

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: CO-140-2009-0058 EA

CASEFILE NUMBER:

PROJECT NAME: Grazing Permit renewal on the Doyal Allotment.

LOCATION: T7S R87W Sec 18 NE1/4 – Doyal Allotment (No 08315); Refer to attached allotment map.

APPLICANT: Grazing Permittee

DESCRIPTION OF THE PROPOSED ACTION AND ALTERNATIVES

Proposed Action: The Proposed Action is to renew term grazing permit for the above applicant. The number/kind of livestock, period of use, percent public land and Animal Unit Months (AUMS) will remain the same as the previous permit. The permit would be issued for a 10-year period. The proposed action is in accordance with 43 CFR 4130.2. The tables below summarize the scheduled grazing use and grazing preference for the permits.

Scheduled Grazing Use:

Operator No.	Allotment Name & No.	Livestock No. & Kind	Period of use	Percent Public Land	AUMs
0507554	Doyal (No 08315)	10 Cattle	05/16 – 06/15	100	10

Grazing Preference AUMS:

Operator No.	Allotment Name & No.	Active	Suspended	Total
0507554	Doyal (No 08315)	10	0	10

The following terms and conditions were included on the previous (expiring) permit and will be carried forward on the issued 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 following allotment term and condition will be included on the issued permits.

- If an assessment of rangeland health results in a determination that changes are necessary in order to comply with the standards for public land health or the guidelines for livestock grazing management in Colorado, this permit will be reissued subject to revised terms and conditions.
- 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).

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. For this reason, discontinuance of grazing use (No Grazing) will not be considered or assessed.

The No Action alternative has also been eliminated from further consideration. The No Action alternative would involve reissuing the permit/lease with current terms and conditions and no additional stipulations would be added to the permit/lease. Reissuing the permit/lease without the new stipulations would be unrealistic due to current Washington Office and Colorado State Office policies.

PURPOSE AND NEED FOR THE ACTION: These permits/leases are subject to renewal or transfer at the discretion of the Secretary of the Interior for a period of up to ten years. The U.S. Bureau of Land Management has the authority to renew the livestock grazing permits/leases consistent with the provisions of the Taylor Grazing Act, Public Rangelands Improvement Act, Federal Land Policy and Management Act, and Glenwood Springs Field Office's Resource Management Plan/Environmental Impact Statement. This Plan/EIS has been amended by Standards for Public Land Health in Colorado.

The renewal of the grazing permit 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, and (5) to allow use of native rangeland resource for conversion into protein suitable for human consumption.

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

Name of Plan: 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.

Decision Number/Page: The action is in conformance with Administrative Actions (pg. 5) and Livestock Grazing Management (pg. 20).

Decision Language: 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.”

STANDARDS FOR PUBLIC LAND HEALTH:

In January 1997, Colorado Bureau of Land Management (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.

The Roaring Fork Landscape which incorporates the Doyal Allotment is scheduled to be assessed in 2010. As such, we are deferring making a determination on conformance with the Standards on this allotment until the formal Land Health Assessment is completed. If the authorized officer determines that existing livestock grazing management practices or levels of grazing use on public lands are significant factors in failing to achieve the standards and conform to the guidelines, the authorized officer shall take appropriate action as soon as practical (according to 43 CFR 4180.2) to achieve progress toward meeting the standards.

Because a standard exists for the five categories mentioned above, the impact analysis must address whether the proposed action or any alternatives being analyzed would result in impacts that would maintain, improve, or deteriorate land health conditions for that specific parameter. These analyses are located in specific elements listed below:

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 1). 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**.

Critical Elements

Table 1. 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	Special Status 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

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 #1009-16) was completed for the Doyal Allotment on February 18, 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)
Doyal	9	74	11	0	No	No additional acres need to be inventoried to meet the 10% sampling threshold. 1% of the allotment has 30%+ slopes.
Total	9	74	11	0		

Two Class III cultural resource inventories (934 and 328) have been conducted within this allotment resulting in the recording of one historic property. Historic properties are cultural resources that are considered eligible or potentially eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places that need to be preserved. If they cannot be avoided, the adverse impacts must be mitigated. Based on available data, there is a low to moderate potential for historic properties within the allotment. 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.

