

**U.S. Department of the Interior
Bureau of Land Management
Gunnison Field Office
DOI-BLM-CO-S060-2009-0004-EA**

ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

NUMBER: DOI-BLM-COS060-2009-0004- EA

CASEFILE/PROJECT: Camp Kettle Gulch Allotment #06318

PROPOSED ACTION TITLE/TYPE:
Camp Kettle Gulch Allotment Grazing Permit Renewal

LOCATION/LEGAL DESCRIPTION: Saguache County, Colorado
NMPM, T. 48 N., R. 3 E., portions of sections 17, 18, 19, 20, 30, and 31
NMPM, T. 47 N., R. 3 E., portions of sections 5, 6, 7, and 8
NMPM, T. 47 N., R. 2 E., portions of sections 1, 2, 3, 10, 11, 12, 15, 16, 21, and 22
NMPM, T. 48 N., R. 2 E., portions of sections 13, 14, 15, 21-29, and 33-36

APPLICANT: Camp Kettle Gulch Allotment Livestock Grazing Permittee

I. INTRODUCTION

A. BACKGROUND/INTRODUCTION:

The Camp Kettle Gulch Allotment is located approximately nine miles southwest of Doyleville Colorado. The allotment consists of approximately 15,855 acres of BLM land and 280 acres of private land that are divided into three pastures (North, West, and Prosser Creek). Camp Kettle Gulch is a category "I" (Improve), allotment. It is bordered on the north by the South Parlin Flats Allotment; on the south by the Razor Creek Dome Allotment and USFS lands; on the west by Highway 114 and on the east by Razor Creek.

In 2003, a land health determination was made that indicated Land Health Standards 1-4 were not being met on the allotment due to excessive historic livestock use, excessive big game use, fire suppression, roads in riparian corridors, and extreme drought. A livestock management system was implemented in 2003 that included a 52% reduction in AUMs (from 867 to 412) and a two week reduction in the amount of spring livestock use (May 16 on date changed to June 1). It was anticipated that these changes in livestock use would facilitate moving towards meeting these standards, even though changing the livestock grazing system could not address ongoing heavy big game use or the after-effects of fire suppression and drought. The BLM continues to work with the Colorado Division of Wildlife to determine appropriate herd levels for big game (elk, mule deer, and pronghorn) throughout the Gunnison Basin. Currently, populations of all three are at or under population objectives.

In 2009 and 2010, erosion along the roads due to improperly installed or maintained culverts and fillworks was examined. A strategy to repair some of these areas was developed which should

result in reduced erosion along Camp Kettle Gulch and some of the tributaries to Razor Creek and Cochetopa Creek.

The current permit is as follows:

Livestock		Season of Use	% P.L.	AUMs
No.	Kind/Class			
103	Cattle	6/1 – 9/30	100	412

The above use includes the following terms and conditions:

1. Kind of livestock use in the Camp Kettle Gulch allotment is limited to cattle only.
2. Water hauling will be done as needed to distribute livestock to achieve appropriate livestock distribution within each pasture. The water haul sites will be monitored and rotated throughout each pasture to avoid impacts to plant communities. The location of water haul sites will include an assessment of plant community condition and critical sage grouse habitat prior to placement in order to avoid or minimize impacts from concentrated use.
3. Livestock use rates will be as described in the Appendix. In critical Sage Grouse habitat these use rates will be in accordance with the Gunnison Sage Grouse Conservation Plan. Once these utilization rates have been reached within each of the pastures they will be moved to the next pasture. Once all of the pastures have been used, livestock will be removed to the permittees' private pasture.
4. Grazing use for the allotment would be in compliance with the Gunnison Resource Area RMP, which was amended to adopt the Colorado Standards for Public Land Health and Guidelines for Livestock in Colorado. Grazing use would also be in conformance with the Gunnison Sage Grouse Conservation Plan. To allow progress in moving toward achieving land health standards, adjustments in utilization guidelines would be considered in severely degraded areas or where foraging by both wildlife and livestock is resulting in excessive use.

B. PURPOSE AND NEED: The purpose of the proposed action is to issue one permit to authorize livestock grazing on the Camp Kettle Gulch Allotment #06318 such that livestock grazing 1) is in compliance with the Gunnison Resource Area Resource Management Plan (RMP) objectives, and 2) achieves or makes significant progress towards achieving the Standards for Public Land Health in Colorado and complies with the Guidelines for Livestock Grazing Management in Colorado, in conformance with the Fundamentals of Rangeland Health (43 CFR 4180.1) and Standards and Guidelines (43 CFR 4180.2). This action is needed now because the previous term permit has been transferred and livestock grazing on the Camp Kettle Gulch Allotment is currently being authorized under the authority of the 2009 Appropriations Act (Public Law 111-8 §426).

C. DECISION TO BE MADE: The BLM will decide what specific livestock and vegetation management actions will be implemented to continue to authorize livestock grazing in compliance with the RMP and Standards for Public Land Health in Colorado.

D. SCOPING AND PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT:

On August 3, 2009, a scoping letter was sent to the grazing permittee and 41 other entities, including 4 federal and state agencies and 36 organizations. This letter asked for information regarding the Camp Kettle Gulch Allotment and asked recipients to respond if they wished to become or remain interested publics on the allotment. No specific information regarding the allotment has been received; however, of the entities that were contacted, one organization (Rocky Mountain Resource Management Services) has asked to remain informed of actions planned for the allotment. One additional individual has indicated that he wishes to be informed of actions that pertain to this allotment.

