

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: DOI-BLM-CO-N010-2009-0034-EA

CASEFILE/ALLOTMENT NUMBER: 0501110/04511

PROJECT NAME: Renewal of the grazing permit on the Four Mile Allotment #04511

LEGAL DESCRIPTION: see Allotment Map, Attachment 1

Four Mile Allotment #04511

T. 12 N., R. 91 W., Sec. 13 W ½ excluding the majority
of the NW ¼
Sec. 14 S ½ excluding portion
of the N ½
Sec. 15 SE ¼ SE ¼
Sec. 22 NE ¼ NE ¼, E ½ SW ¼
Sec. 23 All
Sec. 24 W ½, W ½ SE ¼, SW ¼ NE ¼
Sec. 25 W ½, W ½ E ½
Sec. 26 Majority of the N ½, small portion
of the E ½ SE ¼
Sec. 27 portion of NE ¼ NE ¼ NE ¼

2,337 Acres BLM Lands
225 Acres Private Lands
2,562 Total Acres

APPLICANT: Flattops Ranch LLP

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

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

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 Northern Great Divide Management Unit (MU 6). The proposed action will not impair the management objectives for this unit to maintain and improve critical habitat for sage grouse, mule deer, and pronghorn antelope. This unit is open to livestock grazing compatible with management objectives.

NEED FOR PROPOSED ACTION: The Proposed Action is needed to respond to an expiring permit. The previous permit was issued for the term 03/01/2001 to 02/28/2008, and pursuant to Section 106 and 150 of P.L. 110-329, was extended for one year with an expiration date of 02/28/2009. This permit is subject to renewal at the discretion of the Secretary of the Interior, who delegated the authority to BLM, for a period of up to ten years. The BLM has the authority to renew the livestock grazing permit 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 Plan/EIS has been amended by *Standards for Public Land Health in the State of Colorado*.

The following Environmental Assessment (EA) will analyze the impacts of livestock grazing on public land managed by the BLM. The analysis will recommend terms and conditions to the permit/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 (permittee) must hold a grazing permit. The grazing permittee has a preference right to receive the permit 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: The BLM Little Snake Field Office sent out a Notice of Public Scoping on December 22, 2006 to determine the level of public interest, concern, and resource conditions on the grazing authorizations that were up for renewal in FY 2008. A Notice of Public Scoping was posted on the Internet, at the Colorado BLM Home Page, asking for public input on grazing permit and lease renewals. Individual letters were sent to the affected permittees and lessees informing them that their permit and/or lease was up for renewal and requesting any information they wanted included or taken into consideration during the renewal process. The issuance of a grazing permit is being carefully analyzed within the scope of the specific action being taken, resources issues or concerns, and public input received.

BACKGROUND: The Four Mile Allotment boundary was established in 1968 and permitted for 300 cattle AUMs. Prior to this date, the recognized use was a part of the common Scandinavia Cow Pasture. Once the boundary's were established the 300 cattle AUMs were permitted from May 1 to October 31.

In 1991, a Coordinated Activity Plan (CAP) for the Four Mile Allotment was established with the primary objectives emphasizing riparian area improvement and maintenance, wildlife habitat improvement and maintenance, and establishment of a two pasture deferred rotational grazing system that would facilitate meeting the plans objectives. The CAP and associated EA (CO-016-91-043) authorized construction of livestock ponds and other water developments, vegetation treatments, riparian tree planting, and implementation of a rotational grazing system.

In 2001 there were 6 water developments (ponds) constructed in the Middle Pasture, then known as the Big Dry Pasture, and a riparian pasture fence constructed which created the West End Pasture. With the creation of this riparian pasture a term and condition was added to the permit "Livestock may graze the West End Pasture for a three week period or less during the 05/01 to 06/15 time period. This pasture's season of use shall remain in effect until a deferred rotation grazing plan is developed on the allotment." There have been some areas of brushbeating vegetation treatments but very little documentation on the details of the project. The CAP also outlined a deferred rotation grazing:

Year One

05/01 to 05/31	Riparian Pasture	50 AUMs
06/01 to 10/31	Big Dry Pasture	250 AUMs

Year Two

05/01 to 05/31	Big Dry Pasture	50 AUMs
06/01 to 06/30	Riparian Pasture	50 AUMs
07/01 to 10/31	Big Dry Pasture	200 AUMs

Although the three week time limit in the West End Pasture has been carried forward to the current expiring permit, there is no documentation indicating this deferred rotation schedule has been followed.

