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**U.S. Department of the Interior
Bureau of Land Management
Kremmling Field Office
P.O. Box 68
Kremmling, CO 80459**

ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

NUMBER: DOI-BLM-CO-120-2010-0006-EA

PROJECT NAME: Renewal of Livestock Grazing Lease # 0501902 for Bull Mountain Ranch.

LEGAL DESCRIPTION: Kremmling Field Office (KFO) administered public land includes all or part of the following:

Allotment 07250 (Bull Mountain) 3225 acres
T. 12 N., R. 76 W., 6th P.M., Sections 22, 23, 26-28, 33-35;
T. 12 N., R. 75 W., 6th P.M., Section 31, 32.

Allotment 07262 (Bull Mountain Ranch) 160 acres
T. 12 N., R. 75 W., 6th P.M., Section 20.

APPLICANT: Bull Mountain Ranch

PURPOSE AND NEED FOR THE ACTION: Bull Mountain Ranch's livestock grazing lease # 0501902 that authorizes livestock grazing on Allotment 07250 (Bull Mountain) and Allotment 07262 (Bull Mountain Ranch) expired on February 28, 2010. Bull Mountain Ranch has applied to renew their livestock grazing lease. The lease is subject to renewal at the discretion of the Secretary of the Interior for a period of up to 10 years. Approving the renewal has been delegated to the local Authorized Officer. Renewal of livestock grazing lease # 0501902 would allow Bull Mountain Ranch to continue grazing on their designated allotments without any changes to the terms and conditions of their lease for a period of 10 years beginning on March 1, 2010.

Background/Introduction/Issues and Concerns: In 1992, a three year rotation grazing system was implemented on Allotment 07250 (Bull Mountain). However, the grazing system did not provide rest for the East Pasture. During the 2000 lease renewal process, a new four year rest rotation grazing system was implemented with all four pastures rested for one year during the four year grazing cycle. Allotment 07250 was initially assessed for compliance with the Standards for Public Land Health in Colorado (Standards) on August 4 and 5, 1999. An interdisciplinary (ID) team from the Kremmling Field Office determined Allotment 07250 was in compliance with all of the Standards. Environmental Assessment CO-KRFO-00-17EA documents the field assessment and permit renewal. Stink Creek and Shell Creek were affected

with low flows during the drought in the early 2000's. Livestock use in the riparian areas tended to be high during these years. Since the drought has alleviated, Stink Creek and Shell Creek have returned to more average flows. Also, Pasture Corner Spring was redeveloped and the riparian fence has been repaired reducing the use of the Stink Creek riparian area. Since a new rest rotation grazing system was implemented during the 2000 lease renewal process, an assessment for compliance with the Standards was required to ensure the changes were accomplishing the intended results. Allotment 07250 (Bull Mountain) was reassessed for compliance with the Standards by an ID team from the Kremmling Field Office on July 10, 2008. The ID team determined the allotment is still in compliance with the Standards. In November 2007, the grazing system was adjusted slightly in consultation with the BLM and Bull Mountain Ranch. The current grazing plan is enclosed as Attachment 1.

DESCRIPTION OF PROPOSED ACTION AND ALTERNATIVES:

Proposed Action: The Proposed Action is the continuation of the current management which would renew livestock grazing lease # 0501902 with no changes to the number or kind of livestock, season of use, or amount of authorized livestock grazing preference as expressed in AUMs*. The 2007 amended grazing plan (Attachment 1) would remain in effect for the renewed lease. A copy of the proposed lease with standards terms and conditions is enclosed as Attachment 2.

* AUM = animal unit month = the amount of forage needed to support one cow and calf for one month.

Renewed livestock grazing lease # 0501902 would authorize livestock grazing to the following extent:

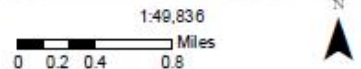
Allotment	Livestock Number	Kind	Season of Use	Percent Public Land	AUMs
07250 Bull Mtn	205	Cattle	6/1 – 9/30	53	436
07262 Bull Mtn Ranch	40	Cattle	9/10 – 9/30	50	14

Design Features of the Proposed Action:

- The permittee would be responsible for notifying the BLM of all suspected noxious weeds found within their livestock grazing allotments.
- The BLM would be responsible for implementing noxious weed control measures, which would include partnership with the Larimer County Weed Abatement Program.
- The allotments would continue to be monitored according to the Compliance/Monitoring Section of this EA.
- If riparian utilization is high or available waters decrease, the permittee would be required to move their livestock to a different area of the pasture away from the riparian area or to remove their livestock from the pasture.