E. ISSUES AND CONCERNS: The following issues and concerns were identified through public scoping comments and interdisciplinary team review of the proposed action.

1. Issues to be Analyzed

- a. Cultural Resources – What effect would the proposed action have on cultural resources?
- b. Migratory Birds – What effect would the proposed action have on migratory birds?
- c. Threatened, Endangered, and Sensitive Species – What effect would the proposed action have on threatened, endangered, and sensitive species?

2. Issues Not Analyzed

See Appendix A for a discussion of other resources that either were not present or that were not affected to a degree that warranted detailed analysis.

II. DESCRIPTION OF PROPOSED ACTION AND ALTERNATIVES

A. Description of the Proposed Action and any applicable mitigation measures

The proposed action is to issue a ten year term grazing permit for the Camp Kettle Gulch Allotment #06318. The permit would include the following terms and conditions, goals, and objectives to achieve allotment specific objectives, that will, 1) meet the Gunnison Resource Area Resource Management Plan (RMP) objectives, and 2) achieve or make significant progress towards achieving the Standards for Public Land Health in Colorado and comply with the Guidelines for Livestock Grazing Management in Colorado, in conformance with the Fundamentals of Rangeland Health (43 CFR 4180.1) and Standards and Guidelines (43 CFR 4180.2).

Livestock		Season of Use	% P.L.	AUMs
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- 1. Kind of livestock use in the Camp Kettle Gulch Allotment is limited to cattle only.
- 2. Water hauling will be done as needed to distribute livestock to achieve appropriate livestock distribution within each pasture. The water haul sites will be monitored and rotated throughout each pasture to avoid impacts to plant communities. The location of water haul sites will include an assessment of plant community condition and critical sage grouse habitat prior to placement in order to avoid or minimize impacts from concentrated use.

3. Livestock use rates will be as follows:

a. Total utilization of key herbaceous forage species within all riparian zones would be limited to 41-60% of the current year's growth, with a 2 ½ inch minimum stubble height maintained throughout the grazing season. These limits are needed to provide a minimum of plant residue to trap sediment during high flows, to buffer or reduce the energy of high flows and to protect stream banks.

b. Uplands will not exceed a utilization level of 41-60% of the current years growth for available key forage during the grazing period of use.

c. Use limits for livestock within important sage grouse nesting and early brood rearing habitat will be as follows:

-Between March 15 and September 28, the grass droop height in the upland areas of a pasture will be 4-6 inches or greater (current year's growth). This applies to big sagebrush communities below 9200 feet and within 4 miles of a lek with understories dominated by herbaceous vegetation that has the potential to grow to 6 inches or greater.

d. Use limits for livestock within important sage grouse brood rearing habitat will be as follows:

- For riparian areas within 4 miles of a sage grouse lek, between June 15 and August 30, the stubble height of herbaceous vegetation in all riparian areas will be a minimum of 4-inches over 80% of each riparian area within a pasture. At all other times a minimum 2.5-inch stubble height will be maintained over 80% of the riparian area within each pasture throughout the period of use.

Once these utilization rates have been reached within each of the pastures livestock will be moved to the next pasture. Once all of the pastures have been used, livestock will be removed to the permittees' private pasture.

In situations where residual vegetation is not meeting the use objectives during/following livestock grazing, the potential of the area to achieve the resource and livestock use objectives will be determined prior to taking any permanent adverse actions against the livestock grazing permit.

4. Grazing use for the allotment would be in compliance with the Gunnison Resource Area RMP, which was amended to adopt the Colorado Standards for Public Land Health and Guidelines for Livestock in Colorado.

5. Any objects or sites of cultural or paleontological value, such as historic or prehistoric resources, graves or grave markers, human remains, ruins, cabins, rock art, fossils, or artifacts shall not be damaged or disturbed. If any such resources are encountered, the permittee shall notify BLM immediately.

6. Salt and/or mineral supplements will not be placed within ¼ mile of any riparian area, wet meadow, or temporary or permanent watering facility. Excess salt and/or mineral sources will be removed from the allotment following grazing use each year.

7. Temporary water hauling site locations shall be coordinated with the BLM. Troughs associated with these sites must have a wildlife escape ramp. To prevent wildlife deaths, these troughs must be removed or turned over each year when they are no longer needed for livestock grazing use.

8. The permittee shall provide the Bureau of Land Management with reasonable administrative access across private and leased lands for the orderly management and protection of the public lands.

9. When poisonous plants are identified as a threat to livestock, management actions to avoid grazing the area during the problem period would be developed. Infestations of noxious weeds would be incorporated into the Field Office noxious weed control program as they are identified.

10. Grazing use would be in conformance with Canada lynx habitat standards:

a. Do not allow livestock use in openings created by fire or timber harvest that would delay successful regeneration of the shrub and tree components.

b. Manage grazing in aspen stands to ensure sprouting and sprout survival sufficient to perpetuate the long-term viability of the clones.

c. Within the elevational ranges that encompass forested lynx habitat, shrub-steppe habitats should be considered as integral to the lynx habitat matrix and should be managed to maintain or achieve mid-seral or higher condition.

d. Within lynx habitat, manage livestock grazing in riparian areas and willow carrs to maintain or achieve mid-seral or higher condition to provide cover and forage for prey species.

8. All range improvements for which the permittee has maintenance responsibility, including fences, troughs, and reservoirs, must be properly maintained prior to livestock turnout. The permittee must notify the BLM prior to beginning any maintenance activities that require the use of heavy equipment, such as tractors, backhoes, or graders. Allotment boundary fences for which the permittee has maintenance responsibility must be maintained every year, even if the allotment is being rested.

