

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

**Environmental Assessment
10 Year Permit Renewal
Lyons/Anderson Allotment**

Grand Junction Field Office
2815 H Road
Grand Junction, Colorado 81506

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The Bureau of Land Management is responsible for the stewardship of our public lands. It is committed to manage, protect, and improve these lands in a manner to serve the needs of the American people for all times. Management is based on the principles of multiple-use and sustained yield of our nation's resources within a framework of environmental responsibility and scientific technology. These resources include recreation; rangelands; timber; minerals; watershed; fish and wildlife; wilderness; air; and scenic, scientific and cultural values.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER 1 – INTRODUCTION	1
1.1 IDENTIFYING INFORMATION	1
1.2 PROJECT LOCATION AND LEGAL DESCRIPTION	2
1.3 PURPOSE AND NEED	2
1.4 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION	2
1.5 DECISION TO BE MADE	3
CHAPTER 2 – PROPOSED ACTION AND ALTERNATIVES	3
2.1 INTRODUCTION	3
2.2 ALTERNATIVES ANALYZED IN DETAIL	3
2.2.1 Best Management Practices (BMPs) Common To All Grazing Alternatives	3
2.2.2 No Action (Current Grazing Permit)	3
2.2.3 Proposed Action	4
2.2.4 No Livestock Grazing Alternative	10
2.3 PLAN CONFORMANCE REVIEW	10
CHAPTER 3 – AFFECTED ENVIRONMENT AND EFFECTS	12
3.1 INTRODUCTION	12
3.2 PHYSICAL RESOURCES	14
3.2.1 Soils (includes a finding on Standard 1)	14
3.2.2 Water (surface and groundwater, floodplains) (includes a finding on Standard 5)	18
3.3 BIOLOGICAL RESOURCES	21
3.3.1 Invasive, Non-native Species	21
3.3.2 Threatened, Endangered and Sensitive Species (includes a finding on Standard 4)	22
3.3.3 Vegetation (grasslands, forest management) (includes a finding on Standard 3)	24
3.3.4 Wildlife (includes fish, aquatic and terrestrial) (includes a finding on Standard 3)	26
3.4 HERITAGE RESOURCES AND HUMAN ENVIRONMENT	28
3.4.1 Cultural Resources	28
3.4.2 Tribal and Native American Religious Concerns	30
3.4.3 Visual Resources	31
3.4.4 Social, Economic, Environmental Justice	32
3.4.5 Wastes, Hazardous or Solid	34
3.5 LAND RESOURCES	35
3.5.1 Recreation	35
3.5.2 Range Management	36
CHAPTER 4 - CONSULTATION AND COORDINATION	39
4.1 LIST OF PREPARERS AND PARTICIPANTS	39
4.2 TRIBES, INDIVIDUALS, ORGANIZATIONS, OR AGENCIES CONSULTED	40
CHAPTER 5 - REFERENCES	41
Appendix 1 Maps	42

CHAPTER 1 – INTRODUCTION

1.1 IDENTIFYING INFORMATION

BACKGROUND: This Environmental Assessment (EA) has been prepared by the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) to analyze the issuance of a 10 year grazing permit for livestock grazing use on the Lyons/Anderson Allotment. The current ten year permit was issued under the 2012 Appropriations Act.

The Lyons/Anderson Allotment is located 2 miles southeast of De Beque, Colorado and has a total of approximately 1,963 public land acres and 160 privately owned acres (Appendix 1, Map #1 of the allotment). Elevation varies from 4,960 ft. in the northwest areas of the allotment to 6,160 ft. along the southern boundaries. Average annual precipitation across the allotment is 12-14 inches. Little Horsethief Creek is the main drainage through the allotment with only intermittent flowing water during snowmelt or runoff from rain storms. The main vegetation types are sagebrush/grass and pinyon-juniper. Several wildland fires have occurred in both pastures of the allotment since 1994 with successful seeding efforts following the fires.

Grazing allotments within the GJFO have been placed in one of three management categories that define the intensity of management: (1) Improve, (2) Maintain and (3) Custodial. These categories broadly define rangeland management objectives in response to an analysis of an allotment's resource characteristics, potential, opportunities, issues, and needs. The Lyons/Anderson Allotment is in the improve management category to improve existing resource conditions through intensive management.

The current authorized grazing schedule is as follows:

Allotment/#	Category	Livestock #/Kind	Grazing Period	%PL	Type Use	AUMS
Lyons/Anderson #16811	Improve	80 Cattle	05/01 – 06/14	91	Active	108
		80 Cattle	10/16 – 11/30	91	Active	110

The allotment has 218 active AUMS and 317 suspended AUMs for a total of 535 AUMs.

¹ AUM is an Animal Unit Month meaning the amount of forage necessary for the sustenance of one cow or its equivalent for a period of 1 month.¹

CASEFILE/PROJECT NUMBER: #0507199

PROJECT NAME: Lyons/Anderson Allotment Grazing Permit Renewal

PLANNING UNIT: Grand Junction Field Office

1.2 PROJECT LOCATION AND LEGAL DESCRIPTION

LEGAL DESCRIPTION:

The Lyons/Anderson Allotment is located in Mesa County approximately 2 miles southeast of De Beque, Colorado (Appendix 1, Map #1 for allotment map and legal descriptions).

1.3 PURPOSE AND NEED

The purpose of the proposed action is to allow grazing on public lands in a responsible manner that is compatible with other resource uses and objectives. The purpose can be met by fully processing the renewal of the qualified applicant's grazing permit preference for the Lyons/Anderson Allotment. In order to graze livestock on public land, the livestock permittee must hold a valid grazing permit.

The need for the action is established by the BLM's responsibility under the Federal Land Policy Management Act (FLPMA) and the Taylor Grazing Act, to respond to an applicant's request for a grazing authorization on public land. The proposed action would provide the opportunity for the continuation of livestock grazing through the issuance of a grazing permit for the permittee on mentioned allotments. The need for this action is to ensure that grazing is authorized by a valid grazing permit and is compatible with Standards for Public Land Health, other resource uses and objectives, and in compliance with grazing regulations under 43 CFR §4100.

1.4 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

1.4.1 Public Scoping: Scoping, by posting this project on the Grand Junction Field Office NEPA website, was the primary mechanism used by the BLM to invite public involvement. No comments were received. Changes in the proposed action were discussed with the permittee and the permittee was in agreement with the proposed action.

Issues Identified: No issues were identified during public scoping.

43 CFR §4130.2 (b) requires, "The authorized officer shall consult, cooperate and coordinate with affected permittees or lessees, the state having lands or responsible for managing resources within the area, and the interested public prior to the issuance or renewal of grazing permits or leases."

1.4.2 Internal Scoping: Maps of the Lyons/Anderson Allotment and description of the proposed action were viewed by the GJFO Interdisciplinary Team (IDT) and discussed at the 2014 Grazing Permit Renewals Meeting. Documentation of which resources would be impacted based on internal scoping and site visits is included in Table 3.1.

1.4.3 Issues Identified: There were no outstanding issues identified on the allotment as the vegetation seedings are doing well and monitoring shows that vegetation conditions on the allotment are improving. Though no outstanding issues were brought forth, there are areas in the allotment that are not meeting rangeland health and management. Opportunities to allow for these areas to improve were discussed.

1.5 DECISION TO BE MADE

The BLM will decide whether to approve the proposed Lyons/Anderson Allotment grazing permit renewal based on the analysis contained in this EA. This EA will analyze impacts to resources from cattle grazing on the allotment. The BLM may choose to accept the proposed action, modify the proposed action, accept an alternative to the proposed action, or reject the application in whole. The finding associated with this EA may not constitute the final approval for the proposed action.

The BLM will determine if the applicant has a satisfactory record of performance in accordance with 43 CFR §4110.1 (b) (1).

CHAPTER 2 – PROPOSED ACTION AND ALTERNATIVES

2.1 INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this chapter is to provide information on the Proposed Action and Alternatives.

The Proposed Action or Alternative chosen from this EA would be the basis for management of livestock on the Lyons/Anderson Allotment.

2.2 ALTERNATIVES ANALYZED IN DETAIL

2.2.1 Best Management Practices (BMPs) Common To All Grazing Alternatives

1. Grazing systems and management practices should be directed at increasing perennial, more fire-tolerant grasses.
2. All uses including grazing should be designed to take into account the highly erodible nature of these soils.
3. All open topped water tanks would include a wildlife escape ramp that have a slope no steeper than 45 degrees, in all directions, is securely attached to the tank, and meets the inside wall of the tank, and extend down the inside wall of the tank/trough (in both directions), making contact with the bottom of the tank.

2.2.2 No Action (Current Grazing Permit)

The No Action Alternative would be continuation of the current grazing permit. Under this alternative, the grazing permit would be:

Allotment/#	Category	Livestock #/Kind	Grazing Period	%PL	Type Use	Federal Acres	AUMs		
							Active	Suspended	Total
Lyons/ Anderson 16811	Improve	80 Cattle 80 Cattle	05/01 to 06/14 10/16 to 11/30	91 91	A	1,963	218	317	535

2.2.3 Proposed Action

The proposed action is to issue a 9 year term permit for livestock grazing on the Lyons/Anderson Allotment. The term of the new Grazing Permit would be October 1, 2014 to September 25, 2023. The proposed action is in accordance with 43 Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) 4130.2.

Under the proposed action, season of use and AUMs for the spring would remain the same. Fall use would be removed as no fall use has occurred on the allotment since 1993 and does not coincide with the permittee's grazing operation. Without the fall use, the active AUMs would be changed from 218 AUMs to 108 AUMs. The suspended AUMs would not be carried forward upon issuance of the new permit. However, if monitoring shows that rangeland conditions are being maintained or improving, rangeland health is improving in areas that currently aren't meeting rangeland health standard(s), more perennial forage is available than the 108 AUMs, and water is available for uniform grazing use of the pastures in the allotment, then permittee may coordinate with the BLM to apply for additional AUMs. Additional AUMs may be approved or denied by the Authorized Officer upon review as stated under grazing regulations 43 CFR §4110.3 (Changes in permitted use).

Spring use would be during the critical growth period for cool season perennial grasses and sedges (Indian ricegrass, poa grasses, squirreltail grass, perennial wheat grasses, ryegrasses, needle and thread grass and sedges). The allotment consists of two pastures (North Pasture /South Pasture) separated by a cross fence. A rest rotation system would be implemented to allow completion of spring growth during the critical growth period in each pasture every other year. The pasture being used would have a 40% or less utilization objective on native perennial species and 50% or less on commercial species since it would be grazed during the critical growth period. If needed, the rested pasture could be used with no more than slight utilization (0 -20%) during the last two weeks of the grazing period to relieve pressure on the used pasture depending on forage conditions, availability of water and coordination between the BLM and permittee.

A component of the grazing permit is the maintenance of range improvements in accordance with associated Cooperative Agreements for the improvement and BLM policy. The following list of range improvements would remain in active status and be maintained:

Beer Retention	#270529	T9S, R97W, Section 13 NWSW
Anderson Pond	#271370	T9S, R97W, Section 11 NENE

L Horse Fire Rehab	#271527	T9S, R97W, Section 12
Anderson Fence	#274623	T9S, R97W, Section 13 NENW
Lyons Fence	#274624	T9S, R97W, Section 13 SWSE
Boundary Fence	3274625	T9S, R97W, Section 3 NENE

If the improvement is no longer needed or beyond repair it would be removed or abandoned. A general description of the maintenance activity required for the various types of range improvements is described below:

Reservoirs/Retention Dams: Removal of deposited sediment from catchment area by heavy equipment. Removed sediment would be placed on the dam area to reinforce the dam. The area disturbed while cleaning sediment from these facilities would not exceed the area originally disturbed during construction of the project. Collection ditches may also be associated with the reservoir and would require cleaning.

Fences: Replacement or repair of wooden or steel posts, broken wire, staples, clips, or stays. Maintenance would be performed on horseback, foot, or motorized vehicles on designated routes.

Cattleguards: Removal of soil underneath cattelguard grate, replacement of cattle guard supports, or repair/replacement of wings. Heavy equipment such as a backhoe would be required to remove cattleguards, remove soil, and to replace cattleguards. Some cattleguards can be cleaning by hand digging. The disturbed area would not exceed the area originally disturbed during the installation.

Springs and Pipelines: Replacement or repair of collection box of spring, enclosure surrounding spring, troughs, or pipelines. Heavy equipment may be necessary to excavate spring box or pipelines. The disturbed area would not exceed the area originally disturbed during the installation.

PROPOSED GRAZING PROGRAM:

Proposed Permitted Use

Allotment/#	Category	Livestock #/Kind	Grazing Period	%PL	Type Use	Federal Acres	AUMs		
							Active	Suspended	Total
Lyons/ Anderson 16811	Improve	80 Cattle	05/01 to 06/14	91	A	1,963	108	0	108

Terms and Conditions of the Proposed Action would be:

1. Livestock grazing utilization levels on key native forage species (Indian ricegrass, poa grasses, squirreltail grass, western wheat grass, ryegrasses, sand dropseed grass,

needle and thread grass, galleta grass, winter fat, sedges, shadscale, serviceberry, and snowberry) shall not exceed 40%. Utilization levels on non-native perennial grasses in the seedings (crested wheat, rye grasses) shall not exceed 50%. If utilization levels are approaching allowable use, livestock will be required to be moved to areas within the allotment that are not approaching allowable use levels. When such areas are not available, livestock will be removed from the allotment once allowable use rates are met. Management adjustments will be made the following year to avoid recurring instances of over utilization.

