

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-100-2007-105

PROJECT/ALLOTMENT NUMBER: 005976, 005977/04030

PROJECT NAME: Construction of a water development and temporary fencing on the Lower Slater Creek Allotment #04030.

LEGAL DESCRIPTION: see project map, Attachment 1

Lower Slater Creek Allotment #04030

T12N R89W Secs. 16, 17, 20-22

APPLICANT: Douglas Sheehan

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 implement range improvements to control livestock use, improve distribution, and improve riparian and wetland habitat.

The Proposed Action is located within Management Unit 1 (Eastern Yampa River) and Management Unit 2 (Northern Central). The Proposed Action is compatible with the management objectives for these units, which are to provide for the development of oil, gas, coal, and forest resources. The Proposed Action would not conflict with the development of these resources.

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

NEED FOR PROPOSED ACTION: The lessee has proposed the water development to provide an upland water source within the larger part of the public lands on this allotment in order to improve overall distribution of livestock and provide for more uniform and effective utilization of forage resources. Currently, the lessee has, primarily through herding, kept up a rotational grazing system on the allotment that has consisted of moving livestock from one end of the allotment to another every two to three weeks. This has been only marginally successful as the primary water source is on private lands along the Little Snake River, resulting in consistent under-utilization of forage resources on the primarily public land western half of the allotment. The proposed temporary fencing would also improve the lessee's ability to accomplish this rotation while avoiding the visual impact of a permanent fence.

The following Environmental Assessment will analyze the impacts of these range improvements on land managed by the BLM. The Proposed Action will be assessed for meeting land health standards.

BACKGROUND: The Lower Slater Creek Allotment #04030 is located approximately one mile southwesterly of Slater, Colorado. Elevations range from just over 6,500 feet along the Little Snake River to 7,000 feet in the southeastern portion of the allotment. The allotment is generally rolling topography dominated by sagebrush-grass plant communities interspersed with mountain shrub communities. Steeper, rockier areas exist along Slater Creek and the bluffs above the Little Snake River. Slater Creek, a perennial stream, flows south to north on private land in the central portion of the allotment. The Little Snake River forms a portion of the northern allotment boundary.

There is no recent monitoring data available. A field visit to the allotment in 2007 to assess land health revealed very diverse, healthy plant communities with very good vigor. The allotment had very few non-native species and shows no evidence of overuse by livestock or wildlife.

DESCRIPTION OF PROPOSED ACTION AND ALTERNATIVES:

Proposed Action

WATER DEVELOPMENT

A round, ten-foot diameter, two-foot deep, 1,100 gallon fiberglass water trough would be installed. The trough would be filled via a one inch PVC pipeline laid on the ground surface, that would drain water from a buried 10,000 gallon water tank. The trough would be fitted with a float system to prevent water overflow. The tank would be buried via backhoe and total surface disturbance involved in burial would be approximately 500 square feet. Due to the small area of disturbance and its proximity to the existing road disturbance, the site of the tank burial would not need to be reseeded. The tank would be filled with from a truck mounted water tank using water drawn from Slater Creek. The proponent possesses a water right on Slater Creek. The pipeline would be laid on the surface and would be removed when livestock are not present. A bird escape ramp would be installed in the trough. See Attachments 3a and 3b.

PASTURE FENCING

Temporary, single strand, electric fencing would be erected by the operator prior to May 15th (and prior to livestock turnout) and removed after July 15th (and after livestock removal). The single strand of the fence would consist of minimum ½ inch wide, white electric fencing tape or other highly visible wire. The fence would be installed and removed via all terrain vehicle. To facilitate construction, removal, and associated access, a 15 foot wide corridor would be brushbeat on either side to the fence line where big sagebrush density necessitates it. See Attachment 3c.

A Cooperative Agreement for Range Improvements (Form 4120-8) must be signed by the applicant and approved by BLM prior to any construction activities, see Attachment 2. The Cooperative Agreement for Range Improvements will include all of the following terms and conditions:

- 1) To protect wintering big game, no project construction may occur between December 1 and April 30.
- 2) To protect nesting and breeding sage-grouse and nesting sage and Brewer's sparrows, no brushbeating may occur between March 1 and June 30. This does not apply to annual installation or removal of electric fencing or the water pipeline.
- 3) If annual installation or removal of temporary electric fencing occurs during March, April, or May, all activities will occur between 9 o'clock AM and 4 o'clock PM to avoid disturbance to breeding sage-grouse.
- 4) The operator will be responsible for all construction and maintenance with BLM supplied materials.
- 5) All projects will be constructed to BLM standards.
- 6) Temporary fencing and the water pipeline must be removed within one week of livestock removal from the allotment.

