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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-120-2009-0017-EA

PROJECT NAME: Renewal of Permit Renewal #0501834

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

Allotments
07150 (Grizzly McFarlane)
T. 7 N., R. 79 W., Sec 27- 34
07151 (Grizzly No. 4)
T. 7 N., R. 80 W., Sec 14, 15, 22, 23
07152 (Grizzly Big Pasture)
T. 7 N., R. 80 W., Sec 23-26
T. 7 N., R. 79 W., Sec 19
07154 (Pole Mountain)
T. 6 N., R. 81 W., Sec 4
07153 (Grizzly Mexican Ridge)
T. 7 N., R. 81 W., Sec 30 and 32
T. 6 N., R. 81 W., Sec 5
07155 (Grizzly No. 4A)
T. 7 N., R. 80 W., Sec 22

APPLICANT: Blain Evans

PURPOSE AND NEED FOR THE ACTION: Evans' livestock grazing permit # 0501834 authorizes grazing on allotments 07150 (Grizzly McFarlane), 07151 (Grizzly No 4), 07152 (Grizzly Big Pasture), 07153 (Grizzly Mexican Ridge) 07154 (Pole Mountain) and 07155 (Grizzly No 4A) expires on February 28, 2009. Evans Livestock have 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 3 acres of allotment 07150 was not achieving Standards for Public Land Health in Colorado (Standards) for wetlands and wildlife. The causative factors were livestock and irrigation practices. New terms and conditions were attached to the permit to help improve the conditions within the allotment. Since 1999, two projects have been completed in allotment 07150 to help improve the allotment. These projects were a sagebrush treatment and new livestock water well. Allotments 7151 and 07155 were assessed for Standards and were determined to be meeting the Standards. Allotments 07066, 07152, 07153 and 07154 were not assessed for Standards in 1999 because they are low priority allotments with no known resource concerns or problems.

Allotment 07150 was again assessed for compliance for Standards in June 2006. It was determined that the allotment is in compliance with the Standards. It was noted that irrigation practices are a concern as well as the allocation of AUMs. Allotments 7151 and 07155 were assessed for Standards in 2006 and were determined to be meeting the Standards. Allotments 07152, 07153 and 7154 were not assessed for Standards because they are low priority allotments with no known resource concerns or problems. .

Allotment 07066 was originally part of the Evans' livestock permit, however, because it is part of a base property lease, it will be analyzed in another NEPA document.

Proposed Action: The Proposed Action would renew the livestock grazing permit and implement a new grazing system for allotment 7150.

- 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.
- Allotment 07150 would extend the grazing season to help implement the new grazing system.
- A new grazing system for allotment 07150 would be implemented.
- Conversion to yearlings use would be authorized at a rate not to exceed 1.5 yearlings per cow.
- Two weeks of flexibility for allotments 07151 and 07155 would be provided.

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

Allotment	Livestock		Season of Use		% Public Land*	AUMs**
	Number	Kind	Begin	End		
07150 (Grizzly McFarlane)	168	C	7/01	9/15	100	427
07151 (Grizzly No 4)	113	C	6/08	6/21	100	52
07152 (Grizzly Big Pasture)	300	C	5/16	11/30	16	314
07153 (Grizzly)	120	C	6/01	9/30	16	77

Mexican Ridge)						
07154 (Pole Mountain)	87	C	6/01	9/30	10	35
07155 (Grizzly No 4A)	115	C	6/03	6/07	100	19

*% 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.

