

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-N040-2011-0017-EA

CASEFILE NUMBER: 0507669

PROJECT NAME: Grazing Permit Renewal on the Derby Ridge Allotment

LOCATION: T2S R86W Sec 1, 12; T2S R85W Sec 6. Refer to attached allotment map.

APPLICANT: Grazing Permittee

DESCRIPTION OF THE PROPOSED ACTION AND ALTERNATIVES

Proposed Action: The proposed action is to renew the term grazing permit for the above applicant. The renewed permit would be revised from expiring permit to correct an error in scheduled grazing use for animal numbers and AUMs (Animal Unit Months)¹. The period of use and percent public land will remain the same as the expiring permit. Grazing preference AUMs would remain the same as the expiring permit. The permit 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.

Mandatory Terms and Conditions

Scheduled Grazing Use:

Current Scheduled Grazing Use:

Allotment Name & No.	Livestock No. & Kind	Period of use	Percent Public Land	AUMs
Derby Ridge 08618	20 Cattle	06/01 – 09/30	33	26

¹ A review of the grazing case file shows active grazing preference is 40 AUMs which is not reflected in the scheduled grazing use of 26 AUMs. Annual authorizations (billings) since 1993 have authorized 40 to 42 AUMs which is closer to active preference. The renewed grazing permit is revised to show full use of active preference and to be more consistent with annual authorizations that have occurred since 1993.

Proposed Changes in Scheduled Grazing Use:

Allotment Name & No.	Livestock No. & Kind	Period of use	Percent Public Land	AUMs
Derby Ridge 08618	30 Cattle	06/01 – 09/30	33	40

Grazing Preference AUMS:

Allotment Name & No.	Active	Suspended	Total
Derby Ridge 08618	40	60	100

The following Other Terms and Conditions were included on the previous (expiring) permit and will be carried forward 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.
- The permittee and all persons associated with grazing operations must be informed that any person who injures, destroys, excavates, appropriates or removes any historic or prehistoric ruin, artifact, object of antiquity, Native American remains, Native American cultural item, or archaeological resources on public lands is subject to arrest and penalty of law. 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 further notified in writing to proceed by the authorized officer.²
- If an assessment of rangeland health results in a determination that changes are necessary in order to comply with the standards for public land health and guidelines for livestock grazing management in Colorado, this permit will be reissued subject to revised terms and conditions.

Additional Background Information:

Actual Use Compared to Permitted Use: There are no recent Actual Grazing Use Reports submitted for this allotment. It is assumed that actual grazing use is the same as the permitted grazing use. The table below summarizes AUMs authorized annually through billings.

Year	AUMs
2006	42
2007	42
2008	42
2009	42

² This term and condition pertaining to cultural resources is the most current version and is a revision from the one contained on the expiring permit.

The Derby Ridge Allotment is divided into several pastures consisting of public and private lands. Livestock are rotated amongst these pastures so grazing use is no longer than a month on any given area. Most of the forage production within the allotment occurs on private land and a substantial amount of that forage occurs on irrigated fields. The majority of livestock grazing use would most likely occur on the irrigated fields where water and forage ~~are~~ are more abundant.

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 process of completing land health assessments on a landscape basis. The Derby Ridge allotment, which is part of the King Mountain landscape, is scheduled for an assessment in the summer of 2011. We are deferring making a determination on achievement of the standards until the formal land health assessment is completed. If the assessment determines that changes in livestock grazing are necessary in order to comply with the Standards for Public Land Health or the Guidelines for Livestock Grazing Management in Colorado, the authorized officer shall initiate those changes within one year of signing the determination.

The impact analysis 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 and are addressed in the appropriate sections below.

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 (see table below). 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

Critical Elements of the Human Environment									
Critical Element	Present		Affected		Critical Element	Present		Affected	
	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

Air Quality

Affected Environment: Air quality in the project area is typical of undeveloped regions in the western United States. The closest Class I airshed are the Flat Tops Wilderness Area located approximately 4 air miles to the west.

The primary sources of air pollutants in the region are fugitive dust from the desert to the west of the planning area, unpaved roads and streets, seasonal sanding for winter travel, motor vehicles, and wood-burning stove emissions. Seasonal wildfires throughout the western U. S. may also contribute to air pollutants and regional haze. The ambient pollutant levels are usually near or below measurable limits, except for high short-term increases in PM₁₀ levels (primarily wind-blown dust), ozone, and carbon monoxide. Within the Rocky Mountain region, occasional peak ozone levels are relatively high, but are of unknown origin. Elevated concentrations may be the result of long-range transport from urban areas, subsidence of stratospheric ozone or photochemical reactions with natural hydrocarbons. Occasional peak concentrations of CO and SO₂ may be found in the immediate vicinity of combustion equipment. Locations vulnerable to decreasing air quality include the immediate areas around mining and farm tilling, local population centers, and distant areas affected by long-range transportation of pollutants. Representative monitoring of air quality in the general area indicates that the existing air quality is well within acceptable standards.

The EPA General Conformity regulations require that an analysis (as well as a possible formal conformity determination) be performed for federally sponsored or funded actions in non-

attainment areas and in designated maintenance areas when the total direct and indirect net air pollutant emissions (or their precursors) exceed specified levels. Since the CRVFO is not within a non-attainment or a maintenance area, the Clean Air Act conformity regulations do not apply.

Environmental Consequences/Mitigation: No impacts to air quality are anticipated with continued grazing within the allotment. No additional mitigation is required to protect air quality.

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 (CRVFO #1011-2) was completed for the [East Fork Common Derby Ridge](#) Allotment on November 20, 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.

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)
Derby Ridge	25	1673	1.5 7% of Public Lands	1	Yes	12 additional acres need to be inventoried on Public Lands. 17% of the allotment has 30%+ slopes.
Total	25	1673	1.5	1	Yes	

Three Class III cultural resource inventories (CRVFO# 540, 1102-3; 15805-3) have been conducted within this allotment and one Historic property was identified an historic era water flume. 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 1960's; Native American sites could represent a time range from 200 to 10,000 years before present. Based on available data, there is a moderate to high potential for historic properties within these allotments.

Subsequent site field visits, inventory, and periodic monitoring may have to be done to identify impacts to the historic properties as well as determine if there are additional historic properties present within the term of the permit and as funds are made available. If the BLM determines

that grazing activities will adversely impact the properties, mitigation will be identified and implemented in consultation with the Colorado SHPO.

At present, there are no known areas of Native American concern within this allotment. On November 15, 2010 the Colorado River Valley 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 2011 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 American Tribes.

Environmental Consequences: ~~The direct impacts that could 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 could include soil erosion, gullyng, and increased potential for unlawful collection and vandalism particularly for undiscovered cultural resources, however the Discovery Stipulation and subsequent changes in grazing management should mitigate and minimize impacts. Continued grazing may cause substantial ground disturbance and cause cumulative, long term, irreversible adverse effects to undiscovered historic properties (Haas 2005). A No Adverse Effect determination has been made for this renewal.~~ ~~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.~~ Five historic properties were identified during the inventories for this allotment which will need to be assessed to determine if livestock are impacting these resources within the term of this permit. ~~A Conditional No Adverse Affect has been made for this renewal, subject to cultural resource mitigation measures. 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: 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.

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~~Invasive, Non-native Species~~

Invasive, Non-native Species

Affected Environment: A recent landscape wide inventory has not been completed on the Derby Ridge Allotment; however, some infestations of noxious weeds such as common mullein, plumeless thistle, and Canada thistle have been documented as occurring on this allotment.

Environmental Consequences/Mitigation: Weeds generally germinate and become established in areas of surface disturbing activities. Livestock grazing can contribute to the establishment and expansion of noxious weeds through various mechanisms. Improperly managed grazing, (over-grazing), can cause a decline in desirable native plant species and ground cover which provides a niche for noxious weed invasion. In addition, noxious weed seed can be transported and introduced to new areas by fecal deposition or by seed that clings to the animal's coat. Conversely, properly managed livestock grazing which does not create areas of bare ground and which maintains the vigor and health of native plant species, particularly herbaceous species, is not expected to cause a substantial increase in noxious weeds. Since the proposed action was designed to sustain and/or improve land health, no significant impacts to non-native, invasive species are expected. Noxious and invasive plant species are not expected to radically increase as a result of the continuation of livestock grazing practices and most infestations will be isolated to watering facilities, salting areas, and other livestock high concentration locations.

