

U.S. Department of the Interior
Bureau of Land Management
Colorado River Valley Field Office
2300 River Frontage Road
Silt, CO 81652

ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

NUMBER: DOI-BLM-CO-N040-2010-0019-EA

CASEFILE NUMBER: 0507570

PROJECT NAME: Grazing Permit Renewals on the Gould, Coryell, Driveway Common, and Prectel Allotments

LOCATION: T6S R87W Sec 19, 30, 29, & 31. Refer to attached allotment map.

APPLICANT: Grazing Permittee

DESCRIPTION OF THE PROPOSED ACTION AND ALTERNATIVES

Background Information: The grazing permittee has requested to change the period of use on his permit. The following table displays the proposed period of use changes.

Allotment Name & No.	Current Period of use	Proposed Period of use
Coryell 08307	06/01-06/05	06/10-06/14
Gould 08306	06/06-06/13	06/18-06/25
Prectel 08311	06/20-06/23	06/05-06/08
Driveway Common 08308	06/24-07/08	06/26-07/10

The adjustment will benefit the permittee's livestock operation by more efficiently coordinating private land and public land use.

Proposed Action: The Proposed Action is to renew a term grazing permit for the above applicant. The number/kind of livestock, percent public land and Animal Unit Months (AUMS) will remain the same as the previous permit. The current period of use (Table 1) will be adjusted upon the permittee's request to the proposed period of use (Table 3). 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). The proposed action is in accordance with 43 CFR 4130.2. The tables below summarize the scheduled grazing use and grazing preference for the permit.

Current Mandatory Terms and Conditions

Table 1: Current Scheduled Grazing Use

Allotment Name & No.	Livestock No. & Kind	Period of use	Percent Public Land	AUMs
Coryell 08307	600 Cattle	06/01-06/05	19	19
Gould 08306	600 Cattle	06/06-06/13	100	158
Prectel 08311	600 Cattle	06/20-06/23	30	24
Driveway Common 08308	600 Cattle	06/24-07/08	100	296

Table 2: Current Grazing Preference AUMS

Allotment Name & No.	Active	Suspended	Total
Coryell 08307	19	0	19
Gould 08306	158	0	158
Prectel 08311	24	0	24
Driveway Common 08308	300	0	300

Proposed Mandatory Terms and Conditions

Table 3: Proposed Scheduled Grazing Use

Allotment Name & No.	Livestock No. & Kind	Period of use	Percent Public Land	AUMs
Coryell 08307	600 Cattle	06/10-06/14	19	19
Gould 08306	600 Cattle	06/18-06/25	100	158
Prectel 08311	600 Cattle	06/05-06/08	30	24
Driveway Common 08308	600 Cattle	06/26-07/10	100	296

Table 4: Proposed Grazing Preference AUMS

Allotment Name & No.	Active	Suspended	Total
Coryell 08307	19	0	19
Gould 08306	158	0	158
Prectel 08311	24	0	24
Driveway Common 08308	300	0	300

The following Other Terms and Conditions will be included on the renewed permit:

- 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.
- An Actual Use Report for each allotment shall be submitted annually to the BLM office no later than 15 days after livestock have been removed (i.e. the end of the grazing period on the bill or permit).
- Unless there is a specific term or condition of the permit addressing utilization, the intensity of grazing use will insure that no more than 50% of the key upland grass species and 40% of the key browse species current year's growth, by weight, is utilized at the end of the grazing season for all allotments. Application of this term may be flexible to recognize livestock

management that includes sufficient opportunity for re-growth, opportunity for spring growth prior to grazing, or growing season deferment. Grazing in riparian zones will not exceed 40% of current year's growth on woody species and will leave a minimum of 4 inches of stubble height on herbaceous vegetation at the end of the growing season.

- The permittee and all persons associated with allotment operations shall not damage, destroy, remove, or disturb any objects or sites of cultural, paleontological, or scientific value such as historic or prehistoric resources, grave or grave marker, human remains, ruins, cabins, rock art, fossils and artifacts. If in connection with allotment operations under this authorization any of the above resources are encountered, the permittee shall protect such resources and immediately notify the BLM authorized officer of the findings.
- Salt, mineral blocks and supplemental feed will be placed a minimum of .25 miles and preferably .50 miles from riparian areas and other water sources, including springs. The permittee should take note of the possible presence of cultural and historic resources and locate salt, mineral blocks or supplemental feed to avoid such locations. The permittee is responsible for informing all persons associated with allotment operations of the terms, conditions and stipulations attached to the permit.
- If an assessment of rangeland health results in a determination that changes are necessary in order to comply with standards for public land health and guidelines for livestock grazing management in Colorado, this permit will be reissued subject to revised terms and conditions.
- Additional stipulations may be required over the term of the permit to mitigate effects to cultural or paleontological resources.

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; amended in September 2002 – Fire Management Plan for Wildland Fire Management and Prescriptive Vegetation Treatment Guidance; amended in June 2007 – Record of Decision for the Approval of Portions of the Roan Plateau Resource Management Plan Amendment; and amended in March 2009 - Record of Decision for the Designation of Areas of Critical Environmental Concern for the Roan Plateau Resource Management Plan.

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:

The Colorado Standards for Public Land Health consist of 5 standards: upland soils, riparian systems, plant and animal communities, special status species, and water quality. Standards describe conditions needed to sustain public land health and relate to all uses of the public lands.

The Colorado River Valley Field Office is in the ongoing process of completing Land Health Assessments on a landscape basis. The allotments in this grazing permit renewal are scheduled for a land health assessment in 2010. A formal determination on conformance with the Standards will not be made until the Land Health Assessment Report and Determination Document are finalized. Based on the findings of the assessment, the authorized officer shall take appropriate action as soon as practical but not later than the start of the next grazing year upon determining that existing grazing management practices or levels of grazing use on public lands are significant factors in failing to achieve the Standards and conform to the Colorado Guidelines for Livestock Grazing.

The impact analysis herein must address whether the proposed action would result in impacts which would improve, maintain or deteriorate land health conditions for each of the parameters found in the Standards for Public Land Health.

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 #1010-5) was completed for the Gould, Coryell, Driveway Common and Prectel Allotments on March 17, 2010 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 CRVFO 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)
Gould	1	252	0	0	no	25 additional acres need to be inventoried for the renewal. 12% of the allotment has 30%+ slopes.
Coryell	33	137	19	1	no	No additional acres need to be inventoried for the renewal. 15% of the allotment has 30%+ slopes.
Driveway Common	513	639	45	2	no	No additional acres need to be inventoried for the renewal. 4% of the allotment has 30%+ slopes.
Prectel	0	651	0	0	no	65 additional acres need to be inventoried for the renewal. 6% of the allotment has 30%+ slopes
Total	547	1679	64	3		

A combined total of eight Class III cultural resource inventories have been conducted in these allotments. One potential historic property has been identified within the Driveway Common allotment. Historic properties are cultural resources that are considered eligible or potentially eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places. No areas of Native American concern were identified. 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 low to moderate potential for historic properties within these allotments. The dense oakbrush and heavy duff make identifying cultural resources difficult in these allotments.

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 these allotments. On October 26, 2009 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 2010 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, gullyng, 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. A change in the time of use is unlikely to have either beneficial or detrimental effects on cultural resources.

One historic property was identified during the inventories for these allotments. Additional historic properties may be found which would require mitigation, therefore the BLM has made a determination of **Conditional No Adverse Affect** has been made for this renewal. The cultural resource specialist should be involved in discussions about improvements, maintenance, supplemental feeding areas, etc to ensure that the historic properties and areas of concern are avoided.

Mitigation:

New improvements or maintenance of existing range improvements, additional feeding areas, etc., may require cultural resource inventories, monitoring, and/or data recovery. In order to mitigate this potential affect to historic properties all ground disturbing activity, salt blocks, and the placement of supplemental feed, etc, must be at least 100 m 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. This allotment may also contain other 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: The proposed action is to renew a term grazing permit on the Gould, Coryell, Driveway Common, and Prectel Allotments. The AUMs and livestock numbers will remain the same as the expiring permit; however, the period-of-use has been changed.

A landscape wide inventory for the presence of noxious and invasive species has not been completed on the above said allotments. However, noxious weeds have been documented on the Driveway Common Allotment and the likelihood of infestations to occur on all allotments is very high. The following list of noxious weeds is common in Garfield County.

- | | | | |
|----------------|--------------|-------------------|------------------|
| Canada thistle | Musk thistle | Plumeless thistle | Absinth wormwood |
| Houndstonge | Cheatgrass | Bull thistle | Russian knapweed |

The following list of noxious weeds has been documented within or adjacent to the Driveway Common Allotment. Specific locations of the following weeds are stored in a CRVFO geodatabase.