In 1996 as part of the Coal Reserve Land Exchange, 87 acres and 10 AUMS were removed from the Four Mile Allotment.

In 1998 Versal Burch sold the base property attached to the grazing preference on the Four Mile Allotment to Willow Creek Ranch LLC. This transfer was authorized through an EA (CO-016-98-034) which continued previously authorized use

In 2001, Willow Creek Ranch LLC sold the base property and transferred the grazing preference for the Four Mile Allotment to Flattops Ranch LLC. The transfer was authorized through a Determination of Land Use Plan Conformance and NEPA Adequacy (DNA), CO-100 LS-01-027 DNA. The permit was reissued to Flattops Ranch LLC for 7 years continuing the original 10 year

term. Without explanation as to the reason, this permit was reissued with modified terms and conditions, the season of use authorized in these new terms and conditions made the deferred rotational grazing system outlined in the 1991 CAP unfeasible.

Allotment Name & Number	Livestock Number & Kind	Dates		%PL	AUMs
		From	To		
Four Mile #04511					
Middle Pasture	180 Cattle	05/01	06/15	97	264
West End Pasture	18 Cattle	05/01	06/15	97	<u>26</u>
Total					290

In 2003, the Four Mile Allotment was included in the Pole Gulch/Four Mile Creek Watershed assessment, stop #37. At that location all Land Health Standard were met. Riparian Proper Functioning Condition (PFC) assessments were completed in 1994, 2000, & 2003 on the segment of Four Mile Creek that runs through the Four Mile Allotment. The results of the 2003 assessment were Functioning at Risk (FAR) with an upward trend.

During an authorization renewal meeting with Flattops Ranch on 02/11/09, they indicated that they do abide by the 3 week term and condition of use in the riparian pasture, and generally use the allotment less, in both time and livestock numbers, than annually authorized. They also indicated that they would be willing to rest the riparian pasture at the request of the BLM.

DESCRIPTION OF PROPOSED ACTION AND ALTERNATIVES:

Proposed Action

Renew the grazing permit on the Four Mile Allotment #04511 for a period of ten years, expiring February 28, 2019. The permit would continue previously authorized use for cattle and add a term and condition that would allow for sheep use. The permit would be renewed as follows:

Allotment Name & Number	Livestock Number & Kind	Dates		%PL	AUMs
		From	To		
Four Mile #04511					
Middle Pasture	180 Cattle	05/01	06/15	97	264
West End Pasture	18 Cattle	05/01	06/15	97	<u>26</u>
Total					290

Special Terms and Conditions

1. Livestock may graze the West End Pasture for a three week period or less during the 05/01 to 06/15 time period
2. Sheep use will be authorized for no more than 4 weeks during the 05/01 to 06/15 time period as long as total AUMs (cattle & sheep) do not exceed 290. Annual sheep use must be proposed and

approved on annual applications prior to turnout.

The permit would be subject to the Standard and Common Terms (attachment 2).

No Action Alternative

The permit would be renewed continuing previously authorized use for a period of ten years, expiring on February 28, 2019. No sheep use would be authorized.

The permit would be subject to the Standard and Common Terms (attachment 2).

Alternatives Considered but not Analyzed:

No Grazing Alternative

No livestock grazing would take place under this alternative.

This alternative is eliminated from detailed study because it is not a realistic, implementable alternative nor does it meet the requirements of the Federal Land Policy and Management Act of 1976. When the RMP was approved, it was determined that livestock grazing was an appropriate use of this land. Eliminating grazing is not analyzed because no new issues or concerns have been identified that would require this action.

AFFECTED ENVIRONMENT/ENVIRONMENTAL CONSEQUENCES/MITIGATION MEASURES

CRITICAL RESOURCES

AIR QUALITY

Affected Environment: The allotment does not lie within any special designation air sheds or non-attainment areas.