Migratory Birds

Affected Environment: 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 2009) 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, or 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

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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 (CRVFO) is within the Southern Rockies/Colorado Plateau Bird Conservation Region (BCR). The 2008 list of Birds of Conservation Concern (USFWS 2008) include the following:

2008 List of Birds of Conservation Concern within the CRVFO

Species	Habitat Description	Potential Occurrences in Project Area	Potentially Impacted by the Proposed Action or Alternatives
Gunnison Sage-Grouse (<i>Centrocercus minimus</i>)	Sagebrush communities for hiding and thermal cover, food, and nesting; open areas with sagebrush stands for leks; sagebrush-grass-forb mix for nesting; wet meadows for rearing chicks. Year-round resident, breeding	Not Present	No
American Bittern (<i>Botaurus lentiginosus</i>)	Marshes and wetlands; ground nester. Summer resident.	Not Present	No
Bald Eagle (<i>Haliaeetus leucocephalus</i>)	Nests in forested rivers and lakes; winters in upland areas, often with rivers or lakes nearby. Generally winter resident, occasional breeding.	Unlikely	No
Ferruginous Hawk (<i>Buteo regalis</i>)	Open, rolling and/or rugged terrain in grasslands and shrubsteppe communities; also grasslands and cultivated fields; nests on cliffs and rocky outcrops. Fall/ winter resident, non-breeding.	Unlikely	No
Golden Eagle (<i>Aquila chrysaetos</i>)	Open country, grasslands, woodlands, and barren areas in hilly or mountainous terrain; nests on rocky outcrops or large trees. Year-round resident, breeding.	Present	No
Peregrine Falcon (<i>Falco peregrines</i>)	Open country near cliff habitat, often near water such as rivers, lakes, and marshes; nests on ledges or holes on cliff faces and crags. Spring/summer resident, breeding.	Possibly Present	No
Prairie Falcon (<i>Falco mexicanus</i>)	Open country in mountains, steppe, or prairie; winters in cultivated fields; nests in holes or on ledges on rocky cliffs or embankments. Spring/summer resident, breeding.	Unlikely	No
Snowy Plover (<i>Charadrius alexandrinus nivosus/tenuirostris</i>)	Sparse vegetated sand flats associated with pickleweed, greasewood, and saltgrass. Spring migrant, non-breeding. Spring migrant, non-breeding.	Not Present	No
Mountain Plover (<i>Charadrius montanus</i>)	High plain, cultivated fields, desert scrublands, and sagebrush habitats, often in association with heavy grazing, sometimes in association with prairie dog	Not Present	No

Species	Habitat Description	Potential Occurrences in Project Area	Potentially Impacted by the Proposed Action or Alternatives
	colonies ; short vegetation.		
Long-billed Curlew (<i>Numenius americanus</i>)	Lakes and wetlands and adjacent grassland and shrub communities. Spring/ fall migrant, non-breeding.	Not Present	No
Yellow-billed Cuckoo (<i>Coccyzus americanus</i>)	Riparian, deciduous woodlands with dense undergrowth; nests in tall cottonwood ,mature willow riparian, moist thickets, orchards, abandoned pastures. Summer resident, breeding.	Not Present	No
Burrowing Owl (<i>Athene cunicularia</i>)	Open grasslands and low shrublands often in association with prairie dog colonies; nests in abandoned burrows created by mammals; short vegetation.	Not Present	No
Lewis's Woodpecker (<i>Melanerpes lewis</i>)	Open woodland, often logged or burned, including oak, coniferous forest (often ponderosa), riparian woodland, and orchards, less often in pinyon-juniper.	Possibly Present	Yes
Willow Flycatcher (<i>Empidonax traillii</i>)	Riparian and moist, shrubby areas; winters in shrubby openings with short vegetation. Summer resident, breeding.	Not Present	No
Gray Vireo (<i>Vireo vicinior</i>)	Open pinyon-juniper woodlands. Uncommon summer resident, breeding.	Possibly Present	Yes
Pinyon Jay (<i>Gymnorhinus cyanocephalus</i>)	Pinyon-juniper woodland. Year-round resident, breeding.	Present	Yes
Juniper Titmouse (<i>Baeolophus ridgwayi</i>)	Pinyon-juniper woodlands, especially juniper; nests in tree cavities. Year-round resident, breeding.	Present	Yes
Veery (<i>Catharus fuscescens</i>)	Dense riparian thickets and hillside brush near streams. Uncommon spring/fall migrant in Eastern Colorado.	Not Present	No
Bendire's Thrasher (<i>Toxostoma bendirei</i>)	Desert, especially areas of tall vegetation, cholla cactus, creosote bush and yucca, and in juniper woodland Possible summer resident.	Unlikely	No
Grace's Warbler (<i>Dendroica graciae</i>)	Breeds in ponderosa pine forests. Uncommon summer resident in southwest Colorado.	Not Present	No
Brewer's Sparrow (<i>Spizella breweri</i>)	Summer resident that primarily breeds in sagebrush-grass stands and shrublands. Migrant at low elevations.	Present in Summer	Yes
Grasshopper Sparrow (<i>Ammodramus savannarum</i>)	Open grasslands and cultivated fields. Spring migrant, non-breeding.	Not Present	No
Chestnut-collared Longspur (<i>Calcarius ornatus</i>)	Open grasslands and cultivated fields. Spring migrant, non-breeding.	Not Present	No
Black Rosy-Finch (<i>Leucosticte atrata</i>)	Open country including mountain meadows, high deserts, valleys, and plains; breeds/ nests in alpine areas near rock piles and cliffs. Winter resident, non-breeding.	Not Present	No
Brown-capped Rosy-Finch (<i>Leucosticte australis</i>)	Alpine meadows, cliffs, and talus and high-elevation parks and valleys. Summer residents, breeding.	Not Present	No
Cassin's Finch (<i>Carpodacus cassinii</i>).	Open montane coniferous forests; breeds/ nests in coniferous forests. Year-round resident, breeding.	Possibly Present	Yes

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, Cassin's Finch 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 ~~their~~ major tributaries. The project area is considered bald eagle winter range and winter foraging area (see map below). 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: Livestock grazing can alter vegetation structure, composition, and function. Effects on migratory birds are dependent on the species of interest and may be adverse or beneficial depending on grazing timing, frequency, and intensity. Aerial, bark and canopy insectivores may be less influenced by grazing than species feeding on nectar, insects, or seeds in the understory or on the ground. Birds may be displaced as a result of fence and pond construction/maintenance and/or grazing. Trampling of nests, eggs, or young could occur. No current issues between migratory birds and grazing exist. Grazing (sheep or cattle) at 50% of current year's growth would be expected to maintain vertical and horizontal vegetative structure and complexity where it presently exists. Areas lacking structure and complexity would be expected to continue to be lacking and bird species richness would be low. It is unlikely that the proposed action would influence migratory bird populations locally or on a landscape level. [Also see the vegetation and riparian sections.](#)

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

Affected Environment: The table below summarizes the 2010 species list from the U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service for Federally listed, proposed, or candidate plant species and the November 2009 Colorado BLM State Director's Sensitive Species List for BLM sensitive plants that may occur within Eagle County and be impacted by the proposed action.

Special Status Plant Species in Eagle County

Federally Listed, Proposed or Candidate Plant Species		
Species	Habitat	Habitat Potential Present / Absent
Ute ladies'-tresses orchid (<i>Spiranthes diluvialis</i>)	Habitat for this threatened species is found below 6,500 feet along streams, lakes or in wetland areas with seasonally saturated or subirrigated soils.	Absent
BLM Sensitive Plant Species		
Species	Habitat	Habitat Potential Present/Absent
Harrington's penstemon (<i>Penstemon harringtonii</i>)	Open sagebrush communities on rocky loam or rocky clay loam soils between the elevations of 6,200 to 10,000 feet.	Present

Environmental Consequences/Mitigation of the Proposed Action:

Ute Ladies'-tresses.

There are two streams that flow through the Derby Ridge allotment; Cabin Creek and Dry Fork Cabin Creek. Both streams could contain potential habitat for the Ute ladies'-tresses orchid, however, the lowest elevation of these streams within the allotment is 7,500 feet which is 1,000 feet above the known upper elevation for the orchid. The Derby Ridge allotment does not contain suitable habitat for the Ute ladies'-tresses orchid and, as such, the proposed action would have "No Effect" on this species.

