

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

**Environmental Assessment
for the 10 Year Permit Renewal of the Dolores Point
Allotment**

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

August 2015



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 Design Features Common to All Grazing Alternatives.....	3
2.2.4 Alternative C: No Livestock Grazing.....	10
2.3 PLAN CONFORMANCE REVIEW.....	11
CHAPTER 3 – AFFECTED ENVIRONMENT AND ENVIRONMENTAL CONSEQUENCES	12
3.1 INTRODUCTION.....	12
3.2 PHYSICAL RESOURCES.....	15
3.2.1 Soils (includes a finding on Standard 1).....	15
3.2.2 Water (surface and groundwater, floodplains) (includes a finding on Standard 5) 18	
3.3 BIOLOGICAL RESOURCES.....	20
3.3.1 Invasive, Non-native Species.....	20
3.3.2 Threatened, Endangered and Sensitive Species (includes a finding on Standard 4) 21	
3.4 HERITAGE RESOURCES AND HUMAN ENVIRONMENT.....	27
3.4.1 Cultural Resources.....	27
3.4.2 Tribal and Native American Religious Concerns.....	32
3.4.3 Wastes, Hazardous or Solid.....	34
3.5 LAND RESOURCES.....	34
3.5.1 Recreation.....	34
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	42
Map 1: Dolores Point Allotment.....	42
Map 2: Land Health Map.....	43
Map 3: Range Improvements.....	44

CHAPTER 1 – INTRODUCTION

1.1 IDENTIFYING INFORMATION

BACKGROUND:

This Environmental Assessment (EA) has been prepared by the BLM to analyze the issuance of a 10 year grazing permit for livestock grazing use on the 28 Hole Allotment. The previous ten year permit expired on December 31, 2014 and was subsequently renewed under the Appropriations Act of 2014 for two years to expire on September 30, 2016. A livestock producer (permittee/lessee) must hold a grazing permit/lease to graze livestock on public land. Grazing Permits specify all authorized use including livestock grazing, suspended use, class of animal, total number of AUMs, season of use, percent public land, and the area authorized for grazing use (43 Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) §4100.0-5).

The Dolores Point Allotment is located about 35 miles southwest of Grand Junction Colorado and 3 miles west of Gateway, Colorado both within Utah and Colorado. The allotment consists of approximately 7,947 acres of which 5,592 acres are located in Colorado, 1,998 are located in Utah, 37 acres are private land, and there are 320 acres of Utah state land. An interagency agreement between the Grand Junction and Moab Field Offices' authorizes and guides management for the area in Utah by the Grand Junction Field Office. (See the allotment map in Appendix 1. Elevation varies from 6,000 ft. in the east portion of the allotment to 7,800 ft. along the southern boundaries. Average annual precipitation across the allotment is 12-14 inches. There are two pastures within the allotment named North and South. Authorized grazing occurs during the spring and fall period rotating between the pastures. Grazing during the summer period occurs on private and state lands in Utah. A well located in Utah feeds a pipeline that runs north and provides water to both the North and South allotments. Several ponds also provide livestock water sources with some being fairly reliable and others dry most of the time. The main vegetation types are sagebrush/grass, mountain Shrub and pinon-juniper. Approximately 700 acres were treated by rollerchopping in 2002 to remove encroaching pinon/juniper in sagebrush parks and to create more open areas for livestock and wildlife. Funding was provided by the fuel reduction program. The area was reseeded as part of the project.

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 the resource characteristics of an allotment, potential, opportunities, issues, and needs. The Dolores Point Allotment is in the Improve (1) management category based on the need to improve existing resource conditions and being important elk and deer habitat.

The current authorized grazing schedule is as follows:

Allotment/#	Category	Livestock #/Kind	Grazing Period	%PL	Type Use	AUMS
Dolores Point/ #06429	Improve	287 Cattle	05/01 – 06/20	100	Active	481
		287 Cattle	10/01 – 11/05		Active	340

The allotment has 821 active AUMS and 0 suspended AUMs for a total of 821 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.

CASEFILE/PROJECT NUMBER: 0504579

PROJECT NAME: Dolores Point Allotment Grazing Permit Renewal

PLANNING UNIT: Grand Junction Field Office

APPLICANT: Grazing Permittee

1.2 PROJECT LOCATION AND LEGAL DESCRIPTION

LEGAL DESCRIPTION:

The Dolores Point Allotment is located in Mesa County, Colorado and Grand County, Utah approximately 35 miles southwest of Grand Junction, Colorado and 3 miles west of Gateway, Colorado (Appendix 1, Map #1 for allotment map). The allotment is located in Township 50 and 51 North, Range 19 and 20 West, New Mexico Principal Meridian in Colorado and Township 25 South and Range 26 East in Utah. Appendix 1 also contains maps for the Land Health Assessment and Range Improvements on the Dolores Point allotment.

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 application for renewal of the grazing permit preference for the Dolores Point allotment.

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. In order to graze livestock on public land, the livestock permittee must hold a valid grazing permit. 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 public comments were received for this project. Changes in the proposed action have been discussed with the permittee who is 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 Dolores Point 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 treatment completed in 2002 has shown success and may continue to improve. Monitoring shows that vegetation conditions on the allotment are improving. Portions of the allotment are not Meeting Land Health Standards due to decadent sagebrush and encroachment of pinon-juniper into sagebrush parks. The causal factor the areas not meeting standards are not livestock related. (See attached map).

1.5 DECISION TO BE MADE

The BLM will decide whether to approve the proposed Dolores Point 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 Dolores Point Allotment.

2.2 ALTERNATIVES ANALYZED IN DETAIL

2.2.1 Design Features Common to All Grazing Alternatives

1. Grazing systems and management practices should be directed at increasing perennial grass and forb cover and meeting Land Health Standards.

2. All uses including grazing should be designed to take into account the erodible nature of these soils.
3. Provide periodic rest during the critical spring growth period.
4. Grazing should be carefully monitored to ensure impacts to elk and deer habitat are minimal.
5. Monitoring would continue on these allotments to measure any impacts to resources or resource uses. The monitoring program would include appropriate consultation, cooperation and coordination with the rangeland users, other agencies, and interested publics. Close coordination between the permittee or their representative, Colorado Parks and Wildlife, and the BLM for all livestock related field monitoring is essential to determine conformity with the terms and conditions of the permits.
6. Table 3.4.1-2 identifies the results of the file search for NHPA compliance for water developments (areas where cattle congregate) and recommended new survey and consultation for section 106 for the area currently being used and a final determination of eligibility for previously recorded sites/IFs located within ¼ mile.
7. If the BLM determines that grazing activities would adversely impact any historic properties identified in the future, mitigation would be designed and implemented in consultation with the Colorado SHPO within the term period of the permit depending on which alternative is selected. The livestock impacts to these historic properties would be assessed within the term period of the permit.
8. If new information is brought forward or any site-specific Native American mitigation measures are suggested during future notification/consultation, the requests would be considered and adjustment to the allotment management plan may be required. If sites or areas of interest to local tribes are found during future inventory or during reevaluation of sites then consultation, including possible additional field visits to evaluate the sites, discuss the effects of the project, and incorporate appropriate protection measures will be made before implementation.
9. Additionally, if the BLM determines that grazing activities will adversely impact any tribal or historic properties of interest to tribes that may be identified in the future, mitigation will be designed and implemented in consultation with the tribes within the term period of the permit depending on which alternative is selected. The livestock impacts to these historic properties and areas of tribal concern will be assessed within the term period of the permit.
10. Continued monitoring of grazing systems for effectiveness in meeting plant species and cover goals is important, particularly with regard to spring season of use.
11. Continued monitoring and treatment of noxious/invasive plant species would be necessary to preserve vegetative communities and protect soil health.

2.2.2 Alternative A – No Action (Current Permit):

The No Action Alternative would be continuation of the current grazing permit. The two pasture rotation between spring and fall use would continue. The authorized grazing would remain as:

Table 2.2.2-1 No Action

Allotment/#	Livestock #/Kind	Grazing Period	%PL	Type Use	AUM's	Federal Acres	AUMs		
							Active	Suspended	Total
Dolores Point # 06429	287 Cattle	05/01 to 06/20	100	A	481	7590	821	0	821
	287 Cattle	10/01 to 11/05	100		340				

2.2.3 Alternative B – Proposed Action:

The proposed action is to issue the applicant a 10 year term grazing permit for livestock grazing on the Dolores Point Allotment. The term of the new Grazing Permit would be October 1, 2015 to September 30, 2025. The proposed action is in accordance with 43 CFR §4130.2.

Under the proposed action, the livestock type and numbers and total AUMs authorized would remain the same as the current permit. The change to the permit would be the grazing dates and shifting some of the spring AUM's to fall AUM's. Currently there are 481 AUM's authorized in the spring and 340 AUM's in the fall period. The proposed action would authorize 340 AUM's in the spring and 481 AUM's in the fall. This shift would relieve some of the grazing pressure in the spring critical growth period for forage species to the fall dormant season. Rotating spring and fall grazing use between the North and South pastures would continue. This will provide for rest from grazing every other year in each pasture. At this point the total AUM's authorized for the allotment appears to be appropriate. Utilization levels for key forage species will be established in the terms and conditions of the permit. If utilization levels are exceeded then movement of livestock off of the allotment will be required. Efforts would be made by the permittee to keep livestock spread throughout the pasture by salting, riding and/or water hauling locations. One pasture would be used in the spring one year and in the early winter the following year, and would not be grazed twice in one year. This rotation would provide rest from spring grazing every other year for each use area.

Table 2.2.3-1

YEAR	SPRING USE	EARLY WINTER USE
1	North Pasture	South Pasture
2	South Pasture	North Pasture
3	North Pasture	South Pasture
4	South Pasture	North Pasture

The spring use would be occurring during the critical growth period for cool season perennial grasses (Indian ricegrass, poa grasses, squirreltail grass, perennial wheat grasses, and needle and

threadgrass). Prior to spring use turnout a range readiness standard of 6" of new growth on cool season bunchgrasses is required. Fall and early winter use occurs when the majority of grasses are in a late season slow growth period or dormancy. The pasture used in the spring would have a 40% or less utilization objective on key forage plants because it would be grazed during the critical growth period. The late winter utilization objective would be 50% on key forage plants.

The Dolores Point allotment would remain in the "I" Improve management category.

