

ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT
LIVESTOCK GRAZING AUTHORIZATION

EA # CA-180-07-64

Bacchi Valley
Dunlap
Dunlap, A.
Cuneo (Marz)

Folsom Field Office
July 2007

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

Purpose and Need for the Action

The purpose of the action is to respond to expiring permits and consider whether to authorize grazing on these allotments. If authorized, grazing would be in accordance with 43 CFR 4100 and consistent with the provisions of the Taylor Grazing Act, Public Rangelands Improvement Act, and Federal Land Policy and Management Act. The purpose is also to ensure that the authorization would be in compliance with the Sierra Management Framework Plan and the Secretary of the Interior-approved Rangeland Health Standards.

Scoping and Issues

The proposed action underwent internal, interdisciplinary scoping. One issue surfaced regarding livestock damage to a cultural resource on the Bacchi Valley allotment.

Prevention of Unnecessary or Undue Degradation

In addition to the management prescriptions discussed in this EA, including all terms and conditions, BLM may close an area of an allotment to grazing use or take other measures to protect resources at any time, if needed. Therefore, issuance of a grazing lease with appropriate terms and conditions is consistent with BLM's responsibility to manage the public's use, occupancy, and development of the public lands and prevent unnecessary or undue degradation of the lands (43 USC 1732(b)).

Relationship to Statutes, Regulations, and Plans

The Endangered Species Act of 1973 (ESA) requires federal agencies to complete formal consultation with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) for any action that may affect federally listed species or critical habitat. The ESA also requires federal agencies to use their authorities to carry out programs for the conservation of endangered and threatened species.

In August 2004, the State Director, California Bureau of Land Management and the California State Historic Preservation Officer (SHPO) addressed the issue of the National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA) Section 106 compliance procedures for processing grazing permit lease renewals for livestock as defined in 43 CFR 4100.0-5. The State Director and the SHPO amended the 2004 State Protocol Agreement between California Bureau of Land Management and The California State Historic Preservation Officer with the 2004 Grazing Amendment, Supplemental Procedures for Livestock Grazing Permit/Lease Renewal. This amendment allows for the renewal of existing grazing permits prior to completing all NHPA compliance needs as long as the 2004 State Protocol direction, the BLM 8100 Series Manual Guidelines, and specific amendment direction for planning, inventory methodology, tribal and interested party consultation, evaluation, effect, treatment, and monitoring stipulations are followed.

Plan Conformance

The proposed action is in conformance with the Sierra MFP as amended July 15, 1988, and is in conformance with the Secretary-approved Rangeland Health Standards. The proposed action would occur in an area identified as available for livestock grazing in the MFP. The proposed action is consistent with the land use decisions of the plan (MFP p. 20). The MFP has an objective to manage for livestock grazing to provide a yearly average of 484 AUMs for livestock in the Mokelumne River

Management area. Each allotment in this area must provide 700 lbs/acre of residual mulch. The Bacchi allotment is an area considered as custodial management which allows for management of livestock grazing to provide for 700 lbs/acre of residual mulch (MFP p. 34).

Rangeland Health

Conformance with Rangeland Health Standards

The allotments were assessed for conformance with the Secretary of Interior-approved Rangeland Health Standards for soils, special status species, riparian habitat, and water quality (April 2003).

All standards (soils, species, riparian/wetland, and water quality) are currently being met on the Cuneo (Marz) allotment. The other three leases (Bacchi Valley, Dunlap and Dunlap A.) meet the standards for soil, riparian/wetland, and water quality. The species standard is not being met on these three leases due to weed issues unrelated to livestock grazing.

CHAPTER 2: PROPOSED ACTION AND ALTERNATIVES

Alternative 1 – Proposed Action

The Bureau of Land Management (BLM) is proposing to issue 10-year permits on the following allotments to authorize livestock grazing. Terms and conditions are as follows:

Name and allotment #	Acres	Location	Livestock	Season	AUMs
Bacchi Valley (4023)	350	2 miles NE of Coloma, CA – See Map 1	2 cows	Year-round (3/1-2/28)	28
Dunlap (4118)	996	North Fork Mokelumne 2 miles NW of Glencoe, CA – See Map 3	5 cows	Year-round (3/1-2/28)	67
Dunlap, A. (4119)	311	North/Middle Fork Mokelumne 2 miles NW of Glencoe, CA – See Map 3	7 cows	Year-round (3/1-2/28)	90
Cuneo (Marz) (4205)	191	Main Mokelumne 3 miles west of Glencoe, CA – See Map 5	2 cows	Year-round (3/1-2/28)	27

Range Improvements

A 600-foot fence to exclude cattle from a cultural resource site (historic miners’ camp) on the Bacchi Valley allotment would be constructed before the start of the next grazing season (T11N, R9E, Sec. 12). See Map 2.

A fence to protect a degraded spring on the Dunlap allotment would be constructed within two years of this lease renewal (T6N, R12E, Sec. 12). See Map 4.