2. Use supervision checks by BLM staff will be conducted to assure grazing compliance. The Grand Junction Field Office will use utilization checks, collect trend data, and evaluate allotments whenever necessary. Evaluation of monitoring will be used to make appropriate changes to grazing management in order to protect land health.
3. This permit is subject to change if results from a land health assessment conclude that the Standards for Rangeland Health are not being met and livestock grazing is determined to be the cause.
4. To allow for variation in climate, plant growth conditions, and flexibility in permittee livestock operations, the BLM may adjust the authorized grazing period by up to two weeks if rangeland conditions are determined by the Authorized officer to be satisfactory for livestock use and if AUMs are not exceeded.
5. Salting and mineral blocks will be placed at least one quarter (1/4) mile or further from water sources. Less than one quarter mile may be allowed if terrain does not allow for one quarter mile distance and approved by the BLM AO.
6. All new range improvement projects will be in accordance with BLM standards.
 - Example - wildlife escape ramps are required in water troughs under BLM standards.
7. Water source areas will be monitored by the permittee and BLM for infestation of noxious weeds. The permittee and BLM will coordinate to treat and eradicate any weed infestations should they occur.
8. Upon approval by the Authorized Officer (AO), the permittee will have the option to apply for more cattle over a shorter time period as long as AUMs are not exceeded in a grazing season, and use is within the season of use.
9. Temporary Non-renewable (TNR) or Adaptive Use may be approved by the authorized BLM officer if additional forage, such as annuals are deemed available within the authorized grazing period, and if the vast majority of the grazing area is meeting Land Health Standards.

10. Maintenance of all structural rangeland improvements (RI) and other projects are the responsibility of the permittee to which they have been assigned. Maintenance would be in accordance with cooperative agreements and/or range improvement permits (43 CFR §4120.3-1). Failure to maintain assigned projects in a satisfactory/functional condition may result in withholding authorization to graze livestock until maintenance is completed. Construction of new RI on BLM administered lands is prohibited without approval from the authorized officer.
 - a. The BLM authorized officer will be contacted prior to any range project maintenance activity involving soil surface disturbance. An example includes but is not limited to the cleaning of ponds with heavy equipment, which would involve soil surface disturbance. All heavy equipment will be washed and free of debris before entering BLM lands.
11. Permittees or lessees shall provide reasonable access across private and leased lands to the Bureau of Land Management for the orderly management and protection of the public lands related to grazing administration.
12. Grazing will be deferred on new vegetation treatments and rehabilitated burned areas to allow two growing seasons of rest unless otherwise authorized. Coordination and cooperation will occur with the permittee prior to any treatment.
13. The permittee shall submit an Actual Use form within 15 days after completing their annual grazing use as outlined in 43 CFR §4130.3-2(d).
14. It is the responsibility of the Permittee to inform all persons associated with work on federal lands subject to the permit that they would be subject to prosecution for knowingly disturbing historic or archaeological sites, or for collecting artifacts.
15. Surface disturbing range improvements associated with the allotment (e.g., fences, ponds) are subject to compliance requirements under Section 106 and will undergo standard cultural resources inventory and evaluation procedures.
16. If newly discovered cultural resources are identified during project implementation, work in that area should stop and the BLM Authorized Officer should be notified immediately (36 CFR §800.13).
17. Notify the Authorized Officer (AO) by telephone and with written confirmation, immediately upon discovery of human remains, funerary items, sacred objects, or objects of cultural patrimony. Activities would stop in the immediate area of the find, and the discovery would be protected for 30 days or until notified to proceed in writing by the AO.
18. During dry and drought conditions adjustments will be made that involve reduction of AUMs or non-use as stated under Code of Federal Regulations 4110.3-2 “Decreasing permitted use” (a) Permitted use may be suspended in whole or in part on a temporary

basis due to drought, fire, And 4110.3-3 “Implementing reductions in permitted use” (a) After consultation, cooperation, and coordination with the affected permittee or lessee,...., reductions of permitted use shall be implemented through a documented agreement or by decision of the authorized officer. (b) When the authorized officer determines that the soil, vegetation, or other resources on the public lands require immediate protection because of conditions such as drought, fire,, the authorized officer shall close allotments or portions of allotments to grazing by any kind of livestock or modify authorized grazing use notwithstanding the provisions of paragraph (a) of this section.

19. If water is available for proper distribution of livestock use, rangeland conditions are maintaining or improving, and monitoring shows additional AUMs are available above the 108 AUMs, then permittee may coordinate with the BLM to apply for additional AUMs. Additional AUMS may be approved or denied by the Authorized Officer upon review as stated under grazing regulation 43 CFR 4110.3 (Changes in permitted use).

Additional Terms and Conditions specific to livestock grazing within the known range of Colorado Hookless Cactus, De Beque phacelia, and its designated critical habitat (adapted from conservation measures in “Biological Opinion for Livestock Grazing Program Effects on Three Listed Plants in the Bureau of Land Management Grand Junction, Colorado River Valley, and Uncompahgre Field Offices):

Conservation Measure 1: In areas where there is a concern that Colorado hookless cactus, and DeBeque phacelia may be present, a survey will be conducted prior to any livestock management actions such as range improvements or maintenance, or weed management.

Conservation Measure 2: Maps will be provided to permittees that identify sensitive areas where restrictions may apply to particular grazing-related activities for the Colorado hookless cactus, and DeBeque phacelia (individual occurrences or populations plus a 200-meter [656 feet] buffer). As new information becomes available, and as necessary, maps will be updated by the BLM and provided to permittees each year if new occurrences are found. (Note: Maps provided to permittees will include sufficient buffers and randomized perimeters to avoid disclosing exact species locations.)

Conservation Measure 3: The permittee is required to notify the BLM Rangeland Management Specialist prior to any surface disturbing range project maintenance activity (fences, stock ponds, spring developments, etc.) in any allotment (standard condition for all BLM allotments). Surveys and avoidance measures will be required where effects to listed plants may occur.

- Construction of new range developments (e.g., fences, ponds, water troughs) would be designed to avoid impacts to listed species whenever feasible. New range developments that may affect listed species would not be permitted until completion of an additional tiered consultation.

Conservation Measure 4: If a permittee wishes to apply an herbicide treatment, they must obtain prior approval from the BLM. Appropriate applicator licenses must be obtained, copies of the appropriate Pesticide Use Proposal must be obtained from the BLM, and a Pesticide Application Record must be completed and returned to BLM no later than 10 days after herbicide application (standard condition for all BLM allotments).

- The permittee must consult with the BLM Rangeland Management Specialist and Biologist/Ecologist prior to applying herbicides or pesticides within 200 meters (656 feet) of individual plants or populations. Such treatments may be restricted or modified to avoid effects to the three listed species. Depending on the Field Office and weed program restrictions (see following point), additional section 7 consultation may be required prior to applying herbicides.
- All treatments will comply with the approved GJFO Integrated Weed Management Plan (IWMP) and section 7 consultation.

Conservation Measure 5: Within 200 meters (656 feet) of listed plants, motorized access for livestock grazing operations will be limited to existing designated roads and routes. Any additional access proposed for grazing operations would require additional surveys and section 7 consultation.

Conservation Measure 6: As a standard permit term and condition within occupied habitat for listed plants, seasonal utilization levels on palatable perennial forage will be limited to 40 percent to the extent possible, and average utilization will not exceed 50 percent (currently the approximate level of forage utilization in most areas on public lands).

Conservation Measure 8: No concentrations of livestock activities including but not limited to herding, routine trailing, bedding, salt or supplement, portable watering, and new stock ponds will be allowed within 200 meters (656 feet) of individual listed plants or populations, except as provided below:

- Concentration may be allowed where separated by a fence or topographic feature (cliff) that will render the impacts to listed plants insignificant, discountable, or if impacts are wholly beneficial (distribute livestock away from listed plants).
- The BLM Rangeland Management Specialist will collaborate with the permittee to develop and employ appropriate grazing strategies for the allotment pastures and use areas to meet Colorado Public Land Health Standards, specifically standard 3 for upland plant communities and standard 4 for Threatened, Endangered Species (TES) species.

Where possible, grazing should be limited to 15 days or less in each pasture or use area during the germination, flowering, and fruiting period for the three focus species to ensure reproduction and recruitment.

Conservation Measure 9: If monitoring/LHAs conclude that an allotment with occupied habitat is not meeting the standards for special status plants, vegetation, or soils, and livestock grazing is

identified as a significant causal factor in not meeting those standards, grazing permit modifications, mitigation, or other prescriptive measures will be required by BLM, such as:

- The BLM Rangeland Management Specialist will work with the permittee to pursue opportunities to allow portions of the allotment(s) to receive yearlong rest or deferment in order to increase plant vigor.
- Exclosures or drift fences may be considered in certain areas where individual plants or populations require special protections from livestock grazing or associated activities, as determined by the BLM.
- Permit terms and conditions may be modified to minimize impacts to listed plants (e.g., improved distribution, changes in season of use/class of livestock).

Additional Standard Terms and Conditions can be found on the signature page of the Grazing Permit.

2.2.4 No Livestock Grazing Alternative

This alternative would mean that a Term Grazing Permit would not be issued and no grazing would be allowed on the allotment.

2.3 PLAN CONFORMANCE REVIEW

PLAN CONFORMANCE REVIEW: The Proposed Action is subject to and has been reviewed for conformance with the following plan (43 CFR 1610.5, BLM 1617.3):

Name of Plan: Grand Junction Resource Management Plan

Date Approved: January 1987

Decision Number/Page: Page 2-17 to manage livestock grazing as described in the *Grand Junction Grazing Management Environmental Statement*. Reevaluate existing allotment management plans to ensure consistency with objectives for riparian and critical erosion goals.

Decision Language: Grazing use will be in accordance with the Taylor Grazing Act, FLPMA, Public Rangelands Improvement Act (PRIA), 43 CFR 4100 and 4180, the Wilderness Act, grazing permits, and BLM Policy.

Applicable NEPA documents and other related documents that cover the proposed action.

Name of Document: Permit Renewal Lyons/Anderson Allotment. CO-GJFO-03-41-EA

Date Approved: July 18, 2003

In January 1997, the Colorado State Office of the BLM approved the Standards for Public Land Health and amended all RMPs in the State. Standards describe the conditions needed to sustain public land health and apply to all uses of public lands.

Standard 1: Upland soils exhibit infiltration and permeability rates that are appropriate to soil type, climate, land form, and geologic processes.

Standard 2: Riparian systems associated with both running and standing water function properly and have the ability to recover from major disturbance such as fire, severe grazing, or 100-year floods.

Standard 3: Healthy, productive plant and animal communities of native and other desirable species are maintained at viable population levels commensurate with the species and habitat's potential.

Standard 4: Special status, threatened and endangered species (federal and state), and other plants and animals officially designated by the BLM, and their habitats are maintained or enhanced by sustaining healthy, native plant and animal communities.

Standard 5: The water quality of all water bodies, including ground water where applicable, located on or influenced by BLM lands will achieve or exceed the Water Quality Standards established by the State of Colorado.

Because standards exist for each of these five categories, a finding must be made for each of them in an environmental analysis. These findings are located in Chapter 3 of this document.

CHAPTER 3 – AFFECTED ENVIRONMENT AND EFFECTS

3.1 INTRODUCTION

This section provides a description of the human and natural environmental resources that could be affected by the Proposed Action and presents comparative analyses of the direct, indirect and cumulative effects on the affected environment stemming from the implementation of the actions under the Proposed Action and other alternatives analyzed.

This EA draws upon information compiled in the Grand Junction Resource Area RMP (BLM 1987) and the Grand Resource Area RMP (BLM 1985).

3.1.1 Elements Not Affected

The following elements, identified as not being present or not affected will not be brought forward for additional analysis:

Geological – (livestock grazing would not affect the geology),

Mineral Resources (livestock grazing would not affect mineral resources),

Paleontological – (livestock grazing would not affect paleontology),

Transportation and Access – (livestock grazing would not affect transportation and access),

Prime or Unique Farmlands – (prime or unique farmlands are not on the allotment),

Special Designations (ACEC, SMAs etc.) – (special designations are not on the allotment),

Wild and Scenic Rivers – (no wild and scenic rivers are on the allotment),

Wild Horse and Burros – (no wild horses and burros are on the allotment),

Land Tenure, ROW and Other Uses – (livestock grazing would not affect land tenure, ROWs and other uses),

Wilderness – (No wilderness areas or WSA's exist on the allotment).

Air Quality/Climate: The no action, no grazing and proposed action alternatives would have no impact to air quality or climate with adherence to terms and conditions of the existing or proposed livestock grazing permit.

Wetlands & Riparian Zones: A formal land health assessment was conducted by BLM in 2010 for the Kannah/Plateau area which included the Lyons/Anderson allotment. No wetlands or riparian habitats were identified within the Lyons/Anderson allotment (BLM. 2010). The resource does not exist in the allotment therefore, a finding for public land health standard 2 is not applicable and no further analysis is necessary.

3.1.2 Past, Present, Reasonably Foreseeable Actions

NEPA requires federal agencies to consider the cumulative effects of proposals under their review. Cumulative effects are defined in the Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ)

regulations 40 CFR §1508.7 as “...the impact on the environment that results from the incremental impact of the action when added to other past, present, and reasonably foreseeable actions regardless of what agency...or person undertakes such other actions.” The CEQ states that the “cumulative effects analyses should be conducted on the scale of human communities, landscapes, watersheds, or airsheds” using the concept of “project impact zone” or more simply put, the area that might be affected by the proposed action. The area that may be affected by this project is the Lyons/Anderson Allotment that includes Little Horsethief Creek and Ashmead Draw watersheds. To assess past, present and reasonably foreseeable actions that may occur within the affected area a review of GJFO NEPA log and our field office GIS data was completed. The following list includes all past, present and reasonably foreseeable actions known to the BLM that may occur within the affected area:

Past Actions:

Oil and Gas activities, livestock grazing, recreation, vegetation treatments (seedings) following wildland fires in 1994 and 2008.

Present Actions:

Oil and Gas activities, livestock grazing, recreation, vegetation treatments.

Reasonably Foreseeable Actions

Oil and Gas, livestock grazing, recreation, vegetation treatments.