The proposed action also includes the addition of Adaptive Management. The permittee with approval by the BLM would be allowed to change the grazing dates by one week prior to and one weeks after the grazing dates shown on the permit. Adaptive management would allow for flexibility in changes in climate and annual weather patterns including timing of moisture received and temperatures during growing seasons. These factors would influence plant growth and range readiness. This flexibility would also allow for minor adjustments to the permittees operation. Based on this addition of adaptive management grazing could occur anytime between the following dates for each allotment:

Dolores Point: 05/03 to 06/21
09/13 to 11/02

If an adjustment in grazing dates is made based on the adaptive management the number of AUM's allowed for that grazing period would not change. For example, if grazing use starts earlier than the permit date livestock would be removed earlier. Total AUM's allowed for each grazing period (spring or early winter) would not increase. Livestock numbers may also vary but total AUM's allowed would not. All changes in use would be approved by the BLM Authorized Officer (AO). This adaptive management would be incorporated into the terms and conditions of the grazing permit.

Temporary Non-Renewable use may be authorized by the BLM Authorized Officer (AO) if additional forage is available due to above normal precipitation or optimal growing conditions and utilization levels would not be exceeded.

Satisfactory results from range trend studies and no Land Health Assessment issues related to livestock grazing confirm that continuation of authorized grazing on the Dolores Point allotment should continue. There are areas either classified as Not Meeting or Meeting with Problems in relation to Land Health Standards. The reason for these classifications is primarily pinon-juniper encroachment or decadent sagebrush. Livestock grazing does not appear to be a causal factor. Monitoring will continue on the allotment to determine if conditions changes or conflicts arise.

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. Refer to Appendix 1 for a map of the range improvements.

Lunsden Reservoir	#270353	SL PM	T25S, R26E,	section 9, SENE
Well Pond	#270384	SL PM	T25S, R26E,	section 16, NWSW

Dolo Pond	#270512	SL PM	T25S, R26E,	section 8, SESE
Pace Reservoir #1	#270980	6 th PM	T15S, R104W,	section 31, NESE
Pace Reservoir #2	#272023	NM PM	T51N, R20W,	section 24, NWSW
Dolores Pt. Check1	#272024	6 th PM	T15S, R104W,	section 32, SWSW
Air Strip Reservoir	#272030	6 th PM	T15S, R104W,	section 32, SWSW
Dolores Point Reservoir	#272031	6 th PM	T15S, R104W,	section 32, NWSW
Winfield Pond	#272063	NM PM	T51N, R20W,	section 24, SWNE
Tunnel Pond	#272064	NMPM	T51N, R20W,	section 35, NESE
Colorado Pond	#272065	NMPM	T50N, R20W,	section 1, NWNW
Lumsden Fence	#274435,	6 th PM	T15S, R104W,	section 29, SWSW
Division Fence	#274436,	NM PM	T51N, R20W,	section 24, NWSW
John Brown Fence	#274465,	NM PM	T51N, R20W,	section 26, SESE
Dolores Point Fence	#274541,	NM PM	T51N, R20W,	section 26 SWSE
Dolores Point Pipeline	#274456,	SL PM,	T25S, R26E,	section 9, NWSW
Dolores CG WG Fences	#274531,	SL PM,	T25S, R26E,	section 8, NWSE
Dolores Point Well	#274497,	SL PM,	T25S, R26E,	section 9, NWSW
Dolores Point Cattleguard	#274395,	SL PM,	T25S, R26E,	section 8, SENE
John Brown Cattleguard #2	#274396,	NM PM,	T51N, R20W	section 25, SWSW

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 cleaning would not exceed the area originally disturbed during construction of the project. Collection ditches may 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 cattleguard grate, replacement of cattle guard supports, or repair/replacement of wings. Heavy equipment such as backhoe would be required to remove cattleguard, remove soil, and replace cattleguard. Some cattleguards allow for cleaning by hand digging. The disturbed area would not exceed the area originally disturbed by the installation.

Wells and Pipelines: Replacement or repair of well equipment, troughs or pipelines. Heavy equipment may be necessary to repair well. The disturbed area would not exceed the area originally disturbed by the installation.

All heavy equipment would be washed and free of debris before entering BLM lands.

PROPOSED GRAZING PROGRAM:

Proposed Permitted Use

Table 2.2.3-2 Proposed Action

Allotment/#	Category	Livestock #/Kind	Grazing Period	%PL	Type Use	Federal Acres	AUMs		
							Active	Suspended	Total
Dolores Point 06429	Improve	287 Cattle	5/10 - 6/14	100	A	340	821	0	821
		287 Cattle	09/20 - 11/9	100		481			

Terms and Conditions of the Proposed Action would be:

1. This permit is only valid with an approved base property lease.
2. The Dolores Point allotment consists of two pasture, a North pasture and South pasture. The spring grazing use shown on the permit will be rotated between the two pastures from year to year. This will provide rest from spring grazing in each pasture every other year.
3. 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 one week before or after the permitted grazing period if rangeland conditions are determined by the Authorized Officer (AO) to be satisfactory for livestock use and AUMs are not exceeded.
4. Temporary Non-renewable (TNR) may be approved by the AO if additional forage is deemed available within the authorized grazing period and the vast majority of the grazing area is meeting Land Health Standards.
5. Livestock grazing utilization levels on key forage species (Indian ricegrass, blue grasses, squirreltail grass, perennial wheat grasses, ryegrasses, sand dropseed grass, needle and thread grass, galleta grass, serviceberry, and snowberry) should not exceed 40% in the spring and 50% in the early winter grazing period. If utilization levels are approaching allowable use, livestock would be required to be moved to areas within the allotment that are not approaching allowable use levels. When such areas are not available, livestock would be removed from the allotment when allowable use rates are met. Management adjustments would be made the following year to avoid recurring instances of over utilization.
6. 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 including habitat assessment framework 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.
7. 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.
 8. 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.
 9. All new range improvement projects will be in accordance with BLM standards.
 - Example - wildlife escape ramps are required in water troughs under BLM standards.
 10. 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.
 11. Upon approval by the AO, the permittee will have the option to apply for more cattle over a shorter time period as long as AUMs and/or utilization levels are not exceeded in a grazing season and use is within the season of use.
 12. 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 shall be contacted 60 days 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.
 13. 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.
 14. 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.

15. 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).
16. It is the responsibility of the Permittee to inform all persons associated with work on public lands managed by the BLM subject to the permit that they would be subject to prosecution for knowingly disturbing historic or archaeological sites, or for collecting artifacts.
17. 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.
18. 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).
19. 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.
20. During dry and drought conditions adjustments will be made that involve reduction of AUMs or non-use as stated under 43 CFR §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 43 CFR §4110.3-3 "Implementing changes in active 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.
21. Salt and mineral blocks will not be placed in the general vicinity of undeveloped campsites where campfire rings are present.

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

2.2.4 Alternative C: No Livestock Grazing

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

Decision Language: 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

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 Dolores Point Allotment. CO-076-9-85-EA

Date Approved: July 8, 1999

Name of Document: Permit Renewal Dolores Point Allotment.
DOI-BLM-CO-130-2009-0091-DNA

Date Approved: September 4, 2009

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 ENVIRONMENTAL CONSEQUENCES

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).

3.1.1 Elements Not Affected

The following elements, identified as not being present or not affected are not brought forward for additional analysis in this EA:

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.

Geology/Mineral Resources – Cattle grazing does not impact geology or mineral resources.

Special Status Species Plants – A records search of BLM and Colorado Natural Heritage Program records confirmed that no rare plants are known to inhabit or have been recorded in the grazing allotment in the past. The proposed action is not anticipated to have any effect on any known rare plant species.

Special Status Species, Animals – There are no special status animal species present in the allotment.

Migratory Birds – There would be no impact to migratory birds.

Forestry – There is no sellable forestry products in this allotment.

Riparian Zones/Wetlands – No riparian zones or wetlands have been mapped in the Dolores Point grazing allotment. The minor adjustment in season of use and associated AUMs would slightly decrease grazing pressure during the growing season, and increase dormant season grazing. This change would be expected to improve watershed health, in turn benefiting down gradient drainages and associated riparian zones and wetlands.

Paleontological – Cattle grazing will not impact paleontological resources.

Visual Resources – Livestock grazing currently exists on the landscape. As such, continuing to authorize livestock grazing would not result in a change to the landscape that would be noticed by the casual observer.

Social/Economic – The small and scale and scope of this project would not have measureable economic impacts. The proposed activities are also located in a remote location outside of a very small community. There are no minority communities near the livestock grazing allotment.

Transportation and Access – Renewing the grazing permit would not change access to or across BLM public lands.

Special Designations (ACEC, RMAs, WSR) – There are no ACEC's or special areas within the allotment.

Wilderness and Wilderness Characteristics – The allotment overlaps part of the Lumsden Canyon lands with wilderness characteristics area. Livestock grazing would not change the size, apparent naturalness, outstanding opportunities for solitude, or outstanding opportunities for primitive recreation. See special status species for impacts to supplemental values (Fisher milkvetch, Horseshoe milkvetch, Dolores River skeletonplant and Osterhout's cyptantha).

Wild Horse and Burros – There are no wild horses located on this allotment

Land Tenure, ROW, Other Uses – Authorized uses within the project area include power line, telephone line, and communication site ROWs. Renewing the grazing permit would not conflict with these uses and would have no effect on land tenure.

Fire and Fuels – Renewing the permit would not impact fire or fuels.

Farmlands, Prime and Unique – There are no prime and unique farmlands located in the Grand Junction Field Office.

Wildlife- The allotment does not contain any critical or severe winter range for deer or elk. Grazing is currently not believed to be impacting wildlife and continuation of grazing is not expected to result in additional impacts.

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 includes the Dolores Point allotment. The area is within the Dolores River watershed. 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:

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:

Livestock Grazing, Uranium mining, recreation, hunting and fuel reduction vegetation treatment (rollerchopping). There was an airstrip at the end of Dolores Point but has been closed to aircraft use.

Present Actions:

Present actions include livestock grazing (cattle), and recreation. The Uranium mines in the area are subject to reopening if market prices rise to a profitable rate.

Reasonably Foreseeable Actions

Reasonably foreseeable actions include livestock grazing, recreation, and as stated above Uranium mines may reopen if market allows. Additional vegetation treatments may be necessary to remove encroaching pinon/juniper in sagebrush parks or decadent sagebrush in order to address areas not meeting Land Health Standards.

