

FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT

LX RANCH LIVESTOCK GRAZING PERMIT RENEWAL FOR COX INDIVIDUAL ALLOTMENT (#00217)

DOI-BLM-OR-L050-2012-0025-EA

The Bureau of Land Management, Lakeview Resource Area (BLM), has analyzed several alternative proposals related to renewing term grazing permit number 3600243 for a ten-year period for the Cox Individual Allotment. The allotment is located approximately 12 miles northeast of Adel, Oregon, is about 1,796 acres in size, and contains about 1,246 acres of public land and 550 acres of private land.

An environmental assessment (EA) was prepared that analyzed the potential direct, indirect, and cumulative environmental impacts of three alternatives. The alternatives included No Action (continue current grazing), 50% reduction in grazing, and no grazing (see pages 6-8 of attached EA).

The Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ) regulations state that the significance of impacts must be determined in terms of both context and intensity (40 CFR 1508.27). The context of the proposed action is the Cox Individual Allotment. For this reason, the analysis of impacts in the attached Environmental Assessment (EA) is focused appropriately at this scale. The CEQ regulations also include the following ten considerations for evaluating the intensity of impacts:

- 1) Would any of the alternatives have significant beneficial or adverse impacts (40 CFR 1508.27(b)(1))?
() Yes (X) No

Rationale: Based on the analysis contained in the attached EA, none of the alternatives would have either significant beneficial or adverse impacts on the human environment. There are no prime or unique farmlands, water resources, fish and aquatic habitat, forest or woodland habitat, wild horse management areas, wild and scenic rivers, significant caves, designated wilderness areas, wilderness study areas, other areas with wilderness characteristics, ACEC/RNAs, threatened or endangered plants and animals, special status plants, hazardous waste sites, or low income or minority populations located in the project area. No measureable impacts would occur to climate air quality, floodplains, hydrology, land status, or mineral and energy resources (Table 3, page 10).

The potential impacts to existing soils, biological soil crusts, wetland and riparian areas, upland vegetation, noxious weeds, wildlife, special status wildlife species, livestock grazing management, native American traditional practices, cultural resources, recreation, visual resources, or social and economic values anticipated by the various alternatives have been analyzed in detail within Chapter 3 of the attached EA and found not to be significant (pages 9-39).

- 2) Would any of the alternatives have significant adverse impacts on public health and safety (40 CFR 1508.27(b)(2))? () Yes (X) No

Rationale: None of the alternatives analyzed in detail in the attached EA would have significant impacts on public health or safety because the project area is not located near any populated rural or urban area. For this reason, there would also be no impacts to low income or minority populations. Further, there are no known hazardous waste sites in the project area. There are no perennial streams or surface drinking water sources located in the project area. There would be no measureable impacts to air quality within and surrounding the project area (Table 3, page 10).

- 3) Would any of the alternatives have significant adverse impacts on unique geographic characteristics (cultural or historic resources, park lands, prime and unique farmlands, wetlands, wild and scenic rivers, designated wilderness or wilderness study areas, or ecologically critical areas (ACECs, RNAs, significant caves)) (40 CFR 1508.27(b)(3))? () Yes (X) No

Rationale: There are no park lands, prime or unique farmlands, wild and scenic rivers, significant caves, designated wilderness areas, WSAs, or ACEC/RNAs located in the project area (Table 3, page 10). Impacts to riparian and wetland vegetation are not significant and are described in Chapter 3 of the attached EA (pages 23-24).

4) Would any of the alternatives have highly controversial effects (40 CFR 1508.27(b)(4)? Yes No

Rationale: The BLM has extensive expertise planning, analyzing impacts, and implementing range management actions such as those proposed by the alternatives addressed in the attached EA. The potential impacts of these range management actions on soils, biological soil crusts, wetland and riparian areas, upland vegetation, noxious weeds, wildlife, special status wildlife species, livestock grazing management, native American traditional practices, cultural resources, recreation, visual resources, or social and economic values can be reasonably predicted based on existing science and professional expertise. The attached EA analyzed these impacts (pages 9-39). The nature of these impacts is not highly controversial, nor is there substantial dispute within the scientific community regarding the nature of these effects.

