



Categorical Exclusion Form

Project: Prescribed Burn on Young Hill and Post-Burn Analysis of Methods to Control Non-Native Grasses

PEPC Project Number: 73524

Description of Action (Project Description):

San Juan Islands National Historical Park (SAJH), the Olympic Fire Management Team and the North Pacific/Columbia Basin Fire Ecology Program, are engaged in a proactive thinning and prescribed burn program at Young Hill, English Camp, to restore its remnant Garry oak woodland. As part of post-burn operations, herbicide will be used in selected areas - less than one acre total - to minimize regeneration of non-native species. The park has concluded that burning and thinning on Young Hill over the past decade has resulted in a reduction of native species composition and an increase of invasive species, specifically grasses.

Studies show that prescribed fire, when used without other treatments (e.g. herbicides and/or seeding) may exacerbate existing infestations. Using small quantities of selective herbicides after burning has been found to greatly assist in controlling non-native grass encroachment.

Non-native grasses are often aggressive and out-compete native grasses and wildflowers. They are less palatable to wildlife and diminish the quality of the Garry Oak habitat. The invasive grasses are particularly troublesome due to their early germination and prolific seed production that have enabled them to quickly recolonize after prescribed fire treatments on Young Hill before native species can recover.

Fire ecologists will analyze how effective native grasses are able to out-perform non-native grasses in the areas treated with herbicides, versus those without. A secondary objective is to examine burning conditions for the *Propertius* duskywing butterfly, a sensitive species associated with Garry oak woodlands that have been found in the area. The final report will be posted to the park's website or mailed to any interested persons. In 2018, the park will begin work on updating its Fire Management Plan and the results of this year's research will inform alternatives developed for that plan.

Project tasks include conducting a prescribed burn and applying herbicide to select locations. The total area encompasses 6,000 m² (64,583 ft.²). The herbicides, Esplanade (Indaziflam) and Matrix (Rimsulfuron), will be applied after the burn across 4,000 m² (43,056 ft.²). A total of 7 oz. of Esplanade and 5 oz. of Matrix will be applied within designated plots by hand sprayers. Areas treated with herbicides will be flagged and signed for identification. The area will be closed for up to 10 days following the applications.

Project Locations:

Location

County: San Juan

State: WA

Mitigation(s):

- All areas where herbicide has been applied will be signed. The perimeter area will be flagged.
- Park staff must be notified of implementation prior to commencement of project activities.
- Equipment and materials staging areas will avoid known Historic Properties.
- Historic Property Inventory and clearance required prior to commencement of the project.
- Archeological monitoring required.

CE Citation: B.1 Changes or amendments to an approved plan, when such changes would cause no or only minimal environmental impact.

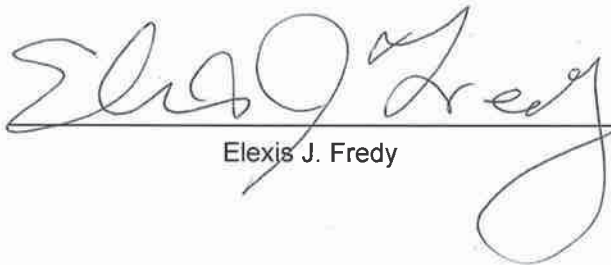
CE Justification:

Actions will be an addition to approved Fire Management Plan. Changes will cause no or minor environmental impacts. Ref: San Juan Islands National Historical Park Fire Management/Environmental Assessment 2005

Decision: I find that the action fits within the categorical exclusion above. Therefore, I am categorically excluding the described project from further NEPA analysis. No extraordinary circumstances apply.

Signature

Superintendent:



Elexis J. Frey

Date:

9/7/18

Extraordinary Circumstances:

If implemented, would the proposal...	Yes/No	Notes
A. Have significant impacts on public health or safety?	No	
B. Have significant impacts on such natural resources and unique geographic characteristics as historic or cultural resources; park, recreation, or refuge lands; wilderness areas; wild or scenic rivers; national natural landmarks; sole or principal drinking water aquifers; prime farmlands; wetlands (Executive Order 11990); floodplains (Executive Order 11988); national monuments; migratory birds; and other ecologically significant or critical areas?	No	
C. Have highly controversial environmental effects or involve unresolved conflicts concerning alternative uses of available resources (NEPA section 102(2)(E))?	No	
D. Have highly uncertain and potentially significant environmental effects or involve unique or unknown environmental risks?	No	
E. Establish a precedent for future action or represent a decision in principle about future actions with potentially significant environmental effects?	No	
F. Have a direct relationship to other actions with individually insignificant, but cumulatively significant, environmental effects?	No	
G. Have significant impacts on properties listed or eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places, as determined by either the bureau or office?	No	Project area surveyed and notifications sent to SHPO and tribes. Requires a monitor during fire and monitoring report.
H. Have significant impacts on species listed or proposed to be listed on the List of Endangered or Threatened Species, or have significant impacts on designated Critical Habitat for these species?	No	
I. Violate a federal, state, local or tribal law or requirement imposed for the protection of the environment?	No	
J. Have a disproportionately high and adverse effect on low income or minority populations (EO 12898)?	No	
K. Limit access to and ceremonial use of Indian sacred sites on federal lands by Indian religious practitioners or adversely affect the physical integrity of such sacred sites (EO 130007)?	No	
L. Contribute to the introduction, continued existence, or spread of noxious weeds or non-native invasive species known to occur in the area or actions that may promote the introduction, growth, or expansion of the range of such species (Federal Noxious Weed Control Act and Executive Order 13112)?	No	