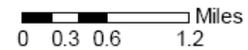
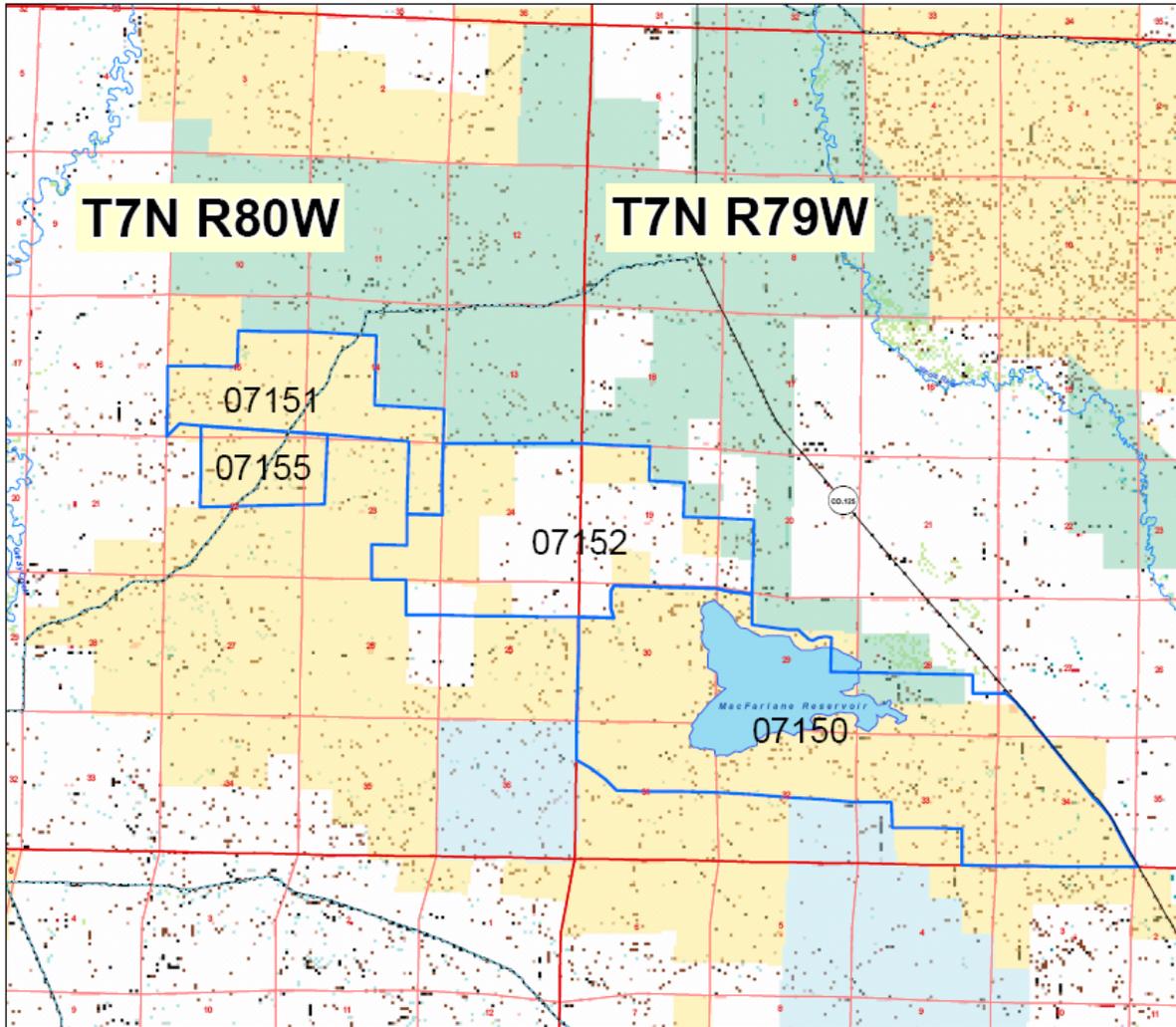
Total AUMs that would be authorized for this permit is 926.

Design Features for the Proposed Action

- Motorized travel to routes would be restricted to designated as ‘Open’ as identified within 1988 Off-Road Vehicle Implementation Plan decision (see attached map).
- Temporary exemptions to the 1988 Off-Road Vehicle Implementation Plan would include:
 - Routes identified on adjacent lands acquired by the BLM after the 1988 Off-Road Vehicle Implementation Plan decision for administrative travel required by the permittee. Requirements would be to access range improvements such as wells and fencelines.
 - Permitting of motorized cross-country travel for fence maintenance. Permittee would travel only along fencelines for this purpose. In the event a fenceline is also a landownership boundary, all motorized travel would occur on the non-BLM side of the fence.
 - Permit case-by-case motorized cross-country travel for instances of retrieving injured animals or other emergencies. All instances should be approved by the authorizing officer beforehand when possible. In the case of an emergency, any motorized cross-country travel would be reported to the BLM immediately. Any permitted or emergency cross-country travel will be evaluated for resource damage. Any rutting of soil or damage to vegetation found to be excessive and establishing a new route would have reclamation completed by the permittee.
 - Permit motorized travel within the Seasonal Closure dates of June 1 to August 1 for the permittee on routes designated as ‘Open’, fencelines for maintenance and routes identified for administrative travel on adjacent lands acquired by the BLM after the 1988 Off-Road Vehicle Implementation Plan decision.
- Specific restrictions and exemptions of the 1988 Off-Road Vehicle Implementation Plan would be part of the Terms and Conditions of the grazing permit.