Harrington's penstemon.

Harrington's penstemon is found in sagebrush and sagebrush/mixed mountain shrub habitat on rocky loam or rocky clay loam soils. A population of Harrington's penstemon has been documented within the Derby Ridge allotment and other locations are known to occur along Pump Gulch several miles east of the allotment. The flowering stalks of Harrington's penstemon are highly palatable to wildlife and livestock. Livestock grazing has the potential to create adverse impacts on Harrington's penstemon if repeated removal of flowering stalks over a period of years prevents the plants from reproducing.

In the past decade, livestock utilization was only recorded for the Derby Ridge allotment in 2009. Utilization data for 2009 indicated that livestock grazing ranged from slight to light. Grazing at this level should leave adequate flowering stalks to permit reproduction of the species and should have no long-term adverse impacts on local population viability. Harrington's penstemon does not compete well with other vegetation for moisture and nutrients and populations tend to be small or absent in areas of dense vegetation. Grazing at light levels of utilization may benefit the penstemon species by reducing competition from other vegetation. Continuation of livestock grazing, as proposed, should have no adverse impacts on special status plants.

Analysis on the Public Land Health Standard 4 for Special Status Plant Species (partial, see also Special Status Terrestrial and Aquatic Wildlife Species): A formal Land Health Assessment has

not been conducted on the King Mountain Landscape which includes the Derby Ridge allotment. The proposed action would likely maintain the standard for special status plants by removing vegetation which might compete with Harrington’s penstemon for moisture, sunlight and nutrients.

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

Affected Environment:

~~Affected Environment for Special Status Terrestrial Wildlife Species:~~—The table below summarizes the latest: 1) species list (USFWS 2010) from the U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service for Federally listed, proposed, or candidate aquatic wildlife species and 2) Colorado BLM State Director’s Sensitive Species List for terrestrial species; that may occur within the CRVFO and be impacted by the proposed action.

Special Status Terrestrial Wildlife Species Summary

Federally Listed, Proposed or Candidate Aquatic Terrestrial Wildlife Species			
Species	Habitat/Range	Occurrence	Potentially Impacted by the Proposed Action or Alternatives
Black-footed Ferret (<i>Mustela nigripes</i>)	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. 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 .	Absent	No

Federally Listed, Proposed or Candidate Aquatic -Terrestrial Wildlife Species			
Canada lynx (<i>Lynx Canadensis</i>)	Federally listed as threatened. Canada lynx occupy high-latitude or high-elevation coniferous forests characterized by cold, snowy winters and an adequate prey base. In the western US, 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 (<i>Lepus americanus</i>) are the preferred prey, lynx in also feed on mountain cottontails (<i>Sylvilagus nuttallii</i>), pine squirrels (<i>Tamiasciurus hudsonicus</i>), and blue grouse (<i>Dendragapus obscurus</i>). The Forest Service has mapped suitable denning, winter, and other habitat for lynx within the White River and Routt National Forests. The mapped suitable habitat comprises areas known as Lynx Analysis Units (LAUs) that are the approximate the size of a female's home range. Several LAUs border BLM lands however no areas large enough to be considered LAUs occur within the CRVFO. BLM lands within the project area generally support the movement of lynx dispersing to a new areas (linkage area) or moving to lower elevations during severe winter weather in search of prey.	Absent Mappped linkage area	No Yes
Mexican spotted owl (<i>Strix occidentalis lucida</i>)	Federally listed as endangered. This owl nests, roosts, and hunts in mature coniferous forests in canyons and foothills. The key habitat components are old-growth forests with uneven-age stands, high canopy closure, high tree density, fallen logs and snags. 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.	Absent	No
Greater Sage-grouse (<i>Centrocercus urophasianus</i>)	Candidate for Federal listing. Sage-grouse, as the name implies, are found only in areas where sagebrush is abundant, providing both food and cover. Sage-grouse 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. Within the CRVFO sage-grouse are still present in the northeast part of the Field Office in 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.	Absent	No

Federally Listed, Proposed or Candidate Aquatic Terrestrial Wildlife Species			
Yellow-billed cuckoo (<i>Coccyzus americanus</i>)	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 (<i>Populus fremontii</i>) and willows (<i>Salix</i> sp.). A few sightings of yellow-billed cuckoo have occurred in western Colorado along the Colorado River near Grand Junction however it is an uncommon summer resident of Colorado.	Absent	No
Uncompahgre fritillary butterfly (<i>Boloria acrocne</i>)	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.	Absent	No
Colorado BLM Sensitive Terrestrial Wildlife Species			
Species	Habitat/Range	Occurrence	Potentially Impacted by the Proposed Action or Alternatives
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 of Colorado. Habitat associations are not well defined. Both of these bats will forage over water and along the edge of vegetation 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. 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).	Absent Present	No
Northern goshawk (<i>Accipiter gentilis</i>)	The goshawk is an uncommon 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). 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.	Absent	No

Federally Listed, Proposed or Candidate <u>Aquatic-Terrestrial</u> Wildlife Species			
Goldeneye, Barrow's (<i>Bucephala islandica</i>)	This bird is an uncommon winter resident and spring/fall migrant in lowlands and mountains. A few may breed in the northern mountains such as the Flat Tops Wilderness Area. Goldeneye's prefer alkaline-freshwater lakes in parkland areas and to a lesser extent subalpine/alpine lakes/beaver ponds for breeding.	Absent	No
Ibis, white-faced (<i>Plegadis chihi</i>)	This bird is a very rare, non-breeding, summer migrant to western Colorado valleys and mountain lakes. This species is commonly found on the eastern slope of Colorado (e.g. San Luis valley). The species inhabits primarily freshwater wetlands, especially cattail (<i>Typha</i> spp.) and bulrush (<i>Scirpus</i> spp.) marshes. This bird is a very rare, non-breeding, summer migrant to western Colorado valleys and mountain lakes. 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 (e.g. San Luis valley).	Absent	No

Canada Lynx. The Derby Ridge allotment ranges in elevation from 7,600 feet to 8,200 feet. The BLM portion of the allotment within the linkage area contains no riparian areas. Vegetation consists primarily of douglas fir and pinyon-juniper woodlands with interspersed sagebrush shrublands. This allotment contains no mapped lynx habitat. The allotment has a small (estimated 40 acre) overlap with the Castle Peak linkage area. This linkage area provides for movement across shrub-steppe habitats between the Flattops (White River Plateau) east to Castle Peak, and has mixed land ownership (USDA 2008).

The following narrative addresses species with a habitat potential to be present in the project area. Species: a) with no known or documented occurrences or b) that are unlikely to be present in the project area due to range, elevation and habitat conditions, are not discussed in more detail in the affected environment portion of this analysis or carried forward into the environmental consequences portion of this analysis.

Greater Sage grouse. Sage grouse are a sagebrush obligate species, meaning that they rely on sagebrush habitats for the majority of their life cycle. Sage grouse are found only in areas where sagebrush is abundant, providing both food and cover for breeding, nesting, brood-rearing and wintering.

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 including: windswept ridges, knolls, areas of flat sagebrush, or 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.

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A wide variety of factors have been identified as potential causes for the decline of Greater sage-grouse in Colorado over the last 10-20 years. Evidence suggests that habitat fragmentation and destruction across much of the species' range has contributed to significant population declines over the past century. CDOW data shows a decline of about 80% statewide over the last 20 years. If current trends persist, many local populations may disappear in the next several decades, with the remaining fragmented population vulnerable to extinction. Eagle County sage-grouse numbers have declined and remain relatively low (NESRGSGWG 2004). Vegetation succession, weather, predation, habitat changes (amount and/or quality), fragmentation, land treatments, grazing practices, unknowns about grouse population cycles, etc. all have had some effect (NESRGSGWG 2004). Fire suppression and historic overgrazing have likely facilitated the invasion of sagebrush by P-J woodlands (Miller et al. 1994). While many factors likely influence productivity, the only factor that has been consistently manageable is habitat (Connelly et al. 1991).

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).