Environmental Consequences, Both Alternatives: Authorizing cattle and/or sheep grazing would not cause regional air quality impairment under either alternative. The existing native plant composition provides sufficient cover to the soil surface to protect it from excessive wind erosion. Vehicular access on existing roads for livestock management activities would result in minimal releases of particulate matter (dust) emissions, but this would be minor and not affect the overall air quality of the area.

Mitigative Measures: None

Name of specialist and date: Mark Lowrey, 03/10/09

AREA OF CRITICAL ENVIRONMENTAL CONCERN

Affected Environment: Not Present

Environmental Consequences, Both Alternatives: None

Mitigative Measures: None

Name of specialist and date: Gina Robison, 2/17/09

CULTURAL RESOURCES

Affected Environment: Grazing authorization renewals are undertakings under Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act. During Section 106 review, a cultural resource assessment was completed for allotment #04511 by Robyn Watkins Morris, Little Snake Field Office Archaeologist on February 23, 2009. 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. Copies of the cultural resource assessments are in the Field Office archaeology files.

Data developed here was 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 General Land Office (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 the allotment.

Allotment Number	Acres Surveyed at a Class III Level	Acres NOT Surveyed at a Class III Level	Percent of Allotment Inventoried at a Class III Level	Eligible or Need Data Sites- Known in Allotment	Estimated Sites for the Allotment *(total number)	Estimated Eligible or Need Data Sites in the Allotment (number)
4511	144	(2565) 2421	5%	2	68	20

(Note *Estimates of site densities are based on known inventory data. Estimates should be accepted as minimum figures which may be revised upwards based on future inventory findings.)

Three cultural resource inventories have occurred within the allotment. Two out of the three related to grazing developments and one was a survey for mineral development. Acreage surveyed within the allotment totals 144 acres. Three out of the twelve sites in the area are

paleontological in nature. There are four open prehistoric camps, one open prehistoric lithic, three prehistoric isolated finds, and one historic trash dump. The GLO plats were checked for the area. On the T12N R91W 1878 GLO an unnamed historic road occurs in section 13, 23, and 26 within allotment boundaries. On the T12N R91W 1911 GLO there is an unnamed road through section 24, 26, and 23; ditch in sec. 12 and 24, and cabin in section 26 within allotment boundaries.

Based on available data there is a high chance for historic cultural resources, given the importance of placer mining to the area. Subsequent site specific monitoring and cultural resource inventory will be conducted in areas where livestock concentrate and where unrecorded cultural resources are located. Subsequent monitoring and field inventory is to be completed within a ten year time frame. Priorities for monitoring and inventory include:

1. The historic road on the 1878 GLO map and the historic road, ditch, and cabin on the 1911 GLO map.
2. Areas along Four Mile Creek will be surveyed as it is a high probability area for cultural resources as well as high grazing impacts.

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, Both Alternatives: The direct impacts that occur where livestock concentrate, during normal livestock grazing activity, 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, gulying, and increased potential for unlawful collection and vandalism. Continued livestock use in livestock concentration areas may cause irreversible adverse effects to historic properties. The number of AUMs remains the same for the proposed action. If the sheep are trailed regularly through any particular area there could be increased impacts to cultural resources. Placing saltblocks along roads or anywhere in the allotment would potentially impact historic properties if placed in close proximity to such properties.

Mitigation Measures: Standard Stipulations for cultural resources are included in the Standard and Common Terms and Conditions (Attachment 2).

Conducting Class II and III survey(s), monitoring, and developing site specific mitigation measures will mitigate the adverse effects to an acceptable level (Cultural Matrix Team Meeting 26 January 1999, NHPA Section 106, 36CFR800.9; Archaeological Resource Protection Act 1979; BLM Colorado and Colorado SHPO Protocol 1998; and NEPA/FLPMA requirements).

Name of specialist and date: Robyn Watkins Morris, 02/23/09

ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE

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

Environmental Consequences, Both Alternatives: No populations would be affected by physical or socioeconomic impacts of the proposed or alternative actions. 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, 02/18/09

FLOOD PLAINS

Affected Environment: There are floodplains associated with Four Mile Creek which runs through the western portion of the allotment, this stream segment is recognized as Reach 2 (R2) in the BLM riparian database. According to the Moffat County Water Commissioner there are five water diversions upstream from R2 of which a couple large ditches were capable of affecting the flooding runoff waters each year.