Table 1– Potentially Impacted Resources

Resources	Not Present On Location	No Impact	Potentially Impacted	Mitigation Necessary?	BLM Evaluator Initial & Date	Comments
PHYSICAL RESOURCES						
Air and Climate	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	ND 6/30/14	See section 3.1 above
Water (surface & subsurface, floodplains)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	ND 7/1/14	
Soils	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	ND 7/1/14	
Geological/Mineral Resources	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	SC 7/30/14	
BIOLOGICAL RESOURCES						
Special Status Plants	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	ARL 7/17/14	
Special Status Wildlife	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	HLP 7/15/14	
Migratory Birds	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	HLP 7/15/14	
Other Important Wildlife Habitat	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	HLP 7/15/14	
Vegetation, Forestry	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	SC 6/6/14	
Invasive, Non-native Species	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	MT 7/17/14	
Wetlands/Riparian Zones	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	ND 7/1/14	See section 3.1 above.
HERITAGE RESOURCES AND HUMAN ENV.						
Cultural or Historical	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	NFC 7/14/14	
Paleontological	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	SC 7/30/14	
Tribal& American Indian Religious Concerns	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	NFC 7/14/14	
Visual Resources	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	CPP 7/24/14	
Social/Economic	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	SC 6/6/14	
Transportation and Access	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	CPP 7/24/14	
Wastes, Hazardous or Solid	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	AK 6/18/14	
LAND RESOURCES						
Recreation	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	CPP 7/24/14	
Special Designations (ACEC, SMAs, WSR)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	CPP 7/24/14	
Wilderness & Wilderness Characteristics	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	CPP 7/24/14	
Range Management	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	SC 6/6/14	
Wild Horse and Burros	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	SC 7/30/14	
Land Tenure, ROW, Other Uses	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	RBL 7/28/14	
Fire/Fuels	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	SC 7/30/14	

3.2 PHYSICAL RESOURCES

3.2.1 Soils (includes a finding on Standard 1)

Current Conditions:

Soils within the project area have been mapped by the Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS) in an Order III soil survey of the Douglas-Plateau Area originally completed in 1988 and accessed on-line through the NRCS web soil survey (USDA-NRCS. 2014). Specific descriptions of soil mapping units from the NRCS web soil survey in the Lyons/Anderson Allotment are identified in Table 3.2.1-1. In general, affected soils are developing in sandstone and shale residuum, colluvium, or alluvial deposits of the Green River and Wasatch Formations.

Table 3.2.1-1:

Soils in Lyons/Anderson Allotment					
Soil Name(#)	Parent Material	Slope range (%)	Drainage Class	Runoff Class	Approximate Acres
Barx loam (3)	Mixed material eolian deposits	3-12	Well drained	medium	323.5
Bunkwater very fine sandy loam (12)	Eolian material derived dominantly from mixed materials	1-8	Well drained	slow	133.7
Dominguez clay loam (32)	Residuum and alluvium derived dominantly from Wasatch shales.	3-8	Well drained	medium	24.6
Rock outcrop-Torriorthents complex (61)	Rock outcrops and residuum and colluvium derived from sandstone, shale or siltstone.	15-90	Well drained	Rapid	412.4
Torriorthents, warm-Rock outcrop complex (66)	Rock outcrops and residuum and colluvium derived from sandstone, shale or siltstone.	35-90	Well drained	Rapid	588.7
Travessilla-Rock outcrop complex (69)	Rock outcrops and residuum derived dominantly from sandstone.	10-35	Well drained	Rapid	638.5

Table data from USDA-NRCS 2014.

Soils on the lower side slopes of the incised valleys are developing in colluvium and alluvial sediments of the Wasatch Shale Formation. These soils are clayey, shallow to deep over shale/sandstone, and are alkaline (Foothill Juniper and Semidesert Clay Loam range sites). Soil erosion and sediment production is greater than desired (much of the erosion is geologic in nature). Lower-lying portions of the side slopes and benches and southerly aspects, support a Pinyon-Juniper vegetation and sparse understory of grasses and shrubs; scattered sagebrush parks occur on the deeper soils. The erosion hazard is very high in these areas. A comprehensive description of all affected soils can be obtained online through the NRCS website: <http://websoilsurvey.nrcs.usda.gov>

A formal land health assessment was conducted by BLM in 2010 for the Kannah/Plateau area which included the Lyons/Anderson allotment. Results of this assessment are displayed in Table 3.2.1-2 below. Overall, soils within the allotment boundaries were meeting land health standard 1. Areas mapped as not meeting public land health standard 1 or meeting with problems represent 4.7 percent of the total allotment area and are primarily attributable to livestock

concentration near water sources. These impacts were documented to reduce soil canopy cover and infiltration capacities which elevate run-off and erosion potential.

Table 3.2.1-2:

Finding on PLHS-1	Acres	% of Allotment	Comments
<i>Not-meeting</i>	26	1.2	Signs of increased erosion, heavy spring grazing, poor cover
<i>Meeting with Problems</i>	74.5	3.5	Erosion evident and poor canopy cover reducing soil stability, heavy spring cattle use, proximity to water
<i>Meeting</i>	1,682	79.4	
<i>Unclassified</i>	25	1.2	

Table data from BLM Kannah/Plateau Land Health Assessment (BLM. 2010).

No Action:

Direct and Indirect Effects: Under the No Action alternative, current management practices would continue for the life of the permit. The current permit authorizes spring and fall grazing without any rest or rotation and may result in multiple plant defoliations during the critical spring and summer growing periods which can reduce plant vigor or lead to mortality of desirable plant species over the entirety of all allotments (2,119.4 acres). These effects could be amplified by continued drought conditions resulting in greater potential for invasion of seasonal non-native species which characteristically lack effective root structures capable of stabilizing soils. Invasion of non-native plant species may also alter natural fire regimes which can further destroy native plant communities leaving soils increasingly vulnerable to natural erosional processes. As a result, erosion rates could be elevated over the landscape when compared to conditions under a desired plant community. Areas that would experience these impacts first would be those identified through the 2010 Land Health Assessment as “not meeting” (26 acres) or “meeting with problems” (74.5 acres) due to poor canopy cover and reduced soils stability associated with heavy spring cattle use (BLM. 2010). These areas account for 100.6 acres or roughly 4.7 percent of the allotment. Consequently, soils adjacent to areas existing in an already degraded condition would become increasingly vulnerable to deterioration associated with grazing related impacts. As a result, the number of acres no longer meeting public land health standard 1 is anticipated to increase from current conditions under the no-action alternative.

Cumulative Effects:

Continued grazing under current conditions combined with development of fluid minerals could result in degradation to soil health as outlined above. The cumulative result of high intensity spring grazing coupled with future surface disturbance associated with mineral development may result in permanent conversion of vegetative communities from functional conditions and desirable species to non-functional conditions and less desirable species. Surface disturbances such as roads, pipelines and well pads combined with routine maintenance activities associated fluid mineral development can be efficient vectors for undesirable plant species which, if left untreated, may find conditions in areas

with degraded soil conditions and/or degraded vegetative communities advantageous for establishment. Degradation of a functional vegetative community would further compromise soil health over time. Areas currently mapped as not meeting or meeting with problems would expand as vegetative communities are degraded. The percentage of acres not meeting public land health standard 1 would increase beyond 4.7% (greater than 100.5 acres).

Proposed Action:

Direct and Indirect Effects: Effects to soil resources from grazing under the proposed action are similar to those outlined under the no-action alternative. However, under the proposed action, fall use would be removed and spring use would be subject to a rest rotation system using existing pasture fences. Rest from livestock grazing during the critical growing season would help preserve the health and vigor of vegetative communities consequently preserving soil stabilizing agents and reducing soil erosion.

Under the proposed action the 26 acres (1.2% of the total acreage) mapped as not meet Public Land Health Standards and the 76 acres (3.5% of total acreage) mapped as meeting with problems would likely see measurable improvements over time. Vegetative communities in these areas would experience regular rest from grazing during the critical spring growing season which would improve vegetative health and vigor while also enhancing soil stabilization and nutrient cycling over time. As a result, the proposed action could contribute towards improvement to public land health throughout the entire allotment. The number of acres identified as not-meeting or meeting with problems could be reduced from current conditions (less than 4.7 % of total acres would be identified as not meeting or meeting with problems). However, climatic conditions, severity of existing degradation, and effectiveness of weed treatment efforts would all be variables affecting the degree of success and the number of acres potentially improved through this action.

Cumulative Effects:

Through implementation of the proposed grazing management plan, vegetative communities would be closely monitored and grazing intensity or season of use would be modified to protect soil resources. Other land uses such as fluid mineral development would continue to have the potential to negatively impact soil resources. However, soil and vegetative resources would be less vulnerable to other actions with successful implementation of the new term grazing permit. Areas currently mapped as not meeting or meeting with problems for public land health standard 1 would be more likely to recover under the proposed action and favorable climatic conditions. Over time the percentage of acres within the allotment boundary identified as not meeting or meeting with problems could be reduced below 4.7%.

Protective/Mitigation Measures:

1. Continued monitoring of grazing systems for effectiveness in meeting plant species and cover goals is important, particularly with regard to spring season of use.

2. Grazing systems and management practices should be directed at increasing perennial, more fire-tolerant grasses.
3. All uses including grazing should be designed to take into account the highly erodible nature of these soils.

No Livestock Grazing

Direct and Indirect Effects: No grazing would have no negative impacts to soil resources resulting from livestock grazing. It is anticipated that the health and vigor of vegetation communities would improve under this alternative and overall soil health would indirectly benefit.

Cumulative Effects:

Soil and vegetative health would improve in the absence of livestock grazing.

Protective/Mitigation Measures: Continued monitoring and treatment of noxious/invasive plant species would be necessary to preserve vegetative communities and protect soil health.

3.2.2 Water (surface and groundwater, floodplains) (includes a finding on Standard 5)

Current conditions:

The Lyons/Anderson Allotment is situated within water quality stream segment 13a of the Lower Colorado River Basin. The primary drainage in the allotment is Little Horsethief Creek which is an ephemeral tributary to the Colorado River (stream segment 2a of the Lower Colorado River) near De Beque, Colorado (CDPHE 2013). Water quality in ephemeral systems of the Lower Colorado River Basin is primarily attributable to the natural environment and geologic setting. However, anthropogenic influences can elevate sedimentation rates increasing dissolved solids, hardness, alkalinity, and degrade water quality in general.

Stream segment 13a is not identified in Colorado's list of impaired streams or monitoring and evaluation list (CDPHE. 2012) meaning water quality standards are being met. The State has classified stream segment 13a as "Use Protected" meaning the antidegradation review requirements in the Antidegradation Rule are not applicable. For those waters, only the protection specified in each reach will apply. Stream segment 2a of the Lower Colorado River is identified in CDPHE Regulation 93 on the "Monitoring and Evaluation List" for sediment. For each of these reaches beneficial use classifications, minimum standards for physical and biological, inorganics and metals are listed CDPHE Regulation 37 (CDPHE 2014).

A formal land health assessment was conducted by BLM in 2010 for the Kannah/Plateau area which included the Lyons/Anderson allotment. Results of this assessment are displayed in table 3.2.1-2 above in the soils section. Overall, water quality within the allotment boundaries were meeting land health standard 5 as all State water quality standards are being met. However, on a local scale areas mapped as not meeting public land health standard 1 or meeting with problems were also observed to not be meeting public land health standard 5 for water quality. These areas represent less than 5 percent of the total allotment and are primarily attributable to livestock concentration near water sources. These impacts were documented as reduced soil canopy cover and reduced infiltration capacities which appeared to be causative factors in

elevate run-off and increased erosion rates when compared to natural conditions based on ecologic site descriptions (BLM. 2010).

Finding for Public Land Health Standard 5:

Currently stream segments within the Lyons/Anderson allotment meet State water quality standards. However, as noted above BLM land health evaluations in 2010 reported localized areas within the allotment boundaries were observed to be lacking proper hydrologic function and were identified as not meeting soil health standards (see table 3.2.1-2). Watershed health and water quality are intricately tied to the soil and vegetative health. Therefore, where soil health standard 1 is compromised due to lack of perennial plant diversity and cheat grass invasion, water quality may also begin to deteriorate.

No Action:

Direct and Indirect Effects: Under the No-Action alternative, current management practices would continue for the life of the permit. The current permit does not provide for rest or rotation during the critical spring growing season which may result in multiple plant defoliations during this period which can reduce plant vigor or lead to mortality of desirable plant species over the entirety of all allotments (2,119.4 acres). These effects could be amplified by continued drought conditions resulting in greater potential for invasion of seasonal non-native species which characteristically lack effective root structures capable of stabilizing soils and maintaining natural rates of erosion. Invasion of non-native plant species may also alter natural fire regimes which can further destroy native plant communities leaving soils increasingly vulnerable to natural erosional processes. As a result, erosion and sedimentation rates to area streams could be elevated over time resulting in reduced water quality. Areas most likely to experience these impacts first would be drainages adjacent to and/or downstream from soils already identified through the 2010 Land Health Assessment as “not meeting” (26 acres) or “meeting with problems” (74.5 acres) due to heavy spring grazing, poor cover, signs of increased erosion, poor infiltration and increased run-off (BLM. 2010). These areas currently account for roughly 100.5 acres or roughly 4.7 percent of the allotment and would be anticipated to increase with continuation of the current grazing management schedule.

Finding on Public Land Health Standard 5: Currently stream segments within the Lyons/Anderson allotment meet State water quality standards. However, as noted above BLM land health evaluations in 2010 reported localized areas within the allotment boundaries were observed to be lacking proper hydrologic function and were identified as not meeting soil health standards (see table 3.2.1-2). Watershed health and water quality are intricately tied to the soil and vegetative health. Therefore, where soil health standard 1 is compromised due to lack of perennial plant diversity and cheat grass invasion, water quality may also begin to deteriorate. Areas most likely to experience these impacts first would be drainages adjacent to and/or downstream from soils already identified through the 2010 Land Health Assessment as “not meeting” (26 acres) or “meeting with problems” (74.5 acres) due to heavy spring grazing, poor cover, signs of increased erosion,

poor infiltration and increased run-off (BLM 2010). These areas currently account for roughly 100.5 acres or roughly 4.7 percent of the allotment and would be anticipated to increase with continuation of the current grazing management schedule.

