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**U.S. Department of the Interior
Bureau of Land Management
Kremmling Field Office
P.O. Box 68
Kremmling, CO 80459**

ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

NUMBER: DOI-BLM-CO-120-2009-0018-EA

PROJECT NAME: Renewal of Permit Renewal #0501817

LEGAL DESCRIPTION: Bureau of Land Management (BLM) administered land includes all or part of the following:

07115 (Indian Creek)
T. 5 N., R. 81 W., Sec 2, 10, 11, 14, 15

07176 (5 East)
T. 6 N., R. 81 W., Sec 15

07177 (5 West)
T. 6 N., R. 81 W., Sec 15, 22

07178 (5 South)
T. 6 N., R. 81 W., Sec 22

APPLICANT: VanValkenburg Livestock

PURPOSE AND NEED FOR THE ACTION: VanValkenburg grazing permit # 0501817 that authorizes grazing on allotments 07115 (Indian Creek), 07176 (5 North), 07177 (5 West), 07178 (5 South) expires on February 28, 2009. VanValkenburg Livestock has applied to renew their livestock grazing permit. The permit is subject to renewal at the discretion of the Secretary of the Interior for a period of up to 10 years. Renewal of this livestock grazing permit would allow them to continue grazing on their designated allotments for a period of 10 years beginning on March 1, 2009.

DESCRIPTION OF PROPOSED ACTION AND ALTERNATIVES:

Background/Introduction/Issues and Concerns:

During the 1999 permit renewal process, it was determined that 10 acres were not achieving Standards for Public Land Health in Colorado (Standards) due to poor livestock distribution resulting in over utilization of forage in allotment #07115. Allotments #07176, #07177 and #07187 were not assessed for Standards because they are custodial allotments with no known resource concerns or problems.

Allotment #07115 was again assessed for compliance for Standards in June 2006. It was determined at that time the allotment is in compliance with the Standards. It was noted that repeated use in the lower pasture was a concern. Allotments #07176, #07177 and #07187 were not assessed for Standards because they are custodial allotments with no know resource concerns or problems.

Since the assessment, a temporary electric fence has been put up in the lower pasture to split this pasture. A permanent fence and a new water development are proposed for 2009. A future project includes another fence in the upper pasture to create four pastures.

Proposed Action: The Proposed Action would renew the livestock grazing permit and implement a new grazing system for allotment #07115.

- The permit would be renewed for 10-years (through February 28, 2019).
- The Standard Terms and Conditions are included in Attachment #2.
- There would be no change in AUMs.
- Indian Creek allotment grazing plan would be implemented.
- Conversion to yearlings use would be authorized at a rate, not to exceed 1.5 yearlings per cow

The renewed livestock grazing permit would authorize grazing to the following extent:

Allotment	Livestock		Season of Use		% Public Land*	AUMs**
	Number	Kind	Begin	End		
07115 (Indian Creek) Lower Pasture	45	C	6/01	9/30	100	180
07115 (Indian Creek) Upper Pasture	160	C	6/01	9/30	13	83
07176 (5 North)	30	C	6/1	8/10	15	11
07177 (5 West)	4	C	6/1	7/31	67	5
07178 (5 South)	40	C	6/01	7/31	49	39

*% Public Land is the percentage of forage within the public land (BLM) portion of the allotment.

