

**U.S. Department of the Interior
Bureau of Land Management
Glenwood Springs Field Office
50629 US Highway 6 & 24
Glenwood Springs, CO 81601**

ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

NUMBER: DOI-BLM-CO-N040-2009-0036-EA

CASEFILE/PROJECT NUMBER: 0500001

PROJECT NAME: Change in Season-of-Use on Porcupine Common Allotment

LEGAL DESCRIPTION: T.7S., R.94W. Sec. 10-15, Porcupine Common Allotment (#08119). See Attached Map

APPLICANT: Grazing Permittees

DESCRIPTION OF BACKGROUND, PROPOSED ACTION AND ALTERNATIVES:

BACKGROUND: Two of the three permittees on the Porcupine Common Allotment have applied to change their season-of-use to spring use. The current demand for their operations has initiated the request. The proposed change will bring the permits into conformance with grazing management guidelines allowing for more growing season rest and adequate recovery periods.

PROPOSED ACTION: The Proposed Action is to re-issue two revised grazing permits with changes to the season-of-use and number of livestock as outlined below. The grazing preference (AUMs) will not change. Other terms and conditions on the existing permits will not change. The permits would be issued for a 10-year period unless the base property is leased for less, but for purposes of the EA, we are assuming 10 years of grazing by this or another applicant (in case of transfer).

Current Grazing Schedule:

| Authorization # | Allotment Name and Number | Livestock Number & Kind | Grazing Period Begin | Grazing Period End | %PL | AUMS |
|-----------------|---------------------------|-------------------------|----------------------|--------------------|-----|------|
| 0500001 | Porcupine Common #08119 | 15 Cattle | 5/7 | 9/30 | 100 | 72 |
| 0503869 | Porcupine Common #08119 | 10 Cattle | 5/7 | 9/15 | 100 | 43 |

Proposed Grazing Schedule:

| Authorization # | Allotment Name and Number | Livestock Number & Kind | Grazing Period Begin | Grazing Period End | %PL | AUMS |
|-----------------|---------------------------|-------------------------|----------------------|--------------------|-----|------|
| 0500001 | Porcupine Common #08119 | 49 Cattle | 5/7 | 6/20 | 100 | 72 |
| 0503869 | Porcupine Common #08119 | 29 Cattle | 5/7 | 6/20 | 100 | 43 |

Grazing Preference (AUMS)

| Authorization # | Allotment Name & Number | Total | Suspended | Active |
|-----------------|-------------------------|-------|-----------|--------|
| 0500001 | Porcupine Common #08119 | 115 | 43 | 72 |
| 0503869 | Porcupine Common #08119 | 58 | 15 | 43 |

The following terms and conditions will be included on the permits:

Maintenance of range improvements is required and shall be in accordance with all approved cooperative agreements and range improvement permits. Maintenance shall be completed prior to turnout.

The permittee and all persons specifically associated with grazing operations must be informed that any objects or sites of cultural, paleontological, or scientific value such as historic or prehistoric resources, graves or grave markers, human remains, ruins, cabins, rock art, fossils, or artifacts shall not be damaged, destroyed, removed, moved, or disturbed. If in connection with allotment operations under this authorization any of the above resources are encountered, the proponent shall immediately suspend all activities in the immediate vicinity and notify the BLM authorized officer of the findings. The discovery must be protected until notified in writing to proceed by the authorized officer (36CFR800.110 & 112, 43CFR 0.4).

Grazing in riparian areas by livestock should leave an average minimum 4-inch stubble height of herbaceous vegetation and should not exceed an average utilization of 40% of the current year's growth for browse species. Within the uplands, average livestock utilization levels should not exceed 50% by weight on key grass species. Once these levels are reached, livestock should be moved to another portion of the allotment, or removed from the allotment entirely for the remainder of the growing season. Application of this term may be flexible to recognize livestock management that includes sufficient opportunity for regrowth, spring growth prior to grazing, or growing season deferment.

ALTERNATIVES CONSIDERED BUT ELIMINATED:

The No Grazing alternative has been eliminated from further consideration. No unresolved conflicts involving alternative use of available resources have been identified. This alternative would not meet the livestock grazing objective for the Field Office. Livestock grazing was not considered an issue in the Land Health Assessments for the Porcupine Common Allotment. For this reason, discontinuance of grazing use (No Grazing) will not be considered or assessed.

The No Action alternative has been eliminated from further consideration. This alternative would not address the need of the permittees to change the season of use on the allotment in response to operational demands. The proposed alternative is a more favorable alternative due to the shortened season-of-use and increased rest and recovery periods. The shortened season-of-use would be in conformance with the guidelines for livestock grazing management.

NEED FOR PROPOSED ACTION:

The action is needed for the following reasons: (1) to meet the livestock grazing management objective of the Resource Management Plan of providing 56,885 animal unit months of livestock forage commensurate with meeting public land health standards, (2) to continue to allow livestock grazing on the specified allotment, (3) to meet the forage demands of local livestock operations, (4) to provide stability to these operations and help preserve their rural agricultural lands for open space and wildlife habitat, (5) to allow use of native rangeland resource for conversion into protein suitable for human consumption, and (6) to meet the Guidelines for Livestock Grazing Management and the Standards for Land Health.

LAND USE PLAN (LUP) CONFORMANCE REVIEW:

The proposed action is subject to the following plan:

Name of Plan: Glenwood Springs Resource Management Plan

Date Approved: Jan. 1984, revised 1988, amended in November 1991 - Oil and Gas Leasing and Development - Final Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement; amended Nov. 1996 - Colorado Standards and Guidelines; amended in August 1997 - Castle Peak Travel Management Plan; amended in March 1999 - Oil and Gas Leasing & Development Final Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement; amended in November 1999 - Red Hill Plan Amendment; and amended in September 2002 – Fire Management Plan for Wildland Fire Management and Prescriptive Vegetation Treatment Guidance.

X The Proposed Action is in conformance with the LUP because it is specifically provided for in the following LUP decision(s):

Decision Language: The action is in conformance with Administrative Actions (pg. 5) and Livestock Grazing Management (pg. 20). Administrative actions states, “Various types of actions will require special attention beyond the scope of this plan. Administrative actions are the day-to-day transactions required to serve the public and to provide optimal use of the resources. These actions are in conformance with the plan”. The livestock grazing management objective as amended states, “To provide 56,885 animal unit months of livestock forage commensurate with meeting public land health standards.”

The Proposed Action is in conformance with the LUP, even though it is not specifically provided for, because it is clearly consistent with the following LUP decisions (objectives, terms, and conditions):

Standards for Public Land Health:

In January 1997, Colorado BLM approved the Standards for Public Land Health. The five standards cover upland soils, riparian systems, plant and animal communities, threatened and endangered species, and water quality. Standards describe conditions needed to sustain public land health and relate to all uses of the public lands.