No Action Alternative

No range improvements would be constructed on the Lower Slater Creek Allotment.

AFFECTED ENVIRONMENT/ENVIRONMENTAL CONSEQUENCES/MITIGATION

MEASURES

CRITICAL RESOURCES

AIR QUALITY

Affected Environment: The project area does not lie in any special designation air sheds or non-attainment areas.

Environmental Consequences, Proposed Action: Short term, local impacts to air quality resulting from diesel engine exhaust, other combustible engines and dust from surface disturbing operations would result from activities. Emissions required to initially bury the water storage tank, install the water trough and brush beat the fenceline corridor would be very minimal. Periodic use of combustible and diesel engines would be required to fill water storage tank and install and remove the electric fence and water line. The emissions from these activities consist of both gaseous and particulate fractions. Gaseous constituents from diesel engine exhaust include carbon dioxide, carbon monoxide, nitric oxide, nitric dioxide, oxides of sulfur and hydrocarbons. Fine particulates of soot from diesel exhaust and fugitive dust from soils would be localized to the project area. The health effects of these emissions are largely from long-term and occupational exposure in confined areas. The Proposed Action would not adversely affect the regional air quality.

Environmental Consequences, No Action: None

Mitigative Measures: None

Name of specialist and date: Ole Olsen 10/5/07

AREA OF CRITICAL ENVIRONMENTAL CONCERN

Affected Environment: Not present.

Environmental Consequences, all alternatives: None

Mitigative Measures: None

Name of specialist and date: Rob Schmitzer 8/24/07

CULTURAL RESOURCES

Affected Environment: Cultural resources, in this region of Colorado, range from late Paleo-Indian to Historic. For a general understanding of the cultural resources in this area of Colorado, see *An Overview of Prehistoric Cultural Resources, Little Snake Resource Area, Northwestern Colorado*, Bureau of Land Management Colorado, Cultural Resources Series,

Number 20, *An Isolated Empire, A History of Northwestern Colorado*, Bureau of Land Management Colorado, Cultural Resource Series, Number 2 and *Colorado Prehistory: A Context for the Northern Colorado River Basin*, Colorado Council of Professional Archaeologists.

Environmental Consequences, proposed action: The proposed project, Sheehan Water Developments, has undergone a Class III cultural resource survey:

Morris, Robyn Watkins
2007 Class III Cultural Resource Survey of Sheehan Ponds and Electric Fence, BLM-Little Snake Field Office, Moffat County, Colorado (10.1.08)

The survey identified no eligible to the National Register of Historic Places cultural resources. The proposed project may proceed as described in this EA with the following mitigative measures in place.

Environmental Consequences, No Action: None

Mitigative Measures:

The following standard stipulations apply for this project:

1. The operator is responsible for informing all persons who are associated with the 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 project activities, the operator is to immediately stop activities in the immediate vicinity of the find and immediately contact the authorized officer (AO) at (970) 826-5000. Within five working days, the AO 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 project activities again; and
 - Pursuant to 43 CFR 10.4(g) (Federal Register Notice, Monday, December 4, 1995, Vol. 60, No. 232) the holder of this authorization must notify the AO, by telephone at (970) 826-5000, and 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.
2. If the operator wishes, at any time, to relocate activities to avoid the expense of mitigation and/or the delays associated with this process, the AO will assume responsibility for whatever recordation and stabilization of the exposed materials may be required.

Otherwise, the operator will be responsible for mitigation costs. The AO will provide technical and procedural guidelines for the conduct of mitigation. Upon verification from the AO that the required mitigation has been completed, the operator will then be allowed to resume construction.

Name of specialist and date: Robyn Watkins Morris 10/19/07

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: The project area is relatively isolated from population centers, so no populations would be affected by physical or socioeconomic impacts of the Proposed Action. The Proposed Action would not directly affect the social, cultural or economic well-being and health of Native American, minority or low-income populations.

Environmental Consequences, No Action: None

Mitigative Measures: None

Name of specialist and date: Mike Andrews 8/24/07

FLOOD PLAINS

Affected Environment: There are no flood plains within the affected area of either proposed project.