**AUM = animal unit month = amount of forage required to support 1 cow and calf for 1 month.

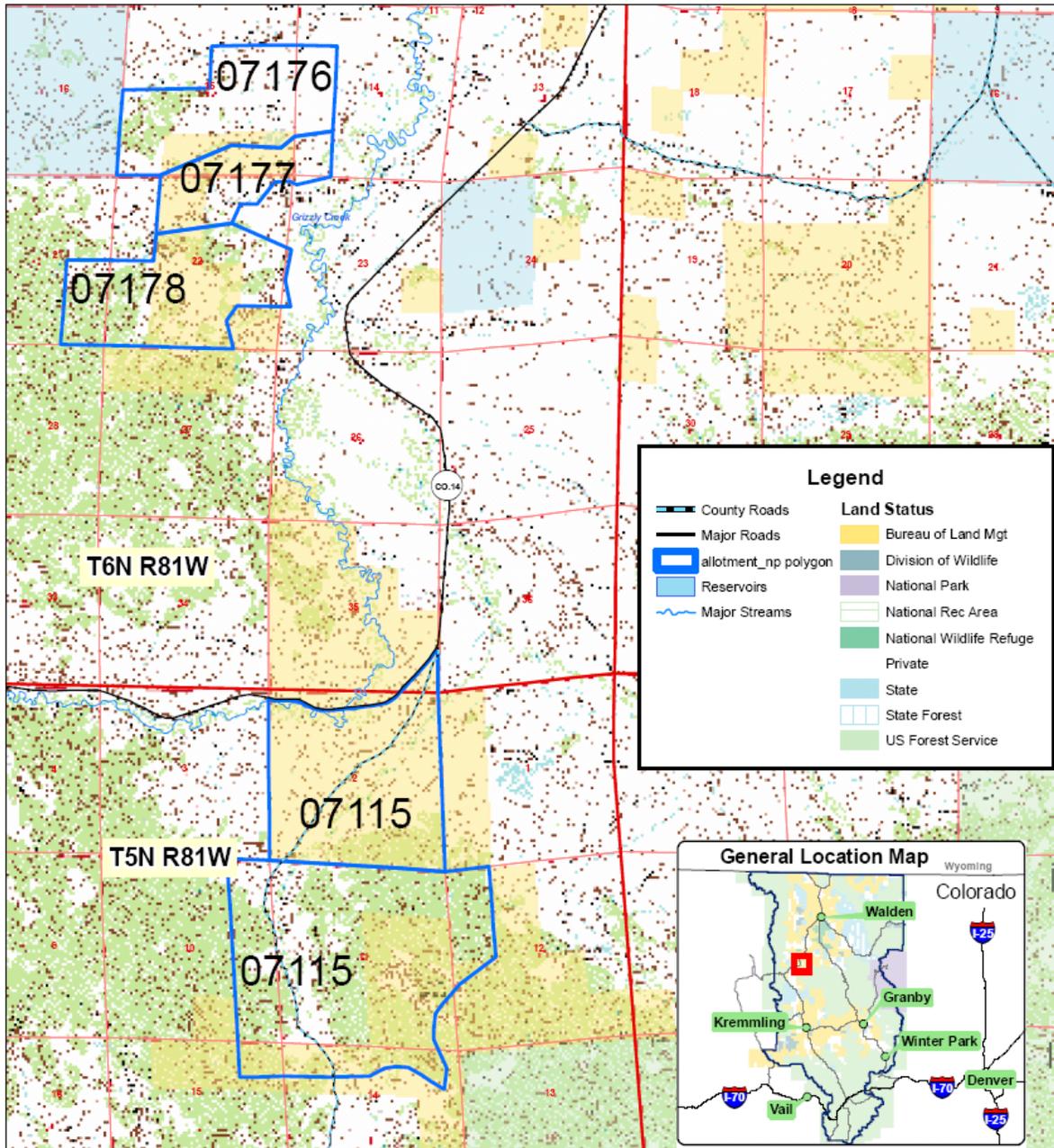
Total AUMs that would be authorized for this permit is 320.

Design Features of the Proposed Action:

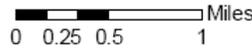
- Continue monitoring of riparian and wetland conditions to help identify trends along both Grizzly Creek and Indian Creek. If conditions are declining, then additional management options would be considered.
- The BLM would monitor the project area for establishment of invasive, non-native species.
- The BLM will be responsible for implementing control measures, which would include partnership with the Jackson County Weed Abatement Program.



Van Valkenburg Ranch



No Warranty is made by the Bureau of Land Management as to the Accuracy, Reliability, or Completeness of this Data for Individual Use or Aggregate Use with Other Data.



1:49,766

Maps: Spicer Peak
BLM, Kremmling FO 11/2008

No Action Alternative: The No Action Alternative would not implement the new grazing plan for allotment #07115. The permit would be renewed under the old permit (1999- 2009) and stipulations.

- The permit would be renewed for 10-years (through February 28, 2019).
- The Standard Terms and Conditions are included in Attachment #2.
- There would be no change in the season of use or AUMs
- Allotment #07115 would allow for grazing the lower pasture twice.

The renewed livestock grazing permit would authorize grazing to the following extent (which is the same as the 1999-2009 permit):

Allotment	Livestock		Season of Use		% Public Land*	AUMs**
	Number	Kind	Begin	End		
07115 (Indian Creek) Lower Pasture	145	C	6/01	6/30	100	143
07115 (Indian Creek) Upper Pasture	145	C	7/1	9/12	13	46
07115 (Indian Creek) Both pastures	145	C	9/13	9/30	86	74
07176 (5 North)	30	C	6/1	8/10	15	11
07177 (5 West)	4	C	6/1	7/31	67	5
07178 (5 South)	40	C	6/1	7/31	49	39

*% Public Land is the percentage of forage within the public land (BLM) portion of the allotment.

**AUM = animal unit month = amount of forage required to support 1 cow and calf for 1 month.

Total AUMs that would be authorized for this permit is 320.

Alternatives Considered But Eliminated From Further Analysis:

No livestock grazing was considered but eliminated from further analysis for the following reasons:

- Livestock grazing with the Kremmling Field Office was fully analyzed and authorized in the RMP/EIS as recorded in the 1984 Approved Plan and Record of Decision. At that time a “No Grazing Alternative” was considered but not selected.

- This alternative is not consistent with the Federal Land Policy and Management Act (FLPMA) that stated: “the public lands be managed in a manner which recognizes the Nation’s need for domestic sources of minerals, food, timber, and fiber from public lands.....”
- During public scoping and staff review there were no issues or concerns identified that would support a “No Grazing Alternative.”

