

United States Department of the Interior

Bureau of Land Management

Pre-Decisional Environmental Assessment # ID-230-2007-EA-3433

For the Lava Pot Allotment (#90934) GRAZING PERMIT RENEWAL

September 26, 2007

Location: Twin Falls District, Shoshone Field Office, 400 West F Street, Shoshone, ID. 83352

Table of Contents

1.0 PURPOSE & NEED 1

1.1 Introduction: 1

1.2 Background: 1

1.3 Need for the Proposed Action 3

1.4 Purpose(s) of the Proposed Action 3

1.5 Conformance with BLM Land Use Plan(s) 4

1.6 Relationship to Statutes, Regulations, or other Plans..... 4

1.7 Identification of Issues 4

 1.7.1 Soils and Watershed.....4

 1.7.2 Vegetation, including Invasive, Non-native Species4

 1.7.3 Threatened , Endangered, and BLM Sensitive Species4

1.8 Summary..... 5

2.0 DESCRIPTION OF ALTERNATIVES, INCLUDING PROPOSED ACTION 5

2.1 Introduction..... 5

2.2 Alternative A – Proposed Action 5

2.3 Alternative B – No Grazing Alternative *Close the Allotment to grazing*..... 5

3.0 AFFECTED ENVIRONMENT 6

3.1 Introduction..... 6

3.2 General Setting..... 6

3.3 Critical Elements of the Human Environment and Other Resources/Issues Bought Forward for Analysis 7

 3.3.1 Resource 1: Soils & Watershed8

 3.3.2 Resource 2: Vegetation, including Invasive, Non-native Species9

 3.3.3 Resource 3: Threatened, Endangered, and BLM Sensitive Species10

4.0 ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS 13

4.1 Introduction..... 13

4.2 Direct/Indirect Impacts 13

 4.2.1 Alternative A – Proposed Action13

 4.2.1.1 Resource 1: Soils and Watershed13

 4.2.1.2 Resource 2: Vegetation, including Invasive, Non-native Species.....13

 4.2.1.3 Resource 3: Threatened , Endangered, and BLM Sensitive Species.....14

4.3 Cumulative Impacts Analysis 14

 4.3.1 Past and Present Actions14

 4.3.2 Reasonably Foreseeable Action Scenario (RFAS).....15

 4.3.3 Cumulative Impacts Summary15

5.0 CONSULTATION AND COORDINATION	16
5.1 Introduction.....	16
5.2 Persons, Groups, and Agencies Consulted	16
5.3 Summary of Public Participation	17
5.4 List of Preparers	17
6.0 REFERENCES	17
6.1 References Cited	17
6.2 Attachments.....	17
7.0 APPENDIXES	18
Appendix B	21
Appendix C	23

1.0 PURPOSE & NEED

1.1. Introduction:

This Environmental Assessment (EA) has been prepared to disclose and analyze the environmental consequences of renewing the term grazing permit on the Lava Pot Allotment as proposed by the Bureau of Land Management (BLM). This EA is a site-specific analysis of potential impacts that could result with the implementation of a Proposed Action. The EA assists the BLM in project planning and ensuring determination as to whether any “significant” impacts could result from the analyzed actions. “Significance” is defined by National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and is found in regulation 40 CFR 1508.27. An EA provides evidence for determining whether to prepare an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) or a statement of “Finding of No Significant Impact” (FONSI). If the decision maker determines that this project has “significant” impacts following the analysis in the EA, then an EIS would be prepared for the project. If not, a Decision Record (DR) may be signed for the EA approving the selected alternative, whether the Proposed Action or another alternative. A Decision Record, including a FONSI statement, documents the reasons why implementation of the selected alternative would not result in “significant” environmental impacts (effects) beyond those already addressed in the 1985 Monument Resource Management Plan (RMP).

1.2 Background:

The action being analyzed is a renewal of the livestock grazing permits in the Lava Pot Allotment in accordance with the Fundamentals of Rangeland Health (43 CFR Subpart 4180). Through this environmental analysis, a final decision will be rendered which will supersede the existing grazing use permit for the Lava Pot Allotment and result in a specific season of use, number and kind of livestock, AUMs, and management plan.

Under the 43 Code of Federal Regulations (43 CFR), Subpart 4180 – Fundamentals of Rangeland Health and Standards and Guidelines for Grazing Administration, the BLM is required to assess resource conditions on the allotment in conjunction with Technical Reference 1734-6 *Interpreting Indicators of Rangeland Health* (2000) and the final *Idaho Standards for Rangeland Health and Guidelines for Livestock Grazing Management* (1997). Rangeland Health Standards and Guidelines are used as management goals by the BLM for the betterment of the environment, protection of cultural resources, and sustained productivity of the range. They were developed with the specific intent of providing for the multiple use of the public lands. The regulations direct that existing grazing management be modified through the term permit to ensure that rangeland health standards are achieved. Ultimately, the intent of the fundamentals of rangeland health and the Idaho standards is to ensure that the resources within the allotment are meeting the Standards for Rangeland Health or are making significant progress toward meeting the Standards.

A Rangeland Health field evaluation was conducted in the Lava Pot Allotment in spring of 2004. Findings of the field evaluations were documented in the Rangeland Health Assessment which was sent out for public review and comment on March 4, 2005. No public comments were received for the allotment in regard to the Rangeland Health Assessment. Based on the 2004 field assessment, the allotment was evaluated to determine if it was meeting the Standards for Rangeland Health. The Standards are:

Standard 1: Watersheds -Watersheds provide for the proper infiltration, retention, and release of water appropriate to soil type, vegetation, climate, and landform to provide for proper nutrient cycling, hydrologic cycling, and energy flow.

1 (a) The Taylor Grazing Act of June 28, 1934 as amended (43 U.S.C. 315, 315a through 315r); (b) The Federal Land Policy and Management Act of 1976 (43 U.S.C. 1701 et seq.) as amended by the Public Rangelands Improvement Act of 1978 (43 U.S.C. 1901 et seq.); (c) Executive orders transfer land acquired under the Bankhead-Jones Farm Tenant Act of July 22, 1937, as amended (7 U.S.C. 1012), to the Secretary and authorize administration under the Taylor Grazing Act.; (d) The Public Rangelands Improvement Act of 1978 (43 U.S.C. 1901 et seq.); and (e) Public land orders, Executive orders, and agreements authorize the Secretary to administer livestock grazing on specified lands under the Taylor Grazing Act or other authority as specified. [43 FR 29067, July 5, 1978, as amended at 49 FR 6449, Feb. 21, 1984; 49 FR 12704, Mar. 30, 1984; 50 FR 45827, Nov. 4, 1985; 61 FR 4227, Feb. 5, 1996]

Standard 2: Riparian Areas and Wetlands – Riparian areas and wetlands are in properly functioning condition appropriate to soil type, climate geology, and landform to provide for proper nutrient cycling, and energy flow. (NOTE: Standard 2 does not apply to the Lava Pot Allotment.)

Standard 3: Stream Channel/Floodplains - Stream channels and floodplains are properly functioning relative to the geomorphology and climate to provide for proper nutrient cycling, hydrologic cycling and energy flow. (NOTE: Standard 3 does not apply to the Lava Pot Allotment.)

Standard 4: Native Plant Communities - Healthy, productive, and diverse native animal habitat and populations of native plants are maintained or promoted as appropriate to soil type, climate, and landform to provide for proper nutrient cycling, hydrologic cycling, and energy flow.

