

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: DOI-BLM-CO-N010-2009-0053-EA

CASEFILE/ALLOTMENT NUMBER: 0501150 / 04069

PROJECT NAME: Renewal of the grazing lease on the Sand Springs Allotment #04069

LEGAL DESCRIPTION: See Allotment Map, Attachment #1.

Sand Springs #04069

T7N, R92W parts of Sec. 33, 34

103 acres BLM

103 acres Private

206 acres Total

APPLICANT: John Servatius / Aric Gerber

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 has been reviewed for conformance with this plan (43 CFR 1610.5, BLM 1617.3).

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 allotment under the Proposed Action is located within Management Unit 1, Eastern Yampa River. The Proposed Action is compatible with the management objectives for this unit. Management objectives of the Eastern Yampa River Management Unit are to realize the potential for development of coal, oil, and gas resources. The Proposed Action would not conflict with these objectives.

NEED FOR PROPOSED ACTION: BLM lease #0501150 held by John Servatius, which authorizes livestock grazing on the Sand Springs Allotment #04069, expires on February 28, 2010. Additionally, application has been made to transfer this lease from Mr. Servatius to Aric Gerber. The transfer of the lease is documented in DOI-BLM-CO-N010-2009-0058-CX. This lease is subject to renewal at the discretion of the Secretary of the Interior, who delegated the authority to BLM, for a period of up to ten years. The U.S. Bureau of Land Management has the authority to renew the livestock grazing permit/lease consistent with the provisions of the *Taylor Grazing Act, Public Rangelands Improvement Act, Federal Land Policy and Management Act,* and Little Snake Field Office's *Resource Management Plan/Environmental Impact Statement*. This Plan/EIS has been amended by *Standards for Public Land Health in the State of Colorado*.

The following Environmental Assessment will analyze the impacts of livestock grazing on public land managed by the BLM. The analysis will recommend terms and conditions to the lease which improve or maintain public land health. The Proposed Action will be assessed for meeting land health standards.

In order to graze livestock on public land, the livestock producer (lessee) must hold a grazing lease. The grazing lessee has a preference right to receive the lease if grazing is to continue. The land use plan allows grazing to continue. This EA will be a site specific look to determine if grazing should continue as provided for in the land use plan and to identify the conditions under which it can be renewed.

PUBLIC SCOPING PROCESS: The BLM Little Snake Field Office sent out a Notice of Public Scoping on December 17, 2007 to determine the level of public interest, concern, and resource conditions on the grazing authorizations that were up for renewal in FY 2008. A Notice of Public Scoping was posted on the Internet, at the Colorado BLM Home Page, asking for public input on grazing permit and lease renewals. Individual letters were sent to the affected permittees and lessees informing them that their permit and/or lease was up for renewal and requesting any information they wanted included or taken into consideration during the renewal process. There were no comments received specific to the renewal of this grazing lease.

BACKGROUND: This allotment is located west of Craig, CO along US Highway 40 accessible off of MCR 174 in Moffat County. The allotment consists of rolling hills with an elevation around 6,500 feet. Surface runoff from the public land drains into Sand Spring Gulch. The current lessee (Mr. Servatius) has held the grazing lease since 1988. Prior to 1992 the allotment was an overnight trailing stop for Bogle Farms (now Cross Mountain Ranch). Additionally, over this time both horses and sheep have been authorized to use the allotment for 14-15 AUMs.

The grazing lease was renewed in 1999 for a ten year period. It was reviewed under EA CO-016-LS-99-017 with no changes or recommendations made.

An allotment visit on 7/17/2008 by an interdisciplinary team found the allotment to be meeting all Land Health Standards.

No actual use, utilization, ESI, or trend data is available for this allotment.

DESCRIPTION OF PROPOSED ACTION AND ALTERNATIVES:

Proposed Action

Renew the grazing lease on the Sand Springs Allotment #04069 for a period of three years, expiring April 30, 2012 to coincide with the base property lease. The lease would be reissued with a change in class of livestock and addition of Special Terms and Conditions as shown below:

From:

Allotment Name & Number	Livestock		Dates		%PL	AUMs
	Number	Kind	From	To		
Sand Springs 04069	2	Horse	05/01	11/30	100	14

No special terms and conditions.