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"/>	PLB 5/4/15	
Water (surface & subsurface, floodplains)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	KEH 7/22/15	
Soils	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	KEH 7/22/15	
Geological/Mineral Resources	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	DSG 4/22/15	
BIOLOGICAL RESOURCES						
Special Status Plants	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	ARL 5/12/15	
Special Status Wildlife	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	HLP 6/5/15	
Migratory Birds	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	HLP 6/5/15	
Other Important Wildlife Habitat	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	HLP 6/5/15	
Vegetation, Forestry	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	JRD 5/8/15	
Invasive, Non-native Species	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	MT 5/19/15	
Wetlands/Riparian Zones	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	ARL 5/5/15	
HERITAGE RESOURCES AND HUMAN ENV.						
Cultural or Historical	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	ALR 6/17/15	
Paleontological	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	DSG 4/22/15	
Tribal& American Indian Religious Concerns	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	ALR 6/17/15	
Visual Resources	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	AW 6/3/15	
Social/Economic	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		
Transportation and Access	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	AW 6/3/15	
Wastes, Hazardous or Solid	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	AK 5/11/15	
LAND RESOURCES						
Recreation	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	AW 6/3/15	
Special Designations (ACEC, SMAs, WSR)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	AW 6/3/15	
Wilderness & Wilderness Characteristics	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	AW 6/3/15	
Range Management	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	JRD 5/8/15	
Wild Horse and Burros	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	JRD 5/8/15	
Land Tenure, ROW, Other Uses	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	RBL 5/11/15	
Fire/Fuels	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	JP 5/14/15	

3.2 PHYSICAL RESOURCES

3.2.1 Soils (includes a finding on Standard 1)

Current Conditions:

Soils within the Dolores Point Allotment have been mapped by the Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS) and the Web Soil Survey (WSS) was accessed to obtain the soils data (NRCS, 2015). Soils within this allotment have been described in two soil surveys. The Canyonlands Area, UT – Part of Grand and San Juan counties (UT 633) make up 25.5% the soils and Mesa County Area, Colorado (CO680) make up 74.5% of the area. There are 11 different soil map units ranging from 0.9% to 28% of the allotment. 11.9% of the soil map units occur on slopes greater than 40%. The remaining soils occur on slopes that range from 3% to 25% slopes. This allotment contains several areas of rock outcrop.

The predominant soil texture is sandy loam with a few instances of clay loams. Cobbles are present in many areas. Parent materials include eolian deposits derived from sandstone,

alluvium derived from sedimentary rock, residuum weathered from sandstone and colluvium derived from sandstone and shale.

Soil profiles can include A, B, C, and R horizons. A horizons can be as deep as 34 inches, but are typically very thin, less than 5 inches average. All soils are well to moderately well drained and have high to very high runoff potential. Soils are nonsaline to slightly saline.

Ecological sites include Upland Shallow Loam (Pinyon-Utah Juniper)(R035XY315UT), Upland Loam (Basin Big Sagebrush) (R035XY306UT), Mountain Loam (Oak) (R048AY415UT), Mountain Shallow Loam (Oak) (R048AY430UT), Talus Slope (Blackbrush-Shadscale) (R035XY018UT), Semidesert Gravelly Loam (Utah Juniper-Pinyon) (R035XY206UT), Talus Slope (Blackbrush-Shadscale) (R035XY018UT), Upland Stony Loam (Pinyon-Utah Juniper) (R035XY321UT), Mountain Loam (Mountain Big Sagebrush) (R048AY405UT), Clayey Foothills (R034XY289CO), and Loamy Foothills (R048AY284CO).

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.

A formal land health assessment was conducted by BLM in 2011 for the Gateway Land Health area which included the Dolores Point Allotment. Soils within the allotment boundaries were meeting land health standard 1 (BLM, 2011). There does not appear to be wide spread accelerated erosion or sediment production.

Alternative A – No Action (Current Permit):

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 with a rest and rotation pattern. Current permit AMU's for spring and fall would continue. The greatest potential impacts to soils include reducing cover (over utilization), decreasing soil function and productivity (compaction), and increasing erosion (particle detachment), especially during periods when the soils are wet. Spring is typically when this area can expect sustained wet soils; therefore, spring grazing poses the greatest threat. Geologic erosion causes the greatest amount of sediment in the watershed and improper grazing could artificially accelerate this erosion. Accelerated geologic erosion can be caused by trailing and concentration areas. Trailing and concentration areas can occur during dryer periods due to improper salting and cattle management.

Cumulative Effects: Continued grazing under current conditions combined with roads and recreation could result in degradation to soil health due to accelerated erosion caused from runoff due to the soils in the allotment having high runoff potential. The cumulative result of higher intensity spring grazing coupled with current roads and recreation activities may result in conversion of vegetative communities from functional conditions and desirable species to non-functional conditions and less desirable species. Degradation of a functional vegetative community could further compromise soil health over time.

Finding on Public Land Health Standard 1:

Soil health should continue to be maintained, but may decline due to the higher spring time AMU's.

Alternative B – 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, a decrease in spring use would reduce the impacts to soils. As a result, the proposed action could contribute towards improvement to public land health throughout the entire allotment.

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 recreation and roads 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.

Finding on Public Land Health Standard 1:

As a result, the proposed action should allow improvement in soil function. 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.

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.

Alternative C - 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.

Finding on Public Land Health Standard 1: Watershed health should continue at its current state or may improve in the absence of livestock grazing.

Protective/Mitigation Measures:

I. 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 Dolores Point Allotment is situated within water quality stream segment COGULD03a of the Lower Dolores River Basin. Assessment of water quality impacts and Clean Water Act compliance for this grazing permit included a review of the 2012 305 (b) report, 2012 303 (d) list, the Colorado Nonpoint assessment report, and all Grand Junction Field office data.

Most of this allotment lies within the uplands of John Brown Canyon, Lumsden Canyon, and Gateway Canyon. The extreme north-western portion lies within an unnamed tributary watershed to Beaver Creek. All of these are tributary to the Dolores River. These canyons typically flow for short periods of time in response to intense storm runoff and perhaps snowmelt. No perennial streams flow through this allotment. No water quality data have been collected within the allotment, since these canyons are generally dry.

Water Quality standards for all tributaries of the Dolores River in this area are use protected for Recreation E, Aquatic Life Warm Class 2, Water Supply, and Agriculture. Consequently, only a few standards apply, and there is no indication that those are being violated. Neither the 303(d) list nor the 305(b) report, including their monitoring and evaluation lists, indicate impairment of any tributary the Dolores River except for Disappointment Creek.

Stream segment COGULD03a 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 COGULD03a 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. 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 2011 for the Gateway Land Health area which included the Dolores Point Allotment (BLM, 2010).

Finding on Public Land Health Standard 5: Currently stream segments within the Dolores Point Allotment meet State water quality standards.

Alternative A – No Action (Current Permit):

Direct and Indirect Effects: Current grazing is permitted during spring, rested during much of the summer, and then grazed mid-October through early November, with varying numbers of livestock. With this timing and number of cattle permitted, no measurable increase in the sediment production is anticipated. Vegetative studies generally show upward or static apparent trend, indicating a healthy vegetative community. Good vegetative cover is instrumental to

minimizing sediment production from this area. In areas where livestock may create a reduction in vegetative cover, the potential of sediment reaching drainages is fairly low. This is a result of the relatively flat terrain in much of the allotment. The lack of perennial water, and the vegetative create a buffer between the uplands and the drainage.

Cumulative Effects: The cumulative result of continued spring grazing coupled with surface disturbance associated with fluid roads and recreation, 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.

Finding on Public Land Health Standard 5: Watershed health should continue to be maintained, but may decline due to the higher spring time AMU's.

Alternative B – 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 increased and spring use would be decreased both 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 associated drainages. 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.

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 water resources. Other land uses such as recreation and roads would continue to have the potential to negatively impact soil resources.

Finding on Public Land Health Standard 5: As a result, the proposed action should allow improvement in watershed function. 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.

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.

Alternative C - 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.

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.

Finding on Public Land Health Standard 5: Watershed health should continue at its current state or may improve in the absence of livestock grazing.

3.3 BIOLOGICAL RESOURCES

3.3.1 Invasive, Non-native Species

Current Conditions:

The Dolores Point allotment was intensively inventoried for noxious weeds in 2000 by BLM weed crews. By far the most common noxious weed of the allotment is Russian knapweed, which was mostly associated with old mining disturbances, pond sites, and roads. In the fall of 2000, the BLM weed program began a series of projects targeting Russian knapweed in this area. Since those initial treatments, the program has re-visited the Dolores Point area twice with the goal of re-treating the knapweed patches. While knapweed is still present within the allotment, it is not out of control, and could be considered in a maintenance mode.

Alternative A – No Action (Current Permit):

A key component of weed prevention is the sustaining a healthy and diverse plant community which provides competition against weed invasion. The Dolores Point allotment is healthy and competitive at this time and should, even under the current grazing plan, be able to remain so well into the future, assuming careful attention is paid to land health. This alternative would continue with a higher number of spring AUMs vs the Proposed Alternative, which would relieve some of the spring grazing pressure. Of the two choices, the proposed is better from a weed perspective because of the reduced pressure during the critical spring growth period.

Cumulative Effects: Spring grazing in this dry climate will always require a greater degree of attention than late or dormant season grazing. One could assume that over the long-term, and over the greater landscape, that more spring AUMs vs fall AUMs would present a higher risk of weed invasion due to a higher risk of decline in the desirable plant community.

Alternative B – Proposed Action:

Direct and Indirect Effects: The proposed action is to reduce the spring AUMs and add to the fall/early winter grazing period. Total AUMs remain the same, but less pressure occurs during the critical spring growth period. For reasons stated above, this is a better approach to providing a healthy and competitive plant community more capable of keeping invasive plants at bay.

Cumulative Effects: The long-term effects of shifting AUMs toward fall and winter should reduce the risk of weed invasion by increasing competition.

For both alternatives, it will be important for the permittee to be watchful of new weed infestations on the allotment, especially along roads and near range improvements (especially ponds). A quick and coordinated response by the permittee and BLM can prevent a weed problem from getting out of hand.

Alternative C - No Livestock Grazing

Direct and Indirect Effects: Livestock grazing and the development and maintenance of range improvements are a disturbance to the system, and therefore the potential exists for the introduction and spread of noxious weeds. However, these two practices are not the only vectors of weed introduction and spread....vehicles, recreationists, wildlife, wind, etc., also contribute to weed problems. Nonetheless, if there were no livestock grazing, one could assume that there could be a net decrease in the introduction and spread of weeds in the short, medium and long term

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

Current conditions:

The cliffs adjacent to the allotment provide nesting habitat for golden eagles and peregrine falcon. The allotment does not contain habitat for the Gunnison or greater sage-grouse and there are no fish bearing streams on the allotment. Birds of conservation concern for whom breeding habitat occurs on the allotment include Brewers sparrow, grace's warbler, juniper titmouse and pinion jay. A Land Health Assessment was conducted in this area in 2011. Portions of the Allotment were not meeting land health standards due to pinon and juniper encroachment, and low understory diversity and production. Livestock use on the allotment has been light and is not believed to be impacting wildlife habitat.

