

**U.S. Department of the Interior
Bureau of Land Management
Little Snake Field Office
455 Emerson Street
Craig, CO 81625-1129**

ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

EA NUMBER: CO-100-2008-016 EA

PERMIT/LEASE/ALLOTMENT NUMBER: 0502906/04323

PROJECT NAME: Partial change in kind of livestock use on the West Douglas Mountain Allotment, #04323.

LEGAL DESCRIPTION: See allotment map, Attachment 1.

**West Douglas Mountain Allotment
04323**

T7N R101W, portions of Sections 6, 7, 18, 19
T7N R102W, portions of Sections 1-28
T8N R101W, portions of Sections 19, 30, 31
T8N R102W, portions of Sections 8-14, 22-27, 32, 34-36
21,055 acres- BLM
5,138 acres- Private
26,193 acres- Total

APPLICANT: Douglas Mountain Grazing Affiliates, LLC.

PLAN CONFORMANCE REVIEW: The Proposed Action and Alternatives are subject to the following plan:

Name of Plan: Little Snake Resource Management Plan and Record of Decision

Date Approved: April 26, 1989

Results: The Proposed Action is consistent with the Little Snake Resource Management Plan, Record of Decision, Livestock Grazing Management objective to improve range conditions for both wildlife and livestock through proper utilization of key forage plants and adjusting livestock stocking rates as a result of vegetation studies.

The Proposed Action is located within Management Unit 2 (Northern Central), Management Unit 5 (Douglas Mountain), and Management Unit 7 (Scattered Sands). The Proposed Action is compatible with the management objectives for these units. The objectives for Unit 2 are to

provide for the development of the oil and gas resource. The objectives for Unit 5 are to manage the forest and woodland resources to produce a variety of forest and woodland products on a sustained-yield basis. Unit 7 objectives are to: 1) provide for the development of locatable minerals and leasable minerals other than coal, oil, gas, and geothermal resources, and 2) make areas available to supply demand for sand, gravel, and other salable mineral materials.

The Proposed Action and Alternatives have been reviewed for conformance with this plan (43 CFR 1610.5, BLM 1617.3).

Other Documents:

The Federal Land Policy and Management Act (FLPMA) of 1976, as amended (43 USC 1752).

Rangeland Reform Final Environmental Impact Statement, December, 1994.

Standards for Public Land Health and Guidelines for Livestock Grazing in Colorado, February 12, 1997.

Environmental Analysis (EA) #CO-100-LS-01-028, ten year grazing permit renewal on the West Douglas Mountain Allotment.

NEED FOR PROPOSED ACTION: BLM permit #0502906 authorizes cattle grazing only on the West Douglas Mountain. The permit was renewed in 2001 for a period of ten years and is not due for another renewal until October 31, 2011. However the permittee would like to change some of the cattle AUMs to domestic horse AUMs so that horses may graze on public lands as well as unfenced private lands within the allotment. Much of the affected environment is the same as that analyzed in EA #CO-100-LS-01-028, therefore, this EA will tier to the EA prepared in 2001. EA #CO-100-LS-01-028 is available at:

http://www.blm.gov/co/st/en/BLM_Information/nepa/lso.html

The following EA will analyze the impacts of converting 48 AUMs from cattle grazing to domestic horse grazing on public land managed by the BLM. If needed, the analysis will recommend additional terms and conditions to the existing permit which will improve or maintain public land health. The Proposed Action will be assessed for meeting land health standards.

This EA will be a site specific analysis to determine if converting 48 AUMs from cattle grazing to domestic horses grazing should be permitted and to identify the conditions under which it can be authorized.

PUBLIC SCOPING PROCESS: The project is posted on the 2008 NEPA log on the Little Snake Field Office web site.

BACKGROUND: The West Douglas Mountain Allotment #4323 is located 40 miles west of Maybell, immediately east of Dinosaur National Monument. Elevations range from 6,600 feet in

the southwest part of the allotment to 8,200 feet on Douglas Mountain. Parcels of private land totaling approximately 5,137 acres are located within the allotment boundary. This land is owned by the Walker Family Trust. There is no state land located within the allotment. The West Douglas Mountain Allotment consists of a total of approximately 26,193 acres, of which 5,138 acres are deeded and 21,055 acres are managed by BLM.

MONITORING DATA: There are no monitoring data that pertain to the Proposed Action.