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.

One historic property was 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 the areas of concern. The cultural resource specialist should be involved in discussions for improvements, maintenance, supplemental feeding areas, etc to ensure that the historic properties and area of concern is avoided.

Mitigation:

New improvements or maintenance of existing range improvements 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. U.S. Census Bureau data from 2006 shows the minority

population of Garfield County comprises less than 0.7 % of the total population of Colorado¹.

Garfield County
Median Household Income (2004)
Estimate
\$50,119

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: No known noxious or invasive plant species are known to occur on the Doyal Allotment.

Environmental Consequences:

As livestock come in contact with noxious and invasive weed species they will continue to transport seed via coat and feces to other areas of the allotments. The proposed season-of-use and livestock numbers are designed to sustain the overall rangeland health of the allotments. By sustaining or improving rangeland health, noxious or invasive weeds would less likely become established and a reduced rate of spread would result. Noxious and invasive plant species are not expected to radically increase as a result of the continuation of livestock grazing practices and most infestations will be isolated to watering facilities, salting areas, and other livestock high concentration locations.

MIGRATORY BIRDS

Affected Environment:

The 1988 amendment to the Fish and Wildlife Conservation Act mandates the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) to “identify species, subspecies, and populations of all migratory nongame birds that, without additional conservation actions, are likely to become candidates for listing under the Endangered Species Act (ESA) of 1973.” *Birds of Conservation Concern 2008* (<http://www.fws.gov/migratorybirds/reports/BCC2008/BCC2008m.pdf>) is the most recent effort to carry out this mandate. The conservation concerns may be the result of population declines, naturally or human-caused small ranges or population sizes, threats to habitat, or other factors. The primary statutory authority for *Birds of Conservation Concern 2008* (BCC 2008) is the Fish and Wildlife Conservation Act of 1980 (FWCA), as amended. Although there are general patterns that can be inferred, there is no single reason why any species was is on the list. The Glenwood Springs Field Office is within the Southern Rockies/Colorado Plateau Bird

¹ 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
Last Revised: Wednesday, 02-Jan-2008 15:11:03

Conservation Region (BCR). The 2008 list include the following birds: Gunnison Sage Grouse, American Bittern, Bald Eagle, Ferruginous Hawk, Golden Eagle, Peregrine Falcon, Prairie Falcon, Snowy Plover, Mountain Plover, Long-billed Curlew, Yellow-billed Cuckoo, Burrowing Owl, Lewis's Woodpecker, Willow Flycatcher, Gray Vireo, Pinyon Jay, Juniper Titmouse, Veery, Bendire's Thrasher, Grace's Warbler, Brewer's Sparrow, Grasshopper Sparrow, Chestnut-collared Longspur, Black Rosy-Finch, Brown-capped Rosy-Finch, and Cassin's Finch.

Habitat loss due to alteration or destruction continues to be the major reason for the declines of many species (<http://www.fws.gov/migratorybirds/reports/BCC2008/BCC2008m.pdf>). When considering potential impacts to migratory birds the impact on habitat, including: 1) the degree of fragmentation/connectivity expected from the proposed project relative to before the proposed project; and 2) the fragmentation/connectivity within and between habitat types (e.g., within nesting habitat or between nesting and feeding habitats). Continued private land development, surface disturbing actions in key habitats (e.g. riparian areas) and the proliferation of roads, pipelines, powerlines and trails are local factors that reduce habitat quality and quantity.

