



# 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](http://www.az.blm.gov)



In Reply Refer To:  
AZ-110: 4130

November 28, 2006

Dear Interested Public:

You are receiving the enclosed Notice's of Proposed Decisions(NOPD) to renew the 10 year grazing permit because you are a Designated Interested Public on the Fern Tank and Lamb Tank 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 15 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



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St. George, Utah 84790  
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In Reply Refer To:  
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## 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 Fern Tank #5217 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 Fern Tank 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 Allotment 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 Fern Tank Grazing Allotment for a period of ten years with the following terms and conditions. The following terms and conditions become effective upon acceptance of the permit/lease.

1. The new Desired Plant Community (DPC) objectives as listed in the Environmental Assessment (EA) EA-AZ-110-2007-0004 will be monitored to determine trends.

Billing for grazing use would be based on Actual use which is due on July 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:**

<u>Allotment</u>	<u>Total Pref. AUMs</u>	<u>Suspended AUMs</u>	<u>Active AUMs</u>
Fern Tank	5870	1064	4806

**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>
Fern Tank	608 Cattle	10/16 to 6/30	93%	4806

**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 October 15, 2002, the interested public was notified that the Fern Tank Grazing Allotment 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 Fern Tank Allotment 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 14, 2003, and a field visit to the allotment was completed on July 23, 2003. A Fern Tank S&G evaluation was sent out for public review and comment July 7, 2005, to 33 Individuals, Groups and Agencies. Response from the public was addressed. The Final Fern Tank 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 Fern Tank Allotment, 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 Allotment 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-110-2007-0004, which analyzed the livestock grazing permit renewal action, based on the S&G evaluation, was completed November 28, 2006. 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 Fern Tank Grazing Allotment.

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



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In Reply Refer To:  
AZ-110: 4130

## **NOTICE OF PROPOSED DECISION**

Dear Interested Publics:

A Formal Allotment Evaluation was completed to address the Arizona Standards for Rangeland Health and Guidelines for Grazing Administration for the Lamb Tank Grazing Allotment #5257. 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 Lamb Tank 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 allotment evaluation, consultation with affected permittee, interested publics, rangeland resource team and recommendations from the interdisciplinary assessment team, my proposed decision is to offer the grazing permit/lease, for the Lamb Tank Grazing Allotment for a period of ten years with the following terms and conditions. The following terms and conditions become effective upon acceptance of the permit/lease.

2. The new Desired Plant Community (DPC) objectives as listed in the Environmental Assessment (EA) EA-AZ-110-2007-0004 will be monitored to determine trends.

Billing for grazing use will be based on the Actual Use Report which is due on or before March 15 each year. Livestock may be moved 15 days before or after scheduled move dates. The grazing schedule is a four-pasture deferred rotation system, with each pasture receiving three months grazing at different times and nine months rest each year.

This helps increase plant vigor, density, litter, seed production and cover.

**Authorized Permitted use is as follows:**

<u>Allotment</u>	<u>Total Pref. AUMs</u>	<u>Suspended AUMs</u>	<u>Active AUMs</u>
Lamb Tank#5257	818	395	423

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

<u>Livestock #'s</u>	<u>Season of Use</u>	<u>% Fed. Range</u>	<u>Active AUMs</u>
47 Cattle	3/1 to 2/28	75%	423

**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 October 19, 2001, the interested public was notified that the Lamb Tank Grazing Allotment would be evaluated during that year 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 Lamb Tank Allotment and to solicit interest in the decision making process for grazing term permit renewal and Standard and Guideline evaluation.

Issue scoping took place on October 22, 2003. And a field visit took place on March 10, 2004. A Lamb Tank S&G evaluation was sent out for public review and comment July 5, 2006, to 27 Individuals, Groups and Agencies. Response from the public was addressed.

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 Lamb Tank Allotment, 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 allotment 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-110-2007-0004, which analyzed the livestock grazing permit renewal action, based on the S&G evaluation, was completed November 28, 2006. 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 Lamb Tank Grazing Allotment.