Camp Kettle Gulch Allotment Range Improvements

Project		Location				Maintenance Responsibility
Name	Number	Township	Range	Section	Subdivision	
East Cochetopa Spring #1	230018	48 N	2 E	21	SESW	Permittee
East Cochetopa Spring #9	230213	47 N	3 E	6	NWSE	Permittee
East Cochetopa Spring #10	230219	48 N	3 E	19	SWSE	Permittee
Vouga Water Box	230234	47 N	3 E	6	SWSW	Permittee
Steer Gulch Spring #32	231132	48 N	2 E	24	SESE	Permittee
Camp Spring #1	234421	48 N	2 E	33	NENE	Permittee
Abbott Spring	234507	48 N	2 E	24	SESE	Permittee
Acuma Pueblo Spring	234509	48 N	2 E	22	NWNE	Permittee
Escondida Spring	234534	47 N	2 E	12	SWSE	Permittee
Espanola Spring	234535	47 N	2 E	15	NE	Permittee
Frijoles Spring	234536	47 N	2 E	22	NWNE	Permittee
Hazard Spring Excavation #2	235014	47 N	2 E	22	SESW	Permittee
Hidden Draw Spring	230304	48 N	2 E	24	NENE	Permittee

Camp Kettle Gulch Allotment Range Improvements (Continued)

Project		Location				Maintenance Responsibility
Name	Number	Township	Range	Section	Subdivision	
Razor Creek Spring #3	238168	47 N	2 E	11	SESE	Permittee
Razor Creek Spring #3 Exclosure	238169	47 N	2 E	11	NESE	Permittee
El Vado Spring	008467	48 N	2 E	13	SESE	Permittee
Cochetopa Dr Fence	230069	47 N	2 E	22	SWSW	Permittee
Razor Needle Fence	230852	48 N	3 E	31	SENE	Permittee
G Mitchell Fence #1	231553	47 N	2 E	16	NWSE	Permittee
Bernalillo Cattleguard	234485	48 N	2 E	15	SESE	Permittee
Camp Kettle Fence	238078	47 N	2 E	11	NENE	Permittee
Yukon Dam	230115	47 N	2 E	2	NWSW	BLM
East Cochetopa Spring #2	230190	48 N	2 E	22	SESE	BLM
Immigrant Spring	230752	47 N	2 E	22	SWSW	BLM
Dsapt Saline Well #7	234533	48 N	2 E	13	SESE	BLM
Meyers Allotment Riparian Exclosure	238123	47 N	2 E	22	SWSW	BLM
Sage Grouse Spike Treatment	238184	49 N	2 E	26	SW	BLM
Camp Kettle Guzzler	238016	48 N	2 E	35	SWNE	BLM

Allotment Goal

The Camp Kettle Gulch Allotment will be managed to provide for a maximum achievable diversity and production of biological resources to improve and sustain habitat for wildlife, to help sustain the economic stability of the permittee, and to allow for quality opportunities for public land users while achieving or making significant progress toward achieving BLM's Standards for Public Land Health in Colorado and conformance to BLM's Guidelines for Livestock Management in Colorado.

Allotment Objectives

a. Native Uplands

The management objective for native upland vegetation on the Camp Kettle Gulch Allotment is to maintain or improve the vigor, production and diversity of desirable plants to support a variety of resource uses, including, but not limited to livestock grazing, wildlife habitat, and recreation. Native upland sites will be managed to achieve and maintain basal cover values which are equal to or greater than those listed for the slightly/moderately accelerated erosion threshold as described in the Montrose District Soil Erosion Monitoring Guidelines for each ecological site.

b. Riparian Areas

Riparian areas will be managed to maintain or achieve a mid-seral or later stage of ecological succession and to provide adequate herbaceous plant residue on stream banks and flood plains during seasons when high flows are likely (spring runoff and the thunderstorm season of July and August). Physical damage to stream banks by people, livestock and wildlife will not exceed 10% of the length of stream banks for any riparian area within a pasture. Physical damage is where stream banks are collapsed or soil is left bare by man or animal trampling. Management prescriptions in this proposed action are designed to maintain adequate vegetation cover over the entire riparian area(s) as stated in the Record of Decision for the Gunnison Resource Management Plan, and Rangeland Program Summary (page 3-4, #5 and #6; Feb. 1993). The intent of the management prescription is to maintain adequate vegetation cover over the entire riparian area(s).

Monitoring/Evaluation

The BLM would be responsible for implementing the following monitoring/ evaluation requirements:

The monitoring program would include appropriate consultation, cooperation and coordination with the rangeland users, other agencies, and interested publics. Close coordination between the permittees or their representatives, the Colorado Division of Wildlife, and the BLM of all livestock related field monitoring is essential to determine conformity with the terms and conditions of the permits.

Sufficient monitoring data would be collected to determine if management actions are, 1) contributing to the achievement of allotment objectives and the Gunnison Resource Area Resource Management Plan (RMP) management objectives, 2) achieving or making significant progress toward achieving the Standards for Public Land Health in Colorado and conforming to the Colorado Livestock Grazing Management Guidelines.

The intensity and frequency of additional monitoring done on the allotment would be dependent on annual funding allocations and work priorities established for the Gunnison Field Office. Monitoring priorities for the allotment would be determined annually. Guidance provided in BLM Technical References, BLM Manuals, the Gunnison Resource Area Rangeland Monitoring Plan, would be the basis for monitoring/inventory conducted on the allotment. Other appropriate guidance documentation would be considered when establishing, collecting and evaluating data.