PROPOSED ACTION AND ALTERNATIVES

PROPOSED ACTION: Convert 48 AUMs from cattle use to domestic horse use. The permit would be re-issued with the same expiration date, February 28, 2010, as the existing permit. The permit would be re-issued as follows:

FROM:

Allotment name and number	Livestock number and kind	Dates		%PL	AUMs
		Begin	End		
West Douglas Mtn. #04323	386 Cattle	05/16 to 10/31		43	922
				Not Scheduled	<u>2</u>
				Total	924

TO:

Allotment name and number	Livestock number and kind	Dates		%PL	AUMs
		Begin	End		
West Douglas Mtn. #04323	366 Cattle	05/16 to 10/31		43	874
	20 Horses	05/16 to 10/31		43	48
				Not Scheduled	<u>2</u>
				Total	924

The grazing permit for the West Douglas Mountain Allotment #04323 would continue to be subject to the following Special Terms and Conditions as outlined in EA #CO-100-LS-01-028 and CX #CO-100-2007-040:

1. Spring grazing in the West Douglas Mountain Allotment will be limited to three weeks between May 1 and June 15.
2. The permittee will submit actual use forms, to be provided by BLM, to more accurately document livestock movements. The forms (4130-5) will be submitted once a year, to coincide with the end of the major season of use, by November 1.
3. West Douglas Mountain, #04323, reflects a consolidation of Upper Five Springs, #04318 (125 AUMs), Big Joe Draw, #04319 (556 AUMs), Zenobia Peak, #04321 (91 AUMs), and Upper Cottonwood, #04322 (152 AUMs).
4. The grazing permit is valid contingent upon a base property lease with the Walker Family Trust.

5. The BLM shall be notified in writing prior to the start of the grazing season of the following: 1) who, by name and registered brand, will have cattle on the allotment and 2) the numbers of livestock each member of the LLC is going to have on the allotment.

6. The LLC shall immediately notify the BLM of any changes in LLC membership.

This permit would also be subject to the Standard and Common Terms and Conditions found in Attachment 2.

NO ACTION ALTERNATIVE: No AUMs would be converted from cattle use to horse use. Livestock would continue to graze the allotment as permitted in the existing authorization.

ALTERNATIVES CONSIDERED BUT ELIMINATED:

No Grazing Alternative: This alternative would cancel the permit on the allotment. As a result, livestock grazing would cease on the public lands within the allotment. This alternative is eliminated from analysis in this EA because it would not conform to the RMP/ROD. The RMP/ROD identified livestock grazing as a suitable and appropriate use on the allotment.

AFFECTED ENVIRONMENT/ENVIRONMENTAL CONSEQUENCES/MITIGATION MEASURES

CRITICAL RESOURCES

AIR QUALITY

Affected Environment: The affected environment is the same as that described in EA #CO-100-LS-01-028.

Environmental Consequences, both alternatives: The environmental consequences would be the same as those analyzed for the Proposed Action in EA #CO-100-LS-01-028.

Mitigative Measures: None.

Name of specialist and date: Kathy McKinstry, 12/10/07

AREA OF CRITICAL ENVIRONMENTAL CONCERN

Affected Environment: Not present.

Environmental Consequences, both alternatives: Not applicable.

Mitigative Measures: None.

Name of specialist and date: Kathy McKinstry, 12/17/07

CULTURAL RESOURCES

Affected Environment: The affected environment for cultural resources is the same as that described in EA #CO-100-LS-01-028.

Environmental Consequences, both alternatives: The environmental consequences would be the same as those analyzed for the Proposed Action in EA #CO-100-LS-01-028.

Mitigative Measures: The mitigative measures are the same as those in presented in EA #CO-100-LS-01-028.

Name of Specialist and date: Robyn Watkins Morris, 12/17/07

ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE

Affected Environment: The proposed action is located in an area of isolated dwellings. Ranching, farming and oil and gas development are the primary economic activities.

Environmental Consequences, both alternatives: The project area is relatively isolated from population centers, so no populations would be affected by physical or socioeconomic impacts of either alternative. Neither alternative would directly affect the social, cultural or economic well-being and health of Native American, minority or low-income populations.

Mitigative Measures: None.

Name of specialist and date: Mike Andrews, 12/12/07

FLOOD PLAINS

Affected Environment: The affected environment for floodplains is the same as that described in EA #CO-100-LS-01-028.

Environmental Consequences, both alternatives: The environmental consequences would be the same as those analyzed in the Proposed Action of EA #CO-100-LS-01-028.

Mitigative Measures: None.

Name of specialist and date: Kathy McKinstry, 12/17/07

INVASIVE, NONNATIVE SPECIES

Affected Environment: The affected environment for invasive, nonnative species is the same as that described in EA #CO-100-LS-01-028.

Environmental Consequences, both alternatives: The environmental consequences would be the same as those analyzed for the Proposed Action of EA #CO-100-LS-01-028.

Mitigative Measures: None.

Name of specialist and date: Kathy McKinstry, 12/10/07

MIGRATORY BIRDS

Affected Environment: Big sagebrush, ponderosa pine, pinyon-juniper, and upland shrub communities in this area provide nesting and/or foraging habitat for the following USFWS Birds of Conservation Concern (2002): black-throated gray warbler, Brewer's sparrow, Virginia's warbler, golden eagle, Lewis's woodpecker, northern harrier, pinyon jay, and pygmy nuthatch. This allotment provides good habitat for migratory birds.