Allotments 07250 and 07262



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Richard Johnson 10/21/09
Tjglsuser@johnson201DNEPAMaps

No Action Alternative: In the case of livestock grazing permit renewals, the No Action Alternative is the same as the Proposed Action.

Alternatives Considered But Eliminated From Further Analysis:

No Grazing

- It is a discretionary action to renew a livestock grazing permits/leases. However, not renewing the grazing lease does not meet the Purpose and Need of this EA.
- During public scoping, no issues or concerns have been identified.
- Not renewing this livestock grazing lease would cause severe economic hardship to the lessee.
- The allotments in lease # 0501902 have been analyzed and meet all of the Standards for Public Land Health in Colorado.

Renew Livestock Grazing Lease # 0501902 with changes to the grazing.

- Does not meet the Purpose and Need for the Action.
- Allotments 07250 and 07262 meet all of the Standards.
- No issues or concerns have been identified with the allotments.

PLAN CONFORMANCE REVIEW: The Proposed Action is subject to and has been reviewed for conformance with the following plan (43 CFR 1610.5, BLM 1617.3):

Name of Plan: Kremmling Resource Management Plan (RMP), Record of Decision (ROD)

Date Approved: December 19, 1984; Updated February 1999

Decision Number/Page: Livestock grazing pages 6 and 8, as revised

Decision Language: Objectives of the RMP/ROD include allocation of a base level of livestock forage and maintaining or improving forage production and condition in areas where livestock grazing is a priority or is compatible with the land use priority. The RMP designated the project area with livestock and wildlife priorities. Livestock grazing is compatible with these priorities.

AFFECTED ENVIRONMENT / ENVIRONMENTAL CONSEQUENCES / MITIGATION MEASURES:

WETLANDS & RIPARIAN ZONES (includes a finding on Standard 2)

Affected Environment: A description of the allotment's riparian areas is included in the 2000 Environmental Assessment. During the 2002 field season, the allotment was very dry and the Stink Creek enclosure was heavily grazed. The allotment remained in drought for the next several years, with small seeps drying up and even Shell Creek had very low flows. Livestock use in the riparian areas tended to be high during these years. Vegetative recovery in Stink

Creek was set back, with some increase in bare soils. Since that time, the spring on Stink Creek (“Pasture Corner Spring”) has been redeveloped and the exclosure repaired.

Environmental Consequences: The Proposed Action would continue the grazing system approved in the 2000 Environmental Assessment with small changes in dates. The system was implemented in the early 1990s and improved the riparian conditions in the allotment from “functioning at risk” to proper functioning condition. The 2000 system adjustment did not affect livestock use in the riparian areas. The rotation system’s effectiveness in maintaining the riparian areas was affected by the drought and the unmaintained spring/exclosure. The grazing system appears to be improving riparian conditions (2008 field assessment), and it is felt that continued improvement will result. Due to the lack of good upland water sources, especially during extended drought, it is important to monitor conditions and adjust livestock use as needed.

No Action Alternative: The No Action Alternative is the same as the Proposed Action so the environmental consequences would be the same.

Mitigation: None

Finding on the Public Land Health Standard for riparian systems: The allotment is considered to be meeting the Standard for riparian health as wetland vegetation is recovering from a few years of heavy utilization. The Proposed Action should continue the riparian improvements as previously observed.

CUMULATIVE IMPACTS SUMMARY:

Geographic Scope of the Cumulative Analysis:

For the purpose of this EA, the general geographic boundary for cumulative impacts is the allotments grazed by Bull Mountain Ranch found in this environmental assessment. The lands are found in the Laramie River watershed in the far northwest corner of Larimer County. Stink and Shell creeks are the main drainages within this part of the Laramie River watershed. Livestock grazing has been occurring on these allotments since the introduction of domestic livestock in the 1870s.

Past, Present, and Reasonably Foreseeable Actions

When considered with past actions, livestock grazing on these allotments did not improve habitat for migratory birds, Greater sage-grouse, wetlands, soils, or vegetation because livestock were not rotated or pastures rested within the allotments. This resulted in the allotments not attaining their vegetative potential. Generally, water is the limiting factor for the number of livestock that can graze an allotment. Water availability also strongly influences livestock distribution within an allotment. Pasture Corner Spring was redeveloped and the riparian fence repaired improving the Stink Creek riparian area and providing an improved source of water for livestock and wildlife. A lack of water can result in reduced habitat for wildlife and reduced vegetation vigor due to poor livestock distribution.

