

**UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT
SURPRISE FIELD OFFICE**

CATEGORICAL EXCLUSION REVIEW AND APPROVAL

Project Name: Long Valley Allotment Livestock Grazing Authorization

NEPA Number: DOI-BLM-CA-2009-0003

Project Description: The Bureau of Land Management (BLM) is proposing to re-issue the existing livestock grazing permits on the Long Valley Allotment for a 10 year period.

Project Location: The Long Valley Allotment is located at T42N, R20E in northwestern Washoe County, Nevada. The allotment is located in an interior basin known as Long Valley and consists of 59,079 acres of public land and 18,500 acres of private land.

A scoping letter was sent to 66 interested publics on January 17, 2008. Western Watersheds Project and Nevada Department of Wildlife contributed comments that were carefully considered.

Project Purpose and Need:

The purpose of the action is to authorize livestock grazing use on the Long Valley Allotment. All grazing would be in accordance with 43 CFR 4100 and consistent with the provisions of the Taylor Grazing Act, Public Rangelands Improvement Act, and Federal Land Policy and Management Act. In addition, the action will ensure that all authorizations implement provisions of, and are in conformance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), the Surprise Field Office Resource Management Plan (RMP) and Record of Decision of April 2008, and the Northeastern California and Northwestern Nevada, Standards for Rangeland Health and Guidelines for Livestock Grazing Management 2000.

The Surprise Field Office RMP applicable goals and objectives of livestock grazing, as noted on page 2-34 and 2-35 include the following: 1) Sustainable, ecologically sound, and economically viable livestock grazing opportunities would be provided, where suitable, in the Surprise Field Office management area, 2) Adequate forage would be produced to support sustainable levels of livestock grazing where compatible with objectives for other resources and resource users, 3) Continue to modify and adjust grazing management within individual grazing allotments to ensure that a vigorous plant community is sustained in combination with livestock grazing.

Washington Office policy, through Instruction Memorandum No.2003-071, calls for all grazing permits to be fully processed by the end of FY 2009, including evaluations of grazing and appropriate NEPA documentation. In accordance with that policy, the Surprise Field Office proposes to issue fully processed livestock grazing permits on the Long Valley Allotment.

A copy of the land health standards determination for the Long Valley Allotment can be found at the Surprise Field Office, and is posted on the Surprise Field Office web page at http://www.blm.gov/ca/st/en/fo/surprise/grazing_permit_renewals.html.

The determination concludes that all of the applicable land health standards are being met or, if standards are not being met, it is due to factors not attributable to existing livestock grazing.

The grazing permits or authorizations (including crossing or trailing permits) will include the type and level of use authorized, including the kind and number of livestock, the period of use, and the amount of active and suspended use in animal unit months (AUMs), and terms and conditions for grazing use.

Attachment 1 provides this information including terms and conditions common to all the permits to be issued, as well as terms and conditions specific to the Long Valley Allotment. The Surprise Field Office is not proposing any changes to the existing grazing permits for the Long Valley Allotment.

The term permit and any future crossing/trailing permits would be implemented through Proposed and Final Grazing Decisions, with provisions for protest, appeal, and petition for stay, accordance with 43 CFR 4100, and would be sent to the permittee(s) and interested publics of record.

Plan Conformance

- ❑ The proposed action is in conformance with the Proposed Surprise Field Office Resource Management Plan and final environmental impact statement issued in May 2007 as adopted by the Record of Decision approved in April 2008.
- ❑ The proposed action is in conformance with the Northeastern California and Northwestern Nevada, Standards for Rangeland Health and Guidelines for Livestock Grazing Management 2000.

Categorical Exclusion Reference

The action described above generally does not require the preparation of an environmental assessment (EA) or environmental impact statement (EIS), as it has been found to not individually or cumulatively have a significant effect on the human environment.

This action qualifies as a CX under 516 DM 11.9, CX #D (11). This CX is for:
Livestock grazing permits/leases where:

- a. *The new grazing permit/lease is consistent with the use specified on the previous permit/lease, such that*
 - 1. *the same kind of livestock is grazed*
 - 2. *the active use previously authorized is not exceeded, and*
 - 3. *grazing does not occur more than 14 days earlier or later than as specified on the previous permit/lease, and*
- b. *The grazing allotment(s) has been assessed and evaluated and the Responsible Official has documented in a determination that the allotment(s) is*
 - 1. *meeting land health standards, or*
 - 2. *not meeting land health standards due to factors that do not include existing livestock grazing.*

Screening for Extraordinary Circumstances: The following exceptions (extraordinary circumstances) apply to individual actions within the CX, as listed in 516 DM 2, Appendix 2. The action has been reviewed to determine if any of the below listed exceptions to categorical exclusion documentation apply.