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 allotment(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 interest 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.

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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**

**Environmental Assessment**

**Fern Tank, Lamb Tank Allotments Grazing Permit Renewal**

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**EA-AZ-110-2007-0004**

**I. INTRODUCTION**

This Environmental Assessment (EA) analyzes the proposed grazing permit renewal for the Fern Tank and Lamb Tank 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 that would maintain desirable conditions and continue to allow improvement of public land resources, or if changes in grazing management for the Fern Tank and Lamb Tank Allotments are necessary. This EA is intended to evaluate the findings of the Fern Tank and Lamb Tank 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 Allotments data indicates that in general or overall conditions 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 Fern Tank #5217 and Lamb Tank #5257 Grazing Allotments. The Fern Tank and Lamb Tank Grazing Allotments are located in Mohave County, Arizona, and ranges Twenty to Thirty miles south of Colorado City, 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 Fern Tank Allotment**

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

**GZ-20** Establish utilization levels not to exceed 50 percent average of current year's growth of key species.

**RR-01** Consider all applications for special recreation permits within the resource area, subject to the constraints of this plan and the environmental assessment for the proposed use.

**RR-03** Provide recreation settings where traditional, backcountry, extensive recreation activities such as camping, hunting, and sightseeing are possible and the opportunities for such activities as defined by the Recreation Opportunity Spectrum are high.

**RR-04** Recreation activities will be carried out in such a way as to protect cultural values.

**RR-11** Restore and/or maintain the generally natural "remote" settings that exist throughout the resource area through mitigation of new projects and implementing restoration projects as necessary.

**RR-17** Institute visitor limits, regulation, or restriction in the resource area only when monitoring of resource and social conditions indicate a trend toward unacceptable change to desired recreation settings brought about by such use.

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

**WS16** Develop management prescriptions or improvement practices to achieve desired plant community objectives.

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

The allotment was classified in the RMP as category IV. This means that the watershed units currently are in satisfactory erosion condition, but are susceptible to wind and water erosion following disturbance.

**TE01** Manage areas consistent with multiple uses 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.

**WL06** In cooperation with Arizona Game and Fish Department, continue restoration of native wildlife into their historic ranges by supporting and assisting in the releases of native species.

**WL07** Manage wildlife habitat through the Habitat Management Plan process to achieve desired plant community objectives.

**WL16** Complete ecological site inventories in key areas to determine site potentials and present ecological conditions; establish desired plant community objectives for various areas and include these objectives in Allotment Management Plans, Habitat Management Plans, watershed plans, and other plans in order to prescribe management or improvement practices to achieve these objectives.

**WL18** Manage identified pronghorn antelope habitat through the Habitat Management Plan process to achieve and maintain optimum numbers and distribution in the Clayhole Valley. Initial population management levels are 400 head in Clayhole Valley. The intent is to have self-sustaining pronghorn herds.

#### **Land Use Plan Objectives for the Lamb Tank Allotment**

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

- RR01** Consider all applications for special recreation permits within the resource area, subject to the constraints of this plan and the environmental assessment for the proposed use.
- RR03** Provide recreation settings where traditional backcountry and extensive recreation activities such as camping, hunting, and sightseeing are possible and the opportunities for such activities are high, as defined by the Recreation Opportunity Spectrum.
- RR11** Restore and/or maintain the generally natural “remote” settings that exist throughout the resource area through mitigation of new projects and implementing restoration projects as necessary.
- RR17** Institute visitor limits, regulation, or restriction in the resource area only when monitoring of resource and social conditions indicates a trend toward unacceptable change to desired recreation settings brought about by such use.
- WS01** Manage vegetation cover towards ecological stability and sound long-term protective soil cover.
- WS16** Develop management prescriptions or improvement practices to achieve desired plant community objectives.
- WS21** Manage watershed areas according to watershed categorizations to achieve identified objectives.
- The allotment was classified in the RMP as category IV. This means that the watershed units currently are in satisfactory erosion condition but are susceptible to wind and water erosion following disturbance.
- TE01** Manage areas consistent with multiple uses 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.
- WL06** In cooperation with Arizona Game and Fish Department, continue restoration of native wildlife into their historic ranges by supporting and assisting in the releases of native species.