In 2004, the BLM Glenwood Springs Field Office staff conducted a formal land health assessment on the Rifle-West Watershed which encompasses this proposed grazing permit. The

Determination Document, signed on August 31, 2005, found that the northern portions of the Porcupine Common allotment were not meeting Standard 3 for wildlife. Extensive natural gas activity was a main cause for not meeting this Standard as habitats have been fragmented and direct losses of cover and forage have occurred. Human use increases in the area have displaced animals out of important big game winter range habitats. Existing livestock grazing was not considered to be a significant factor contributing to the current land health conditions but altering the use on the allotment to allow more growing season rest would bring the permit into conformance with the Guidelines for Livestock Grazing.

The environmental analysis must address whether the proposed action or alternatives being analyzed would result in impacts that would maintain, improve, or deteriorate land health conditions relative to these five standards.

COMPLIANCE WITH SECTION 302 OF FLPMA RELATIVE TO THE COMB WASH DECISION

A review of applicable planning documents and a thoughtful consideration of new issues and new demands for the use of the public lands involved in this allotment have been made. This analysis concludes that the current land and resource uses are appropriate.

Reasons for the conclusion are: No new issues or new demands for the use of public lands involved in this grazing allotment have been identified since approval of the land use plan and amendments.

AFFECTED ENVIRONMENT AND ENVIRONMENTAL CONSEQUENCES

This section provides a description of the human and natural environmental resources that could be affected by the proposed action and no action alternative. In addition, the section presents comparative analyses of the direct and indirect consequences on the affected environment stemming from the implementation of the various actions.

A variety of laws, regulations, and policy directives mandate the evaluation of the effects of a proposed action and alternative(s) on certain critical environmental elements. Not all of the critical elements that require inclusion in this EA are present, or if they are present, may not be affected by the proposed action and alternative (Table 2). Only those mandatory critical elements that are present and affected are described in the following narrative.

In addition to the mandatory critical elements, there are additional resources that would be impacted by the proposed action and alternative. These are presented under Other Affected Resources.

| Table 2. Critical Elements of the Human Environment | | | | | | | | | |
|--|----------------|----|-----------------|----|---------------------------|----------------|----|-----------------|----|
| <i>Critical Element</i> | <i>Present</i> | | <i>Affected</i> | | <i>Critical Element</i> | <i>Present</i> | | <i>Affected</i> | |
| | Yes | No | Yes | No | | Yes | No | Yes | No |
| Air Quality | | X | | X | Prime or Unique Farmlands | | X | | X |

| | | | | | | | | | |
|------------------------------------|---|---|---|---|--|---|---|---|---|
| ACECs | | X | | X | Threatened, Endangered, and Sensitive Species* | X | | X | |
| Cultural Resources | X | | | X | Wastes, Hazardous or Solid | | X | | X |
| Environmental Justice | X | | | X | Water Quality, Surface and Ground* | X | | X | |
| Floodplains | | X | | X | Wetlands and Riparian Zones* | | X | | X |
| Invasive, Non-native Species | X | | X | | Wild and Scenic Rivers | | X | | X |
| Migratory Birds | X | | X | | Wilderness/ WSAs | | X | | X |
| Native American Religious Concerns | | X | | X | | | | | |

* Public Land Health Standard

CRITICAL ELEMENTS

CULTURAL RESOURCES and NATIVE AMERICAN RELIGIOUS CONCERNS

Affected Environment: Range permit renewals are undertakings under Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act. Additional range improvements (e.g., fences, spring improvements) are subject to compliance requirements under Section 106 and will undergo standard cultural resources inventory and evaluation procedures. During Section 106 review, a cultural resource assessment (GSFO #1009-11) was completed for the Porcupine Common Allotment on January 27, 2009 following the procedures and guidance outlined in the 1980 National Programmatic Agreement Regarding the Livestock Grazing and Range Improvement Program, IM-WO-99-039, IM-CO-99-007, IM-CO-99-019, CO-2001-026, and CO-2002-029. The results of the assessment are summarized in the table below. A copy of the cultural resource assessment is available at the GSFO office.

| Allotment Number | Acres Inventoried at a Class III level | Acres NOT Inventoried at a Class III Level | Percent (%) Allotment Inventory data Class III level | Number of Cultural Resources known in allotment | High Potential of Historic Properties (yes/no) | Management Recommendations (Additional inventory required and historic properties to be visited) |
|------------------|--|--|--|---|--|--|
| Porcupine Common | 767 | 1456 | 35 | 30 | no | No additional acres need to be inventoried. 46% of the allotment has 30%+ slopes. |
| Total | 767 | 1456 | 35 | 30 | | |

Thirty-two Class III cultural resource inventories have been conducted within this allotment mostly Oil and Gas driven. Four historic properties have been identified. Historic properties are cultural resources that are considered eligible or potentially eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places. Undiscovered historic era sites within this allotment could represent a time frame from the late 1800's through the

1950's; Native American sites could represent a time range from 200 to 10,000 years before present. Based on available data, there is a moderate potential for historic properties within the allotment.

Subsequent site field visits, inventory, and periodic monitoring may have to be done to identify if additional historic properties are present within the term of the permit and as funds are made available. If the BLM determines that grazing activities will adversely impact the properties, mitigation will be identified and implemented in consultation with the Colorado SHPO.

At present, there are no known areas of Native American concern within this allotment. On November 7, 2008 the Glenwood Springs Field Office mailed an informational letter and maps to the Ute Tribe (Northern Ute Tribe), Southern Ute Tribe, and the Ute Mountain Ute Tribes, identifying the proposed 2009 grazing permit renewals. No response has been received. If new data is disclosed, new terms and conditions may have to be added to the permit to accommodate their concerns. The BLM will take no action that would adversely affect these areas or location without consultation with the appropriate Native Americans.

Environmental Consequences: The direct impacts that occur where livestock concentrate include trampling, chiseling, and churning of site soils, cultural features, and cultural artifacts, artifact breakage, and impacts from standing, leaning, and rubbing against historic structures, above-ground cultural features, and rock art. Indirect impacts include soil erosion, gulying, and increased potential for unlawful collection and vandalism. Continued grazing may cause substantial ground disturbance and cause cumulative, long term, irreversible adverse effects to historic properties.