Alternative 2 – Current Management (No Action)

A 10-year permit would be issued with the same terms and conditions as the soon-to-be expired and

proposed authorizations (see table above). This alternative differs from the proposed alternative only in that Alternative 2 would not include the range improvements proposed in Alternative 1.

Alternative 3 - No Grazing

The permit on the four allotments would be cancelled; grazing would not be authorized. BLM would initiate the cancellation process in accordance with 43 CFR parts 4100 and 1600 to eliminate grazing.

Current Livestock Management

Bacchi – grazes his cattle between his private parcel (440 acres) and the BLM parcels (370 acres) year-round. There are no fences separating the private and public lands. Approximately 140 acres of the BLM land is suitable for grazing. These areas are on the west side of Indian Creek (100 acres), and the small scattered parcels (40 acres) on the allotment (see Map 2).

Dunlap – grazes 10 cattle, approximately ½ on his property and ½ on the BLM year-round. Much of the BLM allotment is unsuitable for grazing, consisting of very steep, rugged river canyon. The only areas suitable for grazing occur on the uplands above the canyon, and a riparian area that flows into the North Fork Mokelumne (approximately 60 acres) (see Map 4).

Dunlap, A. – grazes his 20 cattle year-round between his private property and BLM lands. He uses the forested portion of his allotment along the road from June through November, actively herding the cows to this area. He uses the Middle Fork parcel from December through May. Approximately 100 acres are considered potentially grazable lands on the BLM allotment (see Map 4).

Cuneo (Marz) – grazes the BLM allotment from February or March through August or September each year. According to the lessee, the cows generally stay close to the road where there is more suitable forage, and do not use the steep, rugged river canyons. The lessee indicates that her private property has been treated (brush reduction) to create favorable forage conditions, and that the cattle generally stay on the private property. Approximately 100 acres were identified as grazable lands on the BLM allotment in the past. Approximately 20 acres appear to be grazed consistently (see Map 6).

CHAPTER 3: ENVIRONMENTAL EFFECTS

The following supplemental authorities are not relevant to this project because related resources or conditions are not present: Areas of Critical Environmental Concern (ACEC); essential fish habitat; prime or unique farmlands; floodplains; Native American cultural values; Wild and Scenic Rivers; wilderness; wild horse and burro herds; solid or hazardous wastes; or environmental justice.

Air Quality

Affected Environment

The project areas are in the Mountain Counties Air Basin in an area classified as federal non-attainment for ozone under the National Ambient Air Quality Standards (www.arb.ca.gov/desig/adm.htm). A state implementation plan (SIP) for California identifies sources of emissions which include motor vehicles, consumer products, and pesticides (www.arb.ca.gov/planning/sip/94sip/sipvol1.htm). The SIP also includes control measures to reduce emissions.

Impacts of all Alternatives

The small livestock operations and slight vehicle use would not affect air quality. Cancellation of these small leases similarly would not affect air quality.

Cultural Resources

Affected Environment

4023 – Bacchi Valley – Over the years, much of the land that makes up the proposed lease area has been intensively inventoried by BLM archaeologists. In 1986, BLM archaeologist, Dean Decker, inventoried less than 2 acres along Highway 49, across from BLM's Dave Moore Nature Area to authorize the use of an airplane landing strip. No resources were found. In 1993, Dean Decker inventoried additional lands along Highway 49, across from the Dave Moore Nature Area for a proposed land exchange. A historic-era miners' camp, with possible Chinese affiliation, was found. The site includes outlines of foundation rocks for cabins and a light artifact scatter. In 2004, James Barnes, BLM archaeologist, inventoried a portion of Indian Creek for a proposed grazing lease renewal, and no resources were found. In 2007, James Barnes performed additional inventory and monitoring within the proposed lease area, focusing on Indian Creek (south half of Section 6) and an area along Highway 49, across from the Dave Moore Nature Area. Along Indian Creek, an area of placer mining, including small piles of stacked tailings, was found. A linear rock alignment is possibly the outline of a building foundation.

4118 – Dunlap – A small portion of this area, along the river near the confluence of the north and middle forks, has been previously inventoried for cultural properties during the early 1980s by archaeologists with Chavez & Associates. The inventory was prompted by a proposed hydroelectric project. Three cultural properties were found: a bedrock milling site/collapsed log cabin/mine shafts and two additional bedrock milling sites. A portion of the proposed lease area is in a relatively flat open area on the rim of the canyon in Section 12. This area was inventoried for cultural properties in 1980 by a BLM archaeologist and again this year; none were found.

4119 – Dunlap, A. – Small portions of the proposed grazing lease area were inventoried in the early 1980s; no sites were found. This year, upland portions of the lease area with potential for cultural resources were surveyed, revealing a collapsed cabin predating World War II along an unnamed drainage. The remaining areas of the lease are too steep and rugged to have much potential for cultural properties, especially National Register-eligible properties.