Evans Livestock



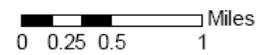
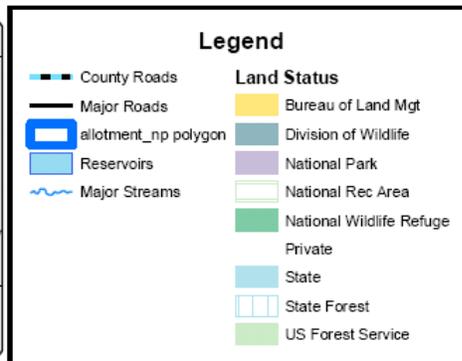
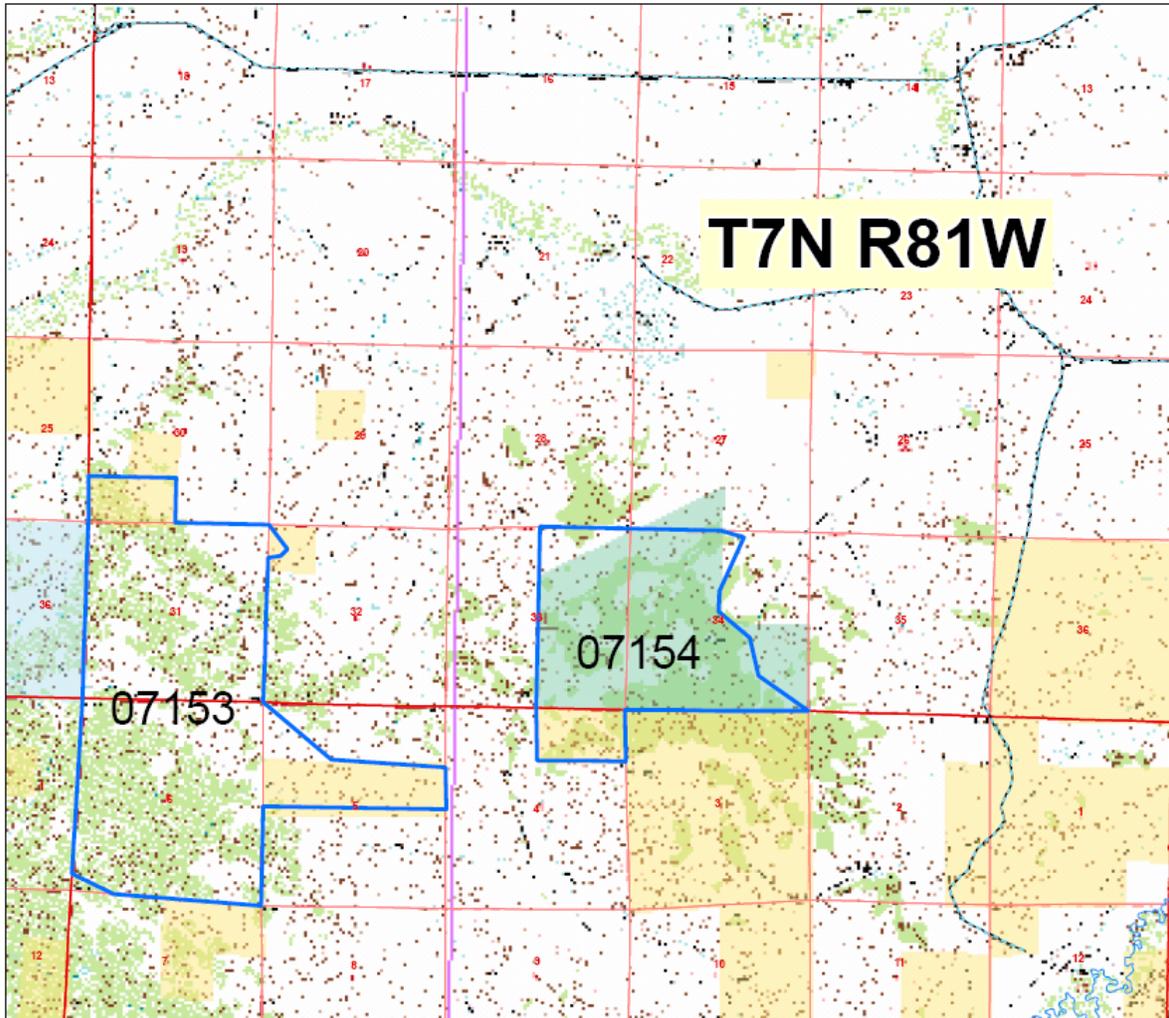
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No Warranty is made by the Bureau of Land Management as to the Accuracy, Reliability, or Completeness of this Data for Individual Use or Aggregate Use with Other Data.

Maps: Owl ridge, Coalmont
McFarlane
BLM, Kremmling FO 11/2008



Evans Livestock



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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.