Standard 5: Seedings - Rangelands seeded with mixtures, including predominately non-native plants, are functioning to maintain life form diversity, production, native animal habitat, nutrient cycling, energy flow, and the hydrologic cycle. (NOTE: Standard 5 does not apply to the Lava Pot Allotment.)

Standard 6: Exotic Plant Communities, other than Seedings - Exotic plant communities, other than seedings, will meet minimum requirements of soil stability and maintenance of existing native and seeded plants. These communities will be rehabilitated to perennial communities when feasible cost effective methods are developed. (NOTE: Standard 6 does not apply to the Lava Pot Allotment.)

Standard 7: Water Quality - Surface and ground water comply with the Idaho Water Quality Standards. (NOTE: Standard 7 does not apply to the Lava Pot Allotment.)

Standard 8: Threatened and Endangered Plants and Animals - Habitats are suitable to maintain viable populations of threatened and endangered, sensitive, and other special status species.

A formal determination by the Shoshone Field Manager has been made in regard to the Lava Pot Allotment as to whether each standard is being met as required by federal regulation following a field review for Idaho Standards for Rangeland Health and analysis of available monitoring data. Table 1 shows the summary of standards and guidelines. The guidelines, if applicable, direct the selection of grazing management practices and/or livestock management facilities when progress is necessary for attainment or maintenance of the standards. Currently, the Lava Pot Allotment is meeting all applicable Standards except for Standard 4, Native Plant Communities and Standard 8, Threatened and Endangered Plants and Animals, but current livestock grazing is not a contributing factor in the failure of those two Standards.

Table 1. Summary of Rangeland Health Assessment Determination

<i>Standard</i>	<i>South Gooding Allotment Results</i>	<i>Jerome Allotment Results</i>
Standard 1 - Watersheds	Meeting	Meeting
Standard 2 - Riparian Areas and wetlands	Does not Apply	Does not Apply
Standard 3 - Stream Channel/Floodplain	Does not Apply	Does not Apply
Standard 4 - Native Plant Communities	Not meeting, livestock not a factor	Not meeting, livestock not a factor
Standard 5 - Seedings	Does not Apply	Does not Apply
Standard 6 – Exotic Plant Communities	Does not Apply	Does not Apply
Standard 7 - Water Quality	Does not Apply	Does not Apply
Standard 8 - Threatened and Endangered Plants and Animals	Not meeting, livestock not a factor	Not meeting, livestock not a factor

Guidelines direct the selection of grazing management practices on the allotment and are outlined in the *Idaho Standards for Rangeland Health and Guidelines for Livestock Grazing Management* (refer to Appendix B for a list of the Guidelines). These Guidelines, or grazing management practices, are intended to be implemented on the allotment through the term permit to promote significant progress toward, or the attainment and maintenance of the Rangeland Health Standards.

The permittee and current authorization are shown in Table 2.

Table 2: Current Grazing Permit Authorization

Allotment	Current Permittee	Livestock #	Grazing Begin End	%PL ¹	Active AUMs ²	Suspended AUMs	Total AUMs
Lava Pot	Richard Dinges	37 Cattle	4/16 to 6/03	100%	60	0	60

1.3 Need for the Proposed Action:

This is the No Action Alternative

A Rangeland health evaluation was conducted in the Lava Pot Allotment in the spring of 2004. The assessment was documented in a subsequent assessment in March of 2005. The Standards for Rangeland Health and the finding of the field evaluation, as applied in the State of Idaho, are considered in the EA, and the current permit would be renewed by incorporating the Fundamentals of Rangeland Health Standards and Guidelines into the management of the allotment.

1.4 Purpose(s) of the Proposed Action:

Based on the mandates of several authorities³, the purpose of the action is to continue authorizing livestock grazing use in the Lava Pot Allotment, consistent with the laws and regulations governing the activity. According to the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), an environmental assessment is necessary to determine the manner and degree to which issuing grazing permits would, based on existing information, continue to provide a reasonable balance between competing resource values and meeting the requirements for the Fundamentals of Rangeland Health and the Standards and Guidelines for Grazing Administration required by Code 43 of Federal Regulations, Subpart 4180. Therefore, there is a need to determine what grazing authorization would be made and what management practices in the allotment would be established that would result in the existing resource conditions moving toward meeting, or making significant progress toward meeting the Idaho Standards for Rangeland Health.

Through these authorities and the 43 Code of Federal Regulations Part 4100, the BLM manages allotment resources and issues grazing permits and leases, hereinafter referred to as permits, for a term not to exceed 10 years.

¹ % PL = Percent Public Land, accounts for private or State land acreage within an allotment and issued for billing purposes.

² AUMS = Animal Unit Months, the equivalent of forage consumed by one cow/calf pair or one bull for one month.

³(a) the Taylor Grazing Act of June 28, 1934 as amended (43 U.S.C.315, 315a through 315r); (b) the Federal Land Policy and Management Act of 1976 (43 U.S.C. 1701 et seq.) as amended by the Public Rangelands Improvement Act of 1978 (43 U.S.C. 1901 et seq.); (c) Executive orders transfer land acquired under the Bankhead-Jones Farm Tenant Act of July 22, 1937, as amended (7 U.S.C 1012), to the Secretary and authorize administration under the Taylor Grazing Act; (d) The Public Rangelands Improvement Act of 1978 (43 U.S.C. 1901 et seq.); and (e) Public land orders, Executive orders, and agreements authorize the Secretary to administer livestock grazing on specified lands under the Taylor Grazing Act or other authority as specified. [43 FR 29067, July 5, 1978, as amended at 49 FR 6449, February 21, 1984; 49 FR 12704, March 30, 1984; 50 FR 45827, November 4, 1985; 61 FR 4227, February 5, 1996]

1.5 Conformance with BLM Land Use Plan(s):

Livestock grazing use within this allotment was analyzed in the 1985 Monument RMP. The action of re-issuing a term grazing permit for this allotment would not result in a change in the scope of the resource uses or a change in the terms, conditions, and decisions of the RMP. The Monument RMP contains broad goals for multiple use management in a planning area of over 2 million acres. This grazing allotment is still allotted and made available for livestock grazing in the Land Use Plan. Establishing appropriate grazing authorization through the incorporation of the Fundamentals of Rangeland Health and Guidelines would continue to allow allotment management to comply with the long-range direction outlined in the RMP. The Proposed Action described in this document is in conformance with the 1985 Monument RMP.

1.6 Relationship to Statutes, Regulations, or other Plans:

The aforementioned authorities (referenced in footnote 3) mandate or allow the BLM to authorize livestock grazing on public lands as part of the multiple-use management of natural resources.

1.7 Identification of Issues:

Issues raised during the analysis have been identified during public scoping with interested publics and the permittees. Rangeland Health Assessments for the Lava Pot Allotment dated March 4, 2005 were mailed to interested publics and the permittees; no comments were received. Issues have also been raised through internal (BLM) review and interdisciplinary processes including meetings, personal communication, and an analysis record checklist. Appendix A contains the analysis record checklist of all resources considered. The following section is a list of issues relevant to this analysis.

1.7.1 Soils and Watershed.

- The soils in the allotment are mostly light textured loamy fine sand. The organic matter content is low and the overall hazard of wind erosion in the Lava Pot Allotment is high due to the sandy soils. The allotment is currently meeting the rangeland health standard for watersheds; however, there is some concern about the degree of mechanical impacts from livestock use to the soil/watershed resource. The allotment burned during the summer of 2006 and other fires have occurred there in the past.