Four historic properties were identified during the inventories for this allotment. A determination of “**Conditional No Adverse Affect**” has been made for this renewal. In order to mitigate this potential affect all ground disturbing activity and the placement of supplemental feed, etc, must be at least 100m from these sites. The cultural resource specialist should be involved in discussions for improvements, maintenance, supplemental feeding areas, etc to ensure that the historic properties are avoided.

The change in season of use may reduce the potential of impacting undiscovered historic properties or areas of Native American Concern while maintaining the physical integrity of the sites by reducing the erosional potential, thereby, protecting buried cultural remains.

Mitigation:

New improvements or maintenance of existing range improvements, additional feeding areas, etc may require cultural resource inventories, monitoring, and/or data recovery.

This allotment may also contain undiscovered historic properties and/or resources protected under the National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA), American Indian Religious Freedom Act, Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act, E.O. 13007, or other statutes and executive orders. The BLM may require modification to

development proposals to protect such properties, or disapprove any activity that is likely to result in damage to historic properties or areas of Native American concern.

Education/Discovery stipulation: The permittee and all persons specifically associated with grazing operations must be informed that any objects or sites of cultural, paleontological, or scientific value such as historic or prehistoric resources, graves or grave markers, human remains, ruins, cabins, rock art, fossils, or artifacts shall not be damaged, destroyed, removed, moved, or disturbed. If in connection with allotment operations under this authorization any of the above resources are encountered, the proponent shall immediately suspend all activities in the immediate vicinity of the discovery that might further disturb such materials and notify the BLM authorized officer of the findings. The discovery must be protected until notified in writing to proceed by the authorized officer (36CFR800.110 & 112, 43CFR 0.4).

ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE

Affected Environment: Review of 2004 data from US Census Bureau indicates the median annual income of Garfield County averages \$50,119 and is neither an impoverished or wealthy county. Median annual income of Mesa County averages \$40,045 and is not an impoverished or wealthy county. U.S. Census Bureau data from 2006 shows the minority population of Garfield and Mesa County comprises less than 0.7 % of the total population of Colorado^a.

| Garfield County | Mesa County |
|--------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| Median Household Income (2004) | Median Household Income (2004) |
| Estimate | Estimate |
| \$50,119 | \$40,045 |

Environmental Consequences/Mitigation: The proposed action and alternatives are not expected to create a disproportionately high and adverse human health impact or environmental effect on minority or low-income populations within the area.

INVASIVE, NON-NATIVE SPECIES

Affected Environment: Noxious weed inventory reports reveal Canada thistle (*Cirsium arvense*) and musk thistle (*Carduus nutans*) occur on the Porcupine Common Allotment.

Environmental Consequences/Mitigation: Wind, water, vehicles, animals, and people transport weeds. Weeds generally germinate and become established in areas of surface disturbing activities such as road construction and maintenance, vehicular traffic, big game and livestock grazing. Livestock grazing can contribute to the establishment and

^a Source U.S. Census Bureau: State and County QuickFacts. Data derived from Population Estimates, Census of Population and Housing, Small Area Income and Poverty Estimates, State and County Housing Unit Estimates, County Business Patterns, Nonemployer Statistics, Economic Census, Survey of Business Owners, Building Permits, Consolidated Federal Funds Report
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expansion of noxious weeds through various mechanisms. Improperly managed grazing, (over-grazing), can cause a decline in desirable native plant species and ground cover which provides a niche for noxious weed invasion. In addition, noxious weed seed can be transported and introduced to new areas by fecal deposition or by seed that clings to the animal's coat. Conversely, properly managed livestock grazing which does not create areas of bare ground and which maintains the vigor and health of native plant species, particularly herbaceous species, is not expected to cause a substantial increase in noxious weeds.

The proposed season-of-use adjustments are designed to improve the overall rangeland health of the allotment. The season-of-use was reduced from season long grazing to a shorter duration in the spring thereby providing native vegetation a chance to recover and remain vigorous. By improving rangeland health, noxious or invasive weeds would less likely become established and a reduced rate of spread would result.

MIGRATORY BIRDS:

Affected Environment:

This grazing allotment is comprised of a variety of vegetative/habitat types including sagebrush, pinyon/juniper, mixed mountain shrub, oakbrush, some mixed coniferous forest with small aspen pockets, and limited riparian. Given the mix and diversity of vegetation present, this allotment provides cover, forage and nesting habitat for a variety of migratory bird species. Priority species on the USFWS Birds of Conservation Concern List that may nest in the area include: flammulated owl, Williamson's sapsucker, sage sparrow, Brewer's sparrow, Virginia's warbler, pinyon jay and black-throated gray warbler. No raptors nests are known on the allotment but Golden eagles and red-tailed hawks nest nearby and these and other raptors likely forage on the allotment.

Environmental Consequences/Mitigation:

It is unlikely that livestock grazing in this allotment as proposed would reduce the extent or quality of habitat available for migratory bird breeding functions. Proposed grazing would overlap with the breeding and nesting times of many of the bird species noted. However, the proposed grazing schedule calls for a change in the season of use and number of livestock. Numbers of cows would be increased but the season would be shortened from 4 months and 24 days to 1 month and 14 days. This would benefit range conditions as season long grazing would be eliminated which would allow for growing season rest and adequate plant rest and recovery periods on the allotment. This should improve grass and forb productivity and riparian conditions. Monitoring data and Land Health Assessments show the allotment to be in generally good condition, providing healthy and productive habitat for migratory bird species. The biggest concern for migratory birds in the general area is the abundant natural gas activity that has reduced cover and fragmented habitats due to increased road and well pad densities.

No intentional take of native bird species is anticipated under the proposed action. Grazing by cattle could result in the accidental destruction of ground nests through trampling. This could impact ground nesting species. However, this impact is expected

to be minimal and isolated and would not influence populations of migratory birds on a landscape level.

THREATENED, ENDANGERED, AND SENSITIVE SPECIES (includes an analysis on Standard 4)

Affected Environment:

According to the latest species list from the U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service (<http://mountain-prairie.fws.gov/endspp/CountyLists/COLORADO.htm>), the following Federally listed, proposed, or candidate plant and animal species may occur within or be impacted by actions occurring in Garfield County: Uinta Basin hookless cactus (*Sclerocactus glaucus*), Ute Ladies' Tresses orchid (*Spiranthes diluvialis*), Parachute beardtongue (*Penstemon debilis*), DeBeque phacelia (*Phacelia submutica*), Canada lynx (*Lynx canadensis*), Mexican spotted owl (*Strix occidentalis*), yellow-billed cuckoo (*Coccyzus americanus*), razorback sucker (*Xyrauchen texanus*), Colorado pikeminnow (*Ptychocheilus lucius*), bonytail chub (*Gila elegans*), and humpback chub (*Gila cypha*). The U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service announced the delisting of the bald eagle in June, 2007 with an effective date of August 8, 2007. The BLM now considers the bald eagle a sensitive species.