4205 – Cuneo (Marz) – A small portion of this area, along the river, was inventoried for cultural properties Chavez & Associates archeologists in the early 1980s; no cultural sites were found. This year an additional inventory was conducted along a foot trail built by a mining claimant between Ponderosa Way and the river. A portion of the grazing lease on a rocky knob in Section 27 was also surveyed. No cultural resources were found. The remaining areas of the lease are too steep and rugged to have much potential for cultural properties, especially National Register-eligible properties.

Impacts of the Proposed Action

4023 – Bacchi Valley – Under the proposed alternative, a historic-era miners' camp would be fenced, thus excluding cows from the area. The site would be protected from livestock grazing impacts. No impacts to cultural resources would occur.

4118 – Dunlap – Grazing a small herd of cows (approximately 10) within the lease area, as proposed, would not affect any of the known cultural properties, because they are not in an area where cows congregate or travel frequently.

4119 – Dunlap, A. – Allowing a small herd of cows (20 head) to graze within the 300-acre lease area is unlikely to affect the collapsed cabin because of the small number of cattle spread over a large area, and because the cattle do not congregate or travel frequently through the cultural site.

4205 – Cuneo (Marz) – Because no cultural resources are known in the area, there would be no impacts to cultural resources from grazing.

Impacts of Current Management

4023 – Bacchi Valley – Grazing is negatively affecting the historic-era miners’ camp. Cattle are congregating on this area, causing impacts to the foundation, rocks, and artifact deposit. The area of placer mining along Indian Creek is not being affected by grazing. It appears too remote for cows to access.

4118 – Dunlap – Grazing a small herd of cows (approximately 10) within the lease area, as proposed, would not affect any of the known cultural properties, because they are not in an area where cows congregate or travel frequently.

4119 – Dunlap, A. – Allowing a small herd of cows (20 head) to graze within the 300-acre lease area is unlikely to affect the collapsed cabin because of the small number of cattle spread over a large area, and because the cattle do not congregate or travel frequently through the cultural site.

4205 – Cuneo (Marz) – Because no cultural resources are known in the area, there would be no impacts to cultural resources from grazing.

Impacts of the No Grazing Alternative

Elimination of grazing on three of these allotments would not adversely affect cultural resources. Elimination of grazing on the Bacchi allotment would protect the miners’ camp site that is being impacted by cattle.

References

Barnes, J. 2007. Section 106 compliance for the Bacchi grazing lease renewal, El Dorado County. Memorandum to the Field Manager. U.S. Bureau of Land Management, Folsom, California. 22 pp.

Barnes, J. 2007. Section 106 compliance for the Curtis Dunlap grazing lease renewal, Calaveras County. Memorandum to the Field Manager. U.S. Bureau of Land Management, Folsom, California. 11 pp.

Barnes, J. 2007. Section 106 compliance for the Andrew Dunlap grazing lease renewal, Calaveras County. Memorandum to the Field Manager. U.S. Bureau of Land Management, Folsom, California. 19 pp.

Barnes, J. 2007. Section 106 compliance for the Cuneo-Marz grazing lease renewal, Amador County. Memorandum to the Field Manager. U.S. Bureau of Land Management, Folsom, California. 11 pp.

Invasive, Non-native Species

Affected Environment

Bacchi – 4023 – Private land west of the public land in Section 6 is heavily infested with medusahead and yellow starthistle. The savannah portion of the lease area mostly west of Indian Creek is also impacted. Most of the serpentine habitat supports chaparral but in some openings with herbaceous vegetation, yellow starthistle has invaded. Because of the invasive weeds, the allotment is not meeting the species standard for rangeland health. See Map 7.

Dunlap – 4118 – Medusahead is a dominant species in the grassland across much of the upper portion of the lease. Italian thistle and mild thistle are also prominent. A single dense stand of oblong spurge on top of the ridge poses a threat to the watershed below. Because of the invasive weeds, the allotment is not meeting the species standard for rangeland health. See Map 8.

Dunlap, A. – 4119 – Yellow starthistle is particularly prevalent on the ridgetop in the southern portion of the north parcel. One small occurrence of Italian thistle and oblong spurge was found. Himalayan blackberry forms large patches in one meadow area. Because of invasive weeds, the allotment is not meeting the species standard for rangeland health. See Map 8.

Cuneo (Marz) – 4205 – Oblong spurge, Italian thistle, yellow starthistle, and cocklebur were all present on the allotment to a limited extent. The allotment is meeting the species standard for rangeland health. See Map 9.

Impacts of the Proposed Action

Invasive species on all of the allotments appear to be well-established, and the invasion occurred several years ago. A rangeland health assessment completed by Julie Hamon in 1998 indicates that weeds were well-established at that time, estimated 80% cover. The lessee indicated that a timber harvest 10 years prior (1988) introduced weeds to the area. Because the lease is grazed by a small number of cattle, it is not believed that livestock grazing is contributing to the spread or abundance of invasive species, or decreasing the abundance or cover of native species. The proposed fencing of a spring on the Dunlap allotment would allow native wetland vegetation to reestablish, and reduce invasive weeds around the spring.