Environmental Consequences, Both Alternatives: There are no floodplain resource concerns on the R2 segment of Four Mile Creek. In 2001, a riparian pasture fence protecting the R2 segment of Four Mile Creek was constructed and, with the three week limitation of livestock authorized in the riparian pasture, there would be no adverse affect to floodplains due to livestock grazing under either alternative.

Mitigative Measures: None

Name of specialist and date: Mark Lowrey, 03/10/09

INVASIVE, NONNATIVE SPECIES

Affected Environment: During the 2003 Pole Gulch Landscape Assessment one stop (#37) on the Four Mile Allotment met all native species standards and noted acceptable levels of noxious/invasive species, cheatgrass and yellow asslyum, which was lighter in the brushbeat treatment areas. There is no other noxious weed or invasive concerns on this allotment.

Environmental Consequences, Proposed Action: The addition of sheep presents an additional vector for new or increased noxious weed invasion/presence. With the native vegetation in good condition, as it is, reduces or neutralizes this potential. Along with the cooperation and observations of the permittee, and the implemented integrated weed management program with the State of Colorado, Moffat County, and the BLM there would be

no adverse affects.

Environmental Consequences, No Action Alternative: There would be no adverse affects, current conditions would persist.

Mitigative Measures: None

Name of specialist and date: Mark Lowrey, 03/11/09

MIGRATORY BIRDS

Affected Environment: The Four Mile Allotment provides nesting habitat for Brewer's sparrow, sage sparrow, golden eagles, and ferruginous hawks. All four of these species are listed on the US Fish and Wildlife Service's 2002 Birds of Conservation Concern List.

Environmental Consequences, Proposed Action: The livestock grazing system proposed under the Proposed Action would not result in long term or cumulative adverse impacts to any of these species nesting habitats. It is possible that livestock could destroy a Brewer's sparrow or sage sparrow nest occasionally. This would result in a temporary adverse impact by reducing nesting success for that season. There is a slight chance for take to occur of Brewer's sparrow and sage sparrow. This is not likely to have any impact on either species populations. This livestock grazing system would not impact golden eagles or ferruginous hawks. There is no chance for take of golden eagles and ferruginous hawks to occur.

Environmental Consequences, No Action Alternative: Impacts and chance of take occurring would be similar to those of the Proposed Action.

Mitigative Measures: None

Name of specialist and date: Timothy Novotny, 02/19/09

NATIVE AMERICAN RELIGIOUS CONCERNS

A letter was sent to the Uinta and Ouray Tribal Council, Southern Ute Tribal Council, Ute Mountain Ute Tribal Council on May 5, 2008. The letter listed the FY08 and FY09 projects that the BLM would notify them on and projects that would not require notification. A followup phone call was performed on June 16, 2008. 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, 02/23/09

PRIME & UNIQUE FARMLANDS

Affected Environment: The Four Mile Allotment contains 114 acres of soil unit: 104-Battlement fine sandy loam, 0 to 3 percent slopes, that qualifies as prime farmland when irrigated.

Environmental Consequences, Both Alternatives: There would be no affect since this soil is not irrigated within the Four Mile Allotment.

Mitigative Measures: None

Name of specialist and date: Mark Lowrey, 03/11/09

T&E AND SENSITIVE ANIMALS

Affected Environment: There are no threatened or endangered species or habitats for such species present within the Four Mile Allotment. This allotment does provide habitat for bald eagles and nesting and brood rearing habitat for greater sage-grouse. Both bald eagles and greater sage-grouse are BLM special status species. Portions of this allotment have received brush beating treatments in the past. These brush beatings left islands of untreated sagebrush within them.

Environmental Consequences, Proposed Action: The proposed livestock grazing system would not have an impact on bald eagles. Livestock grazing could have an impact on greater sage-grouse nesting activities. It is possible that livestock could trample an active sage grouse nest although this is unlikely. If this were to occur, this would result in a short term negative impact to greater sage-grouse with the loss of reproduction by that hen for one year. Livestock utilization levels proposed in this alternative would not have a negative impact on greater sage-grouse habitats within this allotment.