Environmental Consequences/Mitigation: Generally livestock grazing can alter vegetation structure, composition, and function. Effects on terrestrial wildlife are dependent on the species of interest and may be adverse or beneficial depending on AUMs permitted, grazing timing, frequency, and intensity.

Canada Lynx. This analysis is: a) in conformance with and tiered to the programmatic consultation regarding the CRVFO livestock grazing program (ES/GJ-6-CO-03-F-013) and b) summarizes the main points in the unpublished Biological Assessment (BA) for Federally Listed Threatened, Endangered, and Proposed Species for the Colorado River Valley Field Office - 2011 Grazing Permit Renewals (BLM 2010).

Grazing monitoring and compliance inspections conducted since 2000 indicate the allotment receives no more than slight utilization. Site visits indicated the irrigated areas were very productive. Range conditions were consistently noted as good. Sagebrush areas had good diversity and coverage of perennial grasses. The sagebrush was healthy and vigorous.

A 2000 lynx assessment noted vegetation was good despite drought conditions, but habitat was very marginal for lynx. A small amount of livestock use was evident, but utilization was obviously slight. The site was very diverse with a good browse component present. All herbaceous vegetation at the site was drought stressed and very dry. Many forbs were

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completely dried out, and grasses were cured. Use on browse was apparent but was mainly on last years' growth (deer winter use). New growth, although minimal due to drought conditions, showed little use.

A 2010 on-site assessment concurred with the findings of previous grazing compliance inspections. Ocular utilization levels within lynx habitat were estimated to be light (0-5%). Cattle prefer the sub-irrigated vegetation outside of the linkage area. Historic over-browsing by big game on sagebrush is still evident however the understory vegetation was good for the rocky terrain. Wintering deer and elk sign was readily ~~noticeable~~noticeable.

Broad areas of habitat where animals can find food, shelter and security exist in the linkage area portion of the allotment. The structure and/or composition of the upland vegetation were as expected at the sites visited. Good residual herbivore upland forage to sustain lynx and/or prey remained at the end of the season of grazing use. Neither livestock grazing nor any other land management practices were found to be negatively contributing to the ability of native plant communities to support lynx and their prey.

In areas where livestock grazing is being renewed, the allowable number of animal unit months and periods of use, along with the land health standards and terms/conditions are anticipated to result in acceptable residual herbivore forage and riparian conditions necessary to maintain adequate lynx and prey habitat. Directly, indirectly or cumulatively the proposed actions have been determined not to result in the destruction or adverse modification of USFWS designated critical habitat for Canada lynx. The proposed action would not negatively affect the suitability of habitats within a LAU. Connectivity to other habitats across the linkage area would not be degraded. The allotment and the grazing management operation are anticipated to meet land health standard 2 and 3 within linkage areas and mechanisms are in place for adherence to these standards.

In 2000 the Fish and Wildlife Service concurred with BLM's "May Affect, Not Likely to Adversely Affect" determination for activities associated with the grazing permit renewal for the Derby Ridge Allotment. This project level analysis has also reached a determination of "May Affect, Not Likely to Adversely Affect (NLAA)" for the Canada lynx because the proposed action is predicted to only result in insignificant and/or discountable effects to lynx and their habitat.

Livestock grazing actions, for which a determination of NLAA is made, falls within the "blanket concurrence" and the streamlined consultation process provided by the USFWS under a programmatic agreement. As a foundation for the streamlined section 7 process, the BLM and USFWS have developed a set of project decision screens for activities determined by the agencies to cause inconsequential or unlikely effects to the Canada lynx. The assumptions and criteria upon which the screens are based have been fully met by this grazing permit renewal and are documented in the project file.

Fringed Myotis and Townsend's Big-eared Bats. Healthy functioning riparian ecosystems and uplands provide habitat for a diverse and abundant plant community and in turn insect

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populations that attract numerous foraging bat species. Properly managed livestock grazing (i.e. meeting land health standards) is generally compatible with bat species. The development and maintenance of water sources for livestock may unintentionally provide beneficial effects to foraging bat species. As long as utilization levels are maintained and land health standards are achieved there would be no direct or indirect effects of grazing on bat species that forage over these areas.

Analysis on the Public Land Health Standard 4 for Special Status Terrestrial Wildlife Species: (partial, see also Special Status Plants and Aquatic Wildlife): This landscape has not been assessed for land health standards. As a result, a baseline finding on land health standard has yet to be determined. However 2010 on-site inspections by the FO biologist has determined that continuation of livestock grazing, as proposed, is not likely to result in a failure to achieve standard 4, in addition to standards 2 and 3.

); A formal Land Health Assessment was conducted on this landscape in 2006. All areas were at least marginally meeting the land health standard for special status species at the time of the assessment. The continuation of livestock grazing under the proposed schedule and intensity should have no adverse impacts on terrestrial wildlife and Standard 3 would continue to be achieved.

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

Affected Environment: The table below summarizes the latest: 1) species list (USFWS 2010) from the U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service for Federally listed, proposed, or candidate aquatic wildlife species and 2) Colorado BLM State Director's Sensitive Species List for aquatic species; that may occur within the CRVFO and be impacted by the proposed action.

Special Status Aquatic Wildlife Species Summary.

Federally Listed, Proposed or Candidate Aquatic Wildlife Species			
Species	Habitat/Range	Occurrence	Potentially Impacted by the Proposed Action or Alternatives
Greenback cutthroat trout (<i>Oncorhynchus clarki stomias</i>)	Federally listed as threatened. 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 the Western Slope of Colorado. Historically found in cold, clear, gravely headwater streams and mountain lakes of the Arkansas and South Platte River systems in Colorado and part of Wyoming. The greenback cutthroat trout was not identified on the USFWS list for Garfield County; however, recent surveys have identified a population in Cache Creek.	Absent	No

Federally Listed, Proposed or Candidate Aquatic Wildlife Species			
Bonytail (<i>Gila elegans</i>)	Federally listed as endangered. This large chub is a member of the minnow family found in large, fast-flowing waterways of the Colorado River system. Their current distribution and habitat status are largely unknown due to its rapid decline prior to research into its natural history. The bonytail is extremely rare in Colorado and no self-sustaining population exists. Only one has been captured in the state since 1980.	Absent	No
Colorado pikeminnow (formerly Colorado squawfish) (<i>Ptychocheilus lucius</i>)	Federally listed as endangered. The Colorado pikeminnow exists 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.	Absent	No
Humpback chub (<i>Gila cypha</i>)	Federally listed as endangered. Found in deep, clear to turbid waters of large rivers and reservoirs over mud, sand or gravel. The nearest known habitat for the humpback chub 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.	Absent	No
Razorback sucker (<i>Xyrauchen texanus</i>)	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.	Absent	No
Colorado BLM Sensitive Aquatic Species			
Species	Habitat/Range	Occurrence	Potentially Impacted by the Proposed Action or Alternatives

Federally Listed, Proposed or Candidate Aquatic Wildlife Species			
Northern leopard frog (<i>Rana pipiens</i>)	Generally found between 3,500 to 11,000 feet, in wet meadows and in shallow lentic habitats. They require year-round water sources, deep enough to provide ice free refugia in the winter. Within the CRVFO, this species has been documented in locales where quality riparian vegetation exists in conjunction with perennial water sources. Larger populations of this species have been documented northwest of King Mountain within the small drainage that feeds 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.	Absent	No
Bluehead sucker (<i>Catostomus discobolus</i>), Flannelmouth sucker (<i>Catostomus latipinnis</i>), and Roundtail chub (<i>Gila robusta</i>)	Primarily found in larger rivers but may also be found in smaller tributaries with good connectivity to larger river systems. These fish are endemic to the Colorado River basin and reside within the mainstem Colorado River and its major tributary streams. Given their biology, feeding habits, habitat needs, and niche in the ecosystem, these species can persist in the face of actions that increase sediments to streams and rivers containing these species.	Absent	No
Mountain sucker (<i>Catostomus platyrhynchus</i>)	The mountain sucker is found primarily in small, low- mid elevation streams in northwestern Colorado with gravel, sand or mud bottoms. They inhabit undercut banks, eddies, small pools, and areas of moderate current. Young fish prefer backwaters and eddies. A population of mature adults is found in Steamboat Lake. Within the CRVFO, only known occurrence is in Piceance Creek.	Absent	No
Colorado River cutthroat trout (CRCT) (<i>Oncorhynchus clarkii pleuriticus</i>)	CRCT are one of three subspecies of native trout found in Colorado. CRCT prefer clear, cool headwaters streams with coarse substrates, well-distributed pools, stable streambanks, and abundant stream cover. CRCT have been documented as occurring in streams such as Parachute Creek, Abrams Creek, Battlement Creek, Mitchell Creek, North Thompson Creek and Red Dirt Creek. It is likely that all of the perennial waters capable of harboring fish historically contained this native trout species. CRCT have hybridized with non-native salmonids in many areas, reducing the genetic integrity of this subspecies. Rainbow trout hybridize with cutthroat trout. Brook and brown trout tend to replace them in streams and rivers.	Present	Yes

The following narrative provides more in-depth information on addresses species with potential habitat in the project area:

Species: a) with no known or documented occurrences or b) that are unlikely to be present in the project area due to range, elevation and habitat conditions, are not discussed in more detail in the affected environment portion of this analysis or carried forward into the environmental consequences portion of this analysis.

