

U.S. Department of the Interior
Bureau of Land Management
Little Snake Field Office
455 Emerson Street
Craig, CO 81625-1129

ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

EA NUMBER: CO-100-2008-006 EA

CASEFILE/ALLOTMENT NUMBER: #0501204 / #04089

PROJECT NAME: Ten year grazing lease renewal for the East Cedar Hill Allotment #04089.

LEGAL DESCRIPTION: See allotment map, Attachment #1

East Cedar Hill Allotment #04089

T9N, R89W, part of Sec. 33
T8N, R89W, parts of Sec. 6, 5, 4, 3

101 acres BLM
1167 acres Private
1268 acres Total

APPLICANT: David Garner

PLAN CONFORMANCE REVIEW: The Proposed Action and Alternatives are subject to the following plan:

Name of Plan: Little Snake Resource Management Plan and Record of Decision

Date Approved: April 26, 1989

Other Documents:

Federal Land Policy and Management Act of 1976, as amended (FLPMA) (43 USC 1752)

Rangeland Reform Final Environmental Impact Statement. December, 1994.

Standards for Public Land Health and Guidelines for Livestock Grazing in Colorado. Date Approved: February 12, 1997.

Results: The Proposed Action is consistent with the Little Snake Resource Management Plan, Record of Decision, Livestock Grazing Management objective to improve range conditions for both wildlife and livestock through proper utilization of key forage plants and adjusting livestock stocking rates as a result of vegetation studies.

The Proposed Action is located in the Little Snake River Management Unit 1 (MU 1) and 2 (MU 2). The Proposed Action is compatible with the management objectives for these units. The objectives of MU 1 include the development of coal, oil, and gas. MU 2 objectives include the development of oil and gas as well as forest resources. Livestock grazing is permitted consistent with the management objectives for each unit.

The Proposed Action has been reviewed for conformance with this plan (43 CFR 1610.5, BLM 1617.3).

NEED FOR PROPOSED ACTION: BLM grazing lease #0501204 expired February 28, 2006 and was extended through 2007 and again through 2008, under the same terms and conditions as the existing lease, in accordance with Section 325, Title III, H.R. 2691, Department of the Interior and Related Agencies Appropriations Act, 2004 (P.L. 108-108) pending completion of environmental analysis consistent with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA).

This grazing lease is subject to renewal at the discretion of the Secretary of the Interior for a period of up to ten years. The Bureau of Land Management has the authority to renew livestock grazing permits and leases consistent with the provisions of the *Taylor Grazing Act*, *Public Rangelands Improvement Act*, *Federal Land Policy and Management Act*, and Little Snake Field Office's *Resource Management Plan/Environmental Impact Statement*. This RMP/EIS has been amended by *Standards for Public Land Health in the State of Colorado*.

The following Environmental Assessment will analyze the impacts of livestock grazing on public land managed by the BLM. The analysis will recommend terms and conditions to the lease which improve or maintain public land health. The Proposed Action will be assessed for meeting land health standards.

In order to graze livestock on public land, the livestock producer (lessee) must hold a grazing lease. The grazing lessee has a preference right to receive the lease if grazing is to continue. The land use plan allows grazing to continue. This EA will be a site specific look to determine if grazing should continue as provided for in the land use plan and to identify the conditions under which it can be renewed.

PUBLIC SCOPING PROCESS:

BLM Little Snake Field Office sent out a Notice of Public Scoping on October 13, 2004 to determine the level of public interest, concern, and resource conditions on the grazing allotments that were up for renewal in fiscal year 2006. A notice of Public Scoping was also posted on the Internet, at the Colorado BLM Home Page, asking for public input on lease renewals. Individual letters were sent to affected lessees informing them of the upcoming renewal process and requesting any information they wanted included in, or taken into consideration during, the renewal process. The issuance of a grazing lease for the allotment has been carefully analyzed within the scope of the specific action being taken, resource issues or concerns, and public input

received.

BACKGROUND:

East Cedar Hill #04089

This allotment is located approximately 15 miles north of Craig, Colorado. Moffat County Road 18N leads east approximately 7 miles off State Highway 13 to access the allotment. The allotment consists of two separate portions. The smaller portion lies just east of Cedar Hill and contains 8 acres of BLM land while the larger portion of the allotment, containing 93 acres of BLM land, is further east just south of Pinnacle Mountain. Elevation ranges within the allotment from 6,400 feet to 7,600 feet. See Attachment #1. The dominant ecological site on this allotment is Deep Clay Loam. The primary stock water in the allotment is from ponds located on private land.

When preparing the documents for lease renewal the BLM acres listed in the Rangeland Administration System (RAS) and the Rangeland Program Summary (RPS) did not match the actual current BLM acres shown in the GIS Allotment Boundary layer. This was researched but no record of land exchange or change in allotment boundary was found. Consequently, the BLM acres for this allotment have been adjusted to match current landownership boundaries and allotment boundaries. As a result, this reduces the available AUMs.

The allotment is currently classified as a category C (custodial) allotment in the Rangeland Program Summary for the Little Snake Resource Management Plan. A category C allotment is defined as an allotment that has low production potential for livestock forage, there are no major resource conflicts or controversy and present management is accomplishing the desired results. This allotment fits into this category for meeting desired results and having no major resource conflicts or controversy.

DESCRIPTION OF PROPOSED ACTION AND ALTERNATIVES:

PROPOSED ACTION:

Renew grazing lease #0501204 for a period of ten years, expiring February 28, 2018. Total permitted use would be limited to 21 AUMs per grazing year as a term and condition of the lease. This is a correction of the previous lease which included incorrect calculations of BLM acres. Additionally, the Proposed Action shows a shift in fall use dates to facilitate management of cattle and gathering them out of the allotment in the fall.