Environmental Consequences, No Action Alternative: The No Action Alternative would not have an impact on bald eagles. The No Action Alternative would continue the existing livestock grazing system that is currently in place for the Four Mile Allotment. This alternative has been successful in maintaining sage-grouse habitats within this allotment.

Similar to the Proposed Action, the No Action Alternative could result in the occasional destruction of a nest site by livestock.

Mitigative Measures: None

Name of specialist and date: Timothy Novotny, 02/19/09

T&E AND SENSITIVE PLANTS

Affected Environment: There are no federally listed threatened or endangered or BLM

sensitive plant species present on the Four Mile Allotment.

Environmental Consequences, Both Alternatives: None

Mitigative Measures: None

Name of specialist and date: Hunter Seim, 02/19/09

WASTES, HAZARDOUS OR SOLID

Affected Environment: There are no hazardous materials present on the Four Mile Allotment.

Environmental Consequences, Both 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. Due to the limited amount of vehicular activity that would be required, the potential for releases of any of these materials is low and if a release were to occur, it would be minimal and highly localized and not result in an adverse impact to the allotment.

Mitigative Measures: None

Name of specialist and date: Mark Lowrey, 01/28/09

WATER QUALITY - GROUND

Affected Environment: Groundwater aquifers occur in the Wasatch Formation rocks found at and near the surface in this area.

Environmental Consequences, Both Alternatives: Due to the limited number of livestock, the dispersal of these livestock over a fairly large area and the rotation of grazing areas, there would be no adverse impacts to ground water quality within the area of Proposed Action.

Mitigative Measures: None.

Name of specialist and date: Marilyn D. Wegweiser, 02/20/09

WATER QUALITY – SURFACE

Affected Environment: Four Mile Creek is an intermittent to perennial stream, with upstream water diversions. It is the last major perennial tributary that flows into the Little Snake River before it reaches the Yampa River. All tributaries to the Little Snake River within this river segment to a point immediately below the confluence with Four Mile Creek has designated uses classified as Aquatic life Cold 1, Recreation 1b, and Agriculture. Within the Four Mile

Creek Watershed no stream segments or tributaries are currently listed as having impaired water quality and water quality is sufficient to support classified uses.

Environmental Consequences, Both Alternatives: Current authorized grazing is not degrading water quality, the addition of sheep to current authorized grazing would not degrade or increase the potential for degraded water quality.

Mitigative Measures: None

Name of specialist and date: Mark Lowrey, 03/11/09

WETLANDS/RIPARIAN ZONES

Affected Environment: The Four Mile Allotment contains 1.5 miles of Four Mile Creek (1 mile on public lands, 0.5 miles on private lands). In addition, there are 6 stock ponds and numerous lentic tributaries to Four Mile Creek within allotment boundaries.

Environmental Consequences, Both Alternatives: There would be no adverse affects with implementation of either alternative. With the riparian pasture fence constructed and the very limited use within the riparian pasture, adequate riparian protection is provided for Four Mile Creek. Allotment wide, the season of use ending on 06/15 allows adequate time for regrowth of riparian vegetation to stabilize and protect against seasonal flows. The addition of sheep would have no additional impacts with the limited amount of time, four out of six weeks, and relatively small amount of AUMs that would be authorized.

Mitigative Measures: None

Name of specialist and date: Mark Lowrey, 03/11/09

WILD & SCENIC RIVERS

Affected Environment: Not Present

Environmental Consequences, Both Alternatives: None

Mitigative Measures: None

Name of specialist and date: Gina Robison, 02/17/09

WSAs, WILDERNESS CHARACTERISTICS

Affected Environment: Not Present

Environmental Consequences, Both Alternatives: None

Mitigative Measures: None

Name of specialist and date: Gina Robison, 02/17/09

NON-CRITICAL ELEMENTS

SOILS

Affected Environment: The Four Mile Allotment contains the following soils:

Soil Mapping Unit	Map Unit Setting	Descriptions	Ecological Site
10—Battlement fine sandy loam, 0 to 3 percent slopes 114 Acres	<i>Major Land Resource</i> Area: 34 Elevation: 6,000 to 6,800 feet <i>Mean annual precipitation:</i> 11 to 15 inches <i>Mean annual air temperature:</i> 42 to 45 degrees F. <i>Freeze-free period:</i> 75 to 95 days	<i>Landform:</i> Stream terraces, flood plains <i>Drainage class:</i> Well drained <i>Slowest permeability:</i> 0.2 to 0.6 in./hr. (moderately slow) <i>Available water capacity:</i> About 11.1 inches (high) <i>Flooding hazard:</i> Rare <i>Runoff class:</i> Low	Foothill Swale
81—Forelle-Obadia complex, 1 to 8percent slopes 253 Acres	<i>Major Land Resource</i> Area: 34 Elevation: 6,400 to 6,800 feet <i>Mean annual precipitation:</i> 11 to 15 inches <i>Mean annual air temperature:</i> 42 to 45 degrees F. <i>Freeze-free period:</i> 75 to 95 days	<i>Landform:</i> Hills <i>Drainage class:</i> Well drained <i>Slowest permeability:</i> 0.01 to 2.0 in./hr. (very slow to moderate) <i>Available water capacity:</i> 8.3 to 10.5 inches (moderate to high) <i>Runoff class:</i> Medium to very high	Rolling Loam – Forelle Claypan - Obadia
82—Forelle-Pinelli-Maysprings complex, 5 to 20 percent slopes 511 Acres	<i>Major Land Resource</i> Area: 34 Elevation: 6,200 to 7,000 feet <i>Mean annual precipitation:</i> 11 to 15 inches <i>Mean annual air temperature:</i> 42 to 45 degrees F. <i>Freeze-free period:</i> 75 to 95 days	<i>Landform:</i> Hills <i>Drainage class:</i> Well drained <i>Slowest permeability:</i> 0.06 to 2.0 in./hr. (slow to moderate) <i>Available water capacity:</i> 4.4 to 10.3 inches (low to high) <i>Runoff class:</i> Medium to very high	Rolling Loam – Forelle Clayey Foothills – Pinelli Sandyland - Mayspring

<p>173—Ryark-Powderwash complex, 2 to 15 percent slopes</p> <p>149 Acres</p>	<p><i>Elevation:</i> 6,100 to 6,800 feet</p> <p><i>Mean annual precipitation:</i> 11 to 13 inches</p> <p><i>Mean annual air temperature:</i> 42 to 45 degrees F.</p> <p><i>Freeze-free period:</i> 75 to 95 days</p>	<p><i>Landform:</i> Benches, hillslopes</p> <p><i>Drainage class:</i> Well drained to Somewhat excessively drained</p> <p><i>Slowest permeability:</i> 0.001 to 6.0 in./hr. (very slow to moderately rapid)</p> <p><i>Available water capacity:</i> 4.3 to 5.3 inches (low)</p> <p><i>Runoff class:</i> Low</p>	<p>Rolling Loam</p>
<p>184—Styers-Pinelli-Taffom complex, 10 to 25 percent slopes</p> <p>775 Acres</p>	<p><i>Major Land Resource Area:</i> 34</p> <p><i>Elevation:</i> 6,200 to 7,300 feet</p> <p><i>Mean annual precipitation:</i> 11 to 13 inches</p> <p><i>Mean annual air temperature:</i> 42 to 45 degrees F.</p> <p><i>Freeze-free period:</i> 75 to 95 days</p>	<p><i>Landform:</i> Hills</p> <p><i>Drainage class:</i> Well drained</p> <p><i>Slowest permeability:</i> .001 to 2.0 in./hr. (very slow to moderate)</p> <p><i>Available water capacity:</i> 4.2 to 9.2 inches (low to high)</p> <p><i>Runoff class:</i> Medium to Very high</p>	<p>Claypan – Stylers</p> <p>Clayey Foothills – Pinelli</p> <p>Rolling Loam - Taffom</p>
<p>199—Torriorthents-Torripsammets complex, 12 to 40 percent slopes</p> <p>636 Acres</p>	<p><i>Major Land Resource Area:</i> 34</p> <p><i>Elevation:</i> 6,000 to 7,200 feet</p> <p><i>Mean annual precipitation:</i> 9 to 13 inches</p> <p><i>Mean annual air temperature:</i> 42 to 45 degrees F.</p> <p><i>Freeze-free period:</i> 75 to 95 days</p>	<p><i>Landform:</i> Hillslopes</p> <p><i>Drainage class:</i> Well to excessively drained</p> <p><i>Slowest permeability:</i> 0.2 to 0.6 to 20 in./hr. (moderately slow to rapid)</p> <p><i>Available water capacity:</i> 1.4 to 2.1 inches (very low)</p> <p><i>Runoff class:</i> High</p>	<p>N/A</p>

Soils with combined acreages less than 100 acres were not included in the affected environment.

