

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT - ALTURAS FIELD OFFICE

FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT

Day Allotment Fence

EA # DOI-BLM-CA-N020-2011-0002-EA

INTRODUCTION

The Bureau of Land Management (BLM), Alturas Field Office, has conducted an environmental assessment (EA # DOI-BLM-CA-N020-2011-0002-EA) for a Day Allotment fence.

PROPOSED ACTION

The Proposed Action is to grant approval to the grazing lessee on the Day Allotment to construct 1.5 miles of 3 strand wire fence, meeting BLM standards of design and construction, along the north, south and east boundaries of the 120 acre parcel of the Day Allotment located in T. 39 N., R 5 E., Sec. 15 NW ¼ (see attached Day Allotment Fence map). This would be accomplished by entering into a cooperative range improvement agreement with the lessee whereby the lessee would provide labor and materials for the construction and maintenance of the fence and the BLM would provide expertise required for project planning. Fence construction and future maintenance would be timed to minimize disturbance to sensitive wildlife species in the area of the allotment.

Specific design and construction features for the project would include:

- Three strand wire fence (38" max. height) consisting of the top two strands of barbed wire and the bottom strand smooth wire,
- Wire spacing from ground level up will be 16", 10" and 12",
- The proposed fence will have deflectors installed in order to make the fence visible to wildlife,
- Trees may be used for posting if possible where spacing and "scabbing" configurations are consistent with BLM specifications for multiple use fencing,
- Construction of the proposed fence will be conducted so that native oaks will be avoided; juniper and brush species removal/trimming will be limited to only what is necessary for fence installation and will be accomplished using chainsaws.
- Equipment to be used for fence construction and transport of fence materials will include 4x4 trucks and/or all-terrain vehicles (ATVs)
- Special design techniques may need to be employed on the steep slopes and where fence crosses drainages. The BLM Alturas Field Office (AFO) Civil Engineer technician, Rangeland Management Specialist, or Soil/Water/Air/Riparian lead may need to coordinate with fence building crews to ensure that drainage crossings incorporate Best Management Practices (BMPs).

PLAN CONFORMANCE AND CONSISTENCY

This proposed action is subject to the following use plan(s): Alturas Resource Management Plan (RMP) and Record of Decision (ROD), approved on April 17, 2008. The proposed action has been determined to be in conformance with this plan as required by regulation (43 CFR 1610.5-3(a)).

FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT DETERMINATION

It is my determination that the proposed action will not result in significant impacts to the quality of the human environment. Thus, the project does not constitute a major federal action having a significant effect on the human environment. Therefore, an environmental impact statement (EIS) is not necessary and will not be prepared. This conclusion is based on my consideration of the Council on Environmental Quality's criteria for significance (40 CFR §1508.27) regarding the context and intensity of the impacts described in the Barrows Allotment Livestock Grazing Permit Renewal Environmental Assessment (EA). The criteria include:

1. Impacts may be both beneficial and adverse. A significant effect may exist even if the Federal agency believes that on balance the effect will be beneficial.

I have determined that none of the direct, indirect or cumulative impacts are significant individually or combined.

2. The degree to which the selected alternative will affect public health or safety.

The proposed action is located within a rural setting. There are no actions that are proposed that would affect public health or safety.

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

A discussion of cultural resources is located in chapter 3 of the EA. Adequate measures have been taken to identify any potential resources and implement protective measures prior to treatments.

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

An interdisciplinary team reviewed the proposed action and the impacts that would result on the identified issues/resources. No anticipated effects have been identified that are controversial.

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

The actions that would be implemented do not involve unique or unknown risks. The BLM has experience implementing similar actions in similar areas. Based on the attached EA, there are no predicted effects on the human environment that are considered to be highly uncertain or involve unique or unknown risks.

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.

The alternatives described in the EA are not precedent setting and are limited in scope to Day Allotment fence construction.

7. Whether the action is related to other actions with individually insignificant but cumulatively significant impacts – which include connected actions regardless of land ownership.

The actions considered in the selected alternative were considered by the interdisciplinary team within the context of past, present, and reasonably foreseeable future actions. Significant cumulative effects are not predicted on the identified issues. An analysis of the cumulative effects of the selected alternative and all other alternatives is described in chapter 4 of the EA.

8. The degree to which the action may adversely affect districts, sites, highways, structures, or other objects 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.

The Day Allotment has 360 BLM managed acres of which approximately 120 acres have been surveyed for cultural resources. In general, the allotment is considered to have low sensitivity due to the relative lack of water on BLM lands and the prevailing topography. No sites have been recorded in the allotment.

9. The degree to which the action may adversely affect an endangered or threatened species or its habitat that has been determined to be critical under the Endangered Species Act of 1973, or the degree to which the action may adversely affect: 1) a proposed to be listed endangered or threatened species or its habitat, or 2) a species on BLM's sensitive species list.

There are no threatened or endangered species occurring within this portion of the Day Allotment that would be affected by the selected alternative. The project area does not occur within habitat for BLM sensitive species.

10. Whether the action threatens a violation of a federal, state, local, or tribal law, regulation or policy imposed for the protection of the environment, where nonfederal requirements are consistent with federal requirements.

The project does not violate any known federal, state, local or tribal law or requirement imposed for the protection of the environment. Local tribes were contacted and are listed in the EA. In addition, the project is consistent with applicable land management plans, policies, and programs.

Timothy J. Burke, Alturas Field Manager

Date