Environmental Consequences, all alternatives: None

Mitigative Measures: None

Name of specialist and date: Ole Olsen 10/5/07

INVASIVE, NONNATIVE SPECIES

Affected Environment: Moffat County Road 2 runs along the edge of the Lower Slater Creek Allotment and vehicular travel within this corridor can provide a vector for noxious and invasive weeds. Additional roads on the public lands within the allotment are used for dispersed recreation activities throughout the year. Wildlife and cattle grazing and moving in areas of weed infestations can also provide a vector for introducing weed species to a new area. Cheatgrass is commonly found along roads and on small disturbances within the allotment; halogeton is less common but could be present. Hoary cress, tall whitetop, Russian knapweed, spotted knapweed, Canada thistle, musk thistle and other biennial thistles are found in the

vicinity of this allotment. The livestock operator is currently authorized to apply Tordon 22K herbicide to control prickly pear cactus.

Environmental Consequences, Proposed Action: Although surface disturbance generally favors the introduction of cheatgrass, halogeton, and other annual invasive plants, the surface disturbance involved with developing this water project has been minimized. The disturbed area created with burying a water storage tank would be small. It is located adjacent to the existing road and in time this area would naturally revegetate with native plants. Placement of the water trough would cause concentrated use by livestock in its vicinity but it is unlikely the area would harbor vigorous populations of these species due to the physical trampling that would occur. Some increase in annual invasive plants would occur for a short distance radiating from the water development due to the diminished character of the native plant community. Brush beating the proposed fenceline corridor would increase the perennial grass component which would decrease the potential for invasive plants and increase the detection of any noxious weeds that could become established. 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 project area would be for these species to become established and not be detected. Once they are detected they can be controlled with various integrated pest management techniques.

Environmental Consequences, No Action: None

Mitigative Measures: None

Name of specialist and date: Ole Olsen 10/5/07

MIGRATORY BIRDS

Affected Environment: The sagebrush/grass habitats within the project area provide nesting and foraging habitat for a variety of avian species including and not limited to: sage thrasher, Brewer's sparrow, sage sparrow, vesper sparrow and the green tailed-towhee.

Environmental Consequences, Proposed Action: The Proposed Action would remove a section of sagebrush measuring approximately two acres. The removal of sagebrush would result in a loss of nesting and foraging habitat for a variety of avian species. Due to the limited extent of the fence footprint, this loss would be minimal within the larger landscape. The temporary fence would be in place during summer months. This fence would provide new perching areas for predatory bird species that may prey on nesting avian species, however this impact would be a minimal addition to perching areas already provided by existing fences.

The Proposed Action would create a water source for migrating and nesting avian species. This water source could prove beneficial for nesting avian species within the area. A bird escape ramp is proposed with this action and is necessary to avoid accidental take of avian species.

Environmental Consequences, No Action: None

Mitigative Measures: None

Name of specialist and date: Gail E. Martinez 8/24/07

NATIVE AMERICAN RELIGIOUS CONCERNS

A letter was sent to the Uinta and Ouray Tribal Council, Southern Ute Tribal Council, Ute Mountain Ute Tribal Council, and the Colorado Commission of Indian Affairs on January 21, 1999. The letter listed the projects that the BLM would notify them on and projects that would not require notification. 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 10/19/07

PRIME & UNIQUE FARMLANDS

Affected Environment: Not present.

Environmental Consequences, all alternatives: None

Mitigative Measures: None

Name of specialist and date: Hunter Seim 8/29/07

T&E SPECIES - SENSITIVE PLANTS

Affected Environment: There are no BLM sensitive plant species within or in the vicinity of either proposed project.

Environmental Consequences, all alternatives: None

Mitigative Measures: None

Name of specialist and date: Hunter Seim 8/21/07

T&E SPECIES – ANIMALS

Affected Environment: The Little Snake River provides a water source to the Yampa River which contains habitat for four endangered fish species. These species commonly referred to as The Big River Fish are the razorback sucker, Colorado pikeminnow, humpback chub and the bonytail chub.

Environmental Consequences, Proposed Action: The proposed water development would

result in a minor water depletion. This depletion has been consulted upon with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and has been determined to be a **MAY AFFECT, LIKELY TO ADVERSELY AFFECT** the four fish species. In order to mitigate the water depletion and adverse impacts to these species, the BLM would add this project to its annual water depletions list and would pay the appropriate fee to the recovery fund established for these species.

Environmental Consequences, No Action: None

Mitigative Measures: None

Name of specialist and date: Timothy Novotny 8/28/07

T&E SPECIES – PLANTS

Affected Environment: There are no federally listed threatened or endangered plant species within the vicinity of either proposed project.

