

# **Decision Record and Finding of No Significant Impact**

## **Environmental Assessment No. CO-800-2006-102 Lowry Pueblo (5MT1566) Fuels Reduction Project**

### **1.0 DECISION**

It is my decision to approve the proposed action to mechanically treat 40 acres of hazardous fuels at Lowry Pueblo and test the effectiveness of the Plateau herbicide on cheatgrass.

This decision approves the following specific activities:

- Use a combination of hydro-ax mastication and hand-thinning over approximately 40 acres of the analysis area.
- Limited pile burning may occur in some remote and non-sensitive areas.
- Treatment units would be seeded with a native mix prior to mechanical implementation.
- Fine grassy fuels in the center core area would be cut annually.
- Herbicide treatment of about five acres would occur around the Pueblo and picnic areas.

I have reviewed the environmental assessment prepared for this proposed action, including the analyses of potentially significant environmental impacts. I have determined that the proposed action is in conformance with the applicable land use plan, Monument Proclamation and BLM Interim Management for All National Monuments.

### **2.0 FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT**

My review of the analysis of the environmental consequences which are displayed in the environmental assessment for this project, my understanding of the level of anticipated effects, and my familiarity with projects similar in nature, indicates to me that this is not a major federal action as defined in 40 CFR 1508.18.

I considered the 10 factors required for significance determinations under 40 CFR 1508.27. I have determined that no significant effects on the quality of the human, biological or physical environment (as defined at 40 CFR 1508.27) are anticipated within either the context or intensity of the selected alternative.

### **3.0 ALTERNATIVES CONSIDERED**

#### 1. Proposed Action

- Use a combination of hydro-ax mastication and hand-thinning over approximately 40 acres of the analysis area.
- Conduct limited pile burning in some remote and non-sensitive areas.
- Seed treatment areas with a native mix prior to mechanical implementation.
- Fine grassy fuels in the center core area would be cut annually.
- Herbicide treatment of about five acres would occur around the Pueblo and picnic areas.

#### 2. No Action Alternative

- Hazardous fuel reduction and the vegetative manipulation of the proposed project area would not occur.
- The effectiveness of the Plateau herbicide would not be evaluated on 5 acres.

No other alternatives were carried forward for analysis.

### **4.0 RATIONALE FOR MY DECISION**

I have determined that the proposed action is the most reasonable alternative. I have determined that this action will not have significant impacts on the human environment and an EIS is not required. This decision is in conformance with the San Juan/San Miguel Resource Management Plan (1985), the Monument Proclamation (June 2000) and the BLM Interim Guidance for All National Monuments.

I considered the No Action alternative. I determined that the proposed action was the best choice because it would protect valuable cultural and ecological resources while meeting the purpose and need of the project. Selecting the No Action alternative would have left the Lowry Pueblo site at risk of damage from high-severity wildfire and therefore is contrary to the land use plan and Monument Proclamation.

### **5.0 PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT**

The project has been published in the quarterly issues of the San Juan Public Lands Schedule of Proposed Actions since October 2006. A news release was distributed to media outlets on November 27, 2006. Further collaboration occurred with the Colorado State Forest Service, Montezuma County Commissioners, and the Montezuma County Sheriff. A comment letter from the San Juan Citizens Alliance regarding the Lowry Pueblo fuels project was received and is on file in the project folder. Concerns were addressed during a field trip to the site on 4/23/2007.

## 6.0 APPEALS

This decision approving the Lowry Pueblo Fuels Reduction is subject to administrative appeal.

In accordance with 43 CFR 4.411 and 4.413, you may request a State Director Review of my decision for this project. This request must be made in writing within 30 business days from the date of approval.

The request should be sent to:  
Colorado State Director  
2850 Youngfield Street  
Lakewood, Colorado 80215-7076

The decision of the State Director may then be appealed to the Interior Board of Land Appeals in accordance with 43 CFR 4.412 and 4.413.

Any Notice of Appeal must be postmarked or received by the Appeal Deciding Officer- Mark Stiles, San Juan Public Lands Center, 15 Burnett Court, Durango, CO 81301, within 30 calendar days of the date of this decision. A copy of the appeal must also be sent to the Regional Solicitor, Rocky Mountain Region, 755 Parfet Street, Suite 151, Lakewood, CO 80215.

Within 30 days after filing the Notice of Appeal, a complete statement of reasons why the appeal is being filed must be received at the above addresses. The appellant has the burden of showing that the decision appealed is in error.

Appeals must meet current requirements of 43 CFR 4.410-4.413. United States Department of the Interior Form 1842-1 describes appeal procedures in more detail.

**Authorizing Official:** \_\_\_\_\_

**LouAnn Jacobson**  
**Manager, Canyons of the Ancients National Monument**

**Date:** \_\_\_\_\_