Alternative A – No Action (Current Permit):

Under the no action alternative grazing would continue as currently permitted, current management is not believed to be impacting special status wildlife or the land health standards, therefore no impacts to special status wildlife are expected.

Cumulative Effects: Current grazing is not believed to be impacting special status wildlife and is not expected to contribute to cumulative impacts

Alternative B – Proposed Action:

Under the proposed action grazing would focus on the fall months, and additional terms and conditions would be added to the permit. These changes are not expected to impact special status wildlife or the ability of the area to meet Land Health Standards.

Cumulative Effects: Current grazing is not believed to be impacting special status wildlife and is not expected to contribute to cumulative impacts.

Alternative C – No Livestock Grazing

Direct and Indirect Effects: Under the no grazing alternative negative impacts to special status species may occur if water sources are not maintained. Impacts as a result of reduced ground cover would be minimized as only wildlife grazing would be occurring on the allotment. Land Health Standard #4 would continue to be met.

Cumulative Effects: Cumulative effects of wildlife use would continue.

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

Current conditions:

Upland vegetation on the Dolores Point Allotment is comprised of eight ecological sites within Colorado and Utah. Below is a description of the major ecological sites:

Table 3.3.3-1

ECOLOGICAL SITE	PLANT COMMUNITY APPEARANCE	PREDOMINANT PLANT SPECIES IN THE PLANT COMMUNITY
Foothills Swale	Sagebrush/Grassland	Big sagebrush, Rubber rabbit brush, Fourwing saltbush, Basin Wildrye, Indian ricegrass, needle-and-thread grass, western wheatgrass, bottlebrush squirelltail, bluegrass, yarrow, globemallow, yarrow, and Indian paintbrush.
Loamy Foothills	PJ/Sagebrush/Grassland	Big sagebrush, Black sagebrush, serviceberry, western wheatgrass, mutton grass, western wheatgrasses, , bottlebrush squirelltail, needle-and-thread grass, Indian ricegrass, paintbrush, arrowleaf balsomroot, and lupine.
Foothill Juniper	Pinyon/Juniper Woodland	Pinyon pine, Utah juniper, Indian ricegrass, needle-and-thread grass, western wheatgrass, galletta, bottlebrush squirelltail, wild buckwheats, hairy gold aster, and lupine.
Mountain Loam	Grassland	Big sagebrush, snowberry, Needle and thread grass, bluegrasses, western wheatgrass, squirelltail, Erigonum, Balsamroot.
Upland Shallow Loam	PJ/Sagebrush/Grassland	Pinon/juniper, Mountain big sagebrush, black brush, mtn. mahogany, bitterbrush, , Indian ricegrass, needle-and-thread grass, blue grama, bottlebrush squirelltail, bluegrass, milkvetch, buckwheat, phlox.

The majority of the rollerchop vegetation treatment in 2002 occurred in the Foothill Juniper or Foothill Swale ecological sites. The purpose of the treatment was to reduce young pinon and juniper encroachment and create openings in some mature pinon/juniper stands. The project included reseeding the area with a mixture of grasses, forbs and shrubs. Shortly after the treatment there was a flush of cheatgrass due to its opportunistic nature. Overtime since the initial flush cheatgrass has declined in abundance due to the establishment and increase of the perennial grasses and forbs both seeded and nonseeded. Overall the treatment was a success in meeting the objectives of the project.

Land Health Assessment

In 2011, a Land Health Assessment was completed for the Dolores Point Allotment to determine acres Meeting Land Health Standards, Meeting with Problems, and Not Meeting. The entire allotment met Land Health Standards 1,2,4 and 5. Areas not meeting were for Standard 3. Following are the results of the assessment for Standard 3 on the public lands within the allotment:

Table 3.3.3-2: Dolores Point Allotment 2011 Land Health Standard 3 Assessment

Allotment and #	Acres	Acres in each category			
		Meeting	Meeting With Problems	Not Meeting	Unevaluated
Dolores Point #06429	7590	4626	443	2521	0

A attached map shows the Land health Assessment and the specific point locations where the assessment occurred. Following is a description of the findings for each point; if the area was Meeting with Problems or Not meeting, a description of biological integrity, cattle and livestock use, an overall summary and possible causal factor.

GW 152-1: Not Meeting Standard #3; Good perennial grass cover and diversity. High sage cover. Mostly old/mature plants, many are decadent. Annual production/reproduction good for grasses, low for sagebrush and forbs. Pinyons increasing. Old signs of cattle use. Signs of abundant deer/elk in the winter. Heavy to severe browse utilization. Trace of grasshoppers. Overall: Soils are stable with normal erosion. Hydrology functioning normally. Vigorous perennial grass, but ARTR is decadent and showing low vigor. Pinyon and juniper invasion could be treated. Rated as Not Meeting due to P-J invasion and decadent sagebrush.

GW153-1: Meeting with Problems Standard #3: All functional groups present in good balance. Trees and some sagebrush killed by roller chop. Numerous pinyons invading the treatment. Numerous grass seed heads and young sage observed. Winter deer/elk use. Browse utilization is light to moderate. Observed redbtail hawk. Overall: Soils are stable. Hydrologic function is normal. Good diversity and composition. Seeded species vigorous but patchy. Numerous young pinyons invading. Rated as Meeting with Problems due to overall good plant diversity but has P-J invasion.

GW151-1: Meeting Standard #3. Dominated by P-J with reduced shrubs and grasses. Old mature site. Patches of dead pinyon, frost-killed oak. Mtn. mahogany and sagebrush are decadent. Reduced grass reproduction, some young shrubs and trees. ; Livestock use only on open sage parks near water troughs. Browse utilization varies from light to moderate. Signs of deer, elk, bear, hummingbird, bobcat. Soils are stable. Hydrologic function is normal. Overall; Good diversity and composition. Seeded species vigorous but patchy. Numerous young pinyons invading.

GW 154-1: Meeting Standard #3; Excellent diversity of perennial plants. Trees and some shrubs killed by roller chop. Currently good age class mix and vigor, above-average production.

Numerous seed heads, shrubs sprouting from base. No recent cattle use. Signs of moderate deer/elk use. Signs of bear activity. Observed redbill hawk, pinyon jay. Overall: Soils are very stable. Hydrology functioning very well. Excellent diversity and productivity.

GW 149-1: Not Meeting Standard #3; Area is dominated by pinyon, grasses and shrubs are reduced. Numerous dead shrubs due to P-J invasion and frost kill. Duff is a major litter source. Reduced grass/shrub production and reproduction. Light to no livestock use. Browse utilization currently light to moderate. Signs of deer, elk, bear. Observed wild turkeys. Overall: Soils are stable. Hydrology is functioning but modified by tree cover. Heavy P-J invasion, P-J now dominant. Perennial grasses, shrubs, and forbs are dramatically reduced. Rated as Not Meeting due to heavy P-J invasion.

GW 150-1: Not Meeting Standard #3; Perennial grasses present but reduced, may be improving. Some ARTR mortality and decadence. Oak frost-killed but returning. Major pinyon invasion. Seed heads on grasses. Some young sagebrush plants. Past heavy use on sagebrush, currently none. Signs of bear, deer, elk. Overall: Some erosion but healing. Soils now stable. Some overland flow, but functioning. All functional groups present, but pinyon invasion has reduced grasses and forbs. Needs to be treated to restore functional group balance. Rated as Not Meeting due to heavy P-J invasion.

GW 148-1: Meeting Standard #3; All functional groups present. Pinyon have invaded sage parks and reduced vigor and production. Some dead pinyon, frost kill of oak. Shrubs are decadent. Trace of cheatgrass, P-J invading upland loam. Past livestock grazing, currently none. Deer and elk use. Browse utilization varies greatly by species and individual. Overall: Soils are stable. Hydrologic function is normal. Heavy runoff on roads. This complex has good diversity and cover. Increasing P-J invasion on upland loam sites.

Rangeland Trend Studies:

There are three range study sites in the Dolores Point allotment. Study sites are shown on the allotment map in Appendix I. Monitoring data at each range study site consists of a photo point and apparent trend and in some cases a nested frequency transect. Following is a summary of the trend studies at each location.

North 1: This study site is located in the North pasture and within the rollerchop treatment of 2002. Comparison of plot and aspects photos from 2001, 2003, 2005, 2008, 2012 and 2013, show a decrease in sagebrush due to the treatment. Perennial grass cover especially needle and thread grass remains good with some increase in cheatgrass following the treatment. The increase in cheatgrass is not substantial. Apparent trend was rated as upward in 1997, 2001, 2005 and 2013, and static in 2008 and 2012. Frequency data from 1986, 1989, 1993, 1997, 2001, 2005, 2008, and 2012 showed: sagebrush static until 2002 then decreased due to treatment, Needle and thread grass and western wheatgrass increased significantly, bluegrass was static until 2008 then decreased significantly and squirreltail bottlebrush showed a decrease. General observations in 2013 noted moderate to heavy spring grazing, cheatgrass was present but not dominant and good plant diversity. Overall the vegetative community at this study site is stable and in satisfactory condition

South 1: This study site is located in the South pasture and is also within the treated area. Comparison of plot and aspects photos from 2001, 2003, 2005, 2008, 2012 and 2013, show a slight decrease in sagebrush due to the treatment, and an increase in perennial grass cover. Apparent trend was rated as static in 1997 and 2012 and upward in 2001, 2005, 2008 and 2013. Frequency data from 1986, 1989, 1993, 1997, 2001, 2005, 2008, and 2012 showed overall: sagebrush and blue grama remained static, a slight decrease in junegrass and needle and threadgrass, and a slight increase in squirelltail. Most of the changes occurred between 2008 and 2012. General observations in 2013 noted grass and forb diversity was good, seedheads present on most grass species and the area had not been grazed that spring. Overall the vegetative community at this study site is stable and in satisfactory condition.

