

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

## ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

**EA NUMBER:** CO-100-2006-052 EA

**LEASE/ALLOTMENT NUMBER:** 0501312 / 04642

**PROJECT NAME:** Renewal of the grazing lease #0501190 for the **Stagecoach Allotment #04642.**

**LEGAL DESCRIPTION:** See allotment map, Attachment 1

Stagecoach Allotment #04642      T3N R85W, parts of sections 1 and 12  
82 acres BLM  
593 acres private  
675 acres total

**APPLICANT:** Stagecoach Ski Corporation

**PLAN CONFORMANCE REVIEW:** The Proposed Action is subject to the following plan:

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

Date Approved: April 26, 1989

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

The proposed action is located within Management Unit 1 (Eastern Yampa River). The proposed action is compatible with the management objectives for this unit, which is to provide for the development of the coal, oil and gas resources.

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

Other Documents:

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

Rangeland Reform Final Environmental Impact Statement. December, 1994.

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

**NEED FOR PROPOSED ACTION:** BLM lease #0501312, which authorizes livestock grazing on the Stagecoach Allotment #04642, licensed to Stagecoach Ski Corporation, expired on 02/28/2000. It was renewed under section 123 of public law 106-113 for a term of six years. It was renewed again under Sec 325, title III, HR 2691 (P.L. 108-108) for a term of one year under the same terms and conditions.

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

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

**PUBLIC SCOPING PROCESS:** BLM Little Snake Resource Area sent out a Notice of Public Scoping on September 22, 2003, to determine the level of public interest, concern and resource conditions on the grazing allotments that were up for renewal in FY 2000 and FY 2006. A Notice of Public Scoping was posted on the Internet, at the Colorado BLM Home Page, asking for public input on permit/lease renewals. Individual letters were sent to the affected permittees/lessees, informing them their permit/lease was up for renewal and requesting any information they wanted included in or taken into consideration during the renewal process. The issuance of grazing permits/leases for these allotments has been carefully analyzed within the scope of the specific action being taken, resource issues or concerns, and public input received.

**BACKGROUND:**

The Stagecoach Allotment #04642 is located approximately five miles southeast of Oak Creek, CO. The allotment lies south of Routt County Road 12 and west of Routt County Road 212. The allotment consists of approximately 675 acres with 82 acres of BLM land and 593 acres of private. The existing lease is for 4 cattle from 06/01 to 10/31, 100% PL, 20 AUMs.

**DESCRIPTION OF PROPOSED ACTION AND ALTERNATIVES:**

**PROPOSED ACTION:**

Renew the 10-year grazing lease for Stagecoach Ski Corporation #0501312, expiring February 28, 2016, with the following changes:

From:

<u>Allotment Name and #</u>	<u>Livestock # and kind</u>	<u>Dates</u>	<u>%PL</u>	<u>AUMs</u>
Stagecoach #04642	4 C	06/01 to 10/31	100	20

To:

Stagecoach #04642	20 S	06/01 to 10/31	100	20
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The above lease is subject to the Standard and Common Terms and Conditions, see Attachment 2.

**NO ACTION ALTERNATIVE:** The No Action Alternative would be to renew the existing grazing lease #0501312 without changes.

The existing lease #0501312 is as follows:

<u>Allotment Name and #</u>	<u>Livestock # and kind</u>	<u>Dates</u>	<u>%PL</u>	<u>AUMs</u>
Stagecoach #04642	4 C	06/01 to 10/31	100	20

**NO GRAZING ALTERNATIVE:** No livestock grazing would take place under this alternative. This alternative was eliminated from detailed study because it was not a realistic, implementable alternative, nor did 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 may require this action.

## **AFFECTED ENVIRONMENT/ENVIRONMENTAL CONSEQUENCES/MITIGATION MEASURES**

### **CRITICAL RESOURCES**

#### **AIR QUALITY**

Affected Environment: Air quality will not be affected by either of the alternatives.

Environmental Consequences: None

Mitigative Measures: None

Name of specialist and date: Ole Olsen 3/24/06

#### **AREA OF CRITICAL ENVIRONMENTAL CONCERN**

Affected Environment: Not present

Environmental Consequences: Not applicable

Mitigative Measures: Not applicable

Name of specialist and date: Jim McBrayer 5/4/06

#### **CULTURAL RESOURCES**

Affected Environment: The final E.I.S. for Rangeland Reform '94 notice published in the **Federal Register**, December 30, 1994 and guidance from the BLM Washington and BLM Colorado State Office's established requirements for permit renewal analyses.