Listed Species:

Habitat for Canada lynx is located on the southern portions of the allotment at the highest elevations (winter foraging and summer foraging habitat). Vegetation in the lynx habitat portions of the allotment consists primarily of Douglas and sub-alpine fir and some blue and Engelmann spruce with some limited aspen.

No suitable habitat is found on this allotment for any of the four federally-listed, proposed or candidate plant species that occur in Garfield County. No occupied habitat is present within the vicinity that could be indirectly impacted by the proposed action.

No suitable habitat is found on this allotment or any adjacent perennial streams for the four federally listed fishes. However, Designated Critical Habitat for the Colorado pikeminnow and razorback sucker is located in the Colorado River approximately 3.5 miles to the north and downstream of the allotment.

BLM Sensitive Species:

BLM sensitive plant species with habitat and/or occurrence records in Garfield County include adobe thistle (*Cirsium perplexans*), DeBeque milkvetch (*Astragalus debequaeus*), Naturita milkvetch (*Astragalus naturitensis*), Roan Cliffs blazing star (*Mentzelia rhizomata*), Piceance bladderpod (*Lesquerella parviflora*), and Harrington's penstemon (*Penstemon harringtonii*). Of these plants, only Harrington's penstemon is known to occur within the Porcupine Common allotment. This plant species is found in the open, rocky sagebrush/mixed mountain shrublands on the northern portion of the allotment.

The Colorado River contains known occurrence records for bluehead suckers, flannelmouth suckers, and roundtail chubs approximately 3.5 miles north and downstream of this allotment. These 3 fish are all BLM sensitive species.

Beaver Creek which is located on a small 1/8 mile piece of BLM just within the allotments eastern most boundary, contains a core conservation population of Colorado River cutthroat trout, a BLM sensitive species.

Environmental Consequences/Mitigation:

Listed Species:

Canada lynx

The proposed action would not result in direct mortality of individual lynx and any effects to lynx would be the result of changes in ecosystem structure. It is plausible that excessive losses of forage on a large scale could result in a reduction in hiding and movement cover and directly affect lynx's ability to effectively move through the landscape but this is highly unlikely via grazing and would be more common under circumstances such as post wildfire.

Indirect impacts associated with grazing are mainly associated with competition between livestock and lynx prey species for available forage. The Canada Lynx Conservation Assessment and Strategy identified that "grazing, in conjunction with increasing elk populations, may have resulted in increased competition for forage resources with lynx prey". In summary, livestock compete with lynx prey species (snowshoe hare, jack rabbits, cottontails, blue grouse, voles, squirrels) for available forage. In addition, livestock can remove hiding cover important to the survival of prey species, which could ultimately result in lower prey species productivity and density.

Habitat assessments specific to Canada lynx and land health standard 4 have been completed for this allotment. In summary, the lynx habitat portions of the allotment were found to be in good condition, providing suitable habitat for lynx and their prey species. Forage utilization data showed use within the lynx habitat portions of the allotment to be none to slight and no domestic livestock sign was noted. The lynx habitat portion of this allotment is located on steep north-facing slopes which limits livestock access and usability. Abundant grasses and forbs were present with good diversity and productivity in the understory. Conifer stands were relatively healthy with a few age-classes and saplings present. Aspen stands were in poorer condition with limited regeneration. The allotment is meeting Public Land Health Standard 4 and current grazing management is not expected to degrade lynx habitat on the allotment. The proposed season of use changes should improve overall allotment condition and would put this all allotment within the Public Land Health Guidelines which calls for growing season rest and plant recovery periods.

The renewal of the Porcupine Common allotment "May Affect, but is Not Likely to Adversely Affect" the Threatened, Canada lynx. Furthermore, the proposed action would

not result in the destruction or adverse modification of Fish & Wildlife Service designated critical habitat. Programmatic consultation for Canada lynx was completed on the entire grazing program as administered by the GSFO. A “May Affect, Not Likely to Adversely Affect” determination was made and concurrence was obtained from the FWS (ES/GJ-6-CO-03-F-013). Consultation specific to this allotment regarding Canada lynx and livestock grazing has also been initiated. A “May Affect, Not Likely to Adversely Affect” determination was made and a BA was submitted to the FWS on 7/11/2000. Only minor changes are being made to the existing permit. Essentially, this action is simply the reauthorization of grazing for another 10 year period. However, this allotment will be addressed in the 2009 Lynx Consultation BA submitted to the USFWS with any new site specific range data information to further support our effects determination.

Plants:

Due to the absence of any occupied or suitable habitat, the proposed action would have “**No Effect**” to any of the four listed, proposed or candidate plant species.

Fish:

The 4 Colorado River Endangered Fishes are all native to the Colorado River Basin and are well adapted to the high sediment loads traditionally carried by the river. Periodic influxes of sediment are important in the creation and maintenance of important micro habitats for these fish. Given the distance to occupied habitat and these native fish’s tolerance for sediment, the proposed action would have “**No Effect**” to any of the four federally listed fishes or their habitat.

BLM Sensitive Species:

Plants:

Harrington’s penstemon flowering stalks are palatable to both livestock and wildlife. Heavy grazing on penstemon flower stalks each year could result in a decline in the reproductive capability of the species. As old plants eventually die, the population would decline if there is little recruitment of young plants. Light grazing or grazing outside of the flowering period should result in few flower stalks being removed and would not affect the long-term reproductive capability of the population.

The proposed grazing schedule calls for a change in the season of use and number of livestock. The number of cows would be increased but the season would be shortened from season-long (5/7 to 9/30) to 45 days (5/7 to 6/20). The proposed change would result in increased grazing use during the flowering period for Harrington’s penstemon. This may result in heavy grazing on flower stalks and a risk of reducing the reproductive potential and the long-term size of the local population of this species. If livestock are adequately distributed throughout the allotment, the level of grazing on flower stalks should remain low and reproduction of the species should be adequate to maintain the population.

The terms and conditions of the permit include a provision to limit utilization on upland grasses to no more than 50% of current year’s growth. If grazing

management adheres to this utilization limit, the proposed action should have little negative impact on this BLM sensitive plant species.

Fish:

The roundtail chub, flannelmouth sucker, and bluehead suckers are all native to the Colorado River Basin and are well adapted to the high sediment loads traditionally carried by the river. Periodic influxes of sediment are important in the creation and maintenance of important micro habitats for these fish. Given the distance to occupied habitat and these native fish's tolerance for sediment, the proposed action would have no negative effects to any of these three BLM sensitive fishes or their habitat.