Environmental Consequences, Both Alternatives: There are no soil resource concerns on the Four Mile Allotment. Continued soil disturbance associated with livestock grazing would continue. Implementation of either alternative would have no adverse impacts. The addition of occasional sheep use under the Proposed Action would not increase the potential for adverse impacts.

Mitigative Measures: None

Name of specialist and date: Mark Lowrey, 03/23/09

UPLAND VEGETATION

Affected Environment: The predominate ecological sites within this allotment are Rolling Loam and Claypan. The Rolling Loam sites are dominated by Wyoming big sagebrush, with the primary understory vegetation being needleandthread and western wheatgrass; needleandthread increases as sandy soil increases. On areas of deep sandy soils, bitterbrush and Wyoming big sagebrush are co-dominant with needleandthread. On the claypan sites, low sagebrush is the dominant overstory with western wheatgrass and bluebunch wheatgrass being the dominant herbaceous understory. The last herbaceous utilization monitoring, 2001, showed light use, 27 to 29% utilization on needleandthread, bluebunch wheatgrass, and bluegrass.

Environmental Consequences, Proposed Action: There would be no adverse impacts from this alternative. Effects to upland vegetation would be neutral to beneficial with short term sheep use during the early season. Sheep tend to be more of an intermediate feeder, feeding equally on grasses, forbs, and shrubs where as cattle are true grazers and focus primarily on grasses and forbs. When grazing sheep, cattle numbers would be reduced and would provide the opportunity for less utilization on herbaceous species providing a balanced grazing pattern on all upland vegetation. Plus, by removing all livestock no later than 06/15 allows adequate growing season time for grazed plants to regrow and recover from defoliation prior to dormancy.

Environmental Consequences, No Action Alternative: There would be no adverse impacts from this alternative, current conditions would continue. There are no upland vegetation resource concerns on the Four Mile Allotment.

Mitigative Measures: None

Name of specialist and date: Mark Lowrey, 02/12/08

WILDLIFE, AQUATIC

Affected Environment: Four Mile Creek flows through public lands within this allotment. Riparian inventories conducted in 2003 found no aquatic species in this reach. Inventories of Four Mile Creek just upstream from this reach reported an unidentified minnow species. This reach of Four Mile Creek flows just outside the southwestern boundary of this allotment. It is likely that spring flows allow fish to use Four Mile Creek within this allotment.

Environmental Consequences, Both Alternatives: There would be no adverse affects. The proposed livestock grazing system, or the existing grazing system would maintain aquatic habitat along Four Mile Creek.

Mitigative Measures: None

Name of specialist and date: Timothy Novotny, 02/19/09

WILDLIFE, TERRESTRIAL

Affected Environment: The Four Mile Allotment provides year round habitats for mule deer, elk and pronghorn antelope including severe winter range for all three species. A variety of small mammals, songbirds and reptiles may be found within this allotment as well.

Environmental Consequences, Both Alternatives: There would be no adverse affect. The existing grazing system has allowed for healthy productive wildlife habitats that are capable of supporting diverse wildlife populations. The addition of periodic sheep use would not change overall impacts to wildlife habitats.