Maps: Owl Ridge, Coalmont Macfarlane Res, Teal Lake BLM, Kremmling FO 11/2009

No Action Alternative: The No Action Alternative would not implement the new grazing plan for allotment 07150. The permit would be renewed under the old permit (1999-2009) with the following 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 07150 would still require the development of a new grazing system.
- Soap Creek would allow 60% utilization on key forage species.
- Two weeks of flexibility on allotments 07150, 7151 and 7155 would be provided.

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		
07150 (Grizzly McFarlane)	168	C	7/01	9/15	100	427
07151 (Grizzly No 4)	113	C	6/08	6/21	100	52
07152 (Grizzly Big Pasture)	300	C	5/16	11/30	16	314
07153 (Grizzly Mexican Ridge)	120	C	6/01	9/30	16	77
07154 (Pole Mountain)	87	C	6/01	9/30	10	35
07155 (Grizzly No 4A)	115	C	6/03	6/07	100	19

*% 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 926.

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. The BLM would monitor these areas for further establishment or expansion of invasive, non-native species. Also, the BLM will be responsible for implementing control measures, which would include partnership with the Jackson County Weed Abatement Program.

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, Prairie Falcons, Green-tailed Towhees, Mountain and Western Bluebirds, Sage Thrashers, Killdeer, Horned Larks, American Kestrels, and Common Nighthawks in the sagebrush habitat common to these allotments. Species common in and adjacent to allotment #7153 and #7154 in mixed lodgepole pine and aspen forests, include Black-capped Chickadees, Clark's Nutcrackers, Steller's and Gray Jays, and Northern Flickers.

Environmental Consequences: Under the No Action Alternative and the Proposed Action, allotments #7151, #7152, #7153, #7154, and #7155 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 migratory birds. The Proposed Action would implement a new grazing plan for allotments #7150 to prevent possible future Standards issues. 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 permit renewal was received from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service on January 12, 2009. Analysis of this list indicated that no federally threatened or endangered species occur in these allotments.

Greater sage-grouse, a BLM-designated Sensitive Species, inhabit all the allotments included in the proposed grazing permit renewal except allotment #7154. No sage-grouse strutting grounds (leks) are located within the allotments, however, five leks are located within four miles of the allotments. Each of these allotments include sagebrush habitat which provides suitable nesting cover for sage-grouse. Since research has determined that 80% of sage-grouse hens nest within four miles of the leks where they are bred, nesting is occurring in these allotments. All the allotments (except #7154) also provide early brood rearing habitat for young sage-grouse and allotment #7152 provides critical winter habitat.

Environmental Consequences: Under the No Action Alternative and the Proposed Action allotments #7151, #7152, #7153, #7154, and #7155 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 Greater sage-grouse. The Proposed Action would implement a new grazing plan for allotment #7150 to prevent possible future Standards issues. This would increase grass and forb productivity in the allotment where sage-grouse nesting and brood rearing habitat occurs. The increase in production would enhance sage-grouse nesting success since more cover would be available to conceal nests from predators and adverse weather. Brood survival would also increase since more cover and food would be available as they migrate to adjacent brood-rearing habitat.

Mitigation: None

Finding on the Public Land Health Standard for Threatened & Endangered species: Allotment #7150 was assessed for compliance for Standards in June 2006 and determined to be in compliance. It was noted that irrigation practices are a concern as well as the allocation of AUMs. The Proposed Action would implement a new grazing plan for this allotment to prevent possible future Standards issues. Neither the Proposed Action nor the No Action Alternative would impact allotments #7151, 7152, 7153, 7154 or 7155.

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

Affected Environment: Since the environmental assessment completed in 1999 (CO-018-99-33 EA), Little Grizzly Creek has been added to the state's Monitoring and Evaluation List for possible impairment from E. Coli, and ferric (trivalent) iron. Both Grizzly and Little Grizzly Creeks are still on the Monitoring and Evaluation List for possible aquatic life impairment. There is very little BLM land within the Little Grizzly watershed, as it is primarily private lands once outside of the national forest service boundary. This permit includes allotments 7153 and 7154, which are 16% and 10% public lands, and are within the Little Grizzly Creek watershed. The 1999 document reviewed the runoff pathways, and concluded the small discontinuous BLM tracts were unlikely to impact any surface waters. The allotments 7151, 7152, and 7155 are within the Grizzly Creek drainage but are in natural sink areas- the Hebron Sloughs. These low lying areas slow and detain runoff, redepositing sediments. Any runoff leaving the allotments is intercepted by irrigation ditches, the sloughs, and/or the

constructed wildlife ponds. It does not appear that these allotments are impairing surface water quality so that designated uses are not fully supported. There are no known ground water sources within the allotments that would be impacted by livestock grazing.

