

**United States Department of the Interior
Bureau of Land Management**

Arizona Strip Field Office

Environmental Assessment

Head of Hacks Canyon, Loco Point Allotments Grazing Permit Renewal

EA-AZ-110-2007-0017

I. INTRODUCTION

This Environmental Assessment (EA) analyzes the proposed grazing permit renewal for the Head of Hacks Canyon and Loco Point Allotments. The action culminates an evaluation conducted on the Allotments under the Arizona BLM Standards for Rangeland Health and Guidelines for Grazing Management (S&Gs). In addition, this EA looks at the current grazing management practices to determine if they would maintain desirable conditions and continue to allow improvement of public land resources, where the potential exists or if changes in grazing management for the Head of Hacks Canyon and Loco Point Allotments are necessary. This EA is intended to evaluate the findings of the Head of Hacks Canyon and Loco Point assessment as it relates to vegetation conditions and resource values in the Allotments. This is done in an effort to balance demands placed on the resources by various authorized uses within the Allotments.

Analysis of existing data indicates that in general, overall conditions on the allotments are improving. It was determined by the Interdisciplinary Assessment Team (IAT) during the assessment process, that resource conditions on the Allotments are meeting Standards for Rangeland Health.

Purpose and Need

The purpose and need of this action is to renew the grazing permit associated with the Head of Hacks Canyon #5232 and Loco Point #5260 Grazing Allotments. The Head of Hacks Canyon and Loco Point Grazing Allotments are located in Mohave County, Arizona, approximately Twenty to Twenty Five miles south of Fredonia, Arizona. The allotments are accessed via State Highway 389 in the northern portion of Arizona on lands managed by the Arizona Strip Field Office.

Conformance with Land Use Plan

This proposal is found to be in conformance with the Arizona Strip District Resource Management Plan (RMP) dated January 1992, as amended April 1997. The RMP adopted resource specific activity plans from the Vermillion Grazing EIS (April, 1979).

This action is in conformance with Arizona's Standards and Guides, which were developed through a collaborative process involving the Arizona Resource Advisory Council and the Bureau of Land Management State Standards and Guides Team. The Secretary of the Interior approved the Standards and Guides in April 1997. The Decision Record, signed by the BLM State Director (April 1997) provided for full implementation of the Standards and Guides in all Arizona Land Use Plans.

This proposal was initially scoped and found to be consistent with the Arizona Strip District Resource Management Plan (RMP) dated January 31, 1992, as amended April 1997. The following decisions from the Arizona Strip RMP apply to the proposal:

Land Use Plan Objectives for the Head of Hacks Canyon and Loco Point Allotments

Vermillion Resource Area Implementation Plan for the Arizona Strip Resource Management Plan.

A. Objectives

Program guidance decisions, as well as specific resource objectives, for the Head of Hacks Canyon and Loco Point Allotments are found in the Arizona Strip Resource Management Plan (RMP), Implementation Plan (IP), Clayhole Habitat Management Plan (HMP), and Head of Hacks Canyon Allotment Management Plan (AMP).

GZ20 Establish Utilization levels not to exceed 50 percent average of current year's growth on key species.

WS01 Manage vegetation cover toward ecological stability and sound long-term protective soil cover.

WS21 Manage watershed areas according to watershed categorizations to achieve identified objectives.

TE01 Manage areas consistent with multiple use to conserve candidate species and their habitats and ensure that actions authorized, funded, or carried out do not contribute to the need to list any of these species as threatened or endangered. Adverse impacts to listed species will be avoided.

WL02 Maintain productive wildlife habitat and ensure wildlife needs and considerations are incorporated into land use planning, National Environmental Policy Act documents, and management decisions.

WL07 Manage wildlife habitat through the Habitat Management Plan process to achieve desired plant community objectives. Practices used to accomplish this could include mechanical treatments, livestock grazing, herbicide applications, prescribed and natural fire, reseeding, and water development.

WL16 Complete ecological site inventories in key areas to determine site potentials and present ecological conditions; establish desired plant community objectives for various areas include these in HMPs in order to prescribe management of improvement practices.

Relationships to Statutes, Regulations, or other Plans

Grazing permit renewals are provided for in 43 CFRs 4100 where the objectives of regulations are “...to promote healthy, sustainable rangeland ecosystems; to accelerate restoration and improvement of public rangelands to properly functioning conditions; to promote the orderly use,....; to establish efficient and effective administration of grazing of public rangelands;....”, and as provided for in the Land Use Plans in accordance with multiple-use objectives, requirements and provisions of established laws, regulations and BLM policies incorporating Desired Plant Community (DPC) objectives using the Ecological Site Index approach.

Grazing management practices on the Head of Hacks Canyon and Loco Point Allotments are in conformance with Arizona Standards for Rangeland Health and Guidelines for Grazing Administration. These practices are intended to assist management in meeting the Standards for Rangeland Health.

Renewal of the Head of Hacks Canyon and Loco Point grazing permits conform to the President’s National Energy Policy and would not have adverse energy impacts. This action would not deny energy projects, withdraw lands, close roads or in any other way deny or limit access to mineral materials to support energy actions.

The proposed action described and analyzed in this document is in compliance with the Endangered Species Act of 1973 as Amended, section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, the Archaeological Resources Protection Act of 1979, the Federal Land Policy and Management Act of 1976, and State of Arizona regulations regarding air quality.

Comment [PCS1]: Shouldn't you mention Arizona's Standards and Guides.

The proposed action is consistent with Arizona's Standards and Guides (April 1997)

Issues raised relating to Standards for Rangeland Health

The issues relating to rangeland health were identified by the Rangeland Resources Team (RRT), Interdisciplinary Assessment Team (IAT), and livestock permittees during the Head of Hacks Canyon and Loco Point Allotments scoping meeting on January 29, 2002 and the field visit on July 17, 2002. The normal process of raising and considering issues was followed.

Issues brought out in scoping and visited and discussed on the site.

The following issues are for the **Head of Hacks Canyon and Loco Point** allotments:

1. Issues relating to Rangeland Health

a. Salt Cedar increasing along the Bitterseeps wash - Loco point pasture

Salt Cedar is present all the way along this wash, with no other riparian species present. It is helping to control erosion. However, it should be removed as much as possible to increase water flow. This would require a NEPA document to do any removal treatment.

b. Noxious weeds and Poisonous plants (loco weed, milkweed, scotch thistle at the Wildband pasture)

A small area of scotch thistle less than an acre in size has been identified in the wildband pasture. Policy allows us to use whatever tools we have to control or stop the spread of these noxious invading species. BLM noxious weed coordinator will either use herbicides treatment, hand grubbing or biological control measures.

Whorled Milkweed is a native species and is not on the noxious weed list. Therefore, nothing will likely be done with it. Loco Weed is also native, but is very toxic to livestock and also causes them to abort their calves early. This species grows on such a wide spread area, it would be too expensive to treat with herbicides. However, it is not relevant for analysis here because it's only a problem every few years at which time spring grazing will likely be changed to occur in another pasture that does not have poisonous plants as readily available.

c. Increase in woody species - juniper in south hacks

Pinyon and Juniper (PJ) trees have been increasing some, thus creating a park-like condition with adequate densities. It is likely that PJ will not expand much more because the area is not a wet enough site to allow for much encroachment and is not relevant for analysis in this EA. An influx of PJ seedlings would be a problem if conditions allowed for it to increase and spread more. This would then not be acceptable, and a thinning or treatment may be necessary at a later date, which would be covered under a separate site specific EA.

d. Cyclic grasshoppers affecting fourwing saltbush

Grasshoppers can be a big problem depending on the climate, place and year. When the seriousness of the situation warrants, an analysis could be prepared in advance of the season at which time a site specific EA would be written.

Current Planning Process

The Arizona Strip District Office is currently involved in a planning process that would result in 3 stand alone RMPs, one for each new National Monument and one for the Arizona Strip District Office outside of the monuments. No grazing changes are currently anticipated for the Head of Hacks Canyon and Loco Point Allotments. However, there may be modifications as a result of the new RMPs. The 10-year grazing permit, in part, states “This permit is subject to (A) modification, suspension or cancellation as required by land plans and applicable law; (B) annual review and to modification of terms and conditions as appropriate; ...”. BLM may use these permit conditions to implement any changes required under the new RMPs.

