

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-N010-2009-0029 EA

CASEFILE/ALLOTMENT NUMBER: 0501104/04618 & 0502035/04619

PROJECT NAME: Renewal of the grazing permit on the Thornburgh Mtn. #04618
and East Thornburgh #04619 Allotments.

LEGAL DESCRIPTION: see Allotment Map, Attachment 1

Thornburgh Mtn. #04618

T. 3 N., R. 92 W., Sec. 3 E ½ SE ¼, portion of the SW ¼ SW ¼
Sec. 9 E ½ E ½ SE ¼
Sec. 10 All except a portion of NE ¼ NW ¼
Sec. 11 SW ¼ except a portion of the SE ¼
S ½ NW ¼, NW ¼ NW ¼, SW ¼ NE ¼
Sec. 14 NW ¼ NW ¼, NW ¼ SW ¼
Sec. 15 N ½ S ½, SW ¼ SW ¼
Sec. 16 E ½ E ½
Sec. 21 portion of NE ¼ NE ¼ NE ¼
Sec. 22 N ½ NW ¼ NW ¼

1,034 Acres BLM Lands
645 Acres Private Lands
1,679 Total Acres

East Thornburgh #04619

T. 3 N., R. 92 W., Sec. 13 majority of the SW ¼ NW ¼
Sec. 14 S ¼, W ½ SE ¼, S ½ NE ¼,
majority of the NW ¼
Sec. 15 majority of the SE ¼
Sec. 22 NE ¼ NE ¼ NE ¼
Sec. 23 N ½ NW ¼, NW ¼ NE ¼

343 Acres BLM Lands
429 Acres Private Lands
772 Total Acres

APPLICANT: Wellman Ranching Co. & Doug and Lucille Wellman

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.

Portions of both allotments under the Proposed Action are located within Management Unit 1, Eastern Yampa River. The Proposed Action is compatible with the management objectives for this unit. Management objectives of the Eastern Yampa River management unit are to realize the potential for development of coal, oil, and gas resources. The Proposed Action would not conflict with these objectives.

NEED FOR PROPOSED ACTION: The Proposed Action is needed to respond to expiring permits. The previous permit for the East Thornburgh Allotment was issued for the term 03/01/2006 to 02/28/2009, and pursuant to Section 106 and 150 of P.L. 110-329, was extended for one year with an expiration date of 02/28/2010. The previous permit for the Thornburgh Mtn. Allotment was issued for the term 03/01/1999 to 02/28/2009, and pursuant to Section 106 and 150 of P.L. 110-329, was extended for one year with an expiration date of 02/28/2010. These permits are 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 U.S. Bureau of Land Management has the authority to renew the livestock grazing permits 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 17, 2007 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 management category “Custodial (C)” Thornburgh Mountain Allotment #04618 and East Thornburgh Allotment #04619 both lie approximately 20 miles south and southwest of Craig, north of the Thornburgh historic site, and on Thornburgh Mountain proper. The 1990 Range Program Summary for both allotments documented the grazing preference as possibly exceeding the carrying capacity. A field inspection on both allotments indicates actual use and grazing capacity are consistent with the grazing preference. Access is from Colorado State Highway #13, Moffat County Road #45, and across the permittee’s private land. Elevation of these allotments varies from approximately 7,000 to 8,050 feet. Surface runoff from the public land drains mostly into Milk Creek to the northwest.

Wellman Ranching Co. has held the permit on the Thornburgh Mtn. Allotment since 1971. In 2006 the Wellman’s purchased what is known as the Ferguson property from Winslett Ranch. Winslett Ranch transferred all AUMs attached to the E. Thornburgh Allotment to the Ferguson property resulting in an application and transfer (CO-100-2007-024 CX) of the E. Thornburgh Allotment to the Wellman’s.

Both allotments were last renewed for ten year terms in 1999 as analyzed in CO-016-LS-99-022-EA. Authorizations for both allotments analyzed in the 1999 EA were as follows.