The GSFO planning area provides both foraging and nesting habitat for a variety of migratory birds that summer, winter, or migrate through the area. The habitat diversity provided by the broad expanses of sagebrush, mixed mountain shrub, aspen, pinyon-juniper woodlands, other types of coniferous forests, and riparian and wetland areas support many bird species. The pinyon jay is characteristically found in pinyon/juniper woodlands and the Brewer's sparrow (*Spizella breweri*) is found within sagebrush habitats. Other Birds of Conservation Concern 2008 may also occur locally. Many species of raptors (red-tailed hawks, golden eagles, northern goshawks, Cooper's hawks, kestrels and owls) not on the Fish & Wildlife Service's Birds of Conservation Concern list also could occur in the area.

Bald eagle (*Haliaeetus leucocephalus*). Bald eagles are known to winter along portions of the Colorado, Eagle and Roaring Fork Rivers and its major tributaries. Wintering bald eagles are generally present from mid-November to mid-April. Large mature cottonwood trees along the the rivers and their major tributaries are used as roosting and perching sites, and these waterways provide the main food sources of fish and waterfowl. Upland habitats adjacent to these waterways are used as scavenging areas primarily for winter killed mule deer and elk. Major threats include habitat loss, human disturbance and illegal shooting. Bald eagles are increasing in numbers throughout their range and were removed from the federal threatened and endangered species list in 2007 however bald eagles are still protected under the Migratory Bird Treaty Act.

Environmental Consequences/Mitigation:

Limited bird count or species data exists for the area, however the greater concern is the continued fragmentation of habitat and losses of large blocks of contiguous habitat required by many bird species. 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 impact is expected to be minimal and isolated and would not influence populations of migratory birds on a landscape level. Given current overall existing habitat condition, livestock grazing, as proposed, will not negatively affect the degree of fragmentation/connectivity expected relative to the existing condition of the allotment and the fragmentation/connectivity within and between habitat types (e.g., within nesting habitat or

between nesting and feeding habitats would also likely not change. Overall it is unlikely that, livestock grazing in both numbers and duration, as proposed would not reduce the extent or quality of habitat available for migratory bird breeding functions.

THREATENED, ENDANGERED, AND SENSITIVE SPECIES (includes a finding on Standard 4)

Affected Environment:

Federally Listed, Proposed, and Candidate Species

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: Colorado 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*), humpback chub (*Gila cypha*), and Greenback cutthroat trout (*Oncorhynchus clarkii stomias*).

The Colorado pikeminnow, bonytail, humpback chub, and razorback sucker are all located far (>50 miles) downstream in the Colorado River below Rifle, Colorado. Cattle Creek and the nearby Roaring Fork River do not provide habitat for any of these endangered fishes.

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.

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*).

Although a survey for special status plants has not been conducted on the Doyal allotment, several occurrences of the BLM sensitive plant, Harrington's penstemon (*Penstemon harringtonii*), have been documented within one to two miles to the south of the allotment. Similar habitat is found on the allotment and it is presumed that some Harrington's penstemon plants occur on the allotment.

Environmental Consequences/Mitigation:

Federally Listed, Proposed, and Candidate Species

Endangered Colorado River Fishes:

These fish are all native to the Colorado River basin. These species are adapted to the historic natural conditions related to high sediment loads periodically carried by the Colorado River. These allotments provide adequate growing season rest and plant rest and recovery periods. Given the condition of habitats and the distance to occupied habitat from these allotments, continued livestock grazing as proposed would have “**No Effect**” to these fish or their habitat.

Plants:

Due to the absence of occupied or suitable habitat for any of the four listed or candidate plant species in the Doyal allotment, the proposed action would have “**No Effect**” on these plants.

BLM Sensitive Species:

Harrington’s penstemon flowering stalks are palatable to both livestock and wildlife. Under the proposed grazing schedule, the Doyal allotment would be grazed from May 16 to June 15 each year which corresponds to the flowering period for Harrington’s penstemon. 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. Given that the allotment would only be grazed by 10 cattle for a month, it is likely that utilization of penstemon flower stalks would be minimal and the proposed action would not impact the long-term viability of any populations on this allotment.