Environmental Consequences, Proposed Action: Livestock grazing can alter vegetation structure, composition, and function. Effects on migratory birds are dependent on the species of interest and may be adverse or beneficial depending on grazing intensity, timing, frequency and distribution. Birds may be displaced as a result of grazing and related activities, and trampling of nests, eggs, or young could occur. Under the Proposed Action, grazing would occur during the breeding season for most of these species. With a partial change in permit terms from cattle to horse use, impacts on plant communities may be slightly different than that of current management. For instance, horses may remove, in patches, greater amounts of standing biomass than cattle. However, grazing intensity and total forage utilization as permitted would not change. Because total use would remain the same (at a level determined to be sustainable based on current habitat conditions), impacts from the Proposed Action would likely be similar to those of the No Action Alternative. It is, therefore, reasonable to assume current conditions would continue under the Proposed Action Alternative. Based on this information, the Proposed Action would be unlikely to have a measurable influence on migratory bird populations on a landscape scale.

Environmental Consequences, No Action: Impacts would be the same as those analyzed for the Proposed Action in EA #CO-100-LS-01-028.

Mitigative Measures: None.

Name of specialist and date: Charlie Sharp, 12/11/07

NATIVE AMERICAN CONCERNS

Prior to the preparation of EA #CO-100-LS-01-028, a letter was sent to the Uinta and Ouray Tribal Council, Southern Ute Tribal Council, Ute Mountain Utes Tribal Council, and the Colorado Commission of Indian Affairs. The letter discussed the range permits that the BLM would be working on in FY02. Comments received from the Southern Ute Tribal Council did not

foresee any impacts. No other comments were received (Letters on file at the Little Snake Field Office, Craig, Colorado). No further consultation for this action was conducted.

Name of Specialist and date: Robyn Watkins Morris, 12/17/07

PRIME & UNIQUE FARMLANDS

Affected Environment: Not present.

Environmental Consequences, both alternatives: Not applicable.

Mitigative Measures: None.

Name of specialist and date: Kathy McKinstry, 12/10/07

T&E SPECIES - SENSITIVE PLANTS

Affected Environment: While there are no elemental occurrences of BLM sensitive plant species present on the West Douglas Allotment, habitat does exist for the narrow leaf evening primrose (*Oenothera acutissima*) in the form of rock crevices and narrow ephemeral drainages associated with Uinta Mountain Quartzite and the Browns Park Formation.

Environmental Consequences, both alternatives: Where this plant does occur in the general vicinity of the West Douglas Allotment, populations are usually associated with developed springs. Observations made in June, 2006 noted few direct grazing impacts from cattle, horses, or wildlife. Where populations have declined has been due to loss of habitat through changes in moisture regimes than through the direct impact livestock grazing. Neither alternative would result in a reduction in the potential for this plant to populate appropriate habitats on the allotment.

Mitigative Measures: None.

Name of specialist and date: Hunter Seim, 12/13/07

T&E AND SENSITIVE ANIMALS

Affected Environment: No federally listed species or habitat occurs within this allotment. This allotment provides good habitat for the following BLM sensitive species: greater sage-grouse, northern leopard frog, bald eagle, and northern goshawk.

Greater Sage-Grouse

Sage grouse general (non-critical) winter range occurs within this allotment. Sage-grouse droppings were observed at several locations during landscape assessments. No leks or nesting habitat are known to occur here.

Northern Leopard Frog

Typical habitats include wet meadows, ponds, and riparian zones. This species was observed at several locations during landscape health assessments.

Bald Eagle

The north portion of the allotment falls within general winter range for the bald eagle. No nesting, roosting, or other key habitat occurs here.

Northern Goshawk

Habitat is variable but typically includes conifer forests up to 9,000 feet. Nests have been confirmed in this area.

Environmental Consequences, Proposed Action: Livestock grazing can alter vegetation structure, composition, and function. Effects on wildlife are dependent on the species of interest and may be adverse, negligible, or beneficial depending on grazing intensity, timing, frequency, and distribution. Potential impacts include habitat degradation, fragmentation, and loss; and individual displacement and/or reduced fitness. Of those listed above, species most likely to be impacted by grazing would be the greater sage-grouse and northern leopard frog. Such impacts are more pronounced during critical seasons, such as wintering or breeding. Because total use would remain the same (at a level determined to be sustainable based on monitoring), impacts from the Proposed Action would likely be similar to those of the no action alternative. It is reasonable to assume current conditions would continue under the Proposed Action Alternative. The Proposed Action would be unlikely to have a measurable impact on special status animal populations.

Environmental Consequences, No Action: Impacts would be the same as those analyzed for the Proposed Action in EA #CO-100-LS-01-028.

Mitigative Measures: None.

Name of specialist and date: Charlie Sharp, 12/11/07

T&E SPECIES – PLANTS

Affected Environment: There are no federally listed threatened or endangered plant species on the West Douglas Allotment.

Environmental Consequences, both alternatives: None.