A Core Conservation population of Colorado River cutthroat trout reside in Beaver Creek located on the allotments easternmost boundary. The creek is located just east of County Round 317 that buffers the stream from the remainder of the allotment. While the stream is influenced by numerous roads and well pads in the immediate vicinity, a dense, diverse riparian area exists along the creek with a vigorous canopy of alder, red-osier dogwood, currant, twinberry, and various sedges and riparian grasses present. Based on sampling conducted in 2007, it appears livestock do not graze this part of the allotment in or near the stream.

Continued livestock grazing activities across the entire allotment would result in some soil compaction and displacement and increase the likelihood of erosional processes, especially on steep slopes, areas devoid of vegetation, and in concentration areas such as salting sites, stock waters, and drainage bottoms. Soil detachment and sediment transport are likely to occur during runoff events associated with spring snowmelt and short-duration high intensity thunderstorms. Due to the close proximity of grazing to area drainages, there is some potential that additional sediment associated with grazing practices could reach Beaver Creek. Excessive sediment can impact cutthroat trout by silting in important spawning substrates or in the event eggs are present, by smothering eggs. In addition, important micro habitats such as pools needed for overwinter and oversummer thermal protection can be silted in which reduces depth and makes these areas less usable. Aquatic insect productivity can also be reduced due to excessive sediment. This can result in reduced food sources for fish and terrestrial bird and bat species.

The proposed shortening of the grazing season would provide for more growing season rest and adequate plant rest and recovery which should help to improve upland habitats to the west of the stream and minimize erosion and offsite soil movement potential. This stream is much more heavily influenced by the abundant road and well pad network in the area that has the potential to contribute much more sediment than grazing. The proposed action should have little negative impact on these fish or their habitat.

Analysis on the Public Land Health Standard for Threatened, Endangered, and Sensitive Species

A formal Land Health Assessment was completed for this allotment in 2004. Large portions of the watershed were not meeting Standard 3 for wildlife, but for those special

status species and their habitats present, Standard 4 was being met. The change in the period of grazing use has the potential to cause negative effects to populations of Harrington's penstemon. However, the terms and conditions of the permit set the utilization limit on upland species at 50% of current year's growth. If grazing management does not exceed this level of use, adequate flower stalks should remain to ensure continued reproduction of young plants and maintenance of the population. The proposed action should have little influence on the ability of the area to continue to meet Standard 4 for special status species.

WATER QUALITY, SURFACE AND GROUND (includes an analysis on Standard 5)

Affected Environment: The Porcupine Common Allotment is located southwest of the City of Rifle, south of I-70 and the Colorado River, and west of the perennial Beaver Creek. The allotment is within the 6,279 acre Porcupine Creek 6th field watershed and contains the perennial Porcupine Creek which is tributary to the Colorado River to the north.

According to the *Stream Classifications and Water Quality Standards* (CDPHE, Water Quality Control Commission, Regulation No. 37) list, Porcupine Creek is within the Lower Colorado River Basin segment 4a that includes all tributaries to the Colorado River from the confluence with the Roaring Fork River to a point immediately below the confluence with Parachute Creek. This segment has been classified aquatic life cold 2, recreation 2, water supply, and agriculture. Aquatic life cold 2 indicates that this water course is not capable of sustaining a wide variety of cold or warm water biota due to habitat, flows, or uncorrectable water quality conditions. Recreation class 2 refers to waters that are not suitable or intended to become suitable for primary contact recreation. This segment is however suitable or intended to become suitable for potable water supplies and agricultural purposes that include irrigation and livestock use. At this time, very limited water quality data is available for Porcupine Creek.

The State of Colorado has developed a *303(d) List of Water Quality Limited Segments Requiring TMDLS* (CDPHE, Water Quality Control Commission, Regulation No. 93) that identifies stream segments that are not currently meeting water quality standards with technology based controls alone. Porcupine Creek is within the Lower Colorado River Basin segment COLCLC04a that includes tributaries to the Colorado River from the Roaring Fork River to Parachute Creek. This segment is listed as impaired due to Selenium and has been given medium priority by the State of Colorado. At this time Porcupine Creek is not on the *Monitoring and Evaluation List* (CDPHE, Water Quality Control Commission, Regulation No. 94) that identifies water bodies suspected to have water quality problems.

Environmental Consequences/Mitigation: Grazing activities would result in soil compaction and displacement that increase the likelihood of erosional processes, especially on steep slopes and areas devoid of vegetation. Soil detachment and sediment transport are likely to occur during runoff events associated with spring snowmelt and short-duration high intensity thunderstorms. In addition, the number of livestock in the

area would increase the amount of feces present in close proximity to nearby drainages. The introduction of livestock feces to water bodies often leads to water quality degradation by increasing fecal coliform bacteria levels. Due to the close proximity of the proposed activities to area drainages, there is potential that additional sediment associated with grazing practices as well as fecal coliform bacteria from livestock feces could reach Porcupine Creek and be transported to the Colorado River. However, based on historical area water quality data being good this doesn't appear to be a significant problem thus no mitigation is being proposed at this time.

Analysis on the Public Land Health Standard 5 for Water Quality: In 2004, the BLM Glenwood Springs Field Office conducted the Rifle West Watershed Land Health Assessment that included Porcupine Creek. The limited data collected during the assessment did not show a violation of the water quality standards established by the state. Based on past and present conditions in the area, the proposed action would not likely prevent Standard 5 for Water Quality from being met.

NON-CRITICAL ELEMENTS

SOILS (includes an analysis on Standard 1)

Affected Environment: According to the *Soil Survey of Rifle Area, Colorado: Parts of Garfield and Mesa Counties* (USDA 1985), the Porcupine Common Allotment contains seven different soil map units that can be identified by the numerical code assigned by the soil survey (e.g. Cochetopa loam=17). These soil map units are scattered throughout the allotment and have been identified as having moderate to severe erosion hazards. In addition, areas within the allotment are mapped as CSU 4 (Controlled Surface Use) for erosive soils on slopes greater than 30% and NSO 15 (No Surface Occupancy) for slopes greater than 50% regardless of soil type. Following is a brief description of the seven different soil map units found within the Porcupine Common Allotment.

