

DOE-ID NEPA CX DETERMINATION

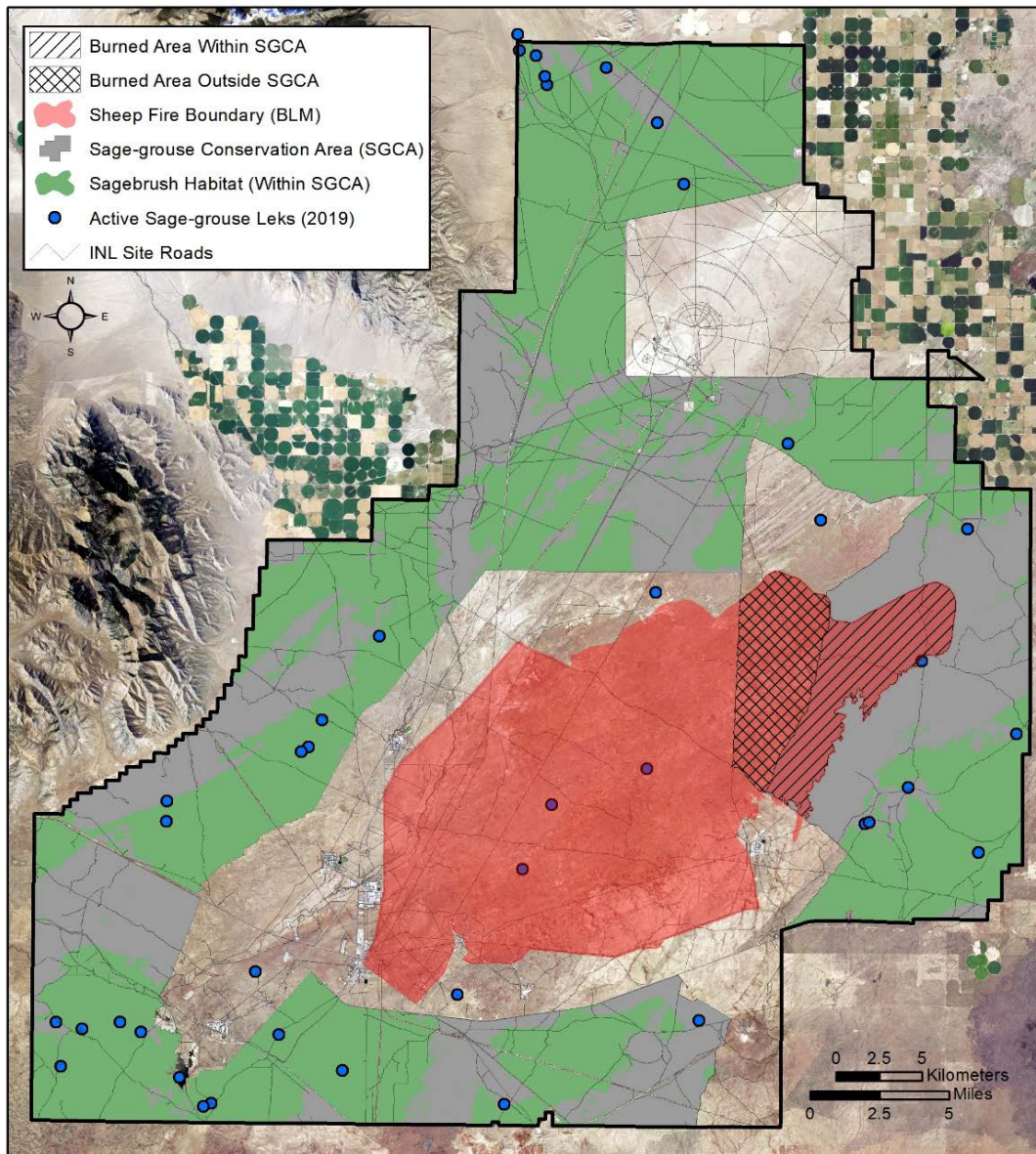
SECTION A. Project Title: Aerial Sagebrush Seeding of 2019 Sheep Fire Burned Area – Veolia Nuclear Solutions-Federal Solutions