Environmental Consequences, all alternatives: None

Mitigative Measures: None

Name of specialist and date: Hunter Seim 8/21/07

WASTES, HAZARDOUS OR SOLID

Affected Environment: No hazardous or solid wastes are present on the Lower Slater Creek Allotment.

Environmental Consequences, Proposed Action: Heavy equipment, pickup trucks, ATVs, and other support vehicles would be present during water project installation. An ATV would be present during annual fence installation/removal. Fuel, oil, and coolant are potential hazardous materials that could be introduced to the project vicinity. If a release does occur, the environment affected would be dependent on the nature and volume of material released. If there are no releases, there would be no impact on the environment. Consequences would be dependent on the volume and nature of the material released. In most every situation involving hazardous materials, there are ways to remediate the area that has been contaminated. Short-term consequences would occur, but they can be remedied, and long-term impacts would be minimal.

Environmental Consequences, No Action: None

Mitigative Measures: None

Name of specialist and date: Hunter Seim 8/27/07

WATER QUALITY - GROUND

Affected Environment: The surface formation is the Mesaverde Formation covered by Quaternary alluvium. This formation could hold fresh water in its minor sandstone horizons but potable water is unlikely.

Environmental Consequences, all alternatives: None

Mitigative Measures: None

Name of specialist and date: Marilyn Wegweiser 8/20/07

WATER QUALITY - SURFACE

Affected Environment: Runoff water from the area of the proposed range improvements flows towards ephemeral draws that flow to the Little Snake River. The Little Snake River is currently supporting the classified beneficial uses that are designated for this stream segment.

Environmental Consequences, Proposed Action: Increased sediments and nutrients may be carried from the areas developed for livestock water due to the initial surface disturbance and soil compaction resulting from concentrated livestock use. The adjacent soils on the uplands and within the drainages have moderately rapid to rapid infiltration rates which absorb runoff water and reduce transport of these pollutants by runoff water.

Environmental Consequences, No Action: None

Mitigative Measures: None

Name of specialist and date: Ole Olsen 10/5/07

WETLANDS/RIPARIAN ZONES

Affected Environment: A small wetland system is present in Mule Creek in an unused area of the allotment adjacent to Moffat County Road 2. This portion of the allotment is not used because a fence along the county road prevents cattle from accessing this portion of the allotment.

Environmental Consequences, all alternatives: None

Mitigative Measures: None

Name of specialist and date: Ole Olsen 10/5/07

WILD & SCENIC RIVERS

Affected Environment: Not Present

Environmental Consequences, all alternatives: None

Mitigative Measures: None

Name of specialist and date: Rob Schmitzer 8/27/07

WSAs, WILDERNESS CHARACTERISTICS

Affected Environment: The Proposed Action is not located in any wilderness study areas or Congressionally designated wilderness areas.

Environmental Consequences, all alternatives: None

Mitigative Measures: None

Name of specialist and date: Rob Schmitzer 8/27/07

NON-CRITICAL ELEMENTS

SOILS

Affected Environment: The Rock River-Taffom complex, 3 to 20 percent slopes is present where the proposed range improvements would be installed. These soils have moderate infiltration, percolation, runoff and available water holding capacity. This soil exhibits a low shrink-swell potential and are non-saline and non-sodic.

Environmental Consequences, Proposed Action: The area to be developed for livestock watering would receive concentrated use by livestock. After the initial disturbance, this area would be more susceptible to wind erosion. However, as the soils become more compacted and organic matter begins to accumulate, this erosion hazard would diminish. Increased soil compaction would lead to additional runoff from the site, but the rapid to moderately rapid infiltration rates on the adjacent undisturbed soils and within the adjacent drainages would limit the area of impact to a short distance from these developments.

Environmental Consequences, No Action: None

Mitigative Measures: None

Name of specialist and date: Ole Olsen 10/5/07

UPLAND VEGETATION

Affected Environment: The Proposed Action is located in a sagebrush-grass plant community. Dominant plants present include Wyoming big sagebrush (*Artemisia tridentata wyomingensis*), basin big sagebrush (*A. tridentata tridentata*), bitterbrush (*Purshia tridentata*), green rabbitbrush (*Chrysothamnus viscidiflorus*), rubber rabbitbrush (*C. nauseosus*), *Lupinus* spp., buckwheat (*Eriogonum* spp.), Hoods phlox (*Phlox hoodii*), needle-and-thread (*Stipa comata*), Indian ricegrass (*Oryzopsis hymenoides*), prairie junegrass (*Koeleria pyramidata*), squirreltail (*Sitanion hystrix*), and Sandberg bluegrass (*Poa sandbergii*). Diversity and composition are excellent and vigor is high.