- | | | |
|----------------|-------------------|--------------|
| Canada thistle | Plumeless thistle | Houndstongue |
|----------------|-------------------|--------------|

Environmental Consequences/Mitigation: Livestock grazing can facilitate the spread and establishment of noxious and invasive species in two major ways.

First, overgrazing can reduce native vegetation thereby providing a niche for noxious weeds to become establish and spread. Conversely, properly managed grazing at low to moderate levels does not significantly increase the establishment and spread of noxious weeds. Some recent studies have shown that proper grazing practices can actually reduce the ability of some weeds, such as Downy Brome, to invade range sites. Land health studies have not been completed on the allotments. However, land health standards are expected to be met. The proposed season-of-

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
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use and AUMs is expected to maintain the current native plant communities in the allotments and therefore the proposed action is not expected to increase noxious and invasive plant species levels.

Second, livestock can act as a vector to spread reproductive vegetative plant parts and weed seed by means of either attaching to the hair or wool of the animal or being transported through fecal matter. The ability of livestock to transport weed seed and plant parts is directly related to the physiology of the weed species. However, this affect is minimal as compared to other weed seed dispersal vectors such as vehicle routes and ground disturbing activities. The current weed management plan for the CRVFO is able to mitigate the expected effects of livestock grazing on noxious and invasive weed management. Furthermore, some of the funding from collected grazing fees is used for weed treatments, thereby offsetting some of the effects that livestock might incur on the above said allotments.

Migratory Birds

Affected Environment:

BLM Instruction Memorandum No. 2008-050 provides guidance toward meeting the Bureau of Land Management's (BLM) responsibilities under the Migratory Bird Treaty Act (MBTA) and the Executive Order (EO) 13186. The guidance directs Field Offices to promote the maintenance and improvement of habitat quantity and quality. To avoid, reduce, or mitigate adverse impacts on the habitats of migratory bird species of conservation concern to the extent feasible, and in a manner consistent with regional or statewide bird conservation priorities. 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." The "*BIRDS OF CONSERVATION CONCERN 2008*" (U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service 2008) is the most recent effort to carry out this mandate.

The MBTA prohibits the "take" of a protected species. Under the Act, the term "take" means to harass, harm, pursue, hunt, shoot, wound, kill, trap, capture, collect, or to attempt to engage in any such conduct. The USFWS interprets "harm" and "kill" to include loss of eggs or nestlings due to abandonment or reduced attentiveness by one or both adults as a result of disturbance by human activity, as well as physical destruction of an occupied nest.

The conservation concerns are the result of population declines - naturally or human-caused, small ranges or population sizes, threats to habitat, or other factors. Although there are general patterns that can be inferred, there is no single reason why any species was is on the list. Habitat loss is believed to be the major reason for the declines of many species. 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 for many species.

The Colorado River Valley Field Office is within the Southern Rockies/Colorado Plateau Bird Conservation Region (BCR). The 2008 list of Birds of Conservation include the following: Gunnison Sage-Grouse (*Centrocercus minimus*), American Bittern (*Botaurus lentiginosus*), Bald Eagle (*Haliaeetus leucocephalus*), Ferruginous Hawk (*Buteo regalis*), Golden Eagle (*Aquila chrysaetos*), Peregrine Falcon (*Falco peregrines*), Prairie Falcon (*Falco mexicanus*), Snowy Plover (*Charadrius alexandrinus nivosus/tenuirostris*), Mountain Plover (*Charadrius montanus*), Long-billed Curlew (*Numenius americanus*), Yellow-billed Cuckoo (*Coccyzus americanus*), Burrowing Owl (*Athene cunicularia*), Lewis's Woodpecker (*Melanerpes lewis*), Willow Flycatcher (*Empidonax traillii*), Gray Vireo (*Vireo vicinior*), Pinyon Jay (*Gymnorhinus cyanocephalus*), Juniper Titmouse (*Baeolophus ridgwayi*), Veery (*Catharus fuscescens*), Bendire's Thrasher (*Toxostoma bendirei*), Grace's Warbler (*Dendroica graciae*), Brewer's Sparrow (*Spizella breweri*), Grasshopper Sparrow (*Ammodramus savannarum*), Chestnut-collared Longspur (*Calcarius ornatus*), Black Rosy-Finch (*Leucosticte atrata*), Brown-capped Rosy-Finch (*Leucosticte australis*), and Cassin's Finch (*Carpodacus cassinii*).

The CRVFO 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, oakbrush, aspen, pinyon-juniper woodlands, other types of coniferous forests and riparian and wetland areas support many bird species. The Gray Vireo, Pinyon Jay, Juniper Titmouse, Lewis's Woodpecker and Grace's Warbler are characteristically found in pinyon/juniper woodlands and the Brewer's sparrow (*Spizella breweri*) is found within sagebrush habitats. Many species of raptors (red-tailed hawks, Cooper's hawks, kestrels and owls) not on the Fish & Wildlife Service's Birds of Conservation Concern list also could occur in the area. Raptor surveys have not been conducted in the area.

Bald eagle (*Haliaeetus leucocephalus*). 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. 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 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 animals. Major threats include habitat loss, human disturbance and illegal shooting.

Environmental Consequences/Mitigation:

Limited specific bird count or species data exists for the area. No intentional take of native bird species is anticipated under the proposed action. Responses of individual bird species to land management activities are often habitat and species specific. Birds generally do not respond to the presence of livestock but are impacted by improper grazing. Improper livestock grazing has the potential to: reduce ground cover and forage, degrade riparian areas, the spread of exotic species, accidentally destroy ground nests through trampling, and alter natural fire regimes. Grazing can also affect riparian habitats which are vitally important to most migratory bird species. The abundance of food, water, and shade which attracts migratory birds to these areas also attracts livestock. On a landscape scale the greater concern is its cumulative impact on the fragmentation of habitats.

Given current overall existing habitat conditions/trends (see riparian and vegetation sections), it is unlikely that livestock grazing as proposed (i.e. numbers, duration, terms/conditions attached), would reduce the extent or quality of habitat available for migratory bird breeding functions or movement. In conclusion, the effects of the proposed action on migratory bird species is expected to be minimal and isolated, but not enough to influence populations of migratory birds on a landscape level or cause clear direct or indirect impacts.

Special Status Species – Aquatic Wildlife (includes an analysis of Public Land Health Standard 4)

Affected Environment:

Federally Listed, Proposed or Candidate Aquatic Wildlife Species

According to the latest species list from the U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service (U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. 2008), the following Federally listed, proposed, or candidate aquatic wildlife species may occur within or be impacted by actions occurring within the GSFO (Table Table - Special Status Species – Aquatic Wildlife):

Table - Special Status Species – Aquatic Wildlife

Aquatic Wildlife Species	Habitat/Range	Eagle County	Garfield County	Mesa County	Pitkin County	Routt County
Greenback cutthroat trout (<i>Oncorhynchus clarki stomias</i>)	Cold, clear, gravely headwater streams and mountain lakes. Originally found in the mountain and foothill areas of the Arkansas and South Platte river systems in Colorado and part of Wyoming.	X	X	X	X	X
Bonytail (<i>Gila elegans</i>)	Large, fast-flowing waterways of the Colorado River system.	X	X	X	X	X
Colorado pikeminnow (<i>Ptychocheilus lucius</i>)	Swift flowing muddy rivers with quiet, warm backwaters of the Green, Yampa, White, Colorado, Gunnison, San Juan, and Dolores rivers.	X	X	X	X	X
Humpback chub (<i>Gila cypha</i>)	Deep, fast-moving, turbid waters often associated with large boulders and steep cliffs such as canyon-bound portions of the Colorado River system such as Black Rocks and Westwater canyons.	X	X	X		X
Razorback sucker (<i>Xyrauchen texanus</i>)	Deep, clear to turbid waters of large rivers and reservoirs over mud, sand or gravel. Currently low numbers in the Yampa, Colorado and Gunnison rivers. Reproducing populations remain only in the Colorado River near Grand Junction.	X	X	X	X	X

These species: their status, their distributions, habitat associations, and as appropriate their association to the project area is summarized below.

Greenback Cutthroat Trout (*Oncorhynchus clarki stomias*). Federally listed as threatened. The greenback cutthroat trout was not identified on the USFWS list for Garfield County; however, recent surveys have identified a population in Cache Creek, located several drainages east of the

project area. The greenback is the subspecies of cutthroat trout native to the Platte River drainage on the Eastern Slope of Colorado, while the Colorado River cutthroat trout is the subspecies native to Garfield County and throughout the Western Slope of Colorado. Although the occurrence of greenbacks in Cache Creek and potentially elsewhere in the GSFO and WRNF areas is apparently the result of human intervention (e.g., sanctioned or *ad hoc* transplantation of fish from the Eastern Slope), its status as threatened applies to Western Slope populations. However, because drainages within the project area do not support this species, it is not considered further.