To:

Allotment Name & Number	Livestock		Dates		%PL	AUMs
	Number	Kind	From	To		
Sand Springs 04069	2	Cattle	05/01	11/30	100	14

Special Terms and Conditions:

1. Cattle or horses are authorized to graze this allotment so long as total AUMs are not exceeded.
2. No salt or mineral supplements will be placed within 200 yards of the NADP Sand Spring Station.

The lease would also be subject to the Standard and Common Terms and Conditions (Attachment #2).

Additionally, a temporary water haul site would be established in each pasture (two sites total) as noted on the map (Attachment #1). These sites would serve as livestock water sources during authorized grazing use. The site in the southern pasture of the allotment has been in existence and would be established as a project. This site consists of a water storage tank and an open galvanized tank. The second site in the north pasture would be utilized as needed when livestock are grazing. It would consist of a 10' fiberglass tank for water to be hauled to.

No Action Alternative

No changes in the existing grazing lease would occur. The water haul tanks would not be established. The lease would be reissued with the same Terms and Conditions.

Allotment Name & Number	Livestock		Dates		%PL	AUMs
	Number	Kind	From	To		
Sand Springs 04069	2	Horse	05/01	11/30	100	14

Alternatives Considered but not Analyzed:

No Grazing Alternative

No livestock grazing would take place under this alternative.

This alternative is eliminated from detailed study because it is not a realistic, implementable alternative nor does it meet the requirements of the Federal Land Policy and Management Act of 1976. When the Little Snake Field Office RMP was approved, it was determined that livestock grazing was an appropriate use of this land. Eliminating grazing is not analyzed because no new issues or concerns have been identified that would require this action.

AFFECTED ENVIRONMENT/ENVIRONMENTAL CONSEQUENCES/MITIGATION MEASURES

CRITICAL RESOURCES

AIR QUALITY

Affected Environment: The Sand Springs Allotment is not within any special designation air sheds or non-attainment areas. The National Atmospheric Deposition Program’s Sand Spring Station (CO15) is located in the eastern pasture of this allotment. This site was established in March 1979 and consists of a small fenced area housing a Belfort rain gauge, a wet-dry deposition collector, a solar panel and a battery. Sand Spring Station is part of a national monitoring effort of about 250 sites established to collect actual weekly precipitation. The bulk sample is correlated with individual and daily precipitation events and is sent to the Illinois State Water Survey Central Analytical Laboratory for chemical analysis. The pH and conductivity of the precipitation is determined and the sample is analyzed for hydrogen (acidity as pH), sulfate, nitrate, ammonium, chloride, and base cations (Ca, Mg, K, Na). A sample is collected from the site every Tuesday. Walking the last 100 yards to the site reduces vehicle disturbance along the two-track trail to the site. This standard operating procedure maintains vegetative cover on the trail to reduce the potential of collecting local soil particles in the precipitation sample. Sand Spring Station is on the web and can be found at <http://nadp.sws.uiuc.edu/sites/siteinfo.asp?net=NTN&id=CO15>.

Environmental Consequences, both alternatives: Renewing the lease to graze livestock on this allotment would not cause regional air quality impairment under either of the alternatives. Some localized dust may result from driving on unpaved roads, but this would be negligible compared to dust generated from all vehicle uses and general activity in the vicinity.

Mitigative Measures: None

Name of specialist and date: Ole Olsen, 4/17/09

AREA OF CRITICAL ENVIRONMENTAL CONCERN

Affected Environment: Not present

Environmental Consequences: None

Mitigative Measures: None

Name of specialist and date: Kimberly Miller, 4/24/09

CULTURAL RESOURCES

Affected Environment: Grazing authorization renewals are undertakings under Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act. During Section 106 review, a cultural resource assessment was completed for each allotment by Robyn Watkins Morris, Little Snake Field Office Archaeologist on April 24, 2009. The assessment followed the procedures and guidance outlined in the 1980 National Programmatic Agreement Regarding the Livestock Grazing and Range Improvement Program, IM-WO-99-039, IM-CO-99-007, IM-CO-99-019, and IM-CO-01-026. The results of the assessment are summarized in the table below. Copies of the cultural resource assessments are in the Field Office archaeology files.