Finding on the Public Land Health Standard 4 for Threatened, Endangered, and Other Special Status Species:

A formal Land Health Assessment has not been completed in this area. Based on the limited number of livestock and the timeframe of grazing use, impacts to special status species should be minimal and it is likely the allotment is meeting Standard 4 for threatened, endangered and other special status species. The continuation of livestock grazing should have minimal effect on the ability of the allotment to meet this Standard.

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

Affected Environment: The Doyal Allotment is located northeast of the Town of Carbondale, Highway 82, and the Roaring Fork River. The northwest half of the allotment is within the 11,298 acre Lower Cattle Creek 6th field watershed while the southeast half of the allotment is within the 3,580 acre Unnamed Creek at Catherine 6th field watershed. To the north of the Doyal Allotment is the perennial Cattle Creek which is directly tributary to the Roaring Fork River to the west. There are no mapped drainages within the Doyal Allotment or major perennial drainages within the vicinity.

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 and could lead to stream bank trampling. The introduction of livestock feces to waterbodies often leads to water quality degradation by increasing fecal coliform bacteria levels and often leads to algal blooms which increase water temperatures and can decrease dissolved oxygen levels. However, based on the period of use, the lack of mapped drainages and perennial drainages in the vicinity, the potential for measureable water quality degradation is minimal.

Finding on the Public Land Health Standard 5 for water quality: In 2010, the BLM Glenwood Springs Field Office is scheduled to complete the Roaring Fork Land Health Assessment that would include an assessment of area drainages. Based on the scheduled period of use and the distance from major perennial drainages, the proposed activities would not likely prevent Standard 5 for Water Quality from being met.

NON-CRITICAL ELEMENTS

The following elements **must** be addressed due to the involvement of Standards for Public Land Health:

SOILS (includes a finding on Standard 1)

Affected Environment: According to the *Soil Survey of Aspen-Gypsum Area, Colorado: Parts of Eagle, Garfield, and Pitkin Counties* (USDA 1992), the Doyal Allotment occurs on one soil type, the Morval-Tridell complex. This soil map unit is found on alluvial fans and mountainsides at elevations ranging from 6,800 to 8,000 feet and on slopes of 12 to 50 percent. Approximately 55 percent of this unit is Morval loam, 30 percent Tridell moderately stony loam, and the other 15 percent a mixture of soil types. The Morval soil is deep, well drained and is derived from basaltic alluvium. Surface runoff is medium and the water erosion hazard is moderate. The Tridell soil is deep, well drained and is derived from basaltic alluvium and colluvium. Surface runoff is rapid and the water erosion hazard is high. Primary uses for this soil map unit include rangeland and firewood production.

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. However, based on the scheduled period of use, the soil type and slope angles, and the distance from major perennial drainages; the potential for measureable sediment transport and negative soil impacts is minimal.

Finding on the Public Land Health Standard 1 for upland soils: The BLM Glenwood Springs Field Office is scheduled to complete the Roaring Fork Land Health Assessment in summer 2010 that would include the Doyal Allotment. Based on the scheduled period of use, the soil type and slope angles, and the distance from major perennial drainages;

the proposed activities would not likely prevent Standard 1 for Upland Soils from being met.

VEGETATION (includes a finding on Standard 3)

Affected Environment:

The Doyal Allotment is a small 83-acre allotment northeast of the town of Carbondale, Colorado. Approximately half of the allotment consists of sagebrush shrublands, with the remainder being a mix of pinyon-juniper woodlands on the drier, south-facing slopes and Gambel oak/mixed mountain shrublands on the more mesic, north-facing slopes. Allotments at this elevation and on these soil types tend to receive moderate amounts of precipitation and forage production is usually very good.

Environmental Consequences/Mitigation:

There is no utilization or trend data in the allotment files to evaluate livestock grazing impacts on the Doyal allotment. The proposed grazing use is for 10 cattle from May 16 to June 15. Cattle grazing in the late spring tend to utilize annual and perennial grasses and forbs that are green and high in protein at this time. Healthy herbaceous vegetation is maintained by providing periodic rest from grazing during critical growth periods or adequate recovery and regrowth periods following grazing.