Impacts of Current Management

Impacts of current management are the same as for the proposed action except that the spring would not be fenced under current management and, therefore, native vegetation would not reestablish and weeds would not be reduced around the spring.

Impacts of No Grazing

Because current, low levels of grazing do not appear to be affecting weed spread, elimination of grazing would not be expected to noticeably reduce invasive species in the allotment.

References

Franklin, A. 2007. Botanical Resource Inventory Report (Bacchi Valley grazing lease renewal).

Unpubl. rep. U.S. Bureau of Land Management, Folsom, California. 3 pp.

Franklin, A. 2007. Botanical Resource Inventory Report (Curtis Dunlap grazing lease renewal). Unpubl. rep. U.S. Bureau of Land Management, Folsom, California. 3 pp.

Franklin, A. 2007. Botanical Resource Inventory Report (Andrew Dunlap grazing lease renewal). Unpubl. rep. U.S. Bureau of Land Management, Folsom, California. 2 pp.

Franklin, A. 2007. Botanical Resource Inventory Report (Cuneo (Marz) grazing lease). Unpubl. rep. U.S. Bureau of Land Management, Folsom, California. 2 pp.

Recreation

Affected Environment

Very little or no recreation is occurring on these allotments, which are largely isolated from the general public. Vehicular access is through private property, and in the case of the Cuneo (Marz) allotment, access is prevented due to a locked gate. The public can drive through a portion of Andrew Dunlap's allotment. Ponderosa Way provides foot access through the Cuneo (Marz) allotment to the river. The allotment itself would probably not receive much recreational use, with the exception of a mining claimant's trail down to the river. In this case, hiking, horseback riding, or mountain biking may occur to a limited extent on the allotment.

Impacts of the Proposed Action and Current Management

The primary impact of grazing on primitive recreation opportunities will be the presence of domestic livestock and the livestock operator in the area during the grazing season. Due to limited access and types of potential recreation, which would not necessarily conflict with grazing, the proposed action would not likely impact recreational opportunities.

Impacts of No Grazing

Due to limited access, elimination of already low/no impact grazing is not expected to affect recreation in the allotment.

Soils

Affected Environment

Bacchi – 4023 – Soils are mapped as: Placer diggings; Perkins gravelly loam, 3% to 30% slopes; Auberry coarse sandy loam, 9% to 15%; Auberry rocky coarse sandy loam, 5% to 15% slopes; Auberry very rocky coarse sandy loam, 15% to 30% slopes; Auburn very rocky silt loam, 2% to 50% slopes; Auburn extremely rocky silt loam, 3% to 70% slopes; and serpentine rock land. Serpentine rock land and Auburn extremely rocky silt loam, 3 to 70% slopes are the predominant soils on the allotment. Placer diggings are prevalent on the smaller parcels in the allotment. See Map 10. (<http://websoilsurvey.nrcs.usda.gov/app/>). The allotment is currently meeting the soil standard for rangeland health. It has good ground cover with a residual dry matter of 700-1,000 lbs/acre and no evident erosion.

Dunlap – 4118 – Granitic geology occurs in the northeastern portion of the lease, and Calaveras

formation, i.e., schist, metachert, quartzite and slate, occurs in the southwestern portion of the lease, according to the “Geologic Map of Calaveras County, California” compiled by Clark and Lydon. No county soil survey has been completed. The allotment is currently meeting the soil standard for rangeland health. It has good ground cover with a residual dry matter of 700-1,000 lbs/acre and no evident erosion.

Dunlap, A. – 4119 – Granitic geology occurs in the allotment area according to the “Geologic Map of Calaveras County, California” compiled by Clark and Lydon. No county soil survey has been completed. The allotment is currently meeting the soil standard for rangeland health. It has good ground cover with a residual dry matter of 700-1,000 lbs/acre and no evident erosion.

Cuneo (Marz) – 4205 – Soils are mapped as Mariposa very rocky loam, 51% to 85% slopes; and rock land. See Map 11. The allotment is currently meeting the soil standard for rangeland health. It has good ground cover with a residual dry matter of 700-1,000 lbs/acre and no evident erosion.

Impacts of the Proposed Action

There is no evidence of erosion or compaction on any of the allotments. Therefore, livestock grazing does not appear to be impacting soils on these allotments.

Impacts of the No Grazing Alternative

Elimination of grazing will not affect soil productivity or stability.

Water Quality

Affected Environment

The Bacchi allotment is in the Upper American River watershed and includes more than a mile of the perennial Indian Creek. The remaining three allotments are in the Upper Mokelumne River watershed. The Upper American and Upper Mokelumne are not on the State 303d list for water quality impairment. Beneficial water uses in the Bacchi allotment are municipal and domestic supply, agriculture (irrigation), industry (hydropower generation), recreation, freshwater habitat (warm and cold water ecosystems), and wildlife habitat. Beneficial uses identified in the basin plan for the Mokelumne River in the area of the other three allotments are municipal and domestic supply, industry (hydropower generation), recreation, freshwater habitat (warm and cold water ecosystems), migration of warm water fish (striped bass, sturgeon, chad) and spawning habitat for warm water fish (striped bass, sturgeon, and chad) and cold water fish (salmon and steelhead), and wildlife habitat. No water quality monitoring/inventory has taken place on any of the allotments.