II. PROPOSED ACTION AND ALTERNATIVES

Proposed Action (Renewal of 10 Year Grazing Permit)

The Proposed Action is to renew the grazing permit for the Head of Hacks Canyon and Loco Point Allotments for a period of ten years with current terms and conditions. Renewal of the 10 year grazing permit proposes no change from the present grazing permit. Livestock numbers would be limited to the current active preference. New range improvements to assist in grazing practices and promote rangeland health would be considered through the NEPA process.

Grazing Preference and Current Use on the Allotments:

Head of Hacks Canyon:

<u>Livestock Numbers</u>	<u>Season of Use</u>	<u>% Federal</u>	<u>Active AUMs</u>
244 Cattle	3/1 to 2/28	91%	2675

Voluntary non-use has varied from 149 to 677 AUMs per year, since 1993. Non-use reflects seasonally dry periods, drought years or other factors.

Grazing system is a 5-pasture deferred rotation system. This provides additional rest during the growing season. This will help increase plant vigor, density, litter, seed production, and cover.

Loco Point:

<u>Livestock Numbers</u>	<u>Season of Use</u>	<u>% Federal</u>	<u>Active AUMs</u>
49 Cattle	3/1 to 2/28	91%	535

Voluntary non-use has varied from 100 to 177 AUMs per year, since 1992. Non-use reflects seasonally dry periods, drought years or other factors.

Grazing system is a 2-pasture deferred rotation system for heifers to keep separate from the base herd for 1-2 years.

Alternatives Considered But Rejected For Further Analysis

Alternatives are tiered to the Arizona Strip District RMP (January, 1992) and the Vermillion Grazing EIS (April, 1979) which was adopted into the RMP and are basically the same for this action. The Grazing EIS addressed these alternatives: Full Stocking with Management, Stocking Level by Condition Class, No Vegetation Manipulation, Elimination of Grazing on Public Lands, Less Intensive Management of Livestock Grazing and No Action.

The following alternatives were considered for this EA but rejected because they were analyzed in the RMP, to which this document is tiered.

- **Full Stocking with Management alternative** would allow stocking at the estimated livestock carrying capacity of each Allotment.
- **Stocking Level by Condition Class alternative** would set the stocking level based on the average condition and apparent trend of the Allotments.
- **No Grazing Alternative (Elimination of Livestock Grazing on Public Lands).** The decision to authorize livestock grazing in this area and specifically on the Head of Hacks Canyon and Loco Point Allotments is documented in the approved land use plan. The absence of new information or other land use plan decisions showing that continued livestock grazing would preclude BLM from meeting or making significant progress toward achieving land health standards renders the existing land use plan authorizing grazing valid. A no grazing alternative or not renewing a grazing permit would not conform to the land use plan. A plan amendment would be required before closing an Allotment to livestock grazing.

Terms and Conditions of Grazing Permit

Billing for grazing use would be based on Actual use, which is due on March 15th for Head of Hacks Canyon and Loco Point each year. Livestock may be moved up to 15 days before or after scheduled move dates

Desired Plant Community (DPC)

This EA also incorporates by reference the “Implementation of Standards for Rangeland Health and Guidelines for Grazing Administration, Head of Hacks Canyon and Loco Point Allotments S&G Assessment” (2002)¹. The Head of Hacks Canyon and Loco Point Allotments Assessment

¹Head of Hacks Canyon and Loco Point Allotments S&G Assessment, available at the Bureau of Land Management, Arizona Strip Field Office, 345 E. Riverside Drive, St. George, Utah 84790.

lists and evaluates achievement of the Allotments DPC objectives summarized below.

Desired Plant Community Objectives developed during this process

DPC objectives were developed during this evaluation process by an interdisciplinary team of resource specialists. These objectives focus on the ecological sites and their potentials, which reflect the vegetative diversity of the area. DPC objectives are expressed in figures of Composition by Weight (CBW). Composition data is collected using the Dry Weight Rank sampling method.

Head of Hacks Canyon:

Desired Plant Community (DPC) Key Area #1 (Sandy Loam Upland 9-13")

Maintain ecological condition in Late Seral through 2035.
Maintain the shrub/browse composition between 10-30% through 2035.
Maintain the grass composition between 50-80% through 2035.
Maintain the forb composition between 1-10% through 2035.

Desired Plant Community (DPC) Key Area #2 (Gyp Hills 7-11" pz)

Maintain ecological condition in Late Seral through 2035.
Maintain the shrub/browse composition between 20-50% through 2035.
Maintain the grass composition between 40-65% through 2035.
Maintain the forb composition between 1-10% through 2035.

Desired Plant Community (DPC) Key Area #3 (Shallow Loamy 7-11" pz)

Maintain ecological condition in Late Seral through 2030.
Maintain the shrub/browse composition between 10-30% through 2030.
Maintain the grass composition between 50-80% through 2030.
Maintain the forb composition between 1-10% through 2030.

Desired Plant Community (DPC) Key Area #4 (Loamy Upland 10-14" pz)

Maintain ecological condition in Late Seral through 2035.
Maintain the shrub/browse composition between 10-30% through 2035.
Maintain the grass composition between 60-80% through 2035.
Maintain the forb composition between 1-10% through 2035.

Desired Plant Community (DPC) Key Area #5 (Shallow Loamy 7-11" pz)

Maintain ecological condition in Late Seral through 2035.
Maintain the shrub/browse composition between 15-35% through 2035.

Maintain the grass composition between 50-80% through 2035.
Maintain the forb composition between 1-10% through 2035.

Loco Point:

Desired Plant Community(DPC) Key Area#6 (Shallow Loamy 7-11" pz)

Maintain ecological condition in Late Seral through 2035.
Maintain the shrub/browse composition between 15-35% through 2035.
Maintain the grass composition between 50-80% through 2035.
Maintain the forb composition between 1-10% through 2035.

Monitoring

The goals of monitoring are to determine if the fundamentals or conditions of Rangeland Health are being met within the allotted areas under 43 CFR 4180. These conditions of Rangeland Health are:

- (a) Watersheds are in, or are making significant progress toward, properly functioning physical condition, including their upland, riparian-wetland, and aquatic components; soil and plant conditions support infiltration, soil moisture storage, and the release of water that are in balance with climate and land form and maintain or improve water-quality, water quantity, and timing and duration of flow.
- (b) Ecological processes, including the hydrologic cycle, nutrient cycle, and energy flow, are maintained, or there is significant progress toward their attainment, in order to support healthy biotic populations and communities.
- (c) Water quality complies with State water quality standards and achieves, or is making significant progress toward achieving, established BLM management objectives such as meeting wildlife needs.
- (d) Habitats are, or are making significant progress toward being restored or maintained for Federal threatened and endangered species, Federal Proposed, Category 1 and 2 Federal candidate and other special status species.

To monitor rangeland health conditions, key areas as defined in the *Monitoring* "Planning for Monitoring", "TR 4400-1", (1984) would be used. The key area would be used as an indicator area to reflect what is happening on the terrain they represent, subsequent of on-the-ground management. Each key area would be established based on a Range Site/Ecological Site (developed by the Natural Resource Conservation Service, (NRCS)) with a specific Potential Natural Community (PNC) and specific physical site characteristics. Knowing the PNC of the area, and using the ecological site descriptions as a guide, DPC objectives can be developed. The DPC then becomes the objectives by which management actions would be measured.

Dry Weight Ranking (DWR) studies would be used to measure attainment of the key area DPC objectives. In addition, Pace Frequency studies would be used at each key area to detect changes of individual species which determines a trend or change in vegetation composition. Pace Frequency and DWR would be completed on each key area every 4-8 years. DWR and Pace Frequency study methodologies are described in *Sampling Vegetation Attributes*, "Interagency Technical Reference 1734-4" (1996).