This proposed duration and intensity of grazing use on the allotment should provide adequate growing season rest for plant health and would allow for seed dissemination and seedling establishment following grazing use. The renewal of the grazing permit is not expected to have any adverse impacts on plant community health.

Analysis on the Public Land Health Standard for Plant and Animal Communities (partial, see also Wildlife, Aquatic and Wildlife, Terrestrial):

A formal Land Health Assessment has not been completed in this area and there is no vegetation utilization or monitoring data for this allotment. Given the short duration of grazing use, the small numbers of livestock, and the amount of forage typically produced in the area, the continuation of livestock grazing on this allotment should have little bearing on the ability of the area to meet this Standard. If the formal land health assessment determines that the allotment is not meeting Standard 3 and livestock grazing is a significant contributing factor, changes will be made to the terms and conditions of the permit to comply with the standards and guidelines.

WILDLIFE, AQUATIC (includes a finding on Standard 3)

Affected Environment:

The Doyal allotment contains no perennial streams and is drained via small ephemeral washes. Cattle Creek is located 0.3 miles to the north of the allotment and the creek in this area contains brown and brook trout, mottled sculpin, and aquatic insects.

Environmental Consequences/Mitigation:

Continued grazing activities would result in some soil compaction and displacement and increase the likelihood of erosional processes, especially on steep slopes, areas devoid of vegetation, and at livestock concentration areas such as stock waters, salting sites, 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 the proposed activities to area drainages and perennial Cattle Creek, there is potential that additional sediment associated with grazing practices could reach this stream.

Sediment can impact sculpin and trout species by silting in important spawning substrates and in the event eggs are present, by smothering eggs which leads to loss of productivity. Excessive sediment can also fill in important pool habitats reducing their depth and usability during critical summer and winter periods when they are needed for thermal refuge and survival. Aquatic insect productivity can be impaired as sediment covers clean gravels and cobbles and fills in the interstitial spaces used by these insects. This can reduce food sources for fish and terrestrial bird and bat species. The reauthorization of grazing as proposed provides for growing season rest and adequate plant rest and recovery periods which should maintain good vegetative cover and help to limit offsite soil movement. The allotment is grazed by only 10 cows for 1 month. Stream and riparian habitats are in good condition, grazing should have minimal impact to fish or fish habitats.

Analysis on the Public Land Health Standard 3 for Plant and Animal Communities
(partial, see also Vegetation and Wildlife, Terrestrial):

A formal Land Health Assessment has not been completed for these lands. The proposed action should have little bearing on the areas ability to meet this standard.

WILDLIFE, TERRESTRIAL (includes a finding on Standard 3)

Affected Environment:

The allotment provides important habitat for a variety of obligate species of birds, and are particularly important as food and cover for wintering big game. Pinyon-juniper woodlands provide important foraging and nesting habitat for some raptor species and many migratory song birds, and provide security, foraging, and thermal cover for a variety of small game, big game, and nongame wildlife. Mixed mountain shrub and oak habitats are important to turkey, black bear, and lion among others.

Terrestrial habitats have been altered by roads (both authorized and unauthorized), powerlines, pipelines, fences, public recreation use, residential and commercial development, vegetative treatments and livestock and wild ungulate grazing. These human uses contribute to degradation of habitat quality, fragmentation of habitat for several species and the expansion of areas supporting noxious and exotic vegetative species.

Species of High Public Interest. Mule deer and elk usually occupy the area yearround however the sagebrush-dominant ridges and south-facing slopes are important big game winter habitat. Within these allotments BLM lands provide a large portion of the undeveloped winter range

available to deer and elk. The allotment overlaps with deer winter range and elk severe winter range. Elk severe winter range is considered that part of the overall range where 90% of the individuals are located when the annual snowpack is at its maximum and/or temperatures are at a minimum in the two worst winters out of ten.