Cumulative Effects:

The cumulative result of continued spring grazing without periodic rest coupled with increased surface disturbance associated with fluid mineral development, prolonged drought and expansion of non-native invasive species throughout the landscape could leave naturally erosive soils even more vulnerable to erosional processes. Collectively, these factors could result in degradation of function and condition of the watershed within the allotment boundary. As a result, water quality would be expected to deteriorate with time over all 2,119.4 acres.

Proposed Action:

Direct and Indirect Effects: Effects to water resources from grazing under the proposed action are similar to those outlined under the no-action alternative. However, under the proposed action, fall use would be removed and spring use would be subject to a rest rotation system using existing pasture fences. Rest from livestock grazing during the critical growing season would help preserve the health and vigor of vegetative communities consequently preserving soil stabilizing agents, reducing soil erosion, minimizing sedimentation to surface water drainages and helping promote water quality that is within the natural range of variability for the Little Horsethief Creek watershed.

Under the proposed action 26 acres (1.2% of the total acreage) mapped as not meet Public Land Health Standards 1 and 5 and 76 acres (3.5% of total acreage) mapped as meeting with problems would likely see measurable improvements over time. Vegetative communities in these areas would experience regular rest from grazing during the critical spring growing season which would improve vegetative health and vigor while also enhancing soil stabilization and nutrient cycling over time. As a result, the proposed action could contribute towards improvement to public land health throughout the entire allotment. The number of acres identified as not-meeting or meeting with problems could be reduced from current conditions (less than 4.7 % of total acres would be identified as not meeting or meeting with problems). However, climatic conditions, severity of existing degradation, and effectiveness of weed treatment efforts would all be variables affecting the degree of success and the number of acres potentially improved through this action.

Finding on Public Land Health Standard 5:

Currently stream segments within the Lyons/Anderson allotment meet State water quality standards. However, as noted above BLM land health evaluations in 2010 reported localized areas within the allotment boundaries were observed to be lacking proper hydrologic function and were identified as not meeting soil health standards (see table 3.2.1-2). Watershed health and water quality are intricately tied to the soil and vegetative health.

Through implementation of the proposed grazing management plan, vegetative communities would be closely monitored and grazing intensity or season of use would be modified to protect soil and water resources. Areas currently mapped as not meeting or meeting with problems for public land health standards 1 and 5 would be more likely to recover under the proposed action and favorable climatic conditions. Over time the percentage of acres within the allotment boundary identified as not meeting or meeting with problems could be reduced below 4.7%.

Cumulative Effects:

Through implementation of the proposed grazing management plan, vegetative communities would be closely monitored and grazing intensity or season of use would be modified to protect soil resources. Other land uses such as fluid mineral development would continue to have the potential to negatively impact soil resources. However, soil and vegetative resources would be less vulnerable to other actions with successful implementation of the new term grazing permit. Areas currently mapped as not meeting or meeting with problems for public land health standards 1 and 5 would be more likely to recover under the proposed action and favorable climatic conditions. Over time the percentage of acres within the allotment boundary identified as not meeting or meeting with problems could be reduced below 4.7%.

No Livestock Grazing

Direct and Indirect Effects: No livestock grazing would occur. Potential to defoliate desirable plant species during the critical growing seasons would be reduced to those impacts associated with wildlife use which has not been identified as a significant factor per Land Health Assessments. Increased vigor and health of vegetative communities would better protect soils and preserve water quality.

Finding on Public Land Health Standard 5: Soil and vegetative health would improve in the absence of livestock grazing.

Cumulative Effects:

The no grazing alternative would benefit vegetation and soils, which are both key factors in preserving watershed function and water quality. Improved range conditions within the allotment would contribute incrementally towards water quality improvements.

3.3 BIOLOGICAL RESOURCES

3.3.1 Invasive, Non-native Species#

Current Conditions:

The Lyons/Anderson allotment was inventoried for noxious weeds during the 2004 field season by BLM crews. There were no listed noxious weeds found within the allotment boundary. The Sunnyside area in general contains isolated Russian knapweed and biennial thistles (mostly Musk thistle) along roads, especially in the eastern half of the area as it approaches Plateau Valley.

There have been two fire rehabilitation projects on this allotment, one in Lyons and one in Anderson. One of the objectives of the rehabilitation was to establish desirable grasses and shrubs to compete against cheatgrass, which is a common problem of the Sunnyside area. Both seedings (1994 in the southern portion of the allotment and 2008 in the northern portion) were satisfactory and continue to compete against cheatgrass. Cheatgrass is present on both sites and varies from year-to-year in vigor, but to date is not dominant in either seeding. The rehabilitation projects also provide forage for livestock and wildlife.

No Action:

Direct, Indirect, and Cumulative Effects: The current permit would allow for spring and fall use even though fall use is not part of the ranch plan and has not occurred for some time. One of the main objectives in weed management is to manage desirable vegetation communities as competitive against weeds. Spring and fall use has the potential to weaken the competitiveness of desirable vegetation, and could result in more chances for a weed problem over the proposed one season of use.

Proposed Action:

Direct and Indirect Effects: The proposed grazing plan of one season and rest-rotation provides the best competitive edge for desirable plants. Assuming the permit conditions are followed, the area should remain healthy from a weed perspective in the short and long term.

Cumulative Effects:

Likewise over a greater area and in the long term, the more these grazing plans are adjusted to provide the best balance of grazing needs and competitive plant base, the better chance they will not be invaded by weedy species.

No Livestock Grazing

Direct and Indirect Effects: Livestock grazing and supporting functions are one of many vectors for the introduction and spread of noxious weeds. From a pure weed management perspective, removing a disturbance lessens the chance of a weed problem. In this case, if there were no permit to graze, one could conclude there would be less chance for weeds in the short and long term.

Cumulative Effects:

Likewise if the no grazing were occurring over a large area or for an extended period of time, there may be less risk for weed introduction and spread.

3.3.2 Threatened, Endangered and Sensitive Species (includes a finding on Standard 4)

Current conditions:

The allotment contains general habitat for the greater sage-grouse and is believed to be utilized only in the winter months by this species. Other special status species known to occur in the area include golden eagle, brewers sparrow, and midget faded rattlesnake. The allotment does not contain any perennial streams and current conditions are not believed to be negatively influencing any adjacent fisheries.

The Lyons-Anderson grazing allotment falls within designated DeBeque phacelia critical habitat, and is known to contain two federally listed plants (Threatened): DeBeque phacelia, and Colorado hookless cactus. Additionally the allotment contains DeBeque milkvetch and Adobe thistle.

A Land Health Assessment was completed in 2010. Approximately 15% of the grazing allotment is not meeting Standard 4. The Assessment noted heavy grazing, and low diversity, vigor and reproduction of perennial grasses. Issues are primarily confined to the Alkaline Slopes and Rolling Loam ecological sites (as defined by the NRCS).

No Action:

Direct and Indirect Effects: Under the No Action Alternative, if the full AUMs were used, 108 in the spring (05/01 to 06/14) and 110 in the fall (10/16 to 11/30), vegetation conditions would likely decline due to vegetation being grazed during the critical growth period in the spring and again in the fall. After spring grazing, some regrowth would occur but would be grazed in the fall limiting the amount of cover and forage left for wintering sage-grouse. Since the permittee has not been utilizing full AUMs further declines in the health and abundance of native vegetation, and habitat quality would be expected, and a greater proportion of the grazing allotment would be expected to not meet Land Health Standard 4 under this alternative.

Cumulative Effects:

The incremental impacts of the No Action Alternative when added to past, present and reasonably foreseeable actions related to oil and gas activities, recreation and vegetation treatments would continue to influence golden eagles, brewers sparrows and wintering greater sage-grouse. Declines in rare plant habitat quality would also be anticipated.

Proposed Action:

Direct and Indirect Effects: Under the proposed action grazing would only occur in the late spring and would be less likely to impact habitat conditions for wintering sage-grouse. This grazing system is also expected to increase overall habitat conditions for other special status species. While the proposed spring grazing period coincides with the blooming period for the DeBeque phacelia and Colorado hookless cactus, the rest rotation would ensure that pastures are rested every other spring. The ability of the allotment to meet Standard 4 should not be impacted by this alternative. The periodic rest should benefit the Alkali Slopes and Rolling Loam sites that are currently not meeting Standard 4, and potentially result in a static or trending towards meeting rating over time.

Cumulative Effects:

The incremental impacts of the Proposed Alternative when added to past, present and reasonably foreseeable actions related to oil and gas activities, recreation and vegetation treatments would minimally influence golden eagles, brewers sparrows, wintering greater sage-grouse, and rare plants.

No Livestock Grazing

Direct and Indirect Effects: No livestock grazing would occur under this alternative, and grazing pressure on vegetation would be reduced to wildlife. Under this alternative impacts to forage conditions for wintering sage-grouse would be limited to competition with wintering mule deer, elk and other wildlife for browse above the snow levels. The threat of trampling by livestock would be eliminated and gradual improvements in the DeBeque phacelia habitat, and individual Colorado hookless cactus survival rates would be expected. The ability of the area to meet Standard 4 would be slightly improved under the No Livestock Grazing alternative.

Cumulative Effects:

The No Livestock Grazing Alternative would result in incremental habitat improvements that would benefit Special Status animals and plants. Selective grazing pressures would be reduced, and the native perennial plant community would have a better chance at restoring its seed bank.

3.3.3 Vegetation (grasslands, forest management) (includes a finding on Standard 3)

Current conditions:

Current native vegetation on the allotment includes pinyon-juniper, foothill juniper, sagebrush, shadscale, greasewood, and 4-wing saltbush with grass understories of Indian ricegrass, galleta, needle and thread, bottlebrush squirreltail, poa, basin wildrye, and western wheat. In 1994 and 2008 wildland fires raged across the central portion of the allotment and following these fires approximately 400 acres were drill seeded. These seedings now have a good mixture and production of crested wheat, western wheat, rye grasses, and galleta.

Four Ecological Sites occur on the allotment:

- 1) Pinyon/Juniper/Unspecified
Pinyon and junipers with patches of big sagebrush and shadscale mixed with Indian ricegrass, galleta and basin wildrye.
- 2) Alkaline Slopes
Big sagebrush and greasewood mixed with an understory of Indian ricegrass, needle and thread grass, poa, bottlebrush squirreltail, western wheat and galleta.
- 3) Foothill Juniper
Big sagebrush and shadscale mixed with Indian ricegrass, bottlebrush squirreltail, galleta, poa and basin wildrye.
- 4) Rolling Loam
Big sagebrush and 4-wing saltbush with a mixture of needle and thread grass, galleta, poa, bottlebrush squirreltail, Indian ricegrass and basin wildrye.

Land Health monitoring in 2010 assessed areas in the Rolling Loam and Alkaline Slopes Ecological Sites as not meeting Standard 3 for vegetation due to low diversity, low vigor, poor cover and juniper invasion. Heavy spring livestock use and low vigor were also noted. Approximately 15% of the Lyon-Anderson grazing allotment is not meeting this Land Health Standard.

Table 3.3.3-1 Lyons Anderson Allotment Land Health Standard 3 Assessment:

Range/Ecological Site	Acres	Acres in each category		
		Meeting	Meeting With Problems	Not Meeting
Pinyon/Juniper/Unspecified	911	911		
Alkaline Slopes	158	81		77
Foothill Juniper	690	690		
Rolling Loam	179			179
Unclassified	25			
Total	1,963	1,682		256

In 2011, monitoring at the two range study sites on the allotment (Appendix 1 Map #2, Range Study Sites) showed apparent trend as static in the southern pasture and improving in the north pasture. Overall, the seedings are doing well, bare ground is decreasing and vegetation cover increasing, and vegetation trend is generally improving across the allotment with native perennial grasses stable or increasing.

No Action:

Direct and Indirect Effects: Over the last 13 years the permittee has only used the allotment in the spring and has usually been below the allowable 108 active AUMs for spring use. On most years, the permittee has reduced AUMs or taken non-use to compensate for dry conditions, availability of water for livestock, and fire rehab.

With reduction of AUMs or non-use during dry periods, vegetation would be expected to remain static or decline depending on severity of drought conditions. Under the livestock management the permittee has used over the last 13 years, vegetation conditions would likely improve during years of average or above average precipitation.

Under the No Action Alternative, if the full AUMs were used, 108 in the spring (05/01 to 06/14) and 110 in the fall (10/16 to 11/30), vegetation conditions would likely decline due to vegetation being grazed during the critical growth period in the spring and again in the fall. After spring grazing, some regrowth would occur but would be grazed in the fall limiting the amount of cover and forage left for the next spring.

Cumulative Effects:

The incremental impacts of the No Action Alternative when added to past, present and reasonably foreseeable actions related to oil and gas activities, recreation and vegetation treatments would have low cumulative effects to vegetation except at the specific sites when projects are being implemented. Overall, impacts would remain low across the entire allotment and watersheds associated with the allotment.

Public Land Health Standard 3:

Under the No Action Alternative, areas not meeting Land Health Standard 3 would likely not improve due to livestock use in both the spring and fall every year. The permittee has only used the allotment in the spring, usually with

reduced AUMs for their spring use. Under the current permittee's management, vegetation conditions would be expected to remain static or improve depending on levels and timing of precipitation.

Proposed Action:

Direct and Indirect Effects: Livestock grazing would occur during the critical growth period for cool season perennial grasses and sedges. The proposed two pasture rotation system would allow cool season plants to complete their growth cycle every other year and in the grazed pasture with no more than 40% utilization on native species and 50% or less utilization in the seedings, cool season perennials would have opportunity to increase. Vegetation conditions would likely improve during years when precipitation levels are average and above average. During drought years the vegetation would remain static or decline depending on the severity and duration of the drought

Cumulative Effects: Cumulative effects would be the same as the No Action Alternative.

Public Land Health Standard 3:

During average and above average precipitation years, areas currently not meeting Standard 3 would be expected to improve and areas meeting Standard 3 would continue to meet standard 3. During below average precipitation years, the overall vegetation conditions would remain static unless the duration of drought is such that causes plant health to decline.