It has been determined that significant progress toward achieving compliance with the Standards for Public Land Health in Colorado would occur with the appropriate livestock grazing guidelines set forth in the Proposed Action

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: Kremmling Resource Management Plan (RMP), Record of Decision (ROD)

Date Approved: December 19, 1984; Updated February 1999

Decision Number/Page: Livestock Grazing: pages 6 and 8, as revised

Decision Language: Objectives of the RMP/ROD include allocation of a base level of livestock forage and maintaining or improving forage production and condition in areas where livestock grazing is a priority or is compatible with the land use priority. The RMP designated the project area with a livestock grazing priority.

AFFECTED ENVIRONMENT / ENVIRONMENTAL CONSEQUENCES / MITIGATION MEASURES:

INVASIVE, NON-NATIVE SPECIES

Affected Environment: Past actions such as livestock grazing, motorized travel, recreation, etc. that have caused disturbance of vegetation and soil have contributed to the invasion and spread of invasive, non-native species (noxious weeds). There are no known invasive, non-native species (noxious weeds) growing within the allotments. If present, species would be located along roadways, and in high-use areas, such as livestock watering areas. Soil or vegetation disturbing activities provide an avenue for the establishment and expansion of invasive, non-native species. The BLM monitors these known areas to control the spread of these species.

Environmental Consequences: Any type of soil or vegetation disturbance in an area where non-native, invasive species are established promotes their expansion. Under the No Action or Proposed Action impacts are expected to be minimal because within the Standard Terms and Conditions of their permit, the permittee is responsible for notifying the BLM of all county listed noxious weeds which result from their livestock grazing operations.

Mitigation: None

MIGRATORY BIRDS

Affected Environment: A variety of migratory bird species, primarily birds of prey and songbirds, use the allotments proposed for renewal. Surveys conducted in 1994 by the Colorado Breeding Bird Atlas Partnership recorded many species in the area including Swainson's hawks, red-tailed hawks, golden eagles, green-tailed towhee, mountain and western bluebirds, sage thrasher, horned lark, western kingbirds, American kestrels, and common nighthawks in the sagebrush habitat common to these allotments. Species common in and adjacent the mixed lodgepole and aspen forests include Black-capped Chickadee, Clark's Nutcracker, N. Flicker, Gray Jay, and Northern Goshawk.

Environmental Consequences: Under the No Action Alternative and the Proposed Action allotments #7176, #7177, and #7178 would be renewed without any changes to the AUMs, however the season of use would be changed for the proposed action. The No Action Alternative and the Proposed Action are expected to maintain current conditions for migratory birds. The Proposed Action would implement a new grazing plan for allotment #7115 to prevent possible future Standards issues. The season of use would increase and the AUMs would remain the same. This would be more beneficial to migratory birds since grass and forb production would likely increase as compared to the continuation of current grazing management. The new grazing plan would provide for better plant vigor and thereby would produce more plant material available for bird use, especially by those species that nest on the ground.

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

Affected Environment: A list of threatened, endangered, and candidate species which could inhabit the proposed project area was received from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service on January 12, 2009. Analysis of this list indicated that Canada lynx is the only listed species which could inhabit one of the allotments included in the proposed grazing permit renewal. Allotment #7115 is located within the Sheep Mountain Lynx Analysis Unit (LAU). The southeastern portion of the allotment is identified as habitat for lynx. Because the dominant vegetative type is lodgepole pine in this part of the allotment, the area has been designated as “Other” habitat for lynx. Snowshoe hares, pine squirrels, and blue grouse inhabit this part of the allotment and would provide a prey base for Canada lynx.

Environmental Consequences: Under the No Action Alternative, the permit would be renewed without any changes. Since there would be no changes to the permit, the No Action Alternative would maintain current conditions for Canada Lynx. The quantity and quality of vegetation including shrubs and young lodgepole pine trees, was sufficient to meet the food and cover needs of snowshoe hares in allotment #7115. The Proposed Action would implement a new grazing plan for allotment #7115 to prevent possible future Standards issues. The season of use would increase and the AUMs would remain the same. This would increase grass and forb productivity in the allotment and snowshoe hare habitat would likely improve. Therefore, the Proposed Action would increase habitat for snowshoe hares, the primary prey species for Canada lynx. The Proposed Action and the No Action Alternative would impact vegetative cover for Canada lynx. Therefore, the proposed grazing permit renewal would have “no affect” on Canada lynx.

Finding on the Public Land Health Standard for Threatened & Endangered species: Allotment #7115 was assessed for compliance for Standards in June 2006 and determined to be in compliance. It was noted that repeated use in the lower pasture was a concern. The Proposed Action would implement a new grazing plan for this allotment to prevent possible future Standards issues and likely improve allotment #7115 as compared to the No Action Alternative. The Proposed Action and the No Action Alternative would impact allotments #7176, #7177, or #7158.