The lease would be renewed as follows:

FROM:

Allotment name and number	Livestock Number and kind	Dates		%PL	AUMs
		Begin	End		
East Cedar Hill	17 Cattle	06/16	07/15	100	17
#04089	17 Cattle	10/10	11/09	100	17
					Total 34

TO:

Allotment name and number	Livestock Number and kind	Dates		%PL	AUMs
		Begin	End		
East Cedar Hill	11 Cattle	06/16	07/15	100	11
#04089	10 Cattle	10/01	10/31	100	10
					Total 21

This lease would also be subject to the Standard and Common Terms and Conditions found in Attachment #2.

NO ACTION ALTERNATIVE:

No changes to the season of use or the number of AUMs would occur under this alternative. Livestock would continue to graze the allotment as permitted in the expiring lease.

ALTERNATIVES CONSIDERED BUT ELIMINATED:

No grazing Alternative: This alternative would cancel the lease on the allotment. As a result, livestock grazing would cease on the allotment. This alternative is eliminated from analysis in this EA because it would not conform to the RMP/ROD. The RMP/ROD identified livestock grazing as a suitable and appropriate use on the allotment.

AFFECTED ENVIRONMENT/ENVIRONMENTAL CONSEQUENCES/MITIGATION MEASURES

CRITICAL RESOURCES

AIR QUALITY

Affected Environment: This allotment is no located within any special designation air sheds or non-attainment areas.

Environmental Consequences, all alternatives: Renewing the lease to graze cattle on East Cedar Hill Allotment would not cause regional air quality impairment under either alternative. Some localized dust may result from driving on unpaved roads but this would be negligible

compared to dust generated from all vehicle uses in the vicinity.

Mitigative Measures: None

Name of specialist and date: Ole Olsen, 11/15/07

AREA OF CRITICAL ENVIRONMENTAL CONCERN

Affected Environment: The allotment is not located within any Areas of Critical Environmental Concern.

Environmental Consequences, all alternatives: None

Mitigative Measures: None

Name of specialist and date: Rob Schmitzer, 11/9/07

CULTURAL RESOURCES

Affected Environment: Grazing permit and lease renewals are undertakings under Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act. During Section 106 review, a cultural resource assessment (Heritage #10.6.08) was completed for the allotment on November 13, 2007 by Robyn Watkins Morris, Little Snake Field Office Archaeologist. The assessment followed the procedures and guidance outlined in the 1980 National Programmatic Agreement Regarding the Livestock Grazing and Range Improvement Program, IM-WO-99-039, IM-CO-99-007, IM-CO-99-019, and IM-CO-01-026. The results of the assessment are summarized in the table below. A copy of the cultural resource assessment is in the Field Office archaeology files.

Data developed here were taken from the cultural program project report files, site report files, and base maps kept at the Little Snake Field Office as well as from GLO maps, BLM land patent records, An Overview of Prehistoric Cultural Resources Little Snake Resource Area, Northwestern Colorado, Bureau of Land Management Colorado, Cultural Resources Series, Number 20, and An Isolated Empire, A History of Northwestern Colorado, Bureau of Land Management Colorado, Cultural Resource Series, Number 2 and Appendix 21 of the Little Snake Resource Management Plan and Environmental Impact Statement, Draft February 1986, Bureau of Land Management, Craig, Colorado District, Little Snake Resource Area.

The table below is based on the allotment specific analysis developed for the allotment in this EA. The table shows known cultural resources, eligible and need data, and those that are anticipated to be in each allotment. Fieldwork for the cultural resources on the table will be carried out in the current fiscal year or within the ten year permit renewal.

Acres Inventoried at a Class III level ¹	Acres NOT inventoried at a Class III Level	Percent-%of Allotment inventoried at a Class III level	Number of Cultural Resources known in allotment	High Potential of Historic Properties	Eligible or Need Data Sites – Known in Allotment (Site Numbers)	Estimated Sites for the Allotment** (Total Number)	Management Recommendations (Add'l inventory required and historic properties to be visited)
7	1261	.005	0	See below	None		Investigate ranch in 8N89W sec. 6 and irrigation ditch in 8N89W section 4

(Note: *Acres are derived from GIS allotment maps. 1. BLM and other acres in the allotment. See allotment specific analysis form. **Estimates of site densities are based on known inventory data. Estimates represent a minimum figure which may be revised upwards based on future inventory findings.)

One cultural resource inventory has been previously conducted within the allotment resulting in the complete coverage inventory of 7 acres and the recording of no cultural resources. Historic GLOs of T8N R89W sections 3-6 show a ranch in the 1880s, fences from the 1910s, irrigation ditches and roads. These resources should be checked to see if they still exist today.

If historic properties are located during the subsequent field inventory, and BLM determines that grazing activities will adversely impact the properties, mitigation will be identified and implemented in consultation with the Colorado SHPO.

Environmental Consequences, all alternatives: Direct impacts that may occur where livestock concentrate include trampling, chiseling, and churning of site soils, cultural features, and cultural artifacts, artifact breakage, and impacts from standing, leaning, and rubbing against historic structures, above-ground cultural features, and rock art. Indirect impacts include soil erosion, gullyng, and increased potential for unlawful collection and vandalism. Continued grazing may cause substantial ground disturbance and cumulative, long term, irreversible adverse effects to historic properties.