These four species of Federally listed big-river fishes occur within the Colorado River drainage basin downstream from the project area.

Bonytail (*G. elegans*). Federally listed as endangered. This large chub is a member of the minnow family. Their current distribution and habitat status are largely unknown due to its rapid decline prior to research into its natural history. Historically, bonytails were present in the Colorado River system, which includes the Yampa, Green, Colorado and Gunnison rivers. The bonytail is extremely rare in Colorado and no self-sustaining population exist throughout the Colorado River basin. Only one has been captured in the state since 1980. Restoration stocking of bonytail in the wild to develop adult populations is the priority recovery action in Colorado.

Colorado Pikeminnow (*Ptychocheilus lucius*). Federally listed as endangered. The Colorado pikeminnow (formerly Colorado squawfish) Colorado pikeminnow were once abundant in the main stem of the Colorado River and most of its major tributaries in Colorado, Wyoming, Utah, New Mexico, Arizona, Nevada, California and Mexico. Now, they exist primarily in the Green River below the confluence with the Yampa River, the lower Duchesne River in Utah, the Yampa River below Craig, Colo., the White River from Taylor Draw Dam near Rangely downstream to the confluence with the Green River, the Gunnison River in Colorado, and the Colorado River from Palisade, Colo., downstream to Lake Powell. Biologists believe Colorado pikeminnow populations in the upper Colorado River basin are now relatively stable and in some areas may even be growing. Designated Critical Habitat for the Colorado pikeminnow includes the Colorado River and its 100-year floodplain west (downstream) from the town of Rifle.

Humpback Chub (*Gila cypha*). Federally listed as endangered. The nearest known habitat for the humpback chub and bonytail is within the Colorado River approximately 70 miles downstream from the project area. Only one population of humpback chub, at Black Rocks west of Grand Junction, is known to exist in Colorado.

Razorback Sucker (*Xyrauchen texanus*). Federally listed as endangered. The razorback sucker was once widespread throughout most of the Colorado River Basin from Wyoming to Mexico. In the upper Colorado River Basin, they are now found only in the upper Green River in Utah, the lower Yampa River in Colorado and occasionally in the Colorado River near Grand Junction. Because so few of these fish remain in the wild, biologists have been actively raising them in hatcheries in Utah and Colorado and stocking them in the Colorado River. Designated Critical Habitat for the razorback sucker includes the Colorado River and its 100-year floodplain west (downstream) from the town of Rifle.

BLM Sensitive Aquatic Wildlife Species

According to the latest *Colorado BLM State Director's Sensitive Species List (Animals and Plants) June, 2000*, the following aquatic wildlife species may occur within or be impacted by actions occurring within the CRVFO (Table - Colorado BLM Sensitive Species - Aquatic):

Table - Colorado BLM Sensitive Species - Aquatic

Name	Habitat	Habitat Potential Present / Absent
Northern leopard frog (<i>Rana pipiens</i>)	Wet meadows and the banks and shallows of marshes, ponds, glacial kettle ponds, beaver ponds, lakes, reservoirs, streams, and irrigation ditches.	Present
Flannemouth sucker (<i>Catostomas latipinnis</i>)	Generally restricted to rivers and major tributaries.	Absent
Roundtail chub (<i>Gila robusta</i>)	Generally restricted to rivers and major tributaries.	Absent
Colorado River cutthroat trout (<i>Oncorhynchus clarki pleuriticus</i>)	Occurs in clear, cool headwaters streams with coarse substrates, well-distributed pools, stable streambanks, and abundant stream cover.	Absent

The following paragraphs address species with a habitat potential to be present in the project area.

Leopard Frog (*Rana pipiens*). Northern leopard frogs are generally found between 3,500 to 11,000 feet in Colorado, in wet meadows and in shallow lentic habitats. Northern leopard frogs require year ‘round water sources, deep enough to provide ice free refugia in the winter. The presence of northern leopard frogs has been associated with sites with more herbaceous cover as opposed to sites with earlier successional stages of emergent vegetation. Leopard frogs feed primarily on emergent adults of aquatic insects or on terrestrial insects attracted to the water. Within the CRVFO, this species has been documented in various locales. Suitable habitat is abundant within the CRVFO, and is located where quality riparian vegetation exists in conjunction with reliable perennial water sources. Larger populations of this species have been documented northwest of King Mountain within the small drainage that feeds and exits King Mountain (Ligon) Reservoir, June Creek and East Divide Creek south of Silt, Colorado, and in portions of the Rifle Creek watershed north of Rifle, Colorado. Population declines have been attributed to habitat alteration and loss, the effects of introduced bullfrogs and gamefish, aerial pesticide applications, and droughts that limit the availability of year ‘round water

Environmental Consequences/Mitigation:

Federally Listed, Proposed or Candidate Aquatic Wildlife Species. Neither the greenback cutthroat trout nor the four species of Federally listed big-river fishes are found within the area or the vicinity of the proposed action. Livestock grazing as proposed would have “No Effect” to these fishes or their habitat.

BLM Sensitive Aquatic Wildlife Species. The Bluehead sucker, Flannemouth sucker, and Roundtail chub are endemic to the Colorado River basin and reside within the mainstem Colorado River

and its major tributary rivers/streams. The proposed action would have negligible negative impact to these species or their habitats.

Analysis on the Public Land Health Standard 4 for Aquatic Wildlife Special Status Species: (partial, see also Plants and Terrestrial Wildlife): A formal Land Health Assessment will be conducted on this landscape in 2010. If the results of the land health assessment or future monitoring data indicate that conditions are failing to meet the Standard or are trending away from meeting the Standard and livestock is a substantial contributing factor, action would be taken in accordance with 43 CFR 4180.2 to ensure progress toward meeting the standard for healthy plant communities.

Special Status Species – Terrestrial Wildlife (includes an analysis of Public Land Health Standard 4)

Affected Environment:

Federally Listed, Proposed or Candidate - Terrestrial Wildlife Species

According to the latest species list from the U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service (U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. 2008), the following Federally listed, proposed, or candidate terrestrial wildlife species may occur within or be impacted by actions occurring within the GSFO (Table 1):

Table 1.

Terrestrial Wildlife Species	Habitat/Range	Eagle County	Garfield County	Mesa County	Pitkin County	Routt County
Black-footed Ferret (<i>Mustela nigripes</i>)	In Colorado habitat includes the eastern plains, the mountain parks and the western valleys. Specifically grasslands or shrublands that supported some species of prairie dog, the ferret’s primary prey.	X				
Canada lynx (<i>Lynx Canadensis</i>)	Mesic forests of lodgepole pine, subalpine fir, Engelmann spruce, and quaking aspen in the upper montane and subalpine zones, generally between 8,000 and 12,000 feet in elevation.	X	X	X	X	X
Mexican spotted owl (<i>Strix occidentalis lucida</i>)	Mature montane forests, shady canyons, and steep canyons. The key components in montane forests are common to old-growth forests: uneven-age stands with high canopy closure and tree density, fallen logs and snags.	X	X		X	
Greater sage grouse (<i>Centrocercus urophasianus</i>)	Resident of relatively large, open sagebrush flats or rolling sagebrush hills. Uncommon and unlikely in this part of the GSFO or associated habitats	X				X
Yellow-billed cuckoo (<i>Coccyzus americanus</i>)	Mature riparian forests of cottonwoods and other large deciduous trees with a well-developed understory of tall riparian shrubs. Uncommon summer resident of Colorado.	X	X	X	X	X
Uncompahgre fritillary butterfly (<i>Boloria</i>)	Patches of snow willow (<i>Salix spp.</i>) at high elevations.	X			X	

Terrestrial Wildlife Species	Habitat/Range	Eagle County	Garfield County	Mesa County	Pitkin County	Routt County
<i>acrocnema</i>)						

These species: their status, their distributions, habitat associations, and as appropriate their association to the project area is summarized below.