Allotment 7150 contains a portion of Soap Creek which is used to transport water diverted from the Illinois River to MacFarlane Reservoir. Since 1999, the BLM has found that Soap Creek itself is an intermittent or ephemeral channel, with no base flow. Water quality objectives are not to protect a natural system, but to protect water quality in MacFarlane Reservoir. The BLM does not own the diverted water or the stored water. The diverted water has downcut and enlarged a main channel and a tributary channel to handle the volume of water. The channel is still adjusting to this imported water and the unstable banks along Soap Creek contribute a large amount of sediment to the Soap Creek “delta”- located at the road culvert entering MacFarlane Reservoir. The BLM has been monitoring Soap Creek since the 1999 assessment for channel stability and riparian vegetation, and has observed improvements in the allotment under the 1999 changes to the permit.

MacFarlane Reservoir is classified by the state of Colorado for primary contact recreation, coldwater aquatic life, water supply, and agriculture uses. The state has not identified water quality concerns for the reservoir, but reducing the sediment load will prolong the life of the reservoir.

Environmental Consequences: Neither the Proposed Action nor the No Action Alternative would result in water quality impacts to allotments 7151-7155. Under the No Action Alternative, the current conditions on Allotment 7150 would be expected to continue. Some additional improvements to the channel would occur over time as the new floodplain stabilizes and a grazing system is developed. The Proposed Action increases the options in developing a grazing system by adding more than another month to the permit. In developing a rotational grazing system, the additional grazing period allows better deferment for each pasture. The Proposed Action also reduces the 60% utilization level for the riparian area to 50% for both riparian and uplands. Both of these actions will improve vegetative vigor and production, increasing the overall ground cover and reducing any accelerated erosion occurring on the allotment. By implementing the Proposed Action, a better grazing system can be developed that complements those actions by improving long term watershed health.

Mitigation: The BLM will continue to monitor Soap Creek’s channel stability to insure an upward trend regardless of the selected action. If the state determines that stream impairment does exist, and identifies affected reaches that could be impacted by these allotments, then the BLM will review this permit to determine if additional actions are necessary and begin compliance monitoring if warranted.

Finding on the Public Land Health Standard for water quality: The allotments within the grazing permit are considered to be meeting the Water Quality Standard. The current permit has improved overall watershed health in the last 10 years and conditions would be expected to continue or show slight improvement depending on the grazing system. Under the Proposed Action, a required grazing system can provide better deferment to the riparian area and reduces livestock utilization. These actions will allow for better watershed conditions within the allotment.

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

Affected Environment: There are no impacts for Allotments 7151, 7152, 7153, 7154, and 7155. When the BLM renewed the permit in 1999, there was little information about allotment 7150, which had been obtained in a land exchange. The permit was renewed by reducing the grazing season from season long (6/16-9/3) to about 39 days and to divide the allotment into two pastures, with the grazing plan to set riparian objectives for the created Soap Creek riparian pasture. The AUMs remained the same, as cattle numbers were increased for the short grazing period. The intent was to defer grazing in the riparian area every other year. The permit also restricted riparian utilization levels to 60%. A temporary electric fence attempted to split the pasture in two for a few years prior to the 2002 drought, but was difficult to maintain during the grazing period. In 2002, the permittee shortened his grazing use to 27 days and in 2003, only used the allotment 2 days for trailing livestock.

There are only limited areas in the allotment with natural wetland values, most are artificially created by the diverted water and the water practices predominantly determine the riparian conditions. Since 1999, the BLM has monitored Soap Creek and done field visits with the permittee, Natural Resource Conservation Service, BLM State and National Operations Center (NOC) office personnel. Although the riparian areas have improved since 1999, it was realized that continued vegetative improvement would not occur without a better grazing system. Once the irrigation water is shut off, the channel dries up, limiting vegetative regrowth.

Environmental Consequences Both the Proposed Action and the No Action Alternative require that a grazing system be developed for allotment 7150. Under the No Action Alternative, the allotment can be used anytime during a 37 day period, while the Proposed Action allows grazing within a 76 day period. This extended period would facilitate the creation of a rotational grazing system that is supported by the permittee and allows greater deferment for the pastures. The Proposed Action also reduces utilization levels on the riparian areas to 50%, which will improve vegetative recovery along Soap Creek and in swales. A better grazing system will improve long term vegetative health, and complement management efforts to stabilize the stream.