**WL18** Manage identified pronghorn antelope habitat through the Habitat Management Plan process to achieve and maintain optimum numbers and distribution in the Clayhole Valley. Initial population management levels are 400 head in Clayhole Valley. The intent is to have self-sustaining pronghorn herds.

### **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 Fern Tank and Lamb Tank 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 Fern Tank and Lamb Tank 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.

### **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 Fern Tank Allotment scoping meeting on January 14, 2003 and the field visit on July 23, 2003. The Lamb Tank Allotment scoping meeting was on October 22, 2003 and the field visit on March 10, 2004. 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 **Fern Tank** allotment:

#### **1. Issues relating to Rangeland Health**

**a. Lack of cover – turn wash**

A good stand of grass and forbs now exists; and lack of cover is presently not a problem. There is little or no soil erosion. A recommendation was made to try seeding a portion of these flats with hycrest wheatgrass, winterfat, fourwing saltbush, tall wheatgrass and western wheatgrass. However, the soils are marginal for seeding because of the fine silts present.

Any future projects would be considered in later, site-specific NEPA analysis

**b. Vegetative treatment areas need maintenance**

Vegetative treatment maintenance is needed to help take care of the existing land treatments that occur on this allotment. Too often no maintenance is done and the benefits of the project are lost. Ninety percent of all conservation practices will benefit range, wildlife, watershed, recreation, and everything else. Treat these areas every 10-20 years or as needed using fire, thinning, tebuthiuron and seeding.

Any ground disturbing projects would be considered in a later site-specific NEPA analysis.

**c. Erosion in the bottoms – Langs Run**

The Langs Run drainage begins at Mt. Trumbull some 20 miles away. Presently, the gully erosion has hit bed rock and is not expanding. The uplands and side slopes on this allotment are not contributing and evidence of less scouring of the banks recently because vegetation and ground cover is showing up all along it. The cost, return, and economics are definitely not feasible for a big project such as building a dam.

The most economically feasible option would be to construct (or maintain) spreader dikes and building reservoirs in two side drainages contributing to langs run by taking out added water velocity and making it more stable.

It is not likely that any new spreader dikes would be proposed, therefore this issue is not relevant to this proposed action.

**d. Dense PJ – Little or no herbaceous understory**

The site we went too was static or proper for the site and to make changes here was a low priority. However, we discussed other areas much worse with PJ and no understory and those are the areas that need to be opened up more. Chaining was not an option, because of dense lavarock in the area, but burning, pushing, agro ax, tebuthiuron and thinning PJ was alright to make openings in the areas with deeper soils. We all agreed that these areas have had a lack of fire and should be recommended as let burn in case of a wildfire.

Any future projects would be considered in a later site-specific NEPA analysis.

**e. Russian Knapweed was found on the flats near turn of the wash**

A small patch of Russian Knapweed was found. It was reported to the noxious weed specialist who is responsible for any efforts to see that any infestations are kept from spreading beyond its existing location. This may be done using integrated weed management approach.

Any proposed treatments were previously considered in the Environmental Impact Statement Vegetation Treatment on BLM Lands in Thirteen Western States. Also covered by field office wide Decision Record.

The following issues are for the **Lamb Tank** allotment:

**1. Issues relating to Rangeland Health**

None.

**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 Fern Tank and Lamb Tank 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 Fern Tank and Lamb Tank 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:**

**Fern Tank:**

<u>Livestock Numbers</u>	<u>Season of Use</u>	<u>% Federal</u>	<u>Active AUMs</u>
608 Cattle	10/16 to 6/30	93%	4806

Voluntary non-use has varied from 783 to 2655 AUMs per year, since 1992. Non-use reflects seasonally dry periods, drought years or other factors.