<i>Exceptions</i>	Yes	No	Specialist Initials
1. Have significant impacts on public health or safety.		X	SM
Rationale: The Long Valley Allotment is located in a rural area of northwestern Nevada. The allotment has no significant impacts on public health or safety near public areas. There are no known circumstances in which public health or safety would be impacted or jeopardized.			
2. Have significant impacts on such natural resources and unique geographic characteristics as historic or cultural resources; park, recreation or refuge lands; wilderness areas; wild or scenic rivers; national natural landmarks; sole or principal drinking water aquifers; prime farmlands; wetlands (Executive Order 11990); floodplains (Executive Order 11988); national monuments; migratory birds; and other ecologically significant or critical areas.		X	PB/AU

<p>Rationale: There are no known unique natural resources or geographic characteristics contained within the Long Valley allotment. However, two prehistoric sites that were recorded in 1980 and found eligible to the National Register of Historic Places continue to receive cattle impacts in the form of wallowing, soil churning, erosion, and trampling. Projects are being developed to protect both of the sites from cattle impacts. These projects will be analyzed and discussed in separate NEPA documents.</p> <p>The Long Valley Allotment has no prime farmlands and no drinking water aquifer is associated with the allotment. Floodplains are associated with 10 - 15 ephemeral drainages that flow west and north into Central Lake, Fortynine Lake and Alkali Lake all ephemeral lakes located in Long Valley. Floodplains would not be significantly impacted by the issuances of the 10 year grazing permit for this allotment.</p>			
3. Have highly controversial environmental effects or involve unresolved conflicts concerning alternative uses of available resources [NEPA section 102 (2) (E)].		X	SM
<p>Rationale: Continuing grazing as it has been on the allotment will not have any highly controversial environmental effects. There are no known conflicting interests on the allotment.</p>			
4. Have highly uncertain and potentially significant environmental effects or involve unique or unknown environmental risks.		X	SM
<p>Rationale: Grazing the allotment in the same manner as previously permitted will have no uncertain or potentially significant environmental effects.</p>			
5. Establish a precedent for future action or represent a decision in principal about future actions with potentially significant environmental effects.		X	SM
<p>Rationale: This grazing authorization is consistent with BLM regulation, policy and applicable Land Use Plan, and does not have a potentially significant environmental effect. The grazing permit renewal process is a common BLM action, and is not precedent setting.</p>			
6. Have a direct relationship to other actions with individually insignificant but cumulatively significant environmental effects.		X	SM

Rationale: No new grazing related actions are proposed for this allotment, and the lack of any other actions occurring in this local geographic area makes the risk of cumulative effects negligible.			
7. Have significant impacts on properties listed, or eligible for listing, on the National Register of Historic Places as determined by either the bureau or office.		X	PB
Rationale: There have been 15,781 acres inventoried for cultural resource on the Long Valley Allotment. As a result, 170 archaeological sites have been recorded. In 2008 the Cultural Resource Assessment for the Long Valley allotment was completed as per the Supplemental Procedures for Livestock Grazing Permit/Lease Renewals, A Cultural Resources Amendment to the State Protocol Agreement Between the California BLM and the California State Historic Preservation Officer. The assessment resulted in the identification of two previously recorded prehistoric sites that were being affected by cattle grazing. These sites were initially recorded in 1980 and found eligible to the National Register of Historic Places. Projects are being developed to protect both of the sites from cattle impacts. These projects will be analyzed and discussed in separate NEPA documents. Because the permit renewals will not include any changes in terms and conditions, no new impacts to additional cultural resources are expected.			
8. Have significant impacts on species listed, or proposed to be listed, on the List of Endangered or Threatened Species, or have significant impacts on designated Critical Habitat for these species.		X	EFJ
Rationale: No listed species or their habitats are known to exist within the allotment.			
9. Violate a Federal law, or a State, local or tribal law or requirement imposed for the protection of the environment.		X	
Rationale: There would be no limited access to any public lands resulting from this project. Native American consultation has taken place for this permit renewal. There were no concerns expressed by the tribes regarding the permit renewal.			PB
10. Have a disproportionately high and adverse effect on low income or minority populations (Executive Order 12898, 'Environmental Justice').		X	SM