- Cochetopa loam (17) – This deep, well drained soil is found on mountainsides and alluvial fans at elevations ranging from 7,000 to 9,500 feet and on slopes of 9 to 50 percent. Parent material for this soil is basaltic alluvium. Surface runoff for this soil is slow and erosion hazard is severe. Primary uses for this soil include grazing and wildlife habitat.
- Ildefonso stony loam (33) – This deep, well drained soil is found on mesas, benches, and sides of valleys at elevations ranging from 5,000 to 6,500 feet and on slopes of 6 to 25 percent. This soil is derived primarily from basalt and may contain a small amount of eolian material at the top of the unit. Surface runoff for this soil is medium and erosion hazard is moderate. Primary uses for this soil include grazing and wildlife habitat.
- Ildefonso stony loam (34) - This deep, well drained, hilly soil is found on mesas, sides of valleys, and alluvial fans at elevations from 5,000 to 6,500 feet and on slopes of 25 to 45 percent. This soil is derived primarily from basalt and may contain a small amount of eolian material at the top of the unit. Surface runoff for this soil is

medium and erosion hazard is severe. Primary uses for this soil include grazing and wildlife habitat.

- Morval-Tridell complex (45) – This soil map unit is found on alluvial fans and the sides of mesas at elevations ranging from 6,500 to 8,000 feet and on slopes of 6 to 25 percent. The Morval soil makes up about 55 percent of the unit and is found on lower slopes while the Tridell soil makes up about 30 percent of the unit and is found on the sides of mesas. Both soils are deep, well drained and have medium surface runoff and moderate erosion hazard. The primary uses for this soil map unit include grazing and wildlife habitat.
- Potts-Ildefonso complex (59) – This complex occurs on alluvial fans and the sides of valleys at elevations ranging from 5,000 to 6,500 feet and on slopes of 25 to 45 percent. Parent material for this soil complex consists of sandstone, shale, and basalt. Approximately 60 percent of this complex is the Potts soil while about 30 percent is the Ildefonso soil. Both soils are deep, well drained, and have medium surface runoff and severe erosion hazard. Uses for this soil complex include limited grazing and wildlife habitat.
- Torriorthents-Camborthids-Rock outcrop complex, steep (66) – This soil map unit consists of sandstone and shale bedrock and soils of variable depth occurring on slopes of 15 to 70 percent. About 45 percent of this complex is Torriorthents, 20 percent is Camborthids, and 15 percent is Rock outcrop. The Camborthids occur on the lower toe slopes on foothills and mountainsides while the Torriorthents are found on the foothills and mountainsides below the Rock outcrop. The Torriorthents are shallow to moderately deep, and clayey to loamy with gravel, cobbles, and stones. The Camborthids are shallow to deep and clayey to loamy. Rock outcrop primarily consists of Mesa Verde sandstones and Wasatch shales with occasional basaltic boulders and stones. This complex is characterized by moderate to severe erosion hazard. Primary uses for this complex include grazing, wildlife habitat, and recreation.
- Torriorthents-Rock outcrop complex, steep (67) – This complex consists of stony soils and exposed outcrops of Mesa Verde sandstone and Wasatch shale that occur on slopes of 15 to 70 percent. Approximately 60 percent of this complex is Torriorthents and 25 percent is Rock outcrop. The Torriorthents are clayey to loamy and contain gravel, cobbles, and stones; many of which are basaltic in origin. They are found on mountainsides below the Rock outcrop. Erosion hazard for this complex varies from moderate to severe. Primary uses for this complex include limited grazing, wildlife habitat, and recreation.

Environmental Consequences/Mitigation: As mentioned above, a high percentage of the Porcupine Common Allotment occurs on soils with severe erosion hazards and on slopes greater than 30% (17°). Grazing activities would result in soil compaction and displacement that increase the likelihood of erosional processes, especially on steep slopes and areas devoid of vegetation. Soil detachment and sediment transport are likely to occur during runoff events associated with spring snowmelt and short-duration high intensity thunderstorms. Due to the close proximity of the proposed activities to area drainages, there is potential that additional sediment associated with grazing practices

could reach Porcupine Creek and be transported to the Colorado River. However, based on existing and recently assessed soil conditions along with continued grazing in the area, this doesn't appear to be a significant problem thus no mitigation is being proposed at this time.

Analysis on the Public Land Health Standard 1 for Upland Soils: In 2004, the BLM Glenwood Springs Field Office conducted the Rifle West Watershed Land Health Assessment that included the Porcupine Common Allotment. At that time, the allotment was rated as achieving or moving towards achieving Standard 1 for Upland Soils. Given the results of the Rifle West Land Health Assessment and existing conditions, it is not likely that the proposed activities would prevent Standard 1 for Upland Soils from being met.

VEGETATION (includes an analysis on Standard 3)

Affected Environment: This grazing allotment is comprised of a mix of pinyon-juniper woodlands at the lower elevations, sagebrush, oakbrush and mixed mountain shrublands in the middle elevations and a small acreage of aspen/mixed coniferous forest at the highest elevations. A short segment of public land along Beaver Creek supports riparian vegetation.

Environmental Consequences/Mitigation: Under the proposed action, the Porcupine Common allotment would have a reduced season of use which would bring the allotment into compliance with the Guidelines for Livestock Grazing by incorporating growing season rest into the grazing management. This would provide for plant rest and recovery following grazing and should allow time for seed dissemination and seedling establishment. Existing vegetative conditions should be maintained or improved.

Analysis on the Public Land Health Standard for plant and animal communities (partial, see also Wildlife, Aquatic and Wildlife, Terrestrial):

In 2004, the BLM Glenwood Springs Field Office conducted the Rifle West Watershed Land Health Assessment that included the Porcupine Common Allotment. At that time, the allotment was rated as achieving Standard 3 for plant communities, although some concerns were noted regarding the level of cheatgrass infestation and old, even-aged sagebrush stands with poor recruitment.

Extensive natural gas development in the area has caused the failure to meet Public Land Health Standard 3 primarily for wildlife. Extensive road and well pad networks have fragmented habitat, reduced overall vegetative cover and provided avenues for the invasion of noxious weeds. Existing livestock grazing was not considered to be a significant factor contributing to the current land health conditions but altering the use on the allotment to allow for more rest and recovery during critical growth periods for perennial grasses and native forbs could result in improved vegetative cover and vigor. The proposed action would not likely result in a failure to achieve this standard and should maintain and/or improve vegetative conditions on the allotment.

WILDLIFE AQUATIC (includes an analysis on Standard 3)

Affected Environment:

The Porcupine allotment contains two perennial streams, Porcupine Creek which bisects the main part of the allotment and Beaver Creek which is located within a small 1/8 mile piece of BLM just within the allotments eastern most boundary. Porcupine Creek is small with limited flows and is not known to contain any fishes. It is a flashy creek that carries large volumes of sediment due to natural geologic conditions in the upper watershed. It likely contains some aquatic insects. Beaver Creek contains brown trout and a core conservation population of Colorado River cutthroat trout which are addressed above in the TES section. This stream contains aquatic insects as well.