Data developed here was taken from the cultural program project report files, site report files, and base maps kept at the Little Snake Field Office as well as from General Land Office (GLO) maps, BLM land patent records, An Overview of Prehistoric Cultural Resources Little Snake Resource Area, Northwestern Colorado, Bureau of Land Management Colorado, Cultural Resources Series, Number 20, and An Isolated Empire, A History of Northwestern Colorado, Bureau of Land Management Colorado, Cultural Resource Series, Number 2 and Appendix 21 of the Little Snake Resource Management Plan and Environmental Impact Statement, Draft February 1986, Bureau of Land Management, Craig, Colorado District, Little Snake Resource Area.

The table below is based on allotment specific analysis developed for the allotment in this EA. The table shows known cultural resources, eligible and need data, and those that are anticipated to be in each allotment.

Allotment Number	Acres Surveyed at a Class III Level	Acres NOT Surveyed at a Class III Level	Percent of Allotment Inventoried at a Class III Level	Eligible or Need Data Sites- Known in Allotment	Estimated Sites for the Allotment *(total	Estimated Eligible or Need Data Sites in the Allotment
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					number)	(number)
4069	18	188	8%	1	6	1

(Note *Estimates of site densities are based on known inventory data. Estimates should be accepted as minimum figures which may be revised upwards based on future inventory findings.)

Four cultural resource inventories have been previously conducted within the Allotment resulting in the complete coverage inventory of 188 acres. One cultural resource was recorded, (5MF728) - an open camp that needs data to determine its eligibility. The GLO plats were checked for 1881 and 1906. There were roads near the area on the 1906 plat.

Based on available data, a medium potential for historic properties occurs in the allotment due to its proximity to Sand Springs and its importance both prehistorically and historically. Subsequent cultural resource inventory will be conducted in areas where livestock concentrate. Subsequent field inventory is to be completed within a ten year period. Site 5MF728 will be revisited.

If historic properties are located during the subsequent field inventory, and BLM determines that grazing activities will adversely impact the properties, mitigation will be identified and implemented in consultation with the Colorado SHPO.

Environmental Consequences, both alternatives: The level of permitted use proposed would not cause the kind of concentration that could cause damage. If animals did concentrate, direct impacts during normal livestock grazing activity, include trampling, chiseling, and churning of site soils, cultural features, and cultural artifacts, artifact breakage, and impacts from standing, leaning, and rubbing against historic structures, above-ground cultural features, and rock art. Indirect impacts include soil erosion, gulying, and increased potential for unlawful collection and vandalism. Continued livestock use in these concentration areas may cause substantial ground disturbance and cause irreversible adverse effects to historic properties. The area of the water haul sites will be surveyed prior to placement of water in 2009.

Mitigation Measures: Standard Stipulations for cultural resources are included in Standard and Common Terms and Conditions (Attachment #2).

Name of Specialist and date: Robyn Watkins Morris, 4/27/09

ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE

Affected Environment: The proposed action is located in an area of isolated dwellings. The allotment is adjacent to residential rural small acreage parcels. Oil & gas development, ranching, and farming 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: Louise McMinn, 04/17/09

FLOOD PLAINS

Affected Environment: No flood plains are present on the public lands within the Sand Springs Allotment.

Environmental Consequences, both alternatives: None

Mitigative Measures: None

Name of specialist and date: Christina Rhyne, 4/1/09

INVASIVE, NONNATIVE SPECIES

Affected Environment: Invasive and noxious weeds are present in the affected area. Invasive annuals such as cheat grass and yellow alyssum occur in the affected area. Additionally, MCR 174 and US Highway 40 border the allotment providing an avenue for weed introduction. Invasive annual weeds are typically established in disturbed and high traffic areas, whereas, biennial and perennial noxious weeds are less common in occurrence. Cheat grass is on the Colorado List C of noxious weeds. Other Colorado List B noxious weeds that are present in the vicinity, and could become established within the allotment, include Scotch thistle, musk thistle, Russian knapweed, and Dalmatian toadflax. This allotment is also adjacent to multiple small acreage land parcels. The BLM cooperates with the Moffat County Pest Management program to employ the principals of Integrated Weed Management (IWM) to control noxious weeds on public lands.

Environmental Consequences, both alternatives: The impact of invasive or noxious weed establishment is very similar under either alternative. Vehicular access to public lands for dispersed recreation, hunting, grazing operations, livestock and wildlife movement, as well as wind and water, can cause weeds to spread into new areas. Surface disturbance from livestock concentration and human activities associated with grazing operations or small acreage management can also increase weed presence. The perennial noxious weeds in the area are less frequently established on the uplands but some potential exists for their establishment in draws and swales with moister soils. The largest concern in the allotment would be for biennial and perennial noxious weed species to establish and not be detected. Once an infestation is detected it

could be controlled with various IWM techniques. Land practices and land uses by the livestock operator and their weed control efforts and awareness would largely determine the identification and potential occurrence of weeds within the allotment.