Each year the permitted livestock are removed entirely from the allotment during the summer months (July thru September) each year. This provides additional rest during the growing season. This will help increase plant vigor, density, litter, seed production, and cover.

**Lamb Tank:**

<u>Livestock Numbers</u>	<u>Season of Use</u>	<u>% Federal</u>	<u>Active AUMs</u>
47 Cattle	3/1 to 2/28	75%	423

Voluntary non-use has varied from 0 to 167 AUMs per year, since 1992. Non-use reflects seasonally dry periods, drought years or other factors.

**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 Fern Tank and Lamb Tank 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 July 1<sup>st</sup> for Fern Tank and March 15<sup>th</sup>, for Lamb Tank 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, Fern Tank and Lamb Tank Allotments S&G Assessment” (2003)<sup>1</sup>. The Fern Tank and Lamb Tank Allotments Assessment 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.

#### **Fern Tank:**

##### **Desired Plant Community (DPC) Key Area #1 (Loam Upland 14-18” pz)**

Maintain ecological condition in Late Seral through 2035.  
Maintain the shrub/browse composition between 20-40% through 2035.  
Maintain the grass composition between 50-75% through 2035.  
Maintain the forb composition between 1-10% through 2035.

##### **Desired Plant Community (DPC) Key Area #3 (Basalt Upland 14-18” pz)**

Maintain ecological condition in Late Seral through 2035.  
Maintain the shrub/browse composition between 15-35% through 2035.  
Maintain the grass composition between 45-65% through 2035.  
Maintain the forb composition between 1-10% through 2035.

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

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<sup>1</sup>Fern Tank and Lamb Tank Allotments S&G Assessment, available at the Bureau of Land Management, Arizona Strip Field Office, 345 E. Riverside Drive, St. George, Utah 84790.

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 #5 (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 50-80% through 2035.  
Maintain the forb composition between 1-10% through 2035.

**Desired Plant Community (DPC) Key Area #6 (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 50-80% through 2035.  
Maintain the forb composition between 1-10% through 2035.

**Desired Plant Community (DPC) Key Area #7 (Limy Slopes 10-14” pz)**

Maintain ecological condition in Late Seral through 2035.  
Maintain the shrub/browse composition between 25-40% through 2035.  
Maintain the grass composition between 50-75% through 2035.  
Maintain the forb composition between 1-10% through 2035.

**Desired Plant Community (DPC) Key Area #8 (Clay Upland 14-18” pz)**

Maintain ecological condition in Late Seral through 2035.  
Maintain the shrub/browse composition between 20-45% 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 #9 (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 50-80% through 2035.  
Maintain the forb composition between 1-10% through 2035.

**Lamb Tank:**

**Desired Plant Community(DPC) Key Area#1 (Shallow loamy 7-11” pz)**

Maintain ecological condition in Late Seral through 2035.

Maintain the perennial grass composition between 50-75% through 2035 by;  
Maintaining Hija CBW between 10 to 15%  
Maintaining Spcr CBW between 1 to 10%  
Maintaining Bogr CBW between 1 to 5%  
Maintaining Sihy CBW between 1 to 5%  
Maintaining Orhy/Stco CBW between 1 to 10%  
Maintain the shrub/browse composition between 20-35% through 2035.  
Maintain the forb composition between 1-10% through 2035.

**Desired Plant Community(DPC) Key Area#2 (Limy Upland 10-14” pz)**

Maintain ecological condition in Late Seral through 2035.  
Maintain the perennial grass composition between 30-50% through 2035 by;  
Maintaining Hija CBW between 1 to 15%  
Maintaining Spcr CBW between 1 to 10%  
Maintaining Boer CBW between 10 to 25%  
Maintain the shrub/browse composition between 25-45% through 2035.  
Maintain the forb composition between 1-10% through 2035.

**Desired Plant Community(DPC) Key Area#3 (Limy Upland 10-14” pz)**

Maintain ecological condition in Late Seral through 2035.  
Maintain the perennial grass composition between 30-50% through 2035 by;  
Maintaining Hija CBW between 1 to 15%  
Maintaining Spcr CBW between 1 to 10%  
Maintaining Boer CBW between 10 to 25%  
Maintain the shrub/browse composition between 25-45% through 2035.  
Maintain the forb composition between 1-10% through 2035.