Dolores Point 3A; This study site was established in 2001 is located in the South pasture and is not within the treatment area. This site has a photo point and apparent trend only, no frequency transect. Comparison of photos from 2001, 2005 and 2013 show sagebrush static but becoming decadent, cheatgrass is prevalent, perennial grass cover remains about the same. Apparent trend was rated as high static in 2001 and 2005. General observations in 2013 noted good grass and for diversity, decadent sage, pockets of dense cheatgrass and lots of deer and elk sign and old cattle sign.

Alternative A: No Action Alternative:

Under the No Action Alternative, vegetation conditions would be expected to remain static and upward in areas with the continuation of current management. Current grazing use is resulting in a static to upward trend based on Apparent Trend data and plot photos. It would be expected that Land Health Standards would remain the same with no change in areas Not Meeting or Meeting with Problems due to livestock grazing not being a causal factor for the rating. The permittee has not utilized the allotment during the fall period for several years resulting in actual use being less than authorized. Part of the nonuse both in the spring and fall has been due to dry conditions. With reduction of AUMs during dry periods, vegetation would be expected to remain static if conditions continue to be dry, and to improve during times of average or above average precipitation.

Cumulative Effects: The combined effects of recreation, livestock and wildlife grazing, and vegetation treatments with the No Action Alternative would have cumulative impacts to vegetation. With current levels of these activities it would be expected that vegetative conditions would remain the same. Extended drought conditions may influence the vigor and frequency of desired plants.

Finding on Public Land Health Standard 3: Under the No Action Alternative, the portions of the allotment Meeting, Meeting with Problems and Not Meeting in relation to Land Health would most likely remain the same. Trends would also continue to be static.

Alternative B - Proposed Action Alternative:

Direct and Indirect Effects: Under the proposed action a two pasture rotation system would continue with each pasture receiving spring grazing every other year. The proposed change is to shift some of the authorized spring AUM's to fall use. This would reduce grazing pressure during the spring during the plant growth period which should improve forage plant vigor. The number of days grazed during the spring would 36 instead of 51. The every other year rest from spring grazing would benefit perennial plant vigor. The proposed two pasture rest-rotation system would allow cool season plants to complete their growth cycle every other year, and the grazed pasture would be limited to 40% or less utilization on key forage species. Cool season perennials would have the opportunity to increase in frequency. Vegetation conditions would likely improve on average and above average precipitation years, and remain static during years of below normal precipitation. Having the Adaptive Management would allow for adjustments in grazing dates due to growth conditions of key forage species. This would allow for adjustments in grazing use on forage plants and minimize grazing of forage plants that are behind in the annual growth rate. This should result in more vigorous plants and increased seed production.

Cumulative Effects: Cumulative effects would be the same as the No Action Alternative except the rotation of spring grazing in each use area should benefit plant vigor and cover, which in turn benefits wildlife species and overall land health.

Finding on Public Land Health Standard 3: Under the Proposed Action areas Meeting with Problems for Standard 3 could progress towards the Meeting category. The areas Not Meeting Land Health Standards would most likely not change status due to livestock not being a casual factor for the designation. Areas currently Meeting Land Health Standards would most likely remain under the same category. Some type of vegetation treatment or fire would be necessary to change areas not meeting.

Alternative C - No Grazing Alternative:

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 cumulative effect associated with livestock. However, recreation activities would continue along with the potential for uranium mining. Vegetation seeding would likely be implemented after wildland fires to combat cheatgrass infestations. The overall combined impacts of the remaining activities after livestock removal would be low.

Finding on Public Land Health Standard 3: Vegetation conditions would likely improve with no livestock grazing unless drought conditions persist, in which case vegetation conditions would remain static or decline depending on the severity of the drought. The areas Not Meeting Land Health Standards would

most likely not change status due to livestock not being a casual factor for the designation.

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 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 has been completed for the BLM by Grand River Institute (GJFO-CRIR 1109-09; Conner & Darnell 2009), which updated and upgraded the previous 5 year grazing permit renewal synthesis (McDonald 2003).

Since 1999 additional survey has been conducted in this allotment. Fifty-two cultural resource sites (including 11 that are in the Utah portion of the allotment) are present in the allotment and of those, 29 have been determined to be eligible or potentially eligible to the National Register of Historic Places. Nineteen eligible or potentially eligible prehistoric sites recorded to date identified evidence of direct animal activity or are of a site type that is of concerns to tribes.

This allotment is in Physiographic Unit A, in Unaweep Canyon. At the time of the 2009 assessment, thirty-eight allotments had been previously evaluated in this unit with approximately 10,550 acres or 5.5 percent BLM land inventoried. The statistical results for this unit are likely skewed by physiographic differences between the perennial streams/river and the steep brushy slopes. The average site/acre ratio in this area is 1:40 (2009:50) but allotments in Sinbad Valley and the uplands and mesas on either side of the Dolores River have a high site per acre ratio and the slopes in Unaweep Canyon have a low site per acre ratio (2009:51-53). The Dolores Point Allotment has a site/acre ratio of 1:29 and a resource (site and isolated finds) to acre ratio to be 1:14 (2009:52). The findings in the file search and evaluation of these allotments in the current EA support this previous finding in the 2009 report.

Table 3.4.1-1: Dolores Point Grazing Allotment Cultural Resources

Allotment Name and No.	# of Previous Class III Inventories /Acres	Site Number	Cultural Affiliation	NRHP Eligibility	# of Prehistoric Isolated Finds	# of Historic Isolated Finds
Dolores Point 06429	23 inventories/ 1292 acres (1049 acres to current standards,	5ME843	Unk. Prehistoric	FND	41	1
		5ME1164	Euroamerican	FNE		
		5ME1357	Unk. Prehistoric	FE		
		5ME1362	Unk. Prehistoric	FND		
		5ME1556	Unk. Culture	OE		
		5ME5116	Unk. Prehistoric	ONE		

243 acres not to current standards)	5ME5117	Unk. Prehistoric	ONE
	5ME5119	Unk. Prehistoric	ONE
	5ME5148	Unk. Prehistoric	FNE
	5ME5902	Unk. Prehistoric	ONE
	5ME5962	Unk. Prehistoric	OE
	5ME7026	Euroamerican	OE
	5ME12288	Euroamerican	FE
	5ME12785	Unk. Prehistoric	ONE
	5ME12786	Unk. Prehistoric	OE
	5ME12787	Unk. Prehistoric	ONE
	5ME12788	Ute	OND
	5ME12789	Ute	OE
	5ME12790	Unk. Prehistoric	OE
	5ME12791	Unk. Prehistoric	ONE
	5ME12792	Unk. Prehistoric	OND
	5ME12793	Late Prehistoric	OND
	5ME12794	Middle Archaic	OND
	5ME12795	Late Archaic, Fremont	OE
	5ME12796	Middle Archaic	OE
	5ME12797	Late Archaic, Fremont	OE
	5ME12798	Unk. Prehistoric	OE
	5ME12799	Euroamerican, Middle Archaic	OE
	5ME12800	Late Archaic, Fremont	OE
	5ME12801	Unk. Prehistoric	ONE
	5ME12802	Late Archaic, Euroamerican	OND
	5ME12803	Unk. Prehistoric	ONE
	5ME12804	Late Prehistoric	ONE
	5ME12805	Unk. Prehistoric	ONE
	5ME12806	Unk. Prehistoric, Euroamerican	OE
	5ME12807	Unk. Prehistoric	ONE
	5ME12808	Unk. Prehistoric, Euroamerican	OND
	5ME13062	Ute, Formative	OE
	5ME15765	Late Prehistoric	OE
5ME17380	Euroamerican	OND	
5ME18180	Euroamerican	OND	
42GR1468	Unknown	UNK	

		42GR2095	Unk. Prehistoric	FNE		
		42GR2096	Unk. Prehistoric	FNE		
		42GR2175	Unk. Prehistoric	FND		
		42GR2775	Unk. Prehistoric	OE		
		42GR2776	Unk. Prehistoric	ONE		
		42GR2777	Unk. Prehistoric	OE		
		42GR2778	Unk. Prehistoric	OE		
		42GR2779	Unk. Prehistoric	OE		
		42GR3930	Unk. Prehistoric	FNE		
		42GR3931	Unk. Prehistoric	FNE		

* OE – Officially Eligible; ONE – Officially Not Eligible; OND – Officially Need Data, further evaluation to determine eligibility; FE – Field Eligible; FND – Field Need Data; FNE – Field Not Eligible; NA – Not Assessed; UNK - Unknown

The prehistoric found within this allotment consist of two open architectural sites (5ME5962; 5ME13062); thirty (30) open camps (5ME1357, 5ME5116, 5ME5117, 5ME5148, 5ME5902, 5ME12785-5ME12793, 5ME12795-5ME12801, 5ME12807, 5ME12794, 5ME15765, 42GR2095, 42GR2096, 42GR2175, 42GR2775, 42GR2778, and 42GR2779); one prehistoric quarry site (42GR2776); nine (9) open lithic sites (5ME843, 5ME1362, 5ME12803-5ME12805, 42GR1468, 42GR2777, 42GR3930 and 42GR3931) ; five (5) historic mines or structures (5ME1164, 5ME7026, 5ME12288, 5ME17380 and 5ME18180); one brush fence (5ME1556), one prehistoric isolated feature (5ME5119), and three multicomponent (both historic and prehistoric) sites (5ME12802, 5ME12806 and 5ME12808).

The table above details the National Register of Historic Places eligibility for each site and their associated cultural affiliations. No Paleontological sites have been recorded. Sites with an “Official” designation have been formally determined for their eligibility to the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP) through consultation with the State Historic Preservation Officer (SHPO). Range staff has not noted any locations of cattle concentrations outside of pond areas for this allotment. There are eleven ponds where cattle may congregate in this allotment. One has been surveyed to standard (272023 – Pace Reservoir #2) and the remaining 10 ponds (270353, 270384, 270512, 270980, 272024, 272030, 272031, 272063, 272064, and 272065) will require additional survey to determine impacts from cattle.