1.7.2 Vegetation, including Invasive, Non-native Species.

- Because this allotment has had wildfires over the years, the native plant communities in the allotment have been compromised. The current starting date for livestock grazing in the allotments is April 16. From a phenological perspective, this is considered too early a start-date for grazing use to occur on the native grasses such as Indian ricegrass, needle-and-thread grass and bluebunch wheatgrass, especially because it can occur on an annual basis under the current terms of the permits. The allotment is currently not meeting the rangeland health standard for native plant communities; thus, there is some concern about the start-date for grazing use and the flowering and seed-set of native grasses.
- Diffuse knapweed and Rush skeletonweed are listed as noxious weeds in the State of Idaho and both have been observed in this allotment. Cheatgrass, a non-native, invasive species, occurs in high concentrations throughout the allotment. There is some concern about the spread of these plants onto other neighboring allotments and onto private lands.

1.7.3 Threatened, Endangered, and BLM Sensitive Species

- Animals: The variation in habitat conditions and habitat structural components that currently exist on the allotment likely provides minimal suitable habitat for BLM threatened, endangered, and sensitive animal species. Canada lynx is very unlikely to occur at the elevation of this allotment or utilize the habitats available on the allotment. Bald Eagles may occur infrequently during the winter months, and the allotment provides relatively small and discrete areas of suitable or marginal winter habitat for sage grouse.

- **Plants:** Picabo milkvetch, a BLM Sensitive Species, is a wiry, diffuse, perennial milkvetch that occurs on deep, stable sandy soils overlying basalt, with flat to rolling topography, at approximately 3500 to 5000 ft elevation. This species tends to occur in areas where competing vegetation is sparse. It flowers May to July. Threats to Picabo milkvetch can include plow and seed projects and competition with exotics. Picabo milkvetch occurs adjacent to this allotment. Picabo milkvetch has been documented to occur near the allotment and is likely to occur on sandy soils within the allotment.

1.8 Summary:

The chapter has presented the purpose and need of the proposed project, as well as the relevant issues, i.e., those elements of the human environment that could be affected by the implementation of the proposed project. In order to meet the purpose and need of the proposed project in a way that resolves the issues, the BLM has developed a range of action alternatives. These alternatives, as well as a no action alternative, are presented in Chapter 2. The potential environmental impacts or consequences resulting from the implementation of the each alternative are then analyzed in Chapter 4 for each of the identified issues.

2.0 DESCRIPTION OF ALTERNATIVES, INCLUDING PROPOSED ACTION

2.1 Introduction:

The Proposed Action was developed based upon issues identified through internal scoping as well as public scoping and involvement. The Proposed Action was designed to address one or more of the identified issues as well as provide the opportunity for specific comparisons on which the decision maker can base a decision.

2.2 Alternative A – Proposed Action:

This is the preferred alternative.

Issue the grazing permit for a ten-year term which authorizes livestock use in the Lava Pot Allotment and incorporates the Fundamentals of Rangeland Health and Standards and Guidelines for Grazing Administration (43 CFR 4180). This alternative describes the on-the-ground management action that the BLM proposes to implement and represents the proposed Management Guidelines. The new permit would authorize livestock use as specified in Table 2. No AUMs are proposed to be suspended in this allotment.

Allotment Improvements under the Proposed Action. No range improvements are proposed under this alternative.

2.3 Alternative B – No Grazing Alternative *Close the Allotment to grazing.* Under this alternative, the BLM Shoshone Office Manager would not reissue a grazing permit and thus discontinue livestock grazing in the Lava Pot Allotment. These lands are still allotted and made available for livestock grazing in the Land Use Plan and therefore the No Grazing Alternative was eliminated from further consideration.

3.0 AFFECTED ENVIRONMENT

3.1 Introduction:

This chapter presents the potentially affected existing environment i.e., the physical, biological, social and economic values and resources) of the impact area as identified in the Interdisciplinary Team Analysis Record Checklist found in Appendix A and presented in Chapter 1 of this environmental assessment. This chapter provides the baseline for comparison of impacts/consequences described in Chapter 4.

3.2 General Setting:

The Lava Pot Allotment is located in Lincoln County; approximately six miles northeast of Gooding, Idaho (refer to Map 1). Elevations in the allotment range from 3,700 feet to 3,767 feet. Livestock use includes cattle grazing during the early spring but this allotment has been rested 21 times since 1978. There is no grazing permitted in the winter months. The allotment has no wilderness study area designated within its boundary.

The term grazing permit for the Jerome Allotment is currently held by Richard Dinges, for 60 active cattle animal unit months (AUMs) and 0 suspended AUMs for an annual season of April 16 to June 3, with livestock licensed at 100% public land. According to the Actual Use Forms, the Lava Pot Allotment was rested from all livestock grazing from 1982 to 1998, 2000, 2001, 2005 and again in 2006. Prior to Richard Dinges, Don Williams and Elwood Shirk had the grazing permit. Elwood Shirk used the permit from 1978 to 1981 and then transferred the permit to Don Williams who took non use from 1982 to 1997. The current permit was issued for a ten-year term which expires February 2008.

3.3 Critical Elements of the Human Environment and Other Resources/Issues Brought Forward for Analysis:

Critical elements of the human environment identified in Table 3 are subject to requirements specified in treaty, statute, regulation, or executive order and must be considered in all environmental assessments. Other important elements of the human environment, identified in Table 4, are not necessarily critical elements, but are nonetheless important to consider in assessing all impacts of the proposal. Elements which are present in the allotments and are likely to be affected are discussed in this section.

Table 3. Critical Elements of the Human Environment

CRITICAL ELEMENTS OF THE HUMAN ENVIRONMENT All of the following elements have been analyzed. However, elements denoted by a <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> are <i>not affected</i> by the Proposed Action and will receive no further consideration.	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Air Quality	<input type="checkbox"/> Threatened/Endangered Plants; Sensitive Plants
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Areas of Critical Environmental Concerns	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Threatened/Endangered Fish; Sensitive Fish
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Cultural Resources	<input type="checkbox"/> Threatened/Endangered Animals; Sensitive Animals
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Environmental Justice (EO 12898)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Wastes, Hazardous or Solid
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Farm Lands (prime or unique)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Water Quality – Surface & Ground
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Floodplains	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Wetlands/Riparian Zones
<input type="checkbox"/> Invasive, Non-native Species	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Wilderness and WSAs
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Migratory Bird Treaty Act Species	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Wild & Scenic rivers – eligible, suitable and designated
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Native American Religious Concerns	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Tribal Treaty Rights

Table 4. Other Important Elements of the Human Environment

OTHER IMPORTANT ELEMENTS OF THE HUMAN ENVIRONMENT All the following elements have been analyzed. However, elements denoted by a <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> are <i>not affected</i> by the Proposed Action and will receive no further consideration.	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Paleontological Resources	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Fisheries
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Mineral Resources	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Forest Resources
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Availability of Public and/or Administrative Access	<input type="checkbox"/> Soils
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Wildlife	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Wild Horse and Burro Designated Herd Management Areas
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Recreation Use, Existing and Potential	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Visual Resources
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Existing and Potential Land Uses (permits, leases, sales)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Economic & Social Values
<input type="checkbox"/> Vegetation Types/Communities	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Other

Critical and important elements that are checked as “not affected” were considered during the environmental analysis process but were identified as such because they are not present within the allotment being analyzed. In the case of cultural resources, no range projects are being proposed, therefore, no cultural resource impacts are anticipated from continuing the current livestock use in this allotment. Similarly, for visual resources, no projects are being proposed; therefore, there would be no effect upon the existing character of the landscape. In the case of migratory bird species, no measurable negative change on migratory bird populations or their habitat is expected to occur if either the Proposed Action or alternatives were implemented. There are no key water bodies located within the allotment that have been listed under Section 303 (d) of the Clean Water Act for the State of Idaho.

