

**FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT
AND
DECISION RECORD**

**Environmental Assessment AZ-130-2008-0031
Brome Research
Grand Canyon – Parashant National Monument/Arizona Strip District
Bureau of Land Management
345 East Riverside Drive
St. George, Utah 84790
435-688-3200**

September 12, 2008

FONSI: Based on the analysis of potential environmental impacts contained in the attached environmental assessment (EA-AZ-130-2008-0031), and with due consideration of public response, the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) has determined that the proposed action will not have a significant effect on the human environment and does not constitute an action that normally requires the preparation of an environmental impact statement. An environmental impact statement, therefore, is not required.

Negative environmental impacts that could occur are minor to negligible in effect. There are no unmitigated adverse impacts on public health, public safety, threatened or endangered species, sites or districts listed in or eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places, or other unique characteristics of the region.

There are no highly uncertain or controversial impacts identified. Due to the small spatial scale of the project, there are no unique or unknown risks or significant cumulative effects. Implementation of the action would not violate any federal, state, or local environmental protection law. Therefore, in accordance with the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969, and regulations of the Council on Environmental Quality (40 CFR 1508.9), an environmental impact statement will not be prepared for this project.

DECISION: It is my decision to implement the Brome Research project on the Grand Canyon – Parashant National Monument, as described in the Proposed Action, Alternative A. of EA-AZ-130-2008-0031. The BLM proposes to assist investigators from the USFS Rocky Mountain Research Station and the USGS in installing different brome research treatments.

The first proposal consists of various research treatments to test and compare the effectiveness of biological and herbicide brome control techniques. The proposed research component compares the results of four different brome control agents on a fire rehabilitation project on the Monument. These agents include two potential biological treatments: (a) A native fungal brome seed pathogen (*Pyrenophora semeniperda*), (b) Application of a bacteria used to control brome in agricultural settings (D7 rhizobacterium), and two chemical treatments: (c) Spring application of glyphosate and (d) Fall application of ammonium salt of imazapic. The different potential control agents would be compared for control effectiveness, monetary efficiency, and impacts to native vegetation.

The second research proposal is to determine local vegetative responses of imazapic relative to fire rehabilitation treatments on the Monument. Specifically the objectives of this research are to closely monitor the use of the imazapic to:

- 1) Determine the extent to which Fall application of the pre-emergent herbicide imazapic suppresses non-native brome grasses relative to local differences in climate, soils, and fire and grazing history,
- 2) Evaluate the impact of imazapic on native Mojave Desert plant species that established from the seed mix applied in 2006, as well as on seed reserves that remain within the soil, and
- 3) Provide recommendations for the use of imazapic in the northeast Mojave Desert burned landscapes to maximize brome grass suppression and minimize negative impacts to native species.

Project personnel would receive a briefing on the goals and objectives of the treatment, and include information regarding protection of desert tortoise. The briefing would include information on employee and visitor safety.

Monitoring:

Implementation monitoring would consist of:

- a. Completion of BLM Pesticide Application Report within 24 hours of application,
- b. Documentation of proposed treatments in the BLM Management Information System (MIS) at the beginning of each fiscal year, and
- c. Documentation of treatment completion in the BLM MIS database at the end of each fiscal year.

Effectiveness monitoring would consist of formal data collection and evaluation by research personnel.

RATIONALE for DECISION: The decision to authorize the proposed action has been made in consideration of the environmental impacts of implementation.

This proposed action is in conformance with the Grand Canyon – Parashant National Monument Management Plan (2008), the Grand Canyon – Parashant National Monument Proclamation (2000), Interim Management Guidelines (2001), and includes conservation measures to protect a National Monument object and Special Status Species.

The No Action Alternative was not selected because it is not in conformance with existing direction, and would not result in the development of information necessary to protect National Monument objects and important ecological and social resources.