Mitigative Measures: None

Name of specialist and date: Timothy Novotny, 02/19/09

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	MDW 02/20/09		
Forest Management	MAL 01/28/09		
Hydrology/Ground		MDW 02/20/09	
Hydrology/Surface		MAL 01/28/09	
Paleontology		MDW 02/20/09	
Range Management		MAL 01/28/09	
Realty Authorizations		MAA 02/17/09	
Recreation/Travel Mgmt		GMR 2/17/09	
Socio-Economics		MAA 02/17/09	
Solid Minerals		JAM 02/20/09	
Visual Resources		GMR 2/17/09	
Wild Horse & Burro Mgmt	MAL 01/28/09		

CUMULATIVE IMPACTS SUMMARY: This allotment and areas surrounding have historically been grazed by both sheep and cattle. Numerous maintained and unmaintained roads exist throughout the area, including on the allotment. These roads are used regularly by local residents and ranchers as well by as the primary recreation users in the area, hunters. Wildlife populations in the area are high, especially for deer and elk that compete with livestock for available forage throughout the area. The Proposed Action to continue grazing on this allotment is compatible with other uses, both historic and present, and would not add any new or detrimental impacts to those that are already present.

STANDARDS

PLANT AND ANIMAL COMMUNITY (animal) STANDARD:

The Four Mile Allotment currently provides healthy productive habitats for a variety of wildlife species including severe winter range for mule deer, elk and pronghorn antelope. Both the Proposed Action and the No Action Alternative would be capable of maintaining wildlife habitats throughout this allotment in a condition that would continue to support healthy wildlife populations. This standard is currently being met and would continue to be met under either the Proposed Action or the No Action Alternative.

Name of specialist and date: Timothy Novotny, 02/19/09

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

There are no threatened or endangered species or habitats for such species present within the Four Mile Allotment. This allotment does provide habitat for bald eagles and greater sage-grouse. Bald eagles would not be impacted by either the Proposed Action or the No Action Alternative. Livestock may occasionally destroy a sage-grouse nest under either the Proposed Action or the No Action Alternative. The No Action Alternative has a slightly lower probability of this occurring due to the fact that some grazing would occur outside of the nesting season. In either case, the probability this would occur is low and would not impact greater sage-grouse populations permanently. This standard is currently being met and would continue to be met with either the Proposed Action or the No Action Alternative.

Name of specialist and date: Timothy Novotny, 02/19/09

PLANT AND ANIMAL COMMUNITY (plant) STANDARD:

Vegetative components include native plant species expected to occur on this allotment. Overall, vegetation composition, diversity, and production are what would be expected for this area. There is an acceptable level of noxious/invasive species occurring on this allotment, this is not adversely affecting the meeting this standard. Vegetation treatments on this allotment have created various seral stages of vegetation and facilitate this standard continuing to be met. This standard is met on this allotment and would continue to be met under the Proposed Action or No Action Alternative.

Name of specialist and date: Mark Lowrey, 02/13/09

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

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

Name of specialist and date: Hunter Seim, 02/19/09

RIPARIAN SYSTEMS STANDARD:

Since the construction of the riparian pasture fence and limited livestock use in the riparian pasture the segment of Four Mile Creek within the Four Mile Allotment has been rated as Functioning at Risk (FAR) with an upward trend. This upward trend is continuing to improve riparian conditions toward Proper Functioning Condition (PFC). This standard is met and would continue to be met with implementation of the Proposed Action or No Action Alternative.

Name of specialist and date: Mark Lowrey, 03/23/09

WATER QUALITY STANDARD:

The water quality standard for public lands within the Four Mile Creek Watershed is met. Runoff waters from snowmelt and rain would drain from the watershed into stream segments that are supporting classified uses. No stream segments or tributaries within the Four Mile Allotment are listed as having impaired water quality. This standard is being met and would continue to be met with implementation of the Proposed Action or No Action Alternative.

Name of specialist and date: Mark Lowrey, 03/23/09

UPLAND SOILS STANDARD:

Soils within the Four Mile Allotment are supporting native vegetation, are stable, and are not in danger of erosion beyond what would be expected for these soil types. This standard is being met and would continue to be met with implementation of the Proposed Action or No Action Alternative.

Name of specialist and date: Mark Lowrey, 03/23/09

PERSONS/AGENCIES CONSULTED: Uintah and Ouray Tribal Council, Colorado Native American Commission, Colorado State Historic Preservation Office, Flattops Ranch LLC.

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
DOI-BLM-CO-N010-100-2009-0034 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 permit/lease may be modified if additional information indicates that revision is necessary to conform with 43 CFR 4180.