3.3.1 Resource 1: Soils & Watershed.

According to the records in the Shoshone Field Office, the Lava Pot Allotment has only had one wildfire which occurred during the 2006 grazing year. There may have been other fires that have occurred in the allotment prior to the 1950’s that have not been recorded. The Lava Fire burned through the central portion of the allotment and did not receive an Emergency Stabilization (ES) Plan or BAR Plan since the allotment has many lava rocks present in the soil which make it unsuitable for seedings.

There are three ecological sites in the Lava Pot Allotment which include a Sandy 8-12” Basin Big Sagebrush/Indian Ricegrass/Needle and Thread grass, a Loamy 8-12” Basin Big Sagebrush/Bluebunch Wheatgrass, and the Lava Flows-Lithic Torriorthents which are basically lava outcrops with little to no vegetation. Since the Lithic Torriorthents have a substantial lack of vegetation, they will not be discussed further in this section. The Sandy 8-12” Basin Big Sagebrush/Indian Ricegrass/Needle and Thread grass ecological site is associated with the lower and central Snake River Plain. Slopes range from 0-10 percent and aspect has virtually no influence on this site. The average annual precipitation ranges from 8-12” and most of the precipitation occurs

during the fall, winter and spring months. The soils on this site are mostly deep to very deep and are well or somewhat excessively drained. This ecological site is only about 80 acres of the Lava Pot Allotment which is why there was not an inventory done on this site.

The Loamy 8-12" Basin Big Sagebrush/Bluebunch Wheatgrass ecological site usually occurs on alluvial fans, terraces and low rolling hills. Slopes are predominately 2-25% and the soils are light textured loamy fine sand. The organic matter content is low and the overall hazard of wind erosion in the Lava Pot Allotment is high due to the sandy soils. The field assessment consisted of evaluating the key ecological site(s) found within the Lava Pot Allotment. An allotment summary of the data obtained from the field assessment for applicable rangeland health standards has been included in this document.

3.3.2 Resource 2: Vegetation, including Invasive, Non-native Species.

The Lava Pot Allotment is categorized as a Custodial Management Allotment. Custodial allotments usually include only small acreage of public land and do not represent a significant problem, regardless of condition. They represent low potential for increasing production. Resource conflicts were considered either non-existent or were outweighed by other considerations. The objective for custodial allotments was to manage public lands with minimal expenditure of funds and continue protecting existing rangeland resource value. Cheatgrass, basin big sagebrush, Sandberg's bluegrass, and annual forbs are the dominant plant species present today. The grazing permit has been renewed through the years and continues to be authorized today.

Since the Lava Pot Allotment is categorized as Custodial Management allotments, no trend data, utilization data or use pattern mapping has been completed. The field assessment of the Lava Pot Allotment consisted of evaluating the key ecological site(s) found within the allotments.

The average actual use, excluding the periods of rest, between 1978 and 2006 is 64 AUMs or 93% of the active preference of 60 AUMs. According to the Actual Use Forms, the Lava Pot Allotment was rested from all livestock grazing from 1982 to 1998 and again in 2000 and 2001. Since Richard Dinges acquired the permit, he has never used more than 93% of the permit. The original actual use forms can be found in the Lava Pot Allotment Studies File at the Shoshone BLM Office and they have also been summarized in Appendix C.

There are two ecological sites that comprise the majority of Lava Pot Allotment:

- Sandy 8-12" Basin Big Sagebrush/Indian Ricegrass/Needle-and-thread grass
- Loamy 8-12" Basin big sagebrush/ Bluebunch wheatgrass

The climate of both the above sites is characterized by hot, dry summers and cold winters, with snow cover most of the winter. Most of the precipitation occurs during the fall, winter and spring months and the optimum plant growth period is from mid-March to mid-April. The Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) site guide description for the Sandy 8-12" states that visually the dominant vegetation of the site is Indian ricegrass and basin big sagebrush. The potential natural plant community for grasses on the site includes Indian ricegrass, Needle-and-thread grass, sand dropseed with lesser amounts of bottlebrush squirreltail, Sandberg bluegrass, Thurber needlegrass and thickspike wheatgrass. Forbs in the potential natural plant community include penstemon, aster, arrowleaf balsamroot, hoods phlox and milkvetch, with lesser amounts of biscuitroot, yellow salsify and scurf pea. Shrubs in the potential natural plant community include basin big sagebrush, green rabbitbrush and four-wing saltbrush with lesser amounts of Wyoming big sagebrush, antelope bitterbrush, grey rabbitbrush and twisted leaf rabbitbrush.

The Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) site guide description for the Loamy 8-12" states that visually the dominant vegetation of the site is basin big sagebrush and bluebunch wheatgrass. The potential natural plant community for grasses on the site includes bluebunch wheatgrass and sand dropseed with lesser amounts of Needle-and-thread grass, Nevada bluegrass, prairie junegrass, Thurber needlegrass, sod wheatgrass, Sandberg bluegrass, bottlebrush squirreltail, dryland sedges, and Indian ricegrass. Forbs in the potential natural

plant community include lupine and Russian thistle with lesser amounts of western yarrow, arrowleaf balsamroot, helianthella, scarlet globemallow, longleaf phlox, onion, and mustard. Shrubs in the potential natural plant community include basin big sagebrush with lesser amounts of Wyoming big sagebrush, green rabbitbrush, antelope bitterbrush, and grey horsebrush.

Vegetation present in the Lava Pot Allotment during the assessments consisted mostly of cheatgrass, basin big sagebrush, Sandberg’s bluegrass, and annual forbs. While the shrub component is present in this allotment, the understory is lacking the desirable grasses and forbs and there is less sagebrush on the site than should be expected according to the ecological site inventory. Dead and/or decadent sagebrush is present as well as many sagebrush seedlings. The forb community in the Lava Pot Allotment has been displaced by cheatgrass and there is a substantial lack of forbs in the area (refer to Table 6). Other plants that were present in the allotment but not in the transect included phlox, bitterbrush, rabbitbrush, wild onion, and mustard.

The field assessment documents that the Lava Pot Allotment is failing the rangeland health standard for native plant communities but that current livestock grazing practices are not contributing factors.

TABLE 6: Percent Cover in 2004

Species	Site 1
Cheatgrass	20
Sandberg bluegrass	9
Basin big sagebrush	5
Annual Forbs	1

Historic use by livestock and the invasion of cheatgrass has contributed to the conditions that exist today in the Lava Pot Allotment. High utilization levels and early season grazing have the potential to alter the composition of the vegetative community, especially if high use levels occur in several subsequent years. This allotment may have experienced high levels of use by livestock historically but according to the actual use reports, (refer to Appendix 2) it typically has not experienced high utilization levels for quite some time. Even with the light utilization and many rests from grazing this allotment is beyond the threshold of bluebunch wheatgrass, Indian ricegrass and needle-and-thread grass reestablishing under natural or normal conditions. The only way that desired plants would be reintroduced would be through seeding.