Impacts of the Proposed Action and Current Management

Because the State has not identified these rivers as water quality impaired, further grazing at current levels are not expected to affect water quality or beneficial water uses.

Impacts from the No Grazing Alternative

Elimination of grazing is not expected to impact water quality on the allotments.

References

California Regional Water Quality Board, Central Valley Region. Revised 2007. The Water Quality Control Plan (Basin Plan) for the Sacramento River and San Joaquin River Basins.

Wetlands/Riparian

Affected Environment

4023 – Bacchi – More than a mile of the perennial stream Indian Creek occurs on the Bacchi allotment. The creek was determined to be in proper functioning condition (10/27/2003), and supports an excellent population of foothill yellow-legged frogs.

4118 – Dunlap – Approximately 2 miles of the North Fork Mokelumne and 1 mile of the South Fork Mokelumne occur on the allotment. The river was not accessible due to the steepness of the canyon, and was therefore not assessed on the ground for functioning condition. Based on aerial photography, however, the riparian zones of the rivers appear to be well-vegetated, with no areas of bare ground. A ½ mile tributary to the North Fork Mokelumne also occurs on the allotment. The tributary was determined to be in properly functioning condition (6/12/07). At least one spring and possibly one or two others (down slope) occur on the allotment. One spring was found to be functional at risk due to grazing-caused erosion.

4119 – Dunlap, A. – Approximately 1 mile of the North Fork Mokelumne and less than ¼ mile of the Middle Fork Mokelumne occur on the allotment. The river was not accessible due to the steepness of the river canyon, and therefore was not assessed on the ground for functioning condition. Based on aerial photography, however, the riparian zones of the rivers appear to be well-vegetated, with no bare ground.

4205 – Cuneo (Marz) – Approximately 1½ miles of the Main Mokelumne are within the allotment boundary. The river was determined to be in proper functioning condition (4/18/2006).

Impacts of the Proposed Action

4023 – Bacchi – Livestock grazing is not having a noticeable impact on riparian habitat based on field examination of Indian Creek. At the southern end of the lease, there is a water diversion for a stock pond on the creek. Below the stock pond, the creek runs dry for approximately ¼ mile; water reappears in the creek after this dry stretch. Riparian vegetation is healthy along the dry stretch, as well as below the dry stretch.

4118 – Dunlap – Under the proposed alternative, a spring which is being degraded due to livestock grazing will be fenced away from cattle. Therefore, the proposed action will improve riparian/wetland habitat. Due to steepness of the terrain, cattle are not likely to use riparian areas along the river. Cattle are using a spring-fed tributary to the North Fork Mokelumne. However, riparian vegetation and other attributes are in proper functioning condition. Cattle do not appear to be impairing this riparian zone.

4119 – Dunlap, A. – Based on field examination and an interview with the lessee, cattle are unlikely to access the river due to the steepness of the terrain, and there is no other riparian habitat on the allotment. Therefore, impacts to riparian habitat are not anticipated.

4205 – Cuneo (Marz) – Cattle could potentially access the river using a foot trail that runs along the slope, and eventually down to the river. However, cattle do not appear to be using the foot trail. The

riparian zone along the river is in proper functioning condition. Consequently, cattle are not impacting riparian habitat on this allotment.

Impacts of the Current Management

4023 – Bacchi – Impacts would be the same as for the Proposed Action.

4118 – Dunlap – Based on field examination, riparian grazing along the river is not expected due to the steepness and ruggedness of the river canyon. Cattle are using a spring-fed tributary to the North Fork Mokelumne. However, the riparian vegetation and other attributes are in proper functioning condition. Cattle do not appear to be impairing this riparian zone. Cattle are having an impact on a spring, which is undergoing fairly severe erosion and there is evidence of pedestaling. There is also invasion of weedy species into the spring. The spring appears to not be retaining as much water as it could potentially retain.

4119 – Dunlap, A. – Impacts would be the same as for the Proposed Action.

4205 – Cuneo (Marz) – Impacts would be the same as for the Proposed Action.

Impacts of the No Grazing Alternative

Elimination of grazing on three of the four allotments would not improve riparian condition on the allotments, since cattle are either not impacting or not using the riparian zone. On the Dunlap (4118) allotment, elimination of cattle grazing would improve the condition of the degraded spring.

References

U.S. Bureau of Land Management. 2001. Grazing Use Management/Rangeland Health Assessment and Determination for the Cuneo (Marz) allotment. Folsom Field Office, Folsom, California. 2 pp.

U.S. Bureau of Land Management. 2003. Grazing Use Management/Rangeland Health Assessment and Determination for the Bacchi allotment. Folsom Field Office, Folsom, California. 2 pp.

U.S. Bureau of Land Management. 2007. Grazing Use Management/Rangeland Health Assessment and Determination for the Dunlap allotment. Folsom Field Office, Folsom, California. 2 pp.