No Livestock Grazing

Direct and Indirect Effects: Under the No Grazing Alternative, cool season perennials would likely increase and vegetation conditions would be expected to improve.

Cumulative Effects:

Under the No Grazing Alternative, livestock grazing would be removed so there would be no further cumulative impacts associated with livestock. Oil and Gas and recreation activities would continue. Vegetation seedings would likely be implemented after wildland fires to combat cheatgrass infestations. The overall past, present and reasonably foreseeable combined impacts of the remaining activities after livestock removal would be low.

Public Land Health Standard 3:

Vegetation conditions would likely improve unless wildland fires promote infestations of cheatgrass and annuals that increase frequency of the fire cycle. An increased frequency of fires could potentially cause problems for perennial vegetation to reestablish.

3.3.4 Wildlife (includes fish, aquatic and terrestrial) (includes a finding on Standard 3)

Current conditions:

The allotment contains critical winter range for mule deer and elk as well as year round rocky mountain bighorn sheep habitat. Birds of Conservation Concern (USFWS, 2008) likely to occur on the allotment include Brewers sparrow, cassin's finch, Gray Vireo, Juniper titmouse, and

pinion jay. Other wildlife likely to occur in the area include mountain lion, coyote, black bear, numerous small mammals, and migratory birds. No fish bearing streams occur on or immediately adjacent to the allotment.

A Land Health Assessment was completed in 2010. Portions of the allotment were not meeting Standard 3. The Assessment noted heavy grazing, and low diversity, vigor, and reproduction of perennial grasses. Issues are primarily confined to the Alkaline Slopes and Rolling Loam ecological sites (as defined by the NRCS).

No Action:

Direct and Indirect Effects: Habitat conditions would likely decline due to vegetation being grazed during the critical growth period in the spring and again in the fall under the no action alternative. After spring grazing, some regrowth would occur but would be grazed in the fall limiting the amount of cover and forage left for wintering wildlife. Since the permittee has not been utilizing full AUMs further declines in the health and abundance of native vegetation, and habitat quality would be expected, and a greater proportion of the grazing allotment would be expected to not meet Land Health Standard 3 under this alternative.

Cumulative Effects: The incremental impacts of the No Action Alternative when added to past, present and reasonably foreseeable actions related to oil and gas activities, recreation and vegetation treatments would continue to influence wildlife species in the area.

Proposed Action:

Direct and Indirect Effects: Under the proposed action grazing would only occur in the late spring and would be less likely to impact habitat conditions for wintering wildlife. This grazing system is also expected to increase overall habitat conditions wildlife species throughout the year. The ability of the allotment to meet Standard 3 should not be impacted by this alternative. The periodic rest should benefit the areas that are currently not meeting Standard 3, and potentially result in a static or trending towards meeting rating over time.

Cumulative Effects:

The incremental impacts of the Proposed Alternative when added to past, present and reasonably foreseeable actions related to oil and gas activities, recreation and vegetation treatments would minimally influence wildlife in the area.

No Livestock Grazing

Direct and Indirect Effects: No livestock grazing would occur under this alternative, and grazing pressure on vegetation would be reduced to those from wildlife. Under this alternative no impacts to habitat conditions for wildlife would occur due to livestock grazing. The ability of the area to meet Standard 3 would be slightly improved under the No Livestock Grazing alternative.

Cumulative Effects:

The No Livestock Grazing Alternative would result in incremental habitat improvements that would benefit wildlife species. Selective grazing pressures would be reduced, and the native perennial plant community would have a better chance at restoring its seed bank. Impacts from oil and gas activities, recreation and vegetation treatments would continue to influence wildlife in the area.

3.4 HERITAGE RESOURCES AND HUMAN ENVIRONMENT

3.4.1 Cultural Resources

Current Conditions:

Range permit renewals are undertakings under Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act. For the purposes of Section 106 review, a cultural resource assessment of allotments in the GJFO began in 1999 and was completed in 2009 reviewing existing site and survey information to compare against the results of other known literature reviews conducted for grazing evaluation. A Class I assessment synthesizing ten years of permit renewal evaluations of 240 grazing allotments managed by GJFO was completed for the BLM by Grand River Institute (GJFO-CRIR 1109-09; Conner and Darnell 2009), which updated and upgraded the previous 5 year grazing permit renewal synthesis (McDonald 2003).

The allotment assessed by this document is in Physiographic Unit H located on the upland benches on the slopes of the Grand Mesa and Battlement Mesa, both north and south of Plateau Creek and east of the Colorado River. The physiographic unit is roughly the same as the 2003 synthesis. As of 2009, thirty five allotments had been previously evaluated and approximately 19,300 acres or 28.5 percent of the allotments have had cultural resource inventory completed on BLM lands. This Unit has the highest level of inventory in the field office, almost double the average for the field office as a whole. Based on previous inventory the average site to acre ratio in this area is 1:51 and of the 35 allotments previously reviewed the site density ranged from Moderate to High (Conner and Darnell 2009:43).

Approximately 526 acres of the 2,122-acre Lyons/Anderson allotment (25%) has been surveyed by project numbers BLM GJFO CRIR 1079-23, 582-01, 1083-21, 1483-14, 1195-09, 15303-01, 5407-01, 14607-01, 1108-09, and 1013-05. Nine cultural resource sites and 20 isolated finds have been documented and evaluated for eligibility for listing on the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP) within this allotment. Sites considered eligible for listing on the NRHP include: three prehistoric sheltered camps (5ME7308, 5ME13598, and 5ME15636), one prehistoric open camp (5ME7306), and one prehistoric open lithic site (5ME7305). The remaining four sites are considered not eligible for listing on the NRHP and include: two prehistoric open camps (5ME4045 and 5ME4713), one prehistoric open lithic site (5ME4779), and one historic camp (5ME13969). All of the isolated finds are considered not eligible for listing on the NRHP.

The 2003 grazing permit renewal for the Lyons/Anderson allotment (DOI-BLM-CO-2003-0041-EA) recommended monitoring of sites 5ME7305, 5ME7306, and 5ME7308. This was completed under project number BLM GJFO CRIR 1013-05.

No Action:

Direct and Indirect Effects: Effects under the No Action alternative would be the same as those under the Proposed Action.

Cumulative Effects:

Cumulative impacts would be the same as the impacts under the Proposed Action.

Proposed Action:

Direct and Indirect Effects: The direct impacts that occur where livestock concentrate include trampling, chiseling, and churning of site soils, cultural features, and cultural artifacts, artifact breakage, and impacts from standing, leaning, and rubbing against historic structures, above-ground cultural features, and rock art. Indirect impacts include soil erosion, gulying, and increased potential for unlawful collection and vandalism from possible upgrades to roads and trails.

Cumulative Effects:

Continued grazing may cause substantial ground disturbance and because cumulative, long term, irreversible adverse effects to historic properties.

Protective/Mitigation Measures:

If, during the course of the ten-year permit, it is determined that grazing is negatively impacting a cultural resource, mitigation to reduce or eliminate impacts will be addressed through discussion between cultural resource and range staff, as well consultation with SHPO and the tribes.

No further cultural resource work is recommended for the Lyons/Anderson allotment.

Standard stipulations to protect cultural resources are incorporated as part of the terms and condition of the permit. If newly discovered historic properties are identified on BLM lands as a result of future surveys, the BLM will evaluate the sites. If the BLM determines that grazing activities would adversely impact any of these newly recorded historic properties mitigation would be identified and implemented in consultation with the Colorado SHPO. The livestock impacts to these historic properties would be assessed within the term period of the permit.

No Livestock Grazing

Direct and Indirect Effects: The removal of cattle from the allotment would eliminate the direct impacts described in the proposed action and eliminate those potential or actual impacts from cultural resources in the allotment, thus having a beneficial effect. Access and use on the public land that occurs from oil and gas development, private land in-holdings, hunting, motorized recreation and dispersed camping all are conditions that

have the potential to directly or indirectly impact cultural resources. The effects of trampling and concentration of cattle on sensitive sites such as rock shelters would be eliminated.

Cumulative Effects:

Removing livestock from the allotment would return only a small portion of the Field Office to land use patterns that predate the historic settlement period.

3.4.2 Tribal and Native American Religious Concerns

Current Conditions:

American Indian religious concerns are legislatively considered under several acts and Executive Orders, namely the American Indian Religious Freedom Act of 1978 (PL 95-341), the Native American Graves Environmental Assessment Protection and Repatriation Act of 1990 (PL 101-601), and Executive Order 13007 (1996; Indian Sacred Sites). In summary, these require, in concert with other provisions such as those found in the NHPA and ARPA, that the federal government carefully and proactively take into consideration traditional and religious Native American culture and life and ensure, to the degree possible, that access to sacred sites, the treatment of human remains, the possession of sacred items, the conduct of traditional religious practices, and the preservation of important cultural properties are considered and not unduly infringed upon. In some cases, these concerns are directly related to “historic properties” and “archaeological resources”. In some cases elements of the landscape without archaeological or other human material remains may be involved. Identification of these concerns is normally completed during the land use planning efforts, reference to existing studies, or via direct consultation. The Grand Junction Field Office consults with the Ute Indian Tribe of the Uinta and Ouray Agency, Ute Mountain Ute Tribe, and the Southern Ute Indian Tribe for grazing permit renewals annually. Previous consultations for grazing permit renewals have included information on the permit renewal process and maps showing the allotment locations, requesting the tribes to identify issues and areas of concern. In addition general annual project consultation for other projects in the area has been conducted with the same tribes. Concerns identified included eradication of sagebrush, impacts to medicinal plants, and general modern intervention in the natural processes. The Ute have a generalized concept of spiritual significance that is not easily transferred to Western models or definitions. As such the BLM recognizes that they have identified sites that are of concern because of their association with Ute occupation of the area as part of their traditional lands. Grazing is a practice that is not part of the pre-contact Ute culture although many modern Ute are involved either directly or by occupation in livestock grazing.

No Action:

Direct and Indirect Effects: Effects under the No Action alternative would be the same as those under the Proposed Action.

Cumulative Effects:

Cumulative impacts would be the same as the impacts under the Proposed Action.

Proposed Action

Direct and Indirect Effects: The direct impacts that occur where livestock concentrate include trampling, chiseling, and churning of site soils, cultural features, and cultural

artifacts, artifact breakage, and impacts from standing, leaning, and rubbing against historic structures, above-ground cultural features, and rock art. Indirect impacts include soil erosion, gullying, and increased potential for unlawful collection and vandalism from possible upgrades to roads and trails.

Cumulative Effects:

Continued grazing may cause substantial ground disturbance and cause cumulative, long term, irreversible adverse effects to unrecorded historic properties. Changes in grazing practices or location of new improvements, or temporary installation of improvements such as salt could affect cultural resources that are important to the Ute Tribes.

Protective/Mitigation Measures:

If sites are reevaluated by other project survey or identified as new survey is conducted in the allotment further consultation with the Ute Tribes would be conducted.

No Livestock Grazing

Direct and Indirect Effects: Removing grazing from the allotment may have a beneficial effect on cultural resources. Direct impacts from grazing are well documented, especially in areas where cattle congregate, and along with indirect impacts from removal of vegetation and subsequent erosion the impacts to cultural resources would no longer be attributable to grazing if the No Action alternative was selected. It would not affect the impacts to the resource that are occurring from wildlife, specifically elk, using the area for grazing and the similar effect they have on both vegetation and soil.

Cumulative Effects: If this alternative was selected it would increase the acreage where no grazing impacts would be attributed to cattle.

3.4.3 Visual Resources

Current Conditions

The allotment occupies the foothills and small mesas along the slopes rising up to the west side of Battlement Mesa, and consists largely of pinyon-juniper and sage-covered hills, ridges, mesas, and canyons.

A 2009 Visual Resource Inventory (VRI) classified the allotment as VRI Class IV, and Scenic Quality B within Scenic Quality Rating Units 20. (BLM 2009)

The area is primarily used by ranchers, oil and gas operators, and recreationists (hikers, mountain bikers, OHV users and hunters.) These users constitute the typical casual observer.

Man-made modifications to the landscape include oil and gas developments, range management structures (fences, corrals, water tanks), the seasonal presence of livestock, and roads and trails.

Under the current RMP, portions of the allotment includes areas designated as Visual Resource Management Class III. The rest of the allotment is in areas undesignated for VRM in the 1987

GJFO RMP. Undesignated areas have typically been managed using Class III objectives. VRM Class III objectives are “to partially retain the existing character of the landscape. The level of change to the characteristic landscape should be moderate. Management activities may attract attention but should not dominate the view of the casual observer. Changes should repeat the basic elements found in the predominant natural features of the characteristic landscape.” (BLM 1987)

No Action

Direct and Indirect Effects: Under this alternative the current grazing routine would continue. There would be no direct or indirect effects to visual resources from this alternative.

Cumulative Effects:

Under the No Action Alternative the visual landscape would continue to change due to on-going natural gas drilling and gathering activities, maintenance and improvement of roads, and recreation use. These activities would have a relatively long-term effect on the visual quality of the view shed in the allotments.

Proposed Action

Direct and Indirect Effects: The seasonal presence of livestock would continue moderate visual contrast during the spring grazing period. Trailing from livestock use on steep cross slopes and around water sources would likely result in reduced vegetation and more exposed soil, increasing visual contrast. These visual impacts would be lessened during non-grazing periods, and eliminated during the fall due to the change in the permitted grazing season. Reducing the number of AUMs, and altering the grazing periods on the allotment would reduce the visual impacts from those of the No Action Alternative.

Cumulative Effects:

Cumulative effects under this alternative would be similar to those described above for the No Action Alternative

No Livestock Grazing

Direct and Indirect Effects: Under this alternative grazing would no longer occur on these allotments and the visual effects of grazing operations would be diminished. Over time, the visual effects from concentrated livestock use (devegetation and exposed soil) would diminish.

Cumulative Effects: Cumulative effects to visual resources under this alternative would be similar to those described above for the No Action Alternative, but would be lessened by the absence of grazing operations.