The Lava Pot Allotment currently has invasive, non-native species within its boundaries. The most common invasive plant species on the allotment is cheatgrass but rush skeletonweed and diffuse knapweed are also present in the allotment. Cheatgrass is an invasive species while rush skeletonweed and diffuse knapweed are both on the noxious weed list for state of Idaho. Cheatgrass is the dominant species throughout the allotment. There is the possibility that this could pose a threat to further expansion into neighboring public lands.

3.3.3 Resource 3: Threatened, Endangered, and BLM Sensitive Species.

Animals: The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service federally listed animal species which may potentially occur in the Lava Pot Allotment include the following: bald eagle (*Haliaeetus leucocephalus*); gray wolf (*Canis lupus*); and Canada lynx (*Felis lynx*).

There is very little potential Bald Eagle habitat in the allotment; however, there is the potential for bald eagles to make incidental use of the proposed project area while wintering in the Little Wood River Watershed.

Lynx occur primarily in the boreal, sub-boreal, and western montane forests of North America. In the Intermountain West, lynx prefer spruce, subalpine fir, and lodgepole pine forest communities. Older forests with a substantial understory of conifers or small patches of shrubs and young trees provide good quality lynx foraging habitat. Thus, both the allotments proposed for permit renewal do not provide lynx habitat.

Use of the allotments by gray wolves is not anticipated. Past sightings of gray wolves in the general area are thought to be solitary individuals making a rare incursion into the area. The successful translocation of wolves in central Idaho coupled with a recent sighting of gray wolves near Picabo and north of King Hill makes it likely that wolves may begin to make incidental use of public lands in and around the Lava Pot Allotment.

The BLM lists additional animals and plants as BLM Sensitive Species in Idaho. The BLM Sensitive Species associated with these two allotments are discussed below and additional species are displayed in Table 7.

BLM Sensitive mammals that may occur in the allotment during all or a portion of the year are: Townsend's big-eared bat, (*Corynorhinus townsendii townsendii*); and pygmy rabbit, (*Brachylagus idahoensis*). The big-eared bat would most likely use shrub-covered areas in the allotment for dispersed foraging activities. The pygmy rabbit may be found in areas with a mature sagebrush overstory but the degraded sagebrush habitat in the allotment make the occurrence of the pygmy rabbit unlikely. No pygmy rabbits have been observed in the Lava Pot Allotment.

The historic distribution of pygmy rabbits in Idaho spanned much of the Snake River Plain. Suitable pygmy rabbit habitat is thought to be associated with sites containing relatively deep soils that support a tall, dense overstory of big sagebrush. No pygmy rabbits have been observed in the Lava Pot Allotment, however there have been several sightings at the Craters of the Moon National Monument, the latest of which was in 2001. During the summer of 2003, a course-scale pygmy rabbit survey was conducted by University of Idaho contractors in the Shoshone Field Office. Preliminary findings from the inventory did not identify any possible pygmy rabbit sightings or burrow complex in the allotments but a systematic inventory for pygmy rabbits has not been conducted specifically in the Lava Pot Allotment.

Sage grouse (*Centrocercus urophasianus*) are North America's largest grouse and are found primarily in habitats dominated by sagebrush (*Artemisia* spp.), particularly big sagebrush (*Artemisia tridentata* spp.). Records at the Shoshone Field Office show only one active sage grouse lek within 6 air miles of the Lava Pot Allotment. The Lava Pot Allotment is designated as R2 sage grouse habitat which is classified as restoration habitat with an exotic understory. The shrub/steppe habitat that occurs in the allotment has the potential to provide sage grouse winter habitat.

Plants: Picabo milkvetch, *Astragalus oniciformis*, a BLM Sensitive Species, occurs immediately adjacent to the allotments. Picabo milkvetch is a wiry, diffuse, perennial milkvetch that occurs on deep, stable sandy soils overlying basalt, with flat to rolling topography, at approximately 3500 to 5000 ft elevation. This species tends to occur in areas where competing vegetation is sparse. It flowers May to July. Associated species include Wyoming big sagebrush, basin big sagebrush, threetip sagebrush, thickspike wheatgrass, Indian ricegrass, and needle-and-thread grass.

Picabo milkvetch is endemic to the northern edge of the Snake River Plain, from Gooding east to the eastern boundary of Craters of the Moon National Monument, and the lower foothills of the Pioneer Mountains near Picabo. There are no documented populations of Picabo milkvetch within the allotment; however, it occurs in the vicinity and potential habitat might exist on sandy soils within the allotment boundary.

Threats include soil-disturbing activities including road/trail construction, pipeline construction, and high-intensity livestock use (such as around trough sites); and competition with weedy species.

Table 7-Federally Listed and BLM Sensitive Animal Species that may occur in the project area

Common Name	Scientific Name	General Habitat Use
Type 1-Threatened (T), Endangered (E), or Proposed (P)		
Bald Eagle (T)	<i>Haliaeetus leucocephalus</i>	Forest, Sagebrush, Riparian
Grey Wolf	<i>Canis lupus</i>	Forest, Sagebrush, Riparian
Canada Lynx	<i>Lynx canadensis</i>	Forest
Type 2-Rangewide/Globally Imperiled Species		
Greater Sage Grouse	<i>Centrocercus urophasianus</i>	Sagebrush, Riparian
Pygmy Rabbit	<i>Brachylagus idahoensis</i>	Sagebrush
Boreal Toad	<i>Bufo boreas boreas</i>	Riparian
Northern Leopard Frog	<i>Rana pipiens</i>	Riparian
Type 3-Regional/State Imperiled Species		
Townsend's Big-eared Bat	<i>Plecotus townsendii</i>	Sagebrush, Grassland, Cave
Fringed Myotis	<i>Myotis thysanodes</i>	Sagebrush, Grassland, Cave
Fisher	<i>Martes pennanti</i>	Forest, Riparian
Wolverine	<i>Gulo gulo luscus</i>	Forest, Riparian
Prairie Falcon	<i>Falco mexicanus</i>	Sagebrush, Grassland
Peregrine Falcon	<i>Falco peregrinus anatum</i>	
Northern Goshawk	<i>Accipiter gentilis</i>	Forest, Grassland, Sagebrush, Riparian
Ferruginous Hawk	<i>Buteo regalis</i>	Forest, Grassland, Sagebrush, Riparian
Mountain Quail	<i>Oreotyx pictus</i>	Forest, Grassland, Sagebrush, Riparian
Flammulated Owl	<i>Otus flammeolus</i>	Forest, Grassland, Sagebrush, Riparian
Lewis's Woodpecker	<i>Melanerpes lewis</i>	
Willow Flycatcher	<i>Empidonx trailii</i>	Forest, Riparian
Grasshopper Sparrow	<i>Ammodramus savannarum</i>	Grassland, Sagebrush
Loggerhead Shrike	<i>Lanias ludovicianus</i>	Sagebrush
Brewer's Sparrow	<i>Spizella breweri</i>	Sagebrush
Sage Sparrow	<i>Amphispiza belli</i>	Sagebrush
Common Garter Snake	<i>Thamnophis sirtalis</i>	Forest, Riparian
Western Toad	<i>Bufo boreas</i>	Forest, Riparian

Type 4-Idaho Peripheral Species		
California Myotis	<i>Myotis californicus</i>	Sagebrush, Grassland, Cave
White-faced Ibis	<i>Plegadis chihi</i>	Grassland, Riparian
Virginia's Warbler	<i>Vermivora virginiae</i>	Forest, Grassland, Sagebrush, Riparian
Black-throated Sparrow	<i>Amphispiza bilineata</i>	Grassland, Sagebrush, Riparian
<p>Type 1-Threatened, Endangered, and Proposed Species -These species are listed by the Fish and Wildlife Service or National Marine Fisheries Service as threatened or endangered, or they are proposed for listing under the Endangered Species Act.</p> <p>Type 2- Range-wide/Globally Imperiled Species -These are species designated as FWS candidate or are ranked by the Natural Heritage program network as globally rare to critically imperiled.</p> <p>Type 3-Regional/State Imperiled Species -These are species that are in danger of becoming extirpated from Idaho in the foreseeable future if factors contributing to their decline, or habitat degradation or loss, continue.</p> <p>Type 4-Peripheral Species -These are species that are in danger of becoming extirpated from Idaho and (a) may be local endemics with currently low threat levels or (b) peripheral, rare species in Idaho.</p>		

4.0 ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS

4.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the potential environmental impacts that may occur if the Proposed Action were implemented in the Lava Pot Allotment. This section will mirror the issues identified in the Interdisciplinary Team Analysis Record Checklist found in Appendix A and presented in Chapter 1 of this assessment. Because all known mitigating measures have been included in the Descriptions and the Alternatives, the environmental consequences described below are unavoidable.