U.S. Bureau of Land Management. 2007. Grazing Use Management/Rangeland Health Assessment and Determination for the Dunlap, A. allotment. Folsom Field Office, Folsom, California. 2 pp.

Wildlife

4023 – Bacchi – Indian Creek supports an excellent population of foothill yellow-legged frog, a BLM sensitive species. Other wildlife habitat on the allotment includes blue oak savannah, mixed oak woodland, riparian, and chamise. Available forage is abundant, with no apparent competition between wildlife and livestock. The allotment is in the yearlong range of the Placerville deer herd but is not considered a critical area for the herd. Surveys of the allotment indicate a diversity of typical, native wildlife species for the area, such as coyote, mountain lion, deer, and several species of songbirds. The species standard for rangeland health is not being achieved, due to invasive weeds. Livestock grazing is not identified as a contributing factor to invasive species. These weeds may be decreasing foraging opportunities for some wildlife.

4118 – Dunlap – No special status species were found on the allotment. Other wildlife habitat on the allotment includes open grassland, mixed oak woodland, mixed conifer forest (small amount), and riparian habitat. Available forage is abundant, with no apparent competition between wildlife and livestock. The allotment is within the yearlong range of the Placerville deer herd but is not considered a critical area for the herd. Surveys of the allotment indicate a diversity of typical, native wildlife species for the area, such as coyote, mountain lion, deer, and several species of songbirds. The species standard for rangeland health is not being achieved, due to invasive weeds. Livestock grazing is not identified as a contributing factor to invasive species. These weeds may be decreasing foraging opportunities for some wildlife.

4119 – Dunlap, A. – Two elderberry bushes were found on the allotment. Although these shrubs could host the federally threatened valley elderberry longhorn beetle, they are unlikely to do so because of the low occurrence and scattered nature of the shrubs in this allotment. In any event, the elderberry bushes showed no evidence of grazing. Other wildlife habitat on the allotment includes open grassland, mixed oak woodland, and mixed conifer forest. Available forage is abundant, with no apparent competition between wildlife and livestock. The allotment is within the yearlong range of the Placerville deer herd but is not considered a critical area for the herd. Surveys of the allotment indicate a diversity of typical, native wildlife species for the area, such as coyote, mountain lion, deer, and several species of songbirds. The species standard for rangeland health is not being achieved, due to invasive weeds. Livestock grazing is not identified as a contributing factor to invasive species. These weeds may be decreasing foraging opportunities for some wildlife.

4205 – Cuneo (Marz) – Three or four elderberry bushes, which can host the federally threatened elderberry longhorn beetle, were located at scattered locations within the allotment. One bush appeared to have exit holes consistent with adult emergence of this beetle. The elderberry bushes showed no evidence of grazing (even one immediately adjacent to the foot trail down to the river). Other wildlife habitat on the allotment is largely interior live oak woodland and canyon live oak woodland with areas of chaparral, blue oak savannah, grassland and riparian forest. Available forage is abundant, with no apparent competition between wildlife and livestock. The allotment is within the yearlong range of the Placerville deer herd but is not considered a critical area for the herd. Surveys of the allotment indicate a diversity of typical, native wildlife species for the area, such as coyote, mountain lion, deer, and several species of songbirds. The species standard for rangeland health is being achieved on this allotment.

Impacts of all Alternatives

Neither existing grazing nor elimination of grazing are expected to impact wildlife because grazing does not appear to be adversely affecting special status species known to occur on the allotments or their habitats.

References

Cranston, P. 2007. Biological Resource Inventory Report, Cuneo (Marz) allotment. Unpubl. rep. U.S. Bureau of Land Management, Folsom, California. 2 pp.

Cranston, P. 2007. Biological Resource Inventory Report, Dunlap allotment. Unpubl. rep. U.S. Bureau of Land Management, Folsom, California. 2 pp.

Cranston, P. 2007. Biological Resource Inventory Report, Dunlap A. allotment. Unpubl. rep. U.S.

Bureau of Land Management, Folsom, California. 2 pp.

U.S. Bureau of Land Management. 1982. Proposed livestock grazing management for the Sierra Planning Area draft environmental impact statement. Bakersfield District Office, Bakersfield, California. 145 pp.

U.S. Bureau of Land Management. 2001. Grazing Use Management/Rangeland Health Assessment and Determination for the Cuneo (Marz) allotment. Folsom Field Office, Folsom, California. 2 pp.

U.S. Bureau of Land Management. 2003. Grazing Use Management/Rangeland Health Assessment and Determination for the Bacchi allotment. Folsom Field Office, Folsom, California. 2 pp.

U.S. Bureau of Land Management. 2007. Grazing Use Management/Rangeland Health Assessment and Determination for the Dunlap allotment. Folsom Field Office, Folsom, California. 2 pp.

U.S. Bureau of Land Management. 2007. Grazing Use Management/Rangeland Health Assessment and Determination for the Dunlap, A. allotment. Folsom Field Office, Folsom, California. 2 pp.