Allotment Name & Number	Livestock Number & Kind	Dates		%PL	AUMs
		From	To		
Thornburgh Mtn #04618 Wellman Ranching Co	495 Sheep or 99 Cattle	06/15	09/10	42	120
East Thornburgh #04619 Winslett Ranch Inc.	46 Cattle	10/01	12/31	28	39

Special Terms and Conditions and Rationale to Changes in Management:

For the Thornburgh Mtn Allotment, livestock numbers and kind (sheep or cattle) will be determined by the permittee. Use will not exceed a two (2) month period during the specified season of use (06/15 – 09/10), nor a total of 120 AUMs.

A reduction of 17 AUMs from current grazing preference of 56 AUMs on the East Thornburgh allotment. This action is necessary as a result of: 1) the permittee’s predator problem with making sheep use and 2) termination of an annual base property lease to a sheep operator.

A name change for the permittee will occur on Thornburgh Mountain allotment #4618 to Wellman Ranching Company - Douglas Wellman, General Partner.

Currently, in the past few years the permittee has been requesting different season of uses on his annual applications. Some requests have been denied because there are outside of the permitted season of use. Changes to the applicant’s livestock operation have resulted in the changes presented under the Proposed Action in this 2009 EA.

Both allotments were part of the 2007 Axial Landscape Health Assessment, stop 3 on E. Thornburgh and stop 4 on Thornburgh Mtn. All standards are met at both locations.

Because of the recent acquisition of the E. Thornburgh Allotment the Wellman’s have two authorizations, one for each allotment, 0501104/Thornburgh Mtn. & 0502035/E. Thornburgh. This will remain unchanged due to base property ownership attached to each allotment.

DESCRIPTION OF PROPOSED ACTION AND ALTERNATIVES:

Proposed Action

Renew the grazing permits on the East Thornburgh Allotment #04619 and Thornburgh Mtn. Allotment #04618, for a period of ten years and expiring February 28, 2019. There will also be a name and address change for the Thornburgh Mtn. authorization The permits would be renewed as follows:

From:

Permit #0501104, Wellman Ranching Co.

Allotment Name & Number	Livestock Number & Kind	Dates		%PL	AUMs
		From	To		
Thornburgh Mtn. #04618	495 Sheep	06/15	09/10	42	120

Special Terms and Conditions

1. For the Thornburgh Mtn. Allotment, Livestock numbers and kind (sheep or cattle) may be determined by the permittee. Use will not exceed a two (2) month period during the specified season of use (06/15 – 09/10), nor a total of 120 AUMs.

Permit #0502035, Doug and Lucille Wellman

Allotment Name & Number	Livestock Number & Kind	Dates		%PL	AUMs
		From	To		
East Thornburgh #04619	46 Cattle	10/01	12/31	28	39

To:

Permit #0501104, Wellman Ranching Co.

Allotment Name & Number	Livestock Number & Kind	Dates		%PL	AUMs
		From	To		
Thornburgh Mtn. #04618	500 Sheep	06/29	08/02	42	48
	150 Cattle	06/29	08/02	42	<u>72</u>
				Total	120

Special Terms and Conditions

There will be a 7 day flexibility period for on and off dates as long as total AUMs are not exceeded.

Permit #0502035, Doug and Lucille Wellman

Allotment Name & Number	Livestock Number & Kind	Dates		%PL	AUMs
		From	To		
East Thornburgh #04619	46 Cattle	05/01	07/30	28	39

Special Terms and Conditions

Livestock numbers may vary; the above schedule represents an authorized date range. Every third or fourth year, livestock will be started later in May and stay on until July 30. This is in coordination with permittees vegetation management on CRP/private lands within allotment boundaries.

There will be a 7 day flexibility period for on and off dates as long as total AUMs are not exceeded.