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~~Colorado River cutthroat trout.~~ Colorado River cutthroat trout. Dry Fork Cabin Creek is believed to be perennial largely due to diversion flows from Derby Creek located to the south. On the BLM segment the stream is a lower gradient pool run riffle channel that is in balance with the valley bottom floor. The stream has a good mix of pools and spawning habitat. Riparian vegetation varies from fair to good with willows, sedges, rushes, and alder. Dry Fork Cabin Creek was sampled on September 26, 2007. Approximately a 1,000 foot long segment was sampled by backpack electro-shocker. A total of 30 Colorado River cutthroat trout were collected, in addition, approximately 300+ brook trout were counted and returned back to the water. Brook trout are dominant in the system. All fish collected appeared healthy and robust. Aquatic insect productivity appeared good with a diversity of stone, caddis, and mayflies present.

Environmental Consequences/Mitigation: There are four general components of an aquatic system that can be affected by livestock grazing; streamside vegetation, stream channel morphology, shape and quality of the water column and the structure of the soil portion of the streambank (Behnke, R. J., and R. F. Raleigh 1979). Field observations indicate that these components are currently in good condition. It is anticipated that maintaining the current grazing scheme will maintain critical habitat needs such as water temperatures for coldwater fish species, overhead cover, sediment levels entering the stream, spawning habitat and conditions for egg incubation, macroinvertebrate diversity and stream channel morphology. The proposed action should continue to maintain adequate habitat conditions (suitability and connectivity) to ensure aquatic species are maintained at viable population levels commensurate with the species and habitat's potential leading to negligible impacts to aquatic species. Also see the vegetation and riparian sections. None of the special status aquatic species are found within the project area or the vicinity of the proposed action. Thus the proposed action would have "No Effect" to this species or habitat.

Analysis on the Public Land Health Standard 4 for Special Status Aquatic Wildlife Species:

(partial, see also Special Status Plants and Terrestrial Wildlife): This landscape has not been assessed for land health standards. As a result, a baseline finding on land health standard has yet to be determined. However 2010 on-site inspections by the FO biologist has determined that continuation of livestock grazing, as proposed, is not likely to result in a failure to achieve standard 4.

~~A formal Land Health Assessment was conducted on this landscape in 2006. All areas were at least marginally meeting the land health standard for special status species at the time of the assessment. The continuation of livestock grazing under the proposed schedule and intensity should have no adverse impacts on terrestrial wildlife and Standard 3 would continue to be achieved.~~

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

Affected Environment: Surface Water: The allotment is located within water quality stream segment 7c of the Upper Colorado River Basin. Stream Segment 7c of the Upper Colorado River Basin is defined as "Mainstem of Muddy Creek from the source to a point immediately below the confluence with Eastern Gulch as well as all tributaries to and wetlands of Muddy Creek from the source to the outlet of Wolford Mountain Reservoir, except for listings in

Segment 4. The mainstems of Derby, Blacktail, Cabin, and Red Dirt Creeks (all below Wolford Mountain Reservoir), including all tributaries and wetlands, from their sources to their confluences with the Colorado River, except for listings in Segment 4” (CDPHE–WQCC. 2010a). More specifically, this allotment is situated in the Cabin Creek 6th field watershed which covers 23,456 acres north of the Colorado River. Cabin Creek is a perennial tributary to the Colorado River near Burns, CO.

The table below identifies stream classifications and water quality standards for Upper Colorado River Basin stream segment 7c as outlined in CDPHE, Regulation No. 33.

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Stream Segment	Classifications	Numeric Standards					
		Physical and Biological	Inorganic (mg/l)		Metals (µg/l)		
COUCUC07c	Aq Life Cold 1 Recreation N Water Supply Agriculture	T=TVS(CS-II);C D.O.=6.0 mg/l D.O.(sp)=7.0 mg/l pH=6.5-9.0 E.Coli=630/100ml	NH3(ac/ch)=TVS Cl2(ac)=0.019 Cl2(ch)=0.011 CN=0.005	S=0.002 B=0.75 NO2=0.05 NO3=10 Cl=250 SO4=WS	As(ac)=340 As(ch)=0.02(Trec) Cd(ac)=TVS(tr) Cd(ch)=TVS CrIII(ac)=50(Trec) CrVI(ac/ch)=TVS Cu(ac/ch)=TVS	Fe(ch)=WS(dis) Fe(ch)=1000(Trec) Pb(ac/ch)=TVS Mn(ch)=WS Mn(ac/ch)=TVS Hg(ch)=0.01(tot)	Ni(ac/ch)=TVS Se(ac/ch)=TVS Ag(ac)=TVS Ag(ch)=TVS(tr) Zn(ac/ch)=TVS

CDPHE–WQCC. 2010a

The CDPHE —Integrated Water Quality Monitoring and Assessment Report-2010 update to the 2008 305(b) Report (CDPHE-WQCC. 2010c) was reviewed to determine the current status of assessment and determination of water quality within the allotment. Derby Creek and Cabin Creek fall outside of the Colorado Integrated Reporting Category (IR) assessment area and therefore have not been assigned an IR value in the —Status of Water Quality in Colorado – 2010.

The 2010 CDPHE-WQCC Regulation No. 93 Section 303d List of Impaired Waters and Monitoring and Evaluation List, was reviewed to determine if Upper Colorado River stream segment 7c was listed. The affected portion of stream segment 7c was not identified on the 303(d) or Monitoring and Evaluation list (CDPHE-WQCC. 2010b).

Groundwater: The primary source of groundwater within the allotment boundaries is located in shallow alluvial/colluvial deposits adjacent to Cabin Creek and Derby Creek. No domestic or stock wells were identified on public land within the allotment boundary. No springs or seeps were identified within the allotment boundary.

Water Rights: The table below displays additional information pertaining to water rights on or adjacent to Federal lands within this allotment.

Water Right Name	Water Source	Q10	Q40	Q100	Sect	Twshp	Range	PM	Adj Date	Appr Date	Use Type	Structure Type	Rate Amount (CFS)	Case No
HOOPER DITCH	CABIN CREEK	NW	NE	NW	1	2S	86W	S	1890-11-20	1888-05-01	1	1	9	CA0295
LITTLE DRY GULCH DITCH	CABIN CREEK	NE	NW	NE	1	2S	86W	S	1890-11-20	1884-09-01	1	1	1.4	CA0295
CABIN CREEK DITCH	CABIN CREEK	SW	SW	NE	6	2S	85W	S	1890-11-20	1884-08-25	1	1	2.5	CA0295
CABIN CREEK NO 2 DITCH	CABIN CREEK	NW	NW	NW	6	2S	85W	S	1890-11-20	1890-06-15	1	1	0.6	CA0295

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Environmental Consequences/Mitigation:

Surface Water: Under the proposed action, no changes to the existing grazing management plan would occur. – Water quality in the affected stream segment continues to meet State water quality standards and riparian conditions continue to function under existing grazing practices. Given favorable environmental conditions, desirable forage plants are anticipated to increase effective ground cover as litter accumulation and plant reproduction rates will be elevated. Increasing effective ground cover with desirable vegetation contributes to soil stability promoting healthy watersheds and encouraging water quality improvement. Therefore, successful implementation of the proposed action should help maintain or improve water quality. With successful implementation of the proposed grazing management plan desirable vegetative communities with potential to expand will do so (the rate of recovery may be slower than if grazing did not occur on the landscape). As a result, cumulative benefits to watershed health and water quality are anticipated to follow. Authorized grazing subject to all terms and conditions under the proposed action will suffice as mitigation.