Public Review and Comments

This EA was posted on the Arizona BLM website and was made available for public and agency comment during a 30-day review period beginning July 15, 2008 and ending August 14, 2008. The Grand Canyon – Parashant National Monument sent a Notice of Availability to 118 federal

and state agencies, individuals, businesses, grazing permittees, and organizations, notifying them of the availability of the EA and the methods of accessing the document. The announcement and document were posted on the BLM Arizona Strip District Office internet website. Individuals and organizations could request the environmental assessment in writing, by phone, or by e-mail.

Two comments were received. Joe McGloin is very supportive of the project. The Grand Canyon Chapter of the Sierra Club supports the control of non-native invasive species within the Monument. However, they have concerns with the proposed action, which are addressed as follows:

"Conducting Research in a national monument is not appropriate."

The areas in which the proposed research would be implemented are areas that were burned in the 2005 and 2006 fires and have been converted to exotic, invasive grasslands. The BLM and the research community, at large, do not know how to specifically rehabilitate the burned Mojave. Site specific research in the Monument is needed to increase our knowledge and new information is necessary to guide our future management actions to rehabilitate the burned Mojave. The information to be obtained from the research projects must be site specific to be of further use on the Monument. Specific soil types and structures, as well as site specific climate conditions are variables that must be evaluated in any decision regarding the effectiveness of the brome control methods, and the effects of the methods on non-target species in the Monument. The geographical scope of the project is less than 10 acres. The analysis generally shows that the short and long-term impacts to Monument Resources would be non-existent or minor.

"Impacts to threatened, endangered, sensitive, and/or candidate species are not documented in the EA."

Only the Mojave Desert Tortoise, federally listed as Threatened, might be present in the project area. Conservation measures to protect the tortoise are documented and will be implemented. No other T&E species, candidate or sensitive species are present in or near the proposed project area, therefore, impacts to them are not analyzed.

"Impacts to water sources and water quality, aquatic invertebrates and fish are not documented in the EA."

There are no water sources, aquatic invertebrates, nor fish in or near the project area.

"The EA does not fully address the impacts nor adequately analyze potential cumulative impacts."

The BLM believes all known potential issues and impacts from implementation of the proposed action have been documented and analyzed. Because this is truly a research project, the very information not presented is unknown, and is the information we seek to gather, at a very small geographic scale. The BLM also believes the effects of the impacts, including cumulative impacts, are minor to negligible, due to the small spatial scale of the project.

BLM IMPLEMENTATION AND APPEAL

This decision may be appealed to the Interior Board of Land Appeals, Office of the Secretary, in accordance with the regulations contained in 43 CFR, Part 4 and the attached Form 1842-1. If an appeal is taken, your notice of appeal must be filed at the Grand Canyon – Parashant National Monument, 345 E. Riverside Drive, St. George, UT 84790, within 30 days from receipt of this decision. The appellant has the burden of showing that the decision appealed from is in error.

If you wish to file a petition (pursuant to regulation 43 CFR 4.21 (58 FR 4939, January 19, 1993) (request) for a stay (suspension) of the effectiveness of this decision during the time that your appeal is being reviewed by the Board, the petition for stay must accompany your notice of appeal. A petition for a stay is required to show sufficient justification based the standards listed below. Copies of the notice of appeal and petition for a stay must also be submitted to each party named in this decision and to the Interior Board of Land Appeals and to the Office of the Solicitor (Department of the Interior, Office of the Field Solicitor, Sandra Day O'Connor U. S. Court House #404, 401 West Washington Street SPC44, Phoenix, AZ 85003-2151) (see 43 CFR 4.413) at the same time the original documents are filed with this office. If you request a stay, you have the burden of proof to demonstrate that a stay should be granted.

Except as otherwise provided by law or other pertinent regulation, a petition for a stay of a decision pending appeal shall show sufficient justification based on the following standards:

Standards for Obtaining a Stay

1. The relative harm to the parties if the stay is granted or denied,
2. The likelihood of the appellant's success on the merits,
3. The likelihood of immediate and irreparable harm if the stay is not granted, and
4. Whether the public interest favors granting the stay.

Approved:



Thomas Edgerton, BLM Monument Manager
Grand Canyon - Parashant National Monument

9-12-08

Date

Attachment: Form 1842-1