**Desired Plant Community(DPC) Key Area#4 (Gyp Hills 7-11” pz)**

Maintain ecological condition in mid to late Seral through 2035.  
Maintain the perennial grass composition between 30-60% through 2035 by;  
Maintaining Hija CBW between 5 to 15%  
Maintaining Spcr CBW between 1 to 10%  
Maintaining Orhy CBW between 1 to 10%  
Maintain the shrub/browse composition between 10-30% through 2035.  
Maintain the forb composition between 1-10% through 2035.

**Desired Plant Community(DPC) Key Area#5 (Gyp Hills 7-11” pz)**

Maintain ecological condition in Late Seral through 2035.  
Maintain the perennial grass composition between 30-60% through 2035 by;  
Maintaining Hija CBW between 5 to 15%

Maintaining Spcr CBW between 1 to 10%  
Maintaining Orhy CBW between 1 to 10%  
Maintain the shrub/browse composition between 10-30% 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 3-6 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 Fern Tank and Lamb Tank S&G Assessment Report (2003-04), 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, Fern Tank and Lamb Tank Allotments S&G Assessment” (2003)<sup>2</sup>. The Fern Tank and Lamb Tank 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 6200 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. Site specific components which could be affected by the proposal are as follows:

### **Climate**

The Lamb Tank Allotment is 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.

The Fern Tank Allotment is most represented by the Temple Trail rain gauge which is 10.14" precipitation per year and approximately 15% (1.47") comes in the fall, 25% (2.52") comes in the winter, 20% (2.05") comes in the spring and 40% (4.10") comes in the summer.

### **Vegetation**

There are three principal vegetative types<sup>3</sup> 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 sites<sup>4</sup> that are part of the Major Land

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<sup>2</sup> Fern Tank and Lamb Tank Allotments S&G Assessment, available at the Bureau of Land Management, Arizona Strip Field Office, 345 E. Riverside Drive, St. George, Utah 84790.

<sup>3</sup> Vermillion Grazing Environmental Impact Statement

<sup>4</sup> 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 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

Resource Units, as defined by the NRCS. The dominant ecological sites on the Fern Tank and Lamb Tank Allotments are: Shallow Loamy, Gypsum Upland and Loamy Upland.

### **Water Sources**

The Fern Tank Allotment contains:

- 5 Livestock/wildlife water catchments
- 2 Wildlife water catchments
- 10 Unfenced reservoirs on public land
- 5 Unfenced reservoirs on private land

The Lamb Tank Allotment contains:

- 2 Unfenced reservoirs on public Land
- 2 Unfenced reservoirs on private Land
- 1 Livestock/Wildlife water catchment on private land.
- 1 Livestock/Wildlife water catchment on public land

The Fern Tank and Lamb Tank 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 the 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 Fern Tank and Lamb Tank 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 Fern Tank and Lamb Tank 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*), small-

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ecological sites in species kind, proportion and total production.

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 Fern Tank and Lamb Tank Allotments, the deer herd in GMU 13A is probably less than 2,000 animals. This herd has been stable to increasing over the 13 year period from 1989 - 2001. 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 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 Fern Tank and Lamb Tank 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