Black-footed Ferret (*Mustela nigripes*). Federally listed as endangered. Black-footed ferrets have ranged statewide but never have been abundant in Colorado. Their habitat included the eastern plains, the mountain parks and the western valleys – grasslands or shrub lands that supported some species of prairie dog, the ferret’s primary prey. Little is known about their natural history. They mate in early spring and give birth to a litter of three or four mouse-sized pups after a seven-week gestation period. Black-footed ferrets are reported to be killed. They are susceptible to distemper, predators like owls and coyotes, and vehicles. It is assumed that plowing for agriculture and programs to eradicate prairie dogs have driven the black-footed ferret to the verge of extinction. State and federal biologists have established two major black-footed ferret colonies: one at Coyote Basin (Colorado-Utah border west of Rangely) and another at the BLM's Wolf Creek Management Area southeast of Dinosaur National Monument (CDOW 2009). Because no known occurrences have been documented and the occurrence of the species in this area is unlikely due to range and habitat conditions, this species is not considered further.

Canada Lynx (*Lynx canadensis*). Federally listed as threatened. Canada lynx (*Lynx canadensis*) was listed as a federally threatened species, effective April 24, 2000 (Federal Register Volume 65, No. 58). Canada lynx occupy high-latitude or high-elevation coniferous forests characterized by cold, snowy winters and an adequate prey base (Ruggiero et al. 1999). The preferred prey of Canada lynx throughout their range is the snowshoe hare (*Lepus americanus*). In the western United States, lynx are associated with mesic forests of lodgepole pine, subalpine fir, Engelmann spruce, and quaking aspen in the upper montane and subalpine zones, generally between 8,000 and 12,000 feet in elevation. Although snowshoe hares are the preferred prey in Colorado, lynx in also feed on other species such as the mountain cottontail (*Sylvilagus nuttallii*), pine squirrel (*Tamiasciurus hudsonicus*), and blue grouse (*Dendragapus obscurus*).

The U.S. Forest Service (USFS) has mapped suitable denning, winter, and other habitat for lynx within the White River National Forest (WRNF). The mapped suitable habitat in the WRNF comprises several areas known as Lynx Analysis Units (LAUs). Lynx analysis units (LAUs) are management areas that contain suitable lynx habitat and approximate the size of a female home range. Several LAUs border BLM lands however no areas large enough to be considered LAUs occur within the CRVFO. BLM lands within the CRVFO area generally support the movement of lynx dispersing to a new area or, potentially, moving to lower elevations during severe winter weather in search of prey. The allotments are near but not part of a linkage area. Because no known occurrences have been documented and the occurrence of the species in this area is unlikely due to range and habitat conditions, this species is not considered further.

Greater sage grouse (*Centrocercus urophasianus*). The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service announced on Friday, March 5, 2010 that the greater sage-grouse (*Centrocercus urophasianus*) would be added to the Endangered Species Act “Candidate” list. Sage grouse, as the name implies, are found only in areas where sagebrush is abundant, providing both food and cover.

Although these birds are found at altitudes of 6000-8500 feet, they are not forest grouse and prefer relatively open sagebrush flats or rolling sagebrush hills. In winter, sagebrush accounts for 100% of the diet for these birds. In addition, it provides important escape cover and protection from the elements. In late winter, males begin to concentrate on traditional strutting grounds or leks. Females arrive at the leks 1-2 weeks later. Leks can occur on a variety of land types or formations (windswept ridges, knolls, areas of flat sagebrush, flat bare openings in the sagebrush. Breeding occurs on the leks and in the adjacent sagebrush, typically from March through May. Females and their chicks remain largely dependent on forbs and insects for food well into early fall. Cultivated herbaceous broad-leaved plants (alfalfa, clover) are important early fall food sources when available (CDOW 2009a).

The Northern Eagle/Southern Routt population, while small (<500 birds), probably has, or had, a relationship with the larger population in Moffat, Rio Blanco and western Routt counties, and probably with the Middle Park population to the east. Sage-grouse are still present in the Radium area between State Bridge and Kremmling (Northern Eagle/Southern Routt Greater Sage-Grouse Work Group 2004) and likely to occur in the Gypsum Hills area and the area north of Wolcott which includes the Ute Creek allotment.

Because no known occurrences have been documented and the occurrence of the species in this area is unlikely due to range and habitat conditions, this species is not considered further.

Mexican Spotted Owl (*Strix occidentalis*). Federally listed as endangered. This owl nests, roosts, and hunts in mature coniferous forests in canyons and foothills. The only extant populations in Colorado are in the Pikes Peak and Wet Mountain areas of south-central Colorado and the Mesa Verde area of southwestern Colorado. Because no known occurrences have been documented and the occurrence of the species in this area is unlikely due to range and habitat conditions, this species is not considered further.

Western Yellow-billed Cuckoo (*Coccyzus americanus occidentalis*). Candidate for Federal listing. This secretive species occurs in mature riparian forests of cottonwoods and other large deciduous trees with a well-developed understory of tall riparian shrubs. Western cuckoos breed in large blocks of riparian habitats, particularly woodlands with cottonwoods (*Populus fremontii*) and willows (*Salix* sp.). A few sightings of yellow-billed cuckoo have occurred in western Colorado along the Colorado River near Grand Junction (USFWS 2009b). Riparian areas in the project area do not provide suitable habitat for this species due to the patchy nature of the stands and the general lack of a tall-shrub understory. Because no known occurrences have been documented and the occurrence of the species in this area is unlikely due to range and habitat conditions, this species is not considered further.

Uncompahgre fritillary butterfly (*Boloria acrocne*). Federally listed as endangered. The butterfly has been verified at only two areas in the San Juan Mountains in Colorado. There is anecdotal evidence of other colonies in the San Juans and southern Sawatch ranges in Colorado. The butterfly exists above treeline in patches of its larval host plant, snow willow. The butterfly is most often found on north and east facing slopes, which provide a moist, cool, microclimate. The greatest known controllable threat is butterfly collecting. Climatological patterns, disease, parasitism, predation, and trampling of larvae by humans and livestock might pose additional

threats. Because no known occurrences have been documented and the occurrence of the species in this area is unlikely due to range, elevation and habitat conditions, this species is not considered further.

BLM Sensitive - Terrestrial Wildlife Species

According to the latest *Colorado BLM State Director's Sensitive Species List (Animals and Plants) June, 2000*, the following terrestrial wildlife species may occur within or be impacted by actions occurring within the CRVFO (Table - BLM Sensitive - Terrestrial Wildlife Species):

Table - BLM Sensitive - Terrestrial Wildlife Species

Name	Habitat/Range	Habitat Potential Present / Absent
Townsend's big-eared bat (<i>Corynorhinus townsendii</i>) and Fringed myotis (<i>Myotis thysanodes</i>)	Occur as scattered populations at moderate elevations on the Western Slope, along the foothills of the Front Range and the mesas of southeastern Colorado. Maximum elevation is 7,500 feet. Breeds and roosts in caves, trees, mines, and buildings; hunts over pinyon-juniper, montane conifer, and semi-desert shrubland habitats. Known occurrences - Potential in caves, mines or trees	Present
Northern goshawk (<i>Accipiter gentilis</i>)	Resident in foothills and mountains and occasional in migration and winter at lower elevations. Predominantly uses mature stands of aspen, and pines (ponderosa and lodgepole). Uncommon - seasonal	Present
Goldeneye, Barrow's (<i>Bucephala islandica</i>)	Rare winter resident and spring/fall migrant in lowlands and mountains; a few breed in the northern mountains. Uncommon - seasonal	Absent
Ibis, white-faced (<i>Plegadis chihi</i>)	Inhabits wet meadows, marsh edges and reservoir shorelines. Very rare, non-breeding, summer migrant to western Colorado valleys and mountain lakes. Main breeding area is in the San Luis valley.	Absent

The following paragraphs address species with a habitat potential to be present in the project area.

Fringed Myotis (*Myotis thysanodes*) and Townsend's Big-eared Bat (*Plecotus townsendii*).

Occur as scattered populations at moderate elevations on the Western Slope of Colorado. Habitat associations are not well defined. Both of these bats will forage over water and along the edge of vegetation (pinyon-juniper woodlands, montane conifer woodlands, semi-desert shrublands) for aerial insects. Although they commonly roost in caves, rock crevices, mines, or buildings, they also may roost in tree cavities. Both species are widely distributed and usually occur in small groups. The animals roost in rock crevices, caves, mines, buildings and trees. Townsend's big-eared bat is not very abundant anywhere in its range and this is attributed to patchy distribution and limited availability of suitable roosting habitat (Gruver, J.C. and D.A. Keinath 2006).

Northern Goshawk (*Accipiter gentilis*). The Northern Goshawk is the largest North American accipiter. The goshawk is a forest habitat generalist that uses a variety of forest type, forest ages, structural conditions and successional stages. Goshawks prey on small-medium sized birds and mammals. It breeds in coniferous deciduous and mixed forests. The nest is typically located on a

northerly aspect in a drainage or canyon and is often near a stream. Nest areas contain one or more stands of large, old trees with a dense canopy cover. A goshawk pair occupies its nest area from March until late September. The nest area is the center of all movements and behaviors associated with breeding from courtship through fledging.