Monitoring would include both short-term and long-term studies. Short-term monitoring would include compliance monitoring, actual use data, range readiness when necessary through a joint field inspection with the BLM and the permittees, utilization studies on riparian areas and uplands as well as climate and soil moisture data. Long term monitoring would document and measure trends toward or achievement of objectives over a period of years.

Evaluations may be conducted anytime during the implementation of this proposed action if monitoring data and/or other data support changes to the allotment objectives, management actions or annual permitted use.

B. ALTERNATIVES CONSIDERED BUT NOT ANALYZED IN DETAIL:

1. No Action (Continue Current Permit)

Under this alternative, the grazing permit on the Camp Kettle Gulch Allotment would be issued for a period of 10 years. The permit would be issued with the same livestock numbers, seasons of use, and terms and conditions that are currently permitted.

This alternative is not carried forward for detailed analysis because it would not conform to the Approved Gunnison Resource Area Resource Management Plan/Record of Decision (RMP/ROD)

2. No Grazing Alternative

During scoping for other similar proposed actions, input from the public included the addition of a No Grazing Alternative. Under this alternative, no livestock grazing would be authorized for the Camp Kettle Gulch Allotment. The No Grazing Alternative was considered but not carried forward for detailed analysis because it would not conform to the Approved Gunnison Resource Area Resource Management Plan/Record of Decision (RMP/ROD). The RMP/ROD identified livestock grazing as an appropriate and suitable use on the Camp Kettle Gulch Allotment. In addition, a No Grazing Alternative would not meet the Purpose and Need for Action.

C. PLAN CONFORMANCE REVIEW:

The Proposed Action is subject to, has been reviewed for, and been found to be in conformance with, the following plan (43 CFR 1610.5, BLM 1617.3). The plan conformance review included consideration of Standard Management (pgs. 2-1 to 2-19), Management Unit Prescriptions (pgs. 2-19 to 2-39), and Standards for Public Land Health (pgs. 4-7).

Name of Plan: Gunnison Resource Area Resource Management Plan (including Adoption of Standards for Public Land Health and Guidelines for Livestock Grazing Management in Colorado)

Date Approved: February 1993 (amended February 1997)

Management Unit(s): 10 (bighorn sheep habitat), 11 (sage grouse high production areas), 12 (crucial deer and elk winter range), and 14 (sage grouse brood-rearing riparian areas)

Decision Number/Page:

Standard Management Direction, pgs. 2-1 to 2-12; 3-1 to 3-8;

Decision Language: (pg. 3-5) *“Grazing permits specifying the season of use, number, and kind of livestock will be issued to each operator for each allotment. Operators will have to obtain BLM approval before changing the grazing specifications outlined in their permits.”*

Decision Number/Page:

Management Unit 10 Direction, pgs. 2-31 to 2-32, 3-12

Decision Language: (pg. 3-12) *“This management unit will be managed to maintain or improve habitat capable of supporting a self-sustaining population of bighorn sheep”*

Decision Number/Page:

Management Unit 11 Direction, pgs. 2-32 to 2-33, 3-12 to 3-13

Decision Language: (pg. 3-13) *“This management unit will be managed to improve and maintain sagebrush vegetative communities in order to optimize sage grouse populations”*

Decision Number/Page:

Management Unit 12 Direction, pgs. 2-33 to 2-34, 3-13

Decision Language: (pg. 3-13) *“This unit will be managed to improve habitat conditions and increase the production and diversity of shrub species in upland and riparian vegetative types to support wintering populations of deer and elk, and to help meet CDOW long-range herd goals”*

Decision Number/Page:

Management Unit 14 Direction, pgs. 2-36 to 2-37; 3-14 to 3-15

Decision Language: (pg 3-14)

1. *“The unit will be managed to protect, restore and enhance these riparian areas on public lands in order to optimize sage grouse populations. Management objectives will be to provide high quality brood-rearing habitat with a diversity of plant species composition and structure, aimed at achieving improved riparian conditions, and achieving adequate vegetative cover necessary to avoid predation of foraging chicks.”*
2. *“Emphasis will be placed on rehabilitating riparian areas where the riparian or hydrological condition is degraded. The herbaceous plant species will be increased to improve forage plants and insects for sage grouse. The proportion of native bunch grasses will be increased to help meet escape and hiding cover requirements of sage grouse chicks.”*

III. AFFECTED ENVIRONMENT / ENVIRONMENTAL EFFECTS

A. Cultural Resources – What effect would the proposed action or alternatives have on cultural resources?

Affected Environment

Range permit renewals are federal undertakings (as defined in 36 CFR 800.16(y)) that fall under Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act, as well as other range improvement projects (*e.g.*, fences, spring improvements, construction of permanent water structures, etc.). These are subject to compliance requirements set forth under Section 106 and will undergo standard cultural resource inventory and evaluation procedures. During Section 106 review, a cultural resource assessment was completed for the allotment (CR Report #03GN009) following the procedures and guidance outlined in the following: The 1980 National Programmatic Agreement Regarding the Livestock Grazing and Range Improvement Program, Instructional Memorandum (IM)-WO-99-039, IM-CO-99-007, IM-CO-99-019 and IM-CO-2001-026. BLM Manuals and Colorado Protocol between the BLM and State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO 1998) provide guidance in meeting BLM's responsibilities under the National Historic Preservation Act. The results of these assessments are summarized below. Copies of the cultural resource assessment are located in the archaeological files at the Gunnison Field Office. Cultural resources are fragile, non-renewable and significant sites and are protected by law, and various regulations.