Livestock use on forage plants would be determined by conducting grazing utilization studies using the Grazed-Class Method as described in the *Utilization Studies and Residual Measurements* "Interagency Technical Reference 1734-3" (1996). Utilization studies would be completed annually by BLM, when livestock are removed from the pasture. Study data would be compiled each year. Other information to be collected and compiled is precipitation, actual use, etc. All monitoring data would be used to evaluate current management and assist BLM in making management decisions that helps achieve vegetation objectives on the Allotments.

Based on analyses of the Allotments monitoring data and supporting documentation contained in the Head of Hacks Canyon and Loco Point S&G Assessment Report (2002-03), resource conditions on the Allotments meet all applicable standards for rangeland health.

III. AFFECTED ENVIRONMENT

The following critical elements of the human environment are not affected by the proposed action or alternatives or are not present on these Allotments:

- Air Quality
- ACECs
- Native American Religious Concerns
- Wastes (hazardous or solid)
- Water (quality and quantity of surface/underground supplies)
- Prime or unique farmlands
- Floodplains
- Environmental Justice
- Wetlands/Riparian Areas
- Wild & Scenic Rivers
- Wilderness
- Wild Horses and Burros
- Minerals

The affected environment is tiered to the Arizona Strip District RMP (January 31, 1992), Affected Environment pages III-1 to III-58, and pages 41 to 92 of the Vermillion Grazing EIS (April, 1979) which was adopted into the RMP and are essentially the same for this action. Chapter 2 of the Vermillion Grazing EIS describes the environmental components likely to be impacted by the proposed action. Environmental components discussed in the EIS that might

affect or be affected by the proposal are: Climate, Vegetation, Water Sources, Threatened and Endangered Species, Wildlife, BLM Sensitive and State Species of Concern, Soils, Lithology, Cultural/Historical, Visual Resources, Livestock Grazing, Recreation Resources, and Socioeconomics.

This EA also incorporates by reference the "Implementation of Standards for Rangeland Health and Guidelines for Grazing Administration, Head of Hacks Canyon and Loco Point Allotments S&G Assessment" (2002)². The Head of Hacks Canyon and Loco Point Allotments S&G Assessment describes the resources and issues applicable to the Allotment areas.

The Arizona Strip Field Office is located in the northwest portion of Arizona. The topography of the Allotments area is semiarid range with sloping, rolling, or flat terrain. Elevation ranges from 4400 to 5600 feet, temperatures average 34 degrees in the winter and 80+ degrees in the summer, and precipitation averages 7-14 inches annually. A general description of the affected environment may be found in the FEIS. Relevant site specific components are as follows:

Climate

These Allotments are most represented by the Sunset rain gauge which is 9.79" precipitation per year and approximately 17% (1.62") comes in the fall, 23% (2.26") comes in the winter, 22% (2.15") comes in the spring and 38% (3.76") comes in the summer.

Vegetation

There are three principal vegetative types³ within these Allotments: Grassland, sagebrush, and pinyon-juniper.

- The grassland type consists of plant species such as blue grama, galleta grass, squirreltail needle 'n' thread, red three-awn and Indian ricegrass.
- The sagebrush type includes big sagebrush, squirrel tail, blue grama, sand dropseed, mormon tea, yellow rabbitbrush, winterfat and fourwing saltbush.
- The pinyon-juniper type includes pinyon, juniper, sagebrush, fourwing saltbush, desert holly, blue grama, and squirrel tail.

These vegetative types make up the different ecological sites⁴ that are part of the Major Land

² Head of Hacks Canyon and Loco Point Allotments S&G Assessment, available at the Bureau of Land Management, Arizona Strip Field Office, 345 E. Riverside Drive, St. George, Utah 84790.

³ Vermillion Grazing Environmental Impact Statement

⁴ An ecological site is a distinctive kind of land that differs from other kinds in its ability to produce a characteristic plant community. Each ecological site is a product of all

Resource Units, as defined by the NRCS. The dominant ecological sites on the Head of Hacks Canyon and Loco Point Allotments are: Shallow Loamy, Gypsum Upland and Loamy Upland.

Water Sources

The Head of Hacks Canyon Allotment contains:

- 3 Livestock/wildlife water catchments
- 10 Unfenced reservoirs
- 5 Fenced reservoirs, which are accessible to wildlife.

The Loco Point Allotment contains:

- 5 Unfenced reservoirs
- 1 Fenced reservoir, which is wildlife accessible.

The Head of Hacks Canyon and Loco Point water sources are available to wildlife yearlong and livestock as needed, depending on the grazing rotation system. All of the water rights to the reservoirs are held by the permittee. It is a requirement of the agreements to make the water accessible to wildlife, for the time that water is available. There is no competition for water between wildlife and livestock at any of these water sources.

Threatened or Endangered (T&E) Species

Bald eagle (*Haliaeetus leucocephalus*), California condor (*Gymnogyps californianus*), and peregrine falcon (*Falco peregrinus alatum*) may occasionally fly over the Head of Hacks Canyon and Loco Point Allotments. There are no riparian areas that would provide foraging habitat for peregrine falcon, bald eagle, Mexican spotted owl, or southwestern willow flycatcher. An experimental non-essential population (as defined under section 10J of the Endangered Species Act) of California condors was established on the Vermillion Cliffs in 1996. These birds may eventually forage on carrion within these Allotments but have not yet been observed doing so. No other federally listed T&E (plant or animal) species are known to occur in the area covered by this EA.

BLM Sensitive or State Species of Concern

Ferruginous hawks (*Buteo regalis*) are known to forage over grassland habitat similar to that found on the Allotments, though specific sightings have not been recorded for the area. Western burrowing owls (*Athene cunicularia hypugea*) are sensitive species that may occur within or adjacent to this area, but have not been recorded on the Head of Hacks Canyon and Loco Point Allotments. A variety of sensitive bat species have been known to occur in the surrounding area, including Townsend's big-eared (*Corynorhinus townsendii*), spotted bats (*Euderma maculatum*),

environmental factors responsible for its development. Each site is capable of producing and supporting a plant community typified by an association of species that differs from other ecological sites in species kind, proportion and total production.

small-footed myotis (*Myotis ciliolabrum*), fringed myotis (*Myotis thysanodes*), and big free-tailed bats (*Nyctinomops macrotis*).

No sensitive reptiles or amphibians are known or suspected to occur on these Allotments.

Wildlife

These allotments fall within AGFD's Game Management Unit 13A. Mule deer and pronghorn are the primary big game species that occupy this habitat area. The number of mule deer counted in this area varied considerably over the 13 year period from 1989 to 2001, from a low of 31 in 1992 to a high of 170 in 2001. While there are no published estimates of mule deer numbers specifically for the Head of Hacks Canyon and Loco Point Allotments, the deer herd in GMU 13A is probably less than 2,000 animals. This herd has been stable to increasing over the 15 year period from 1989 - 2003. It should be noted that the number of mule deer counted may not accurately reflect population trends due to variations and other inherent biases in survey techniques. In addition, population numbers do not necessarily reflect habitat conditions. Populations may be high despite poor habitat conditions, or low despite excellent conditions.

Mule deer fawn production estimates are generally not available. However, AGFD researchers confirmed successful reproduction for 11 of 16 (69%) telemetered does in the spring of 2001. Accounting for twins, this would result in a production estimate of 1.4 fawns/doe, or 140 fawns per 100 does. Fawn survival rates are typically considerably lower due to over-winter mortality. A typical five year average would be about 44 fawns per 100 does. This information is collected annually in July by AGFD from fixed wing aircraft.

The mule deer population on these allotments is a low density deer population. Mule deer are most likely to be found during the winter months on these allotments. They prefer rocky or broken terrain at higher elevations during the summer and seek shelter at these lower elevations during the winter. The dominant vegetation favoring mule deer appears to be pinyon-juniper, sagebrush, and cliffrose.

The pronghorn population is doing well most years in the Clayhole Habitat Area(CHA). In 2002, a severe drought year, fawn numbers were low, but numbers were up in 2003. Pronghorn are seen on the Head of Hacks Canyon and Loco Point Allotments, especially in the more open northern and eastern portions.