When considering present actions, continuation of the rest rotation grazing system for these allotments would benefit threatened and endangered species, Greater sage-grouse, big game,

water quality, migratory birds and help slow the spread of invasive species. In Allotment 07250 (Bull Mountain) a four pasture rest rotation grazing system was installed to provide rest to each pasture once every four years and to ensure each pasture would be used at different times from year to year. Springs have been developed to provide more sources of water for livestock and wildlife use. The spring developments include pipelines to water troughs to reduce livestock use of riparian areas.

When considering future action, livestock grazing allotments and leases are usually renewed or issued for a period of ten years. The next time this lease would be renewed is in 2020. The four year rest rotation grazing system would remain in effect. Alterations to the grazing system would be implemented if they are beneficial to the vegetation through improved livestock use or if they would financially benefit the lessee's livestock grazing operation. All changes would be subject to the approval of the BLM and lessee. New water developments would most likely be wells because these types of projects provide the most reliable source of water. Redevelopment of an existing non-functioning well or drilling new wells are both considered viable alternatives. All known springs have been developed, but if new springs are located, they would be investigated for possible development. All water developments are generally beneficial to wildlife, vegetation, and wetlands through improved livestock distribution.

PERSONS / AGENCIES CONSULTED:

Bull Mountain Ranch, Lessee

Starting in January 2007, a scoping process was begun to request information concerning the renewal of grazing permits/leases and to prioritize areas or allotments with issues and concerns. The Kremmling Field Office sent scoping letters, along with land status maps showing the affected allotments to the following groups and agencies: Colorado Division of Wildlife (Steamboat Springs, Walden, Hot Sulphur Springs, Fort Collins); District Board of Grazing Advisors; County Commissioners of Grand and Jackson counties; Stock Growers Association (Middle Park, North Park, Upper Big Laramie River Ranch Assoc.); Northwest Resource Advisory Council, United States Forest Service (Silverthorne, Granby, Walden); US Fish and Wildlife Service (Arapaho National Wildlife Refuge); Tribal Councils (Arapaho, Shoshone, Southern Ute); Colorado Commission of Indian Affairs; Ute Indian Tribe Uintah and Ouray Agency Business Committee; Colorado Environmental Coalition; and Colorado State Land Board (Lane Osborn).

The BLM Colorado State Office also mailed outreach letters concerning the renewal of grazing permits/leases to all Congressional offices, State and Federal agencies, and major environmental, conservation, and user group organizations.

In addition, individual letters were sent to the affected permittees/lessees informing them that their permit/lease was up for renewal and requested any information they wanted included in, or taken into consideration during the permit renewal process. A Notice of Public Scoping was posted on the internet at the Colorado BLM homepage, and in Grand and Jackson county newspapers asking for public input on permit/lease renewals and the assessment for compliance with the Standards for Public Land Health in Colorado within the Kremmling Field Office. This notice was followed up with an internet posting of the Kremmling Field Office prioritization of allotments and a determination as to which allotments would be assessed according to the

Standards for Public Land Health in Colorado. The proposed permit renewal was also posted on the Kremmling Field Office Internet NEPA register.

No comments were received concerning this lease renewal.

See Appendix 2 for a Tribal List.

INTERDISCIPLINARY REVIEW: See IDT-RRC in Appendix 1.

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Based on the analysis of potential environmental impacts contained in the attached environmental assessment, and considering the significance criteria in 40 CFR 1508.27, I have determined that the Proposed Action will not have a significant effect on the human environment. An environmental impact statement is therefore not required.

DECISION RECORD

DECISION: It is my decision to authorize the Proposed Action as described in the attached EA and renew livestock grazing lease # 0501902 to be in effect from March 1, 2010 through February 28, 2020. This decision is contingent on meeting all monitoring requirements listed below.

RATIONALE: When a livestock grazing lease expires, it is subject to renewal at the discretion of the Secretary of the Interior for a period of up to ten years. Livestock grazing when properly managed in accordance with good rangeland ecology practices, has been proven to result in improved land health. The public benefits from public lands which are maintained in a healthy condition and are able to produce sustainable resources for a variety of uses.

The livestock producer benefits from a renewed livestock grazing permit/lease to graze forage on BLM managed land. Livestock grazing on BLM managed land is an integral part of the livestock producer's operation, and an important part of local rural economies.

