duane Erickson  
Elko County Board of Commissioners  
Ellison Ranching Company  
Farm Credit Service  
Federal Land Bank  
Friends of Nevada Wilderness  
Friends of Nevada Wildlife  
Funds for Animals, New York, NY  
Funds for Animals, Jackson, WY.  
Gene Bray  
Hawkwatch International  
Humboldt County Commissioners  
Intermountain Range Consultants  
Kenneth Buckingham  
National Audubon Society, Washington, D.C.  
Natural Resources Defense Council  
Nevada Cattlemen's Association/Nevada Land Action Association  
Nevada Department of Wildlife, Elko NV. Steve Foree  
Nevada Outdoor Recreation Association  
Nevada State Clearinghouse  
Red Rock Audubon Society  
Roger McGinty  
Resource Concepts, Inc.  
Paul Bottari  
Sierra Club, Reno, NV. Marjorie Sill  
Sierra Club, Reno, NV. Rose Strickland  
Sierra Club, Washington, D.C.  
The Wilderness Society  
U.S. Forest Service, Mountain City, NV  
Wilderness Impact Research Foundation  
Wild Horse Organized Assistance