3.4.4 Social, Economic, Environmental Justice

Current Conditions:

The issuance of a ten year grazing permit allows for the continuance of livestock grazing on the Lyons/Anderson Allotment which contributes to the operation of the grazing permittee. Permitted grazing use on public lands is a large factor in keeping the local ranching families and

industry viable. This in turn has an effect in maintaining the stability of local economies with this economic effect of ranching generally increasing as community size decreases. Small communities in the planning area are much more economically dependent on ranching and agriculture than larger communities with more diverse economic bases.

No Action

Direct and Indirect Effects: The No Action Alternative would be the same as the Proposed Action for social and economic impacts.

Proposed Action

Direct and Indirect Effects: The proposed action would provide for maintaining and improving conditions for vegetative and soil conditions and meet the needs of the grazing permittee, which would increase the long-term viability of the permittee's grazing operation.

Cumulative Effects: The issuance of a 9 year grazing permit to this permittee as well as other permittees in the area would provide economic stability to the grazing permittees as well as the agricultural industry in the area.

No Livestock Grazing

Direct and Indirect Effects: Eliminating grazing on public land would cause a major direct impact to the grazing permittee by eliminating an area for livestock grazing, but would have limited impacts on a broader economic scale. Removing this grazing area would force the permittee to pursue other options which would have greater economic impacts to their operation. These options include pursuing private lands for grazing, which are limited or feeding hay. Feeding hay can be very expensive and a major impact to livestock producers. Economic impacts in the larger community and economy would be minimal under this alternative.

Cumulative Effects: Regional cumulative effects under this alternative would be minimal. The additional economic impact to the local community and livestock operator could result in the termination of the livestock operation. This termination may have an economic impact to the local economy if trends in loss of livestock operations were to increase. The elimination of a grazing operation could force the permittee to seek other options for his private property such as subdividing for development, which can be more of a short-term localized economic return.

Environmental Justice

The requirements for environmental justice review were established by Executive Order 12898 (February 11, 1994). That order declared that each Federal agency is to identify "disproportionately high and adverse human health or environment effects of its programs, policies, and activities on minority populations and low income populations."

According to Census 2010, the only minority population of note in the impact area is the Hispanic community of Mesa County. Persons describing themselves as Hispanic or Latino represented 13.3 percent of the population, considerably less than the Colorado

state figure for the same group, 20.7 percent. Blacks, American Indians, Asians and Pacific Islanders each accounted for around 1 percent of the population, below the comparable state figure in all cases. The census counted 11.8 percent of the Mesa County population as living in families with incomes below the poverty line, compared to 12.6 percent for the entire state. Both minority and low income populations are dispersed throughout the county.

Cumulative Effects: Both minority and low income populations are dispersed throughout the county. Therefore, no minority or low-income populations would suffer disproportionately high and adverse effects as a result of any of the alternatives, even when combined with the past, present and reasonably foreseeable actions.

3.4.5 Wastes, Hazardous or Solid

Current Conditions:

Hazardous and solid wastes are not expected to be a part of the natural environment but could be introduced into the environment as a result of implementation of the proposed action.

No Action:

Direct and Indirect Effects: Effects under the No Action alternative would be the same as those under the Proposed Action.

Cumulative Effects:

Cumulative impacts would be the same as the impacts under the Proposed Action.

Proposed Action:

Direct and Indirect Effects: There should be little or no direct indirect impacts from the proposed action. Potential sources of hazardous wastes would be from the use of herbicides/pesticides, and fuels and lubricants used for machinery. Standard lease terms require adherence to applicable state and federal laws, which would include the Resource Conservation and Recovery Act (RCRA) and the Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation, and Liability Act (CERCLA.) Improper disposal of solid wastes is prohibited by the Federal Land Policy and Management Act (FLPMA.) Illegal disposal of hazardous or solid wastes has generally not been an issue with grazing permits, at least in the more recent past. The rare, isolated instance of spilled or abandoned wastes would be handled in accordance with the Grand Junction Field Office Oil and Hazardous Materials Incident Contingency Plan.

Cumulative Effects:

Given the rarity of incidents involving spilled and abandoned hazardous wastes, cumulative effects would likely be essentially immeasurable.

Protective/Mitigation Measures:

None required. Lease stipulations and hazmat response capabilities adequately provide adequate mitigation.

No Livestock Grazing

Direct and Indirect Effects: No impacts from spills of wastes, hazardous or solid materials resulting from livestock grazing operations would occur under this alternative.

Cumulative Effects:

No cumulative impacts from spills of wastes, hazardous or solid materials resulting from livestock grazing operations would occur under this alternative.

3.5 LAND RESOURCES

3.5.1 Recreation

Current Conditions

The subject allotment is not part of a designated recreation management area and does not contain any developed recreation facilities. The allotment receives limited OHV use. Hunting is the primary recreation activity within the allotment. Hunting for elk, deer, bear, and mountain lion occurs in the area during fall and winter hunting seasons. Some dispersed camping also occurs at undeveloped sites throughout the area. No BLM traffic counter data is available for recreation visitor use estimates in this area. The primary recreation use season for the area is spring and fall when temperatures are moderate.

The Project Area is located in Colorado Parks and Wildlife (CPW) Game Management Unit (GMU) 42. This GMU has historically been very popular with big-game hunters and can be expected to remain so into the future. The GJFO manages three Special Recreation Permit (SRP) for mountain lion hunting in the area. The following mountain lion outfitters are authorized to operate in the project area: Alamo Outfitters, Backcountry Outfitters, High Lonesome Lodge, Cat Track Outfitters, and Mark Davies Outfitters.

No Action (Current Permit)

Direct and Indirect Effects: Under this alternative current grazing operations would continue. Livestock grazing would continue to be present (or allowed) during the higher use spring and fall seasons but would generally not have a noticeable effect on recreation activities. The presence of livestock would impact the physical setting of recreationists seeking a natural setting for their chosen recreation activity. Since fall livestock grazing does not currently occur impacts to hunting would be minimal. Indirect effects include trail damage (loosening soil on dry trails, pock-marking wet trails) from livestock use, and impacts to campsites from trampling and fecal material.

Cumulative Effects:

Ongoing oil and gas development in the area would continue to have an impact on recreation users for the long-term as new roads are developed and the naturalness of the area's setting is reduced. Big game hunters would be impacted by changes to habitat and potential changes in animal distribution.

Proposed Action

Direct and Indirect Effects: Impacts under the Proposed Action would be similar but reduced from those under the No Action alternative. The elimination of the permitted fall

grazing period would ensure minimal direct effects on hunting opportunities from livestock grazing.

Cumulative Effects:

Cumulative effects from the proposed action would be similar to those described in the No Action Alternative

No Livestock Grazing

Direct and Indirect Effects: Under this alternative, impacts to trails, campsites, game species and recreation setting characteristics from livestock grazing would be eliminated.

Cumulative Effects:

Ongoing oil and gas development in the area would continue to have an impact on recreation users for the long-term as new roads are developed and the naturalness of the area’s setting is reduced. Big game hunters would be impacted by changes to habitat and potential changes in animal distribution. Impacts from livestock grazing on these allotments would be eliminated.

3.5.2 Range Management

Current Conditions:

The current permit is under the following grazing schedule:

Table 3.5.2-1

Allotment/#	Category	Livestock #/Kind	Grazing Period	%PL	Type Use	Federal Acres	AUMs		
							Active	Suspended	Total
Lyons/ Anderson 16811	Improve	80 Cattle 80 Cattle	05/01 to 06/14 10/16 to 11/30	91 91	A	1,963	218	317	535

Over the last 13 years the permittee has only used the allotment in the spring and the allotment has not been used by livestock in the fall since 1993 when it was converted from sheep to cattle. For spring use (05/01 to 06/14) 108 active AUMs are allowed but for most of these years the permittee has used less than the 108 AUMs due to dry conditions, fire rehabilitation, and availability of water.

Range studies conducted on the allotment in 2011 found that vegetation conditions are static or improving and concluded that overall, vegetation conditions are improving. The permittee has adjusted their livestock numbers each year to accommodate for variation in rangeland conditions that occur from year to year. This management appears to be working to improve rangeland health.

Under the current livestock management, rangeland conditions would be expected to remain static or improve depending on timing and amount of precipitation.

No Action:

Direct and Indirect Effects: Under the No Action Alternative, issuance of the new permit would be the same grazing schedule with the same terms and conditions as the current permit. The current permit was issued under the Appropriations Act to continue as is until analyzed under an environmental assessment (EA).

If the allotment is grazed as specified under the No Action Alternative for both spring and fall use, vegetation conditions would likely decline due to vegetation being grazed during the critical growth period in the spring and again in the fall. After spring grazing, some regrowth would occur but would be grazed in the fall limiting the amount of cover and forage left for the next spring.

Cumulative Effects: The incremental impacts of the No Action Alternative when added to past, present and reasonably foreseeable actions related to oil and gas activities, recreation, vegetation treatments would have low cumulative effects. Effects would be low across the entire allotment and watersheds associated with the allotment.

Proposed Action:

Direct and Indirect Effects: Under the Proposed Action the grazing schedule would be during the spring from 05/01 to 06/14. Fall use would be eliminated.

Table 3.5.2-2 Proposed Permitted Use

Allotment/#	Category	Livestock #/Kind	Grazing Period	%PL	Type Use	Federal Acres	AUMs		
							Active	Suspended	Total
Lyons/ Anderson 16811	Improve	80 Cattle	05/01 to 06/14	91	A	1,963	108	0	108

Overall, under the current management rangeland conditions are improving. This management would continue with AUMs adjusted from year to year depending on rangeland conditions.

Rangeland conditions should continue to improve with the rest rotation system allowing cool season perennials to complete their growth cycle every other year.

The term of the new permit analyzed under this EA would be for 9 years (CFR 4130).

Cumulative Effects:

Cumulative effects would be the same as the No Action Alternative.

No Livestock Grazing

Direct and Indirect Effects: Under the No Grazing Alternative the grazing permit would not be renewed and livestock grazing on the Lyons/Anderson Allotment would be terminated. This would cause a negative financial impact to the permittee. Required maintenance on range improvement projects would no longer occur.

Cumulative Effects:

Under No Livestock grazing, the action of livestock grazing would be removed from cumulative effects with oil and gas activities, recreation and vegetation treatments. Oil and gas, recreation and vegetation treatments would continue with no livestock grazing. The cumulative effects of these activities would be low.

CHAPTER 4 - CONSULTATION AND COORDINATION

4.1 LIST OF PREPARERS AND PARTICIPANTS

INTERDISCIPLINARY REVIEW

NAME	TITLE	AREA OF RESPONSIBILITY
Julia Christiansen	Natural Resource Specialist	Surface Management and Permitting for Oil & Gas, Realty Authorizations, Land Tenure/Status
Natalie Clark	Archaeologist	Cultural Resources, Native American Religious Concerns
Michelle Bailey Chris Pipkin	Outdoor Recreation Supervisor Outdoor Recreation Planner	Access, Transportation, Recreation, VRM, Wilderness, ACECs
Scott Clarke	Range Management Specialist	Vegetation, Range,
Jacob Martin	Range Management Specialist	Range, Forestry
Jim Dollerschell	Range Management Specialist	Range, Wild Horse & Burro Act
David Scott Gerwe	Geologist	Geology, Paleontology
Alan Kraus	Hazardous Materials Specialist	Hazardous Materials
Robin Lacy	Realty Specialist	Land Tenure/Status, Realty Authorizations
Heidi Plank	Wildlife Biologist	T&E Species, Migratory Bird Treaty Act, Terrestrial & Aquatic Wildlife
Anna Lincoln	Ecologist	Land Health Assessment, Range Ecology, Special Status Plant Species
Christina Stark	Environmental Coordinator	Environmental Justice, Prime & Unique Farmlands, Environmental Coordinator
Nate Dieterich	Hydrologist	Soils, Air Quality, Water Quality, Hydrology, Water Rights
Mark Taber	Range Management Specialist	Weed Coordinator, Invasive, Non-Native Species
Lathan Johnson	Fire Ecologist Natural Resource Specialist	Fire Ecology, Fuels Management

4.2 TRIBES, INDIVIDUALS, ORGANIZATIONS, OR AGENCIES CONSULTED

David and Chris Long – Grazing Permittee

A consultation letter dated April 14, 2014 was sent to the following tribes notifying them of this permit renewal.