Environmental Consequences/Mitigation:

In addition to the Core Conservation population of Colorado River cutthroat trout, brown trout also reside in Beaver Creek. The creek is located just east of County Round 317 that buffers the stream from the remainder of the allotment. While the stream is influenced by numerous roads and well pads in the immediate vicinity, a dense, diverse riparian area exists along the creek with a vigorous canopy of alder, red-osier dogwood, currant, twinberry, and various sedges and riparian grasses present. Based on sampling conducted in 2007, it appears livestock do not graze this part of the allotment in or near the stream.

Continued livestock grazing activities across the entire allotment would result in some soil compaction and displacement and increase the likelihood of erosional processes, especially on steep slopes, areas devoid of vegetation, and in concentration areas such as salting sites, stock waters, and drainage bottoms. Soil detachment and sediment transport are likely to occur during runoff events associated with spring snowmelt and short-duration high intensity thunderstorms. Due to the close proximity of grazing to area drainages, there is some potential that additional sediment associated with grazing practices could reach Beaver Creek. Excessive sediment can impact brown trout by silting in important spawning substrates or in the event eggs are present, by smothering eggs. In addition, important micro habitats such as pools needed for overwinter and oversummer thermal protection can be silted in which reduces depth and makes these areas less usable. Aquatic insect productivity can also be reduced due to excessive sediment. This can result in reduced food sources for fish and terrestrial bird and bat species.

The proposed shortening of the grazing season would provide for more growing season rest and adequate plant rest and recovery which should help to improve upland habitats to the west of the stream and minimize erosion and offsite soil movement potential. This stream is much more heavily influenced by the abundant road and well pad network in the area that has the potential to contribute much more sediment than grazing. The proposed action should have little negative impact on these fish or their habitat.

Analysis on the Public Land Health Standard for plant and animal communities (partial, see also Vegetation and Wildlife, Terrestrial):

In 2004, the BLM Glenwood Springs Field Office conducted the Rifle West Watershed Land Health Assessment that included the Porcupine Common allotment. At that time standard 3 for aquatic wildlife was generally being met. Natural gas activity was a main cause for many areas not meeting portions of Standard 3 – mainly for terrestrial species. The proposed action should have little bearing on area streams ability to meet Standard 3 for aquatic wildlife.

WILDLIFE TERRESTRIAL (includes an analysis on Standard 3)

Affected Environment:

This grazing allotment is comprised of a variety of vegetative/habitat types including sagebrush, pinyon/juniper, mixed mountain shrub, oakbrush, some mixed coniferous forest with limited aspen, and limited riparian. Given the diversity of vegetation found on this allotment, a variety of wildlife species may be found here. This allotment provides cover, forage, breeding, and nesting habitat for a variety of big game, small game, and non-game mammals, reptiles, and birds. Large portions of this allotment are mapped as important big game winter habitat (CDOW 2008).

Environmental Consequences/Mitigation:

It is unlikely that the proposed action would have any long-term negative impacts to terrestrial wildlife habitat. Under the proposed action, the Porcupine Common allotment would have a reduced season of use which would bring the allotment into compliance with the Guidelines for Public Land Health as growing season rest would be incorporated into the grazing management. This would allow for improved plant rest and recovery periods. This would help to improve and maintain range conditions and provide for the forage needs of resident wildlife.

Range data indicates that site specific areas within this allotment are generally in good condition, and provide healthy and productive habitat for resident wildlife species. However, extensive natural gas development in the area has caused the failure to meet Public Land Health Standard 3 primarily for big game species. Extensive road and well pad networks have fragmented habitat, resulted in reductions in forage and cover, and the increased human use in the area has displaced big game from important winter range habitats. Changes in the proposed grazing management should improve habitat condition and have little impact to resident wildlife and would not be expected to degrade wildlife habitat.

Analysis on the Public Land Health Standard for plant and animal communities (partial, see also Vegetation and Wildlife, Aquatic):

In 2004, the BLM Glenwood Springs Field Office conducted the Rifle West Watershed Land Health Assessment that included the Porcupine Common allotment. At that time standard 3 for terrestrial wildlife was not being met. Extensive natural gas activity was a main cause for many areas not meeting this Standard as habitats have been fragmented and direct losses of cover and forage have occurred. Human use increases in the area have displaced animals out of important big game winter range habitats. The proposed action should have little bearing regarding the areas ability to meet Standard 3.

OTHER NON-CRITICAL ELEMENTS: For the following elements, those brought forward for analysis will be formatted as shown above.

| Non-Critical Element | NA or Not Present | Applicable or Present, No Impact | Applicable & Present and Brought Forward for Analysis |
|-----------------------|-------------------|----------------------------------|---|
| Travel/Access | | X | |
| Cadastral Survey | X | | |
| Fire/Fuels Management | | X | |
| Forest Management | X | | |
| Geology and Minerals | X | | |
| Law Enforcement | X | | |
| Paleontology | X | | |
| Noise | X | | |
| Range Management | | | X |
| Realty Authorizations | | X | |
| Recreation | X | | |
| Socio-Economics | | X | |
| Soils | | | X |
| Transportation | X | | |
| Visual Resources | | X | |

CUMULATIVE IMPACTS SUMMARY:

PERSONS/AGENCIES CONSULTED:

Grazing Permittees
 Southern Ute Tribe
 Northern Ute Tribe
 Ute Mtn. Ute Tribe

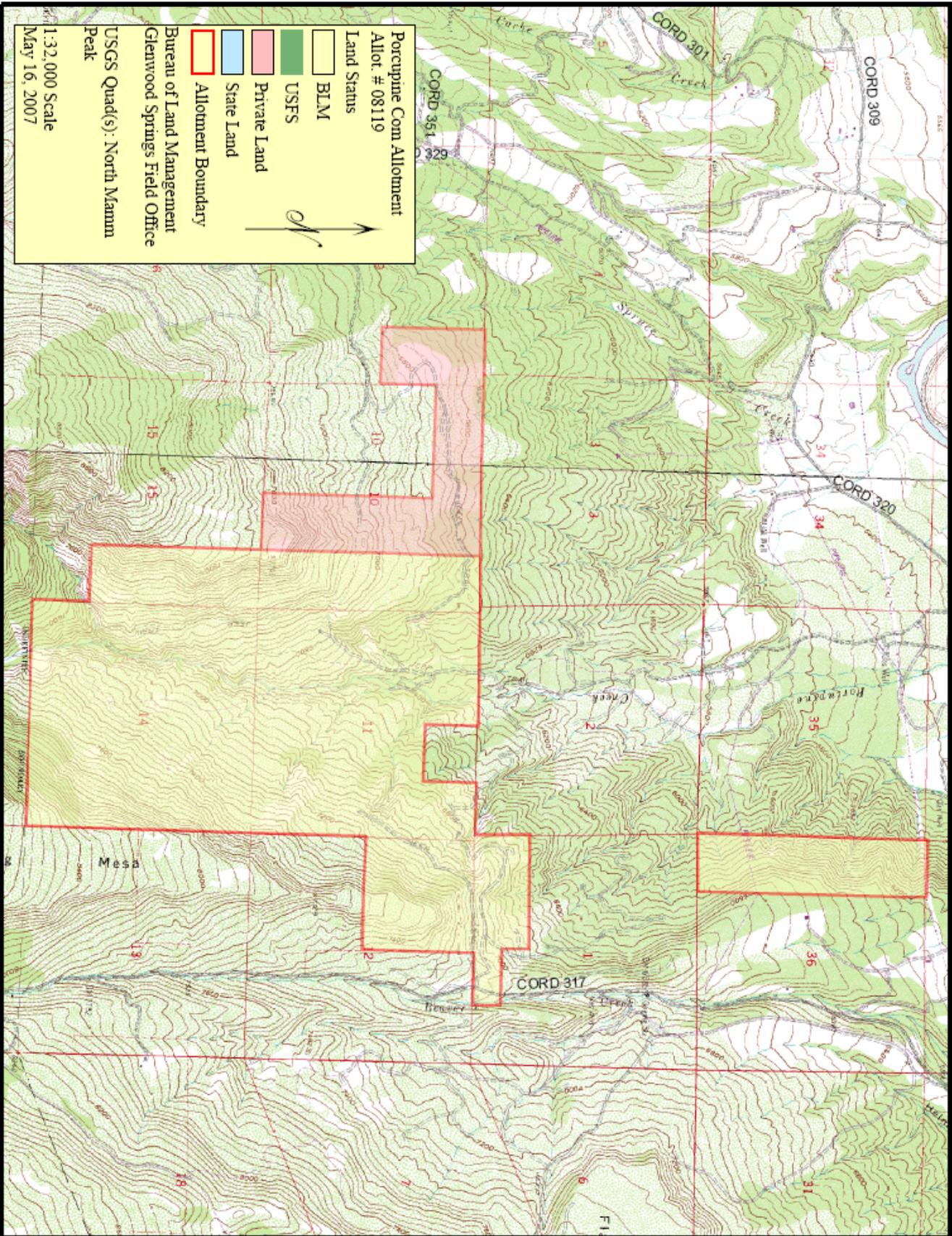
INTERDISCIPLINARY REVIEW:

| Name | Title | Area of Responsibility |
|-----------------|---------------------------------|---|
| Isaac Pittman | Rangeland Management Specialist | Range, NEPA Lead |
| Mike Kinser | Rangeland Management Specialist | Riparian Zones |
| Jeff O'Connell | Hydrologist/Geologist | Soil, Air, Water, Geology |
| Kay Hopkins | Outdoor Recreation Planner | Wilderness, VRM |
| Carla DeYoung | Ecologist | ACEC, T/E/S Plants, Standards, Vegetation |
| Cheryl Harrison | Archaeologist | Cultural & Native American Concerns |
| Tom Fresques | Fisheries Biologist | Wildlife Aquatic, T&E (Fish) |
| Brian Hopkins | Wildlife Biologist | Wildlife Terrestrial, T&E |
| Dereck Wilson | Range Management Specialist | Invasive, Non-native Species |

SIGNATURE OF PREPARER:

DATE SIGNED:

ATTACHMENTS: Allotment Map



UNITED STATES
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT
GLENWOOD SPRINGS FIELD OFFICE
FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT

Grazing Permit Renewal with Changes on the Porcupine Common Allotment
DOI-BLM-CO140-2009-0036-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

In 2004, the BLM Glenwood Springs Field Office conducted the Rifle West Watershed Land Health Assessment that included the Porcupine Common Allotment. At that time, the allotment failed to meet Public Land Health Standard 3 primarily for wildlife. Extensive road and well pad networks have fragmented habitat, reduced overall vegetative cover and provided avenues for the invasion of noxious weeds. Existing livestock grazing was not considered to be a significant factor contributing to the current land health conditions but altering the use on the allotment to allow for more rest and recovery during critical growth periods for perennial grasses and native forbs could result in improved vegetative cover and vigor. The proposed action would not likely result in a failure to achieve this standard and should maintain and/or improve vegetative conditions on the allotment.

Context

There are three permits on this allotment. Two of the permittees have adjusted their livestock operation and have applied for spring use rather than the previously authorized season-long use. There were no issues noted with the previous use authorized and the changes are in response to application made by both permittees.

Intensity

I have considered the potential intensity/severity of the impacts anticipated from the grazing permit changes on the Porcupine Common allotment decision relative to each of the ten areas suggested for consideration by the CEQ. With regard to each:

1. Impacts that may be both beneficial and adverse.

A compressed grazing season allows for more growing season rest. It may also avoid gas production and grazing conflicts by having cattle there for a shorter amount of time. The shortened season of use could increase the diversity of species grazed which could be both beneficial and adverse. Adverse impacts could occur if more grazing pressure is put on the BLM sensitive Harrington's Penstemon. Utilization limits should offset any possible adverse impacts.

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

This action does not affect 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.

There are no unique characteristics. The allotment is about 4 miles south of the Colorado River between the towns of Parachute and Rifle and is mostly bordered by private property.

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

Effects to the human environment are not likely to be highly controversial.

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

The possible effects to the human environment are not highly uncertain. Many of the grazing allotments in the Glenwood Springs Field Office are managed for spring grazing use.

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 change in season of use will be issued as a ten year permit and will be analyzed further upon expiration of the permit. It represents no precedent for future actions. All actions of this nature will be analyzed separately.

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

There would be no cumulatively significant impacts from these grazing authorizations.

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.

Four historic properties have been identified on this allotment. With proposed mitigation measures there would be no destruction or loss that would adversely affect these resources.

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 threatened or endangered species have been identified in this allotment.

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

No laws are violated by the proposed action.

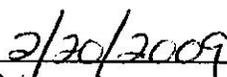
FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT

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 or alternatives will not have significant environmental impacts beyond those already addressed in the "Record of Decision and Resource Management Plan," (Jan. 1984, revised 1988); (2) the Proposed Action and alternatives are in conformance with the "Record of Decision and Resource Management Plan,"; and (3) the Proposed Action and alternatives do 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 or as articulated in the letters of comment.



Authorized Official
Glenwood Springs Field Office



Date