MITIGATION MEASURES: None

COMPLIANCE/MONITORING: Compliance with the renewed livestock grazing lease and its associated terms and conditions would be accomplished through the Kremmling Field Office Range Management Program. Allotment 07250 (Bull Mountain) is an "I" (improve) category allotment. The objective of "I" allotments is to improve the forage productivity and condition in grazing allotments where vegetation condition has not attained its potential. Monitoring of "I" allotments includes collection of actual use, utilization, and climatic data. Compliance checks will be conducted to ensure adherence to annual grazing authorizations. Trend studies would be included for allotments that have Allotment Management Plans.

Allotment 07262 (Bull Mountain Ranch) is a "C" (custodial) category allotment. The objective of "C" category allotments is to maintain existing allotment conditions and provide for management opportunities as needs arise for operators and other land use agencies. Monitoring of "C" allotments includes periodic compliance checks to ensure adherence to annual grazing authorizations.

NAME OF PREPARER: Richard Johnson

NAME OF ENVIRONMENTAL COORDINATOR: Susan Cassel

DATE:

SIGNATURE OF AUTHORIZED OFFICIAL: /s/David Stout

DATE SIGNED: 6/25/10

APPENDICES:

Appendix 1 – Interdisciplinary Team Analysis Review Record and Checklist

Appendix 2 – Native American Tribal List

ATTACHMENTS:

1. 2007 amended rotation grazing plan
2. Livestock grazing lease # 0501902 with standard terms and conditions

Appendix 1

INTERDISCIPLINARY TEAM ANALYSIS REVIEW RECORD AND CHECKLIST:

Project Title: Renewal of livestock grazing lease # 0501902

Project Leader: Richard Johnson

Due Date for Comments: 4/30/2010

Need for a field Exam: Allotment 07250 (Bull Mountain) was assessed for compliance with the Standards on July 10, 2008.

Scoping Needs/Interested or Affected Publics: (Identify public scoping needs)

Consultation/Permit Requirements:

Consultation	Date Initiated	Date Completed	Responsible Specialist/ Contractor	Comments
Cultural/Archeological Clearance/SHPO	NA	1/12/2010	BBW	Past actions have resulted in a cultural resource inventory to determine if those actions would cause potential adverse affects to known and unknown cultural resources sites from livestock grazing, motorized travel, and recreational use. When project undertakings are identified, a cultural resource inventory would be conducted to determine if sites are present and their eligibility, project effects, and mitigation requirements as necessary.
Native American	4/10/2009	1/12/2010	BBW	Tribal consultation was initiated and to date no tribe has identified any area of traditional spiritual concern. All Section 106 undertakings would initiate additional Native American Tribal consultation to identify any potential effects to traditional spiritual places.
T&E Species/FWS	N/A	N/A	McGuire	
Permits Needed (i.e. Air or Water)	N/A	N/A	PBelcher	No new actions are proposed that would require a permit

(NP) = Not Present

(NI) = Resource/Use Present but Not Impacted

(PI) = Potentially Impacted and Brought Forward for Analysis.

NP NI PI	Discipline/Name	Date Review Comp.	Initials	Review Comments (required for Critical Element NIs, and for elements that require a finding but are not carried forward for analysis.)
CRITICAL ELEMENTS				
NI	Air Quality Belcher	4/22/10	PB	Air quality is good and would not be impacted by the Proposed Action.
NP	Areas of Critical Environmental Concern Cassel	10/22/09	SC	There are no Areas of Critical Environmental Concern in the proximity of the proposed project area.
NI	Cultural Resources Wyatt	1/12/2010	BBW	Past actions have resulted in a cultural resource inventory to determine if those actions would cause potential adverse affects to known and