Other Nongame Species: As with most Allotments, nongame wildlife forage and cover needs have not been specifically addressed in applicable management plans, including those pertaining to wildlife habitat (HMPs). No monitoring programs have been established that would identify trends in nongame wildlife populations. It is typically assumed that management actions that provide for healthy rangelands will benefit most nongame species. This is particularly true where there is a mosaic of habitat types separated by edge or transitional communities.

Soils

SCS Soil Survey of Mohave County Area Ecological Sites-625(SCS, 1991) Arizona, East of Hurricane Cliffs, 1992. Includes both allotments

Head of Hacks Canyon and Loco Point Soils:

- 6 Bidonia-Bond-RO complex, 1 to 25 percent slopes, (plateaus, mesas), sandstone; Bidonia Sandstone Upland (Woodland), 10" to 14" ppt; Bond Shallow Loamy, 10" to 14" ppt
- **10 Clayhole loam, 1 to 3 percent slopes, (alluvial fans), gyp-shale; Gypsum Upland, 7" to 11" ppt
- 13 Grieta fine sandy loam, 1 to 5 percent slopes, (fan terraces), sandstone; Sandy Loam Upland, 7" to 11" ppt
- **15 Gypsiorthids-Gypsiorthids, shallow complex, 1 to 50 percent slopes, (fan terraces, hills), gypsiferous shales; Gypsiorthids
- 17 Havasupai-Mellenthin complex, 2 to 12 percent slopes, (fan terraces, hills), limestone; Shallow Loamy, 10" to 14" ppt
- **19 Jocity-Clayhole complex, 1 to 4 percent slopes, (stream terraces, fans), mixed, gyp-shale; Jocity Silty Upland, 7" to 11" ppt; Clayhole Gypsum Upland, 7" to 11" ppt
- 20 Jocity silty clay loam, 1 to 4 percent slopes, (stream terraces), mixed alluvium; Silty Upland, 7" to 11" ppt
- 22 Kinan gravelly loam, 1 to 15 percent slopes, (fan terrace), limestone; Loamy Upland, 7" to 11" ppt
- 23 Kinan-Hatknoll-Grieta complex, 1 to 5 percent slopes, (fan terraces), limestone, basalt, sandstone; Kinan and Grieta Loamy Upland, 7" to 11" ppt; Hatknoll Clay Loam Upland, 7" to 11" ppt
- 29 Manikan silty clay loam, 1 to 4 percent slopes, (stream terraces), sandstone, shale; Clayey Upland, 10" to 14" ppt
- 32 Mellenthin-Progresso complex, 1 to 7 percent slopes, (hills, fan terraces), limestone; Shallow Loamy, 10" to 14" ppt; Progresso Sandy Loam Upland (calcareous), 10" to 14" ppt
- 33 Mellenthin very gravelly loam, 1 to 25 percent slopes, (hills), limestone; Shallow Loamy, 10" to 14" ppt
- 46 Pennell-Bacobi complex, 1 to 7 percent slopes, (hills, fan terraces), limestone; Pennell Shallow Loamy, 7" to 11" ppt; Bacobi Loamy Upland, 7" to 11" ppt
- 47 Torriorthents, 3 to 50 percent slopes, (scarps, hills), gyp-shales and mudstones; Gypsum Hills, 7" to 11" ppt
- 54 Saido-Brinkerhoff complex, 1 to 5 percent slopes, (fan terraces), gyp-shale, mudstone, sandstone; Saido Gypsum Upland, 7" to 11" ppt; Brinkerhoff; Loamy Upland, 7" to 11" ppt
- 63 Torriorthents-RO complex, 30 to 70 percent slopes, (hills, scarps), Moenkopi colluvium; Breaks, 10" to 14" ppt

****Slightly Saline Soils**

Lithology:

The north half of the Head of Hacks allotment consists of loamy textured stream terraces and alluvial fans, including ridges, with outcrops of Moenkopi mudstones and gypsiferous shales on the east side.

The south half of the allotment is dominated by ridges of Kaibab limestone, with some Moenkopi mudstones and gypsiferous shales on the north end. Loamy stream terraces are in the center of the area.

The Loco Point allotment consists of low ridges of Moenkopi mudstones and shales cut by Bitter Seeps Wash on the west and by Kanab Creek canyon on the east. Loamy alluvial fans are in the northwest corner.

Cultural/Historical

Cultural resources cover the span of human occupation in the new world from around 10,000 years ago, up to and including the ranch operators of today. Our specific knowledge of the cultural makeup is limited due to the lack of scientific investigation of the area. A class I review was conducted and certain sites have been recorded on these Allotments, but no known impacts to significant resources resulting from grazing have been found or documented.

Visual Resources

The area within these allotments has been classified as follows:

Head of Hack Canyon – Class II, III, and IV

Loco Point – Class II and III

The objective for Class II areas is to retain the existing character of the landscape. The objective for Class III areas is to partially retain the existing character of the landscape. The objective for Class IV areas is to provide for management activities that require major modifications of the existing character of the landscape.

Livestock Grazing

The Head of Hacks Canyon Allotment is comprised of 29,490 acres of federal land, 1,920 acres of state land. The total number of active AUMs on this Allotment is 2923.

The Loco Point Allotment is comprised of 2,697 acres of federal land, 640 acres of state land. The total number of BLM active AUMs on this Allotment is 535.

Recreation Resources

These Allotments are considered to have recreation values for their geology, scenic view areas, solitude and remoteness. General recreation activities include: OHV uses, sight seeing, horseback riding, hiking, camping, hunting, rock collecting, photography, bird watching and nature study.

Off Highway Vehicles: The Head of Hacks allotment has two classifications for OHV use: Limited to Existing Roads and Trails, and Limited to Designated Roads and Trails. The Loco Point allotment has one classification for OHV use: Limited to Existing Roads and Trails

Recreation Opportunity Spectrum: The area within this allotment was classified as Semi-Primitive Non-Motorized, Semi-Primitive Motorized, and Roded Natural. The area within the Loco Point Allotment was classified as Semi-Primitive Non-Motorized, and Roded Natural.

Trails: The Dominguez-Escalante Party is presumed to have come through the Head of Hacks allotment, although the party's route is shown on the Arizona Strip's Visitor Map as a historic trail, the exact route is not known, and no trail markers are found on the ground in this area.

Socio/Economic

The economic base of the Arizona Strip is mainly ranching with a few gypsum/selenite mines and uranium operations. Nearby communities are supported by tourism (including outdoor recreation), construction and light industry. The social aspect involves remote, unpopulated settings with moderate to high opportunities for solitude.

IV. ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS

Only impacts that may result from implementing the proposed action or alternatives are described in this EA. If an ecological component is not discussed, it is because BLM resource specialists have considered effects to the component and found the proposed action or alternatives would have minimal or no effects.

General effects from projects similar to the proposed action or alternatives are also described in the documents to which this EA is tiered.

This EA incorporates by reference the Head of Hacks Canyon and Loco Point Allotments S&G Assessment and Appendix (2002-03) that provides a complete discussion, analysis and summaries of the range resources and associated data and issues.

Climate

The Proposed Action would have no effect on the climate. However, the Proposed Action would allow affected resources to respond to the climate with improvement to these resources, as

mentioned below in the drought and vegetation sections.

Drought

In response to drought conditions, BLM can modify the terms and conditions of a grazing permit (i.e. number of cattle, turn out dates, removal dates, etc.) temporarily or on a more long-term basis. Most modifications are accomplished on a cooperative basis with the livestock permittee. However, if a permittee disagrees with BLM's assessment of the resource conditions or the necessary modifications, BLM may nevertheless issue a Full Force and Effect Grazing Decision to protect resources.

Vegetation

Grazing impacts on vegetation are mitigated by timing of use, adjusting of stocking rates, and conformance with Standards and Guidelines for Grazing Management. The current management allows for cool and warm season grasses and browse to elongate the plants apical bud, build vigor and achieve seed ripe.

Pace Frequency trend data on the Head of Hacks Canyon indicates that two key areas are in upward trend, and three are in static trend. The Loco Point data indicates that one key area is in upward trend.

These vegetation components constitute the ecological sites upon which DPC objectives are based(both are in late seral and upward). Key areas are established on ecological sites and studied to determine the ecological status⁵ of that site and the trend of plant species on the site.