Mitigation: None

Finding on the Public Land Health Standard for riparian systems: The, allotments are considered to be meeting the Standard for riparian systems. Due to the diverted water on 7150 creating the riparian values and being outside of the BLM's control, it did not seem appropriate to rate the "ditch" as not meeting the Standard. It is still a high priority, however, to improve the riparian values provided by the irrigation water. The Proposed Action reduces riparian utilization levels and provides for a better grazing system. The No Action Alternative would also require a grazing plan with riparian objectives, but limits the management options by the short permitted grazing period.

SOILS (includes a finding on Standard 1)

Affected Environment: Soils are described in the 1999 EA (CO-018-99-33 EA). The Proposed Action and the No Action Alternative would not impact allotments 7151, 7152, 7153, 7154, and 7155.

Environmental Consequences: The Proposed Action and the No Action Alternative require a grazing system be developed for allotment 7150. Improving livestock distribution and vegetative conditions will benefit soil health within the allotment. Under the No Action Alternative, the riparian utilization level would remain at 60%. This results in high utilization levels on the adjacent upland streambanks along Soap Creek, decreasing litter production and vegetative cover. The Proposed Action sets utilization levels at or below 50% for upland and riparian areas, which will improve the ground cover and the cycling of nutrients into the soil. The extended grazing period would also improve the management options in the grazing system for the allotment.

Mitigation: None

Finding on the Public Land Health Standard for upland soils: The allotments within the permit are considered to be meeting the Standard for soils. Allotment 7150 still is considered functioning at risk, however, and continued monitoring of the vegetative conditions will help identify any needed adjustments to the grazing plan to insure long term soil health. The Proposed Action would better benefit soil resources by reducing utilization levels and increasing pasture deferment than the No Action Alternative.

VEGETATION (includes a finding on Standard 3)

Affected Environment: Allotments consist mostly of sagebrush steppe vegetation communities. The dominant species is big sagebrush (*Artemisia tridentata*) with an understory of perennial cool season grasses and annual and perennial forbs.

Environmental Consequences: Under the proposed action the permit would be renewed and a new grazing system would be implemented for allotment 07150. The new grazing system would provide deferment for the vegetation by utilizing an internal fence to split the pasture. The proposed livestock grazing system would improve the vegetation by reducing repeated grazing through the use of the pasture fence. AUMs would also be reduced to 328 until utilization data supports the permitted 427 AUMs. The season of use would be extended for this allotment which is needed to help develop a more comprehensive grazing plan with the permittee. Under the no action alternative, there would be no change for allotment 07150. The allotment would not provide deferment as livestock movement would not be limited by an internal fence. AUMs use would be permitted at 427 AUMs. Proposed Action and the No Action Alternative would not impact the vegetation within allotments 7151, 7152, 7153, 7154, and 7155.

Mitigation: None

Finding on the Public Land Health Standard for plant and animal communities (partial, see also Wildlife, Aquatic and Wildlife, Terrestrial): Allotment 07150 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 irrigation practices are a concern. The allocation of AUMs was also a concern. Allotments 07152, 07153 and 7154 were not assessed for Standards because they are low priority allotments with no know resource concerns or problems. Allotments 7151 and 07155 were assessed for Standards in 2006 and were determined to be meeting Standards.

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, and MacFarlane Reservoir. These waters support aquatic wildlife, primarily waterbirds, beaver, and muskrats during wet periods. None of the waters are known to support fish.

Environmental Consequences: Under the No Action Alternative and the Proposed Action allotments #7151, #7152, #7153, #7154, and #7155 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 #7150 to prevent possible future Standards issues. 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.

Mitigation: None

Finding on the Public Land Health Standard for plant and animal communities (partial, see also Vegetation and Wildlife, Terrestrial): Allotment #7150 was assessed for compliance for Standards in June 2006 and determined to be in compliance. It was noted that irrigation practices are a concern as well as the allocation of AUMs. The Proposed Action would implement a new grazing plan for this allotment to prevent possible future Standards issues. Neither the Proposed Action nor the No Action Alternative would impact allotments #7151, 7152, 7153, 7154 or 7155.

WILDLIFE, TERRESTRIAL (includes a finding on Standard 3)

Affected Environment: The allotments included in the proposed grazing permit renewal provide upland habitat for a variety of wildlife species. Large mammals which use the allotments at least part of the year include mule deer, pronghorn, Rocky Mountain elk, moose, black bear, and mountain lions. Small mammals include coyote, red foxes, bobcat, and a variety of small rodents. Mule deer, pronghorn antelope, and elk use the allotments yearlong with most use occurring during summer. Allotment #7154 is critical winter range for elk and moose. Black bear and mountain lion use of the allotments occurs sporadically yearlong.