4.2 Direct/Indirect Impacts:

4.2.1 Alternative A – Proposed Action

4.2.1.1 Resource 1: Soils and Watershed.

No direct measurements have been conducted following the 1985 Monument RMP to determine if a change in soil loss has occurred. Continued livestock grazing in this allotment would affect soil resources on public lands but the BLM has not observed nor received any reports of noticeable soil erosion in the Lava Pot Allotment. Unacceptable levels of soil erosion due to livestock grazing as a result of the Proposed Action are not expected. Under the present management, the watershed condition in these allotments is adequate for maintaining soil stability and hydrologic cycling.

Litter is important in reducing compaction, erosion and increasing nutrient cycling of minerals and plant nutrients. Removal of vegetation reduces the amount of litter and nutrient cycling in the soil.

4.2.1.2 Resource 2: Vegetation, including Invasive, Non-native Species.

The rangelands where the Lava Pot Allotment is located have been dominated by cheatgrass for decades. Cheatgrass, a non-native, invasive annual grass, has displaced desirable native grasses such as Indian ricegrass, Thurber needlegrass and needle-and-thread grass. High utilization levels and early season grazing have the

potential to alter the composition of the vegetative community, especially if high use levels occur in several subsequent years. During the field assessment, the Lava Pot Allotment was past the threshold of being able to support and promote viable populations of perennial grasses. In order for this allotment to make progress towards meeting the Native Plant Communities Standards in the future, a restoration plan must be implemented that includes mechanical treatments such as seedings.

Under the Proposed Action without any mechanical treatments, the overstory vegetation would continue to be dominated by basin big sagebrush and the understory vegetation will continue to be dominated by cheatgrass. The populations of perennial forbs will not have the potential to increase over time due to the competition with cheatgrass and should stay static over time.

There is a possibility that the season of use in the Lava Pot Allotment may need to be deferred if this area is rehabilitated in the future. Deferment of livestock grazing has the potential to enhance the seed production and ensure the establishment of a successful seeding.

4.2.1.3 Resource 3: Threatened, Endangered, and BLM Sensitive Species.

Animals: The proposed livestock grazing is not expected to perceptively alter habitat suitability for the federally listed bald eagle, gray wolf or Canada lynx which may utilize the Lava Pot Allotment. The suspected very low, incidental use level of the allotments by these three listed animal species is expected to result in “No Effect” to the continued existence of the bald eagle, gray wolf and Canada lynx.

Cattle grazing during the spring would occur during sage-grouse nesting and early brood-rearing periods and has the potential to result in some cattle use of native forbs preferred by sage-grouse. The decrease in herbaceous cover values in the allotment would increase the possibility of nest site predation and reduce concealment and security cover for young sage-grouse chicks. Reduction in height and diversity of vegetation would also reduce the number and occurrence of insects, a key component in the diet of young sage-grouse chicks. Reducing plant species diversity and vigor in the native plant communities would produce fewer suitable habitat conditions for many of the sensitive shrub steppe wildlife species expected to occur in the area.

Plants: The potential habitat for Picabo milkvetch in the allotment is of poor quality due to the abundance of cheatgrass. The possibility of sensitive plants being impacted by the Proposed Action is slight due to the lack of known populations and lack of good quality potential habitat for Picabo milkvetch within the allotment boundaries.

4.3 Cumulative Impacts Analysis:

“Cumulative impacts” are those impacts resulting from the incremental impact of an action when added to other past, present, or reasonably foreseeable actions regardless of what agency or person undertakes such other actions. The geographic scope of the proposed grazing permit renewals will be limited to just those 1,047 federal acres within the Lava Pot Allotment.

4.3.1 Past and Present Actions

Livestock grazing has occurred in the area now known as the Lava Pot Allotment since the late 1800s. This area was first managed by the General Land Office (GLO) and designated as arid, broken, mountainous, or grazing in character (USDI- BLM 1988). Many western ranchers depended on this remaining public domain to help support their livestock. The local ranchers grazed these lands in conjunction with their private ranch lands and it was on a first-come, first-serve basis. All of these lands had unregulated grazing until the implementation of the Taylor Grazing Act of 1934. In 1946, the Department of the Interior formed the Bureau of Land Management and grazing on public lands was formalized and divided into grazing allotments.

The Lava Pot Allotment borders the Pocket Allotment to the northwest, the Shortline Allotment to the west, the Dinky Allotment to the east and unallotted BLM lands consisting of lava outcrops to the north and northeast.

Because of the general lack of water (both distribution and time available) over what is known now as the Lava Pot Allotment, this area was likely used less intensively than other areas historically.

The central portions of the Lava Pot Allotment burned during the summer of 2006. There most likely have been more wildfires prior to the ones that have just occurred but they have not been documented by the Shoshone Field Office. Historic use levels opened communities to exotic plant invasion, which reduced the resiliency of the communities to subsequent disturbance, such as introduction of new weeds and wildland fire.

4.3.2 Reasonably Foreseeable Action Scenario (RFAS)

There are currently no range improvement projects planned within the Lava Pot Allotment or within the neighboring allotments. The Shoshone Field Office does not foresee any other projects taking place within the allotment or within the surrounding areas as well. In approximately ten years, this allotment will again be reviewed and analyzed under existing regulations for consideration of permit renewal. The Shoshone Field Office will begin the process for an updated Land Use Plan within a few years. At that time, changes to some grazing permits may be made but no changes in the Lava Pot Allotment are anticipated.

When considered with past, present, and reasonably foreseeable future actions, there are no known incremental effects to soils and watershed or threatened/endangered/BLM sensitive species as a result of the Proposed Action, which is a continuation of the current situation.

4.3.3 Cumulative Impacts Summary:

No significant individual or cumulative impacts are anticipated as a result of the Proposed Action, which is a continuation of the current situation, in the Lava Pot Allotment. Currently, the Lava Pot Allotment is meeting all applicable Standards except for Standard 4, Native Plant Communities and Standard 8, Threatened and Endangered Plants and Animals but current livestock grazing is not a contributing factor in the failure of those two Standards.

5.0 CONSULTATION AND COORDINATION:

5.1 Introduction:

The issue identification section of Chapter 1 identifies those issues analyzed in detail in Chapter 4. Appendix A provides the rationale for issues that were considered but not analyzed further. The issues were identified through the public and agency involvement process described in sections 5.2 and 5.3 below.