Groundwater: The proposed action is not anticipated to directly or indirectly impact groundwater resources.

Water Rights: Grazing will have no impact on irrigational water usage on Federal lands within the allotment boundaries. Available AUMs should be adjusted to reflect any modification to land use (irrigated lands to non-irrigated lands) in the allotment.

Analysis on the Public Land Health Standard 5 for Water Quality: Public Land Health Standard 5 for Water quality is currently being met in the affected portion of water quality stream segment 7c of the Upper Colorado River basin. The proposed action will not alter this finding.

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

Affected Environment: The table below lists known riparian areas and their Proper Functioning Condition (PFC) assessment for the Derby Ridge Allotment.

Riparian Area Name	Approximate Miles	Year Assessed	Condition Rating
Cabin Creek	0.5	1995	Proper Functioning Condition
Dry Fork Cabin Creek	0.7	1995	Functioning at Risk Not Apparent Trend

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Contributing factors for the functioning at risk rating for Dry Fork Cabin Creek included heavy grazing use and washed out beaver dams. Notes on the PFC assessment form describe varying conditions of the riparian. The part of the riparian (approx. 0.3 mi) above an irrigation diversion had signs of heavy utilization by livestock in addition to washed out beaver dams. The riparian area below the irrigation diversion (approx. 0.4 mi) was in better condition. Grazing pressure along this stretch was much reduced; however, washed out beaver dams were still present. An inspection of the riparian was conducted again on May 19, 2000 which indicated that there should be more woody vegetation along the 0.3 mile stretch mentioned above. Heavy to severe browsing on woody species by deer and/or elk which occurred over the winter and spring was also noted. The grazing permittee was present during this field visit and stated that livestock grazing only occurs for approximately five days within the pasture that contains Dry Fork Cabin Creek and Cabin Creek. The riparian area along Dry Fork Cabin Creek was also examined during a compliance inspection conducted on Oct. 16, 2009. Notes on the compliance report indicated the riparian area was in good condition except for one flat area at an old abandoned beaver dam. Cattle appeared to be congregating in that location; however, utilization was within acceptable limits. The report also noted that old beaver dams that were breached had impacted the riparian area but the riparian area appeared to be recovering. Photographs were taken to support the observations above. The Proper Functioning Condition assessment for Cabin Creek did not raise or identify any issues with livestock grazing. There is no other current monitoring, inventory or documented field observations for the affected riparian areas other than what is discussed above.

Environmental Consequences/Mitigation: Livestock grazing on the Derby Ridge Allotment is under a rotational grazing system and the period of use along the riparian areas is relatively short duration. Under this grazing management, repeated defoliation of riparian plant species 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. 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 analysis above and the conditions/trend of riparian areas described in the Affected Environment, renewal of the grazing permit is not expected to cause adverse impacts to riparian zones. The condition of riparian areas would be maintained or improved.

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 the table below 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.

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: A review of the NRCS soil survey for the Aspen-Gypsum Area, Colorado, Parts of Eagle, Garfield, and Pitkin Counties was conducted to identify affected soils within this heavily utilized portion of the project area. A brief description of primary soil units affected by the proposed action is listed below.

Map unit: 10 - Anvik-Skylick-Sligting association, 10 to 25 percent slopes. The *Anvik* component makes up 30 percent of the map unit. This component is situated on fans and mountain slopes. The parent material consists of mixed alluvium and/or mixed colluvium. Depth to a root restrictive layer is typically greater than 60 inches. The natural drainage class is identified as well drained. Available water to a depth of 60 inches is moderate. Shrink-swell potential is moderate. This soil is not flooded or ponded. Additionally, there is no zone of water saturation within a depth of 72 inches.

The *Skylick* component makes up 30 percent of the map unit. This component is situated primarily on mountain sides. The parent material consists of colluvium derived from sandstone and/or residuum weathered from sandstone. Depth to a root restrictive layer is greater than 60 inches. The natural drainage class is well drained. Water movement in the most restrictive layer is moderately high. Available water to a depth of 60 inches is high. Shrink-swell potential is low. This soil is not flooded or ponded. Additionally, there is no zone of water saturation within a depth of 72 inches.

The *Slighting* component makes up 30 percent of the map unit. This component occurs on mountains. The parent material consists of colluvium derived from sandstone and/or colluvium derived from basalt and/or residuum weathered from sandstone and/or residuum weathered from basalt. Depth to a root restrictive layer is greater than 60 inches. The natural drainage class is well drained. Water movement in the most restrictive layer is moderately low. Available water to a depth of 60 inches is low. Shrink-swell potential is moderate. This soil is not flooded or ponded. There is no zone of water saturation within a depth of 72 inches.

Map unit: 47 - Forsey cobbly loam, 25 to 65 percent slopes. The *Forsey* component makes up 95 percent of the map unit. This component is situated on ridges, fans, and mountain sides. The parent material consists of mixed alluvium and/or mixed colluvium and/or mixed residuum. Depth to a root restrictive layer is greater than 60 inches. The natural drainage class is well drained. Water movement in the most restrictive layer is moderately high. Available water to a depth of 60 inches is low. Shrink-swell potential is low. This soil is not flooded or ponded. There is no zone of water saturation within a depth of 72 inches. Organic matter content in the surface horizon is about 3 percent.

Map unit: 65 - Jerry-Millerlake loams, 1 to 6 percent slopes. The *Jerry* component makes up 50 percent of the map unit. This component is situated on alluvial fans. The parent material consists of alluvium derived from sandstone and shale. Depth to a root restrictive layer is greater than 60 inches. The natural drainage class is well drained. Water movement in the most restrictive layer is moderately high. Available water to a depth of 60 inches is moderate. Shrink-swell potential is moderate. This soil is not flooded or ponded. There is no zone of water saturation within a depth of 72 inches. Organic matter content in the surface horizon is about 4 percent.

The *Millerlake* component makes up 40 percent of the map unit. This component is situated on valley sides, alluvial fans. The parent material consists of alluvium derived from sedimentary rock. Depth to a root restrictive layer is greater than 60 inches. The natural drainage class is well drained. Water movement in the most restrictive layer is moderately high. Available water to a depth of 60 inches is moderate. Shrink-swell potential is low. This soil is not flooded. It is not ponded. There is no zone of water saturation within a depth of 72 inches.

Map unit: 104 - Torriorthents-Camborthids-Rock outcrop complex, 6 to 65 percent
The *Torriorthents* component makes up 45 percent of the map unit. This component is situated on hills, ridges, mountains. The parent material consists of colluvium derived from sedimentary rock and/or residuum weathered from sedimentary rock. Depth to a root restrictive layer, bedrock, lithic, is 4 to 30 inches. The natural drainage class is well drained. Water movement in the most restrictive layer is moderately high. Available water to a depth of 60 inches is low. Shrink-swell potential is low. This soil is not flooded. It is not ponded. There is no zone of water saturation within a depth of 72 inches.

The *Camborthids* component makes up 20 percent of the map unit. This component is situated on hills, mountains, ridges. The parent material consists of alluvium derived from shale and/or colluvium derived from shale and/or alluvium derived from sandstone and/or colluvium derived from sandstone and/or alluvium derived from basalt and/or colluvium derived from basalt. Depth to a root restrictive layer, bedrock, lithic, is 15 to 60 inches. The natural drainage class is well

drained. Water movement in the most restrictive layer is moderately high. Available water to a depth of 60 inches is low. Shrink-swell potential is moderate. This soil is not flooded or ponded. There is no zone of water saturation within a depth of 72 inches.

Map unit: 105 - Torriorthents-Rock outcrop complex, 45 to 95 percent slopes. The *Torriorthents* component makes up 45 percent of the map unit. This component is situated on mountains, hills, ridges. The parent material consists of colluvium derived from sandstone and/or residuum weathered from sandstone and/or colluvium derived from shale and/or residuum weathered from shale and/or colluvium derived from basalt and/or residuum weathered from basalt. Depth to a root restrictive layer, bedrock, lithic, is 4 to 30 inches. The natural drainage class is well drained. Water movement in the most restrictive layer is moderately high. Available water to a depth of 60 inches is low. Shrink-swell potential is low. This soil is not flooded or ponded. There is no zone of water saturation within a depth of 72 inches.