Table 3.4.1-2

Allotment #	Acres Inventoried at Class III level	Acres NOT Inventoried at Class III level	% of Allotment Inventoried (all survey)	# Cultural Resources known in allotment	Potential of Historic Properties (yes/no)	Recommended Management (Inventory Required & Sites to visit)

<p>Dolores Point #06429</p>	<p>1049 BLM (1049 Total) 8 "to standard" reports</p>	<p>243 acres 15 surveys not to current standard</p>	<p>16% of the total allotment. (16% BLM) 1292 Total Acres</p>	<p>52 Sites, 42 Isolates</p>	<p>Yes</p>	<p>To standard inventory should be completed (minimum of 5 acres) around at least 10% of ponds by the end of the permit term.</p> <p>An additional 20 acres should be surveyed to determine grazing impacts in this allotment. Survey should be completed in areas where cattle do or are expected to congregate. Priority areas would include ponds, pre-FLPMA fencelines, and cliff areas.</p> <p>Sites 5ME5962, 5ME7026, 5ME12786, 5ME12788, 5ME12789, 5ME12790, 5ME12792, 5ME12793, 5ME12794, 5ME12795, 5ME12796, 5ME12797, 5ME12798, 5ME12799, 5ME12800, 5ME12802, 5ME12806, 5ME12808 and 42GR2175 should be monitored for grazing impacts.</p>
-----------------------------	----------------------------------------------------------	---------------------------------------------------------	-----------------------------------------------------------------------	------------------------------	------------	------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------

Monitoring is recommended of sites 5ME13062, 5ME7026, 5ME12786, 5ME12788-12790, 12792-12800, 5ME12802, 5ME12806, 5ME12808, 5ME5962 and 42GR2175. If newly discovered historic properties are identified on BLM lands as a result of future surveys, the BLM will evaluate the sites for eligibility and grazing and other impacts. If

the BLM determines that grazing activities will adversely impact any historic properties mitigation will be identified and implemented in consultation with the Colorado SHPO and Native American tribes. The livestock impacts to these historic properties will be assessed within the term period of the permit.

Alternative A – No Action (Current Permit):

Direct and Indirect Effects: Under this alternative the current grazing routine would continue. The direct impacts that occur where livestock concentrate include trampling, chiseling, and churning of site soils, cultural features, and cultural artifacts. Impacts also include artifact breakage and impacts from standing, leaning, and rubbing against historic structures, above-ground cultural features, and rock art. Broader indirect impacts from the cattle include soil erosion and gullying.

Indirect impacts from increased access, resulting from upgrades to roads and trails as part of pond or other facility maintenance, may result in increased potential for unlawful collection and vandalism. Livestock concentration areas (including bedding areas (such as rock overhangs), along fence lines, watering areas (such as ponds), salt blocks, shade areas, etc.) may cause concentrated ground disturbance and cause cumulative, long term, irreversible adverse effects to impacted historic properties if present in those areas.

Cumulative Effects: Continued grazing as previous permitted on this allotment may cause concentrated ground disturbance from cattle and cause cumulative, long term, irreversible adverse effects to known and also unrecorded historic properties. Additionally this allotment experiences vandalism in the form of unauthorized excavation and surface collection.

Alternative B – Proposed Action:

Direct and Indirect Effects: In general, the direct and indirect effects of the Proposed Action will be similar to the No Action Alternative, though the use of less grazing in the Spring could create some differences. Less grazing in the spring would result in additional vegetation growth that could stabilize cultural sites and reduce erosion. The placement of items such as salt blocks, and water hauling locations could greatly impact the concentration areas of the cattle. If the locations are collaboratively decided on with input from cultural resource staff, these items could be placed in such a way as to direct cattle away from important cultural resources thus reducing concentration on eligible or needs data sites. If salt blocks and water hauling locations are placed in inappropriate locations, cattle impacts could be greater than in the No Action Alternative.

Cumulative Effects: Continued grazing on this allotment would be similar under the No Action Alternative.

Protective/Mitigation Measures:

- The permittee is required to notify the BLM if any subsurface disturbance would occur for maintenance of any existing buried improvements (e.g. pipelines). Subsurface potential construction of range improvements where

subsurface disturbance shall occur may require the presence of a BLM permitted contract archaeologist. If monitoring is required archaeological monitors are required to be with the equipment and operator during construction activities.

These standard stipulations have been added to the Terms and Conditions of the proposed permit renewal:

- 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..
- Surface disturbing range improvements associated with the allotment (e.g. fences and ponds) are subject to compliance requirements under Section 106 and will undergo standard cultural resources inventory and evaluation procedures.
- 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).
- Notify the 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.

Alternative C - No Livestock Grazing:

Direct and Indirect Effects: The removal of cattle from the allotments 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 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 livestock grazing if the No Action alternative was selected.

Cumulative Effects:

If this alternative was selected it would increase the acreage where no grazing impacts would be attributed to cattle, but impacts to cultural resources through unauthorized excavation and other vandalism would continue.

3.4.2 Tribal and Native American Religious Concerns

Current conditions:

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. This allotment is in an area with cultural resources affiliated with Ute occupation. Several have clearly affiliated sites, others are inferred without further data recovery (absolute dating of hearths) to confirm. Additional information will be provided to the tribes regarding the presence of and management considerations for known sites that may be of concern, and notification for new sites identified by survey or allotment evaluation.

Alternative A – No Action (Current Permit):

Direct and Indirect Effects: Based on previous consultation for other projects, the environment of these allotments, and the results of the current literature review and fieldwork, there is evidence that there are sites that hold special significance for Native Americans in the allotment. Known Ute sites of concern in the allotment would be monitored and additional inventory may identify additional Ute sites or other sites or resources of interest. Because the cultural affiliation of other archaeological sites previously recorded in the allotment has not been established, it is possible that more sites that are affiliated to the Ute could be confirmed. As sites are reevaluated and survey is conducted in these allotments further consultation with the Ute Tribes would be conducted.

Cumulative Effects:

Continued livestock grazing does change the landscape that the Native Americans experienced prior to their removal, though active range management to increase forage would allow the pasture to rest which could increase natural vegetation resources. Additional impacts such as unauthorized collection of cultural remains, and resource important to tribes could still continue to impact the landscape.

Alternative B – Proposed Action:

Direct and Indirect Effects: The direct and indirect effects of the Proposed Action would be similar to the No Action Alternative, except that the utilization of the allotment less in the spring would potentially allow the plants to rest for a portion of the year which could increase the native vegetation and reduce erosion. If the locations for salt blocks, and watering sites, etc., are collaboratively decided on with input from tribes, these items could be placed in such a way as to direct cattle away from important tribal locations or resources thus reducing concentration on in inappropriate areas. If salt blocks and water locations are placed in inappropriate locations, cattle impacts could be greater than in the No Action Alternative.

Cumulative Effects: Continued livestock grazing does change the landscape that the Native Americans experienced prior to their removal, though allowing the pasture to rest could increase natural vegetation resources. Additional impacts such as unauthorized collection of cultural remains, and resource important to tribes could still continue to impact the landscape.

Alternative C - No Livestock Grazing

Direct and Indirect Effects: Removing grazing from the public lands would more quickly return the land use pattern to that prior to the contact period when Euroamericans and other ethnic groups first settled the Grand Valley immediately following removal of the Ute from their traditional lands. These conditions would best represent the landscape that the Native Americans experienced prior to the taking of their lands for the purpose of grazing and other resource uses by the non-native cultures, though some intensive restoration efforts would need to occur to fully achieve the landscape that was present previous to historical grazing.

Cumulative Effects:

No grazing of this allotment would increase the number of acres that would reflect the pre-contact conditions described in the Direct Effect indicated above, though additional multiple use impacts would still occur.

3.4.3 Wastes, Hazardous or Solid

Current conditions: Hazardous and solid wastes are not a part of the natural environment.

Alternative A - No Action (Current Permit): The effects (direct and indirect) would be the same as for the Proposed Action Alternative (see following)

Alternative B - Proposed Action: 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.

No Grazing Alternative No direct, indirect or cumulative effects.

3.5 LAND RESOURCES

3.5.1 Recreation

Current conditions:

Primarily recreation use in area includes backcountry motorized touring and big game hunting. Under the Proposed RMP, the area would be managed as the Gateway Recreation Management Area with objectives to protect backcountry motorized scenic and heritage touring in a largely undeveloped landscape. Generally, the physical recreation setting includes primary access routes, linear disturbances from past mining exploration, and user-created two track routes. There are livestock grazing developments (e.g. fences well, troughs and water ponds) and evidence of old uranium mines. The contrast of these developments with the natural landscape is visible in some areas and not visible in other areas. There are no recreation facilities in the area. BLM does not have traffic counters in the area. Overall visitation is estimated to be low. The highest visitation likely occurs during the fall big game hunting season. Under the Proposed RMP, motorized and mechanized travel will be restricted to designated routes. Otherwise there are no restrictions limiting recreation use. Currently, there are five Special Recreation Permits (SRP) in the area for mountain lion hunting. In addition to the lion hunting permits, Gateway Canyons Resort has an SRP for a variety of activities including ATV and jeep tours. User days associated with the SRPs is less than 500 annually.

Alternative A – No Action (Current Permit)::

Impacts on recreation from livestock grazing include trampling and manure impacts at popular recreation sites (e.g., campsites and trails). The intensity of the impact would vary with the visitor's experience of recreating in areas where livestock grazing is present. Visitors from the Intermountain West are more accustomed to recreating in areas with livestock impacts. As a result, the impacts on their recreation outing might be less than it is to a visitor from outside the Intermountain West who is not accustomed to recreation in areas with livestock impacts (Brunson and Wallace 2002). In addition, development of livestock grazing facilities impacts the naturalness of the physical setting. Stock ponds, wells, troughs and other facilities all contrast with the natural landscape. For some visitors the presence of livestock grazing could have positive impacts to their recreation outings. Present day livestock grazing is part of the heritage of the landscape. Seeing livestock grazing activities could enhance these visitor's recreation outings.

Under the No Action Alternative, impacts to recreation would be the same as those described above that are presently occurring.

Cumulative Effects: Past, present and future management of wildlife and private resorts in the area could result in more recreation visitation. Colorado Parks and Wildlife's management of elk and deer could result in more hunting opportunities which could attract more visitors during the big game season which coincides with the fall/early winter grazing period. The resort in Gateway could grow and attract more visitors from outside the Intermountain region, which could result in more visitation by people not accustomed to recreating with livestock. Combined, these could result in more conflicting interactions between recreation and livestock.

Alternative B – Proposed Action:

Under the proposed action, the impacts would be similar to those described in the No Action Alternative. The grazing seasons do not change. As a result, livestock would be in

the area used by visitors for the same period of time. With the stipulation that salt and mineral blocks not being placed at undeveloped campsites, impacts could be less under the proposed action. Campers would be less likely to encounter evidence of cattle (trampling and manure).

Cumulative Effects: The cumulative effects under the Proposed Alternative would be the same or similar to those described in the No Action Alternative.