The cultural resources in the Gunnison Field Office span approximately 12,000 years and are represented by Paleoindian, Archaic, Formative, Ute and Euro-American cultures. Sites include lithic scatters, quarries, temporary camps, extended camps, village, rock shelters, rock art, wickiups, scarred trees, hunting sites, kill/butchering sites, processing areas, tree platforms, eagle traps, vision quest sites, caves, trails, roads, water resource sites, homesteads, ranches, cabins, mills, railroads, transmission lines, mines, trash dumps, aspen art, isolated artifacts, graves, etc. Many of these sites have the potential to be directly affected and impacted by livestock grazing. Continued grazing may cause substantial ground disturbance and cause cumulative, long term, irreversible adverse effects to significant cultural properties.

Less than one percent of the Camp Kettle Gulch Allotment has been inventoried for cultural resources. These inventories have revealed three sites that are eligible for the National Register of Historic Places, and two sites that require more data before a determination of eligibility can be made. With such a small percentage of the allotment inventoried, there is a high potential for more eligible sites. Eligible sites in similar allotments have been severely impacted by historic grazing practices. Such impacts occurred around heavily utilized areas such as springs, salt lick localities, and along fence lines. These impacts include displacement and breakage of artifacts, and accelerated erosion, which not only impacted the integrity of the sites, but also contributed to increased looting. Management practices outlined in the proposed alternative will decrease these historic grazing impacts, but the potential still remains to impact cultural resources around sensitive areas such as springs. Within this allotment, there are no known areas of Native American Religious Concerns.

Environmental Consequences and Mitigation

Cattle concentration areas have a high potential to directly damage surface and subsurface cultural resources in the following ways: trampling and churning of site soils, features and artifacts; breakage of artifacts; and impacts from standing or rubbing against structures, surface features or rock art. Indirect impacts can include increased soil erosion and substantial ground disturbance, which can lead to irreversible damage over time. Significant historic properties that may be identified within cattle concentration areas will need to be monitored for future grazing impacts.

If future cultural resource inventories identify significant sites, the sites will need to be monitored to determine if adverse effects are occurring to the sites. If adverse effects are found, mitigation measures will need to be implemented. These can include, but are not exclusively limited to, decrease in the AUMs, construction of fenced exclosures around the sites, excavation of the sites or installation of erosion control devices.

B. Migratory Birds – What effect would the proposed action have on migratory birds?

Affected Environment

Bird species on the list for the Southern Rockies/Colorado Plateau region which could breed within this proposed project area include the Green-tailed towhee (*Pipilo chlorurus*), Black-throated gray warbler (*Dendroica nigrescens*), Hammonds flycatcher (*Empidonax hammondi*), Williamson's sapsucker (*Sphyrapicus thyroideus*), MacGillivrays warbler (*Oporornis tolmiei*), Wilson's phalarope (*Phalaropus tricolor*), Brewer's sparrow (*Spizella breweri*), and Sage sparrow (*Amphispiza belli*). Williamson's sapsuckers are cavity nesters that may nest within the scattered mixed conifer/aspen stands or riparian areas. Wilson's phalarope has strong preference for moist sedge and rush meadows characterized by low plant height in the western slope and prairie marshes. The Black-throated gray warbler spends its spring and fall amongst piñon-juniper, scrub oak, riparian lowlands (cottonwoods [*Populus*], willows [*Salix*], tamarisk [*Tamarix*]), and riparian transition (cottonwood, willow, and alder [*Alnus*]) habitats (Kingery 1988). Nesting occurs off the ground in the midstory branches of Douglas fir–oak forest. The MacGillivrays warbler requires aspen forests with a dense shrubby understory. Habitat can also be composed of coniferous forest clearcuts with spruce and Douglas fir or mixed deciduous forests with birch, aspen, or poplar. They nest in clumps of grass on the ground or near the ground in shrubs. The Hammond's flycatcher nest high in the trees of coniferous and aspen forests. The Green-tailed towhee breeds in dry shrubby hillsides and scattered aspen trees intermixed with shrubs. Brewer's sparrows and Sage sparrows are tied closely to sagebrush. Brewer's sparrows breed in tall dense stands of sagebrush broken up with grassy openings. Sage sparrows nest within sizable (>30 acres), low-elevation (<8400 ft), semi-open to dense stands of 0.5 to 2 m (1.5 to 6.5 ft) tall sagebrush (Colorado Partners in Flight website; Lambeth 1998) which are uncommon but could occur within this allotment. They typically arrive in Colorado by April, initiate nesting in May, and fledge young during June and July. They construct cup nests, usually at mid-bush level with sufficient foliage above to conceal the nest (Lambeth 1998).

Environmental Consequences and Mitigation:

Livestock grazing will not directly affect cavity and tree nesting species including Williamson's sapsuckers, Hammond's flycatcher, and Black-throated gray warbler. Therefore, no take of these species or their nests is expected to occur as a result of grazing under this alternative. The ground nesting of the MacGillivray's warbler, Wilson's phalarope, and Green-tailed towhee will not be inadvertently affected due to the nest being located in dense vegetation usually beneath shrubs or dense undergrowth. Although the Brewer's sparrow's and Sage sparrow's nesting period overlaps the livestock grazing season in the Camp Kettle Gulch Allotment, placement of their nests off the ground and well within a sagebrush plant would protect them from being trampled by livestock.

C. Threatened, Endangered, and Sensitive Species – What effect would the proposed action have on threatened, endangered, and sensitive species?