**Fern Tank Soils:**

- 7 Bond-Bidonia complex, 1 to 7 percent slopes, (plateaus, mesas), sandstone; Bond-Shallow Loamy, 10" to 14" ppt; Bidonia-Sandstone Upland (PJ-Woodland), 10" to 14" ppt
- 11 Curhollow-Prieta complex, 4 to 20 percent slopes, (fan terraces, hills), limestone, basalt; Basalt Upland, 10" to 14" ppt
- 33 Mellenthin very gravelly loam, 1 to 25 percent slopes, (hills), limestone; Shallow Loamy, 10" to 14" ppt
- 40 Moab loam, 1 to 5 percent slopes, (fan terraces), limestone; Loamy Upland, 10" to 14" ppt
- 41 Moab-Mellenthin complex, 1 to 20 percent slopes, (fan terraces, hills), limestone; Moab-Loamy Upland, 10" to 14" ppt; Mellenthin-Shallow Loamy, 10" to 14" ppt
- 49 Poley-Moab complex, 1 to 10 percent slopes, (fan terraces), basalt, pyroclastics; Poley-Clay Loam Upland, 10" to 14" ppt; Moab-Loamy Upland, 10" to 14" 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
- 57 Showlow-Section complex, 1 to 15 percent slopes, (hills, fan terraces), basalt, pyroclastics, limestone; Showlow-Clay Loam Upland, 14" to 18" ppt; Section-Loamy Upland, 14" to 18" ppt
- 67 Wukoki-Lomaki complex, 15 to 50 percent slopes, (cinder cones), scoriaceous basalt, pyroclastics; Cinder Hills, 10" to 14" ppt
- 72 Yumtheska very gravelly loam, 4 to 20 percent slopes, (hills), limestone; Shallow Loamy (PJ-Woodland), 14" to 18" ppt
- 73 Yumtheska very gravelly loam, 30 to 50 percent slopes, (hills), limestone; Limestone Hills (PJ-Woodland), 14" to 18" ppt

**Lamb Tank Soils:**

- 10 Clayhole loam, 1 to 3 percent slopes, (alluvial fans), gyp-shale; Gypsum Upland, 7" to 11" ppt
- 15 Gypsiorthids-Gypsiorthids, shallow complex, 1 to 50 percent slopes, (fan terraces, hills), gypsiferous shales; Gypsiorthids-Gypsum Upland, 7" to 11" ppt; Gypsiorthids shallow-Gypsum Hills, 7" to 11" ppt
- 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
- 22 Kinan gravelly loam, 1 to 15 percent slopes, (fan terrace), limestone; Loamy Upland, 7" to 11" 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
- 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
- 64 Torriorthents-RO complex, dry, 30 to 70 percent slopes, (hills, scarps), Moenkopi colluvium; Breaks, 7" to 11" ppt
- 65 Torriorthents-RO complex, warm, 30 to 70 percent slopes, (hills, scarps), Moenkopi colluvium; Breaks, 8" to 12" ppt

### **Lithology:**

The **Fern Tank** Allotment is located on the Uinkaret Plateau. Soil ecological sites vary from one to twenty percent slopes and some steeper slopes in the basalt knolls and limestone cliffs. The majority of Fern Tank consists of limestone fan terraces and hills plus basalt hills and terraces.

The **Lamb Tank** Allotment is divided into three parts. The western-most portion is mainly colluvium on 30 to 70 percent slopes (hills, scarps). The remaining two portions vary in slopes from one to seventy percent. Topography is hills, scarps, fans and stream terraces. The soils are derived mainly from limestone and gyp-shale.

### **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**

Visual Resource Management (VRM): The area within these Allotments has been classified primarily as a VRM Class 3 with some Class 2 & 4.

## **Livestock Grazing**

The Fern Tank Allotment is comprised of 48,269 acres of federal land, 3,440 acres of state land and 40 acres of private lands. The total number of active AUMs on this Allotment is 4806.

The Lamb Tank Allotment is comprised of 7,397 acres of federal land, 640 acres of state land and 640 acres of private lands. The total number of BLM active AUMs on this Allotment is 423.

## **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: These Allotments has two classifications for OHV use: Closed and Existing Roads and Trails.

Recreation Opportunity Spectrum: The area within these Allotments was classified as A Semi-Primitive Non-Motorized, Semi-Primitive Motorized, Roded Natural, Rural.

Trails: The Historic Temple Trail runs in a north to south direction through the Lamb Tank Allotment. This is a marked trail although a lot of the signs have disappeared since they were first put in.