Alternative C - No Grazing Alternative

Under the No Grazing Alternative, there would be no conflicts between recreation visitors and livestock. As such, the impacts of trampling and manure at campsites or along trails would not occur. Long-term, the No Grazing Alternative could result in an increase in visitation to the area. There are few public land areas where there is no livestock grazing. Visitors looking for opportunities to recreation without livestock could be attracted to the area. There could be negative impacts to visitors who appreciate livestock grazing as symbol of the area’s heritage. Since livestock grazing would likely occur on other adjacent public lands, these impacts would be minor.

Cumulative Effects: Combined with past, present and future actions, the No Grazing Alternative would not have impacts to recreation other than those described above.

3.5.2 Range Management

Current conditions:

The current permit is under the following grazing schedule:

Table 2.2.2-1 No Action

Allotment/#	Livestock #/Kind	Grazing Period	%PL	Type Use	AUM's	Federal Acres	AUMs		
							Active	Suspended	Total
Dolores Point # 06429	287 Cattle	05/01 to 06/20	100	A	481	7590	821	0	821
	287 Cattle	10/01 to 11/05	100		340				

For the past 10 years or more the allotment has been controlled by a permittee through a base property lease. The allotment has been primarily used during the spring period as preferred by the base property owner. Nonuse has been approved during this period due to drought and near drought conditions for this time period. The two pasture rotation was occurring during this time for the spring use.

Actual use on the allotment has ranged from 0 to 469 AUM’s in the past ten years with most of this occurring during the spring period. Nonuse was taken during the 2002 drought year and two years following the vegetation treatment to allow for seedling establishment.

The Land Health Standards are as follows:

Standard	Acres	Acres in each category			
		Meeting	Meeting With Problems	Not Meeting	Unevaluated
#1 Soils	7590	7590	0	0	0
#2 Riparian	None Present				
#3 Vegetation/Wildlife	7590	4626	443	2521	0
#4 T & E Species	None Present				0
#5 Water Quality	7590	7590	0	0	0

Alternative A – 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 term of the new permit would be from 10/01/2015 to 09/30/2025. The majority of the AUM's would be authorized during the spring period. Rangeland conditions would be expected to remain static.

There would be no expected change to the Standards for Rangeland Health since areas not meeting land health standards are not related to livestock grazing.

Cumulative Effects: If the allotment was utilized at the full authorized AUM's for spring and fall use it is possible that range trend could turn downward. Without full use being taken for many years it is difficult to determine if or how rangeland conditions would change. The elk population in the area continues to rise which would also add to grazing pressure.

Alternative B – Proposed Action:

Direct and Indirect Effects: The proposed action will change authorized grazing on the Dolores Point allotment. The total number of AUM's authorized for the allotment will not change but some AUM's will be shifted from spring use to fall use. AUM's authorized for spring use would be 340 and The AUM's for the fall would now be 481. The authorized grazing use would be:

Allotment/#	Category	Livestock #/Kind	Grazing Period	%PL	Type Use	Federal Acres	AUMs		
							Active	Suspended	Total
Dolores Point 06429	Improve	287 Cattle	5/10 - 6/14	100	A	340	821	0	821
		287 Cattle	09/20 - 11/9	100		481			

Shifting AUM's from the spring to fall will reduce the grazing pressure during the critical plant growth period. The two pasture rotation system will remain in place thus each pasture will only be used every other spring. Utilization standards have been established to maintain healthy plants. Livestock grazing utilization levels on key forage species (Indian ricegrass, blue grasses, squirreltail grass, perennial wheat grasses, ryegrasses, sand dropseed grass, needle and thread grass, galleta grass, serviceberry, and snowberry) should not exceed 40% in the spring and 50% in the early winter grazing period. The proposed action should improve rangeland monitoring trends. The Land Health Standards would most likely stay unchanged since areas Not Meeting are not associated with livestock grazing.

Cumulative Effects: If the allotment is utilized at the authorized AUM level reduced use in the spring should lead to increased plant health. Utilization standards will be followed. The elk population in the area continues to rise which would also add to grazing pressure.

Alternative C - No Livestock Grazing

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

With no livestock grazing the Land Health Standards would most likely stay unchanged since areas Not Meeting are not associated with livestock grazing.

Cumulative Effects: Under No Livestock grazing, the action of livestock grazing would be removed from cumulative effects with elk use, recreation and vegetation treatments. If the elk population continues to rise impacts from their grazing may be detrimental to land health.

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
Alissa Leavitt-Reynolds	Archaeologist	Cultural Resources, Native American Religious Concerns
Andy Windsor	Outdoor Recreation Supervisor	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 Science Coordinator	Land Health Assessment, Range Ecology, Special Status Plant Species
Christina Stark	Planning & Environmental Coordinator	Environmental Justice, Prime & Unique Farmlands, Environmental Coordinator, Riparian and Wetland
Paula Belcher	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
Vacant	Realty Specialist	Lands and Realty

4.2 Tribes, Individuals, Organizations, or Agencies Consulted

Mark Hill – Grazing Permittee

A consultation occurred on April 8, 2015 with the following tribes notifying them of this permit renewal.