Cultural Review Process

Monitoring of the previous years range permit renewal environmental documentation for FY1998, FY1999, FY2000, FY2001, FY2002, FY2003, FY2004, and FY2005 has been carried out. These reports represent three field seasons of evaluation work on the eligible and need data sites. The fieldwork conducted in 2000, 2001, 2002, 2003, and 2005, identified impacts to some of the cultural resources being evaluated. This information is covered in the following reports:

Keesling, Henry S. and Gary D. Collins, Patrick C. Walker

2000 Cultural Resource Evaluation of Known Eligible and Need Data Sites within Range Allotments for Range Permit Renewal EA's FY98 and FY99. Bureau of Land Management, Little Snake Field Office, Craig, Colorado. Copy on file at that office.

Collins, Gary D., and Patrick C. Walker, Sam R. Johnson, Henry S. Keesling
2001 **Addendum to Cultural Resource Evaluation of Known Eligible and Need Data Sites within Range Allotments for Range Permit Renewal EAs FY98 and FY99, Range Permit Renewal EA's FY2000 and FY2001.** Bureau of Land Management, Little Snake Field Office, Craig, Colorado. Copy on file at that office.

Collins, Gary D. and Ryan J. Nordstrom, Henry S. Keesling
2002 **The Second Addendum to The Cultural and Need Data Sites Within Range Allotments for Range Permit Renewal EA's FY98, FY99, FY00, FY01, and FY02.** Bureau of Land Management, Little Snake Field Office, Craig, Colorado. Copy on file at that office.

Collins, Gary D. and Henry S. Keesling
2003 **The Third Addendum to The Cultural and Need Data Sites Within Range Allotments for Range Permit Renewals EA's FY98, FY99.** Bureau of Land Management, Little Snake Field Office, Craig, Colorado. Copy on file at that office

Collins, Gary D. and Henry S. Keesling
2005 **The Fourth Addendum Range Permit Renewal FY04 and FY05 to The Cultural Resource Evaluation of Known Eligible and need Data Sites Within Range Allotments for Range Permit Renewal EA's FY00, FY01, FY02, FY03.** BLM 10.27.05. Bureau of Land Management, Little Snake Field Office, Craig, Colorado. Copy of file at that office.

BLM has committed to a ten year phased evaluation being conducted for cultural resources that takes into account identified livestock concentration areas and the cultural resources that are either eligible and/or need data and to carrying out mitigation on cultural resources that require this action. The phased monitor and mitigation approach will mitigate identified adverse effects, significant impacts and data loss (NHPA Section 106, 36CFR800.9; Archaeological Resource Protection Act 1979; BLM/Colorado SHPO Protocol 1998; NEPA/FLPMA requirements) to an acceptable level.

The GIS mapping and evaluation effort will establish areas that have potential conflicts between livestock and prehistoric cultural resources. The GIS maps will provide a computer generated visual departure point for the proposed cultural fieldwork. GIS maps using USGS and BLM best available data, will be created showing springs, stream course features, riparian areas, and slopes that are greater than 30% slope within the allotment. Current understanding of prehistoric settlement and subsistence patterns will be applied to the GIS map review and used to establish prehistoric cultural areas. These potential livestock concentration areas will be evaluated in the field.

Livestock impacts may cause cumulative effects, some of which could be significant and may cause long-term, irreversible, potentially irretrievable adverse impacts and data loss. However, the phased identification and evaluation fieldwork will identify mitigation measures that will reduce these impacts (NHPA Section 106; 36CFR800.9; Archaeological Resource Protection Act 1979; BLM/Colorado SHPO Protocol 1998; NEPA/FLPMA requirements) to an acceptable level.

Other project specific Class III surveys initiated by the BLM, industry, or ranching will identify previously unrecorded cultural resources within these allotments. Newly identified cultural resources will need to be mitigated in relationship to the proposed project. Further, these cultural resources will be incorporated into current and future grazing review efforts to be evaluated and monitored as necessary.

Mitigation Measures: Standard Stipulations for cultural resources are included in Standard Terms and Conditions, see Attachment #2.

1. GIS maps based upon stream course features and springs from the 7.5 minute USGS maps and BLM best available riparian/spring data in this office will be used to initially establish evaluation areas for livestock concentrations. Current archaeological understanding of settlement and subsistence patterns for prehistoric cultural resources will be applied to these maps. Identified livestock concentration areas will be field evaluated. Those areas with no livestock impacts but with potential for cultural resources will under go the same Class III survey discussed below. This survey will be conducted documenting archaeological resources which may be impacted if grazing practices change in the future.
2. GIS maps showing slope potential, 30% or greater, where rock art and rock shelters are predicted to occur, will be used to initially establish evaluation areas for Class III survey. These areas will be evaluated for livestock concentrations. Identified concentration areas will have the following cultural surveys performed:

Potential rock shelters and rock art areas will be evaluated to see if cultural materials are present. When cultural resources are identified the site will be recorded and appropriate mitigation will be developed.

3. Previously identified sites (table above) and new sites recorded and evaluated as eligible and/or need data during other project specific Class III survey will need to be evaluated as well. Initial recording of new sites and re-evaluation of the known sites will establish current condition of the resource and help in developing a monitoring plan for all sites. Some sites will have to be monitored more often than others. Sites that are impacted by grazing activities will need further monitoring, physical protection or other mitigative measures developed.

4. Site monitoring plans and other mitigation plans will be developed and provided to the Colorado State Historic Preservation Officer in accordance with the Protocol (1998) and subsequent programmatic agreements regarding grazing permit renewals.