5.2 Persons, Groups, and Agencies Consulted:

TABLE 8: LIST OF ALL PERSONS, AGENCIES AND ORGANIZATIONS CONSULTED FOR PURPOSES OF THIS EA

Name	Purpose & Authorities for Consultation or Coordination	Findings & Conclusions
Richard Dinges	Permittee	No comments from Standards Assessment
Committee for the High Desert	Interested Public	No comments from Standards Assessment
ICL Public Lands Office	Interested Public	No comments from Standards Assessment
Idaho Department of Fish & Game	Interested Public	No comments from Standards Assessment
Idaho Wildlife Federation	Interested Public	No comments from Standards Assessment
Shoshone-Bannock Tribes	Interested Public	No comments from Standards Assessment
The Wilderness Society	Interested Public	No comments from Standards Assessment
Western Watersheds Project	Interested Public	No comments from Standards Assessment
David Skinner	Interested Public	No comments from Standards Assessment
Rusty Tews	Interested Public	No comments from Standards Assessment
Western Land Exchange	Interested Public	No comments from Standards Assessment
Loyd W. Briggs	Interested Public	No comments from Standards Assessment
Mel Quale	Interested Public	No comments from Standards Assessment
Dennis Crane	Interested Public	No comments from Standards Assessment
Chris J. Christiansen	Interested Public	No comments from Standards Assessment
Kelly Adams	Interested Public	No comments from Standards Assessment
Kenneth Sanders	Interested Public	No comments from Standards Assessment
Paul McClain	Interested Public	No comments from Standards Assessment

5.3 Summary of Public Participation:

During preparation of the EA, the Public was notified of the proposed action through a Pre-Decisional EA mailed out on September 26, 2007 and a comment period was offered until October 29, 2007.

5.4 LIST OF PREPARERS

Table 9. List of BLM –Shoshone Field Office Reviewers

Name	Title	Responsible for the Following Section(s) of this Document	Review Date
Joanna Tjaden	Rangeland Management Specialist	Permit Renewal Team Project Leader	4/12/07
Doug Barnum	Supervisory Natural Resource Specialist	Supervisory Natural Resource Specialist	9/24/07
Bonnie Hunt	Wildlife Biologist	Threatened, Endangered or Candidate Species and Wetlands / Riparian Zones	7/11/07
Julie Hilty	Botanist	Invasive, Non-native Species; Vegetation, including Special Status Plants	9/13/07
Lisa Cresswell	Archaeologist	Cultural Resources	8/3/07

6.0 REFERENCES

6.1 References Cited:

U.S. Department of the Interior, Bureau of Land Management. 1985. Final Monument Resource Management Plan. Document on file at the BLM, Shoshone Field Office, Shoshone, Idaho.

U.S. Department of the Interior, Bureau of Land Management. 1988. Opportunity and Challenge: The Story of the BLM. US Government Printing Office, Washington D.C.

6.2 Attachments:

Map 1 – Allotment Boundary

Lava Pot Allotment Draft Determination

INTERDISCIPLINARY TEAM ANALYSIS RECORD CHECKLIST

Project Title: Permit Renewal for Lava Pot Allotment #90934 (located in Lincoln County)

NEPA Log Number: ID-230-2007-EA-3433

File/Serial Number:

Location of Project(s):

T 5S, R 16 E, Sections 17, 20, 21, and 29

Project Leader: Joanna Tjaden

DETERMINATION OF STAFF: (Choose one of the following abbreviated options for the left column)

NP = not present in the area impacted by the proposed or alternative actions

NI = present, but not affected to a degree that detailed analysis is required

PI = present with potential for significant impact analyzed in detail in the EA; or identified in a DNA as requiring further analysis

NC = (DNAs only) actions and impacts not changed from those disclosed in the existing NEPA documents cited in Section C of the DNA form.

Det ermi- nation	Resource	Rationale for Determination	Signature	Date
CRITICAL ELEMENTS				
NI	Air Quality (Joanna Tjaden)	There is no official air quality designation for the area. In any case, air quality is not going to be affected by renewing the permit.	JPF	5/7/07
NP	Areas of Critical Environmental Concern (Joanna Tjaden)	There are no ACECs present in the allotment.	JPF	5/7/07
NP	Cultural Resources (Lisa Cresswell)	No previously recorded cultural resources have been identified within the allotments.	LTC	5/23/07
NP	Environmental Justice (Joanna Tjaden)	NP	JPF	5/7/07
	Farmlands (Prime or Unique) (Joanna Tjaden)	NP	JPF	5/7/07
NP	Floodplains (Joanna Tjaden)	There are no floodplains present in the allotment boundary	JPF	5/7/07
PI	Invasive, Non-native Species (Julie Hilty)	Cheatgrass is common in the general area. Diffuse knapweed and rush skeletonweed occur within the allotment.	JH	7/13/07
NP	Native American Religious Concerns (Lisa Cresswell)	No specific sacred sites have been identified in this area by local tribes.	LC	5/23/07
NP	Threatened, Endangered or Candidate Plant Species (Julie Hilty)	There are no federally listed or candidate plants in the allotments.	JH	7/13/07
NI	Threatened, Endangered or Candidate Animal Species (Bonnie Hunt)	Gray wolf , bald eagle and Canada lynx are very unlikely to occur in the grazing allotments.	BCH	7/11/2007
NP	Wastes (hazardous or solid) (Timothy Fuller)	If any pesticides are used, they should be limited to those approved as described on WO IB No. 2007-028. Chemical storage should have prior permission, and only allowed with secondary containment. The permittee should indemnify the BLM in case of a hazmat incident.	TF	5/11/07

Determination	Resource	Rationale for Determination	Signature	Date
NI	Water Quality (drinking/ground) (Lisa Jaro)	No streams or other bodies of water in the allotment have been identified by the State of Idaho as water-quality limited.	LJ	7/3/07
NP	Wetlands/Riparian Zones (Joanna Tjaden)	There are not any wetlands or riparian areas present in the allotment boundary	JPF	5/7/07
NP	Wild and Scenic Rivers (David Freiberg)	No Wild and Scenic segments in the area.	DF	09/17/07
NP	Wilderness/WSA (David Freiberg)	No Wilderness or WSA in the area	DF	09/17/07
NI	Rangeland Health Standards and Guidelines (Joanna Tjaden)	PI – Except for RH Standards for Standard 4 and Standard 8, the remaining applicable standards are being met in the allotment. Livestock are not a contributing factor in the failure of these two Standards.	JPF	5/7/07
NI	Livestock Grazing (Joanna Tjaden)	PI- Term grazing permit is/has expired and needs to be renewed. Current allotment mgmt needs to be reviewed and other mgmt schemes need to be analyzed to order to move all resources toward meeting or maintaining RH Standards.	JPF	5/7/07
NP	Woodland / Forestry (Kasey Prestwich)	There is no Forest or Woodland vegetation with in these allotments.	KP	5/9/2007
PI	Vegetation including Special Status Plant Species other than FWS candidate or listed species (Julie Hilty)	The allotment is dominated by degraded low elevation sagebrush steppe. Picabo milkveth (<i>Astragalus oniciformis</i>) occurs in the vicinity and while there are no known populations within the allotment, potential habitat might exist there.	JH	7/13/07
NI	Fish and Wildlife Including Special Status Species other than FWS candidate or listed species eg. Migratory birds. (Bonnie Hunt)	Numerous BLM Sensitive animal species are either known or are likely to make use of the upland and riparian habitat conditions on public land in the allotment.	BCH	7/11/2007
NI	Soils (Project Lead)	Grazing use/mechanical impacts to the soil/watershed resource are expected.	JPF	5/7/07
NI	Recreation (John Kurtz)	The allotment is within the Monument Extensive Recreation Management Area (ERMA). Within ERMA's visitor health and safety, use and user conflicts and resource protection need to be addressed. There are no known visitor health and safety issues, use or user conflicts and Standards identified as, not being met, are not a result of recreation activities; therefore no further detailed analysis regarding recreation is necessary.	JK	6/14/07
NI	Visual Resources (David Freiberg)	This area falls within a VRM Inventory Class II area. Visual resources are present but will not impacted by the grazing permit renewal.	DF	09/21/07
NP	Geology / Mineral Resources/Energy Production (John Garth)	There are no active or proposed locatable, leasable, or salable minerals projects located within the allotment.	JG	06/19/2007
NP	Paleontology (Lisa Cresswell)	No known paleontological resources	LC	5/21/07
NI	Lands / Access (Debbie Kovar)	There are some rights-of-way authorizations (road and canal) within the project areas; however, they will not be affected by the proposed action or alternatives.	DK	5/18/07
NI	Fuels / Fire Management (Joe Russell)	Vegetation communities consist of low-elevation shrub communities but would not be affected to a degree where detailed analysis of fire and fuels management would be required.	JR	5/18/07
NI	Socio-economics (Joanna Tjaden)	PI – a potential change in allotment mgmt may have an affect upon permitholder's personal economy.	JPF	5/7/07