Mitigative Measures: None

Name of specialist and date: Christina Rhyne, 4/1/09

MIGRATORY BIRDS

Affected Environment: The vegetation within this allotment primarily consists of perennial grass communities. Some shrub species are also present including green rabbitbrush and silver sagebrush. Although this ecosystem typically provides nesting habitat for a large array of migratory birds, there are no species listed on USFWS's Birds of Conservation Concern List for this habitat type. A visit to the allotment in July of 2008 showed the vegetative community to be in good condition, providing suitable and productive habitat for migratory bird species. Although the allotment is in good condition, habitat value may be somewhat decreased due to the subdivision and associated roads located adjacent to the allotment.

Environmental Consequences, Proposed Action: The Proposed Action would permit grazing by cattle or horses. The addition of cattle grazing to the allotment would be neutral. Both classes of livestock primarily focus on grasses, however, horses have the ability to graze vegetation closer to ground level. The grass component of the ecosystem exhibited high vigor and would be resilient to grazing by either class of livestock. Overall, the Proposed Action would be compatible with maintaining local migratory bird populations.

Environmental Consequences, No Action Alternative: Under this grazing system, the vegetative community is in good condition, providing suitable and productive habitat for migratory bird species. The allotment would continue to provide suitable habitat for a variety of bird species under the No Action Alternative.

Mitigative Measures: None

Name of specialist and date: Desa Ausmus, 4/17/09

NATIVE AMERICAN RELIGIOUS CONCERNS

A letter was sent to the Uinta and Ouray Tribal Council, Southern Ute Tribal Council, Ute Mountain Ute Tribal Council on May 5, 2008. The letter listed the FY08 and FY09 projects that the BLM would notify them on and projects that would not require notification. A followup phone call was performed on June 16, 2008. No comments were received (Letter on file at the Little Snake Field Office). This project requires no additional notification.

Name of specialist and date: Robyn Watkins Morris, 4/27/09

PRIME & UNIQUE FARMLANDS

Affected Environment: There are no Prime and Unique Farmlands present on the BLM land within the Sand Springs Allotment.

Environmental Consequences, both alternatives: None

Mitigative Measures: None

Name of specialist and date: Christina Rhyne, 4/1/09

T&E SPECIES – ANIMALS

Affected Environment: The Sand Springs Allotment does not provide habitat for any federally listed or BLM sensitive species.

Environmental Consequences, both alternatives: None

Mitigative Measures: None

Name of specialist and date: Desa Ausmus, 4/17/09

T&E AND SENSITIVE PLANTS

Affected Environment: There are no federally listed threatened or endangered or BLM sensitive plant species present on the allotment.

Environmental Consequences, both alternatives: None

Mitigative Measures: None

Name of specialist and date: Hunter Seim, 4/14/09

WASTES, HAZARDOUS OR SOLID

Affected Environment: There are no hazardous materials present within the Sand Springs Allotment.

Environmental Consequences, both alternatives: Potential releases of hazardous materials could occur due to vehicular access for livestock management operations. Coolant, oil, and fuel are materials that could be released. Due to the limited amount of vehicular activity that would be required, the potential for release of any of these materials is low and, if a release were to occur, it would be minimal and highly localized and not result in an adverse impact to the allotment.

Mitigative Measures: None

Name of specialist and date: Christina Rhyne, 4/1/09

WATER QUALITY - GROUND

Affected Environment: The rocks near the surface are Eocene Brown's Park formation and Cretaceous Lance formation.

Environmental Consequences, both alternatives: Livestock grazing would not affect groundwater resources under either alternative.

Mitigative Measures: None

Name of specialist and date: Marilyn D. Wegweiser, 04/21/09

WATER QUALITY - SURFACE

Affected Environment: Runoff water from snow and rain draining off public lands flows to ephemeral draws that are tributaries of Sand Spring Gulch which is a tributary of the Yampa River. The water quality within these affected streams is currently supporting classified uses. This segment of the Yampa River needs to have water quality that will support Aquatic Life Cold 1, Recreation 1a, Water Supply and Agriculture. Tributaries to the Yampa River in this area need to have water quality that will support Aquatic Life Warm 2, Recreation 2 and Agriculture. The tributary streams within this segment are designated use protected; "higher" use classifications would not be expected for these tributary stream segments in the future.