Affected Environment

Over 90% of the allotment has been identified as habitat for Gunnison Sage-grouse, a BLM sensitive species. There are two leks in the allotment, Razor Dome 1 and 2. The location of these leks within the allotment elevates the importance of the area for nesting & brood rearing. In addition, the plant communities associated with intermittent and perennial streams, springs and seeps provide important brood habitat. Past heavy and severe use of vegetation by livestock has greatly diminished the quality of brood-rearing habitat in these areas. Inventory and monitoring data available for this area indicates that nesting/early brood-rearing habitat in big sagebrush dominated plant communities are often deficient in forb and grass cover, diversity and productivity. The northern third of the allotment includes Sage-grouse winter habitat with critical winter habitat occurring in the extreme northeast corner.

Even though recent non-use has resulted in an increase in plant vigor in some areas, recovery has been slow and Sage-grouse nesting conditions remain well below their potential. Many plant communities were affected by drought conditions that occurred in 2002. In some areas big sagebrush canopy cover has been greatly reduced as a result of dead or partial dead plants. Loss of productivity and canopy cover of herbaceous plant species is also evident in observations of dead or partially dead plants. The addition of drought related impacts to Sage-grouse habitat that was not achieving this standard prior to 2002, may limit the opportunities for meeting the minimum requirements for Sage-grouse habitat in some areas.

A small ten-acre patch of aspen has been identified as "other (seasonal)" lynx habitat along the southeast boundary of the allotment. This is an isolated patch of aspen that has no other lynx habitat associated with it.

Gunnison milk vetch (*Astragalus anisus*) is a sensitive plant that is only known to occur in the Gunnison Basin and has been observed in the allotment. The plant is found throughout the sagebrush communities to approximately 9,500 feet. Recent surveys show that populations appear to be healthy and well distributed throughout the Basin.

Environmental Consequences and Mitigation

There will be no anticipated negative impacts to the Gunnison milk vetch as a result of the proposed action. There is no evidence that indicates this plant is a livestock forage species. The

probability of physical impacts to any populations of Gunnison milk vetch are expected to be minimal given the size of the allotment and the number of livestock that will graze the area.

There are no anticipated negative impacts to lynx or lynx habitat as a result of the proposed action. The small ten-acre patch of aspen that was identified as potential seasonal lynx habitat is isolated from any adjacent potential lynx habitat. Douglas fir and sagebrush community types border this aspen stand. There is no information indicating that lynx occurs or has occurred in this area. Continued implementation of the current livestock management system is expected to allow continued improvement to occur in aspen stands throughout the allotment where past livestock overuse has occurred.

Continued implementation of the current livestock management system will facilitate the improvement of Sage-grouse habitat and allow progress in moving toward achieving this standard. It is anticipated that changes in plant vigor, productivity and cover will begin to address the habitat needs of Sage grouse

C. Wildlife

Affected Environment

Bighorn Sheep are found on the western portion of the allotment. Currently, the herd found in this region is about 50 animals. Generally they spend most of their time within Cochetopa Creek canyon but are seen crossing the flats on Doyleville cutoff.

Environmental Consequences and Mitigation

There are no anticipated impacts to bighorn sheep from cattle grazing. With the current management, range conditions should continue to improve and offer forage for bighorns and other wildlife within the allotment.

C. CUMULATIVE IMPACTS SUMMARY:

The cumulative effects of drought, excessive big game use, and historic livestock grazing use are generally concerns in many grazing allotments throughout the Gunnison Basin. However, the livestock grazing management in the Camp Kettle Gulch Allotment has, and is expected to continue to, result in improvement of plant vigor and productivity and vegetative cover.

IV. TRIBES, INDIVIDUALS, ORGANIZATIONS, OR AGENCIES CONSULTED:

On August 3, 2009, a scoping letter was sent to the grazing permittee and 41 other entities, including 4 federal and state agencies and 36 organizations. This letter asked for information regarding the Camp Kettle Gulch Allotment and asked recipients to respond if they wished to become or remain interested publics on the allotment. No specific information regarding the allotment has been received; however, of the entities that were contacted, one organization (Rocky Mountain Resource Management Services) has asked to remain informed of actions planned for the allotment.

Colorado Division of Wildlife	Colorado State Forest Service
USDI National Park Service	Trout Unlimited
Western Colorado Congress	Colorado Mountain Club
High Country Citizen’s Alliance	Colorado Cattlemen’s Association
Colorado Native Plant Society	Gunnison County Stock-Grower’s Association, Inc.
Colorado Environmental Coalition	The Wilderness Society
WildEarth Guardians	Rocky Mountain Biological Lab
Center for Native Ecosystems	Rocky Mountain Resource Management Services
Biodiversity Conservation Alliance	Central Colorado Wilderness Coalition
Western Watersheds Project	Southern Rockies Conservation Alliance
Grand Valley Audubon Society	National Wildlife Federation
US Fish and Wildlife Service	Backcountry Snowsports Alliance
Colorado Wild	Defenders of Wildlife
Great Old Broads for Wilderness	Quiet Use Coalition
San Luis Valley Ecosystem Council	Sierra Club – Rocky Mountain Chapter
Western Environmental Law Center	Western Slope Environmental Resource Council
Wilderness Workshop	Environment Colorado
Natural Resource Defense Council	San Juan Citizens Alliance
Sheep Mountain Alliance	Western Resource Advocates
Winter Wildlands Alliance	Jim Cochran
Board of Grazing Advisors	

One additional individual has indicated that he wishes to be informed of actions that pertain to this allotment.

Note: Refer to EA #CO-160-2003-014 for a list of interested publics consulted during the development of the current livestock grazing system.