WATER QUALITY, SURFACE AND GROUND (includes a finding on Standard 5)

Affected Environment: The allotments are all within the Upper North Platte River basin, within the Grizzly Creek 5th order watershed. Allotment #7115 contains private and public segments of Indian Creek, a tributary to Grizzly Creek. Allotments #7177 and #7178 contain only ephemeral drainages that are tributary to Grizzly Creek, as does most of allotment #7176. Approximately 110 acres (the southwest portion) of allotment #7176 is tributary to the South Fork of Mexican Creek, a tributary to Grizzly Creek. The 1999 Grazing Permit Renewal Environmental Assessment included an assessment of the permit’s compliance with the Clean Water Act and the Colorado Land Health Standards as an attachment. The attachment discusses riparian and watershed conditions for each allotment and the runoff pathways.

The State of Colorado’s 2008 Status of Water Quality Report (305(b) Report) lists streams in this portion of the basin as fully supporting agriculture, water supply, primary contact recreation, and coldwater aquatic life-class 1. Grizzly Creek is still listed on the current

Monitoring and Evaluation List (2006) as having possible impairment for aquatic life use. The list includes those stream segments where impairments might exist, but additional data is needed to determine if an impairment exists and if so, for which stream segments.

The BLM has continued to monitor water quality at the highway bridge on Grizzly Creek and recently added some monitoring on Indian Creek. Both streams have been difficult to sample due to increased beaver activity. During the 2002 drought, the streams were dry, as was Lower Indian Creek by late summer 2007. As discussed in the 1999 Environmental Assessment, it appears that the streams' major sediment sources are upstream of these segments. The use of the temporary fence and the permittee's monitoring of riparian conditions are reducing streambank trampling and utilization levels along Indian Creek. This helps maintain water temperatures and reduce stream sediments.

Environmental Consequences: The Proposed Action implements a grazing system that is designed to better distribute livestock utilization in the allotment and reduce the number of times plants are grazed. These changes will improve vegetative cover in areas currently grazed at heavier levels and increase desirable vegetation along the streambanks. Indian Creek's riparian zone and streambanks will be more stable and reduce sediment loads to the stream as sedges replace bluegrass in the understory. Under the No Action Alternative, current conditions would be expected to continue with no further improvements to Indian Creek.

Mitigation: None

Finding on the Public Land Health Standard for water quality: Indian and Grizzly Creeks are considered to be meeting the Standard for water quality. The Proposed Action requires a grazing system that should improve stream stability, helping protect water quality for the longterm. Under the No Action Alternative, the Water Quality Standard is met, but is more at risk for future failure due to riparian conditions.

WETLANDS & RIPARIAN ZONES (includes a finding on Standard 2)

Affected Environment: The 1999 Environmental Assessment describes the riparian communities in allotment #7115. Allotments #7176, #7177, and #7178 do not have any known wetland areas. In 2002, the BLM contracted for a wetland inventory in North Park. Allotment #7115's lower pasture was mapped as containing 90.47 acres of riparian mire. The southeastern terrace of Indian Creek has multiple small seeps that feed the riparian and beaver pond complex. The riparian system extends above and below the pasture, but the mire is entirely within the lower pasture. The mire is atypical in that it is almost exclusively riparian. The private irrigation ditch does not appear to affect the stream and riparian zone. "Grazing has caused some channel degradation and soil disturbance, especially around the most sensitive spring areas, and it has likely affected plant species composition. These grazing impacts are likely reversible with alternate grazing management." (Johnson and Gerhardt, 2002). The Grizzly Creek portion has generally received less use than Indian Creek, as livestock would graze Indian Creek early and late and not drop down to Grizzly Creek. The BLM has been monitoring livestock use of the riparian areas and streambank conditions since 2002. Allotment #7115's temporary fence and 1999 changes in the permit are helping improve the area.

Environmental Consequences: The Proposed Action would implement a grazing system that helps reduce livestock pressure in the riparian area. This benefits the upper pasture too,

where public lands are only 13% of the pasture. Due to the density of Indian Creek and Grizzly Creek's willow canopies and the number of beaver dams, livestock tend to congregate on certain stream segments that are more accessible. The Proposed Action creates a 'Grizzly Creek pasture', so that livestock will use this portion of the lower pasture, rather than regrazing Indian Creek. As Indian Creek's utilization levels decrease, sedges will begin to increase in the understory over invader and increaser species. Sedges will help reduce streambank sloughing and channel widening. The grazing system will also promote wetland vegetation in the seeps. The grazing system will eventually help reduce riparian use in the Upper Pasture, when fencing splits the pasture in two. Under the No Action Alternative, it is unlikely that any more improvement along Indian Creek will be achieved and current conditions would continue. Indian Creek's riparian and wetland areas would be at risk for failing the Standard in the future.

Mitigation: None

Finding on the Public Land Health Standard for riparian systems: Allotment #7115 is considered to be meeting the Standard, but additional improvements are desired. Implementing the Proposed Action will continue to benefit both the private and public riparian areas, and benefit the public mire. These improvements should help protect longterm health.