Environmental Consequences, Proposed Action: The Proposed Action would result small, highly localized direct disturbance to the plant community. The installation and removal of temporary fencing and the burying of a water tank and creation of a pond would result in no more than negligible impacts to the plant community. Indirect impacts, both positive and negative, would occur. As with any livestock water source, the addition of a pond would create an area of livestock concentration within an acre of the pond. Within the concentration area, heavy to severe utilization of forage plants would be expected and trampling of all plants would occur. Soil compaction associated with this concentration would also inhibit plant vigor and lead to increased plant mortality and reduced reproduction.

Indirectly, both projects would result in more even utilization of forage throughout the allotment by providing a water source in addition to the Little Snake River and improving the operator's ability to control livestock movement within the allotment. These projects would reduce dependence on and potential over use of areas near the river while fostering more efficient use of the allotment as a whole.

Environmental Consequences, No Action: This alternative would result in no direct impacts to the plant community as a result of construction activities or the creation of a new livestock concentration area. This alternative would, however, maintain the existing situation of livestock relying too heavily on lands near the Little Snake River because of proximity to water.

Mitigative Measures: None

Name of specialist and date: Hunter Seim 8/27/07

WILDLIFE, AQUATIC

Affected Environment: Aquatic wildlife habitat does exist along Slater Creek which would serve as a water source for the proposed water project.

Environmental Consequences, Proposed Action: The installation of temporary electric fencing and the water tank and pond would not impact aquatic wildlife habitat on public lands. The Proposed Action would result in a minor water depletion from Slater Creek. This could result in a negative impact to aquatic wildlife within Slater Creek and the Little Snake River.

The Proposed Action would also result in an adverse affect on the four Big River Fishes within the Yampa River. This adverse impact has been consulted upon. See Threatened and Endangered Species Section.

Environmental Consequences, No Action: None

Mitigative Measures: None

Name of specialist and date: Timothy Novotny 8/28/07

WILDLIFE, TERRESTRIAL

Affected Environment: The area is currently mapped by the Colorado Division of Wildlife as mule deer severe winter range, elk severe winter range, bald eagle winter range, and sage grouse production area. There is also a sage grouse lek within the area. There are three historical golden eagle nests within a half a mile of the Proposed Action.

Environmental Consequences, Proposed Action: Brush beating for the fence corridor would remove approximately two acres of sagebrush. The removal of sagebrush in a linear fashion to create a route for the installation of the fence would create a temporary corridor for predatory species. This removal of sagebrush would not adversely impact terrestrial species utilizing the area for nesting and/or foraging.

The Proposed Action would create a new water source within the area. This water source would prove beneficial for big game species that utilize the area during dry summer months.

The Proposed Action would create a temporary fence during the spring and summer. The implementation of a temporary fence during this period would not have an effect on terrestrial wildlife species. The fence falls near the ¼ mile no surface occupancy area from a sage-grouse lek. Using high visibility wire would reduce potential collisions between greater sage-grouse and the fence wire. Construction equipment should not be used for brush beating the fence line between March 1 and June 30 in order to protect breeding and nesting greater sage grouse. Placement and removal of the temporary fence is not likely to negatively impact nesting sage-grouse. This activity could be conducted during the nesting season and if conducted during the months of March, April, or May this activity would not be performed before 9 am or after 4 pm resulting in no impacts to breeding sage-grouse. If these activities are conducted in accordance with the proposed terms and conditions, there is little chance of negatively impacting greater sage-grouse populations.

Environmental Consequences, No Action: None

Mitigative Measures: None

Name of specialist and date: Timothy Novotny 9/25/07

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		MW 8/20/07	
Forest Management	JHS 8/21/07		
Hydrology/Ground		MW 8/20/07	
Hydrology/Surface		OO 10/5/07	
Paleontology		MW 8/20/07	
Range Management		JHS 8/26/07	
Realty Authorizations		MAA 8/24/07	
Recreation/Travel Mgmt		RS 8/27/07	
Socio-Economics		MAA 8/24/07	
Solid Minerals	JAM 8/20/07		
Visual Resources		RS 8/27/07	
Wild Horse & Burro Mgmt	JHS 8/27/07		