Mitigative Measures: None.

Name of specialist and date: Hunter Seim, 12/13/07

WASTES, HAZARDOUS OR SOLID

Affected Environment: There are no known hazardous materials present on the West Douglas Mountain Allotment.

Environmental Consequences, both alternatives: The environmental consequences are the same as those analyzed in EA #CO-100-LS-01-028.

Mitigative Measures: None.

Name of specialist and date: Kathy McKinstry, 12/17/07

WATER QUALITY - GROUND

Affected Environment: The affected environment is the same as that described in EA #CO-100-LS-01-028.

Environmental Consequences, both alternatives: The environmental consequences would be the same as those analyzed for the Proposed Action in EA #CO-100-LS-01-028.

Mitigative Measures: None.

Name of specialist and date: Kathy McKinstry, 12/17/07

WATER QUALITY - SURFACE

Affected Environment: The affected environment is the same as that described in EA #CO-100-LS-01-028.

Environmental Consequences, both alternatives: The environmental consequences would be the same as those analyzed for the Proposed Action in EA #CO-100-LS-01-028.

Mitigative Measures: None.

Name of specialist and date: Kathy McKinstry, 12/17/07

WETLANDS/RIPARIAN ZONES

Affected Environment: Recent Proper Functioning Condition (PFC) Assessments have been conducted on two riparian systems that are present within the West Douglas Mountain Allotment (in areas where horses would likely graze) subsequent to the analysis in EA #CO-100-LS-01-028. The first of these areas is the riparian system that is supported by BLM Spring No.74-08 which is known as Five Springs near the center of the allotment and in close proximity to the main summer cabin. The second area is within an eastern tributary to Cottonwood Creek downstream of a spring source on private lands that is also near an old cabin below the steep rocky slopes dividing the uplands and lowlands within the allotment. Additional assessments have been conducted on a few other riparian systems located on slopes and these riparian areas would not likely be affected by the short term use by horses.

The affected environment discussion from EA #CO-100-LS-01-028 concerning the riparian area associated with Five Springs stated:

“In August 1996, hoof shear, within the lentic draw and along its edges and subsequent runoff, has caused a slight depression (6 to 8 inches) of the wetland system in relation to the adjacent ground. This essentially confines the riparian plants to the slightly depressed drainage.”

Five Springs emerges from a hillslope a short distance up a steep slope. Spring flow continues down the steep slope running over embedded rock with riparian brush, forbs and moss. The width of this system expanded to 15 to 20-feet downstream where it leads directly into a small livestock pond. The small channel persisted to about where a fenceline crosses it. The channel appeared to follow areas of trampled soils and vegetation. Impacts from cattle trampling in the wet soils throughout the small riparian system were present.

The lotic assessment determined that the riparian system was rated on the low end of functioning properly. It was noted that some impacts due to trampling, from elk as well as livestock, occurred on the soils below the steep slope. The lentic assessment determined that the riparian system was not enlarging or had not reached its potential extent, due to bare spots caused by trampling and the small channel was not vegetated. Water flowed through the system at a rate faster than expected due to the presence of hoof action. This has resulted in water that is not spread out across the entire system. If the water spreads across the vegetated surface, it is slowed down and more capable of irrigating underlying soils. The riparian system was rated on the high end of functioning at risk with the lentic assessment form with a non-apparent trend. The repetitive trampling that is occurring in the small riparian area below Five Springs has not been corrected with the grazing adjustments made in 2002; therefore the need for a riparian enclosure was identified as part of the land health assessment summary in 2005 to correct the trampling problem. To date, this enclosure has not been constructed.

A substantial spring is present on private lands and flows onto BLM lands within a small tributary to Cottonwood Creek. The riparian system found in this small drainage is associated with the spring on private lands upstream or is supported by an accumulation of spring flow from springs on BLM lands (BLM Springs Nos. 74-09 and 74-10) and those on private lands. It was rated as functioning at risk with an upward trend.

Environmental Consequences, both alternatives: The livestock pond below the riparian area created by Five Springs will always draw large ungulates, including elk, cattle and horses, to the area and trampling within the system would continue. Sources of fine sediments are scarce in the affected area and sediment transport to riparian systems that may be losing soil materials would be slow.

Mitigative Measures: A small barrier in the upper portion of Five Springs in combination with a protective fence enclosure on the lower portion will be installed to prevent livestock from trampling directly on this small riparian/wetland system. This enclosure will also discourage elk

from accessing and trampling the spring. Water will still be available for wildlife and domestic animals at the large pond below the spring. Site specific analysis for this action will be prepared subsequent to this EA and prior to the construction of the enclosure.

Name of specialist and date: Ole Olsen, 1/14/08

WILD & SCENIC RIVERS

Affected Environment: Not present.

Environmental Consequences, both alternatives: Not applicable.

Mitigative Measures: None.