Table 1 lists allotments and key areas, the ecological site of the key areas, current ecological status and associated similarity indexes.

⁵Ecological status is the present state of vegetation of an ecological site in relation to the potential plant community for that site. It expresses the relative degree to which the kinds, proportions, and amounts of plants in a plant community resemble that of the potential natural plant community for the site. Ecological status is a coefficient of community similarity, which gives an ecological rating of the plant community. Ecological status is also defined in seral stages, which are the developmental stages of ecological succession. The four ecological status classes correspond to percent similarity to potential natural community and correlate with seral stage ratings.

Early Seral Stage (0-25%)
Mid Seral Stage (26-50%)
Late Seral Stage (51-75%)
Potential Natural Community (76-100%)

Table 1(Head of Hacks Canyon)

Allotments	Key Area	Ecological Site	Ecological Status	Similarity Index
Head of Hacks Canyon	#1	Sandy Loam Upland 9-13" pz	Late Seral	55%
Head of Hacks Canyon	#2	Gyp Hills 7-11" pz	Late Seral	63%
Head of Hacks Canyon	#3	Shallow Loamy 7-11" pz	Late Seral	52%
Head of Hacks Canyon	#4	Loamy Upland 10-14" pz	Late Seral	67%
Head of Hacks Canyon	#5	Shallow Loamy 7-11" pz	Late Seral	52%

Table 1 (Loco Point)

Allotments	Key Area	Ecological Site	Ecological Status	Similarity Index
Loco Point	#6	Shallow Loamy 7-11" pz	Late Seral	61%

DPC objectives are found in the S&G evaluation and these DPCs were established to achieve the goals of the decisions, which include managing vegetation toward ecological stability and long term protective cover, proper watershed management, desired wildlife and livestock habitat conditions.

Utilization

Utilization is the proportion or degree of current year's forage production that is consumed or removed by animals. The Key Species Grazed Class Method was used to collect the data. Utilization was read at the key areas.

Utilization levels during the analysis period were below the 50% allowable level. During the evaluation period, average utilization across all pastures for cool season grasses were 32%,

ranging between 5% and 46%. For the warm season grasses, the average was 28%, ranging from 5% to 48%. The browse averaged 36% and all browse species ranged from 5% to 48%.

Threatened or Endangered Species(T&E)

Implementation of the proposed action would have no affect on an occasional fly over by bald eagle, California condor, or peregrine falcon. The proposed action would have no affect on any other listed, proposed, or candidate species.

BLM Sensitive or State Species of Concern.

The Proposed Action would have no affect on BLM sensitive and state species of concern. These species include the avian species, Ferruginous hawk, western burrowing owl and sensitive bat species such as Townsend's big eared, spotted bats, western small-footed myotis, fringed myotis, big free-tailed bats.

Wildlife

The Proposed Action would have no substantial impacts on any objectives for meeting wildlife habitat needs that are provided for in habitat management plans (HMPs) written for specific geographic regions. The Clayhole Habitat Management Plan provides management direction for this area. This plan primarily addresses the needs of threatened, endangered, or sensitive species and big game animals.

The Proposed Action would have no substantial impacts on big game(mule deer, pronghorn) or the other nongame wildlife found on the Allotments. Observations and studies over time have indicated that this area receives only light use by mule deer, primarily as winter range.

The Proposed Action would have no substantial impacts on Pronghorn Antelope. Observations and studies over time have indicated that this area receives light use by pronghorn, which may occupy or transition back and forth between areas. According to recent fence inventory by the Arizona Game and Fish Department, this area of public lands within these Allotments does meet the standards for antelope passable fences. Any maintenance or replacement fences will be built in compliance. But none are proposed at this time.

These allotments are fair habitat for bats, raptors, and carnivorous species. Coyotes are the dominant predator species.

Migratory Birds

Executive Order 13186 requires BLM and other federal agencies to work with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to improve protection for migratory birds. Implementation of the proposed action is not likely to adversely affect any species of migratory bird known or suspected to occur on these Allotments. No take of any such species is anticipated.

Soils

Soil in the Head of Hacks Canyon and Loco Point includes primarily Shallow Loamy, Loamy Upland and Gyp Upland range sites. Attributes making up the soil resource should remain stable or improve thru implementation of the Proposed Action Alternative and enforcement of the Arizona Standards and Guides process for permitted livestock grazing within the Head of Hacks Canyon and Loco Point Allotments. The current grazing rotation allows for seasonal plant rest and vigor. Utilization levels are within that allowable.

Cultural Resources

There would be no substantial impact to cultural or historical sites as a result of renewing this grazing permit. Cultural resources project files for the Head of Hacks Canyon Allotment is AZ BLM 110-2007-029, and Loco Point is AZ BLM 110-2007-028 which contains documentation of compliance with Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act. Great efforts are made to avoid any sites during Allotments project implementation. Further, archaeological clearances are completed prior to any and all project approvals.

Visual Resources

The long-term success of improving land health could contribute to enhancing visual resources conditions by increasing the variety of visual forms, lines, colors and textures where past land use practices may have virtually eliminated any such variety. Conducting a Visual Resource Contrast Rating evaluation as part of rangeland development design would likely enable most projects to be mitigated to meet VRM Class objectives.

Livestock Grazing

Under the Proposed Action livestock grazing would continue and the permittees would be allowed to continue in the livestock business.

Recreation Resources

Recreation in the area is primarily composed of OHV uses, sightseeing, horseback riding, hiking, camping, hunting, rock collecting, photography, bird watching and nature study. No impact to recreation is expected.

Cumulative Impacts

Cumulative Impacts are tiered to the Arizona Strip RMP (1992), Environmental Consequences pages IV-36 to IV-38, and to chapter 4 of the Vermillion Grazing EIS (1979) which was adopted into the RMP. Unavoidable Adverse Impacts, Relationship between Local Short-term Uses of Man's Environment, Maintenance and Enhancement of Long-term Productivity, and the

Irreversible and Irretrievable Commitments of Resources were discussed.

Cumulative impacts occur when additional management facilities are added to those already present. Grazing plans are intended to meet specific objectives to the plan area and involve rangeland improvements that are designed to maintain or improve wildlife habitat, watershed, and overall resource conditions, thus improving ecosystem health.

Residual Impacts

Residual Impacts are tiered to the Arizona Strip RMP (1992), Irreversible and Irretrievable Commitments of Resources page 172 of the Vermillion Grazing EIS (1979) which was adopted into the RMP. Though the proposed action doesn't propose any new fences, it does allow for the existence of present fence lines, which do create some restrictions of free passage, but do not prevent passage of mule deer. Existing fences are pronghorn compliant with the recent modifications. Other wildlife using the area are not restricted by existing fences.

Monitoring

The monitoring described in the proposed action (page 8-10) is sufficient to identify changes in vegetation as a result of livestock grazing activities. In addition to those methods described, there are efforts in place to inventory for noxious weed establishment, as well as monitor treated areas for treatment effectiveness. BLM Arizona Strip Field Office noxious weed specialist has the lead on monitoring and treating noxious weeds for this area.

Mitigation

When noxious weeds are located, various methods are used for their control depending on the size of the infestation and growth stage of the plants. The methods include but are not limited to:

- Physical or mechanical
- Biological
- Chemical

If vegetative monitoring indicates current livestock grazing practices are causing non-attainment of resource objectives, BLM can modify the terms and conditions of a grazing permit (ie. number of cattle, turn out dates, removal dates, etc.) temporarily or on a more long-term basis. Most modifications are accomplished on a cooperative basis with the livestock permittee. However, if a permittee disagrees with BLM's assessment of the resource conditions or the necessary modifications, BLM may nevertheless issue a Full Force and Effect Grazing Decision to protect resources.

V. CONSULTATION AND COORDINATION

This EA was prepared by the Bureau of Land Management (BLM), Arizona Strip Field Office,

345 E. Riverside Drive, St. George, UT 84790. Public involvement for the Head of Hacks Canyon and Loco Point S&G evaluation began January 29, 2002. The assessment was conducted by an interdisciplinary assessment team (IAT) of resource specialists from the BLM. The IAT was assisted by the Rangeland Resources Team (RRT) appointed by the Arizona Resource Advisory Council. A draft evaluation was sent out for public review and comment to Individuals, Groups and Agencies. Comments from Individuals, Groups and Agencies were incorporated in to the Final Head of Hacks Canyon and Loco Point S&G evaluation report.