Environmental Consequences, both alternatives: Grazing use of the allotment would not impair water quality under either of the alternatives. Water quality would continue to support the present classified uses.

Mitigative Measures: None

Name of specialist and date: Christina Rhyne, 4/8/09

WETLANDS/RIPARIAN ZONES

Affected Environment: There are no wetlands or riparian areas on the public lands in the Sand Spring Allotment.

Environmental Consequences, both alternatives: None

Mitigative Measures: None

Name of specialist and date: Christina Rhyne, 4/8/09

WILD & SCENIC RIVERS

Affected Environment: Not present.

Environmental Consequences, both alternatives: None

Mitigative Measures: None

Name of specialist and date: Kimberly Miller, 4/24/09

WSAs, WILDERNESS CHARACTERISTICS

Affected Environment: Not present

Environmental Consequences, both alternatives: None

Mitigative Measures: None

Name of specialist and date: Kimberly Miller, 4/24/09

NON-CRITICAL ELEMENTS

RANGE IMPROVEMENTS

Affected Environment: The pastures included in the Proposed Action currently have minimal infrastructure. The two pastures are fenced separately with the division of CR174 and ownership boundaries. The water haul site in the south pasture has been present for a number of years but never recognized as a BLM project.

Environmental Consequences, Proposed Action: Establishing the two water haul sites provides a benefit to livestock grazing management. The current tank in the south pasture is the only source of water for grazing livestock. Establishing a tank in the northern pasture would provide an improved water source for this pasture and better distribute livestock grazing. The only current water source in the north pasture is on private land in the Sand Spring Gulch area

Environmental Consequences, No Action Alternative: The water haul sites would not be established. The south pasture would have no water source preventing livestock grazing and livestock grazing distribution problems would persist in the north pasture.

Mitigative Measures: None

Name of specialist and date: Christina Rhyne, 6/2/09

SOILS

Affected Environment: The table below (Table 1) describes the soils included within the Sand Springs Allotment. Surface soil characteristics are stable with good vegetative canopy to protect from accelerated erosion. There is no evidence of accelerated erosion in the form of rills, gullies, pedestalling, flow patterns, or compaction.

Table 1. Soil Summary for the Sand Springs Allotment #04069

Soil Map Unit (MU) & Soil Name (Acres in Allot.)	Map Unit Setting	Description
MU 12 Berlake sandy loam, 3 to 12 % slopes (103 acres)	<u>MLRA</u> : 34 <u>Elevation</u> : 6,200' - 7,200' <u>Mean annual precipitation</u> : 13-15" <u>Ecological Site</u> : Sandy Foothills	These soils can be found on the alluvial fans and hillslopes. The parent material is alluvium and residuum derived from sandstone. These soils are well drained. These soils are moderate permeability. Available water capacity is low.
MU 209 Weed sandy loam, 1 to 12% slopes (51 acres)	<u>MLRA</u> : 34 <u>Elevation</u> : 6,300' - 7,400' <u>Mean annual precipitation</u> : 13-15" <u>Ecological Site</u> : Deep Loam	These soils can be found on the alluvial fans and hills along the toeslope. The parent material is alluvium derived from sandstone. They are relatively well drained with moderate permeability and moderate available water capacity.
MU 89 Grieves loamy fine sand, 12 to 25% slopes (43 acres)	<u>MLRA</u> : 34 <u>Elevation</u> : 5,800' - 6,800' <u>Mean annual precipitation</u> : 11-13" <u>Ecological Site</u> : Sandy Foothills	These soils can be found on the hills along the footslope in the allotment. Parent material is alluvium and residuum derived from sandstone. They are somewhat excessively drained with a moderately rapid permeability and moderate available water capacity.
MU 118 Lander loam, 0 to 3% slopes (9 acres)	<u>MLRA</u> : 34 <u>Elevation</u> : 6,000' - 7,000' <u>Mean annual precipitation</u> : 12-16" <u>Ecological Site</u> : River Bottom	These soils can be found on flood plains. Parent material is derived from mixed sources. They are somewhat poorly drained with moderately slow permeability and moderate available water capacity.