No Action Alternative

Renew the grazing permits on the East Thornburgh Allotment #04619 and Thornburgh Mtn. Allotment #04618, continuing previous authorized use for a period of ten years and expiring February 28, 2019.

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: There are no special designation air sheds or non-attainment areas nearby that would be affected by either alternative.

Environmental Consequences, Both Alternatives: Authorizing cattle grazing in the E. Thornburgh and Thornburgh Allotments 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, 03/03/09

AREA OF CRITICAL ENVIRONMENTAL CONCERN

Affected Environment: Not Present

Environmental Consequences: None

Mitigative Measures: None

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

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 each allotment by Robyn Watkins Morris, Little Snake Field Office Archaeologist on February 12, 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 allotments in this EA. The table shows known cultural resources, eligible and need data, and those that are anticipated to be in each 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)
4618	0	1678	0%	0	44	13
4619	0	771	0%	0	17	5

(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.)

No Class III cultural resource inventories have been conducted within either of the allotments. One Class II cultural resource inventory has been conducted and confirmed that 5MF495 is not where it was originally mapped during the 1970s. It is outside of the allotment on private land. No cultural resources have been identified within the allotments, however, the historic Battle of Milk Creek occurred approximately one mile to the south.

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, gullyng, and increased potential for unlawful collection and vandalism. Continued livestock use may cause substantial ground disturbance and cause cumulative, long term, irreversible adverse effects to historic properties.

Both allotments contain very steep BLM lands and it is unlikely that there would be much damage from grazing on those lands under the Proposed Action or No Action Alternatives. Although, the timing for livestock use is changing to earlier dates on the East Thornburg Allotment. This change may raise the potential for impacts due to grazing at a time of higher soil moisture and lower shear strength in the soils, which would lead to increased potential of damage to buried cultural resources. Under the No Action Alternative for East Thornburg allotment, there would be less potential impact to buried cultural resources as the soils would likely be frozen. The change to later dates for the Thornburg Mountain Allotment would allow for some drying out of the soils, which would help to reduce potential impacts to buried cultural resources. Placing saltblocks along roads or anywhere in the allotments would potentially impact historic properties if placed in close proximity to such resources.

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

Name of Specialist and date: Robyn Watkins Morris, 02/12/09

ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE

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

Environmental Consequences, Both Alternatives: The project area 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, 02/11/09

FLOOD PLAINS

Affected Environment: There are no flood plains on public lands within either allotment.

Environmental Consequences, Both Alternatives: There would be no adverse impact to floodplains that lie outside either allotment with implementation of either alternative.

Mitigative Measures: None

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

INVASIVE, NONNATIVE SPECIES

Affected Environment: Within these allotments, and surrounding allotments, noxious weeds

and other undesirable weed species are minimal in the overall plant communities. However, the occurrence of whitetop and hounds tongue is a problem in isolated areas of the Axial Basin, to the north of these allotments. In cooperation with the State of Colorado, the permittee/lessees, Moffat County, Rio Blanco County, and the BLM have implemented an integrated weed management program.

Environmental Consequences, Both Alternatives: Grazing within the terms and conditions under either alternative would have no adverse or neutral impacts.

Mitigative Measures: None

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

MIGRATORY BIRDS

Affected Environment: Vegetation on the allotments consists of sagebrush and mixed mountain shrub communities. These ecosystems typically provide nesting habitat for a large array of migratory birds during the breeding season. Priority species on the USFWS Birds of Conservation Concern List that may nest in the area include: sage sparrow, Brewer's sparrow and Virginia's warbler. Additional birds that may nest in the area include vesper sparrow and sage thrasher. Golden eagles and red tailed hawks are known to nest and forage on the allotments.

