

**FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT (FONSI)
ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT FOR THE IMPLEMENTATION
OF THE PUEBLO OF ISLETA
WILDLAND FIRE MANAGEMENT PLAN**

An Environmental Assessment (EA) has been prepared to identify and evaluate the potential environmental effects that would occur from the implementation of the Wildland Fire Management Plan (WFMP). This EA was prepared in accordance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) (42 United States Code [USC] §4321-4370 et. seq); the Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ) Regulations for Implementing the Procedural Provisions of NEPA (CEQ Regulations, 40 CFR Parts 1500-1508); 90 IAM 2, Wildland Management, Fire Management Plans, January 19, 2006; and Indian Affairs Manual (IAM), Part 59, Environmental and Cultural Resources Management.

Description of Proposed Action and Alternatives

1. Proposed Action

The EA analyzes the Proposed Action and the No Action Alternative. The Proposed Action is a reasonable alternative that meets the underlying need for a successful fuels reduction program for the BIA Southern Pueblos Agency. This need is to minimize the occurrence of a large wildfire that could threaten life and property. This EA focuses on local and regional significant resources that could be affected by the fuels reduction activities under the Proposed Action. The No Action alternative does not meet the needs for a successful fuels reduction program. Without implementation of the WFMP, which includes a site-specific detailed fuels management plan, no fuels reduction activities would be accomplished to reduce the risks of a large wildfire in the communities within Pueblo Trust Lands.

The BIA is proposing to implement a WFMP for the purpose of reducing hazardous fuels and to reduce the intensity and frequency of future wildland fires in the Wildland Urban Interface within Pueblo Trust Lands. Hazardous fuels management strategies would be employed to minimize impacts to life and property. A range of treatments would be employed to meet management objectives including hand methods such as hand thinning, lop and scatter, hand piling; mechanical methods such as mastication, mowing and extraction; prescribed fire including broadcast burns and pile burns; and herbicides may be used on a limited basis.

2. No Action Alternative

An environmental analysis of a No Action Alternative is required by CEQ regulations to serve as a baseline against which the Proposed Action can be evaluated. The No Action alternative analysis also provides a benchmark to allow decision makers and the public to compare the levels of environmental effects of the alternatives. In the context of this EA, a No Action Alternative means that there would be no change from the current fire management operations and therefore, activities would continue without the benefit of the WFMP to standardize and formalize operating procedures. No vegetation would be removed for the purpose of reducing fire fuel loads. No additional disturbance to plant, wildlife, or soil resources would occur. Encroachment

of non-native species in the riparian areas would continue to exist. Fuel loads would continue to accumulate, increasing the risk of wildfire.

3. Environmental Analysis

Based upon the analysis provided in the EA, it has been determined that implementation of the Proposed Action would not result in any adverse environmental effects.

Neither the Proposed Action nor the No Action Alternative create disproportionately high or adverse human health or environmental effects on children, minority or low-income populations, or communities at, or surrounding the Pueblo.

4. Regulations

The Proposed Action would not violate the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), its regulations promulgated by the CEQ, and the BIA (IAM), Part 59, Environmental and Cultural Resources Management. No other federal, state, or local environmental regulations would be violated.

5. Finding of No Significant Impact

Based on the information presented in the Final Environmental Assessment, the BIA, Southern Pueblo Agency, proposes to implement the Proposed Action. Once public comments have been addressed and if a determination is made that the Proposed Action will have no significant impact, the FONSI will be signed and the action will be implemented. The requirements of NEPA and the CEQ regulations will have been met. An Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) will not be prepared and the BIA will issue this FONSI.

Patricia L. Mattingly
Regional Director, Southwest Region
Bureau of Indian Affairs

Date

NAME AND TITLE

DATE