Goldeneye, Barrow's (*Bucephala islandica*). This bird is a rare and local breeder in Flat Tops Wilderness Area in Garfield and adjacent counties. First confirmed record this century of fledged young or broods on 3 shallow lakes in Flat Tops Wilderness in 1990; also found in 1991 and 1994 (CLO 2009). Goldeneye's prefer alkaline-freshwater lakes in parkland areas and to a lesser extent subalpine/alpine lakes/beaver ponds for breeding.

Ibis, white-faced (*Plegadis chihi*). The species inhabits primarily freshwater wetlands, especially cattail (*Typha* spp.) and bulrush (*Scirpus* spp.) marshes. This species feeds in flooded hay meadows, agricultural fields, and estuarine wetlands. This species breeds in isolated colonies in mainly shallow marshes with "islands" of emergent vegetation. This species is more commonly found on the eastern slope of Colorado. Sparse historical records indicate that this species is uncommon within the CRVFO.

Environmental Consequences/Mitigation:

Federally Listed, Proposed or Candidate - Terrestrial Wildlife Species

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.

BLM Sensitive Terrestrial Wildlife Species.

Fringed Myotis and Townsend's Big-eared Bats. Distribution seems is likely to be locally determined by availability of roosts, such as caves, mines, tunnels, crevices and masonry structures with suitable temperatures. No bat roosts or hibernaculum have been documented within the area of the proposed action.

The greatest threats to Townsend's Big-eared Bat (and likely Fringed Myotis) are the: (a) loss/modification/disturbance of roosting habitat resulting from uninformed closure of abandoned mines, recreation and renewed mining at historical sites; (b) loss/modification/disturbance of foraging habitat resulting from elimination of forest canopy, elimination or alteration of wetland habitat and conversion of native shrub and grasslands to urban or agricultural uses; and (c) exposure to environmental toxins (Gruver, J.C. and D.A. Keinath 2006). It is plausible that over-grazing by livestock could contribute to the decline of the functionality of foraging habitat for bats. The allowable number of animal unit months and periods of use, along with land health standards and terms/conditions; should continue to maintain adequate habitat conditions (suitability and connectivity) for bats.

Northern Goshawk. It is plausible that over-grazing by livestock could contribute to the decline of the functionality of the habitat. A reduction in forage availability could limit prey population density. However no nest sites are known to occur within the area of the proposed action and nesting birds are unlikely in the predominant habitat types. The allowable number of animal unit months and periods of use, along with land health standards and terms/conditions; should

continue to maintain adequate habitat conditions (suitability and connectivity) for Northern goshawks.

Analysis on the Public Land Health Standard 4 for Terrestrial Wildlife Special Status Species: (also see Plants and Aquatic Wildlife Special Status Species). A formal Land Health Assessment will be conducted on this landscape in 2010. If the results of the land health assessment or future monitoring data indicate that conditions are failing to meet the Standard or are trending away from meeting the Standard and livestock is a substantial contributing factor, action would be taken in accordance with 43 CFR 4180.2 to ensure progress toward meeting the standard for healthy plant communities.

Special Status Species – Plants (includes an analysis of Public Land Health Standard 4)

Affected Environment:

Federally Listed, Proposed or Candidate Plant Species

According to the latest species list from the U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service (U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. 2008), the following Federally listed, proposed, or candidate threatened or endangered plant 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*), and DeBeque phacelia (*Phacelia submutica*).

There are no known occurrences or known suitable habitat for any listed, proposed or candidate plant species within or immediately adjacent to the project area.

BLM Sensitive Plant 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*).

The BLM sensitive plant, Harrington's penstemon, occurs in sagebrush habitat or sagebrush with mixed mountain shrubs on clay loams or rocky clay loam soils at elevations ranging from 6,000-10,000 feet. Potential habitat for Harrington's penstemon may occur within these grazing allotments, particularly the Prectel allotment, since a large portion of this allotment consists of sagebrush parks. The nearest known occurrence of Harrington's penstemon is 3 miles south of the Prectel allotment. Only cursory surveys have been conducted for Harrington's penstemon within these allotments, but no rare plants have been found.

Proposed Action:

Environmental Consequences:

Federally Listed, Proposed or Candidate Plant Species

Due to the absence of any known occurrences or suitable habitat for any listed, proposed or candidate plant species, the proposed action should have "No Effect" on these species.

BLM Sensitive Plant Species

Harrington's penstemon flower stalks are palatable to both livestock and wildlife. The June grazing period coincides with the flowering period for this plant. If Harrington's penstemon does occur within one or more of these allotments, the populations could be impacted if excessive grazing removes a large percentage of flower stalks each year, thereby inhibiting seed dissemination and reproduction. Given the short period of grazing use in each allotment or pasture, livestock are unlikely to remove a large percentage of flowering stalks; therefore, grazing should not result in any long-term loss of viability of the populations.

Water Quality, Surface & Ground (includes an analysis of Public Land Health Standard 5)

Affected Environment: The four allotments in the proposed action are located east of Highway 82 and the Roaring Fork River and north of Cattle Creek within the 17,775 acre Coulter Creek 6th field watershed. Flowing north to south through the Driveway Common, Gould, and Coryell Allotments is the perennial West Coulter Creek which joins East Coulter Creek to the south to form Coulter Creek. Flowing west to east through the Prectel Allotment is the perennial Mesa Creek which is tributary to Coulter Creek to the east. Just south of the project area, the perennial Coulter Creek is directly tributary to Cattle Creek.

At this time, Mesa and West Coulter Creek are not currently listed on the State of Colorado's *Stream Classifications and Water Quality Standards* (CDPHE, Water Quality Control Commission, Regulation No. 33) list, *303(d) List of Water Quality Limited Segments Requiring TMDLS* (CDPHE, Water Quality Control Commission, Regulation No. 93) or the *Monitoring and Evaluation List* (CDPHE, Water Quality Control Commission, Regulation No. 94) as waterbodies suspected to have water quality problems. At this time, very limited current water quality data is available for the drainages mentioned above.

Environmental Consequences/Mitigation: Grazing activities could 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. However, based on the lack of perennial drainages of concern in the allotment and good vegetative cover, the potential for measureable water quality degradation in nearby perennial drainages of concern (i.e. Cattle Creek, Roaring Fork River) associated with the proposed activities is minimal.

Analysis on the Public Land Health Standard 5 for Water Quality: The BLM Colorado River Field Office is scheduled to evaluate area drainages in 2010 as part of the Roaring Fork River Land Health Assessment. Based on the period of use, good vegetative cover and the lack of perennial drainages of concern within these allotments, the proposed activities would not likely prevent Standard 5 for Water Quality from being met.

Wetlands and Riparian Zones (includes an analysis of Public Land Health Standard 2)

Affected Environment: The table below lists known riparian areas and their Proper Functioning Condition (PFC) assessment for the affected grazing allotments:

Allotment Name	Riparian Area Name	Miles/ Acres	Year Assessed	Condition Rating
Coryell	West Coulter Creek	0.2 mi	1994	Proper Functioning Condition
Gould	West Coulter Creek	0.4 mi	1994	Proper Functioning Condition
Prectel	Mesa Creek	0.3 mi	1994	Proper Functioning Condition
Driveway Common	Mesa Creek	0.2 mi	1994	Proper Functioning Condition
	West Coulter Creek	1.0 mi	1994	Proper Functioning Condition
	Consolidated Reservoir	5 ac	1994	Proper Functioning Condition

The Proper Functioning Condition assessments above did not raise or identify any issues with livestock grazing. There is no current monitoring, inventory or documented field observations for the affected riparian areas other than what is discussed above.

Environmental Consequences/Mitigation: Livestock grazing, if improperly managed, can result in direct or indirect impacts to riparian areas such as excessive utilization, soil compaction or repeated defoliations that do not allow sufficient time for rest and recovery of plant species. This may result in a decline in the condition of the riparian vegetation (e.g., reduced age-class diversity, species composition, and cover), reduced vigor or death of plant species as well as increased potential for weed invasion or other undesirable vegetation. Excess herbivory or trampling damage can lead to greater erosion or deposition, changes in channel geomorphology, and less soil moisture (Skovlin 1984, Legge et al. 1981). Conversely, livestock grazing that promotes and is compatible with healthy riparian vegetation contributes to sustainable levels of aboveground biomass, root growth, and root strength in streambanks. Through overbank flows, riparian vegetation is naturally defoliated or buried by stream and sediment deposition. Livestock can contribute to the maintenance of vegetation by defoliating dormant or dead growth in between these overflow events, thus increasing green matter and hence root strength and growth (Wyman et al. 2006).