V. LIST OF PREPARERS:

<u>Name</u>	<u>Title</u>	<u>Area(s) of Responsibility</u>
Arden Anderson	Recreation Planner	Wild and Scenic Rivers Wilderness Access and Transportation Recreation Visual Resources Areas of Critical Environmental Concern
Tara de Valois	Rangeland Management Specialists	Invasive, Non-Native Species Upland Vegetation Rangeland Management
Andrew Breibart & Art Hayes	Natural Resource Specialist	Floodplains Water Quality Wetlands and Riparian Areas Soils Air Quality Hydrology and Water Rights
Russell Japuntich	Wildlife Biologist	Migratory Birds Threatened, Endangered and Sensitive Species Wildlife
David Lazorchak	Geologist	Geology and Minerals
Marnie Medina	Realty Specialist/NEPA Coordinator	Lands Authorizations NEPA Hazardous Materials Environmental Justice Prime and Unique Farmlands
Elizabeth Francisco	Archaeologist	Cultural Resources Native American Religious Concerns Paleontology
Brian Brown	Forester	Forestry
Brian Stevens	Prescribed Fire Specialist	Fire and Fuels Management

Note: Refer to EA #CO-160-2003-014 for a complete list of the team members participating in the development of the current livestock grazing system.

**APPENDIX A
INTERDISCIPLINARY TEAM ANALYSIS RECORD CHECKLIST**

NUMBER: DOI-BLM-COS060-2009-0004- EA

PROJECT NAME: Camp Kettle Gulch Allotment Grazing Permit Renewal

DETERMINATION OF STAFF: (Choose one of the following options for the left column)

NP = not present in the area impacted by the proposed or alternative actions

NA = present, but not affected to a degree that detailed analysis is required

PA = present and requires further analysis because 1) analysis of the issue is necessary to make a reasoned choice between alternatives, or 2) analysis of the issue is necessary to determine the significance of impacts.

NC = (DNAs only) actions and impacts not changed from those disclosed in the existing NEPA documents cited in Section C of the DNA form.

PHYSICAL RESOURCES			
Air Quality (Clean Air Act)	Determination	Signature	Date
	NA	<i>Andrew Breitbart</i>	11/6/2009
	Rationale for Determination: Livestock grazing has a negligible effect on air quality in the project area.		
Geology/Minerals	Determination	Signature	Date
	NA	DL	07/22/2009
	Rationale for Determination: There are no active mining operations in this area. Livestock grazing has no effect on geologic or mineral resources in the project area.		
Paleontology	Determination	Signature	Date
	NA	Elizabeth Francisco	8/13/2009
	Rationale for Determination: Livestock grazing has no effect on paleontological resources in the project area.		
Soils (includes Public Land Health Standard 1)	Determination	Signature	Date
	NA	<i>Andrew Breitbart</i>	11/6/2009
	Rationale for Determination: Partially as a result of the management changes made to the grazing permit in 2003, progress is being made towards meeting this standard in the allotment, and it is anticipated that the proposed action would continue this progress. Accelerated erosion such as gullies result from poor or non-existent drainage on roads within the allotment.		
Floodplains (EO11988)	Determination	Signature	Date
	NP	<i>Andrew Breitbart</i>	11/6/2009
	Rationale for Determination: There are no floodplains on public land in the allotment.		

Water Quality (drinking/ground) (Clean Water Act and others) (includes Public Land Health Standard 5)	Determination	Signature	Date
	NA	<i>Andrew Breibart</i>	
	Rationale for Determination: This Standard is being met. Excessive sediment in Camp Kettle Gulch, which flows into Cochetopa Creek, a perennial stream, results from poor road drainage and gully erosion caused by the road.		
BIOLOGICAL RESOURCES			
Fire and Fuels Management	Determination	Signature	Date
	NA	<i>Brian Stevens</i>	12/8/09
	Rationale for Determination: Livestock grazing has no effect on fire and fuels management in the allotment.		
Invasive, Non-native Species (Federal Noxious Weed Act and EO 13112) (includes portion of Public Land Health Standard 3)	Determination	Signature	Date
	NA	<i>Tara M. de Valois</i>	10/7/09
	Rationale for Determination: Partially as a result of the management changes made to the grazing permit in 2003, progress is being made towards meeting this standard in the allotment, and it is anticipated that the proposed action would continue this progress.		
Forest Vegetation (includes portion of Public Land Health Standard 3)	Determination	Signature	Date
	NA	<i>Brian Brown</i>	9/22/09
	Rationale for Determination: Partially as a result of the management changes made to the grazing permit in 2003, progress is being made towards meeting this standard in the allotment, and it is anticipated that the proposed action would continue this progress.		
Upland Vegetation (includes portion of Public Land Health Standard 3)	Determination	Signature	Date
	NA	<i>Tara M. de Valois</i>	10/7/09
	Rationale for Determination: Partially as a result of the management changes made to the grazing permit in 2003, progress is being made towards meeting this standard in the allotment, and it is anticipated that the proposed action would continue this progress.		
Riparian Zones and Wetlands (EO 11990) (includes Public Land Health Standard 2)	Determination	Signature	Date
	NA	<i>Andrew Breibart</i>	11/6/2009
	Rationale for Determination: Partially as a result of the management changes made to the grazing permit in 2003, progress is being made towards meeting this standard in the allotment, and it is anticipated that the proposed action would continue this progress.		
Wildlife (includes portion of Public Land Health Standard 3)	Determination	Signature	Date
	NA	<i>Russell Lapuntich</i>	9/11/2009
	Rationale for Determination: Partially as a result of the management changes made to the grazing permit in 2003, progress is being made towards meeting this standard in the allotment, and it is anticipated that the proposed action would continue this progress.		