Map unit: 112 - Woodhall gravelly loam, 6 to 50 percent slopes, extremely stony. The *Woodhall* component makes up 80 percent of the map unit. This component is situated on ridges, mountains. The parent material consists of alluvium derived from sandstone and/or residuum weathered from sandstone and/or alluvium derived from basalt and/or residuum weathered from basalt. Depth to a root restrictive layer, bedrock, lithic, is 20 to 40 inches. The natural drainage class is well drained. Water movement in the most restrictive layer is moderately high. Available water to a depth of 60 inches is very low. Shrink-swell potential is low. This soil is not flooded or ponded. There is no zone of water saturation within a depth of 72 inches.

Environmental Consequences/Mitigation: Under the proposed action the current grazing management plan will continue for another 10-year period. Forage production and utilization is primarily on irrigated agricultural lands located on private properties in valley bottoms. Thus, impacts to vegetation and soils on public land will be limited. As a result, healthy vegetative communities will promote enhanced soil stabilization and health in these areas. Current conditions are anticipated to be maintained or improved over time with continued implementation of the existing grazing system. Authorized grazing subject to all terms and conditions under the proposed action will suffice as mitigation. Any alteration to land use (e.g. change in irrigation status) may require adjustment to carrying capacities and would require adjustment at that time.

Analysis on the Public Land Health Standard 1 for Upland Soils: This landscape has not been assessed for Land Health Standard 1. As a result, a finding on Land Health Standard 1 has yet to be determined.

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

Affected Environment: Public land on the Derby Ridge allotment consists mostly of Mountain big sagebrush/grass with patches of Pinyon pine and Utah juniper on steeper slopes and shallower soils. Pinyon-juniper woodlands are beginning to encroach into sagebrush parks due to lack of disturbance. Sagebrush within the Derby Ridge allotment is generally old and even-aged, but the stands are still vigorous and productive. Portions of the allotment are irrigated

from ditches which flow across the allotment. Irrigated areas are dominated by redbud, smooth brome and timothy.

Douglas fir, Engelmann spruce and riparian grasses and shrubs are found along Cabin Creek and Dry Fork Cabin Creek.

Environmental Consequences:

The Derby Ridge allotment is permitted for livestock grazing from 6/1 to 9/30, however the allotment is under a rotational grazing system with the adjacent private lands, so no portions of the allotment are grazed for an extended period of time. In 2009, upland herbaceous vegetation appeared lightly utilized, overall. Livestock concentrated in a flat area adjacent to Dry Fork Cabin Creek, however, utilization in the area was not excessive. Riparian shrubs appeared heavily browsed by big game (as discussed under Riparian Zones section). Continuation of livestock grazing, as proposed, is not likely to cause adverse impacts to vegetation.

Analysis on the Public Land Health Standard for Plant and Animal Communities (partial, see also Wildlife, Aquatic and Wildlife, Terrestrial): Continuation of livestock grazing, as proposed, is not likely to result in a failure to achieve Standard 3 for healthy plant and animal communities.

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

Affected Environment: *Fish.* Dry Fork Cabin Creek is believed to be perennial largely due to diversion flows from Derby Creek located to the south. On the BLM segment the stream is a lower gradient pool run riffle channel that is in balance with the valley bottom floor. The stream has a good mix of pools and spawning habitat. Riparian vegetation varies from fair to good with willows, sedges, rushes, and alder. Dry Fork Cabin Creek was sampled on September 26, 2007. Approximately a 1,000 foot long segment was sampled by backpack electro-shocker. A total of 30 Colorado River cutthroat trout were collected, in addition, approximately 300+ brook trout were counted and returned back to the water. Brook trout are dominant in the system. All fish collected appeared healthy and robust. Aquatic insect productivity appeared good with a diversity of stone, caddis, and mayflies present. The project area is located within ephemeral drainages. Neither of these drainages contains aquatic wildlife. The nearest perennial waters are Big Alkali Creek located within 1.0 mile away, and the Colorado River located within 3 miles away. Portions of Big Alkali Creek contain rainbow and brown trout, speckled dace, and suckers. The Colorado River in the vicinity of the project contains brown and rainbow trout, mountain whitefish, speckled dace, and carp. Both waters also contain aquatic insects.

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 pinion-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.

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Environmental Consequences/Mitigation: There are four general components of an aquatic systems that can be affected by livestock grazing: streamside vegetation, stream channel morphology, shape and quality of the water column and the structure of the soil portion of the streambank (Behnke, R. J., and R. F. Raleigh 1979). Field observations indicate that these components are currently in good condition. It is anticipated that maintaining the current grazing scheme will maintain critical habitat needs such as water temperatures for coldwater fish species, overhead cover, sediment levels entering the stream, spawning habitat and conditions for egg incubation, macroinvertebrate diversity and stream channel morphology. The proposed action should continue to maintain adequate habitat conditions (suitability and connectivity) to ensure aquatic species are maintained at viable population levels commensurate with the species and habitat's potential leading to negligible impacts to aquatic species. Also see the riparian and vegetation sections. The number/kind of livestock, period of use, percent public land and Animal Unit Months (AUMS) will remain the same as the previous permit. No current issues between aquatic wildlife and grazing exist. Renewing the grazing permit on this small 30-acre allotment would continue to have negligible impacts on aquatic species due to the distance from water and the low amount of disturbance created by cattle.

Analysis on the Public Land Health Standard 3 for Aquatic Animal Communities (partial, see also Vegetation and Wildlife, Terrestrial): This landscape has not been assessed for land health standards. As a result, a baseline finding on land health standard has yet to be determined. However 2010 on-site inspections by the FO biologist has determined that continuation of livestock grazing, as proposed, is not likely to result in a failure to achieve standard 3 for aquatic animal communities.

~~A formal Land Health Assessment was conducted on this landscape in 2006. All areas were at least marginally meeting the land health standard for special status species at the time of the assessment. The continuation of livestock grazing under the proposed schedule and intensity should have no adverse impacts on terrestrial wildlife and Standard 3 would continue to be achieved.~~

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 BLM lands. 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.

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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*).

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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 CRVFO'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.

Environmental Consequences/Mitigation: Livestock grazing can alter vegetation structure, composition, and function. On the other hand, livestock grazing can have a beneficial effect on

forage quality by removing the rough or dried seedheads and stems, while leaving or creating the more palatable leaves for deer or elk to graze later in the season. Effects on terrestrial wildlife are dependent on the species of interest and may be adverse or beneficial depending on grazing numbers, timing, frequency, and intensity. Since the livestock AUMs authorized are estimated to remove 50% or less of the annual vegetative component - thereby leaving no less than 50 of the vegetative resource for use by wildlife - the proposed action would provide for adequate amounts of herbaceous vegetation necessary to continue to meet the needs of the various terrestrial wildlife species. The judicious rotational grazing system and the low number of AUMs would likely continue to have negligible or slight positive effects on wildlife such as the removal of mature coarse grass and the encouragement of regrowth forage for wild ungulates. Based on field observations the proposed action should continue to maintain adequate habitat conditions (suitability and connectivity) to ensure local terrestrial wildlife species are maintained at viable population levels commensurate with the species and habitats' potential. Also see the riparian and vegetation sections.

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Analysis on the Public Land Health Standard for Terrestrial Animal Communities (partial, see also Vegetation and Wildlife, Aquatic): This landscape has not been assessed for land health standards. As a result, a baseline finding on land health standard has yet to be determined. However 2010 on-site inspections by the FO biologist has determined that continuation of livestock grazing, as proposed, is not likely to result in a failure to achieve standard 3 terrestrial animal communities.

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Affected Environment: Given the mixes of vegetation, the project area provides cover, forage, and nesting habitat for a variety of big game, small game, and non-game mammals and birds. The area is mapped as mule deer and elk winter range.

Environmental Consequences/Mitigation: Livestock grazing can alter vegetation structure, composition, and function. Effects on terrestrial wildlife are dependent on the species of interest and may be adverse or beneficial depending on grazing timing, frequency, and intensity. Judicious seasonal grazing practices as proposed would likely have negligible or even positive effects on wildlife including: a) increases in vegetation composition diversity and improvement of forage availability; b) the creation of patchy habitat with high structural diversity for feeding, nesting and hiding; opening up areas of dense vegetation to improve foraging areas for a variety of wildlife; and e) removal of mature coarse grass; and d) encourage regrowth and improve abundance of high quality forage for wild ungulates.