SECTION B. Project Description

The proposed action involves aerial application of bulk sagebrush seed to areas burned by the Sheep Fire in July 2019 by Thomas Helicopter, a commercially available and DOE-approved aviation vendor. Two areas within the footprint of 2019 Sheep Fire are proposed for aerial sagebrush seeding during the winter of 2019/2020. Two areas shown in Figure 1 will be seeded. The first area is 12,521 acres within the Sage Grouse Conservation Area (SGCA; diagonal lines). The second area is 11,828 acres and is outside of, but adjacent to the SGCA (crosshatching). Both areas are considered breeding and brood-rearing habitat for sage grouse lekking on the INL Site, as well as wintering habitat for birds lekking north of the INL Site.

Approximately 8,000 pounds bulk sagebrush seed will be applied at 1/4 coverage for a total of 6,620 acres applied at a rate of 0.25 pounds/acre. The Bureau of Land Management (BLM) Seed Warehouse will provide the seed through an agreement with the Department of Energy – Idaho Operations (DOE-ID) Office. Veolia Nuclear Solutions – Federal Services (VNS-FS) will coordinate with BLM and DOE-ID to have the seed delivered to the Shoshone warehouse for pickup. Thomas Helicopters, a DOE-approved aviation vendor headquartered in Gooding, Idaho, will be subcontracted by VNS-FS to apply the seed. Seed will be applied between January 6, 2020 and March 15, 2020, and VNS-FS will work with Thomas Helicopters to identify an optimal planting window.

VNS-FS will be responsible to ensure compliance with INL Site requirements. Thomas Helicopters will be required to comply with INL safety requirements and ESER's Aviation Safety Program (HSP 9). VNS-FS will assist with addressing HSP 9 plan requirements, such as overflight notification and developing a task hazard analysis. The aircraft will operate within a flight zone determined by INL. The aircraft is not proposed to land on the INL Site.



SECTION C. Environmental Aspects / Potential Sources of Impact

Disturbing Cultural/Biological Resources – The seed will be applied aerially using a helicopter. Seed will be staged and loaded at a paved location on or near the INL Site. Staging could occur at the Test Area North (TAN) parking lot or any other logistically appropriate location as determined at the discretion of BEA. There is potential to disturb biological resources during the activity. Noise generated by the aircraft may cause disturbance and dispersal of wildlife in the vicinity of the operation. The disturbance will be temporary while the aircraft is in operation.

SECTION D. Determine the Level of Environmental Review (or Documentation) and Reference(s): Identify the applicable categorical exclusion from 10 CFR 1021, Appendix B, give the appropriate justification, and the approval date.

Note: For Categorical Exclusions (CXs) the proposed action must not: 1) threaten a violation of applicable statutory, regulatory, or permit requirements for environmental, safety, and health, including requirements of DOE orders; 2) require siting and construction or major expansion of waste storage, disposal, recovery, or treatment facilities; 3) disturb hazardous substances, pollutants, contaminants, or CERCLA-excluded petroleum and natural gas products that pre-exist in the environment such that there would be uncontrolled or unpermitted releases; 4) adversely affect environmentally sensitive resources. In addition, no extraordinary circumstances related to the proposal exist which would affect the significance of

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the action, and the action is not “connected” nor “related” (40 CFR 1508.25(a)(1) and (2), respectively) to other actions with potentially or cumulatively significant impacts.

References: B3.2 Aviation activities for survey, monitoring, or security purposes that comply with Federal Aviation Administration regulations.

Final Idaho National Engineering and Environmental Laboratory Wildland Fire Management Environmental Assessment (DOE/EA-1372, 2003)

Justification: The activity consists of performing aerial application of bulk sagebrush seed to areas burned during the July 2019 Sheep Fire.

Is the project funded by the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 (Recovery Act) Yes No

Approved by Jason Sturm, DOE-ID NEPA Compliance Officer on 12/16/2019