The Colorado State Historic Preservation Officer (SHPO) agreed with the Bureau of Land Management, Colorado (BLM) that the BLM could issue its Range Renewal Permits with the proposed Cultural Resource Management actions, monitoring known eligible and need data sites and conducting Class III and/or modified Class III surveys on selected areas of BLM lands within a ten year time frame (Cultural Matrix Team Meeting 26 January 1999, Colorado BLM State Office).

The Little Snake Field Office will initiate the monitoring of known eligible and need data sites the first field season following the issuing of the permit if possible. This survey will be based upon an accepted BLM and SHPO research design that will establish criteria for evaluation of the sites for livestock impacts and any needed mitigation and future monitoring needs.

Name of specialist and date: Robyn Watkins Morris, 11/13/07

ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE

Affected Environment: The allotment is located in an area of isolated dwellings. Ranching, farming and mineral development are the primary economic activities.

Environmental Consequences, all alternatives: The allotment is relatively isolated from population centers, so no populations would be affected by physical or socioeconomic impacts of either alternative. Neither alternative would directly affect the social, cultural or economic well-being and health of Native American, minority or low-income populations.

Mitigative Measures: None

Name of specialist and date: Mike Andrews, 11/07/07

FLOOD PLAINS

Affected Environment: No floodplain areas are present on the public lands within the East Cedar Hill Allotment. Stream gradients are too steep for floodplain development.

Environmental Consequences, all alternatives: None

Mitigative Measures: None

Name of specialist and date: Ole Olsen, 11/15/07

INVASIVE, NONNATIVE SPECIES

Affected Environment: Invasive and noxious weeds occur in the vicinity of the East Cedar Hill Allotment. Tarweed, purple mustard, yellow alyssum and cheatgrass are annual invasive weeds common in this area. Perennial and biennial noxious weeds in this area include spotted knapweed, hoary cress (whiteweed), tall larkspur, houndstongue, leafy spurge, Canada thistle and other biennial thistles. Access to the public lands is restricted by private lands and the general public is not able to use these areas, reducing the threat of additional weed introductions.

Environmental Consequences, all alternatives: The impact of increased invasive and/or noxious weed establishment would be very similar under either alternative. Vehicular access to public land for grazing operations, livestock and wildlife movement, as well as wind and water, can cause weeds to spread into new areas. Surface disturbance due to livestock concentration and human activities associated with grazing operations can also increase weed presence. Land practices and land uses by the livestock operator and their weed control efforts would largely determine the identification and potential occurrence of weeds within the allotment.

Mitigative Measures: None

Name of specialist and date: Ole Olsen, 11/15/07

MIGRATORY BIRDS

Affected Environment: Brewer's sparrow and sage sparrow are likely to nest within the East Cedar Hill Allotment. Both of these species are listed on the USFWS 2002 Birds of Conservation Concern List.

Environmental Consequences, Proposed Action: The Proposed Action would reduce livestock stocking rates and reduce potential for nest trampling to occur. Moderate levels of livestock grazing can benefit both of these species. There is little chance for take to occur as a result of the Proposed Action.

Environmental Consequences, No Action Alternative: This alternative would not reduce trampling potential but would not likely lead to significant levels of take.

Mitigative Measures: None

Name of specialist and date: Timothy Novotny, 11/06/07

NATIVE AMERICAN RELIGIOUS CONCERNS

A letter was sent to the Uinta and Ouray Tribal Council, Southern Ute Tribal Council, Ute Mountain Ute Tribal Council, and the Eastern Shoshone on July 11, 2007. The letter listed the grazing allotments up for renewal in FY07 and included a map of the areas. A follow up phone

call was performed on August 14, 2007. No comments were received (letter on file at the Little Snake Field Office). This project requires no additional notification.

Name of specialist and date: Robyn Watkins Morris, 11/13/07

PRIME & UNIQUE FARMLANDS

Affected Environment: There are no Prime and Unique Farmlands present within the East Cedar Hill Allotment.

Environmental Consequences, all alternatives: None

Mitigative Measures: None

Name of specialist and date: Ole Olsen, 11/15/07

T&E AND SENSITIVE ANIMALS

Affected Environment: There are no threatened or endangered animal species, or habitat for such species, present within the allotment. The East Cedar Hill Allotment does provide suitable nesting and breeding habitat for Columbian sharp-tailed grouse, a BLM special status species. There is one active sharp-tailed grouse lek on private lands within this allotment. There are an additional five leks within one mile of this allotment. BLM lands within this allotment provide nesting habitat for sharp-tailed grouse.

Environmental Consequences, Proposed Action: There is potential for trampling of sharp-tailed grouse nests to occur. The likelihood of this occurring is low. The Proposed Action would reduce the amount of grazing pressure within this allotment during the nesting season for sharp-tailed grouse. This would reduce the potential for trampling of nests to occur. There is little chance that trampling would affect sharp-tailed grouse populations. The Proposed Action should not have any negative impacts on nesting habitat within this allotment.

Environmental Consequences, No Action Alternative: Potential for trampling of nests by livestock remains with the No Action Alternative. A greater number of livestock would be allowed in the allotment during the nesting season. This increases the potential for nest trampling to occur. Heavier utilization associated with this alternative would put habitat at greater risk than with the Proposed Action.

Mitigative Measures: None

Name of specialist and date: Timothy Novotny, 11/06/07

T&E AND SENSITIVE PLANTS

Affected Environment: There are no federally listed threatened or endangered or BLM sensitive plant species present on the East Cedar Hill Allotment.