Analysis on the Public Land Health Standard for Terrestrial Animal Communities (partial, see also Vegetation and Wildlife, Aquatic): A formal Land Health Assessment was conducted on this landscape in 2006. All areas were at least marginally meeting the land health standard for special status species at the time of the assessment. The continuation of livestock grazing under the proposed schedule and intensity should have no adverse impacts on terrestrial wildlife and Standard 3 would continue to be achieved.

SUMMARY OF CUMULATIVE IMPACTS

Wildlife. *General.* The area covered by the proposed action only comprises a small portion of the watershed. Cumulatively, many of the future actions planned on private and other lands may have some undetermined effect on wildlife including special status species habitat. The proposed action would create negligible landscape-level cumulative impacts to wildlife when viewed in conjunction with those activities currently occurring and reasonably certain to occur on adjacent private/other lands.

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Canada Lynx. For the Canada lynx, where these activities fall within an LAU or a linkage area, they cumulatively have the potential to affect Canada lynx or their prey species either through habitat loss, habitat degradation, direct mortality, disturbance or displacement. On private lands, where the Federal government's ability to regulate/mitigate impacts to lynx are diminished, the negative effect of such land uses on lynx may be more severe than those occurring from similar actions on BLM lands. The proposed action ~~iss-are~~ not anticipated to result in negative cumulative impacts to lynx when viewed in conjunction with those activities currently occurring and reasonably certain to occur on adjacent private and state lands.

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PERSONS AND AGENCIES CONSULTED:

A notice of public scoping was posted on the Colorado BLM's Internet web page on June 1, 2010 regarding grazing permits and associated allotments scheduled for renewal in 2011. 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
- Ute Mtn. Ute Tribe Chairman and Tribal Historic Preservation Officer
- Northern Ute Tribal Chairman
- Southern Ute Tribal Chairman

INTERDISCIPLINARY REVIEW:

<i>Name</i>	<i>Title</i>	<i>Responsibility</i>
Michael Kinser	Rangeland Management Specialist	NEPA Lead, Wetlands and Riparian Zones, Range Management
Nathan Dieterich	Hydrologist	Air Quality, Water Quality, Soils
Carla DeYoung	Ecologist	ACEC, Vegetation, T/E/S Plants, Land Health Stds
Greg Wolfgang	Outdoor Recreation Planner	VRM, Recreation, Travel Management
Kimberly Miller	Outdoor Recreation Planner	WSR, Wilderness, Recreation
Cheryl Harrison	Archaeologist	Cultural Resources and Native American Concerns

Brian Hopkins	Wildlife Biologist	Migratory Birds, Terrestrial Wildlife and T/E/S Terrestrial Wildlife, Aquatic Wildlife and T/E/S Aquatic Wildlife
Monte Senor	Rangeland Management Specialist	Invasive, Non-native Species

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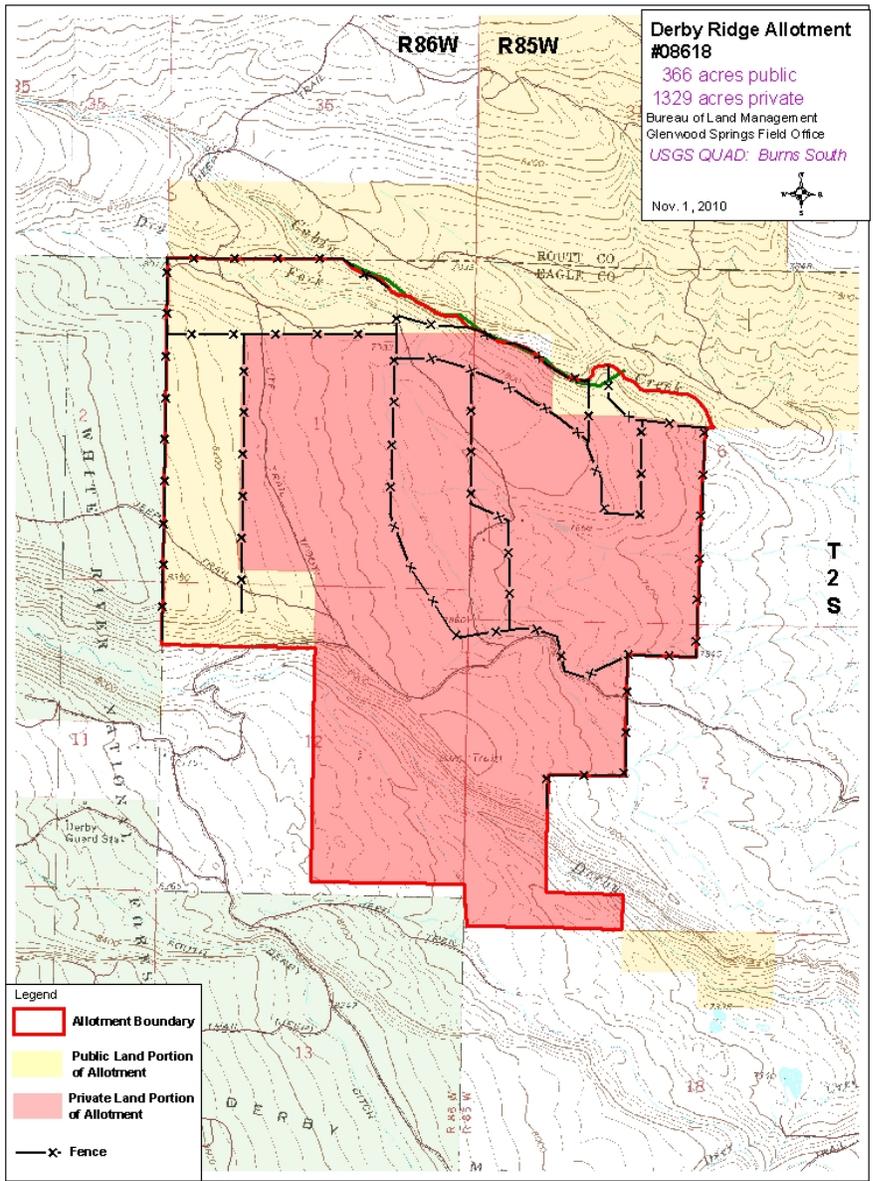
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APPENDICES: None

ATTACHMENTS: Allotment Map

PREPARER: Michael R. Kinser

| DATE: [January 18, 2011](#)



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 Derby Ridge Allotment

DOI-BLM-N040-2011-0017-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 Derby Ridge Allotment. The effects of the proposed action are disclosed in the Alternatives and Environmental Impacts sections of the EA. Implementing regulations for NEPA (40 CFR 1508.27) provide criteria for determining the significance of the effects. Significant, as used in NEPA, requires consideration of both *context* and *intensity* as follows:

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

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

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

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

Impacts associated with the livestock grazing permit renewal are identified and discussed in the 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 prime and unique farmlands, caves, wild and scenic rivers, wilderness study areas, or ACECs.

No unique characteristics are known to occur in the allotment.

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

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

The EA discloses that cumulatively, many of the future actions planned on private and other lands may have some undetermined effect on wildlife including special status species habitat. The proposed action would create negligible landscape-level cumulative impacts to wildlife when viewed in conjunction with those activities currently occurring and reasonably certain to occur on adjacent private/other lands.

8. *The degree to which the action may adversely affect scientific, cultural, or historical resources, including those listed in or eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places.*

Historic properties have been identified within this allotment. The EA discloses adverse impacts that may occur to cultural resources from livestock grazing. A determination of "No Adverse Affect" has been made for historic properties that occur in the allotment.

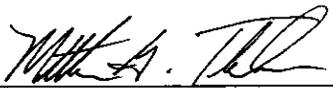
9. *The degree to which the action may adversely affect an endangered or threatened species or its habitat that has been determined to be critical under the Endangered Species Act of 1973.*

There is no designated critical habitat for any listed Threatened or Endangered species within the project area. The EA discloses that adverse effects to species listed as threatened or endangered are unlikely.

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

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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

1-19-11

Date