

Spring 2021 Management Review

Gunnison Ranger District Taylor Park Vegetation Management Project (Taylor Park)

May 2020

Purpose: Annually the District interdisciplinary team of the Gunnison Ranger District will complete a Management Review of the Taylor Park Project to ensure that the Final Decision Notice (DN) and accompanying Final Environmental Assessment (EA) is being implemented as planned and is adequate, suitable and effective in achieving desired outcomes. The management review is central to the adaptive management process. The review ensures leadership is aware of environmental and economic performance of the project and takes actions for continual improvement.

The Adaptive Management Group (AMG) assist in development of recommendations for changes to Taylor Park. The Science Team interprets the latest science and/or monitoring related to the project for consideration by the District interdisciplinary team and District Ranger. Changes to the Taylor Park project is the sole responsibility of the District interdisciplinary team and District Ranger and will be applied to all treatments planned from the date of the decision. Changes will also be posted to the Taylor Park Implementation Website.

ACCOMPLISHMENTS THROUGH DECEMBER 31, 2020.

The Taylor Park Decision was signed on May 7, 2020. Since this time, treatment planning has been underway, but no treatments have been fully implemented or timber sales sold. Treatments are planned for sale and implementation in 2021. Below is the template for information to be included in future Management Reviews when the information exists.

ENVIRONMENTAL PERFORMANCE

Management Question: Are actions resulting in unacceptable outcomes that are outside those expected in the EA?

Have Triggers identified in the EA for Canada Lynx, Watershed Impacts, Habitat Structural Diversity, soil productivity, and bare soil resulting from burning of slash piles been exceeded?

Treatments have not yet been implemented. Treatments are planned for sale and implementation in 2021. This information will be included in future Management Reviews when the information exists.

PROPOSED ADMINISTRATIVE CHANGES TO THE PROJECT

Management Question: Are there changes to Taylor Park that would result in increased efficiency and/or changes to design features to make them more implementable or effective to achieve the desired environmental outcome?

PRE-TREATMENT CHECKLIST (APPENDIX A OF EA)

Step 4: Design Features

WQSP-11 Recommendation:

The following proposed change would update the design feature based on Best Available Science Information that the Interdisciplinary Team was not aware of prior to the Decision Notice. The proposed changes are based on the January 2020 Colorado Forest Restoration Institute's (Colorado State University) "Mulching: A knowledge summary and guidelines for best practices on Colorado's Front Range" paper.

Current Wording:

Mastication of woody debris: Chip bed depth shall average less than 2 inches in depth across more than 80 percent of the treatment area with a maximum chip depth of 4 inches in isolated spots equating to no more than 10 percent of the treatment area.

Proposed Wording:

Mastication of woody debris: Average mulch depth shall be 2 inches or less across the treatment area, and the maximum allowable depth shall not exceed 6 inches within any part of the treatment area. 40-60% of the management area may be covered with mulch material, but maximum size of any one continuous patch size will not exceed 1 acre. Maximum size of mulch pieces will not exceed 6" diameter and 6' length (Wolk et al 2020)

WUI and Fuel Break Treatments

Mastication of woody debris: Average mulch depth shall be 1-2 inches to minimize fire residence time and post mop up within the treatment area, and the maximum allowable depth shall not exceed 4-8 inches within any part of the treatment area. 20-40% of the management area may be covered with mulch material, but maximum size of any one continuous patch size will not exceed 1 acre (best to minimize deep accumulations especially near expected containment lines). Minimize mulch size to facilitate safe fire operations to a maximum size of 3" diameter and 2' in length (Wolk et al 2020).

Monitoring

Post mulch treatment monitoring is recommended to identify potential noxious weed infestations. Studies indicate exotic species (Canada Thistle appeared to be the problem invasive weed) increase post mulch treatment compared to untreated areas (Wolk et al 2020).

ADAPTIVE IMPLEMENTATION PROCESS (APPENDIX E OF FEIS)

Recommendation:

Step 6 Public Engagement in Adaptive Implementation process (Appendix E of the EA) needs to be clarified to better reflect the type of public input that is most constructive to plan treatments. This update was added to the SBEADMR document in 2020 and it would be preferred to have the same wording for Taylor Park EA since we do a joint public input period.

Current wording:

- A. Selection and scheduling of priority treatments;
- B. Types and locations of planned treatments;
- C. Monitoring topics, questions, and priorities;
- D. Application and adequacy of design features;
- E. Treatment conformance to scope of EA/DN, disclosure of environmental effects, and adherence to decision parameters.

Suggested changes:

- A. Resource information that could prove useful to treatment planning (e.g. presence of species that could affect treatment layout, cultural resource information, etc.).
- B. Operational considerations – logging truck traffic and the need for dust abatement, potential conflicts with other user groups such as snowmobile use when winter logging is considered, etc.
- C. Monitoring topics, questions, and priorities;
- D. Application and adequacy of design features;
- E. Treatment conformance to scope of EA/DN, disclosure of environmental effects, and adherence to decision parameters.

Motion: Accepted Recommended Changes