Environmental Consequences, all alternatives: None

Mitigative Measures: None

Name of specialist and date: Hunter Seim, 11/7/07

WASTES, HAZARDOUS OR SOLID

Affected Environment: There are no hazardous materials present on the East Cedar Hill Allotment.

Environmental Consequences, all alternatives: Potential releases of hazardous materials could occur due to vehicular access for livestock management operations. Coolant, oil and fuel are materials that could potentially be released. This type of release is unlikely due to the limited amount of vehicular activity required on this allotment. If a release were to occur it would be extremely limited in nature, highly localized and would not result in an adverse impact to the allotment. Changing the season of use dates does not affect hazardous or solid waste.

Mitigative Measures: None

Name of specialist and date: Christina Rhyne, 10/5/07

WATER QUALITY - GROUND

Affected Environment: The surface is covered by quaternary colluvium overlaying clay derived from shale from the Tertiary Fort Union and Tertiary Wasatch formation. This area is well drained due to the slopes and slow permeability.

Environmental Consequences, all alternatives: None

Mitigative Measures: None

Name of specialist and date: Jennifer Maiolo, 11/13/2007

WATER QUALITY - SURFACE

Affected Environment: Runoff water drainage in the East Cedar Hill Allotment flows to ephemeral tributaries of Dry Fork which is an intermittent tributary of Little Bear Creek. Little Bear Creek is an intermittent tributary of Fortification Creek. Fortification Creek needs to have water quality that can support Aquatic Life Warm 1, Recreation 1a and Agriculture. Tributary waters to Fortification Creek need to support Aquatic Life Warm 2, Recreation 1b and Agriculture; these tributaries are designated as Use Protected. None of these stream segments have impaired water quality and all of these stream segments are supporting their classified uses.

Environmental Consequences, all alternatives: Neither alternative would impair water quality. Water quality would continue to support the present classified uses.

Mitigative Measures: None

Name of specialist and date: Ole Olsen, 11/15/07

WETLANDS/RIPARIAN ZONES

Affected Environment: No riparian systems are present on public lands within the East Cedar Hill Allotment.

Environmental Consequences, all alternatives: None

Mitigative Measures: None

Name of specialist and date: Ole Olsen, 11/15/07

WILD & SCENIC RIVERS

Affected Environment: Not present.

Environmental Consequences, all alternatives: None

Mitigative Measures: None

Name of specialist and date: Rob Schmitzer, 11/9/07

WSAs, WILDERNESS CHARACTERISTICS

Affected Environment: There are no WSAs or wilderness characteristics within the allotment.

Environmental Consequences, all alternatives: None

Mitigative Measures: None

Name of specialist and date: Rob Schmitzer, 11/9/07

NON-CRITICAL ELEMENTS

SOILS

Affected Environment: The only soil on public lands within the East Cedar Hill Allotment is the Herm-Fughes complex, 10 to 20 percent slopes, and many boulders are present. This soil is deep and has moderate water holding capacity, slow permeability and a very high runoff rate. The Herm-Fughes soils are derived from shale colluvium. This soil complex is correlated to the Deep Clay Loam and Mountain Loam ecological sites.

Mosses are the most observable biological soil crust and these are found below the edge of the brush canopy, where trampling effects are lessened and sunlight is available. Cyanobacteria is present in the inter-spaces where forage and litter cover is not abundant and would likely be present on the less productive soils in the allotment.

The soils in the East Cedar Hill Allotment are well covered by big sagebrush, serviceberry and perennial grass with a diverse mixture of forbs. Soils are stable based on the soil surface characteristics observed on the allotment.

Environmental Consequences, all alternatives: Soil compaction and depleted soil cover are the most obvious impacts incurred as a result of livestock grazing. These affects would occur on areas of concentrated use with either alternative, but the majority of the affected lands within the allotments would have adequate plant and litter cover based on proper utilization of forage resources.

It is not anticipated that loss or gain of biological soil crusts would occur as a result of implementing either alternative.

Environmental Consequences, Proposed Action: Reducing the total AUMs allowed for grazing cattle would reduce the extent of concentrated use areas found near water sources and trailing attributed to cattle. Potentially, less forage would be consumed by cattle providing more soil cover at least during the grazing period authorized. Remaining forage would still be available for wildlife.

Environmental Consequences, No Action Alternative: Upland soils are stable under the current authorized use.

Mitigative Measures: None

Name of specialist and date: Ole Olsen, 11/15/07

UPLAND VEGETATION

Affected Environment: The East Cedar Hill Allotment is dominated by sagebrush-grass and mountain shrub communities. Dominant plants include Wyoming big sagebrush (*Artemisia tridentata* ssp. *wyomingensis*), serviceberry (*Amelanchier alnifolia*), rubber rabbitbrush (*Chrysothamnus nauseosus*), yarrow (*Achillea millefolium*), Sandberg bluegrass (*Poa secunda*), western wheatgrass (*Agropyron smithii*) and Gambel's oak (*Quercus gambelii*). A variety of other forbs are present on the allotment. Plant vigor is high, plant species are diverse and abundant litter is present.

Environmental Consequences, Proposed Action: Changing the season of use dates to conclude by the end of October (10 days earlier) would have little impact on the growth pattern of upland vegetation in the allotment. This fall use would occur during a potential re-growth period for cool season grasses. The first turnout period during June/July follows the primary spring growth period. Combined with appropriate stocking rates this change in the season of use would not adversely impact the plant community.