SOILS (includes a finding on Standard 1)

Affected Environment: The grazing permits for #7176, #7177, and #7178 are not affected by the permit renewal as no changes are proposed in either alternative. Allotment #7115's soils are described in the 1999 Environmental Assessment. During the 1999 and 2006 allotment assessments, and during pasture monitoring, there have been few upland soil concerns. The uplands are well vegetated, especially in the upper pasture where vegetation and litter provide good ground cover. The slopes adjacent to Indian Creek tend to have some livestock trailing. The lower pasture's slopes overlooking Grizzly Creek have rills and a few gullies. These gullies appear to form from large snowdrifts' melt and not from livestock.

Environmental Consequences: The Proposed Action's grazing system will divide the lower pasture in two, reducing the number of times a plant is grazed. The shorter season in each pasture should also help reduce trailing along the creeks. These changes will maintain or improve overall upland soil conditions. The No Action Alternative would continue current conditions. Although the area would meet the Standard, the opportunity to protect high use areas and insure their longterm health could be at risk.

Mitigation: None

Finding on the Public Land Health Standard for upland soils: The allotment is meeting the Standard. Renewing the permit in the No Action Alternative, would put some small areas at risk for failing the Standard in the future. The Proposed Action would benefit the entire allotment, both private and public lands, and insure that longterm soil health, especially adjacent to riparian areas, is maintained.

VEGETATION (includes a finding on Standard 3)

Affected Environment: The vegetation found within the livestock grazing allotments is a mixture of an over story of sagebrush, shrubs aspen, lodge pole pine and Douglas fir with an understory of grasses and forbs. During the 1999 land health assessment, it was noted that there were concerns with livestock distribution in allotment #07115 causing uneven use within the allotment. This impact was reducing riparian vegetation vigor along Indian Creek. Livestock use was adjusted and it was determined during follow up monitoring that in order to improve the public land within the allotment a new grazing system was needed.

Environmental Consequences: The proposed action would renew the permit for 10 years and implement a new grazing system for allotment #07115. In order to implement the new grazing system, a new permanent fence and additional water sources would be needed. Once completed, these projects would provide four pastures. The new pastures would help improve the vegetation by reducing the amount of time livestock have to graze the vegetation before they are moved to another pasture. In the No Action Alternative allotment #07115 would renew the permit as it currently exists. Livestock distribution would continue to be of concern as well as potential repeated use of vegetation. Under the No Action Alternative and the Proposed Action allotments #7176, #7177, and #7178 would be renewed without any changes. The impacts to vegetation are not anticipated to change the vegetation.

Mitigation: None

Finding on the Public Land Health Standard for plant and animal communities (partial, see also Wildlife, Aquatic and Wildlife, Terrestrial): Allotment #07115 was assessed for compliance for Standards in June 2006. It was determined at that time the allotment is in compliance with the Standard. It was noted that repeated use in the lower pasture was a concern. Allotments #07176, #07177 and #07187 were not assessed for Standards because they are custodial allotments with no known resource concerns or problems.

WILDLIFE, AQUATIC (includes a finding on Standard 3)

Affected Environment: A variety of intermittent and perennial water bodies are located in the allotments included in the proposed grazing permit renewal. These water bodies include drainage bottoms, stock ponds, Indian Creek, and several small spring-fed perennial drainages. These waters support aquatic wildlife, primarily waterbirds, beaver, and muskrats during wet periods. Indian Creek supports coldwater fish such as brook trout, minnows, dace and suckers.

Environmental Consequences: Under the No Action Alternative and the Proposed Action allotments #7176, #7177, and #7178 would be renewed without any changes. Since there would be no changes to these allotments, the No Action Alternative and the Proposed Action are expected to maintain current conditions for aquatic wildlife. The Proposed Action would implement a new grazing plan for allotment #7115 to prevent possible future Standards issues. The season of use would increase slightly and the AUMs would remain the same. This would be more beneficial to aquatic wildlife since grass and forb production would likely increase and riparian areas would improve as compared to the No Action Alternative.

Finding on the Public Land Health Standard for plant and animal communities (partial, see also Vegetation and Wildlife, Terrestrial): Allotment #7115 was assessed for compliance for Standards in June 2006, and determined to be in compliance. It was noted that repeated use in the lower pasture was a concern. The Proposed Action would implement a new grazing plan for this allotment to prevent possible future Standards issues and likely improve allotment #7115 as compared to the No Action Alternative. Neither the Proposed Action nor the No Action Alternative would impact allotments #7176, #7177, or #7158.

WILDLIFE, TERRESTRIAL (includes a finding on Standard 3)

Affected Environment: These allotments provide habitat for a variety of upland wildlife. Mule deer, pronghorn antelope, moose and Rocky Mountain elk occupy the area at different times of the year while badgers, coyotes, red foxes, white-tailed jackrabbits, and a variety of small rodents live in the allotments on a year-long basis. Pronghorn antelope and mule deer primarily use the allotments during the summer while elk use the northern allotments in the winter and southern allotments in the summer. Moose concentrate along Indian Creek and Grizzly Creek throughout the year.