Migratory Birds (EO 13186 and Migratory Bird Treaty Act)	Determination	Signature	Date
	PA	<i>Russell Lapuntich</i>	9/11/2009
	Rationale for Determination: This issue will be carried forward for analysis to demonstrate compliance with migratory bird laws and regulations.		
Threatened, Endangered, Candidate (ESA), and/or Sensitive Animal Species (includes Public Land Health Standard 4)	Determination	Signature	Date
	PA	<i>Russell Lapuntich</i>	9/11/2009
	Rationale for Determination: Partially as a result of the management changes made to the grazing permit in 2003, progress is being made towards meeting this standard in the allotment, and it is anticipated that the proposed action would continue this progress. However, the issue will be carried forward for analysis to demonstrate compliance with ESA and Sec. 107 consultation.		
HERITAGE RESOURCES and HUMAN ENVIRONMENT			
Cultural Resources (National Historic Preservation Act)	Determination	Signature	Date
	PA	Elizabeth Francisco	8/13/2009
	Rationale for Determination: This issue will be carried forward for analysis to demonstrate compliance with NHPA and Sec. 106 consultation.		
Environmental Justice (EO 12898)	Determination	Signature	Date
	NA	<i>Marnie Medina</i>	10/28/09
	Rationale for Determination: The proposed action has no disproportionate impact on any racial, ethnic, or socioeconomic group.		
Native American Religious Concerns (American Indian Religious Freedom Act)	Determination	Signature	Date
	NP	Elizabeth Francisco	8/13/2009
	Rationale for Determination: No Native American religious concerns have been identified in the project area.		
Socio-economics	Determination	Signature	Date
	NA	<i>Tara M. de Valois</i>	10/7/09
	Rationale for Determination: The proposed action has no effect on socioeconomics in the project area, including on the individual permittee		
Visual Resources	Determination	Signature	Date
	NA	<i>Arden Anderson</i>	10/8/09
	Rationale for Determination: The proposed action has no effect on visual resources in the project area.		
Wastes (hazardous or solid) (RCRA and CERCLA)	Determination	Signature	Date
	NP	<i>Marnie Medina</i>	10/28/09
	Rationale for Determination: There were no hazardous or solid wastes identified on public land in the project area.		

LAND USES and SPECIAL DESIGNATIONS			
Areas of Critical Environmental Concern (FLPMA)	Determination	Signature	Date
	NP	<i>Arden Anderson</i>	10/8/09
	Rationale for Determination: There are no designated ACEC's in the project area.		
Farmlands (Prime or Unique) (SMCRA and Farmland Protection Policy Act)	Determination	Signature	Date
	NP	<i>Marnie Medina</i>	10/28/09
	Rationale for Determination: There are no prime or unique farmlands in the project area.		
Lands/Realty Authorizations	Determination	Signature	Date
	NP	<i>Marnie Medina</i>	10/28/09
	Rationale for Determination: The proposed action would have no effect on lands/realty authorizations in the project area.		
Rangeland Management	Determination	Signature	Date
	NA	<i>Tara M. de Valois</i>	10/7/09
	Rationale for Determination: The proposed action continues current management and so has no effect on rangeland management.		
Recreation	Determination	Signature	Date
	NA	<i>Arden Anderson</i>	10/8/09
	Rationale for Determination: The proposed action has no effect on recreation in the project area.		
Access and Transportation	Determination	Signature	Date
	NA	<i>Arden Anderson</i>	10/8/09
	Rationale for Determination: The proposed action has no effect on access in the project area.		
Wild and Scenic Rivers (Wild and Scenic Rivers Act)	Determination	Signature	Date
	NA	<i>Arden Anderson</i>	10/8/09
	Rationale for Determination: There are no wild or scenic rivers within the project area		
Wilderness (FLPMA and Wilderness Act)	Determination	Signature	Date
	NP	<i>Arden Anderson</i>	10/8/09
	Rationale for Determination: There is no designated Wilderness in the project area.		

FINAL REVIEW:

Reviewer Title	Signature	Date	Comments
NEPA Coordinator	<i>Marnie Medina</i>	10/28/09	
Field Manager	Brian St. George	1/20/11	

**U.S. Department of the Interior
Bureau of Land Management
Gunnison Field Office
DOI-BLM-COS060-2009-0004-EA**

**FONSI
FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT**

Based on the analysis of potential environmental impacts contained in the referenced environmental assessment, and considering the significance criteria in 40 CFR 1508.27, I have determined that the action will not have a significant effect on the human environment. Therefore, preparation of an environmental impact statement is not necessary.

RATIONALE

The Bureau of Land Management (BLM), Gunnison Field Office (GFO) prepared an Environmental Assessment (EA) CO-S060-2009-0004 to analyze the effects of issuing a 10-year permit for livestock grazing in the Camp Kettle Gulch Allotment.

The EA analyzed potential site-specific impacts on resources that would result from implementing the proposed action or alternatives. The analysis addressed whether or not the proposed action and alternatives would: 1) address public lands that are failing to achieve the Public Land Health Standards and/or not conforming to the Guidelines for Livestock Management in Colorado due to livestock grazing (43 CFR 4180.2 (c)); and, 2) assure compliance with the objectives of the Approved Gunnison Resource Area Resource Management Plan (RMP).

SIGNATURE OF AUTHORIZED OFFICIAL: /s/ Brian St. George
Brian St. George, Gunnison Field Manager

DATE SIGNED: 1/20/11