Det ermi- nation	Resource	Rationale for Determination	Signature	Date
NI	Water Rights (Lisa Jaro)	There are stockwater and wildlife water right claims for the springs and streams within the project area; however, they will not be affected by the proposed action or the proposed alternatives.	LJ	7/03/07
NP	Wilderness characteristics (David Freiberg)	This area has been evaluated for Wilderness Characteristics and found not to have them.	DF	09/17/07

Reviewer Title	Signature	Date	Comments
NEPA / Environmental Coordinator (Barb Bassler)	/s/ Barbara C. Bassler	9/24/07	
Authorized Officer (Lori A. Armstrong)	/s/ Lori A. Armstrong	9/25/2007	

Idaho Guidelines per the *Idaho Standards for Rangeland Health and Guidelines for Livestock Grazing Management*

1. Use grazing management practices and/or facilities to maintain or promote significant progress toward adequate amounts of ground cover (determined on an ecological site basis) to support infiltration, maintain soil moisture storage, and stabilize soils.
2. Locate livestock management facilities away from riparian areas wherever they conflict with achieving or maintaining riparian –wetland functions.
3. Use grazing management practices and /or facilities to maintain or promote soil conditions that support water infiltration, plant vigor, and permeability rates and minimize soil compaction appropriate to site potential.
4. Implement grazing management practices that provide periodic rest or deferment during critical growth stages to allow sufficient regrowth to achieve and maintain healthy, properly functioning conditions, including good plant vigor and adequate vegetative cover appropriate to site potential.
5. Maintain or promote grazing management practices that provide sufficient residual vegetation to improve, restore, or maintain healthy riparian-wetland functions and structure for energy dissipation, sediment capture, ground water recharge, streambank stability, and wildlife habitat appropriate to site potential.
6. The development of springs, seeps, or other projects affecting water and associated resources shall be designed to protect the ecological functions, wildlife habitat, and significant cultural and historical/archaeological/paleontological values associated with the water source.
7. Apply grazing management practices to maintain, promote, or progress toward appropriate stream channel and streambank morphology and functions. Adverse impacts due to livestock grazing will be addressed.
8. Apply grazing management practices that maintain or promote the interaction of the hydrologic cycle, nutrient cycle, and energy flow that will support the appropriate types and amounts of soil organisms, plants, and animals appropriate to soil type, climate, and landform.
9. Apply grazing management practices to maintain adequate plant vigor for seed production, seed dispersal, and seedling survival of desired species relative to soil type, climate, and landform.
10. Implement grazing management practices and /or facilities that provide for complying with the Idaho Water Quality Standards.

Appendix B (Continued)

11. Use grazing management practices developed in recovery plans, conservation agreements, and Endangered Species Act, Section 7 consultations to maintain or improve habitat for federally listed threatened, endangered, and sensitive plants and animals.
12. Apply grazing management practices and/or facilities that maintain or promote the physical and biological conditions necessary to sustain native plant populations and wildlife habitats in native plant communities.
13. On areas seeded predominantly with non-native plants, use grazing management practices to maintain or promote the physical and biological conditions to achieve healthy rangelands.
14. Where native communities exist, the conversion to exotic communities after disturbance will be minimized. Native species are emphasized for rehabilitating disturbed rangelands. Evaluate whether native plants are adapted, available, and able to compete with weeds or seeded exotics.
15. Use non-native plant species for rehabilitation only in those situations where:
 - a. native species are not readily available in sufficient quantities;
 - b. native plant species cannot maintain or achieve the standards; or
 - c. non-native plant species provide for management and protection of native rangelands.Include a diversity of appropriate grasses, forbs, and shrubs in rehabilitation efforts.
16. On burned areas, allow natural regeneration when it is determined that populations of native perennial shrubs, grasses, and forbs are sufficient to revegetate the site. Rest burned or rehabilitated areas to allow recovery or establishment of perennial plant species.
17. Carefully consider the effects of new management facilities (e.g., water developments, fences) on healthy and properly functioning rangeland prior to implementation.
18. Use grazing management practices, where feasible, for wildlife control and to reduce the spread of targeted undesirable plants (e.g., cheatgrass, medusa head, wild rye, and noxious weeds) while enhancing vigor and abundance of desirable native or seeded species.
19. Employ grazing management practices that promote natural forest regeneration and protect reforestation projects until the Idaho Forest Practices Act requirements for timber stand replacement are met.
20. Design management fences to minimize adverse impacts, such as habitat fragmentation, to maintain habitat integrity and connectivity for native plants and animals.

TABLE 1: ACTUAL USE SUMMARY

Year	Grazing Use Period	Active Preference (AUM's)	Actual Use (AUM's)	Percent of Active Use
1978	Cattle 4/23 to 6/11	60	59	98%
1979	Cattle 4/16 to 6/04	60	59	98%
1980	Cattle 4/16 to 6/04	60	59	98%
1981	Cattle 4/16 to 6/04	60	59	98%
1982	RESTED	60	0	0%
1983	RESTED	60	0	0%
1984	RESTED	60	0	0%
1985	RESTED	60	0	0%
1986	RESTED	60	0	0%
1987	RESTED	60	0	0%
1988	RESTED	60	0	0%
1989	RESTED	60	0	0%
1990	RESTED	60	0	0%
1991	RESTED	60	0	0%
1992	RESTED	60	0	0%
1993	RESTED	60	0	0%
1994	RESTED	60	0	0%
1995	RESTED	60	0	0%
1996	RESTED	60	0	0%
1997	RESTED	60	0	0%
1998	RESTED	60	0	0%
1999	Cattle 4/16 to 6/03	60	60	100%
2000	RESTED	60	0	0%
2001	RESTED	60	0	0%
2002	Cattle 4/25 to 6/03	60	53	88%
2003	Cattle 4/15 to 5/15	60	56	93%
2004	Cattle 4/19 to 5/12	60	41	68%
2005	RESTED	60	0	0%
2006	RESTED	60	0	0%
2007	RESTED	60	0	0%