Environmental Consequences: Under the No Action Alternative and the Proposed Action allotments #7176, #7177, and #7178 would be renewed without any changes. Since there would be no changes to these allotments, the No Action Alternative and the Proposed Action are expected to maintain current conditions for terrestrial wildlife. The Proposed Action would implement a new grazing plan for allotment #7115 to prevent possible future Standards issues. The season of use would increase and the AUMs would remain the same. This would be more beneficial to terrestrial wildlife since grass and forb production would likely increase as compared to the No Action Alternative. This additional vegetation would be especially important to wildlife that use the allotment during winter.

Finding on the Public Land Health Standard for plant and animal communities (partial, see also Vegetation and Wildlife, Aquatic): Allotment #7115 was assessed for compliance for Standards in June 2006, and determined to be in compliance. It was noted that repeated use in the lower pasture was a concern. The Proposed Action would implement a new grazing plan for this allotment to prevent possible future Standards issues and likely improve allotment #7115 as compared to the No Action Alternative. The Proposed Action and the No Action Alternative would impact allotments #7176, #7177, or #7158.

RANGE MANAGEMENT:

Affected Environment: Livestock use in allotment #07115 has been grazed with livestock starting in the lower pasture and then moving livestock into the upper pasture. In the fall, livestock are allowed to drift back into the lower pasture. Permittee generally uses #07115 for one herd of cattle and allotments #07176, #07177 and #07178 for their other herd of cattle.

Environmental Consequences: Under the Proposed Action, the new grazing system and proposed range improvements require more movement of the livestock. This is anticipated to improve the vegetation for future years in the allotment. Under the No Action alternative the permittee would continue to graze the allotment without using the pasture fence. The long term health of the vegetation would be reduced and could cause a reduction in AUMs in the future.

Under the Proposed Action or No Action Alternative livestock use would not be impacted for allotments #07176, #07177 and #07178.

Mitigation: None

CUMULATIVE IMPACTS SUMMARY: Livestock grazing has been an important use of the public lands in the Kremmling Field Office since the introduction of domestic livestock in the 1870s. Presently, the Field Office supports a grazing program on approximately 378,000 acres of BLM-administered public lands. Currently, these public ranges are licensed at a level of approximately 39,726 Animal Unit Months (AUMs) for livestock.

For the purpose of this EA, the general geographic boundary for cumulative impact analysis is North Park. The Kremmling Field Office is divided north to south by the Continental Divide. The public lands to the north of the divide are generally referred to as North Park, and those to the south of the divide, Middle Park. In North Park, there are approximately 260,000 acres of BLM-administered public lands that are currently being grazed, and 26,656 AUMs that are licensed.

In looking at past actions within the geographic area over the past ten years, there have not been any major changes to the North Park allotments. A majority of the allotments have been assessed for standards and the permits modified when needed due to non-compliance with specific standards or new information that has been received (i.e. new sage grouse lek). A BLM interdisciplinary Team (IDT) assessed two allotments for compliance with the Colorado Public Land Health Standards, and both allotments met standards.

In looking at reasonably foreseeable actions, the Coalmont area in southern Jackson County has seen recent interest in oil and gas development. There is a potential this activity could have a cumulative impact on North Park allotments in the future depending upon the extent of development. Other reasonably foreseeable actions that are projected to occur include minor range improvement projects.

In terms of cumulative impacts to cultural resources, grazing may cause substantial ground disturbance and cause cumulative, long term, irreversible adverse effects to historic properties throughout the Kremmling Field Office. However, as part of the BLM permit renewal process, allotments are being assessed and inventoried for cultural resources. If resources are found and eligible for NRHP, mitigation is implemented. This process is attempting to mitigate any major cumulative impacts to cultural resources in the Kremmling Field Office.

PERSONS / AGENCIES CONSULTED: Starting in February 2008, a scoping process was begun to request information concerning the renewal of grazing permits/leases and to prioritize areas or allotments with issues and concerns. The Field Office sent scoping letters, along with land status maps showing the affected allotments, to the following groups and agencies: Colorado Division of Wildlife (Steamboat, Walden, Hot Sulphur Springs, Ft Collins); District Board of Grazing Advisors; County Commissioners (Grand, Jackson); Stock Growers (Middle Park, North Park, Upper Big Laramie River Ranch Assoc.); Northwest Resource Advisory Council; United States Forest Service (Silverthorne, Granby, Walden); US Fish and Wildlife Service (Arapaho Wildlife Refuge); Tribal Councils (Arapaho, Shoshone, Southern Ute);

Colorado Commission of Indian Affairs; Ute Indian Tribe Uintah & Ouray Agency Business Committee; Colorado Environmental Coalition; Colorado State Land Board.

The BLM Colorado State Office also mailed outreach letters, concerning the renewal of grazing permits/leases, to all Congressional offices, State and Federal agencies, and major environmental, conservation, and user group organizations.

In addition, individual letters were sent to the affected permittees/lessees informing them that their permit/lease was up for renewal and requested any information they wanted included in, or taken into consideration, during the renewal process. A Notice of Public Scoping was posted on the Internet, at the Colorado BLM home page, asking for public input on permit/lease renewals and the assessment of public land health standards within the Field Office. This notice was followed up in October with an Internet posting of the Field Office prioritization of allotments and a determination as to which allotments would be assessed according to the land health standards. The proposed project was also posted on the Kremmling Internet NEPA Register.