Environmental Consequences: Under the No Action Alternative and the Proposed Action allotments #7151, #7152, #7153, #7154, and #7155 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 #7150 to prevent possible future Standards issues. 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 for wildlife that use the allotment during winter.

Mitigation: None

Finding on the Public Land Health Standard for plant and animal communities (partial, see also Vegetation and Wildlife, Aquatic): Allotment #7150 was assessed for compliance for Standards in June 2006 and determined to be in compliance. It was noted that irrigation practices are a concern as well as the allocation of AUMs. The Proposed Action would implement a new grazing plan for this allotment to prevent possible future Standards issues. Neither the Proposed Action nor the No Action Alternative would impact allotments #7151, 7152, 7153, 7154 or 7155.

RANGE MANAGEMENT:

Affected Environment: The proposed livestock grazing system for allotment 07150 would improve the vegetation with the allotment due to the ability to reduce repeated grazing through the use of the pasture fence. The new grazing system would split the allotment into two pastures which would provide for deferment to the vegetation. The deferment would allow for the re-growth for next growing season. AUMs would be reduced from 427 to 328 in the grazing system. Under the no action alternative, allotment 07150 would not be split and the full preference would be permitted.

Environmental Consequences: Under the proposed action, the new grazing system requires more movement of the livestock and would require a reduction in AUMs. This should improve the vegetation for future years in the allotment. Under the No Action alternative, the permittee would continue to graze the allotment with out using the pasture fence. AUMs would also be permitted at 427 AUMs. This use would potentially reduce the vegetation vigor and long term health in allotment 07150. Neither the Proposed Action nor the No Action Alternative would impact allotments 7151, 7152, 7153, 7154 or 7155.

Mitigation: None

ACCESS/TRANSPORTATION:

Affected Environment: The location of the proposed action has allotments within the Hebron Waterfowl Area and Hebron Slough that have travel management decisions made through the Off-Road Vehicle Implementation Plan, September 20, 1988. Allotments 7151, 7155 and 7152 are within an area designated as 'Limited'. Under the Off-Road Vehicle Implementation Plan decision, 2,840 acres within the area were 'Limited to Designated Roads and Trails'. Designations are for BLM administered lands only and do not effect private lands or lands administered by other agencies. The designation purpose as stated within the plan is: "The restricted area is an important waterfowl nesting area and the proposed restrictions would alleviate conflicts between ORV travel and nesting waterfowl." Under the 1988 Off-Road Vehicle Implementation Plan specific resource programs were identified for responsibility of the area. The identified resource program responsible for Hebron Slough was 4351-Wildlife Management. Identified restrictions are as are as follows: "Motorized vehicle use is permitted only on routes signed as open for use and cross-country travel is prohibited, except for snowmobiles operating on snow unless otherwise stated". Additionally, a seasonal closure of the area was designated between June 1 to August 1 except to authorized personnel for administrative purposes. No known exemptions were made for grazing leases within the area under designation. Since this designation, adjacent lands have been acquired and are now administered by the BLM. Lands acquired and adjacent to an area having travel designations

assume such designations. No updates to the designated route system of the area have taken place since the 1988 Off-Road Vehicle Implementation Plan. Currently, the area has limited signing providing information on which routes are open or closed. A small parking area exists on the east side of County Road 34. Under the current Resource Management Plan (RMP) revision, implementation level designations for Comprehensive Travel Management will be made. Implementing Colorado Comprehensive Travel Management throughout the state has been a high priority for the Bureau of Land Management (BLM). Instruction Memorandum No. CO-2007-020 states "In establishing designated road and trail networks through the planning process, field offices are able to manage all modes of travel on public lands. A well-designed travel system can direct use away from sensitive areas, yet provide quality recreational activities and access for commercial, administrative and recreational needs."

Environmental Consequences: Under the No Action Alternative and the Proposed Action, allotments #7151, #7152, #7153, #7154, and #7155 would be renewed without any changes. The Proposed Action would implement a new grazing plan for allotments #7150 to prevent possible future Standards issues. The No Action Alternative and the Proposed Action for all allotments will not change travel designations for each area. Allotments 7151, 7155 and 7152 are within an area designated as 'Limited'. Under the Off-Road Vehicle Implementation Plan decision, 2,840 acres within the area were 'Limited to Designated Roads and Trails'. Currently, existing routes in the area not identified as 'Open' continue to be traveled. Cross-country travel during times of moist soils or repetitive use will inherently create resource damage and a new established route through rutting and vegetation damage. The area is used for waterfowl hunting and wildlife viewing with low to moderate visitation. Once a route becomes established through cross-country travel, it becomes much more difficult to prevent visitors of the area from traveling on such routes due to their visibility. If visitors to the area see others traveling cross-country with motorized vehicles they may believe this is an accepted and allowed use of the area. Motorized cross-country travel not only creates damage to the resources, it leads to other unauthorized uses as well. Motorized cross-country travel would be detrimental to the area resources and be inconsistent with the 1988 Off-Road Vehicle Implementation Plan decision, and upcoming Comprehensive Travel Management decisions. Impacts would be minimized with the design features of the proposed action.