Vegetation

Bacchi – 4023 – No special status species were found, although serpentine habitat with the potential to support a number of special status species, including the federally threatened Layne's butterweed, is extensive. Brandegees clarkia, a BLM sensitive species, could occur in the oak woodland or oak savannah portion of the allotment, which is also the area of the allotment that is grazed.

Three primary plant communities are present on the Indian Creek parcel of the lease. Blue oak savannah occurs higher on the slope (east aspect) and a mixed oak woodland occurs lower in the canyon. Woody species include blue oak, interior live oak, gray pine, California buckeye, deerbrush, buckbrush, poison oak, and toyon. Deep in the canyon some ponderosa pine and black oak occur. Riparian species along the creek and springs include California bay, California coffeeberry, California wild grape, red willow, white alder, and Fremont cottonwood. The serpentine slopes (west aspect) support chamise as a dominant community with leather oak is an important sub-dominant. Other woody species include white leaf manzanita, toyon, holly-leaf redberry, bush monkeyflower, yerba santa, and redbud. There is a spectacular display of columbine and stream orchid at some of the springs on the slopes east of Indian Creek.

Dunlap – 4118 – No special status species were found. The ridgetop contains a combination of savannah and open grassland. Woody species here include canyon live oak, black oak, gray pine, and California buckeye. The steep west facing slopes are dominated by live oak woodland, with some zones of chaparral and grassland openings as well. In addition to species already mentioned, woody species on these slopes include chamise, buckbrush, whiteleaf manzanita, coyote bush, poison oak, silver lupine, deerweed, keckiella, storax, toyon, deerbrush, sourberry, California wild grape, and mock orange. North slopes have ponderosa pine as well.

Dunlap, A. – 4119 – No special status species were found. The ridgetop contains a combination of savannah and open grassland. The northern parcel has a considerable amount of ponderosa pine, perhaps the remainder of an old plantation. Other woody ridgetop species include interior live oak, canyon live oak, gray pine, black oak, valley oak, buckbrush, poison oak, golden fleece, holly-leaf redberry, and toyon. Steep south facing slopes on the south parcel are dominated by live oak

woodland. In addition to species already mentioned, woody species on these slopes include silver lupine, California buckeye, deerweed, California bay and whiteleaf manzanita.

Cuneo (Marz) – 4205 – No special status species were found. The lease is largely interior live oak woodland and canyon live oak woodland with areas of chaparral, blue oak savannah, grassland and riparian forest. Woody species in upland communities include interior live oak, canyon live oak, black oak, blue oak, gray pine, California buckeye, toyon, white leaf manzanita, holly-leaf redberry, silver lupine, keckiella, poison oak, and storax. Riparian woody species include white alder, Fremont cottonwood, Oregon ash, buttonwillow, red willow, mock orange, and California wild grape.

Impacts of the Proposed Action

The Bacchi allotment is the only allotment that may support special status species, although none have been identified thus far. Surveys have been limited, so there remains some potential for serpentine special status species to occur in the allotment. However, the portion of this allotment where these species would be most likely to occur is thick chaparral and is not being grazed. Non-serpentine areas (public and private land) supply much more forage, and are more accessible to cattle. Therefore renewing the lease has little likelihood of negatively impacting these species.

The BLM sensitive species Brandegee's clarkia could occur in grazed areas of the lease. However, several studies and observations of the response of other clarkia species to grazing indicate that many species of this genus are resilient to grazing. Brandegee's clarkia is an under-reported species, in part because it was only recently added to the CNPS 1B list. It is likely that with greater survey focus on this species, it will be found to be common enough to be removed from List 1B, and will no longer be considered BLM sensitive. Therefore, the risk to this species posed by renewal of the grazing lease is very small due to the fact that it may not even occur on the allotment and because it could be found to be common enough to be removed from the special status list in time.

Impacts of Current Management

Same as for the Proposed Action.

Impacts of no grazing:

Elimination of grazing is not expected to impact vegetation.

References

Franklin, A. 2007. Botanical Resource Inventory Report, Bacchi Valley Allotment. Unpubl. rep. U.S. Bureau of Land Management, Folsom, California. 3 pp.

Franklin, A. 2007. Botanical Resource Inventory Report, Dunlap allotment. Unpubl. rep. U.S. Bureau of Land Management, Folsom, California. 3 pp.

Franklin, A. 2007. Botanical Resource Inventory Report, Dunlap, A. allotment. Unpubl. rep. U.S. Bureau of Land Management, Folsom, California. 2 pp.

Franklin, A. 2007. Botanical Resource Inventory Report, Cuneo (Marz) allotment. Unpubl. rep. U.S. Bureau of Land Management, Folsom, California. 2 pp.

Cumulative Impacts

Because no site specific adverse impacts are expected for any resources (described above), cumulative impacts at the larger, watershed scale are not anticipated.