Environmental Consequences, Proposed Action: While livestock grazing can directly impact reproductive success of migratory songbirds by trampling of nests, it is more likely that it indirectly influences reproductive success due to changes in vegetation such as species composition, height or cover. The Proposed Action would eliminate livestock use during the fall when forage species are dormant, and all use would occur during the spring and summer months. Under the Proposed Action, grazing would be permitted in the Thornburgh Mountain Allotment for just over 30 days in the summer and the East Thornburgh Allotment would be grazed for approximately two months between May 1 and July 30. Grazing on the Thornburgh Mountain Allotment would have minimal influence on migratory bird nesting, as grazing would not start until the latter part of the breeding season. Grazing would coincide with migratory bird nesting in the East Thornburgh Allotment. Spring grazing has the potential to reduce the amount of herbaceous cover available for nest concealment. Herbaceous cover is an important component for several ground nesting species. Standard terms and conditions would keep utilization at a moderate rate. This, combined with the removal of fall grazing (resulting in an increase of residual cover available for nest concealment), would minimize any potential impacts to ground nesting species. Overall, the Proposed Action would be compatible with maintaining local migratory bird populations.

Environmental Consequences, No Action Alternative: The No Action Alternative would permit grazing on the Thornburgh Mountain Allotment for two months between 6/15 and 9/10. The East Thornburgh allotment would be grazed for three months from October until the end of

December. Under this grazing system, both allotments were found to be meeting all land health standards and providing suitable and productive habitat for a variety of migratory bird species. Habitat conditions would remain unchanged under this alternative.

Mitigative Measures: None

Name of specialist and date: Desa Ausmus, 02/23/09

NATIVE AMERICAN RELIGIOUS CONCERNS

A letter was sent to the Uinta and Ouray Tribal Council, Southern Ute Tribal Council, Ute Mountain Ute Tribal Council, 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, 02/12/09

PRIME & UNIQUE FARMLANDS

Affected Environment: There are no prime or unique farmlands within either allotment. There are no prime or unique farmlands that lie outside either allotment that would be affected by either alternative.

Environmental Consequences, Both Alternatives: None

Mitigative Measures: None

Name of specialist and date: Mark Lowrey, 03/04/09

T&E AND SENSITIVE ANIMALS

Affected Environment: Both allotments provide habitat for two BLM sensitive species, greater sage grouse and Columbian sharp-tailed grouse. The CDOW has mapped winter and nesting habitat on public lands in both allotments. There are no leks located within the boundaries of either allotment. The allotment does not provide habitat for any federally threatened or endangered species.

Environmental Consequences, Proposed Action: Livestock grazing can influence grouse reproductive success either directly by trampling nests or indirectly by altering habitat components such as species composition, height or cover. The Proposed Action would eliminate livestock use during the fall when forage species are dormant, and all use would occur during the spring and summer months. The Proposed Action would permit grazing in the Thornburgh Mountain Allotment for just over 30 days in the summer and the East Thornburgh Allotment

would be grazed for approximately two months between May 1 and July 30. Grazing on the Thornburgh Mountain Allotment would have minimal influence on grouse nesting, as grazing would not start until the latter part of the nesting season. Grazing would coincide with grouse nesting in the East Thornburgh Allotment. Removing fall grazing would increase the amount of residual herbaceous cover available for nest concealment during the initial nesting period, however, residual cover and any initial growth would be subject to grazing beginning May 1. Every three to four years, the onset of grazing would be later in May. Although early spring grazing can potentially reduce herbaceous cover important for nesting grouse, standard terms and conditions contained in every grazing permit would help to minimize these potential impacts. BLM lands would also be grazed in combination with private lands, potentially reducing the change of excess herbaceous removal in any given area. Moderate utilization levels of spring grazing, combined with the removal of fall grazing, would leave enough residual and new growth cover to be compatible with nesting for both grouse species.

Environmental Consequences, No Action Alternative: The No Action Alternative would permit grazing on the Thornburgh Mountain Allotment for two months between 6/15 and 9/10. The East Thornburgh allotment would be grazed for three months from October until the end of December. Under this grazing system, both allotments were providing suitable and productive habitat for both greater sage grouse and Columbian sharp-tailed grouse. Habitat conditions would remain unchanged under this alternative.