The Dominguez-Escalante Party is presumed to have come through a part of the Fern Tank Allotment, and 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 Fern Tank and Lamb Tank Allotments S&G Assessment and Appendix (2003-04) 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 Fern Tank indicates that four key areas are in upward trend, and four are in static trend. The Lamb Tank indicates that three key areas are in upward trend and two are in static 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 status<sup>5</sup> of that site and the trend of plant species on the site.

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<sup>5</sup>Ecological 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

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

**Table 1(Fern Tank)**

Allotments	Key Area	Ecological Site	Ecological Status	Similarity Index
Fern Tank	#1	Loamy Upland 14-18" pz	Late Seral	57%
Fern Tank	#3	Basalt Upland 14-18" pz	Mid Seral	43%
Fern Tank	#4	Loamy Upland 10-14" pz	Late Seral	56%
Fern Tank	#5	Loamy Upland 10-14" pz	Late Seral	70%
Fern Tank	#6	Loamy Upland 10-14" pz	Late Seral	72%
Fern Tank	#7	Limy Slopes 10-14" pz	Late Seral	60%
Fern Tank	#8	Clay Upland 10-14" pz	Mid Seral	48%

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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%)

Fern Tank	#9	Loamy Upland 10-14" pz	PNC	78%
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**Table 1 (Lamb Tank)**

Allotments	Key Area	Ecological Site	Ecological Status	Similarity Index
Lamb Tank	#1	Shallow Loam 7-11" pz	Late Seral	64%
Lamb Tank	#2	Limy Upland 10-14" pz	Late Seral	67%
Lamb Tank	#3	Limy Upland 10-14" pz	Late Seral	64%
Lamb Tank	#4	Gyp Hills 7-11" pz	Mid Seral	42%
Lamb Tank	#5	Gyp Hills 7-11" pz	Late Seral	57%

### **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.

### **Fern Tank**

Utilization levels during the analysis period have been 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%.

### **Lamb Tank**

Utilization levels during the analysis period have been below the 50% allowable level. During the evaluation period, average utilization across all pastures for Cool Season grasses was 37%, ranging between 19% and 50%. For the Warm Season grasses the average was 33%, ranging from 15% to 49%. The Browse averaged 34% and all browse species ranged from 13% to 55%.

### **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 transitional habitat between summer and 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 Fern Tank and Lamb Tank 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 Fern Tank and Lamb Tank Allotments. The current grazing rotation and controlling waters 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 Lamb Tank Allotment is AZ BLM 010-2004-11, and Fern Tank is AZ BLM 110-2007-018 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.

## **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 Irrecoverable 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 Irrecoverable 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 11-13) 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 Fern Tank S&G evaluation began January 14, 2003 and Lamb Tank on October 22, 2003. 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 Fern Tank and Lamb Tank S&G evaluation report.

**Interdisciplinary Assessment Team (IAT):**

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

**Internal Reviewers:**

Gloria Benson, Native American Coordinator  
Tom Folks, Recreation  
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  
Larry Gearhart, Recreation/Visual/Wilderness  
L. D. Walker, Noxious Weed Coordinator  
Becky Hammond, Arizona Strip Field Office Manager

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

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**Richard Spotts**  
**P&EC**

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**Date**

## **FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT**

Implementation of the Arizona Standards for Rangeland Health and Guidelines for Grazing Management for the Fern Tank and Lamb Tank Grazing Allotments Permit Renewal

RE: AZ-EA-110-2007-0004

The Environmental Assessment AZ-110-2007-0004, 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.