Interdisciplinary Assessment Team (IAT):

Linda Price.....Project Coordinator
Kevin Schoppmann....Range/Grazing
John Herron.....Archaeologist
Robert Smith....Soils, Watershed
Larry Gearhart.....Wilderness/Recreation
Michael Herder.....Wildlife Biologist
Lee Hughes.....Plants/Ecology

Internal Reviewers:

Gloria Benson, Native American Coordinator
Tom Folks, Recreation/Visual/Wilderness
Laurie Ford, Lands/Realty/Minerals/Team Leader
Michael Herder, Wildlife Team Lead
John Herron, Cultural
Lee Hughes, Plants/Ecology
Ron Wadsworth, Supervisory Law Enforcement
Linda Price, S&G Program Coordinator
Bob Sandberg, Range Team Lead
Richard Spotts, Environmental Coordinator
Ray Klein, GCPNM Supervisory Law Enforcement
L. D. Walker, Noxious Weed Coordinator
Becky Hammond, Arizona Strip Field Office Manager
Andi Rogers, AZGFD Habitat Specialist
Rick Miller, AZGFD Habitat Specialist

Reviewed by Planning and Environmental Coordinator(P&EC):

Richard Spotts
P&EC

Date

FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT

Implementation of the Arizona Standards for Rangeland Health and Guidelines
for Grazing Management for the Head of Hacks Canyon and Loco Point Grazing Allotments
Permit Renewal

RE: AZ-EA-110-2007-0017

The Environmental Assessment AZ-110-2007-0017, hereby incorporated by reference, analyzed a livestock grazing permit renewal action conducted under the Arizona BLM Standards for Rangeland Health and Guidelines for Grazing Management (S&Gs) where an intensive Allotments evaluation was conducted with public and other agency involvement throughout the process. Analysis of existing study data indicates that overall ecological conditions are presently static to upward on the Allotments. The resource conditions on these Allotments are meeting Standards for Rangeland Health. Issues were analyzed and it was determined that current management is not a factor in preventing attainment of Standards.

The Environmental Assessment reaffirmed the present management system, and determined that the present grazing management program will continue to allow improvement to the health of public land resources, such as soil, water, vegetation, wildlife habitat, and wildlife and other resource values.

Based on the analysis of Environmental Assessment AZ-110-2007-0017, I have determined that the renewal of the Head of Hacks Canyon and Loco Point Allotments Grazing Permit with current terms and conditions will not have a significant effect on the human environment. Therefore, an environmental impact statement will not be prepared.

Field Manager
Arizona Strip Field Office

Date



United States Department of the Interior

BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT
Arizona Strip Field Office
345 East Riverside Drive
St. George, Utah 84790
www.az.blm.gov



In Reply Refer To:
AZ-110: 4130

February 8, 2007

Dear Interested Public:

You are receiving the enclosed Notice of Proposed Decisions(NOPD) to renew the 10 year grazing permit because you are a Designated Interested Public on the Head of Hack Canyon and Loco Point Allotments.

The Environmental Assessment(EA), Finding of No Significant Impacts(FONSI) and NOPD are public documents and available upon request. The EA's analysis and the alternatives were considered from the tiered Vermillion Grazing Environmental Impact Statement.

Any applicant, permittee, lessee or other affected interests may protest the proposed decision under 43 CFR 4160.1 in person or in writing to the authorized officer, Becky J. Hammond, at 345 East Riverside Dr., St. George, Utah 84790, within 15 days after receipt of such decision. The protest, if filed, should clearly and concisely state the reason(s) as to why the proposed decision is in error.

In the absence of a protest, the proposed decision will become the final decision of the authorized officer in 30 days from the date of the proposed decision without further notice.

Any applicant, permittee, lessee or other person whose interest is adversely affected by the final decision may file an appeal and petition for stay of the decision pending final determination on appeal under 43 CFR 4160.4, 4.21 and 4.470. The appeal and petition for stay must be filed in the office of the authorized officer, as noted above, within 30 days following receipt of the final decision, or 30 days after the date the proposed decision becomes final.

The appeal shall state the reasons, clearly and concisely, why the appellant thinks the final decision is in error.

Should you wish to file a motion for stay, the appellant shall show sufficient justification based on the following standards:

- (1) The relative harm to the parties if the stay is granted or denied.

- (2) The likelihood of the appellant's success on the merits.
- (3) The likelihood of immediate and irreparable harm if the stay is not granted, and
- (4) Whether the public interest favors the stay.

As noted above the petition for stay must be filed in the office of the authorized officer.

Sincerely,

Becky J. Hammond
Arizona Strip Field Office Manager



United States Department of the Interior

BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT
Arizona Strip Field Office
345 East Riverside Drive
St. George, Utah 84790
www.az.blm.gov



In Reply Refer To:
AZ-110: 4130

NOTICE OF PROPOSED DECISION

Dear Interested Public:

A Formal Allotments Evaluation was completed to address the Arizona Standards for Rangeland Health and Guidelines for Grazing Administration for the Head of Hack Canyon #5232 and Loco Point #5260 Grazing Allotments. On April 28, 1997, Arizona Standards for Rangeland Health and Guidelines for Grazing Administration (S&Gs) were approved by Secretary of the Interior and adopted into all Land Use Plans (LUPs) in Arizona, as indicated by the Decision Record for the Statewide Amendment. The Head of Hack Canyon and Loco Point Allotment Evaluation was conducted in accordance with the direction set forth in the Washington Office Instruction Memorandum No. 98-91 for implementation of Standards Rangeland Health and guidelines for grazing administration. The evaluation revealed that issuing a grazing permit, for a period of ten years, conformed to the applicable land use plans and amendments and the existing NEPA documentation adequately addresses the proposed action.

In accordance with 43 Code of Federal Regulations 4130.2, and based upon the Allotments evaluation, consultation with affected permittees, interested publics, rangeland resource team and recommendations from the interdisciplinary assessment team, my proposed decision is to offer the grazing permit/lease, for the Head of Hack Canyon and Loco Point Grazing Allotments for a period of ten years with the current terms and conditions. The current terms and conditions become effective upon acceptance of the permit/lease.

Billing for grazing use would be based on Actual use which is due on March 15 each year. On drought years or when utilization reaches 50%, livestock are removed and taken off. This will help provide additional rest and increase plant vigor, density, litter, seed production and cover.

Authorized Permitted use is as follows:

Allotment Total Pref. AUMs Suspended AUMs Active AUMs

Head of Hack Canyon	3305	641	2664
Loco Point	535	0	535

Kind and number of Livestock, period(s) of use and the amount of use, in animal unit months (AUMs):

<u>Allotment</u>	<u># Livestock</u>	<u>Season of Use</u>	<u>% P.L.</u>	<u>Active AUMs</u>
Head of Hack Canyon	244 Cattle	3/1 to 2/28	91%	2664
Loco Point	49 Cattle	3/1 to 2/28	91%	535

RATIONALE:

The Taylor Grazing Act of 1934 and the Federal Land Policy and Management Act of 1976 provides for livestock grazing use of the public lands which have been classified as proper for grazing. Grazing use must be consistent with good range management aimed at conservation and protection of the natural resources.

Arizona Standards and Guidelines (S&G) for grazing administration were developed through a collaborative process involving the Bureau of Land Management State S&G Team and the Arizona Resource Advisory Council. Together, through meetings, conference calls, correspondence, and Open Houses with the public, the BLM State Team and RAC prepared Standards and Guidelines to address the minimum requirements outlined in the grazing regulations. The Standards and Guidelines, criterion for meeting Standards, and indicators are an integrated document that conforms to the fundamentals of rangeland health and the requirements of the regulations when taken as a whole.