INTERDISCIPLINARY REVIEW: See IDT-RRC in Appendix 1.

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DOI-BLM-CO-120-2009-0018-EA

Based on the analysis of potential environmental impacts contained in the attached environmental assessment, and considering the significance criteria in 40 CFR 1508.27, I have determined that the Proposed Action will not have a significant effect on the human environment. An environmental impact statement is therefore not required.

DECISION RECORD

DECISION: It is my decision to authorize the Proposed Action (see Attachment #3 for new grazing plan for allotment # 07115) as described in the attached EA and renew livestock grazing permit # 0501817 until February 28, 2019. The new permits will be subject to the mitigation measures included below.

RATIONALE: The proposed action was chosen because it would result in better livestock distribution, improve vegetative vigor and overall cover, protect watershed conditions, produce more plant material available for bird use, especially by those species that nest on the ground, and improve habitat conditions for sage-grouse.

When a livestock grazing permit/lease expires, it is subject to renewal at the discretion of the Secretary of the Interior for a period of up to ten years. Livestock grazing, when properly managed in accordance with good rangeland ecology practices, has been proven to result in improved land health. The public benefits from public lands which are maintained in a healthy condition and are able to produce sustainable resources for a variety of uses.

The livestock producer benefits from a renewed livestock grazing permit/lease to graze forage on BLM managed land. Livestock grazing on BLM managed land is an integral part of the livestock producer's operation, and an important part of local rural economies

MITIGATION MEASURES:

Cultural:

-A Class III field inventory will be completed within the ten-year expiration period of the grazing permit. Mitigation would be identified and implemented in consultation with the Colorado State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) if historic properties are located during the subsequent field inventory and if BLM determines that grazing activities would adversely impact the properties.

COMPLIANCE/MONITORING: Compliance with the renewed livestock grazing permit and its associated terms and conditions will be accomplished through the Kremmling Field Office Range Management Program. Livestock grazing will be monitored by the range staff and other

area personnel, as appropriate, to ensure compliance. The Kremmling Field Office Range Monitoring Plan will be used to schedule periodic utilization checks, collect trend data, and evaluate allotment condition. When activity plans have been developed covering an allotment, monitoring methods and schedules included in them will be applied to the allotment. Changes will be made to the permit, based on monitoring, when changes are determined necessary to further protect land health.

NAME OF PREPARER: Peter Torma

NAME OF ENVIRONMENTAL COORDINATOR: Susan Cassel

DATE: 3/10/09

SIGNATURE OF AUTHORIZED OFFICIAL: /s/ Peter McFadden

DATE SIGNED: 3/10/09

ATTACHMENTS:

- 1). Livestock grazing permit # 0501817
- 2). Standard Term and Conditions
- 3). Grazing plan for allotment # 07115

APPENDICES:

Appendix 1 – Interdisciplinary Team Analysis Review Record and Checklist

Appendix 1

INTERDISCIPLINARY TEAM ANALYSIS REVIEW RECORD AND CHECKLIST:

Project Title: VanValkenburg Livestock permit renewal

Project Leader: Peter Torma

Date Proposal Received: (Only for external proposals)

Date Submitted for Comment: 12/8/08

Due Date for Comments: 2/17/08

Need for a field Exam: (If so, schedule a date/time)

Scoping Needs/Interested or Affected Publics: (Identify public scoping needs)

Consultation/Permit Requirements:

Consultation	Date Initiated	Date Completed	Responsible Specialist/ Contractor	Comments
Cultural/Archeological Clearance/SHPO	1/20/2009	1/20/2009	BBW	Past actions have resulted in a cultural resource inventory to determine if those actions would cause potential adverse affects to known and unknown cultural resources sites from livestock grazing, motorized travel, and recreational use. When project undertakings are identified a cultural resource inventory would be conducted to determine if sites are present and their eligibility, project effects, and mitigation requirements if necessary.
Native American	1/20/2009	1/20/2009	BBW	Consultation was completed for the original allotment renewal. Future undertakings would require tribal consultation to identify traditional cultural properties.
T&E Species/FWS	N/A	N/A	MM	
Permits Needed (i.e. Air or Water)	N/A	N/A	PB	

(NP) = Not Present

(NI) = Resource/Use Present but Not Impacted

(PI) = Potentially Impacted and Brought Forward for Analysis.