The duration of grazing use proposed for all allotments ranges from 4 to 15 days during the late spring and/or early summer. Under the short-duration grazing use proposed, repeated defoliation is less likely to occur and there would be a period of grazing rest throughout most of the growing season. This would allow for ample grazing rest and recovery time for riparian plant species. Given the relatively high livestock numbers (600 cattle), some trampling and soil compaction would be expected; however, this would occur over a short period which would minimize adverse impacts. In consideration of the above, renewal of the grazing permit (including the proposed changes in grazing use) is not expected to cause adverse impacts to riparian zones. The

condition of riparian areas would be maintained or improved. There would be no cumulative impacts.

Analysis on the Public Land Health Standard for Riparian Systems: The proposed action would not result in failure to achieve this standard and should maintain and/or improve land health conditions for riparian systems.

Other Affected Resources

In addition to the critical elements, the resources presented in Table 2 were considered for impact analysis relative to the proposed action and no action alternative. Resources that would be affected by the proposed action and no action alternative are discussed below.

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	
Soils*			X
Vegetation*			X
Visual Resources		X	
Wildlife, Aquatic*			X
Wildlife, Terrestrial*			X

*Public Land Health Standard

Soils (includes an analysis of Public Land Health Standard 1)

Affected Environment: According to the *Soil Survey of Aspen-Gypsum Area, Colorado: Parts of Eagle, Garfield, and Pitkin Counties* (USDA 1992), the four allotments contain six different soil map units that can be identified by the numerical code assigned by the soil survey. These soil map units are identified as having moderate to severe erosion hazard potential but occur primarily on slopes less than 30%. Following is a brief description of the six soil map units found within the four allotments.

- Anvik-Skylick-Sligting association (10) – This soil map unit is found on fans and mountainsides at elevations ranging from 7,500 to 9,500 feet and on slopes of 10 to 25 percent. Approximately 30 percent of this unit is Anvik soil, 30 percent Skylick soil, and 30 percent Sligting soil. The other 10 percent of this soil map unit is made up of

Cochetopa, Antrobus, Forsey, Coulterg, and Ansel soils. The Anvik soil is deep, well drained and is derived from alluvium and colluvium of mixed mineralogy. The surface runoff for this soil is medium and the water erosion hazard is moderate. The Skylick soil is deep, well drained and is derived from sandstone colluvium. The surface runoff for this soil is medium and the water erosion hazard is moderate. The Slighting soil is deep, well drained and is derived from sandstone and basalt colluvium. The surface runoff for this soil is medium and the water erosion hazard is moderate. Primary uses for this soil map unit include woodland, wildlife habitat, and rangeland.

- Jerry loam (64) – This deep, well drained soil is found on alluvial fans and hills at elevations ranging from 7,500 to 9,500 and on slopes of 25 to 65 percent. This soil is derived from sandstone and shale alluvium. Surface runoff is very rapid and the water erosion hazard is moderate. This soil is used primarily for rangeland purposes.
- Jerry-Millerlake loams (67) – This soil map unit is found on alluvial fans and valley sides at elevations ranging from 7,500 to 9,500 feet and on slopes of 25 to 45 percent. Approximately 50 percent of this unit is Jerry soil and 40 percent Millerlake soil, with the other 10 percent being a mix of soil types. The Jerry soil is deep, well drained and is derived from sandstone and shale alluvium. Surface runoff is rapid and the water erosion hazard is severe. The Millerlake soil is deep, well drained and is derived from sedimentary rock alluvium. Surface runoff is rapid and the water erosion hazard is severe. Primary uses for this soil map unit include rangeland, and wildlife habitat.
- Morval-Tridell complex (87) – 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.
- Showalter-Morval complex (94) – This soil map unit is found on alluvial fans, high terraces, and valley sides at elevations ranging from 7,000 to 8,500 feet and on slopes of 5 to 15 percent. Approximately 45 percent of this unit is Showalter very stony loam, 35 percent Morval loam, and the other 20 percent a mixture of soil types. The Showalter soil is deep, well drained and is derived from basaltic alluvium. Surface runoff is medium and the water erosion hazard is slight. The Morval soil is deep, well drained and is derived from basaltic alluvium. Surface runoff is medium and the water erosion hazard is slight. Primary uses for this soil map unit include rangeland, hayland, crops, and homesite development.
- Showalter-Morval complex (95) – This soil map unit is found on alluvial fans, high terraces, and valley sides at elevations ranging from 7,000 to 8,500 feet and on slopes of 15 to 25 percent. Approximately 45 percent of this unit is Showalter very stony loam, 35 percent Morval loam, and the other 20 percent a mixture of soil types. The Showalter soil is deep, well drained and is derived from basaltic alluvium. Surface runoff is medium and the water erosion hazard is moderate. The Morval soil is deep, well drained and is derived from basaltic alluvium. Surface runoff is medium and the water erosion

hazard is slight. Primary uses for this soil map unit include rangeland, hayland, and homesite development.

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. Based on the scheduled period of use, good vegetative cover, and the lack of perennial drainages of concern within these allotments, the potential for measureable sediment transport and negative soil impacts is minimal.

Analysis on the Public Land Health Standard 1 for Upland Soils: The BLM Colorado River Valley Field Office is scheduled to evaluate area soil conditions in 2010 as part of the Roaring Fork River Land Health Assessment. Based on the period of use in the proposed action and good vegetative cover, the proposed activities would not likely prevent Standard 1 from being met.

Vegetation (includes an analysis of Public Land Health Standard 3)

Affected Environment:

Upland vegetation in the Coryell, Gould, Prectel and Driveway Common allotments consists primarily of oakbrush, sagebrush and mixed mountain shrubs. Small groves of aspen are found in the upper elevations of the Driveway Common allotment. There is a shallow pond/wetland in the Driveway Common allotment which supports sedges and rushes. Willow, aspen, alder, hawthorn, chokecherry and sedges and rushes are found along Mesa Creek and West Coulter Creek.

Environmental Consequences/Mitigation:

There is very little recent utilization or vegetative trend monitoring data in the files. Reports from the 1990's indicate heavy cattle and big game use, especially along West Coulter Creek, and some livestock distribution issues, primarily in the Driveway Common allotment. However, this data precedes the implementation of the current high-intensity, short-duration grazing system, so no correlations can be made regarding the impacts of the current grazing strategy. In addition, there are a few photo plots taken in 2000 and 2009 that appear to show a decrease in vegetative cover over that time period. However, these photos may not be representative of the allotments as a whole.

The current and proposed grazing system provides for short-duration, high intensity grazing. Large numbers of livestock are placed on the allotment but are moved to new areas every few days. Under this system, the cattle will graze less selectively, not choosing only the most palatable species, and will be moved in time for the vegetation to recover and set seed following the grazing period. No adverse impacts on vegetative health are anticipated from this grazing strategy.

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 will be conducted on this landscape in 2010. If the results of the land health assessment or future

monitoring data indicate that vegetative conditions are failing to meet the Standard or are trending away from meeting the Standard and livestock is a substantial contributing factor, action would be taken in accordance with 43 CFR 4180.2 to ensure progress toward meeting the standard for healthy plant communities.

Wildlife, Aquatic (includes an analysis of Public Land Health Standard 3):

Affected Environment:

Fish. Fisheries potential is limited for all waters. No fish are known to exist in the other perennial waters within the area of the proposed action primarily due to low seasonal flows and heavy sedimentation caused by flashy runoff and local geologic conditions.

Amphibians. Several amphibians of interest are found within the CRVFO, the Boreal Toad (*Bufo boreas boreas*) and the Great Basin spadefoot toad (*Spea intermontana*). The distribution of the boreal toad is restricted to areas with suitable breeding habitat in spruce-fir forests and alpine meadows generally between 7,500 and 12,000 feet elevation. Breeding habitat includes lakes, marshes, ponds, and bogs with sunny exposures and quiet shallow water. Great Basin spadefoot toads occupy arid grasslands and high sagebrush, desert shrub, and piñon-juniper woodlands. Great Basin spadefoot toad has been documented in the western third of the field office from the town of Rifle west to the boundary with the Grand Junction Field Office. This represents the eastern extent (fringe) of the species overall range and populations are believed to be small and sporadic.

Environmental Consequences/Mitigation:

Fish. Continued grazing activities could 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.

Sediment can impact fish 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 plenty of growing season rest and adequate plant rest and recovery periods which should maintain good vegetative cover and help to limit offsite soil movement. Stream and riparian habitats are in good condition, and continued livestock grazing as proposed should have minimal impact to nearby streams, fish, or their habitats.