The BLM has also reviewed the legal concerns and has concluded that the Standards and Guidelines evaluation and term permit renewal is supported by the National Environmental Policy Act and Council of Environmental Quality (CEQ) regulations. The proposed action of renewing leases/permitted use conforms to the Arizona Strip Resource Management Plan (Land Use Plan) dated January 31, 1992, as amended. The NEPA documentation covers the proposed action and alternatives which constitute BLM's compliance with the requirements of NEPA, and procedural requirements as provided in the CEQ regulations. This is demonstrated by the following background information:

In December of 1996 a ("draft") Statewide Plan Amendment of Land Use Plans in Arizona for implementation of Arizona Standards for Rangeland Health and Guidelines for Grazing Administration, and preliminary Finding of No Significant Impact, and supporting Environmental Assessment was sent out to 900 interested publics.

On April 28, 1997, Arizona Standards for Rangeland Health and Guidelines for Grazing Administration (S&Gs) were approved by Secretary of the Interior and adopted into all LUPs in Arizona as indicated by the Decision Record for the Statewide Amendment.

The BLM has followed the mandate of Federal Land Policy and Management Act, which requires the Secretary of the Interior to: develop, maintain, and revise land use plans. The Resource Management Plan/Environmental Impact Statement guides the BLM's management of public lands and all resources.

The BLM has complied with the grazing regulations, Washington Office and Arizona BLM policies for permit/lease renewals and fundamentals of Rangeland Health as specified in 43 CFR 4180.

The Bureau of Land Management's grazing regulations contains many provisions for public participation in the decision making process. Consultation, cooperation and coordination (CCC) are the core of the public participation process and provides the BLM decision-maker the opportunity to consider the most complete information before making decisions.

On January 8, 2002, the interested public was notified that the Head of Hack Canyon and Loco Point Grazing Allotments would be evaluated to determine if the resource conditions were meeting the Arizona standards for Rangeland Health and Guidelines for Grazing Administration. This initial notification was provided to allow for public participation in CCC process. Different individuals, groups, organizations and agencies, were contacted from the general Resource Management Plan mailing lists to determine specific interest in the Head of Hack Canyon and Loco Point Allotments and to solicit interest in the decision making process for grazing term permit renewal and Standard and Guideline evaluation.

Issue scoping took place on January 29, 2002, and a field visit to the allotment was completed on September 18, 2002. A Head of Hack Canyon and Loco Point S&G evaluation was sent out for public review and comment July 6, 2005, to 56 Individuals, Groups and Agencies. Response from the public was addressed. The Final Head of Hack Canyon and Loco Point S&G evaluation report was completed and assessed.

The assessment fulfilled its purpose of determining if the existing permitted livestock use, and other activity plans, which identify terms and conditions for management on public lands within the Head of Hack Canyon and Loco Point Allotments, meet, or are making significant progress toward meeting the standards or other LUP objectives and are in conformance with Arizona's Standards for Rangeland Health and Guidelines for Grazing Administration. A thirty-day comment period on the draft report was afforded to the Permittee's, Arizona Game and Fish Department, Arizona State Land Department, Natural Resources Conservation Service, and interested public and other Agencies.

The S&G assessment was conducted by an interdisciplinary assessment team (IAT) of resource specialists from the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) and the Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS). The IAT was assisted by the Rangeland Resource Team (RRT). The RRTs were established under the charter of the Resource Advisory Council (RAC) and are involved during the S&G assessment process for permit/lease renewals. Recommendations were considered from the (RRTs), which represented a variety of commodity, environmental and

recreational interests, to assist in the interdisciplinary assessment of Standards for Rangeland Health.

In accordance with Bureau Policy and regulations, all applicable monitoring data were examined and evaluated in order to determine progress in meeting Arizona Standards for Rangeland Health and other land use plan objectives. Analysis of data indicated that the Land Use Planning (LUP) Objectives are being met. LUP Objectives pertaining to DPC's are being met and they assure rangeland health, state water quality standards, and habitat for: endangered, threatened, and sensitive species, as well as other wildlife is being maintained and improved. All key area DPC objectives for the Allotments are being met. Issues were analyzed and it was determined that current management is not a factor in preventing attainment of Standards. A review of the resource data revealed that the Allotment meets Standards 1 and 3. Standard 2 is not applicable (there are no riparian areas in the Allotment).

The IAT completed the rangeland health assessment to determine if renewal of the term grazing permits/leases would preclude the attainment of Arizona's S&Gs and determine if the proposed action (permit/lease renewal) was in conformance with the documented Land Use Plan and adequately covered under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA).

The EA/FONSI, EA-AZ-110-2007-0017, which analyzed the livestock grazing permit renewal action, based on the S&G evaluation, was completed February 8, 2007. This referenced EA/FONSI is considered a public document and is available upon request.

The Environmental Assessment reaffirmed the present grazing management, and determined that the present grazing management program would continue to allow improvement to the health of public land resources, such as soil, water, vegetation, wildlife habitat, and wildlife and other resource values. Further, the Authorized Officer made a determination that issuing a grazing permit for a period of ten years, conformed to the applicable land use plans and amendments, and the existing NEPA documentation adequately addresses the proposed action.

The Code of Federal Regulations (43 CFR 4130.2(a) require that, "Grazing permits or leases shall be issued to qualified applicants to authorize use on the public lands and other lands under the administration of the Bureau of Land Management that are designated as available for livestock grazing through . . ." the Arizona Strip District Office Resource Management Plan, which adopted the Vermillion Resource Area Grazing Environmental Impact Statement.

The Arizona Strip District Office is currently involved in a planning process that will result in a new RMP for the Arizona Strip Field Office outside of the monuments. There may be modifications as a result of the new RMP. The 10-year grazing permit, in part, states "This permit is subject to (A) modification, suspension or cancellation as required by land plans and applicable law; (B) annual review and to modification of terms and conditions as appropriate;..". BLM may use these permit conditions to implement any changes required under the new RMPs.

Also, the renewal of grazing permits are allowed: As provided for in 43 CFRs 4100 where the objectives of regulations are “. . . to promote healthy sustainable rangeland ecosystems; to accelerate restoration and improvement of public rangelands to properly functioning conditions; to promote the orderly use, . . . ; to establish efficient and effective administration of grazing of public rangelands; . . .”, and as provided for in the Land Use Plans in accordance with multiple-use objectives, requirements and provisions of established laws, regulations and BLM policies incorporating Desired Plant Community Objectives using the Ecological Site Index approach.

Renewal of the grazing permit would comply with Section 401 of the Federal Clean Water Act and ARS§ 49-202 of the State Environmental Quality Act Certification. The management practices of the Allotment are in conformance with Arizona Standards for Rangeland Health and Guidelines for Grazing Administration, and are designed to assist management in meeting these Standards for Rangeland Health through guideline consistency on the Head of Hack Canyon and Loco Point Grazing Allotments.

As required by Bureau Instruction Memorandum No. 2002-052 renewal of these grazing permits would not result in an adverse effect on energy development, production or distribution.

Authority: The authority for this proposed decision is contained in Title 43 of the Code of Federal Regulations, which states in pertinent parts:

4100.0-8 “The authorized officer shall manage livestock grazing on public lands under the principles of multiple use and sustained yield and in accordance with applicable land use plans. Land use plans shall establish allowable resource uses (either singly or in combination), related levels of production or use to be maintained, areas of use, and resource condition goals and objectives to be obtained. The plan also sets forth program constraints and general management practices needed to achieve management objectives. Livestock grazing activities and management actions approved by the authorized officer shall be in conformance with the land use plan as defined at 43 CFR 1601.0-5(b).”

4110.3 “The authorized officer shall periodically review the permitted use specified in grazing permits or leases and shall make changes in the permitted use as needed to manage, maintain or improve rangeland productivity, to assist in restoring ecosystems to properly functioning condition, to conform with land use plans or activity plans or to comply with provisions of subpart 4180 of this part.”

4130.2(a) “Grazing permits or leases shall be issued to qualified applicants to authorize use on public lands and other lands under the administration of the Bureau of Land Management that are designated as available for livestock grazing through land use plans. Permits or leases shall specify the types and levels of use authorized, including livestock grazing, suspended use, and conservation use. These grazing permits or leases shall also specify terms and conditions pursuant to 4130.3, 4130.3-1, and 4130.3-2.”