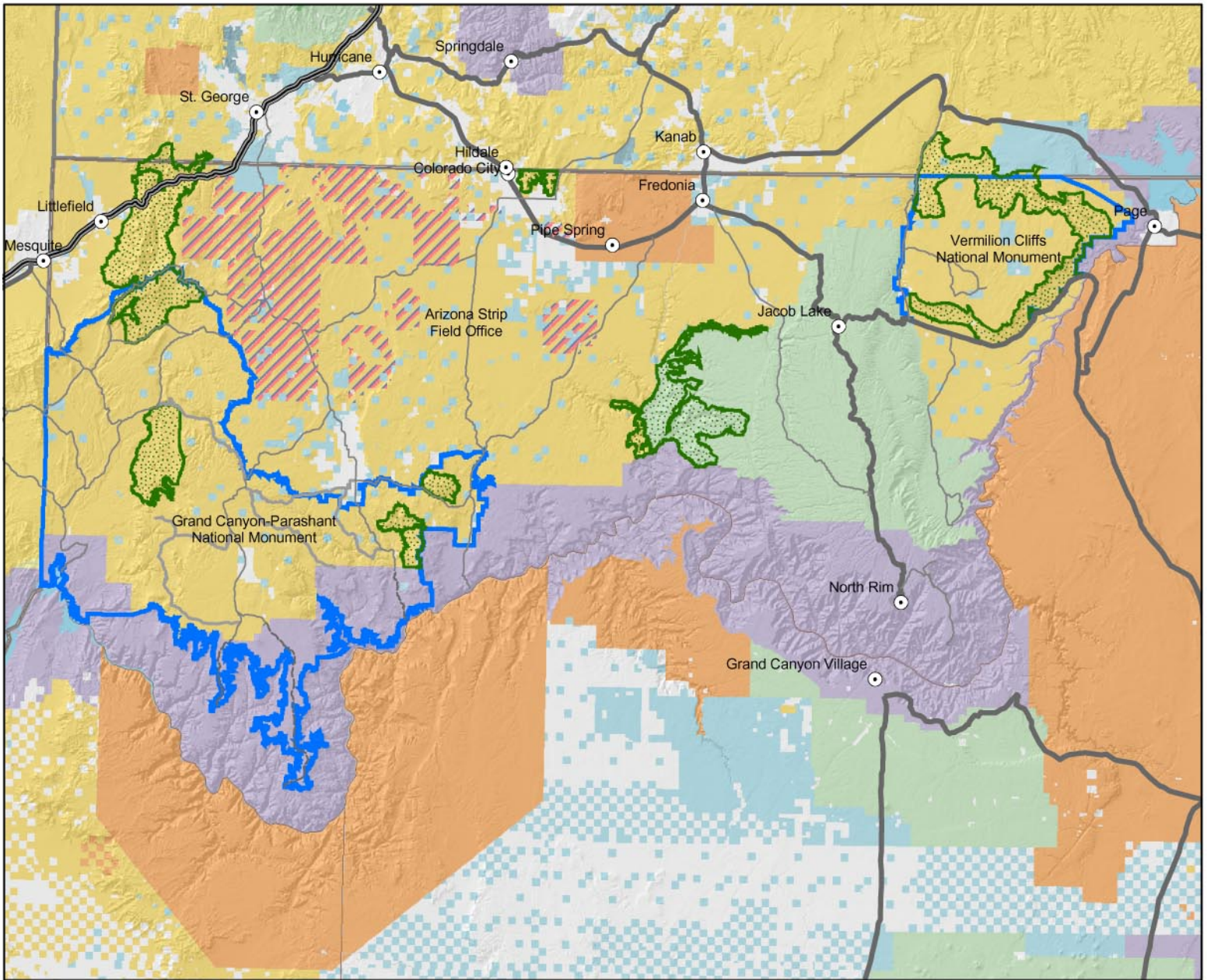
Based on the analysis of Environmental Assessment AZ-110-2007-0004, I have determined that the renewal of the Fern Tank and Lamb Tank Allotments Grazing Permit with current terms and conditions will not have a significant effect on the human environment. Therefore, an environmental impact statement will not be prepared.

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**Field Manager**  
**Arizona Strip Field Office**

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**Date**



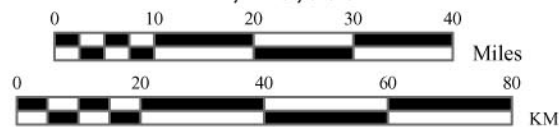
**Legend**

- |                                                                                                           |                                                                                                               |                                                                                                           |                                                                                                         |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
|  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.

