

**Finding of No Significant Impact  
Grazing Permit Renewal  
Environmental Assessment No. ID-110-2005-EA-011**

I have reviewed the Council on Environmental Quality Regulations (CEQ) for significance (40 CFR 1508.27). I have determined the proposed actions analyzed in Environmental Assessment ID110-2005-EA-011 would not constitute a major federal action that would significantly affect the quality of the human environment. Therefore, an Environmental Impact Statement is not required. This finding was made by considering both the context and intensity of the potential effects, as described in the Environmental Assessment (EA), using the following factors defining significance:

1. *Impacts that may be both beneficial and adverse.*

It is documented in EA #ID-110-2005-EA-011 that repeated season-long grazing during the growing season contributes to a decline in the vigor of perennial forage species by not allowing plants to restore depleted carbohydrate root reserves. Grazing systems that provide periodic deferment or rest for perennial species during their growing season will allow plants to restore depleted carbohydrate root reserves and maintain vigor. It is also documented in EA #ID-110-2005-EA-011 that the proposed actions would have a beneficial impact to vegetation, soils, wildlife populations and/or their habitat. Some actions are minor with progress towards meeting standards may be slow, but the long-term result would be conformance to all applicable Rangeland Health Standards. This progress is due to the improvements in grazing management, including reductions in livestock number and/or active preference, and initiation of rotational grazing systems. Updating, or correcting, allotment boundary lines to reflect existing fences will make permit administration and allotment management more efficient and cost-effective. No other impacts, beneficial or adverse, were identified or are expected to occur to other resources or special status species as a result of implementing the proposed action.

2. *The degree to which the proposed action affects public health or safety.*

No public health and safety issues were identified in EA #ID-110-2005-EA-011.

3. *Unique characteristics of the geographic area such as proximity to historic or cultural resources, park lands, prime farmlands, wetlands, wild and scenic rivers, or ecologically critical areas.*

No unique characteristics of the assessment area were identified. No cultural resources, parklands, wetlands, or wild and scenic rivers, or ecologically critical areas are found within the management area.

While farmlands are located throughout the assessment area, they would not be considered prime farmlands.

4. *The degree to which the effects on the quality of the human environment are likely to be highly controversial.*

Through the scoping and NEPA processes no controversy or disagreement concerning effects on the quality of the human environment were identified. It was shown in the cumulative effects section of EA #ID-110-2005-EA-011 that livestock grazing on public lands will not have an impact, either beneficial or adverse, to the surrounding community as it is a continuation of a historic land use.

5. *The degree to which the possible effects on the human environment are highly uncertain or involve unique or unknown risks.*

No highly uncertain effects to the human environment or effects that involve unique or unknown risks were identified in EA #ID ID-110-2005-EA-011. Prior to the Taylor Grazing Act of 1934, agriculture, which includes livestock grazing, was the primary use of the area. This use continues today.

6. *The degree to which the action may establish a precedent for future actions with significant effects or represents a decision in principle about a future consideration.*

Implementation of the proposed action will trigger no future actions other than the possible construction and repair of livestock facilities, including fences, cattleguards, ponds, etc., as well as potential vegetation treatment projects. In addition, monitoring activities would increase to ensure that authorized actions are having the desired result(s). Following initiation of vegetation treatment projects, grazing management would be adjusted to protect and conserve the ecological and monetary investments reflected in the projects. Vegetation treatment projects would adversely impact livestock grazing in the short-term through the imposition of AUM reductions necessitated by post-treatment rest periods during treatment establishment. Conversely, these projects would have long-term benefits to both livestock and wildlife by producing a more stable and reliable perennial forage base.

7. *Whether the action is related to other actions with individually insignificant but cumulatively significant impacts.*

With implementation of the proposed action presented in EA #ID-110-2005-EA-011, no known significant direct or indirect impacts were identified.

8. *The degree to which the action may adversely affect properties listed in or eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places or may cause loss or destruction of significant scientific, cultural, or historical resources.*

In EA #ID-110-2005-EA-011, we stated that management actions that help to improve ecological conditions would, in most cases, increase ground cover, which should reduce erosional effects to cultural resources. Further, increased ground cover should reduce ground visibility, and thus reduce human impacts to cultural sites and artifacts. As such, the renewal of grazing permits, which include improved grazing management and modified Terms and Conditions, should not

result in significant adverse effects to natural, scientific, cultural or historic resources.

9. *The degree to which the action may adversely affect an endangered or threatened species or its habitat that has determined to be critical under the Endangered Species Act of 1973.*

Through EA #ID-110-2005-EA-011, it was shown that, although no known populations of Northern Idaho ground squirrels exist in any of the allotments, habitat exists that supported historic populations. Improvements in grazing management will result in ecological improvements to the habitat, which should benefit ground squirrel populations, should they reoccupy or be reintroduced to the area.

Prostrate ceanothus, also known as Mahala mat, is a sensitive plant that occurs in some allotments; however, the EA shows that proposed grazing management will not adversely affect this species.

No other populations of threatened, endangered or sensitive plant, wildlife or fish species, or their habitat, are known to occur within the affected allotments. Therefore, no adverse effects to threatened or endangered species or their habitats will occur as a result of implementing this administrative action.

10. *Whether the action threatens a violation of Federal, State, and local laws or requirements imposed for protection of the environment.*

The proposed action analyzed in EA #ID-110-2005-EA-011 is consistent and compatible with all known Federal, State, and local laws, regulations, or requirements imposed for protection of the environment.

  
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Rosemary Thomas  
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