Mitigative Measures: None

Name of specialist and date: Desa Ausmus, 02/23/09

T&E AND SENSITIVE PLANTS

Affected Environment: There are no federally listed threatened or endangered or BLM sensitive plant species present on either allotment.

Environmental Consequences: None

Mitigative Measures: None

Name of specialist and date: Hunter Seim, 02/10/09

WASTES, HAZARDOUS OR SOLID

Affected Environment: There are no hazardous materials present on Thornburgh Mtn. or E. Thornburgh Allotments.

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 allotments.

Mitigative Measures: None

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

WATER QUALITY – GROUND

Affected Environment: Surficial deposits of Quaternary alluvium overlay Upper Cretaceous Williams Fork Formation rocks, containing groundwater aquifers, in the area of the proposed action.

Environmental Consequences, Both Alternatives: Grazing activity would not impact groundwater bearing aquifers in the subsurface. A continuation of livestock grazing would not increase appreciably any runoff that would impact subsurface useable groundwater bearing aquifers.

Mitigative Measures: None.

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

WATER QUALITY – SURFACE

Affected Environment: Most of the public lands within both allotments are on steep brushy slopes and hillsides. There are no perennial water bodies or riparian systems on public lands within either allotment. There are numerous small ephemeral drainages on public land within both allotments.

Environmental Consequences, Both Alternatives: There would be no adverse affects since there are no major drainages or surface water within the areas of proposed action.

Mitigative Measures: None

Name of specialist and date: Mark Lowrey, 03/06/09

WETLANDS/RIPARIAN ZONES

Affected Environment: There are no lentic or lotic riparian systems on public lands within either allotment.

Environmental Consequences: None

Mitigative Measures: None

Name of specialist and date: Mark Lowrey, 03/06/09

WILD & SCENIC RIVERS

Affected Environment: Not Present

Environmental Consequences: None

Mitigative Measures: None

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

WSAs, WILDERNESS CHARACTERISTICS

Affected Environment: Not Present

Environmental Consequences: None

Mitigative Measures: None

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

NON-CRITICAL ELEMENTS

SOILS

Affected Environment: The Thornburgh Mountain and E. Thornburgh Allotment contain the following soils.

Soil Mapping Unit	Map Unit Setting	Descriptions	Ecological Site
108—Jerry-Cochetopa complex, 5 to 35 percent slopes 335 Acres	<i>Major Land Resource</i> Area: 48A Elevation: 7,200 to 8,600 feet Mean Annual Precipitation: 18 to 20 inches Mean Annual Air Temperature: 37 to 40 degrees F. Freeze-Free Period: 50 to 75 days	<i>Landform: Mountainsides</i> <i>Drainage Class:</i> Well drained <i>Slowest Permeability:</i> Very slow <i>Available Water Capacity:</i> About 9.6 in (high) <i>Runoff Class:</i> Very high	Brushy Loam