Environmental Consequences, No Action Alternative: This alternative would not change the fall use period or the total AUMs. Current operator use results in livestock being gathered out of the allotment by the end of October and, consequently, no November use. This current grazing period also occurs during a time of potential re-growth for cool season grasses in the fall.

Mitigative Measures: None

Name of specialist and date: Christina Rhyne, 10/17/07

WILDLIFE, AQUATIC

Affected Environment: There is no aquatic wildlife habitat present within this allotment.

Environmental Consequences, all alternatives: None

Mitigative Measures: None

Name of specialist and date: Timothy Novotny, 11/06/07

WILDLIFE, TERRESTRIAL

Affected Environment: The East Cedar Hill Allotment provides year round habitat for mule deer, elk and pronghorn antelope including severe winter range for mule deer and elk. A variety of small mammals, song birds and reptiles may also be found within this allotment. The allotment is meeting Colorado Public Land Health Standards for wildlife habitat.

Environmental Consequences, Proposed Action: The Proposed Action would reduce the amount of pressure this allotment would receive from livestock grazing. This would maintain or enhance habitat conditions for most wildlife species using this allotment. This would benefit most wildlife species.

Environmental Consequences, No Action Alternative: The No Action Alternative allows for higher levels of utilization. While current habitat conditions are acceptable under this alternative, if livestock were to concentrate in one area for too long it could result in areas of utilization of wildlife habitat exceeding 50%.

Mitigative Measures: None

Name of specialist and date: Timothy Novotny, 11/06/07

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

Non-Critical Element	NA or Not Present	Applicable or Present, No Impact	Applicable & Present and Brought Forward for Analysis
Fluid Minerals	JAM 12/3/07	MDW, 02/11/08	
Forest Management		CR 10/5/07	
Hydrology/Ground		MDW, 02/11/08	JAM 11/13/07
Hydrology/Surface		OO 1/15/07	
Paleontology		JAM 11/13/07	
Range Management			CR 10/5/07
Realty Authorizations	MAA 11/07/07		
Recreation/Travel Mgmt		RS 11/09/07	
Socio-Economics		MAA 11/07/07	
Solid Minerals	JAM 11/13/07		
Visual Resources		RS 11/09/07	
Wild Horse & Burro Mgmt	CR 10/05/07		

CUMULATIVE IMPACTS SUMMARY:

This allotment and the surrounding areas have historically been grazed by cattle. Access to the public land in this allotment is limited and local ranchers are the primary users in the area. Wildlife populations in the area are high, especially deer and elk which compete with livestock for available forage. The primary impacts from these activities are most immediately seen in the presence of roads, cultivated private lands and weed presence. Continued grazing on this allotment is compatible with other uses, both historic and present, and would not add any new or detrimental impacts to those already present.

STANDARDS

PLANT AND ANIMAL COMMUNITY (animal) STANDARD:

The Proposed Action would not impact big game, small mammals or reptiles. Some ground nesting songbirds could have nests destroyed by trampling. This is unlikely to occur frequently and there is little chance that any species' populations would be impacted negatively. Potential for trampling decreases with the Proposed Action. The No Action Alternative would not reduce potential for trampling. This standard is currently being met. The Proposed Action would continue to meet this standard.

Name of specialist and date: Timothy Novotny, 11/06/07

SPECIAL STATUS, THREATENED AND ENDANGERED SPECIES (animal) STANDARD:

There are no threatened and endangered species, or habitat for such species, within this allotment. The proposed project does provide nesting habitat for Columbian sharp-tailed grouse, a BLM special status species. The Proposed Action decreases the livestock stocking rate and would benefit nesting habitat and reduce potential for trampling of nests. This would ensure that this standard is met. The No Action Alternative would not reduce stocking rates or trampling potential but would not necessarily prevent this standard from being met.

Name of specialist and date: Timothy Novotny, 11/06/07

PLANT AND ANIMAL COMMUNITY (plant) STANDARD:

This allotment is currently meeting this standard. Species composition and production are appropriate for the site. Diversity of species is high and plant communities are both healthy and vigorous. However, the actual use has not been the full permitted amount but closer in number to the Proposed Action permitted AUMs. The Proposed Action would continue to meet this standard. The No Action alternative would also continue to meet this standard as a result of current management reducing the number of livestock and shortening the season of use compared to the information shown in the current lease.

Name of specialist and date: Christina Rhyne, 10/17/07

SPECIAL STATUS, THREATENED AND ENDANGERED SPECIES (plant)

STANDARD:

There are no federally listed threatened or endangered or BLM sensitive plant species present on the East Cedar Hill Allotment. This standard does not apply.

Name of specialist and date: Hunter Seim, 11/7/07

RIPARIAN SYSTEMS STANDARD:

No riparian systems occur on the public lands in the East Cedar Hill Allotment. This standard does not apply.

Name of specialist and date: Ole Olsen, 11/15/07

WATER QUALITY STANDARD:

The water quality standard for healthy rangelands would be met with implementation of either the Proposed Action or No Action Alternatives. Runoff from snowmelt and summer storms will drain from the East Cedar Hill Allotment into stream segments that are presently supporting classified uses. No stream segments are listed as impaired.

Name of specialist and date: Ole Olsen, 11/15/07

UPLAND SOILS STANDARD:

The upland soil standard for healthy rangelands would be met with the implementation of either the Proposed Action or No Action Alternatives. The soils within the East Cedar Hill Allotment are stable. The native plant community provides good cover with a diverse mix of shrubs, grasses and forbs. Proper grazing use of the forage resource is required under the terms and conditions of the permit under each of these alternatives. This level of grazing would maintain sufficient residual forage for upland soil health to be maintained.