NP NI PI	Discipline/Name	Date Review Comp.	Initials	Review Comments (required for Critical Element NIs, and for elements that require a finding but are not carried forward for analysis.)
CRITICAL ELEMENTS				
NI	Air Quality Belcher	3/3/09	PB	Air quality would not be impacted by the Proposed Action.
NP	Areas of Critical Environmental Concern Cassel	3/10/09	SC	There are no Areas of Critical Environmental Concern in the proximity of the proposed project area.
NI	Cultural Resources Wyatt	1/20/2009	BBW	Past actions have resulted in a cultural resource inventory to determine if those actions would

					cause potential adverse affects to known and unknown cultural resources sites from livestock grazing, motorized travel, and recreational use. When project undertakings are identified a cultural resource inventory would be conducted to determine if sites are present and their eligibility, project effects, and mitigation requirements if necessary.
NP	Environmental Justice	Cassel	3/10/09	SC	According to the most recent Census Bureau statistics (2000), there are no minority or low income communities within the Kremmling Planning Area.
NP	Farmlands, Prime and Unique	Belcher	3/3/09	PB	There are no farmlands, prime or unique, in the proximity of the proposed project area.
NI	Floodplains	Belcher	3/3/09	PB	The Proposed Action would not affect the functionality nor increase the flood hazard of Grizzly Creek, which is in Allotment 7115.
NP	Invasive, Non-native Species	Johnson Torma Scott	1-12-09	MS	See Analysis.
PI	Migratory Birds	McGuire	1/23/09	MM	See Analysis.
NI	Native American Religious Concerns	Wyatt	1/20/2009	BBW	Consultation was completed for the original allotment renewal. Future undertakings would require tribal consultation to identify traditional cultural properties.
PI	T/E, and Sensitive Species (Finding on Standard 4)	McGuire	1/23/09	MM	See Analysis.
NP	Wastes, Hazardous and Solid	Hodgson	1/7/09	KH	There are no quantities of wastes, hazardous or solid, located on BLM-administered lands in the proposed project area, and there would be no wastes generated as a result of the Proposed Action or No Action alternative.
PI	Water Quality, Surface and Ground (Finding on Standard 5)	Belcher	3/3/09	PB	See Water Quality Section.
PI	Wetlands & Riparian Zones (Finding on Standard 2)	Belcher	3/3/09	PB	See Wetlands and Riparian Section.
NP	Wild and Scenic Rivers	Stout			There are no eligible Wild and Scenic River segments in the proposed project area.
NP	Wilderness	Stout			There is no designated Wilderness or Wilderness Study Areas in the proximity of the proposed project area.
NON-CRITICAL ELEMENTS (A finding must be made for these elements)					
PI	Soils (Finding on Standard 1)	Belcher	3/3/09	PB	See Soils Section.
PI	Vegetation (Finding on Standard 3)	Johnson Torma Scott	3/2/09	PT	See Vegetation Section
PI	Wildlife, Aquatic (Finding on Standard 3)	McGuire	1/23/09	MM	See Analysis.
PI	Wildlife, Terrestrial (Finding on Standard 3)	McGuire	1/23/09	MM	See Analysis.
OTHER NON-CRITICAL ELEMENTS					
NI	Access/Transportation	Monkouski	2/24/09	JJM	No change in access. No Impacts.
NI	Forest Management	K. Belcher	2/4/2009	KB	No impact to forest resources.
NI	Geology and Minerals	Hodgson	1/7/09	KH	No impacts.
NP	Fire	Wyatt	1/20/2009	BBW	Grazing would reduce light flashy fuels.
NI	Hydrology/Water Rights	Belcher	3/3/009	PB	Hydrologic impacts are discussed in the Soils,

					Water Quality, and Wetlands Section of this document. There are no impacts to water rights.
NI	Paleontology	Rupp	1/16/2009	FGR	No impacts to fossil resources from renewing permit, or the no action alternative. Proposed ground disturbing projects will be reviewed on a project by project basis to determine the need for paleontological inventory.
NI	Noise	Monkouski	2/24/09	JJM	No Impacts.
PI	Range Management	Johnson Torma Scott	1/26/09	PT	See Range Section
NI	Lands/ Realty Authorizations	Cassel	12/16/08	SC	There are no leases or permits in the location of the proposed action. There are several ROW's: Centurytel of Eagle - COC-66131, COC-50021, COC-56807; Mountain Parks Electric – COC-49110; Larrick French (road) – COC-62317, COC-29987; and Meyring Livestock (ditch) – COC-29987. The ROW's will not be impacted by the proposed action or the no action alternative.
NI	Recreation	Monkouski Windsor	2/24/09	JJM	Under the proposed action no impacts would occur to recreational opportunities that include camping, hunting, hiking, and watching wildlife. Currently, hikers utilizing the Continental Divide Trail (CDT) hike along Colorado Highway 14 and County Road 53 and on the adjacent BLM administered lands to access the trail on USFS administered lands. A potential route for the CDT on BLM lands away from the roadways may be implemented in the future. The proposed action would not impact this.
NI	Socio-Economics	Cassel	3/10/09	SC	Since there would be no change in AUMs, there would be no socio-economic impacts.
NI	Visual Resources	Windsor	1/30/09	AW	Visual resources would not be impacted by the proposed action or the no action alternative.
NI	Cumulative Impact Summary	Cassel	3/10/09	SC	See analysis
FINAL REVIEW					
	P&E Coordinator	Cassel	3/10/09	SC	