Ute Indian Tribe of the Uintah and Ouray Reservations

Ute Mountain Ute Tribe

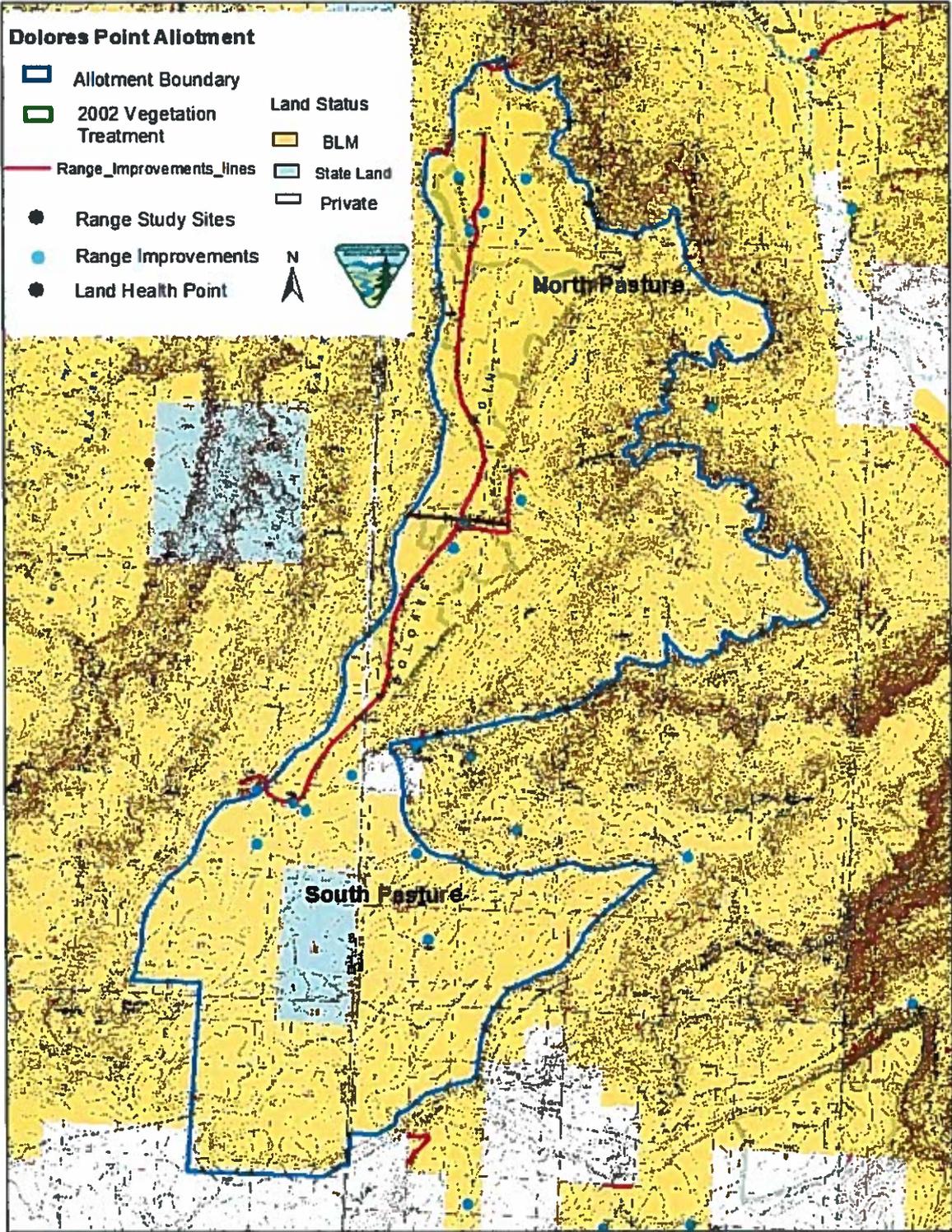
Southern Ute Tribe

CHAPTER 5 - REFERENCES

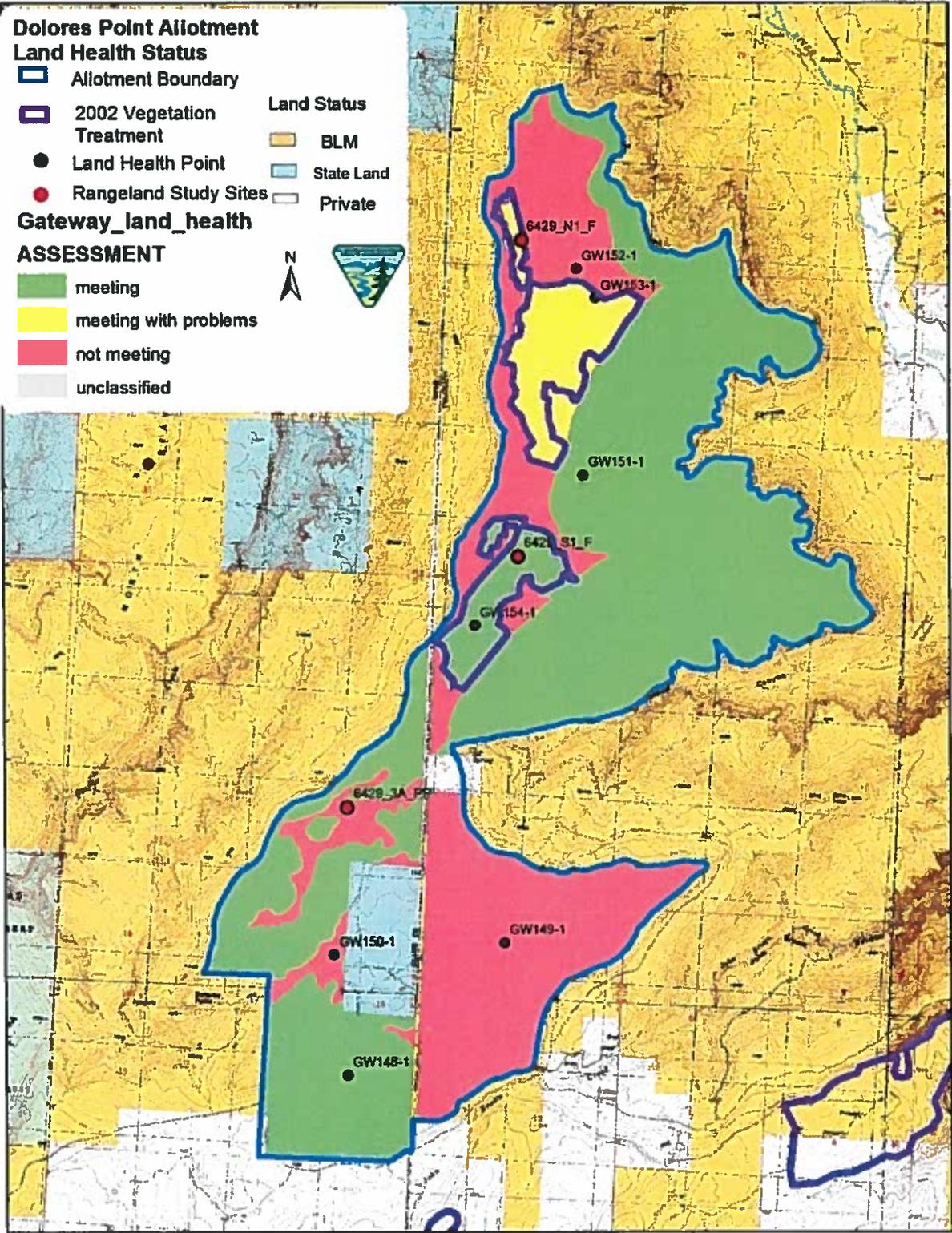
- Bureau of Land Management (BLM). 2011. Acreage_summary-Gateway_land_health.xls. S:\Programs\Vegetation\Land Health Assessments\Gateway LHA. Accessed 07/23/2015.
- Bureau of Land Management (BLM). 1985. Draft Resource Management Plan and Environmental Impact Statement. Grand Junction Field Office. Grand Junction, Colorado.
- Bureau of Land Management. 1987. Grand Junction Resource Area Resource Management Plan and Record of Decision. Grand Junction District. Grand Junction, Colorado.
- Bureau of Land Management. 1988. H-1790-1 National Environmental Policy Handbook. Washington, D.C.
- Bureau of Land Management. 2004. Resource Management Plan and Record of Decision for the Colorado Canyons National Conservation Area and Black Ridge Canyons Wilderness. Grand Junction Field Office. Grand Junction, Colorado.
- CDPHE. 2014. Water Quality Control Commission, 5 CCR 1002-37, Regulation No. 37, Classifications and Numeric Standards for Lower Colorado River Basin, Amended: 3-11-14, Effective: 6/30/14.
- CDPHE. 2012c. Water Quality Control Commission, 5 CCR 1002-93, Regulation #93, Colorado's Section 303(D) List of Impaired Waters and Monitoring and Evaluation List, Amended February 13, 2012, Effective March 30, 2012.
- Conner, Carl and Nicole Darnell. 2009. A Class I Synthesis of Two Hundred and Forty Grazing Permit Renewal Allotments Administered by the Bureau of Land Management Grand Junction Field Office in Delta, Garfield, Mesa and Montrose Counties, Colorado. Manuscript on file at the Grand Junction Field Office.
- McDonald, Kae. 2003. Grazing Permit Renewal Allotment, In Mesa and Garfield Counties, Colorado, A Class I Synthesis. Manuscript on file at the Grand Junction Field Office.
- Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS). 2015. United States Department of Agriculture. Web Soil Survey. Available online at <http://websoilsurvey.nrcs.usda.gov/>. Accessed 07/21/2015.

APPENDIX 1

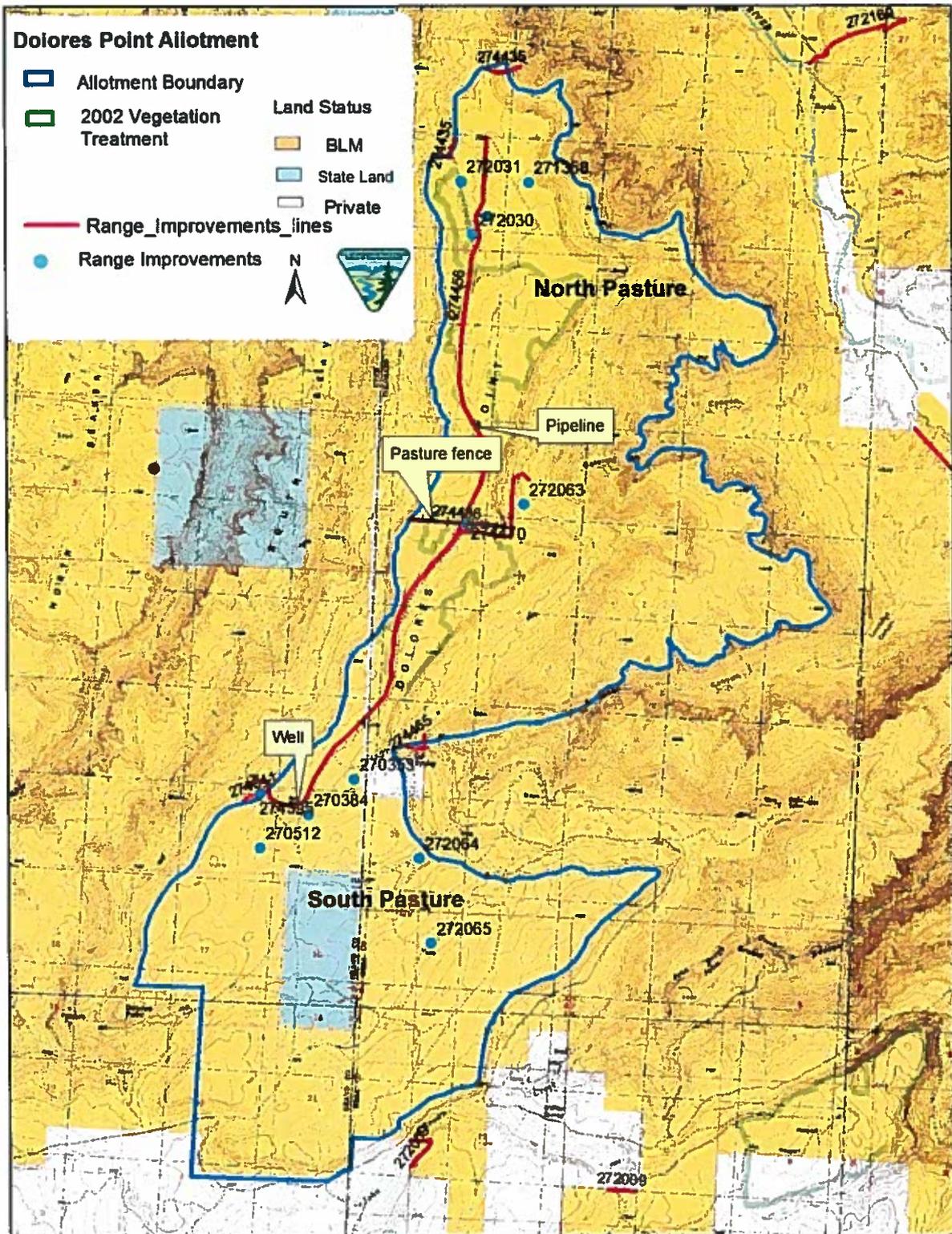
Map 1: Dolores Point Allotment



Map 2: Land Health Map



Map 3: Range Improvements



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

FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT

**10 Year Permit Renewal for
Dolores Point Allotment**

DOI-BLM-CO-N030 2015-0023-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 which analyzed the effects of re-authorization of Grazing Permit #0504579 for Lazy 3X Ranch c/o Mark Hill on the Dolores Point Allotment to determine impacts and mitigation required to continue to allow 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 which proposes to modify the grazing schedule by shifting some of the AUM's authorized in the spring to fall use to reduce grazing pressure in the spring during the critical growth period. The total number of AUM's authorized on the allotment would not change. Utilization levels for key forage species will be established in the terms and conditions of the permit. If utilization levels are exceeded then movement of livestock off of the allotment will be required. The proposed action also includes the addition of Adaptive Management. The permittee with approval by the BLM would be allowed to change the grazing dates by one week prior to and one week after the grazing dates shown on the permit. Adaptive management would allow for flexibility in changes in climate and annual weather patterns including timing of moisture received and temperatures during growing seasons. These factors would influence plant growth and range readiness. This flexibility would also allow for minor adjustments to the permittees operation.

Temporary Non-Renewable use may be authorized by the BLM Authorized Officer (AO) if additional forage is available due to above normal precipitation or optimal growing conditions and utilization levels would not be exceeded.

RATIONALE: The analysis demonstrates that the proposed action would not have any significant impacts to the natural resources. The proposed grazing plan would allow for growth and reproduction of key forage species and the rangeland monitoring program would continue measuring the impacts of grazing. The proposed action is in accordance with 43 Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) §4130.2.

Intensity

I have considered the potential intensity/severity of the impacts anticipated from the Dolores Point Allotment Permit Renewal project decision relative to each of the ten areas suggested for consideration by the CEQ. The following findings have been made with regard to each of the ten CEQ considerations:

- 1. Impacts that may be both beneficial and adverse.*** 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 allotments. There are no significant impacts to parklands, prime farmlands, wetlands, wilderness, special designations 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 proposed action is expected to improve the quality of the human environment by improving the resources. The effects are relatively well understood by the academic and practicing communities
- 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. Potential impacts are mitigated when identified. 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 impacts were brought forward that would indicate any adverse impacts to endangered or threatened species or its habitats. A No Effect determination was made.

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 would not have significant environmental impacts beyond those already addressed in the "Record of Decision and Resource Management Plan," for the Grand Junction Resource Area (*January 1987*); (2) the Proposed Action is in conformance with the Resource Management Plans; 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: Jim Dollerschell

NAME OF ENVIRONMENTAL COORDINATOR: Christina Stark

DATE: 8/11/15



Field Manager
Grand Junction Field Office

8-14-2015

Date