Name of specialist and date: Kathy McKinstry, 12/17/07

WILDERNESS, WSAs

Affected Environment: The affected environment is the same as that described in EA #CO-100-LS-01-028.

Environmental Consequence, both alternatives: The environmental consequences would be the same as those analyzed for the Proposed Action in EA #CO-100-LS-01-028.

Mitigative Measures: None.

Name of specialist and date: Kathy McKinstry, 12/17/07

NON-CRITICAL ELEMENTS

UPLAND VEGETATION

Affected Environment: The affected environment is the same as that described in EA #CO-100-LS-01-028, however in 2005 the BLM brush beat approximately 314 acres of BLM managed land and 128 acres of private land in T.7N., R.102W., section 12 and T.8N., R.102W, sections 26, 27, 34 and 35. The result of this project is a mosaic landscape of different seral stages dominated by perennial grass with islands of sagebrush left intact. Because this brush beating is close to the summer headquarters of the permittee, it is likely that this is the area where the domestic horses would spend much of their time grazing.

Environmental Consequences, Proposed Action: The diets of cattle and horses both consist primarily of perennial grasses, therefore the impacts of grazing, whether by cattle or horses are very similar. However, because horses' jaws and teeth are structurally different than that of a cow, there are differences in the way the two animals select, bite off and chew plants. Horses have upper and lower incisors which enable them to graze plants at the soil level, whereas a cow

has difficulty grazing plants that are two inches or shorter in height. This difference could result in over-utilization (greater than 50% use of current year's growth) of individual plants. It is anticipated that the horses would not spend 24 hours per day grazing on public lands; the animals would be used to gather and move cattle during the day and would receive supplemental feed on private land. The horses would be turned out at the end of their working day to graze. These factors, when combined with removing a proportionate amount of AUMs from cattle use, would ensure that the area is not over-stocked and over-utilization would not occur.

Environmental Consequences, No Action: The environmental consequences of the No Action Alternative would be same as those analyzed for the Proposed Action in EA #CO-100-LS-01-028.

Mitigative Measures: None.

Name of specialist and date: Kathy McKinstry, 12/12/07

SOILS

Affected Environment: The affected environment is the same as that described in EA #CO-100-LS-01-028.

Environmental Consequences, both alternatives: The environmental consequences would be the same as those analyzed for the Proposed Action in EA #Co-100-LS-01-028.

Mitigative Measures: None

Name of Specialist and Date: Kathy McKinstry, 12/17/07

WILDLIFE, AQUATIC

Affected Environment: Aquatic habitat within this allotment is sparse, although springs and intermittent streams occur throughout. Some of these systems support amphibians, reptiles, and invertebrates. Northern leopard frogs were observed near springs and other water sources during the 2005 site visits (refer to T&E and Sensitive Animals Section). One riparian assessment (PFC) was conducted in this allotment in 2005. Green River #22 (Five Springs) was rated as functional-at risk (non-apparent trend) due to areas with sparse vegetative cover, soil erosion and scouring, and excessive hoof action and stream channelization. According to the wildlife report (D. Ausmus, 06/07/05), the site was meeting standards for native animal communities. Based on this information, habitat is good to poor for aquatic wildlife within the West Douglas Mountain Allotment.

Environmental Consequences, Proposed Action: Potential impacts include trampling of individuals or nests/eggs; water displacement, sedimentation and nitrification; and removal or degradation of shading vegetation. Because total use would remain the same (at a level determined to be sustainable based on monitoring), impacts from the Proposed Action would

likely be similar to those of the No Action Alternative. It is, therefore, reasonable to assume current conditions would continue under the Proposed Action. The Proposed Action would be unlikely to have a measurable impact on aquatic wildlife populations.

Environmental Consequences, No Action: Impacts would be the same as that analyzed for the Proposed Action in EA #CO-100-LS-01-028.

Mitigative Measures: None.

Name of Specialist and Date: Charlie Sharp, 12/11/07

WILDLIFE, TERRESTRIAL

Affected Environment: This allotment provides habitat for a variety of mammals and birds. This allotment provides good habitat for the following species.

Large Mammals

Approximately 9500 acres of elk calving habitat occurs in this allotment. The area also provides habitat for mountain lions and black bears.

Small Mammals

A variety of small mammals occur here including rodents such as rabbits, ground squirrels, and marmots as well as mesocarnivores such as coyotes, foxes, bobcats, and others.

Birds

Golden eagles, bald eagles, red-tailed hawks, and other raptors may use the area, although no nests have been documented within the allotment. Winter range, reproduction, and roosting habitat for Merriam's turkey also occur here.