Rationale: This project would not negatively effect low income or minority populations.			
11. Limit access to and ceremonial use of Indian sacred sites on Federal lands by Indian religious practitioners or significantly adversely affect the physical integrity of such sacred sites (Executive Order 13007).		X	PB
Rationale: There would be no limited access to any public lands resulting from this project. Native American consultation has taken place for this permit renewal. There were no concerns expressed by the tribes regarding the permit renewal.			
12. Contribute to the introduction, continued existence, or spread of noxious weeds or non-native invasive species known to occur in the area or actions that may promote the introduction, growth, or expansion of the range of such species (Federal Noxious Weed Control Act and Executive Order 13112).		X	AU
Rationale: This project would have a low probability to contribute to the introduction, continued existence, or spread of noxious weeds or non-native invasive species known to occur in the area or actions that may promote the introduction, growth, or expansion of the range of such species. Inventory for noxious weeds for the Long Valley Allotment was completed with a re-inventory cycle of every three to four years. From 1997 – 2007 a total of one Dyer’s woad, one Perennial pepperweed, six Canada thistle and thirty one Scotch thistle sites have been inventoried, treated and evaluated. All noxious weed sites were located along main roads in right-of-way.			

Land Use Plan conformance and Categorical Exclusion review confirmation:

Lead Preparer: Steven P. Matthews Date: 12/2/2008

NEPA/ Environmental Coordinator: Ulyssa Parrott Date: 12/2/08

Approval and Decision

Based on a review of the project described above and field office staff recommendations, I have determined that the project is in conformance with the land use plan and is categorically excluded from further environmental analysis. It is my decision to approve the action as proposed, with the following stipulations (if applicable):

Field Office Manager: Shane DeForest Date: 12/2/08

Attachment 1

Long Valley Allotment Terms and Conditions

Mandatory Terms and Conditions

1. 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.
2. All permits and leases shall be made subject to cancellation, suspension, or modification for any violation of these regulations or of any term or condition of the permit or lease.
3. Permits and leases shall incorporate terms and conditions that ensure conformance with subpart 4180 of this part.

Permitted Use Summary

Allotment	Operator	Active AUMs	Suspended AUMs	Total Permitted Use
Long Valley (01005)	Hicks Bros.	915	231	1,146
Long Valley (01005)	Joe Stevenson	1,745	438	2,183
Total		2,660	669	3,329

Livestock Management

The current grazing plan on the Long Valley allotment allows for a total of 2,660 AUMs to be utilized on the public portion of the allotment. The above table details the number of livestock and season of use.

Livestock Numbers and Season of Use

Operator	Auth. Number	No. of livestock	Kind	Season of use	Public AUMs	% Public Land
Hicks Bros.	0402637	182	C	5/1-9/30	915	100
Joe Stevenson	0402661	347	C	5/1-9/30	1,745	100
Totals		529	C	5/1-9/30	2,660	100

Grazing use on the Long Valley Allotment will be subject to the following Terms and Conditions:

1. Grazing use in the Long Valley Allotment will be in compliance with the Long Valley Allotment Management Plan and all other applicable decisions. Any livestock use found outside the limits of flexibility of the AMP, without prior authorization, will be subject to unauthorized use actions.
2. Billing will be based on your actual use reports which are to be submitted within 15 days of your last authorized take off date for each allotment. If actual use reports are not submitted within 30 days, the permittee will be billed and liable for their full active preference. Repeated delays in submitting actual use reports and/or paying grazing billings will revoke actual use billing privileges.
3. Any deviation in season of use, livestock number, or pasture rotation must receive prior approval from the authorized officer.
4. All range improvements must be maintained to standards prior to livestock turnout. All assigned fence maintenance must be completed annually, even if your permit is not activated. Failure to complete assigned fence maintenance may result in suspension of your grazing authorization.
5. Grazing use offered or authorized by BLM is subject to all provisions of the grazing regulations (43 CFR Parts 4100) and other applicable law and regulation. Grazing use will be in accordance with the Rangeland Health Standards and Guidelines for California and Northwestern Nevada Final EIS approved by the Secretary of the Interior on July 13, 2000. Grazing use authorization may be modified in accordance with regulation to attain progress towards achieving rangeland health standards (subpart 4180.1 and 4180.2 Fundamentals of Rangeland Health and Standards and Guidelines for Grazing Administration).
6. Salt and/or mineral supplements will be placed no closer than ¼ mile from any public water source, aspen stand, or meadow.
7. Grazing flexibility can be requested by the livestock operators to run increased numbers for a shorter season. Any changes in grazing use cannot exceed Active AUMs, and must be approved in advance by a BLM authorized officer.

Long Valley Allotment Map