*MLRA = Major Land Resource Area

Data taken from *Soil Survey of Moffat County Area, Colorado (2004)*.

Environmental Consequences, both alternatives: Soil compaction and depleted soil cover are the most likely impacts to be incurred as a result of livestock grazing. These effects would occur on areas of concentrated use under either alternative. The affected land within the allotment has adequate plant and litter cover to reduce or eliminate associated soil erosion. No loss or gain of biological soil crusts would occur as a result of implementing either of the alternatives.

The utilization objective for perennial herbaceous forage is 50%. At this level, vegetative canopy cover would remain adequate to protect soil stability. Utilization levels that exceed the objective could lead to accelerated soil erosion due to increased loss of canopy cover and litter.

Environmental Consequences, Proposed Action: Grazing preferences of cattle and horses are similar in type of forage selected. Grazing methods and habits are different between the species. Soils within the allotment are sufficiently stable to support the grazing of both classes of livestock. This alternative would result in neutral to positive benefits to the soil resource in the allotment.

Mitigative Measures: None

Name of specialist and date: Christina Rhyne, 4/8/09

UPLAND VEGETATION

Affected Environment: The vegetation within this allotment consists of primarily perennial grass communities. Grass species include Sandberg bluegrass, crested wheatgrass, needle and thread, and cheatgrass. Some shrub species are also present including green rabbitbrush, silver sagebrush and cactus. Forbs include lupine, allysum, scarlet globemallow and Hood's phlox. Species diversity is high and contributes to desired objectives. Plant production and density are high and are adequate to provide resilience from human activity.

Environmental consequences, Proposed Action: This allotment is stable and has maintained production, diversity, and vigor in conjunction with livestock grazing. Under this alternative a change to include horses and cattle grazing the allotment would have primarily neutral effects. Diet selection between cattle and horses are primarily the same focusing on herbaceous perennial grasses with little utilization of browse forage. Equine foraging does clip forage lower on the plant when compared to cattle and horses may tend to be more selective or repeat grazers. Horses have upper and lower incisors which enable them to graze plants closer to the soil level, whereas a cow grabbing the plant with the tongue, has difficulty grazing plants that are two inches or shorter in height. Additionally, horses may be more active grazers covering larger areas while cattle can be more sedentary in their grazing movement.

Environmental Consequences, No Action: The allotment is currently meeting land health standards under this use and maintaining desirable vegetative communities. This alternative would have a neutral effect on the allotment.

Mitigative Measures: None

Name of specialist and date: Christina Rhyne, 4/8/09

WILDLIFE, AQUATIC

Affected Environment: The Sand Springs Allotment does not provide habitat for aquatic wildlife species.

Environmental Consequences, both alternatives: None

Mitigative Measures: None

Name of specialist and date: Desa Ausmus, 4/17/09

WILDLIFE, TERRESTRIAL

Affected Environment: The vegetation within the Sand Springs Allotment primarily consists of perennial grass communities. Some shrub species are also present including green rabbitbrush and silver sagebrush. Grass/shrub communities typically provide habitat for big game species as well as small mammals, reptiles and birds. The allotment provides important habitat for wintering big game species. The allotment is currently in good condition, providing suitable habitat for terrestrial wildlife species. Although vegetative communities within the allotment are in good condition, habitat value is likely decreased due to the subdivision and associated roads located near the allotment.

Environmental Consequences, both alternatives: The Proposed Action would permit grazing by cattle or horses. The addition of cattle grazing to the allotment would be neutral. Both classes of livestock focus on grasses and would overlap the diet of big game species, primarily elk. Mule deer and pronghorn focus more on forbs and shrubs and would not compete with livestock for available forage. Overall, the proposed grazing is expected to be compatible with maintaining suitable habitat for a variety of wildlife species. The allotment is in good condition under the current grazing regime, and these conditions would continue under both the Proposed Action and the No Action Alternative.