Environmental Consequences, Proposed Action: Livestock grazing can alter vegetation structure, composition, and function. Effects on wildlife are dependent on the species of interest and may be adverse, negligible, or beneficial depending on grazing timing, frequency, intensity, and distribution. Livestock may compete for forage with wild ungulates, particularly elk. Over-utilization (< 50% on current year's growth) or uneven grazing distribution may degrade habitat and forage bases. Depending on design, fences may impede wildlife movement and migrations. Potential impacts include habitat degradation, fragmentation, and loss; individual displacement; and reduced fitness. Such impacts are more significant during critical seasons, such as winter or reproduction. Because total use would remain the same (at a level determined to be sustainable based on monitoring), impacts from the Proposed Action would likely be similar to those of the no action alternative. It is also reasonable to assume current conditions would continue under the Proposed Action. The Proposed Action would be unlikely to have a measurable impact on terrestrial wildlife populations.

Environmental Consequences, No Action: Impacts would be the same as that analyzed for the Proposed Action in EA #CO-100-LS-01-028.

Mitigative Measures: None.

Name of specialist and date: Charlie Sharp, 12/11/07

OTHER NON-CRITICAL ELEMENTS: For the following elements, those brought forward for analysis will be formatted as shown above.

Non-Critical Element	NA or Not Present	Applicable or Present, No Impact	Applicable & Present and Brought Forward for Analysis
Fluid Minerals		MDW 12/10/07	
Forest Management		KLM 12/10/07	
Hydrology/Ground		MDW 12/10/07	
Hydrology/Surface		OO 12/13/07	
Paleontology		MDW 12/10/07	
Range Management		KLM 12/10/07	
Realty Authorizations	MAA 12/12/07		
Recreation/Travel Mgmt		KLM 12/17/07	
Socio-Economics		MAA 12/12/07	
Solid Minerals		JAM 12/10/07	
Visual Resources		KLM 12/12/07	
Wild Horse & Burro Mgmt	KLM 12/10/07		

CUMULATIVE IMPACTS SUMMARY: This allotment and areas surrounding have historically been grazed by both sheep and cattle. Numerous maintained and un-maintained roads exist throughout the area, including on the allotment. These roads are used regularly by local residents and ranchers as well as by hunters, the primary recreation users in the area. Wildlife populations in the area are high, especially for deer and elk that compete with livestock for available forage throughout the area. The primary impacts from all of these activities are most immediately seen in the presence of roads, cultivation on private lands, and weed presence. The proposed action to convert 48 AUMs from cattle grazing to domestic horse grazing on the West Douglas Mountain Allotment is compatible with other uses, both historic and present, and would not add any new or detrimental impacts to those that are already present.

STANDARDS

PLANT AND ANIMAL COMMUNITY (animal) STANDARD: This standard is being met for special status and native wildlife. Because total forage use would remain the same (at a level determined to be sustainable based on monitoring), current conditions would continue under the Proposed Action. The Proposed Action would not result in diminished animal production,

diversity, or resilience. Therefore, this standard would be met. This standard would also be met under the No Action Alternative.

Name of specialist and date: Charlie Sharp, 12/11/07

SPECIAL STATUS, THREATENED AND ENDANGERED SPECIES (animal)

STANDARD: This standard is being met for special status wildlife. Because total forage use would remain the same (at a level determined to be sustainable based on monitoring), current conditions would continue under the Proposed Action. The Proposed Action would not appreciably impact the stability or growth of special status species' populations. Therefore, this standard would be met. This standard would also be met under the No Action Alternative.

Name of specialist and date: Charlie Sharp, 12/11/07

PLANT AND ANIMAL COMMUNITY (plant) STANDARD: When assessed in 2003 and 2005, landscape health standards were being met for the native vegetation standard. Because total permitted use would remain the same under the Proposed Action, it is reasonable to assume current conditions would continue under the Proposed Action. This standard would also be met under the No Action Alternative.

Name of specialist and date: Kathy McKinstry, 12/17/07

SPECIAL STATUS, THREATENED AND ENDANGERED SPECIES (plant)

STANDARD: While the lack of federally listed threatened or endangered or BLM sensitive plant species eliminates the applicability of this standard to the Proposed Action and No Action Alternative, neither alternative would preclude the establishment or presence of the BLM sensitive plant species narrow leaf evening primrose.

Name of specialist and date: Hunter Seim, 12/13/07

RIPARIAN SYSTEMS STANDARD: The riparian standard for riparian resources is not met under either alternative, however, as determined in the Douglas Mountain Landscape Health Assessment, (June, 2004), livestock grazing was not the causal factor. Heavy trampling by elk of the riparian system associated with Five Springs has been observed with three different PFC assessments (1996, 2002 and 2005). Livestock do also use the riparian vegetation associated with Five Springs and account for some of the damage caused by hoof shear. Drainage from the spring source onto the lower portion, between the steep hill and the pond has developed a stream channel which was not noted in 1996 or 2002. Pictures of this area in 2002 did not reveal a channel was present but heavy trampling was apparent. The spring flow coupled with livestock trampling may have initiated the formation of this small channel. A small barrier in the upper portion of Five Springs, in combination with a protective fence enclosure on the lower portion will be installed to prevent livestock from trampling directly on this small system and ensure livestock impacts do not contribute to additional degradation. The enclosure would probably not prevent use by elk, but would discourage the animals from utilizing the spring and riparian

vegetation. The barrier and enclosure will be analyzed for compliance with NEPA in a document subsequent to this EA. This action would lead to the attainment of the riparian standard.