Amphibians. It is plausible that over-grazing by livestock could contribute to the decline of the functionality of the habitat for amphibians. Overgrazing impacts on wetlands and riparian vegetation could impact individual animals and prey populations. Primary, the allotment is outside the range (overall, elevation, and habitat) of most amphibian species of interest and

known to occur in the CRVFO. Secondly, land health standard 2 for riparian systems is being achieved (BLM 2004). Thus maintaining the current number of animal unit months and periods of use, along with land health standards and terms/conditions; should continue to maintain adequate habitat conditions (suitability and connectivity) to ensure amphibians are maintained at viable population levels commensurate with the species and habitat's potential.

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 will be conducted on this landscape in 2010. If the results of the land health assessment or future monitoring data indicate that the allotment is failing to meet Standard 3 or are trending away from meeting the Standard and livestock is a substantial contributing factor, action would be taken in accordance with 43 CFR 4180.2 to ensure progress toward meeting the standard for healthy plant communities.

Wildlife, Terrestrial (includes an analysis of Public Land Health Standard 3)

Affected Environment:

The CRVFO supports a wide variety of terrestrial wildlife species 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/wetland areas support many species. The current condition of wildlife habitats varies across the landscape. Some habitat is altered by power lines, pipelines, fences, public recreation use, residential and commercial development, vegetative treatments, livestock and wild ungulate grazing, oil and gas development, and roads/trails. These factors have contributed to some degradation/fragmentation of habitat as well as causing disturbance to some species.

Reptiles. Reptile species most likely to occur include the western fence lizard (*Sceloporus undulatus*) and gopher snake (bullsnake) (*Pituophis catenifer*) in xeric shrublands or grassy clearings and the western terrestrial garter snake (*Thamnophis elegans*) along creeks. Other reptiles potentially present along creeks, although more commonly found at lower elevations than the site, are the milk snake (*Lampropeltis triangulum*) and smooth green snake (*Opheodrys vernalis*).

Birds. Passerine (perching) birds commonly found in the area include the: American robin (*Turdus migratorius*), Pinyon jay (*Gymnorhinus cyanocephalus*) western scrub-jay (*Aphelocoma californica*), and black-billed magpie (*Pica pica*). Two gallinaceous species, the wild turkey (*Meleagris gallopavo*) and the Dusty grouse (*Dendragapus obscurus*), are found here.

Birds of prey (eagles, falcons, hawks, and owls) may migrate through the area or nest in cottonwoods, conifers, or very tall oaks, while the numerous songbirds and small mammal populations provide the primary prey base. Common raptor species in the area include the: red-tailed hawk (*Buteo jamaicensis*), golden eagle (*Aquila chrysaetos*) American kestrel (*Falco sparverius*), great horned owl (*Bubo virginianus*), Cooper's hawk (*Accipiter cooperii*), and sharp-shinned hawk (*A. striatus*).

Numerous streams, rivers, reservoirs, ponds, and associated riparian vegetation provide habitat for a wide variety of waterfowl and shorebirds. Common species include: great blue herons (*Ardea Herodias*), Canada geese (*Branta canadensis*), mallards (*Anas platyrhynchos*), pintails (*A. acuta*), gadwalls (*A. strepera*), and American wigeon (*A. americana*) are common.

Mammals. Numerous small mammals reside within the planning area, including ground squirrels (*Spermophilus* spp.), chipmunks (*Neotamias* spp.), rabbits (*Sylvilagus* spp.), skunks (*Mephitis mephitis*), and raccoons (*Procyon lotor*). Many of these small mammals provide the main prey for raptors and larger carnivores. These species are most likely to occur along the drainages, near the margins of dense oakbrush, in pinyon-juniper woodland, or in the small area of aspen and spruce/fir. Larger carnivores expected to occur include the bobcat (*Lynx rufus*) and the coyote (*Canis latrans*). Black bears (*Ursus americanus*) make use of oaks and the associated chokecherries and serviceberries for cover and food, while mountain lions (*Felis concolor*) are likely to occur during seasons when mule deer (*Odocoileus hemionus*) are present.

Big Game. The mule deer (*Odocoileus hemionus*) is a recreationally important species that are common throughout suitable habitats in the region. Another recreationally important big game ungulate (hoofed animal), the Rocky Mountain elk (*Cervus elaphus nelsonii*), is also present. Mule deer and elk usually occupy higher elevations, forested habitat, during the summer and then migrate to sagebrush-dominant ridges and south-facing slopes at lower elevation in the winter.

BLM lands provide a large portion of the undeveloped winter range available to deer and elk. The GSFO's Resource Management Plan (RMP) allocated existing forage proportionately to livestock and big game, the criterion being active preference for livestock and 5-year average demand for big game. The RMP allocated all available forage on allotments in big game winter range -unavailable to livestock because of stocking rate limitations or slope restrictions - to big game. Summer range was not limiting to big game; therefore, allocating forage beyond CDOW population goals in summer range was deemed to be unnecessary since winter range is what limits herd size. In addition, the RMP allocated additional forage produced through vegetation manipulation on wildlife winter range first to big game and then to livestock up to active preference. On summer range, additional forage was allocated to livestock first.

Environmental Consequences/Mitigation:

Reptiles. It is plausible that over-grazing by livestock could contribute to the decline of the functionality of the habitat for reptiles. A impacts on upland and riparian vegetation could impact individual animals and prey populations. Primary, the project area is outside the range (overall, elevation, habitat) of most reptile species of interest and known to occur in the CRVFO. Secondly, land health standard 2 for riparian systems and standard 3 for productive plant communities are being achieved (BLM 2004). Thus the allowable number of animal unit months and periods of use, along with land health standards and terms/conditions; should continue to maintain adequate habitat conditions (suitability and connectivity) to ensure reptiles are maintained at viable population levels commensurate with the species and habitat's potential.

Birds and Mammals. Overgrazing affects bird and mammals by altering habitat structure and food availability. Grazing invariably reduces the height and ground cover of plants, at least temporarily, thus reducing the cover they need for protection, feeding, roosting and nesting. There is no indication or data to support that the proposed action would have any large scale negative impacts to density, composition, or frequency of terrestrial species or the quality or connectivity of terrestrial wildlife habitat. This area receives adequate growing season plant rest and recovery periods. The land health assessment data along with range compliance data indicates that current livestock grazing consistent with achieving land health standards for bird and mammal species.

Big Game. The proposed action lies in Game Management Unit 444. Big game populations are managed to achieve population and sex ratio objectives established for Data Analysis Units (DAU). A DAU is the geographic area that represents the year-around range of a big game herd and includes all of the seasonal ranges of a specific herd. No DAU plans exist for Mule Deer DAU D-53 or Game or Elk DAU E-16.

The whole area is mapped mule deer summer range which is that part of the overall range where 90% of the individuals are located between spring green-up and the first heavy snowfall. Summer range is not necessarily exclusive of winter range; in some areas winter range and summer range may overlap. The southeast 1/3 of the allotment is severe elk winter range is that part of the overall range of elk 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 winter of 1983-1984 is a good example of a severe winter. The area around Consolidated Reservoir is CDOW mapped elk production area which represents that part of the overall range of elk occupied by the females from May 15 to June 15 for calving.

Most issues between domestic livestock and big game concerns forage allocation and land health.

Forage Allocation. Managing the timing and intensity of livestock grazing is critical to maintaining habitat conditions preferable to big game. For example, cattle grazing during the early season could improve the quality of winter forage for elk but cattle must be removed early enough to allow plants to re-grow. However, 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. The GSFO's RMP allocated existing forage proportionately (50/50) to livestock and big game and that seem to be adequate on this allotment.

Overall, elk populations since the late 1970s to present have been increasing while livestock numbers and periods of use have decreased. Qualitatively viewing the big game population trends and CDOW objectives in relationship to the proposed action (maintaining the existing level of livestock AUMs and periods of use, along with land health standards and terms/conditions), it can be assumed that the proposed action (based on the cumulative annual use of forage by big game and domestic livestock) remains compatible with the CDOW big game objectives while achieving public land health standards.

Analysis on the Public Land Health Standard for plant and animal communities (partial, see also Vegetation and Wildlife, Aquatic): A formal Land Health Assessment will be conducted on this landscape in 2010. If the results of the land health assessment or future monitoring data indicate that conditions are failing to meet the Standard or are trending away from meeting the Standard and livestock is a substantial contributing factor, action would be taken in accordance with 43 CFR 4180.2 to ensure progress toward meeting the standard for healthy plant communities.