					unknown cultural resources sites from livestock grazing, motorized travel, and recreational use. When project undertakings are identified, a cultural resource inventory would be conducted to determine if sites are present and their eligibility, project effects, and mitigation requirements as necessary.
NP	Environmental Justice	Cassel	10/22/09	SC	According to the most recent Census Bureau statistics (2000), there are no minority or low income communities within the Kremmling Planning Area.
NP	Farmlands, Prime and Unique	Belcher	4/22/10	PB	There are no farmlands, prime or unique, in the proximity of the proposed project area.
NP	Floodplains	Belcher	4/22/10	PB	The upland allotments do not impact the floodplain.
NP	Invasive, Non-native Species	Johnson Torma Hughes	02/25/10	ZH	There are no known invasive, non-native species (noxious weeds) growing in the project area. Since soil or vegetation disturbing activities provide an avenue for the establishment or expansion of invasive, non-native species, the BLM would monitor the project area.
NI	Migratory Birds	McGuire	12/9/2009	MM	The allotments are currently in good condition. Since there are no changes proposed to the existing permit, impacts would remain the same.
NI	Native American Religious Concerns	Wyatt	1/12/2010	BBW	Tribal consultation was initiated and to date no tribe has identified any area of traditional spiritual concern. All Section 106 undertakings would initiate additional Native American Tribal consultation to identify any potential effects to traditional spiritual places.
NI	T/E, and Sensitive Species (Finding on Standard 4)	McGuire	12/9/2009	MM	No T/E species. The allotments are currently in good condition. Since there are no changes proposed to the existing permit, impacts would remain the same.
NP	Wastes, Hazardous and Solid	Hodgson	12/03/09	KH	There are no quantities of wastes, hazardous or solid, located on BLM-administered lands in the proposed project area, and there would be no wastes generated as a result of the Proposed Action or No Action alternative.
NI	Water Quality, Surface and Ground (Finding on Standard 5)	Belcher	4/22/10	PB	The Proposed Action is a continuation of the present management, there would be no impact. There have been no water quality concerns raised since the 2000 E.A.
PI	Wetlands & Riparian Zones (Finding on Standard 2)	Belcher	4/29/10	PB	See Wetlands Section.
NP	Wild and Scenic Rivers	Windsor	11/13/09	AW	There are no eligible Wild and Scenic River segments in the proposed project area.
NP	Wilderness	Monkouski	3/12/2010	JJM	There is no designated Wilderness or Wilderness Study Areas in the proximity of the proposed project area.
NON-CRITICAL ELEMENTS (A finding must be made for these elements)					
NI	Soils (Finding on Standard 1)	Belcher	4/22/10	PB	The Proposed Action would not have any new impacts to soils, which were assessed as meeting the Standard. See the 2000 E.A. for

					more discussion.
NI	Vegetation (Finding on Standard 3)	Johnson Torma	10/28/09	RJ	Since there would be no changes to the number or kind of livestock, season of use, or amount of authorized livestock grazing preference, there would be no impact to the vegetation.
NI	Wildlife, Aquatic (Finding on Standard 3)	McGuire	12/9/2009	MM	The allotments are currently in good condition. Since there are no changes proposed to the existing permit, impacts would not occur.
NI	Wildlife, Terrestrial (Finding on Standard 3)	McGuire	12/9/2009	MM	The allotments are currently in good condition. Since there are no changes proposed to the existing permit, impacts would not occur.
OTHER NON-CRITICAL ELEMENTS					
NI	Access/Transportation	Monkouski	3/12/2010	JJM	The current designation is "Open" for Off Highway Vehicle use and there are no restrictions for mechanized or non-motorized travel in the area. No change in access. No Impacts.
NI	Forest Management	K. Belcher	2/18/10	KB	No impact to forest resources.
NI	Geology and Minerals	Hodgson	12/03/09	KH	No impacts.
NI	Fire	Wyatt	1/12/2010	BBW	Grazing would reduce light flashy fuels. Cattle trails that result in the trampling and removal of vegetation would create potential fuel breaks.
NI	Hydrology/Water Rights	Belcher	4/22/10	PB	The Proposed Action would continue present management, and there would be no new impacts.
NI	Paleontology	Rupp	11/13/09	FGR	Environmental Consequences/Mitigation: There would be no impacts to Paleontological resources from renewing the grazing permit. Ground disturbing projects or undertakings will be reviewed to determine the need for Paleontological inventory.
NI	Noise	Monkouski	3/12/2010	JJM	No impact.
NI	Range Management	Johnson Torma	10/28/09	RJ	No changes to the livestock grazing would be implemented in the new lease. Therefore, there would be no impact to the range management.
NP	Lands/ Realty Authorizations	Cassel	10/22/09	SC	There are no leases, permits or ROWs in the location of the proposed action.
NI	Recreation	Monkouski Windsor	3/12/2010	JJM	Existing recreational uses in the general area include hunting, hiking, horseback riding, wildlife viewing; snowmobiling and driving for pleasure. There are no recreation activity plans or other special recreation designations for this area. The proposed action should have no impacts to the recreation resource.
NI	Socio-Economics	Cassel	10/22/09	SC	Since there is no change in use, there would be no impacts to socio-economics from the proposed action.
NI	Visual Resources	Windsor	11/13/09	AW	Visual resources would not be impacted by the proposed action or the no action alternative.
	Cumulative Impact Summary Johnson		5/3/10	RJ	See Analysis
FINAL REVIEW					
	P&E Coordinator	Cassel			

Appendix 2

NATIVE AMERICAN TRIBES CONTACTED:

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