The marginal riparian system associated with the small tributary to Cottonwood Creek should continue to be monitored; it is currently considered to be in an upward trend. A more substantial and important riparian system is present on private lands upstream and if it was protected and water was developed for livestock away from the riparian/wetland it would likely have a positive influence on any downstream resources that could develop and persist on the BLM lands.

Name of specialist and date: Ole Olsen, 1/14/08

WATER QUALITY STANDARD: The water quality standard for healthy rangelands is met under either alternative. Runoff from snow melt and summer storms drains from the affected lands directly into stream segments that are presently supporting classified uses. No stream segments within the West Douglas Mountain Allotment or the Yampa and Green Rivers which receive these tributary waters are listed as impaired. The conversion of AUM's from cattle to horses as proposed would have the same effect on soil and forage resources. This level of grazing would not adversely affect the water quality of runoff waters from the allotment.

Name of specialist and date: Ole Olsen 1/11/08

UPLAND SOILS STANDARD: The upland soil standard is met under either alternative. Changes were made to the grazing system in 2002 to improve resource conditions on the West Douglas Mountain Allotment and the Proposed Action to convert 48 AUMs from cattle grazing to horse grazing would not conflict with the improved grazing management practices implemented in 2002.

Name of specialist and date: Ole Olsen 1/11/08

PERSONS/AGENCIES CONSULTED: Uintah and Ouray Tribal Council, Colorado Native American Commission, Colorado State Historic Preservation Office, Wanda Walker, Dawn Nottingham, (base property owners).

ATTACHMENTS:

Attachment 1 – West Douglas Mountain Allotment Map

Attachment 2 – Standard and Common Terms and Conditions

SIGNATURE OF PREPARER:

DATE SIGNED:

SIGNATURE OF ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEWER:

DATE SIGNED:

FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT (FONSI)

Based on the analysis of potential environmental impacts contained in EA CO-100-2008-016 and all other available information, I have determined that the proposal and the alternatives analyzed do not constitute a major Federal action that would adversely impact the quality of the human environment. Therefore, an EIS is unnecessary and will not be prepared. This determination is based on the following factors:

1. Beneficial, adverse, direct, indirect, and cumulative environmental impacts have been disclosed in the EA. Analysis indicated no significant impacts on society as a whole, the affected region, the affected interests or the locality. The physical and biological effects are limited to the Little Snake Field Office jurisdiction and adjacent land.
2. Public health and safety would not be adversely impacted. There are no known or anticipated concerns with project waste or hazardous materials.
3. There would be no adverse impacts to regional or local air quality, prime or unique farmlands, known paleontological resources on public land within the area, wetlands, floodplain, areas with unique characteristics, ecologically critical areas or designated Areas of Critical Environmental Concern.
4. There are no highly controversial effects on the environment.
5. There are no effects that are highly uncertain or involve unique or unknown risk. Sufficient information on risk is available based on information in the EA and other past actions of a similar nature.
6. This alternative does not set a precedent for other actions that may be implemented in the future to meet the goals and objectives of adopted Federal, State or local natural resource related plans, policies or programs.
7. No cumulative impacts related to other actions that would have a significant adverse impact were identified or are anticipated.
8. Based on previous and ongoing cultural surveys, and through mitigation by avoidance, no adverse impacts to cultural resources were identified or anticipated. There are no known American Indian religious concerns or persons or groups who might be disproportionately and adversely affected as anticipated by the Environmental Justice Policy.
9. No adverse impacts to any threatened or endangered species or their habitat that was determined to be critical under the Endangered Species Act were identified. If, at a future time, there could be the potential for adverse impacts, treatments would be modified or mitigated not to have an adverse effect or new analysis would be conducted.
10. This alternative is in compliance with relevant Federal, State, and local laws, regulations, and requirements for the protection of the environment.

SIGNATURE OF AUTHORIZED OFFICIAL:

DATE SIGNED:

Attachment 2
EA CO-100-2008-016
Standard Terms and Conditions

1. Grazing permit or lease terms and conditions and the fees charged for grazing use are established in accordance with provisions of the grazing regulations now or hereafter approved by the Secretary of the Interior.
2. They are subject to cancellation, in whole or in part, at any time because of:
 - a. Non compliance by the permittee/lessee with rules and regulations;
 - b. Loss of control by the permittee/lessee of all or part of the property upon which it is based;
 - c. A transfer of grazing preference by the permittee/lessee to another party;
 - d. A decrease in the lands administered by the Bureau of Land Management within the allotments(s) described;
 - e. Repeated willful unauthorized grazing use;
 - f. Loss of qualifications to hold a permit or lease.
3. They are subject to the terms and conditions of allotment management plans if such plans have been prepared. Allotment management plans **MUST** be incorporated in permits and leases when completed.
4. Those holding permits or leases **MUST** own or control and be responsible for the management of livestock authorized to graze.
5. The authorized officer may require counting and/or additional or special marking or tagging of the livestock authorized to graze.
6. The permittee's/lessee's grazing case file is available for public inspection as required by the Freedom of Information Act.
7. Grazing permits or leases are subject to the nondiscrimination clauses set forth in Executive Order 11246 of September 24, 1964, as amended. A copy of this order may be obtained from the authorized officer.
8. Livestock grazing use that is different from that authorized by a permit of lease **MUST** be applied for prior to the grazing period and **MUST** be filed with and approved by the authorized officer before grazing use can be made.
9. Billing notices are issued which specify fees due. Billing notices, when paid, become a part of the grazing permit or lease. Grazing use cannot be authorized during any period of delinquency in the payment of amounts due, including settlement for unauthorized use.
10. Grazing fee payments are due on the due date specified on the billing notice and **MUST** be paid in full within 15 days of the due date, except as otherwise provided in the grazing permit or lease. If payment is not made within that time frame, a late fee (the greater of \$25 or 10 percent of the amount owed but not more than \$250) will be assessed.

11. No member of, or Delegate to, Congress or Resident Commissioner, after his/her election of appointment, or either before or after he/she has qualified, and during his/her continuance in office, and no officer, agent, or employee of the Department of the Interior, other than members of Advisory committees appointed in accordance with the Federal Advisory Committee Act (5 U.S.C. App. 1) and Sections 309 of the Federal Land Policy and Management Act of 1976 (43 U.S.C. 1701 et seq.) shall be admitted to any share or part in a permit or lease, or derive any benefit to arise therefrom; and the provision of Section 3741 Revised Statute (41 U.S.C. 22), 18 U.S.C. Sections 431-433, and 43 CFR Part 7, enter into and form a part of a grazing permit or lease, so far as the same may be applicable.

Common Terms and Conditions

- A) Grazing use will not be authorized in excess of the amount of specified grazing use (AUM number) for each allotment. Numbers of livestock annually authorized in the allotment(s) may be more or less than the number listed on the permit/lease within the grazing use periods as long as the amount of specified grazing use is not exceeded.
- B) Unless there is a specific term and condition addressing utilization, the intensity of grazing use will insure that no more than 50% of the key grass species and 40% of the key browse species current years growth, by weight, is utilized at the end of the grazing season for winter allotments and the end of the growing season for allotments used during the growing season. Application of this term needs to recognize recurring livestock management that includes opportunity for regrowth, opportunity for spring growth prior to grazing, or growing season deferment.
- C) Failure to maintain range improvements to BLM standards in accordance with signed cooperative agreements and/or range improvement permits may result in the suspension of the annual grazing authorization, cancellation of the cooperative agreement or range improvement permit, and/or the eventual cancellation of this permit/lease.
- D) Storing or feeding supplemental forage on public lands other than salt or minerals must have prior approval. Forage to be fed or stored on public lands must be certified noxious weed free. Salt and/or other mineral supplements shall be placed at least one-quarter mile from water sources or in such a manner as to promote even livestock distribution in the allotment or pasture.
- E) Pursuant to 43 CFR 10.4(g), the holder of this authorization must notify the authorized officer, by telephone, with written confirmation, immediately upon the discovery of human remains, funerary items, sacred objects, or objects of cultural patrimony. Further, pursuant to 43 CFR 10.4(c) and (d), you must stop activities in the vicinity of the discovery and protect it for 30 days or until notified to proceed by the authorized officer. The operator is responsible for informing all persons who are associated with the allotment operations that they will be subject to prosecution for knowingly disturbing historic or archaeological sites or for collecting artifacts. If historic or archaeological materials are encountered or uncovered during any allotment activities or grazing

activities, the operator is to immediately stop activities in the immediate vicinity and immediately contact the authorized officer. Within five working days, the authorized officer will inform the operator as to:

-whether the materials appear to be eligible for the National Register of Historic Places;
-the mitigation measures the operator will likely have to undertake before the identified area can be used for grazing activities again.

If paleontological materials (fossils) are uncovered during allotment activities, the operator is to immediately stop activities that might further disturb such materials and contact the authorized officer. The operator and the authorized officer will consult and determine the best options for avoiding or mitigating paleontological site damage.

- F) No hazardous materials/hazardous or solid waste/trash shall be disposed of on public lands. If a release does occur, it shall immediately be reported to this office at (970) 826-5000.
- G) The permittee/lessee shall provide reasonable administrative access across private and leased lands to the BLM and its agents for the orderly management and protection of public lands.
- H) Application of a chemical or release of pathogens or insects on public lands must be approved by the authorized officer.
- I) The terms and conditions of this permit may be modified if additional information indicates that revision is necessary to conform with 43 CFR 4180.