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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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 # 07150) as described in the attached EA and renew livestock grazing permit # 0501834 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.

Water Quality, Wetland and Soils:

The BLM will continue to monitor Soap Creek's channel stability to insure an upward trend regardless of the selected action. This will include water quality, wetland and soils monitoring. If the state determines that stream impairment does exist, and identifies affected reaches that could be impacted by these allotments, then the BLM will review this permit to determine if additional actions are necessary and begin compliance monitoring if warranted.

NAME OF PREPARER: Peter Torma

NAME OF ENVIRONMENTAL COORDINATOR: Susan Cassel

DATE: 2/24/09

SIGNATURE OF AUTHORIZED OFFICIAL: /s/ Peter McFadden

DATE SIGNED: 2/26/09

ATTACHMENTS:

- 1). Livestock grazing permit # 0501834
- 2). Standard Term and Conditions
- 3). Grazing plan for allotment # 07150
- 4). 1988 Off-Road Vehicle Implementation Plan Map

APPENDICES:

- Appendix 1 – Interdisciplinary Team Analysis Review Record and Checklist
- Appendix 2 – Bibliography (if citations are used)

Appendix 1

INTERDISCIPLINARY TEAM ANALYSIS REVIEW RECORD AND CHECKLIST:

Project Title: Evans Livestock permit renewal
Project Leader: Peter Torma
Date Proposal Received: (Only for external proposals)
Date Submitted for Comment: 12/7/08
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	2/4/09	PB	The Proposed Action and the No Action Alternatives do not impact air quality.
NP	Areas of Critical Environmental Concern J. Stout			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	J. Stout	2/24/09	PT	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	2/4/09	PB	There are no farmlands, prime or unique, in the proximity of the proposed project area.
NP	Floodplains	Belcher	2/4/09	PB	The allotments do not include any river floodplains. The Soap Creek floodplain is addressed in the wetland/riparian section.
NP	Invasive, Non-native Species	Johnson Torma Scott	1-7-09	MS	See Analysis.
PI	Migratory Birds	McGuire	1/22/09	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	1/22/09	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	2/5/09	PB	See Write-up
PI	Wetlands & Riparian Zones (Finding on Standard 2)	Belcher	2/5/09	PB	See Write-Up
NP	Wild and Scenic Rivers	Cassel	2/24/09	SC	There are no eligible Wild and Scenic River segments in the proposed project area.
NP	Wilderness	Cassel	2/24/09	SC	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	2/5/09	PB	See Write-Up
PI	Vegetation (Finding on Standard 3)	Johnson Torma Scott	1/23/09	PT	See Analysis
PI	Wildlife, Aquatic (Finding on Standard 3)	McGuire	1/22/09	MM	See Analysis.
PI	Wildlife, Terrestrial (Finding on Standard 3)	McGuire	1/22/09	MM	See Analysis.
OTHER NON-CRITICAL ELEMENTS					
PI	Access/Transportation	Monkouski	2/24/09	JM	See Analysis.
NI	Forest Management	K. Belcher	1/15/09	KB	No impact to forest resources as a result of implementing the proposed action, or the no action, alternative.
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	2/4/09	PB	Hydrologic concerns are addressed in the wetland and water quality sections. 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 under the proposed action.
PI	Range Management	Johnson Torma Scott	1/23/09	PT	See analysis
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: COC-8481 to Mountain Parks Electric; COC-4444 to Century Tel of Eagle; COC-57574, COC-59474, COC-59314 & COC-59475 all for ditches to Evans and F&WS. These ROW's will not be impacted by the proposed action or the no action alternative.
NI	Recreation	Monkouski Windsor	2/23/09	JM	There are no impacts to recreation with regards to grazing
NI	Socio-Economics	Cassel	2/24/09	SC	Since the only change is to the length of the season and the number of AUMs do not change, there would be no Socio-Economic effects from the proposed action and the no action alternative.
NI	Visual Resources	Windsor	1/30/09	AW	Visual resources would not be impacted by the proposed action or the no action alternative.
	Cumulative Impact Summary	J. Stout	2/24/09	PT	See analysis
FINAL REVIEW					
	P&E Coordinator	Cassel	2/24/09	SC	