<p>112—Kemmerer-Moyerson complex, 20 to 40 percent slopes</p> <p>225 Acres</p>	<p><i>Major Land Resource</i> <i>Area:</i> 34 <i>Elevation:</i> 6,000 to 7,000 feet Mean annual precipitation: 11 to 13 inches <i>Mean Annual Air Temperature:</i> 42 to 45 degrees F. <i>Freeze-Free Period:</i> 75 to 95 days</p>	<p><i>Landform:</i> Hills <i>Drainage Class:</i> Well drained <i>Slowest permeability:</i> .001 to .06 in./hr. (very slow) <i>Available water capacity:</i> About 3.6 inches (low) <i>Runoff class:</i> Very high</p>	<p>Clayey Slopes</p>
<p>117—Lamphier-Jerry complex, 25 to 65 percent slopes</p> <p>248 Acres</p>	<p><i>Major Land Resource</i> <i>Area:</i> 48A <i>Elevation:</i> 7,200 to 8,600 feet Mean annual precipitation: 18 to 20 inches Mean annual air temperature: 37 to 40 degrees F. <i>Freeze-free period:</i> 50 to 75 days</p>	<p><i>Landform:</i> Mountainsides, plateaus <i>Drainage class:</i> Well drained <i>Slowest permeability:</i> 0.6 to 2.0 in./hr. (moderate) <i>Available water capacity:</i> About 8.7 inches (moderate) <i>Runoff class:</i> Medium</p>	<p>Brushy Loam</p>
<p>149—Pinelli loam, 3 to 12 percent slopes</p> <p>138 Acres</p>	<p><i>Major Land Resource</i> <i>Area:</i> 34 <i>Elevation:</i> 6,200 to 7,000 feet Mean annual precipitation: 12 to 14 inches Mean annual air temperature: 42 to 45 degrees F. <i>Freeze-free period:</i> 75 to 95 days</p>	<p><i>Landform:</i> Benches, alluvial fans <i>Drainage class:</i> Well drained <i>Slowest permeability:</i> .06 to 0.2 in./hr. (slow) <i>Available water capacity:</i> About 9.4 inches (high) (moderate) <i>Runoff class:</i> Very high</p>	<p>Clayey Foothills</p>
<p>160—Rock outcrop-Torriorthents complex, 50 to 75 percent slopes</p> <p>127 Acres</p>	<p><i>Major Land Resource</i> <i>Area:</i> 34 <i>Elevation:</i> 5,900 to 8,000 feet Mean annual precipitation: 9 to 16 inches Mean annual air temperature: 42 to 48 degrees F. <i>Freeze-free period:</i> 75 to 105 days</p>	<p><i>Landform:</i> Hills, cliffs, mountainsides, & hillslopes <i>Available water capacity:</i> About 0.0 – 1.5 inches (very low) <i>Drainage class:</i> Well drained <i>Slowest permeability:</i> 0.6 to 2.0 in./hr. (moderate) <i>Runoff class:</i> Very high</p>	<p>N/A</p>

<p>197—Torriorthents-Rock outcrop, sandstone complex, 25 to 75 percent slopes</p> <p>613 Acres</p>	<p><i>Major Land Resource Area: 34</i> <i>Elevation: 6,000 to 11,280 feet</i> <i>Mean annual precipitation: 9 to 16 inches</i> <i>Mean annual air temperature: 42 to 48 degrees F.</i> <i>Freeze-free period: 75 to 105 days</i> <i>Note: This unit is 40 percent very shallow to shallow</i> Torriorthents on backslopes, 20 percent moderately deep Torriorthents on backslopes, and 30 percent rock outcrop.</p>	<p><i>Landform: Hills, mountainsides</i> <i>Drainage class: Well drained</i> <i>Slowest permeability: 0.6 to 2.0 in./hr. (moderate)</i> <i>Available water capacity: About 1.5 inches (very low)</i> <i>Runoff class: Very high</i></p>	<p>N/A</p>
<p>206—Ustorhents, frigid-Borolls complex, 25 to 75 percent slopes</p> <p>432 Acres</p>	<p><i>Major Land Resource Area: 48A</i> <i>Elevation: 7,000 to 8,500 feet</i> <i>Mean annual precipitation: 16 to 20 inches</i> <i>Mean annual air temperature: 37 to 45 degrees F.</i> <i>Freeze-free period: 50 to 85 days</i> <i>Note: Included in this unit in the Williams Fork Mountains area are Abor soils on footslopes. Included in this unit in the Tanks Peak area are Rencot soils on back slopes.</i></p>	<p><i>Landform: Mountainsides</i> <i>Drainage class: Well drained</i> <i>Slowest permeability: 0.6 to 2.0 in./hr. (moderate)</i> <i>Available water capacity: About 2.5 – 4.5 (low to very low)</i> <i>Runoff class: High</i></p>	<p>N/A</p>