The BLM is not currently aware of any potential highly controversial effects, as defined under 40 CFR 1508.27(b)(4). The public, agencies, and tribes were given an opportunity to review and comment on the analysis of effects. No comments were received during the review period.

5) Would any of the alternatives have highly uncertain effects or involve unique or unknown risks (40 CFR 1508.27(b)(5)? Yes No

Rationale: The BLM has extensive expertise planning, analyzing impacts, and implementing range management actions such as those proposed by the alternatives addressed in the attached EA. The potential impacts of these range management actions on soils, biological soil crusts, wetland and riparian areas, upland vegetation, noxious weeds, wildlife, special status wildlife species, livestock grazing management, native American traditional practices, cultural resources, recreation, visual resources, or social and economic values can be reasonably predicted based on existing science and professional expertise. The attached EA analyzed these impacts (pages 9-39). The nature of these impacts is not highly uncertain nor does it involve unique or unknown risks.

6) Would any of the alternatives establish a precedent for future actions with significant impacts (40 CFR 1508.27(b)(6)? Yes No

Rationale: The BLM has extensive expertise planning, analyzing impacts, and implementing range management actions such as those proposed by the alternatives addressed in the attached EA. None of the alternative actions represents a new, precedent-setting range management technique or would establish a precedent for future similar actions with potentially significant effects.

7) Are any of the alternatives related to other actions with potentially significant cumulative impacts (40 CFR 1508.27(b)(7)? Yes No

Rationale: Based on the analysis contained within the Cumulative Effects section of Chapter 3 of the attached EA, none of the alternatives would have significant cumulative effects within the project area, even when added to the effects of other past, present, and reasonably foreseeable future actions (pages 36-39).

8) Would any of the alternatives have significant adverse impacts on scientific, cultural, or historic resources, including those listed or eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Resources (40 CFR 1508.27(b)(8)? Yes No

Rationale: The allotment is located within an area which was used historically by native Americans. However, there are no known native American religious or sacred sites, Traditional Cultural Properties, or plant collecting sites known within the allotment. Potential impacts to cultural resources have been analyzed in Chapter 3 of the attached EA and found not to be significant (pages 29-31).

9) Would any of the alternatives have significant adverse impacts on threatened or endangered species or their critical habitat (40 CFR 1508.27(b)(9)? Yes No

Rationale: There are no threatened or endangered species or designated critical habitat within the project area (Table 3, page 10).

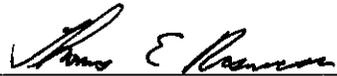
10) Would any of the alternatives have effects that threaten to violate Federal, State, or local law or requirements imposed for the protection of the environment (40 CFR 1508.27(b)(10)? () Yes (X) No

Rationale: All of the alternatives analyzed in the attached EA comply with all Federal, State, and local environmental laws or other environmental requirements, including the requirements of the National Environmental Policy Act, Clean Water Act, Clean Air Act, and Endangered Species Act.

The Federal Land Policy and Management Act requires that any action that BLM implements must also conform with the current land use plan and other applicable plans and policies. The purpose and need for the proposed action conforms with the management direction contained in the *Lakeview Resource Management Plan/Record of Decision* (BLM 2003b). The alternatives analyzed in the EA conform to the management direction requirements of this plan and the *Standards for Rangeland Health and Guidelines for Livestock Grazing Management for Public Lands Administered by the Bureau of Land Management in the States of Oregon and Washington* (BLM 1997), the *Greater Sage-Grouse Conservation Strategy and Assessment for Oregon* (ODFW 2005), the *Greater Sage-Grouse Interim Management Policies and Procedures* (BLM 2011), and the grazing regulations (43 CFR Part 4100) in varying degrees (see EA Chapter 1, pages 2-6 and Chapter 3, pages 9-39). Conformance with this direction will be addressed in more detail within the proposed decision as it represents important decision factors that I will consider in making my final decision (EA pages 2-3).

Finding

On the basis of the analysis contained in the attached EA, the consideration of intensity factors described above, and all other available information, my determination is that none of the alternatives analyzed would constitute a major federal action which would have significant adverse or beneficial impacts on the quality of the human environment. Therefore, an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) is unnecessary and will not be prepared.



Thomas E. Rasmussen, Field Manager
Lakeview Resource Area



Date