4130.2(b) “The authorized officer shall consult, cooperate and coordinate with affected permittees or lessees, the State having lands or responsible for managing resources within the area, and the interested public prior to the issuance or renewal of grazing permits and leases.”

4130.3 “Livestock grazing permits and leases shall contain terms and conditions determined by the authorized officer to be appropriate to achieve the management and resource condition objectives for public lands and other lands administered by the Bureau of Land Management, and to ensure conformance with the provisions of subpart 4180 of this part.”

4130.3-1(a) “The authorized officer shall specify the kind and number of livestock, the period(s) of use, the Allotments(s) to be used, and the amount of use, in animal unit months, for every grazing permit or lease. The authorized livestock grazing use shall not exceed the livestock carrying capacity of the Allotment.”

4130.3-2 “The authorized officer may specify in grazing permits or leases other terms and conditions which will assist in achieving management objectives, provide for proper range management or assist in the orderly administration of the public rangelands...”

4130.2(f) “The authorized officer will not offer, grant or renew grazing permits or leases when the applicants, including permittees/lessees seeking renewal, refuse to accept the proposed terms and conditions of a permit or lease.”

4160.1(a) “Proposed decisions shall be served on any affected applicant, permittee, or lessee, and any agent and lien holder of record, who is affected by the proposed actions, terms or conditions, or modification relating to applications, permits and agreements (including range improvement permits) or leases, by certified mail or personal delivery. Copies of proposed decisions shall also be sent to the interested publics.”

4160.2 “Any applicant, permittee, lessee or other affected interests may protest the proposed decision under Sec. 4160.1 of this title in person or in writing to the authorized officer within 15 days after receipt of such decision.”

4180.2(c) The authorized officer shall take appropriate action as soon as practicable but not later than the start of next grazing year upon a determination that existing grazing management practices or levels of grazing use on public lands are significant factors in failing to achieve standards and conform with the guidelines that are made effective under this section...”

Protests:

Any applicant, permittee, lessee or other affected interests may protest the proposed decision under 43 CFR 4160.1 in person or in writing to the authorized officer, Becky J. Hammond, at 345 East Riverside Dr. St. George, Utah 84790, within 15 days after receipt of such decision. The protest, if filed, should clearly and concisely state the reason(s) as to why the proposed decision is in error.

In the absence of a protest, the proposed decision will become the final decision of the authorized officer in 30 days from the date of the proposed decision without further notice.

Any applicant, permittee, lessee or other person whose interest is adversely affected by the final decision may file an appeal and petition for stay of the decision pending final determination on appeal under 43 CFR 4160.4, 4.21 and 4.470. The appeal and petition for stay must be filed in the office of the authorized officer, as noted above, within 30 days following receipt of the final decision, or 30 days after the date the proposed decision becomes final.

The appeal shall state the reasons, clearly and concisely, why the appellant thinks the final decision is in error.

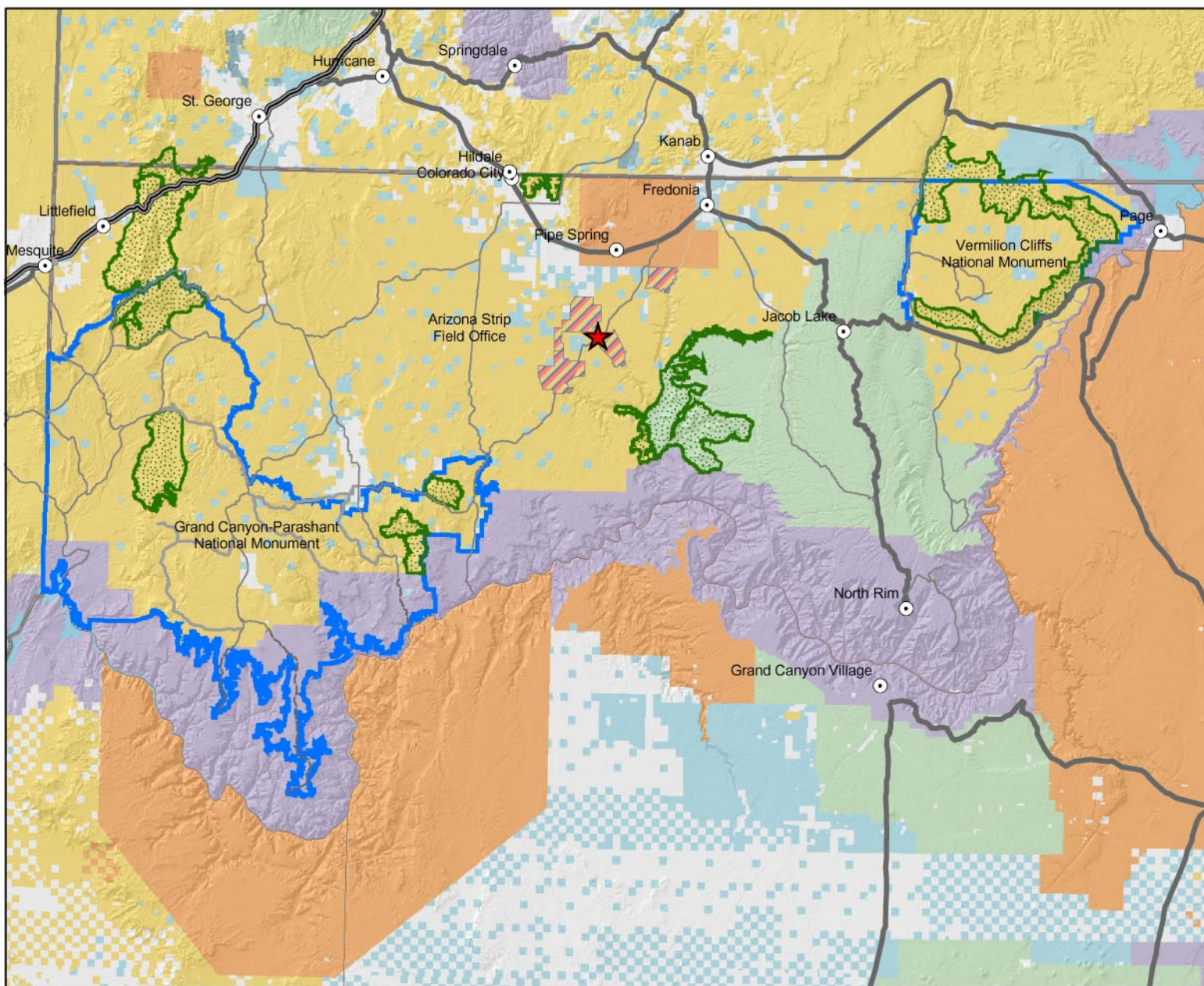
Should you wish to file a motion for stay, the appellant shall show sufficient justification based on the following standards:

- (1) The relative harm to the parties if the stay is granted or denied.
- (2) The likelihood of the appellant's success on the merits.
- (3) The likelihood of immediate and irreparable harm if the stay is not granted, and
- (4) Whether the public interest favors the stay.

As noted above the petition for stay must be filed in the office of the authorized officer.

Sincerely,

Becky J. Hammond
Arizona Strip Field Office Manager



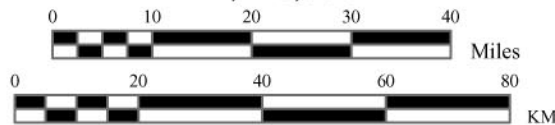
Legend

- | | | | |
|-----------------------|---------------------------|-----------------------|-------------------|
| Area of NEPA Project | Bureau of Land Management | National Park Service | Interstate |
| Designated Wilderness | State Lands | Indian Lands | Primary Routes |
| Monuments | Private Lands | National Forest | Secondary Routes |
| | | | Light Duty Routes |
| | | | 4WD Routes |

Location Map



1:1,220,000



CAUTION:
Land ownership data is derived from less accurate data than the 1:24000 scale base map. Therefore, land ownership may not be shown for parcels smaller than 40 acres, and land ownership lines may have plotting errors due to source data.

No warranty is made by the Bureau of Land Management for the use of the data for purposes not intended by the BLM.