Name of specialist and date: Ole Olsen, 11/15/07

PERSONS/AGENCIES CONSULTED: Uintah and Ouray Tribal Council, Colorado Native American Commission, Colorado State Historic Preservation Office, Ron Snowden - Land Manager for David Garner.

MITIGATION MEASURES:

BLM Cultural Resources Commitments:

1. GIS maps based upon stream course features and springs from the 7.5 minute USGS maps and BLM best available riparian/spring data in this office will be used to initially establish evaluation areas for livestock concentrations. Current archaeological understanding of settlement and subsistence patterns for prehistoric cultural resources will be applied to these maps. Identified livestock concentration areas will be field evaluated. Those areas

with no livestock impacts but with potential for cultural resources will under go the same Class III survey discussed below. This survey will be conducted documenting archaeological resources which may be impacted if grazing practices change in the future. Identified concentration areas that exhibit livestock impacts will have the following cultural surveys:

2. GIS maps showing slope potential, 30% or greater, where rock art and rock shelters are predicted to occur, will be used to initially establish evaluation areas for Class III survey. These areas will be evaluated for livestock concentrations. Identified concentration areas will have the following cultural surveys performed:

Potential rock shelters and rock art areas will be evaluated to see if cultural materials are present. When cultural resources are identified the site will be recorded and appropriate mitigation will be developed.

3. Previously identified sites (table above) and new sites recorded and evaluated as eligible and/or need data during other project specific Class III survey will need to be evaluated as well. Initial recording of new sites and re-evaluation of the known sites will establish current condition of the resource and help in developing a monitoring plan for all sites. Some sites will have to be monitored more often than others. Sites that are impacted by grazing activities will need further monitoring, physical protection or other mitigative measures developed.
4. Site monitoring plans and other mitigation plans will be developed and provided to the Colorado State Historic Preservation Officer in accordance with the Protocol (1998) and subsequent programmatic agreements regarding grazing permit renewals.

Conducting Class III survey(s), monitoring, and developing site specific mitigation measures will mitigate the adverse effects, data loss, and significant impacts (NHPA Section 106, 36CFR800.9; Archaeological Resource Protection Act 1979; BLM Colorado and Colorado SHPO Protocol 1998; and NEPA/FLPMA requirements) to an acceptable level.

The Colorado State Historic Preservation Officer (SHPO) agreed with the Bureau of Land Management, Colorado (BLM) that the BLM could issue its Range Renewal Permits with the proposed Cultural Resource Management actions, monitoring known eligible and need data sites and conducting Class III and/or modified Class III surveys on selected areas of BLM lands within a ten year time frame (Cultural Matrix Team Meeting 26 January 1999, Colorado BLM State Office).

The Little Snake Field Office will initiate the monitoring of known eligible and need data sites the first field season following the issuing of the permit if possible. This survey will be based upon an accepted BLM and SHPO research design that will establish criteria for evaluation of the sites for livestock impacts and any needed mitigation and future monitoring needs.

ATTACHMENTS:

Attachment 1 – Allotment Map

Attachment 2 – Standard and Common Terms and Conditions

SIGNATURE OF PREPARER:

DATE SIGNED:

SIGNATURE OF ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEWER:

DATE SIGNED:

Finding of No Significant Impact

The environmental assessment, analyzing the environmental effects of the Proposed Action, has been reviewed. With the implementation of the attached mitigation measures there is a finding of no significant impact on the human environment. Therefore, an environmental impact statement is not necessary to further analyze the environmental effects of the Proposed Action.

1. Beneficial, adverse, direct, indirect, and cumulative environmental impacts have been disclosed in the EA. Analysis indicated no significant impacts on society as a whole, the affected region, the affected interests or the locality. The physical and biological effects are limited to the Little Snake Resource Area and adjacent land.
2. Public health and safety would not be adversely impacted. There are no known or anticipated concerns with project waste or hazardous materials.
3. There would be no adverse impacts to regional or local air quality, prime or unique farmlands, known paleontological resources on public land within the area, wetlands, floodplain, areas with unique characteristics, ecologically critical areas or designated Areas of Critical Environmental Concern.
4. There are no highly controversial effects on the environment.
5. There are no effects that are highly uncertain or involve unique or unknown risk. Sufficient information on risk is available based on information in the EA and other past actions of a similar nature.
6. This alternative does not set a precedent for other actions that may be implemented in the future to meet the goals and objectives of adopted Federal, State or local natural resource related plans, policies or programs.
7. No cumulative impacts related to other actions that would have a significant adverse impact were identified or are anticipated.
8. Based on previous and ongoing cultural surveys, and through mitigation by avoidance, no adverse impacts to cultural resources were identified or anticipated. There are no known American Indian religious concerns or persons or groups who might be disproportionately and adversely affected as anticipated by the Environmental Justice Policy.
9. No adverse impacts to any threatened or endangered species or their habitat that was determined to be critical under the Endangered Species Act were identified. If, at a future time, there could be the potential for adverse impacts, treatments would be modified or mitigated not to have an adverse effect or new analysis would be conducted.
10. This alternative is in compliance with relevant Federal, State, and local laws, regulations, and requirements for the protection of the environment.