Range Management

Affected Environment: The proposed action is to renew a term livestock grazing permit on the Gould, Coryell, Driveway Common, and Prectel Allotments. The mandatory terms and conditions on the permit will remain the same except for the season of use. The permittee applied to change the on and off dates to correspond with his adjacent private land livestock operations. The following tables display the proposed adjustments:

Current Scheduled Grazing Use

Allotment Name & No.	Livestock No. & Kind	Period of use	Percent Public Land	AUMs
Coryell 08307	600 Cattle	06/01-06/05	19	19
Gould 08306	600 Cattle	06/06-06/13	100	158
Prectel 08311	600 Cattle	06/20-06/23	30	24
Driveway Common 08308	600 Cattle	06/24-07/08	100	300

Proposed Scheduled Grazing Use

Allotment Name & No.	Livestock No. & Kind	Period of use	Percent Public Land	AUMs
Coryell 08307	600 Cattle	06/10-06/14	19	19
Gould 08306	600 Cattle	06/18-06/25	100	158
Prectel 08311	600 Cattle	06/05-06/08	30	24
Driveway Common 08308	600 Cattle	06/26-07/10	100	300

Environmental Consequences/Mitigation:

The proposed action would improve range management efficiency on the entire landscape of the livestock operation (including both private and public lands involved). The changes to the season of use on the allotments will allow the permittee to move livestock more efficiently from the private land to public land and off to private land again. The livestock numbers and AUMs would remain the same.

SUMMARY OF CUMULATIVE IMPACTS

No cumulative impacts were identified.

PERSONS AND AGENCIES CONSULTED:

A notice of public scoping was posted on the Colorado BLM’s Internet web page and a news release was issued on October 20, 2009 regarding grazing permits and associated allotments scheduled for renewal in 2010. The public was provided an opportunity to offer any

information or concerns, or to be considered as an interested public on a permit or allotment scheduled for renewal. There have been no responses received specific to the permit renewal or allotments addressed in this NEPA document. The Colorado River Valley 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.

The following individuals, groups, organizations and/or local governments were also consulted:

Grazing permittee associated with the permit renewal
 Uintah and Ouray Ute Tribe
 Southern Ute Indian Tribe
 Ute Mountain Ute Tribe

INTERDISCIPLINARY REVIEW:

<i>Name</i>	<i>Title</i>	<i>Responsibility</i>
Carla DeYoung	Ecologist	ACECs, Vegetation, T/E/S Plants, Land Health Stds
Cheryl Harrison	Archaeologist	Cultural Resources and Native American Concerns
Brian Hopkins	Wildlife Biologist	Migratory Birds, Terrestrial Wildlife, T/E/S Terrestrial Wildlife, Aquatic Wildlife and T/E/S Aquatic Wildlife
Michael Kinser	Rangeland Management Specialist	Wetlands and Riparian Zones
Jeff O'Connell	Hydrologist/Geologist	Soil, Air, Water, Geology
Kimberly Miller	Outdoor Recreation Planner	WSRs, Wilderness, Recreation
Gregory Wolfgang	Outdoor Recreation Planner	VRM, Transportation
Dereck Wilson	Rangeland Management Specialist	NEPA Lead, Invasive, Non-native Species, Range Management

APPENDICES: None

ATTACHMENTS: Allotment Map

NAME OF PREPARER: Monte Senior

DATE: 3/23/2010

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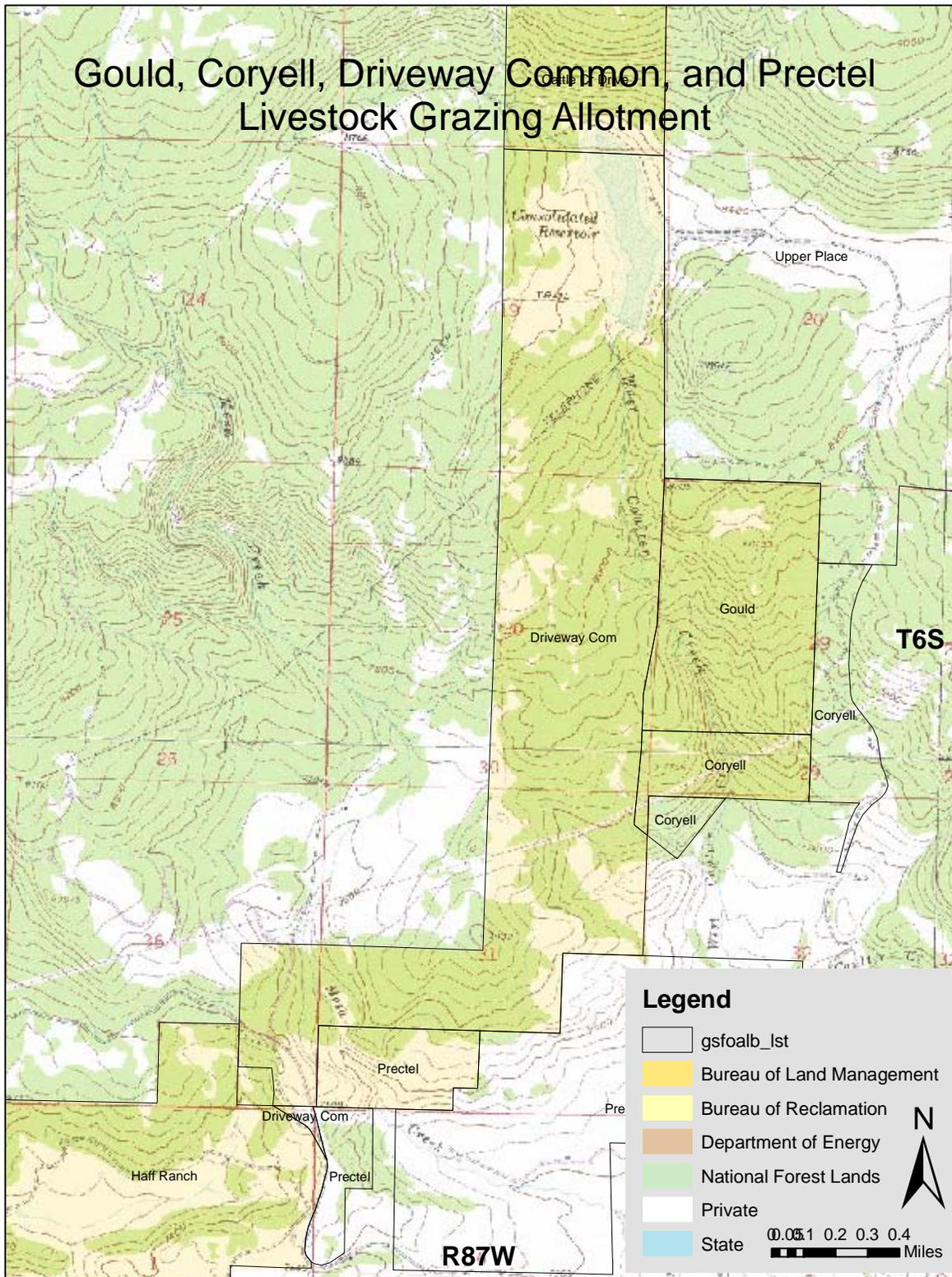
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Gould, Coryell, Driveway Common, and Prectel Livestock Grazing Allotment



UNITED STATES
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT
COLORADO RIVER VALLEY FIELD OFFICE
FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT

Grazing Permit Renewal on the Gould, Coryell, Driveway Common, and Prectel Allotments

DOI-BLM-CO140-2010-0019-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 Gould, Coryell, Driveway Common, and Prectel Allotments. 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 Affected Environment and Environmental Consequences 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.

Unique characteristics for the allotments have been identified and addressed in the EA. These include wetlands/riparian zones and cultural resources. Application of mitigation measures for cultural resources results in a determination of “Conditional No Adverse Affect” for historic properties that occur in the allotments. The proposed action is not expected to cause adverse impacts to riparian zones. 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 Gould, Coryell, Driveway Common, and Prectel Allotments. 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.

No cumulative impacts were identified in the EA.

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.

At present, there are no known areas of Native American concern within this allotment. One historic property was identified during the inventories for these allotments which will have to be assessed to determine if there has or are livestock impacts. A determination of Conditional No Adverse Affect has been made for this renewal.

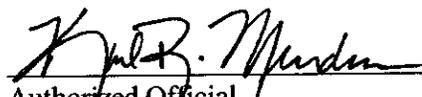
9. The degree to which the action may adversely affect an endangered or threatened species or its habitat that has been determined to be critical under the Endangered Species Act of 1973.

There is no designated critical habitat for any listed Threatened or Endangered species within the project area. The EA discloses that the proposed action would have no effect to species listed as threatened or endangered.

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
Colorado River Valley Field Office

3/24/2010
Date