Ute Indian Tribe of the Uintah and Ouray Reservation

Ute Mountain Ute Tribe

Southern Ute Indian Tribe

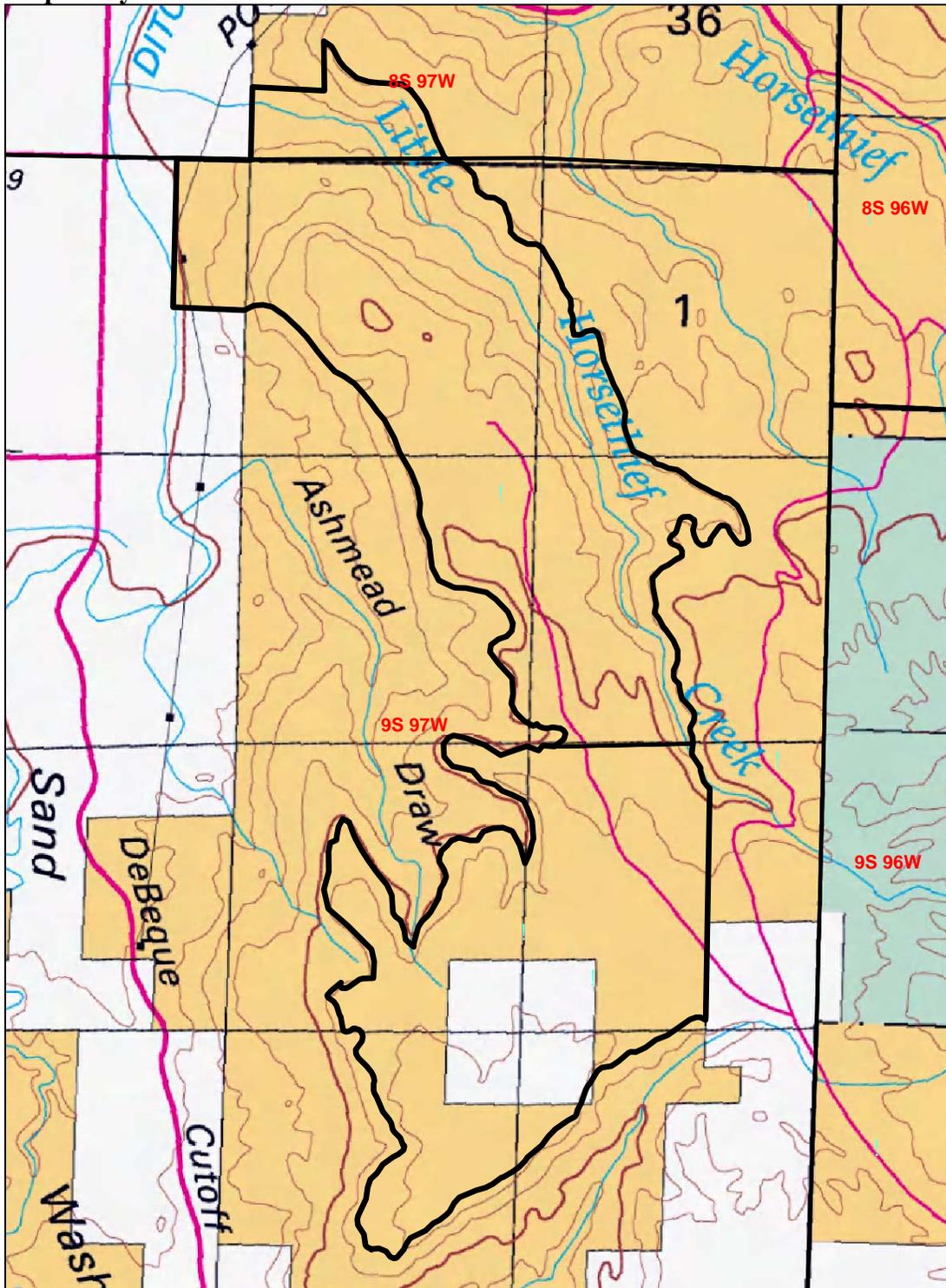
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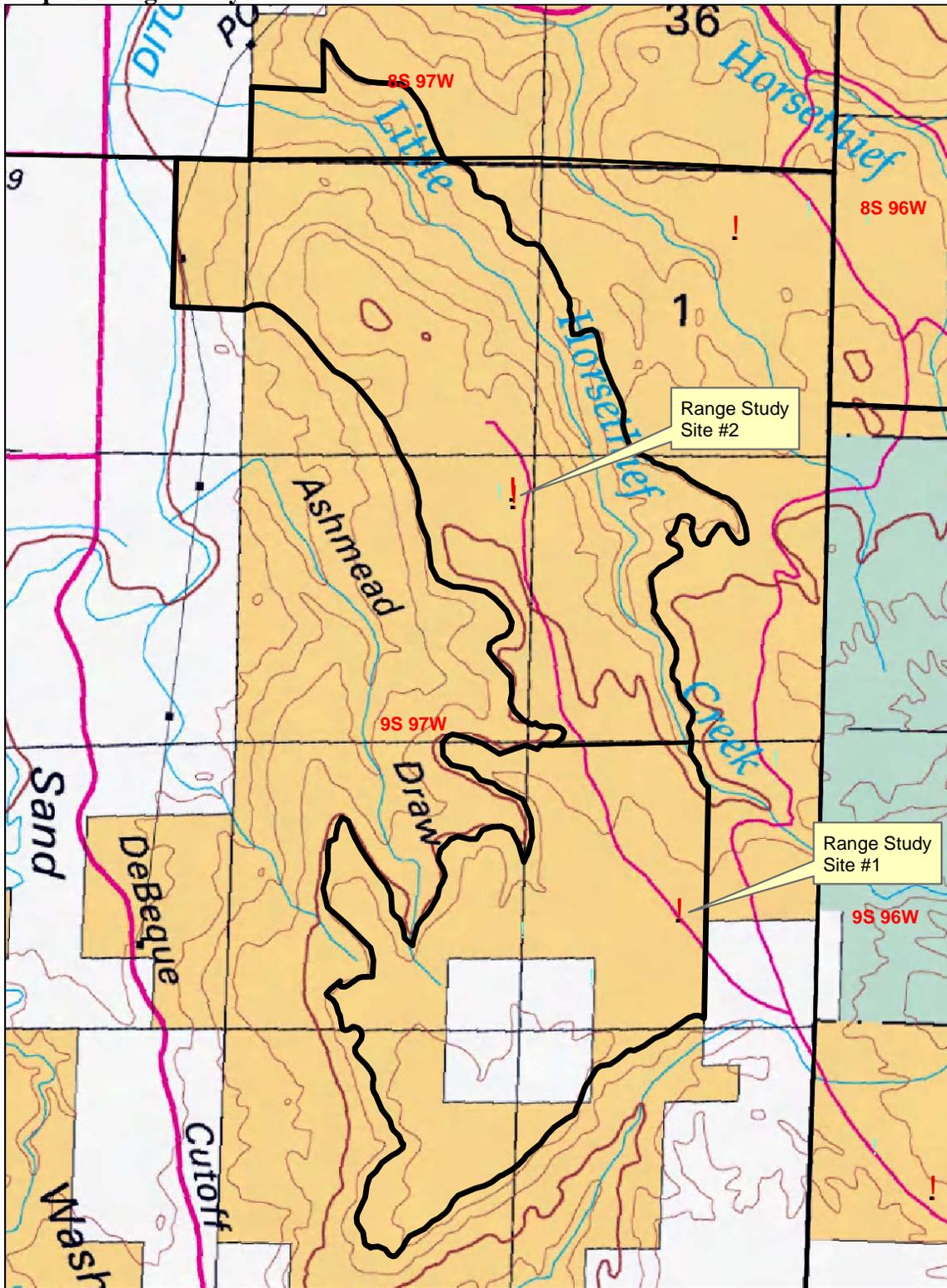
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Appendix 1 Maps

Map #1 Lyons/Anderson Allotment



Map #2 Range Study Sites



**DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT
GRAND JUNCTION FIELD OFFICE**

FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT

**Grazing Permit Renewal for the Lyons/Anderson Allotment
DOI-BLM-CO-130-2014-0023-EA**

Based on the analysis of potential environmental impacts contained in the attached environmental assessment, and considering the significance criteria in 40 CFR §1508.27, I have determined that the Proposed Action will not have a significant effect on the human environment. An environmental impact statement is therefore not required.

BACKGROUND

The Bureau of Land Management prepared an Environmental Assessment (EA) which analyzed the effects of re-authorization of Grazing Permit #0507199 on the Lyons/Anderson Allotment. The EA analyzed impacts and recommended mitigation measures for managing grazing on public lands in a responsible manner that is compatible with Standards for Public Land Health, other resource uses and objectives, and in compliance with grazing regulations under 43 CFR 4110.1(a)(1). In order to graze livestock on public land, the livestock permittee must hold a valid grazing permit

The EA identified a proposed action that would modify the current grazing schedule of 80 cattle 05/01 – 06/14 = 108 animal unit months (AUMs) and 80 cattle 10/16 – 11/30 = 110 AUMs to only spring use of 80 cattle 05/01 – 06/14 = 108 AUMs. This change would eliminate the fall use and would maintain the same authorized spring use as the current permit.

RATIONALE: The analysis demonstrates that the proposed action would not have any significant impacts to the natural resources. The proposed grazing program is at carrying capacity with a grazing plan for rest-rotation that would allow for growth and reproduction of key forage species, and continues a rangeland monitoring program which has the capability of measuring the impacts of grazing. The change in permitted grazing would eliminate fall use. The proposed action is in accordance with 43 Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) §4130.2.

Intensity

I have considered the potential intensity and severity of the impacts anticipated from the continuation of grazing on the Lyons/Anderson Allotment relative to each of the ten areas suggested for consideration by the CEQ. With regard to each:

1. Impacts that may be both beneficial and adverse.

This project may have minor short term impacts to soils, vegetation, and wildlife; however these impacts are not significant. This project would have a long term net benefit on the allotment because it better suits proper grazing management of native perennial plants. The grazing program is expected to benefit the soil and vegetation resource and the resources on which health of these resources is based.

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

The proposed action is not expected to impact public health and safety.

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

The proposed action would not significantly impact the unique characteristics of the historical or cultural resources on the allotment. There are no significant impacts to parklands, prime farmlands, wetlands or wild and scenic rivers within the project area. There are no municipal water supplies in the project area.

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

The impacts of grazing are generally well known and documented in the academic and practicing communities. Therefore the environmental effects are not likely to be controversial.

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

Livestock grazing has a long history in the region and poses no 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.*

This decision is like one of many that have previously been made and will continue to be made by BLM responsible officials regarding livestock grazing on public lands. The decision is within the scope of the Resource Management Plan and is not expected to establish a precedent for future actions. The decision does not represent a decision in principle about a future consideration.

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

There are no significant cumulative effects on the environment, either when combined with the effects created by past and concurrent projects, or when combined with the effects from natural changes taking place in the environment or from reasonably foreseeable future projects.

8. *The degree to which the action may adversely affect districts, sites, highways, structures, or 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 historic resources.*

Cultural inventories have been conducted to establish potential impacts from livestock grazing. No adverse impacts have been identified for the proposed action at this time.

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.*

No negative impacts are expected to endangered or threatened species or their designated critical habitats. The allotment contains general habitat for greater sage-grouse that may utilize the

allotment during winter months. The allotment falls within designated DeBeque phacelia critical habitat, and is known to contain two federally listed plants (Threatened): DeBeque phacelia, and Colorado hookless cactus. Livestock use would not be during the winter months and under the rest rotation grazing system habitat conditions for threatened and endangered species should maintain or improve.

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

This decision complies with other Federal, State, or local laws and requirements imposed for the protection of the environment.

FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT

On the basis of the information contained in the EA, and all other information available to me, it is my determination that: 1) the implementation of the Proposed Action will not have significant environmental impacts beyond those already addressed in the "Record of Decision and Resource Management Plan," (January, 1987) (2) the Proposed Action is in conformance with the Resource Management Plan; and (3) the Proposed Action does not constitute a major federal action having a significant effect on the human environment. Therefore, an environmental impact statement or a supplement to the existing environmental impact statement is not necessary and will not be prepared.

This finding is based on my consideration of the Council on Environmental Quality's (CEQ) criteria for significance (40 CFR §1508.27), both with regard to the context and to the intensity of the impacts described in the EA.

NAME OF PREPARER: Scott Clarke

NAME OF ENVIRONMENTAL COORDINATOR: Christina Stark

DATE: 8/7/14

SIGNATURE OF AUTHORIZED OFFICIAL:



Katie A. Stevens
Manager
Grand Junction Field Office



Date

4160 Sec. 3 (LLCON03000)
Allotment #16811

NOTICE OF PROPOSED DECISION

CERTIFIED MAIL NO.
RETURN RECEIPT REQUESTED

David and Chris Long
57609 OE Road
Collbran, CO 81624

Dear Mr. and Mrs. Long,

Your current Grazing Permit for the Lyons/Anderson Allotment was issued under the 2012 Appropriations Act until analyzed under an environmental assessment (EA). This EA has been completed with a proposed action to renew Grazing Permit #0507199 for David and Chris Long on the allotment. Term of the grazing permit will be for a period of 9 years based on your base property lease agreement with Betty Silzell that expires September 25, 2023. The term of your new Grazing Permit will be October 1, 2014 to September 25, 2023.

Under the proposed action, season of use and AUMs for the spring will remain the same. Fall use will be removed as no fall use has occurred on the allotment since 1993 and does not coincide with the permittee's grazing operation.

Enclosed is your new grazing permit which will be effective for the period October 1, 2014 to September 25, 2023. Please sign, date and return **both copies** to this office. I will return a copy for your records following approval.

On the basis of the information contained in the EA (DOI-BLM-CO-130-2014-0023-EA), and all other information available to me, it is my determination that: 1) the implementation of the Proposed Action will not have significant environmental impacts beyond those already addressed in the 1987 Grand Junction Resource Management Plan; (2) the Proposed Action is in conformance with the Resource Management Plan; and (3) the Proposed Action does not constitute a major federal action having a significant effect on the human environment.

Therefore, an environmental impact statement or a supplement to the existing environmental impact statement is not necessary and will not be prepared.

Therefore in accordance with 43 CFR 4130.2, it is my proposed decision to issue Grazing Permit #0507199 for the period of October 1, 2014 to September 25, 2023 with the following Schedule, Permitted Use, and Terms and Conditions.

New Grazing Schedule:

Allotment/#	Livestock #/Kind	Grazing Period	%PL	Type Use	AUMS
Lyons/Anderson #16811	80 C	05/01 to 06/14	91	A	108

%PL is the percentage of BLM lands used for grazing within the allotment.

AUM-The amount of forage necessary for the sustenance of one cow/calf pair or its equivalent for a period of one month.

Allotment Summary:

Allotment	Federal Acres	AUMs		
		Active	Suspended	Total
Lyons/Anderson	1,963	108	0	108

Terms and Conditions:

1. Livestock grazing utilization levels on key native forage species (Indian ricegrass, poa grasses, squirreltail grass, western wheat grass, ryegrasses, sand dropseed grass, needle and thread grass, galleta grass, winter fat, sedges, shadscale, serviceberry and snowberry) will not exceed 40%. Utilization levels on non-native grasses in the seedings (crested wheat, rye grasses) will not exceed 50%. If utilization levels are approaching allowable use, livestock will be required to be moved to areas within the allotment that are not approaching allowable use levels. When such areas are not available, livestock will be removed from the allotment when allowable use rates are met. Management adjustments will be made the following year to avoid recurring instances of over utilization.
2. Use supervision checks by BLM staff will be conducted to assure grazing compliance. The Grand Junction Field Office will use utilization checks, collect trend data, and evaluate allotments whenever necessary. Evaluation of monitoring will be used to make appropriate changes to grazing management in order to protect land health.
3. This permit is subject to change if results from a land health assessment conclude that the Standards for Rangeland Health are not being met and livestock grazing is determined to be the cause.
4. To allow for variation in climate, plant growth conditions, and flexibility in permittee livestock operations, the BLM may adjust the authorized grazing period by up to two

weeks if rangeland conditions are determined by the Authorized officer to be satisfactory for livestock use and AUMs are not exceeded.