The Lower Colorado River Habitat Management Plan 2008-2012 indicates the 2006 post hunt elk population to be an estimated 5,950 within data analysis unit (DAU) E-16 (game management units 44,444, 45 and 47). The CDOW recommended population objective for elk is 6,000. As indicated the elk population is stable and meeting the population objectives set by the CDOW. CDOW recommended population objective for deer is 7,000. The 2006 post hunt population estimate was 10,160 deer in game management DAU D-14 (GMU 44). Currently the deer numbers are likely near the 7,000 deer population objective due to the locally severe winter of 2007-08.

Environmental Consequences/Mitigation:

It is unlikely that the proposed action on this small allotment would have any long-term negative impacts to terrestrial wildlife or their habitat. Under the proposed action, the allotment would be grazed in the spring for a short duration (one month) by 10 cattle so minor direct competition with wildlife for forage would occur. The proposed action would not be expected to degrade wildlife habitat and would still provide for the forage and cover needs of resident wildlife.

Species of High Public Interest. The magnitude of competitive interactions between big game and livestock is poorly understood. Livestock and wild ungulate carrying capacities should be evaluated holistically and be used to guide stocking rate decisions and wild ungulate population objectives. Since these allotments are part of big game winter ranges, the lack of late-season grazing provides residual vegetation that is necessary for wintering big game. Regrowth areas previously used by cattle in the spring may even be favored because of the resultant increase in forage palatability.

Qualitatively viewing the big game population trends and objectives in relationship to the consistent level of livestock AUMs, it can be assumed that the current stocking rates will continue to be compatible with CDOW big game objectives.

Analysis on the Public Land Health Standard 3 for Terrestrial Wildlife Communities (partial, see also plant and aquatic wildlife): A formal Land Health Assessment has not been completed in this area and there is no vegetation utilization or monitoring data for this allotment. Given the short duration of grazing use, the small numbers of livestock, and the amount of forage typically produced in the area, the continuation of livestock grazing on this allotment should have little bearing on the ability of the area to meet this Standard. If the formal land health assessment determines that the allotment is not meeting Standard 3 and livestock grazing is a significant contributing factor, changes will be made to the terms and conditions of the permit to comply with the standards and guidelines.

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

Table 2. Other Resources Considered in the Analysis.			
<i>Resource</i>	<i>NA or Not Present</i>	<i>Present and Not Affected</i>	<i>Present and Affected</i>
Access and Transportation		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	
Visual Resources		X	

SUMMARY OF CUMULATIVE IMPACTS

No cumulative impacts have been identified.

PERSONS AND AGENCIES CONSULTED:

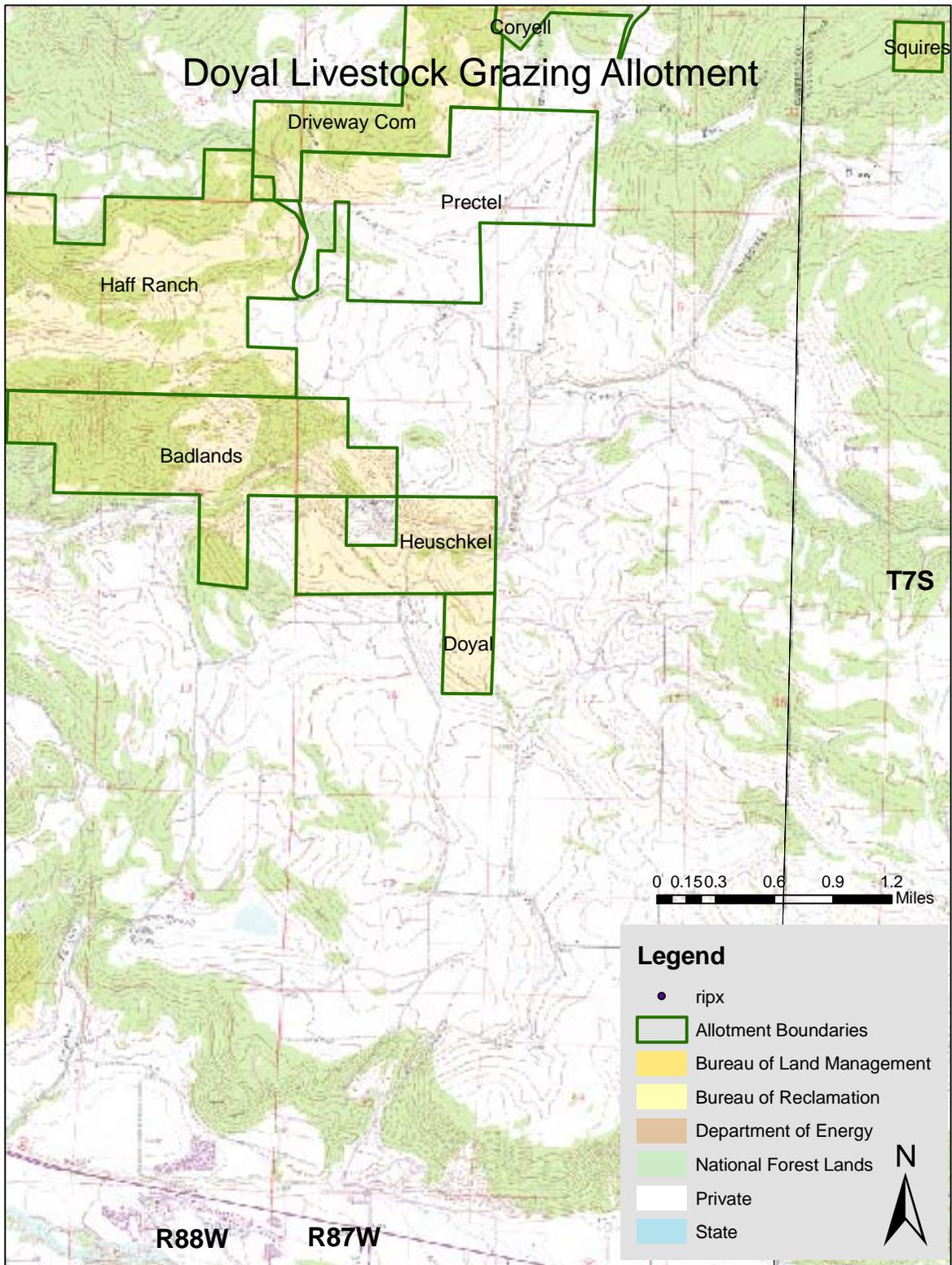
Notices of public scoping were issued through the Colorado BLM’s Internet web page providing the public an opportunity to obtain information or offer concerns on grazing permits or allotments scheduled for renewal. News releases were issued... There have been no responses received specific to the permit renewal or allotments addressed in this NEPA document. The Glenwood Springs Field Office Internet NEPA Register also lists grazing permit renewal NEPA documents that have been initiated. They are generally posted approximately one month prior to the estimated completion date.

Southern Ute Tribe
Northern Ute Tribe
Ute Mtn. Ute Tribe

INTERDISCIPLINARY REVIEW:

<i>Name</i>	<i>Title</i>	<i>Responsibility</i>
Dereck Wilson	Rangeland Management Specialist	NEPA Lead, Noxious and Invasive Species, Range Management
Michael Kinser	Rangeland Management Specialist	Wetlands and Riparian Zones

Jeff O'Connell	Hydrologist/Geologist	Soil, Air, Water, Geology
Kay Hopkins	Outdoor Recreation Planner	WSR, Wilderness, VRM, Recreation, Transportation
Cheryl Harrison	Archaeologist	Cultural Resources and Native American Concerns
Brian Hopkins	Wildlife Biologist	Migratory Birds, T/E/S Wildlife, Terrestrial Wildlife
Carla DeYoung	Ecologist	ACEC, Vegetation, T/E/S Plants, Land Heath Stds
Tom Fresques	Fisheries Biologist	T/E/S Aquatic Species, Aquatic Wildlife
Jeff Cook	Wildlife Biologist	Terrestrial Wildlife