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

Environmental Consequences, Proposed Action: There are no soil resource concerns on either allotment. On the Thornburgh Mountain Allotment, the addition of cattle along with existing sheep use would have no additional impacts. The change in season of use to drier season grazing plus the reduced period of time livestock would be authorized is much more conducive to maintaining and improving soil health, structure, and function. On the E. Thornburgh Allotment the change in season of use from fall/winter when soils can stay wet longer, to late spring/summer when soils can dry quicker, will reduce the potential for livestock

impacts to wet soils, resulting in beneficial impacts to soil resources. For both allotments, the benefits of not grazing on wet soils, compared to dryer soils, from livestock hoofs penetrating deeper on wet soils is: less compaction, less surface disturbance, less damage to plant root systems, and maintaining a uniformed soil surface allowing for better surface runoff and reducing erosion potential. Both allotments would receive late season rest from livestock grazing which will allow any late season vegetation growth to occur without defoliation, producing more protective standing and litter cover for soils prior to the fall/winter wet season.

Environmental Consequences, No Action Alternative: There are no current soil resource concerns on either allotment. There would be no adverse impacts current conditions would continue.

Mitigative Measures: None

Name of specialist and date: Mark Lowrey, 03/06/09

UPLAND VEGETATION

Affected Environment: Vegetation on both allotments consist of sagebrush-grassland and mountain shrub vegetation types. On the E. Thornburgh Allotment, the sagebrush grassland area is located on the Clayey Slope Ecological Site with Wyoming big sage and snowberry as the dominant vegetative cover and western wheatgrass, prairie junegrass, Kentucky bluegrass, and bluebunch wheatgrass being the co-dominant grasses, with Indian paintbrush, penstemmon, astragalus, phlox, plus many others comprising the forb component. On the Thornburgh Mtn. Allotment the mountain shrub community is located on the Brushy Loam Ecological Site with deciduous shrubs such as serviceberry, snowberry, and Gambel oak as the dominant vegetative cover and western wheatgrass, prairie junegrass, basin wildrye, and mountain brome being the co-dominant grasses, with arrowleaf balsamroot, penstemmon, lupine, yarrow, and many others comprising the forb component. A review of the utilization monitoring information collected on the Thornburgh Mtn. Allotment indicates that key forage plants are not over-utilized by the amount of specified livestock grazing permitted.

Environmental Consequences, Proposed Action: There would be beneficial effects to both allotments under the proposed action. The E. Thornburgh Allotment would benefit with grazing beginning on 05/01, allowing adequate spring growth on forage plants so that early season defoliation would not over stress these plants. Plus, removing livestock by the end of July at the latest, would allow for undisturbed late summer and fall regrowth. Combined with the deferral every 3 or 4 years the Proposed Action would provide for a vigorous and stable native plant community. On the Thornburgh Mtn. Allotment grazing after seed set for most species and coming off with adequate time for fall regrowth would provide for a vigorous and stable native plant community.

Environmental Consequences, No Action Alternative: There are no vegetation resource concerns. There would be no adverse impacts current conditions would continue.

Mitigative Measures: None

Name of specialist and date: Mark Lowrey, 02/05/09

WILDLIFE, AQUATIC

Affected Environment: There is no aquatic wildlife habitat present on public lands within either allotment.

Environmental Consequences: None

Mitigative Measures: None

Name of specialist and date: Desa Ausmus, 02/23/09

WILDLIFE, TERRESTRIAL

Affected Environment: Both allotments are dominated by sagebrush-grass and mountain shrub plant communities. Sagebrush ecosystems typically provide habitat for big game species as well as small mammals, reptiles and birds. The allotment provides important habitat for wintering big game species. The allotments are both mapped severe winter range for elk. Data from an allotment visit showed the vegetative community is in good condition, providing suitable and productive habitat for a variety of terrestrial wildlife species.