CUMULATIVE IMPACTS SUMMARY: This allotment and adjacent areas have historically been grazed by both sheep and cattle. Numerous maintained and unmaintained roads exist throughout the area, including on the allotment. These roads are used regularly by local residents and ranchers, as well as by the primary recreational users in the area, hunters. Sporadic oil and gas development activity occurs in the vicinity, though not on the allotment at this time. Wildlife populations in the area are high, especially for deer and elk who compete with livestock for available forage. The primary impacts from all of these activities are most immediately seen in the presence of roads, cultivated areas on private lands, and weed presence. The Proposed Action and No Action Alternatives are compatible with other uses, both historic and present, and would not add any new or detrimental impacts to those that area already present.

STANDARDS

PLANT AND ANIMAL COMMUNITY (animal) STANDARD: The Lower Slater Creek Allotment is currently meeting this standard. The allotment provides habitat for a variety of big game animals, small mammals, reptiles and songbirds. The proposed project, as mitigated, would not negatively impact any of these species. The Proposed Action would not prevent this standard from being met in the future. The No Action Alternative would meet the standard as well.

Name of specialist and date: Gail E. Martinez 9/5/07

SPECIAL STATUS, THREATENED AND ENDANGERED SPECIES (animal)

STANDARD: The Lower Slater Creek Allotment is meeting this standard. The proposed seasonal electric fence does traverse through a greater sage-grouse production area. As mitigated, greater sage-grouse would not be negatively impacted by the Proposed Action. The electric fence project would not prevent this standard from being met in the future. Under the No Action Alternative, the standard would also continue to be met.

Name of specialist and date: Gail E. Martinez 8/23/07

PLANT AND ANIMAL COMMUNITY (plant) STANDARD: The Lower Slater Creek Allotment is currently meeting this standard. The Proposed Action would result in improved distribution throughout the allotment, particularly on the uplands, which would relieve pressure on lands near the only current water source, the Little Snake River. The Proposed Action would allow the allotment to continue to meet this standard. The No Action Alternative, by maintaining the status quo, would also meet this standard, however, undue reliance on private lands near the Little Snake River would adversely impact those lands even though they are not subject to this standard.

Name of specialist and date: Hunter Seim 8/28/07

SPECIAL STATUS, THREATENED AND ENDANGERED SPECIES (plant)

STANDARD: There are no federally listed threatened or endangered or BLM sensitive plant species within or in the vicinity of either of the proposed projects. This standard does not apply.

Name of specialist and date: Hunter Seim 8/21/07

RIPARIAN SYSTEMS STANDARD: The only riparian resource on the Lower Slater Creek Allotment is approximately a 500 foot stretch of Mule Creek immediately south of Moffat County Road 2 in the south-central portion of the allotment. Moffat County Road 2 is fenced and livestock grazed on this allotment are unable to access any portion of Mule Creek. While a riparian resource exists on the Lower Slater Creek Allotment, it is not impacted by grazing use that would be enhanced by the Proposed Action. This standard does not apply.

Name of specialist and date: Ole Olsen 10/5/07

WATER QUALITY STANDARD: This standard would be met with implementation of either the Proposed Action or No Action Alternatives. Runoff from snowmelt and summer storms drains from the Lower Slater Creek Allotment into ephemeral stream segments that are tributary to the Little Snake River. This segment of the Little Snake River and its tributaries is presently supporting classified beneficial uses and is not listed as impaired.

Name of specialist and date: Ole Olsen 10/5/07

UPLAND SOILS STANDARD: The upland soil is capable of supporting the Proposed Action.

The water development would foster good livestock management on public lands within the allotment and the area receiving direct impacts from construction or livestock concentration would be limited. This development would allow better distribution of livestock and would reduce the potential for livestock to concentrate near one water source. The upland soils within the Lower Slater Creek Allotment would meet this standard under the Proposed Action. The No Action Alternative would not affect the upland soil standard on public lands, either positively or negatively.

Name of specialist and date: Ole Olsen 10/5/07

PERSONS/AGENCIES CONSULTED: Uintah and Ouray Tribal Council, Colorado Native American Commission, Colorado State Historic Preservation Office, Douglas Sheehan.

ATTACHMENTS: Attachment 1, Project Map
Attachment 2, Form 4120-8, Cooperative Agreement for Range Improvements (copy)
Attachment 3a, Underground Storage Tank (Steel)
Attachment 3b, Round Water Trough Installation
Attachment 3c, Typical Single-Strand Electric Fence

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: