

DOE-ID NEPA CX DETERMINATION

Idaho National Laboratory

SECTION A. Project Title: Birch Creek Soil Stabilization

SECTION B. Project Description and Purpose:

The need to revegetate an area along the birch creek drainage has been identified (Figure 1). This area has been degraded due to historical grazing regimes in the Mahogany Butte Allotment resulting in soil erosion. DOE proposes to stabilize the soil erosion through the revegetation of native species.

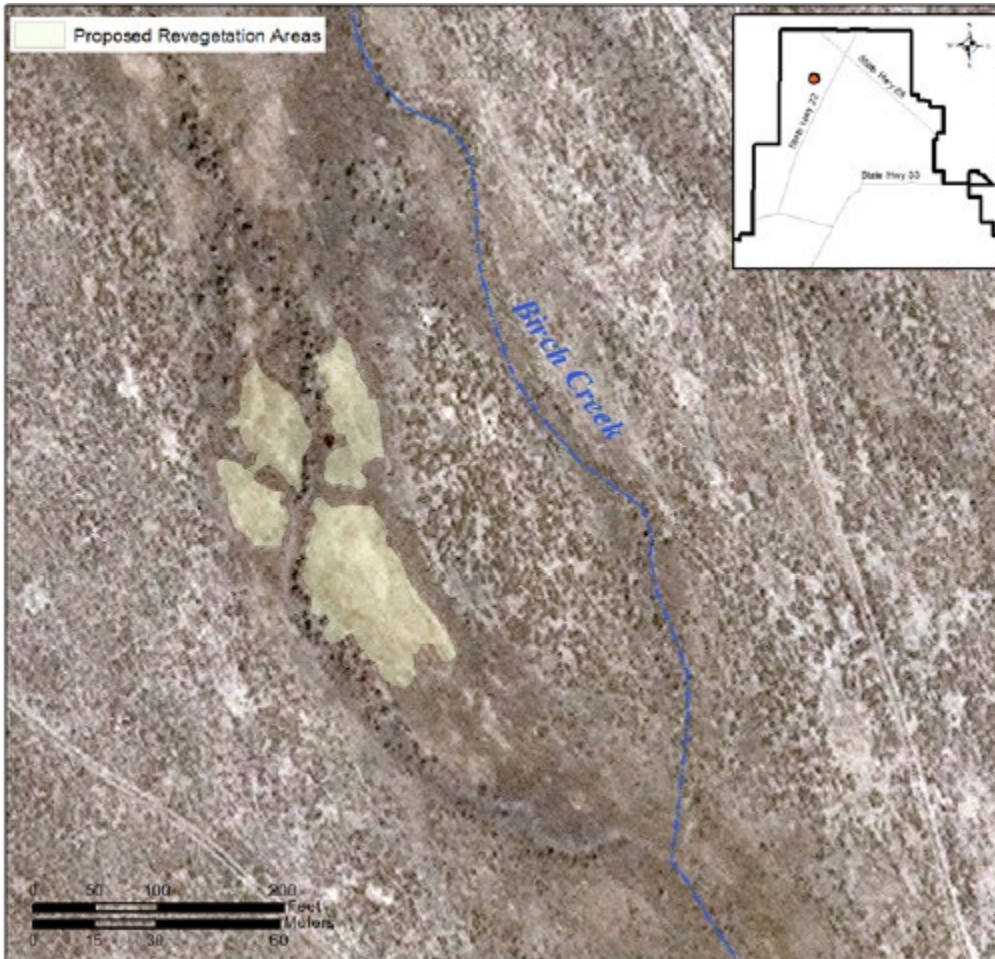


Figure 1: Proposed Revegetation Areas.

Proposed revegetation activities include the following:

- Amending soils located on the project area by topically applying custom fertilizer mix to soil surface in the spring and allowing fertilizer to leach into the soil for multiple months. The fertilizer mix consists of Phosphate applied at a rate of 120lb/ac and elemental Sulfur applied at a rate of 200lb/ac.
- Hydroseeding the area from a distance via cannon or hose to avoid disturbing soil on the site.
- Hydroseed mix will include either a paper or wood mulch mix including a native seed mix including appropriately sourced native seed.
- Hydro seed may contain additional adjuvants such as a tackifier to stabilize soils while seeds germinate.
- Application of Hydro mulch and seed will take place in the late summer to early fall.
- Big Sagebrush (*Artemisia tridentata*) and Juniper (*Juniperus L.*) seedlings will be planted across the project area utilizing foot traffic and hand tools.
- Containerized seedlings will be grown in 6 in Ray Leach Containers.
- Planting of sagebrush seedlings will occur in the fall.
- Supplemental water may be applied to the site via a water truck parked along established roadways and a hose to reach the project area.
- The project area may be watered multiple times during the growing season the following year depending on precipitation yields.

The Project area will be accessed using two track roads and traveling by foot when leaving the two track roads.

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- Any approaches needed to access to the project area will require appropriate clearances including a Cultural Resource Review (CRR) and Biological Resource Review (BRR). Any restrictions resulting in a CRR or BRR must be followed by project personnel.

SECTION C. Environmental Aspects or Potential Sources of Impact:

Air Emissions

N/A

Discharging to Surface-, Storm-, or Ground Water

Projects that are located within the boundaries of the storm water corridor are considered to have reasonable potential to discharge to "Waters of the U.S.". This project is located within the storm water corridor but is not expected to disturb more than one acre. If the area of disturbance changes, the storm water determination will need to be reevaluated.

Disturbing Cultural or Biological Resources

There is the potential for this work to impact vegetation and for project personnel to interact with various wildlife species. A Biological Resource Review will be arranged within two weeks prior to the initiation of any activities that might disturb soil or vegetation and again following completion of project activities. A nesting bird survey is included with the Biological Resource Review for actions occurring between April 1 - October 1 per compliance with the Migratory Bird Treaty Act. Bat surveys are also included with the Biological Resource Review in accordance with the INL Bat Protection Plan.

Generating and Managing Waste

N/A

Releasing Contaminants

N/A

Using, Reusing, and Conserving Natural Resources

N/A

SECTION D. Determine Recommended Level of Environmental Review, Identify Reference(s), and State Justification: Identify the applicable categorical exclusion from 10 Code of Federal Regulation (CFR) 1021, Appendix B, give the appropriate justification, and the approval date.

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, or similar requirements of Department of Energy (DOE) or Executive Orders; (2) require siting and construction or major expansion of waste storage, disposal, recovery, or treatment or facilities; (3) disturb hazardous substances, pollutants, contaminants, or Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation, and Liability Act (CERCLA)-excluded petroleum and natural gas products that pre-exist in the environment such that there would be uncontrolled or unpermitted releases; (4) have the potential to cause significant impacts on environmentally sensitive resources (see 10 CFR 1021). In addition, no extraordinary circumstances related to the proposal exist that would affect the significance of the action. In addition, the action is not "connected" to other action actions (40 CFR 1508.25(a)(1)) and is not related to other actions with individually insignificant but cumulatively significant impacts (40 CFR 1608.27(b)(7)).

References:

B1.20 "Protection of cultural resources, fish and wildlife habitat"

Justification:

B1.20 Protection of cultural resources, fish and wildlife habitat. Small-scale activities undertaken to protect cultural resources (such as fencing, labeling, and flagging) or to protect, restore, or improve fish and wildlife habitat, fish passage facilities (such as fish ladders and minor diversion channels), or fisheries. Such activities would be conducted in accordance with an existing natural or cultural resource plan, if any.

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

Approved by Jason L. Anderson, DOE-ID NEPA Compliance Officer on: 05/10/2023.