SIGNATURE OF AUTHORIZED OFFICIAL:

DATE SIGNED:

**ATTACHMENT #2
CO-100-2008-006 EA
TERMS AND CONDITIONS**

Standard Terms and Conditions

- 1) Grazing permit or lease terms and conditions and the fees charged for grazing use are established in accordance with the provisions of the grazing regulations now or hereafter approved by the Secretary of the Interior.
- 2) They are subject to cancellation, in whole or in part, at any time because of:
 - a. Noncompliance by the permittee/lessee with rules and regulations;
 - b. Loss of control by the permittee/lessee of all or a part of the property upon which it is based;
 - c. A transfer of grazing preference by the permittee/lessee to another party;
 - d. A decrease in the lands administered by the Bureau of Land Management within the allotment(s) described;
 - e. Repeated willful unauthorized grazing use;
 - f. Loss of qualifications to hold a permit or lease.
- 3) They are subject to the terms and conditions of allotment management plans if such plans have been prepared. Allotment management plans **MUST** be incorporated in permits and leases when completed.
- 4) Those holding permits or leases **MUST** own or control and be responsible for the management of livestock authorized to graze.
- 5) The authorized officer may require counting and/or additional or special marking or tagging of the livestock authorized to graze.
- 6) The permittee's/lessee's grazing case file is available for public inspection as required by the Freedom of Information Act.
- 7) Grazing permits or leases are subject to the nondiscrimination clauses set forth in Executive Order 11246 of September 24, 1964, as amended. A copy of this order may be obtained from the authorized officer.
- 8) Livestock grazing use that is different from that authorized by a permit or lease **MUST** be applied for prior to the grazing period and **MUST** be filed with and approved by the authorized officer before grazing use can be made.
- 9) Billing notices are issued which specify fees due. Billing notices, when paid, become a part of the grazing permit or lease. Grazing use cannot be authorized during any period of delinquency in the payment of amounts due, including settlement for unauthorized use.

- 10) Grazing fee payments are due on the date specified on the billing notice and **MUST** be paid in full within 15 days of the due date, except as otherwise provided in the grazing permit or lease. If payment is not made within that time frame, a late fee (the greater of \$25 or 10 percent of the amount owed but not more than \$250) will be assessed.
- 11) No member of, or Delegate to, Congress or Resident Commissioner, after his/her election of appointment, or either before or after he/she has qualified, and during his/her continuance in office, and no officer, agent, or employee of the Department of Interior, other than members of Advisory committees appointed in accordance with the Federal Advisory Committee Act (5 U.S.C. App. 1) and Sections 309 of the Federal Land Policy and Management Act of 1976 (43 U.S.C. 1701 et seq.) shall be admitted to any share or part in a permit or lease, or derive any benefit to arise therefrom; and the provision of Section 3741 Revised Statute (41 U.S.C. 22), 18 U.S.C. Sections 431-433, and 43 CFR Part 7, enter into and form a part of a grazing permit or lease, so far as the same may be applicable.

Common Terms and Conditions

- A) Grazing use will not be authorized in excess of the amount of specified grazing use (AUM number) for each allotment. Numbers of livestock annually authorized in the allotment(s) may be more or less than the number listed on the permit/lease within the grazing use periods as long as the amount of specified grazing use is not exceeded.
- B) Unless there is a specific term and condition addressing utilization, the intensity of grazing use will insure that no more than 50% of the key grass species and 40% of the key browse species current years growth, by weight, is utilized at the end of the grazing season for winter allotments and the end of the growing season for allotments used during the growing season. Application of this term needs to recognize recurring livestock management that includes opportunity for regrowth, opportunity for spring growth prior to grazing, or growing season deferment.
- C) Failure to maintain range improvements to BLM standards in accordance with signed cooperative agreements and/or range improvement permits may result in the suspension of the annual grazing authorization, cancellation of the cooperative agreement or range improvement permit, and/or the eventual cancellation of this permit/lease.
- D) Storing or feeding supplemental forage on public lands other than salt or minerals must have prior approval. Forage to be fed or stored on public lands must be certified noxious weed-free. Salt and/or other mineral supplements shall be placed at least one-quarter mile from water sources or in such a manner as to promote even livestock distribution in the allotment or pasture.

- E) Pursuant to 43 CFR 10.4(g), the holder of this authorization must notify the authorized officer, by telephone, with written confirmation, immediately upon the discovery of human remains, funerary items, sacred objects, or objects of cultural patrimony. Further, pursuant to 43 CFR 10.4(c) and (d), you must stop activities in the vicinity of the discovery and protect it for 30 days or until notified to proceed by the authorized officer.

The operator is responsible for informing all persons who are associated with the allotment operations that they will be subject to prosecution for knowingly disturbing historic or archaeological sites, or for collecting artifacts. If historic or archaeological materials are encountered or uncovered during any allotment activities or grazing activities, the operator is to immediately stop activities in the immediate vicinity and immediately contact the authorized officer. Within five working days the authorized officer will inform the operator as to:

- whether the materials appear eligible for the National Register of Historic Places;
- the mitigation measures the operator will likely have to undertake before the identified area can be used for grazing activities again.

If paleontological materials (fossils) are uncovered during allotment activities, the operator is to immediately stop activities that might further disturb such materials and contact the authorized officer. The operator and the authorized officer will consult and determine the best options for avoiding or mitigating paleontological site damage.

- F) No hazardous materials/hazardous or solid waste/trash shall be disposed of on public lands. If a release does occur, it shall immediately be reported to this office at (970) 826-5000.
- G) The permittee/lessee shall provide reasonable administrative access across private and leased lands to the BLM and its agents for the orderly management and protection of public lands.
- H) Application of a chemical or release of pathogens or insects on public lands must be approved by the authorized officer.
- I) The terms and conditions of this lease may be modified if additional information indicates that revision is necessary to conform with 43 CFR 4180.