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

Grazing Permit Renewal on the Doyal Allotment

DOI-BLM-CO140-2009-0058-EA

Finding of No Significant Impact

I have reviewed the direct, indirect and cumulative effects of the proposed action documented in the EA for the grazing permit renewal on the Doyal Allotment. The effects of the proposed action are disclosed in the Alternatives and Environmental Impacts sections of the EA. Implementing regulations for NEPA (40 CFR 1508.27) provide criteria for determining the significance of the effects. Significant, as used in NEPA, requires consideration of both *context* and *intensity* as follows:

(a) Context. This requirement means that the significance of an action must be analyzed in several contexts such as society as a whole (human, national), the affected region, the affected interests, and the locality. Significance varies with the setting of the proposed action. For instance, in the case of a site-specific action, significance would usually depend upon the effects in the locale rather than in the world as a whole. Both short and long-term effects are relevant (40 CFR 1508.27):

The disclosure of effects in the EA found the actions limited in context. The planning area is limited in size and activities limited in potential. Effects are local in nature and are not likely to significantly affect regional or national resources.

(b) Intensity. This requirement refers to the severity of the impact. Responsible officials must bear in mind that more than one agency may make decisions about partial aspects of a major action. The following are considered in evaluating intensity (40 CFR 1508.27).

1. Impacts that may be both beneficial and/or adverse.

Impacts associated with the livestock grazing permit renewal are identified and discussed in the Environmental Impacts section of the EA. The proposed action will not have any significant beneficial or adverse impacts on the resources identified and described in the EA.

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

The proposed activities will not significantly affect public health or safety. The purpose of the proposed action is to allow for multiple uses while maintaining or improving resource conditions to meet standards for rangeland health in the allotment. Similar actions have not significantly affected public health or safety.

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

A determination of “May Adversely Affect” has been made for historic properties that occur in the allotments; however, this determination is based on impacts from the construction and/or maintenance of range improvements which is not the proposed action (i.e., renewal of the livestock grazing permit). Although there is generic discussion of adverse impacts that could occur to cultural resources from livestock grazing, no specific impacts from livestock grazing have been identified to the historic properties that occur within these allotments. No other unique characteristics are known to occur in the allotments.

4. The degree to which the effects are likely to be highly controversial.

The analysis did not identify any effects that are highly controversial.

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

The possible effects on the human environment are not highly uncertain nor do they involve unique or uncertain risks. The technical analyses conducted for the determination of the impacts to the resources are supportable with use of accepted techniques, reliable data, and professional judgment. Therefore, I conclude that there are no highly uncertain, unique, or unknown risks.

6. The degree to which the action may establish a precedent for future actions with significant effects or represent a decision in principle about a future consideration.

This EA is specific to the Doyal Allotment. It is not expected to set precedent for future actions with significant effects or represent a decision in principle about a future management consideration in or outside of this allotment.

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

The analysis in the EA did not identify any related actions with cumulative significant effects.

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, cultural, or historical resources.

The proposed action is not considered to adversely affect districts, sites, highways or structures. Refer to the discussion for No. 3 for impacts to cultural/historic 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.

There is no designated critical habitat for any listed Threatened or Endangered species within the project area. Due to the absence of any occupied or suitable habitat within or adjacent to these allotments, the proposed action would have “**No Effect**” to any of the four listed, proposed or candidate plant species. Given the grazing management in place on both allotments, reauthorization of livestock grazing should have “**No Effect**” to either of these endangered fishes or their habitats.

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

The proposed action does not violate or threaten to violate any Federal, State or local laws or requirements imposed for the protection of the environment.

Based upon the review of the test for significance and the environmental analyses conducted, I have determined that the actions analyzed in the EA will not significantly affect the quality of the human environment. Accordingly, I have determined that the preparation of an Environmental Impact Statement is not necessary for this proposal.



Authorized Official
Glenwood Springs Field Office



Date