Mitigative Measures: None

Name of specialist and date: Desa Ausmus, 4/17/09

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 4/21/09		
Forest Management	CR 4/1/09		
Hydrology/Ground		MDW 4/21/09	
Hydrology/Surface		CR 4/1/09	
Paleontology		MDW 04/21/09	
Range Management		CR 4/1/09	
Realty Authorizations		LM 4/17/09	
Recreation/Travel Mgmt		KM 4/24/09	
Socio-Economics		LM 4/17/09	
Solid Minerals		JAM 4/20/09	
Visual Resources		KM 4/24/09	
Wild Horse & Burro Mgmt	CR 4/1/09		

CUMULATIVE IMPACTS SUMMARY: This allotment and areas surrounding have historically been grazed by sheep, cattle and horses. Oil and gas development has also been active in the vicinity of this allotment. Numerous maintained roads exist throughout the area. These roads are used regularly by local residents and ranchers as well as by recreation users in the area, primarily hunters. The lands surrounding the allotment consist of small acreage parcels (~5-40 acres) with dwellings. Wildlife populations in the area may compete with livestock for available forage. The primary cumulative impacts from these activities are most immediately seen in the presence of roads, cultivation on private lands, and weed presence. The Proposed Action to continue grazing on these allotments is compatible with other uses, both historic and present, and would not add any new or detrimental impacts to those already present.

STANDARDS

PLANT AND ANIMAL COMMUNITY (animal) STANDARD: The Sand Springs Allotment provides habitat for a variety of wildlife species. Both alternatives would sustain viable plant communities and continue to provide productive habitat for terrestrial wildlife. This standard would be met under the Proposed Action and the No Action Alternative.

Name of specialist and date: Desa Ausmus, 4/17/09

SPECIAL STATUS, THREATENED AND ENDANGERED SPECIES (animal) STANDARD: The Sand Springs Allotment does not provide habitat for any federally listed or BLM sensitive species. This standard does not apply.

Name of specialist and date: Desa Ausmus, 4/17/09

PLANT AND ANIMAL COMMUNITY (plant) STANDARD: This standard is currently being met and would continue to be met in the future under the Proposed Action or No Action alternative. The dominant and key species are appropriate and as expected within the allotment. The vegetation is productive and vigorous exhibiting adequate resilience from human activities. Some non-native species are present in the allotment but are within an acceptable level.

Name of specialist and date: Christina Rhyne, 4/9/09

SPECIAL STATUS, THREATENED AND ENDANGERED SPECIES (plant) STANDARD: There are no federally listed threatened or endangered or BLM sensitive plant species present on the allotment. This standard does not apply.

Name of specialist and date: Hunter Seim, 4/14/09

RIPARIAN SYSTEMS STANDARD: There are no riparian resources present on the public lands within the Sand Springs Allotment. This standard does not apply

Name of specialist and date: Christina Rhyne, 4/9/09

WATER QUALITY STANDARD: The water quality standard for healthy rangelands would be met with implementation of either the Proposed Action or No Action Alternatives. Runoff from snowmelt and rain storms drains from the allotment into stream segments that are presently supporting classified uses. No affected stream segments are listed as impaired.

Name of specialist and date: Christina Rhyne, 4/9/09

UPLAND SOILS STANDARD: This standard is currently being met within the Sand Springs Allotment. Upland soils are stable and have good vegetative cover. There is very little visual evidence of soil movement and surface litter is accumulating in place. No visual evidence of rills, pedestals, or flow patterns is present. Proposed levels of grazing would maintain sufficient residual forage for upland soil health to be maintained. This standard would be met with the implementation of either the Proposed Action or No Action Alternatives.

Name of specialist and date: Christina Rhyne, 4/9/09

PERSONS/AGENCIES CONSULTED: Uintah and Ouray Tribal Council, Colorado Native American Commission, Colorado State Historic Preservation Office, John Servatius (base property owner), Aric Gerber (transferee).

MITIGATION MEASURES: None

COMPLIANCE PLAN(S): None

ATTACHMENTS: Attachment #1, 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

The environmental assessment, analyzing the environmental effects of the proposed action, has been reviewed. With the implementation of the attached mitigation measures there is a finding of no significant impact on the human environment. Therefore, an environmental impact statement is not necessary to further analyze the environmental effects of the proposed action.

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 Resource Area 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
DOI-BLM-CO-N010-2009-0028-EA
TERMS AND CONDITIONS

Standard Terms and Conditions

- 1) Grazing permit or lease terms and conditions and the fees charged for grazing use are established in accordance with the 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. Noncompliance by the permittee/lessee with rules and regulations;
 - b. Loss of control by the permittee/lessee of all or a 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 allotment(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 or 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 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 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 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.

The terms and conditions of this lease may be modified if additional information indicates that revision is necessary to conform with 43 CFR 4180.