CHAPTER 4: CONSULTATION AND COORDINATION

Persons, Groups, and Agencies Consulted

- Sierra Native American Council
- Calaveras Band of Miwok Indians
- California Valley Miwok Tribe
- Buena Vista Rancheria
- Glen Villa Sr., Cultural Committee
- Jackson Band of Mi-Wuk Indians/Jackson Rancheria
- Bill Bacchi
- Curtis Dunlap
- Andrew Dunlap
- Carol Marz

Public Participation

The EA will be available on BLM's website for a 15-day public review period. It will also be sent to the lessees and those identified as interested publics for these allotments.

List of Preparers and Reviewers

- Peggy Cranston, Wildlife Biologist and Range Program Lead
- Al Franklin, Botanist
- James Barnes, Archaeologist
- Sandra McGinnis, NEPA Coordinator

**United States Department of the Interior
Bureau of Land Management**

Environmental Assessment CA-180-07-64

Finding of No Significant Impact

**Bacchi Valley, Dunlap, Dunlap A., and Cuneo (Marz) Livestock Grazing
Authorizations**

U.S. Department of the Interior
Bureau of Land Management
Folsom Field Office
63 Natoma Street
Folsom, CA 95628
Phone: (916) 985-4474
FAX: (916) 985-3259

July 2007

Finding of No Significant Impact Folsom Field Office

FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT DETERMINATION:

Based upon a review of the EA and the supporting documents, I find that the project is not a major federal action, and will not significantly affect the quality of the human environment, individually or cumulatively with other actions in the general area. No environmental effects meet the definition of significance in context or intensity as defined in 40 CFR 1508.27 and do not exceed those effects described in the Sierra MFP. Therefore, an environmental impact statement is not needed. This finding is based on the context and intensity of the project as described:

Context: The project is a site-specific action cumulatively (all 4 allotments), directly involving approximately 1,800 acres of BLM administered land that by itself does not have international, national, regional, or state-wide importance.

Intensity: The following discussion is organized around the Ten Significance Criteria described in 40 CFR 1508.27 and incorporated into BLM's Critical Elements of the Human Environment list (H-1790-1), and supplemental Instruction Memorandum, Acts, regulations and Executive Orders. The following have been considered in evaluating intensity for this proposal:

1. **Impacts may be both beneficial and adverse.** The proposed action would have no adverse impacts to resources as described in the EA.
2. **The degree to which the selected alternative will affect public health or safety.** No health and safety issues are associated with the proposed action.
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.** The historic and cultural resources of the area have been inventoried and with the proposed range improvement on the Bacchi Valley allotment, no adverse impacts were identified. The following Critical Elements of the Human Environment and Other Resource Issues are not affected because they are not present in the project area: Areas of Critical Environmental Concern (ACEC); essential fish habitat; prime or unique farmlands; floodplains; Native American cultural values; Wild and Scenic Rivers; wilderness; wild horse and burro herds; solid or hazardous wastes; or environmental justice.
4. **The degree to which the effects on the quality of the human environment are likely to be highly controversial.** There is no scientific controversy over the nature of the impacts.
5. **The degree to which the possible effects on the human environment are highly uncertain or involve unique or unknown risks.** The project is not unique or unusual. The BLM has experience implementing similar actions in similar areas. The environmental effects to the human environment are fully analyzed in the 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

actions considered in the selected alternative were considered by the interdisciplinary team within the context of past, present, and reasonably foreseeable future actions. A complete analysis of the direct, indirect, and cumulative effects of the selected alternative and all other alternatives is described in Chapter 3 of the EA.

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 interdisciplinary team evaluated the possible actions in context of past, present and reasonably foreseeable actions. Because no site specific adverse impacts are expected for any resources, cumulative impacts at the larger, watershed scale are not anticipated.
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 project, which includes fencing to protect a cultural site on the Bacchi allotment from livestock damage, will not adversely affect districts, sites, highways, structures, or other objects listed in or eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places, nor will it cause loss or destruction of significant scientific, cultural, or historical resources. A cultural inventory has been completed for the proposed action, and consultation with SHPO has been completed in accordance with Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA). A finding of “no effect” on cultural resources completes BLM’s obligations under Section 106 of the NHPA, pursuant to the statewide Protocol Agreement (2004) between BLM California and the State Historic Preservation Officer. These reports are on file with BLM.
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.** Although, elderberry bushes, potential host plant for the valley elderberry longhorn beetle, occur on two of the allotments (Dunlap A. and Cuneo (Marz), there is no evidence that these bushes are being grazed and it is unlikely they support beetles. The Bacchi allotment may support Layne’s butterweed and Brandegees’ clarkia though none have been found. Grazing does not occur in Layne butterweed habitat and the clarkia is likely resilient to grazing and more abundant than its special status species implies. Therefore, the proposed action is not anticipated to affect endangered or threatened species or their habitat.
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 non-federal 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. State, local, and tribal interests were given the opportunity to participate in the environmental analysis process. Furthermore, letters were sent to three Native American tribes concerning consulting party status, and there was no response from any of the tribes. In addition, the project is consistent with applicable land management plans, policies, and programs.

William S. Haigh, Folsom Field Manager

Date