5. Salting and mineral blocks will be placed at least one quarter (1/4) mile or further from water sources. Less than one quarter mile may be allowed if terrain does not allow for one quarter mile distance and approved by the BLM AO.
6. All new range improvement projects will be in accordance with BLM standards.
 - Example - wildlife escape ramps are required in water troughs under BLM standards.
7. Water source areas will be monitored by the permittee and BLM for infestation of noxious weeds. The permittee and BLM will coordinate to treat and eradicate any weed infestations should they occur.
8. Upon approval by the Authorized Officer (AO), the permittee will have the option to apply for more cattle over a shorter time period as long as AUMs are not exceeded in a grazing season and use is within the season of use.
9. Temporary Non-renewable (TNR) or Adaptive Use may be approved by the authorized BLM officer if additional forage, such as annuals are deemed available within the authorized grazing period and the vast majority of the grazing area is meeting Land Health Standards.
10. Maintenance of all structural rangeland improvements (RI) and other projects are the responsibility of the permittee to which they have been assigned. Maintenance would be in accordance with cooperative agreements and/or range improvement permits (43 CFR 4120.3-1). Failure to maintain assigned projects in a satisfactory/functional condition may result in withholding authorization to graze livestock until maintenance is completed. Construction of new RI on BLM administered lands is prohibited without approval from the authorized officer.
 - a. The BLM authorized officer will be contacted prior to any range project maintenance activity involving soil surface disturbance. An example includes but not limited to cleaning of ponds with heavy equipment, which would involve soil surface disturbance. All heavy equipment will be washed and free of debris before entering BLM lands.
11. Permittees or lessees shall provide reasonable access across private and leased lands to the Bureau of Land Management for the orderly management and protection of the public lands related to grazing administration.
12. Grazing will be deferred on new vegetation treatments and rehabilitated burned areas to allow two growing seasons of rest unless otherwise authorized. Coordination and cooperation will occur with the permittee prior to any treatment.

13. The permittee shall submit an Actual Use form within 15 days after completing their annual grazing use as outlined in 43 CFR 4130.3-2(d).
14. It is the responsibility of the Permittee to inform all persons associated with work on federal lands subject to the permit that they would be subject to prosecution for knowingly disturbing historic or archaeological sites, or for collecting artifacts.
15. Surface disturbing range improvements associated with the allotment (e.g., fences, ponds) are subject to compliance requirements under Section 106 and will undergo standard cultural resources inventory and evaluation procedures.
16. If newly discovered cultural resources are identified during project implementation, work in that area should stop and the BLM Authorized Officer should be notified immediately (36 CFR 800.13).
17. Notify the Authorized Officer (AO) by telephone and with written confirmation, immediately upon discovery of human remains, funerary items, sacred objects, or objects of cultural patrimony. Activities would stop in the immediate area of the find, and the discovery would be protected for 30 days or until notified to proceed in writing by the AO.
18. During dry and drought conditions adjustments will be made that involve reduction of AUMs or non-use as stated under Code of Federal Regulations 4110.3-2 “Decreasing permitted use” (a) Permitted use may be suspended in whole or in part on a temporary basis due to drought, fire, And 4110.3-3 “Implementing reductions in permitted use” (a) After consultation, cooperation, and coordination with the affected permittee or lessee,...., reductions of permitted use shall be implemented through a documented agreement or by decision of the authorized officer. (b) When the authorized officer determines that the soil, vegetation, or other resources on the public lands require immediate protection because of conditions such as drought, fire,, the authorized officer shall close allotments or portions of allotments to grazing by any kind of livestock or modify authorized grazing use notwithstanding the provisions of paragraph (a) of this section.
19. If water is available for proper distribution of livestock use, rangeland conditions are maintaining or improving and monitoring shows additional AUMs are available above the 108 AUMs, the permittee may coordinate with the BLM to apply for additional AUMs that would be approved or denied by the Authorized Officer upon review as stated under grazing regulation 43 CFR 4110.3 (Changes in permitted use).

Additional Terms and Conditions specific to livestock grazing within the known range of Colorado Hookless Cactus, De Beque phacelia, and its designated critical habitat (adapted from conservation measures in “Biological Opinion for Livestock Grazing Program Effects on Three Listed Plants in the Bureau of Land Management Grand Junction, Colorado River Valley, and Uncompahgre Field Offices):

Conservation Measure 1: In areas where there is a concern that Colorado hookless cactus, and DeBeque phacelia may be present, a survey will be conducted prior to any livestock management actions such as range improvements or maintenance, or weed management.

Conservation Measure 2: Maps will be provided to permittees that identify sensitive areas where restrictions may apply to particular grazing-related activities for the Colorado hookless cactus, and DeBeque phacelia (individual occurrences or populations plus a 200-meter [656 feet] buffer). As new information becomes available, and as necessary, maps will be updated by the BLM and provided to permittees each year if new occurrences are found. (Note: Maps provided to permittees will include sufficient buffers and randomized perimeters to avoid disclosing exact species locations.)

Conservation Measure 3: The permittee is required to notify the BLM Rangeland Management Specialist prior to any surface disturbing range project maintenance activity (fences, stock ponds, spring developments, etc.) in any allotment (standard condition for all BLM allotments). Surveys and avoidance measures will be required where effects to listed plants may occur.

- Construction of new range developments (e.g., fences, ponds, water troughs) would be designed to avoid impacts to listed species whenever feasible. New range developments that may affect listed species would not be permitted until completion of an additional tiered consultation.

Conservation Measure 4: If a permittee wishes to apply an herbicide treatment, they must obtain prior approval from the BLM. Appropriate applicator licenses must be obtained, copies of the appropriate Pesticide Use Proposal must be obtained from the BLM, and a Pesticide Application Record must be completed and returned to BLM no later than 10 days after herbicide application (standard condition for all BLM allotments).

- The permittee must consult with the BLM Rangeland Management Specialist and Biologist/Ecologist prior to applying herbicides or pesticides within 200 meters (656 feet) of individual plants or populations. Such treatments may be restricted or modified to avoid effects to the three listed species. Depending on the Field Office and weed program restrictions (see following point), additional section 7 consultation may be required prior to applying herbicides.
- All treatments will comply with the approved GJFO Integrated Weed Management Plan (IWMP) and section 7 consultation.

Conservation Measure 5: Within 200 meters (656 feet) of listed plants, motorized access for livestock grazing operations will be limited to existing designated roads and routes. Any additional access proposed for grazing operations would require additional surveys and section 7 consultation.

Conservation Measure 6: As a standard permit term and condition within occupied habitat for listed plants, seasonal utilization levels on palatable perennial forage will be limited to 40 percent to the extent possible, and average utilization will not exceed 50 percent (currently the approximate level of forage utilization in most areas on public lands).

Conservation Measure 8: No concentrations of livestock activities including but not limited to herding, routine trailing, bedding, salt or supplement, portable watering, and new stock ponds

will be allowed within 200 meters (656 feet) of individual listed plants or populations, except as provided below:

- Concentration may be allowed where separated by a fence or topographic feature (cliff) that will render the impacts to listed plants insignificant, discountable, or if impacts are wholly beneficial (distribute livestock away from listed plants).
- The BLM Rangeland Management Specialist will collaborate with the permittee to develop and employ appropriate grazing strategies for the allotment pastures and use areas to meet Colorado Public Land Health Standards, specifically standard 3 for upland plant communities and standard 4 for Threatened, Endangered Species (TES) species.

Where possible, grazing should be limited to 15 days or less in each pasture or use area during the germination, flowering, and fruiting period for the three focus species to ensure reproduction and recruitment.

Conservation Measure 9: If monitoring/LHAs conclude that an allotment with occupied habitat is not meeting the standards for special status plants, vegetation, or soils, and livestock grazing is identified as a significant causal factor in not meeting those standards, grazing permit modifications, mitigation, or other prescriptive measures will be required by BLM, such as:

- The BLM Rangeland Management Specialist will work with the permittee to pursue opportunities to allow portions of the allotment(s) to receive yearlong rest or deferment in order to increase plant vigor.
- Exclosures or drift fences may be considered in certain areas where individual plants or populations require special protections from livestock grazing or associated activities, as determined by the BLM.
- Permit terms and conditions may be modified to minimize impacts to listed plants (e.g., improved distribution, changes in season of use/class of livestock).

Additional Standard Terms and Conditions can be found on the signature page of the Grazing Permit.

Rationale

Under the Proposed Action, using a two pasture rest-rotation grazing system will allow opportunity for rangeland conditions to maintain or improve.

The Grand Junction Field Office will continue to monitor rangeland conditions on the allotment and as stated in the Terms and Conditions of the permit: use supervision checks by BLM staff will be conducted to assure grazing compliance. The Grand Junction Field Office will use utilization checks, collect trend data, and evaluate the allotment whenever necessary. Evaluation of monitoring will be used to make appropriate changes to grazing management in order to protect land health. This permit is subject to change if results from a land health assessment conclude that the Standards for Rangeland Health are not being met and livestock grazing is determined to be the cause. Under the Grand Junction Field Office rangeland monitoring program and terms and conditions of the proposed grazing permit, rangeland conditions are expected to maintain or improve.

Issuance of the permit is necessary for the continuance of the livestock operation of the grazing permittee. Analysis of the proposed action has concluded impacts to the human environment are

not significant. The proposed action is in conformance with the Colorado Standards for Rangeland Health as discussed in the environmental assessment. Monitoring of the rangeland will continue. Based on these results, the livestock management identified in the proposed action is appropriate.

Authority

The authority for this proposed decision is contained in Title 43 Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) §4130, §4160, and §4180 which in part state:

§4130.2(a) “Grazing permits or leases shall be issued to qualified applicants to authorize use on the public lands and other lands under the administration of the Bureau of Land Management that are designated as available for livestock grazing through land use plans. Permits or leases shall specify the types and levels of use authorized, including livestock grazing, suspended use, and conservation use. These grazing permits or leases shall also specify terms and conditions pursuant to §§ 4130.3, 4130.3-1, and 4130.3-2.”

§4130.2(d) “The term of grazing permit or leases authorizing livestock grazing on the public lands and other lands under the administration of the Bureau of Land Management shall be 10 years unless.....” (Unless circumstances require the permit to be less than 10 years).

§4130.3 “Livestock grazing permits and leases shall contain terms and conditions determined by the authorized officer to be appropriate to achieve the management and resource condition objectives for the public lands and other lands administered by the Bureau of Land Management, and to ensure conformance with the provisions of subpart 4180 of this part.”

§4160.1 (b) “Proposed decisions shall state the reasons for the action and shall reference the pertinent terms, conditions and the provisions of applicable regulations.”

§4180.1(a) "Watersheds are in, or are making significant progress toward, properly functioning physical condition, including their upland, riparian-wetland, and aquatic components; soil and plant conditions support infiltration, soil moisture storage, and the release of water that are in balance with climate and landform and maintain or improve water quality, water quantity, and timing and duration of flow."

Protest and/or Appeal

Any applicant, permittee, lessee or other interested public may protest a proposed decision under Sec. 43 CFR 4160.1 and 4160.2, in person or in writing to Grand Junction Field Manager, Bureau of Land Management, 2815 H Road, Grand Junction, Colorado 81506, within 15 days after receipt of such decision. The protest, if filed, should clearly and concisely state the reason(s) why the proposed decision is in error.

In accordance with 43 CFR 4160.3 (a), in the absence of a protest, the proposed decision will become the final decision of the authorized officer without further notice unless otherwise provided in the proposed decision.

In accordance with 43 CFR 4160.3 (b) upon a timely filing of a protest, after a review of protests received and other information pertinent to the case, the authorized officer shall issue a final decision.

Any applicant, permittee, lessee or other person whose interest is adversely affected by the final decision may file an appeal in accordance with 43 CFR 4.470 and 43 CFR 4160.3 and 4160 .4. The appeal must be filed within 30 days following receipt of the final decision, or within 30 days after the date the proposed decision becomes final. The appeal may be accompanied by a petition for a stay of the decision in accordance with 43 CFR 4.471 and 4.479, pending final determination on appeal. The appeal and petition for a stay must be filed in the office of the authorized officer, as noted above. The appellant must serve a copy of the appeal by certified mail on the Office of the Field Solicitor, Rocky Mountain Region, 755 Parfet Street Suite 151, Lakewood, Colorado, 80215 and person(s) named (43 CFR 4.421(h)) in the Copies sent to: section of this decision.

The appeal shall clearly and concisely state the reasons why the appellant thinks the final decision is in error, and otherwise complies with the provisions of 43 CFR 4.470.

Should you wish to file a petition for a stay, see 43 CFR 4.471 (a) and (b). In accordance with 43 CFR 4.471(c), a petition for a stay must show sufficient justification based on the following standards:

- (1) The relative harm to the parties if the stay is granted or denied.
- (2) The likelihood of the appellant's success on the merits.
- (3) The likelihood of immediate and irreparable harm if the stay is not granted, and
- (4) Whether the public interest favors granting the stay.

In accordance with 43 CFR 4160.1(a) a copy of this proposed decision shall be served on any affected applicant, permittee or lessee, and any agent and lien holder of record, who is affected by the proposed actions, by certified mail or personal delivery. Copies of this proposed decision shall also be sent to any interested public who has requested involvement in a specific allotment.

If you have any questions concerning the above matter please contact Scott Clarke of this office at (970) 244-3017.

Sincerely,



Katie A. Stevens
Manager
Grand Junction Field Office

Enclosure
Grazing Permit (Two Copies)