Environmental Consequences, Proposed Action: The Proposed Action would permit grazing in the Thornburgh Mountain Allotment for just over 30 days in the summer and the East Thornburgh Allotment would be grazed for approximately two months between May 1 and July 30. These grazing schedules would allow for ample growing season rest and adequate plant recovery periods. BLM lands in the allotment would also be grazed in conjunction with private lands, allowing for rotation during the grazing period. The proposed grazing regime is compatible with maintaining suitable terrestrial wildlife habitat.

Environmental Consequences, No Action Alternative: The No Action Alternative would permit grazing on the Thornburgh Mountain Allotment for two months between 6/15 and 9/10. The East Thornburgh allotment would be grazed for three months from October until the end of December. Under this grazing system, both allotments are providing suitable and productive habitat for a variety of wildlife species. These conditions would be expected to continue under the No Action Alternative.

Mitigative Measures: None

Name of specialist and date: Desa Ausmus, 02/23/09

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 02/09/09		
Forest Management	MAL 01/28/09		
Hydrology/Ground		MDW 02/09/09	
Hydrology/Surface		MAL 03/09/09	
Paleontology		MDW 02/09/09	
Range Management		MAL 01/28/09	
Realty Authorizations		MAA 02/11/09	
Recreation/Travel Mgmt		GMR 02/09/09	
Socio-Economics		MAA 02/11/09	
Solid Minerals		JAM 02/10/09	
Visual Resources		GMR 02/09/09	
Wild Horse & Burro Mgmt	MAL 01/28/09		

CUMULATIVE IMPACTS SUMMARY: These allotments 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:

Both allotments provide habitat for a variety of wildlife species. Both alternatives would sustain viable plant communities and continue to provide productive habitat for terrestrial wildlife. This standard is met and would continue to be met under the Proposed Action or No Action Alternative.

Name of specialist and date: Desa Ausmus, 02/23/09

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

The allotments provide habitat for greater sage grouse and Columbian sharp-tailed grouse, both BLM sensitive species. This standard is currently being met for both grouse species. Both the Proposed Action and the No Action Alternative would continue to meet this standard.

Name of specialist and date: Desa Ausmus, 02/23/09

PLANT AND ANIMAL COMMUNITY (plant) STANDARD:

Vegetative components include native plant species expected to occur on both the E. Thornburgh and Thornburgh Mtn. Allotments. Overall, vegetation composition, diversity, and production are what would be expected for this area. This standard is met and would continue to be met under the Proposed Action, and No Action Alternative.

Name of specialist and date: Mark Lowrey, 02/17/09

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

There are no federally listed threatened or endangered or BLM sensitive plant species present on either allotment. This standard does not apply.

Name of specialist and date: Hunter Seim, 02/10/09

RIPARIAN SYSTEMS STANDARD:

There are no riparian systems present on either allotment. This standard does not apply.

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

WATER QUALITY STANDARD:

There is not a quantitative data record sufficient to indicate non-compliance with these criteria. However, based on examination of the other upland soil and plant standards (in this document) plus the absence of riparian systems, there is no reason to suspect water quality impairment in either allotment. This standard is met and would continue to be met under the Proposed Action or No Action Alternatives.

Name of specialist and date: Mark Lowrey, 03/06/09

UPLAND SOILS STANDARD:

Biological soil crust are present throughout the landscape providing an important function of stable soils found on both allotments. Stable soils are present on both allotments. The amount of vegetation produced annually from perennial species provides for the limited forage demands of authorized livestock grazing and still provides adequate protection to maintain and enhance soil structure and function. This standard is met and would continue to be met under the Proposed Action or No Action Alternative.

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

PERSONS/AGENCIES CONSULTED: Uintah and Ouray Tribal Council, Colorado Native American Commission, Colorado State Historic Preservation Office, Wellman Ranching Co.

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-N010-2009-0029 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.