Data developed here, as well as in the allotment specific analysis, 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 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. Other data sets may be used for the GIS maps developed from the Little Snake Field Office Geographic Information System (GIS) as that data is developed in future studies.

The GIS maps will be developed using USGS and BLM data that show the springs, creeks and rivers, intermittent drainage, riparian areas, and slopes greater than 30 percent. The BLM data that reflects water features potentially present in the project areas is incomplete at this time. This data represents the "best available data" that the BLM office currently has developed at this time.

These maps, as well as the cultural programs current understanding of prehistoric settlement and subsistence patterns, as reflected in the archaeological record, will be used to guide initial survey efforts to locate past human activity areas in each allotment. These areas will be evaluated for potential livestock concentration impacts. The effort to identify and evaluate cultural resources in association with livestock concentration areas will take place during upcoming field seasons.

The table below is based on the allotment specific analysis developed for the allotment in this environmental assessment. Copies of the allotment specific analysis are on file at the Little Snake Field Office. The table shows cultural resources, eligible and need data, and those that are anticipated to be in each allotment. Fieldwork will be carried out in current fiscal year or in subsequent years.

Allotment Number	Acres Surveyed at a Class III Level <sup>1 2</sup>	Acres <u>NOT</u> Surveyed at a Class III Level	Percent -%-Of Allotment Inventoried at a Class III Level	Eligible or Need Data Sites – Known in Allotment (Site Numbers)	Estimated Sites for the Allotment** (Total Number)	Estimated Eligible or Need Data Sites in the Allotment (Number)
04642	none <sup>1</sup>	82	none	none	2.17	.65

(Note: \*Acres are derived from GIS allotment maps. 1. BLM only acres or 2. BLM and other acres in the allotment. See allotment specific analysis form. \*\*Estimates of site densities are based on known inventory data. Estimates represent a minimum figure which may be revised upwards based on future inventory findings.)

Environmental Consequences: Monitoring of the previous years range permit renewal environmental documents, FY98, FY99, FY2000, FY01, FY02, FY03, FY04, and FY05 has been carried out for some of the known eligible and need data sites identified in the cultural records review. These reports represent three field seasons of evaluation work on the eligible and need data sites. The fieldwork conducted during 2000, 2001, 2002, 2003, and 2005 identified impacts to some of the cultural resources being evaluated. This information is covered in the following reports:

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Other project specific Class III surveys initiated by the BLM, industry, or ranching will identify previously unrecorded cultural resources within these allotments. These cultural resources will be incorporated into current and/or future range permit renewal Section 106 review efforts.

Mitigative Measures: Standard Stipulations for cultural resources are included in Standard Terms and Conditions for the grazing permit (Attachment 2).

**Allotment Specific Stipulations for this EA:**

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

Springs, riparian areas, streams or creeks, and intermittent drainage will have a Class III survey in the area of concentration that includes an additional 50 feet around the impacted area. Identified cultural resources will be recorded to include the total site area and mitigation developed.

Springs will have a Class III survey in the area of concentration and include an additional 50 feet around the impacted area. Identified cultural resources will be recorded to include the total site area and mitigation developed.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Name of specialist and date: Henry S. Keesling 3/7/06

### **ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE**

Affected Environment: The project would not directly affect the social, cultural, or economic well being and health of Native American, minority or low-income populations. The project area is relatively isolated from population centers, so no populations would be affected by physical or socioeconomic impacts from the project.

Environmental Consequences: None

Mitigative Measures: None

Name of Specialist and Date: Louise McMinn 03/09/06

### **FLOOD PLAINS**

Affected Environment: The public land tract consists of ridge areas and northerly facing hillslopes. Headwaters of Middle Creek are present but gradients downstream would preclude floodplain development.

Environmental Consequences: None

Mitigative Measures: None

Name of specialist and date: Ole Olsen 3/24/06

### **INVASIVE, NONNATIVE SPECIES**

Affected Environment: Houndstongue, cheatgrass and yellow allysum are known to occur in this region. Whitetop, black henbane, Canada thistle, and other biennial thistles are known to occur in this area as well. There is the potential for noxious weeds, such as Dalmatian toadflax, knapweeds, and others, to exist and spread in these areas.

Environmental Consequences: Vehicular access to public land for grazing operations, livestock and wildlife movement, as well as wind and water can cause invasive species to spread into new areas. Surface disturbance activities associated with livestock concentration can increase weed presence. Land practices and land uses by the livestock operator and their weed control efforts will largely determine the identification and potential occurrence of weeds within the allotment. The use of best management practices and mitigation of livestock disturbance can facilitate control of invasive species and reduce the potential of long term infestation of annual and noxious weed species. All principles of Integrated Pest Management would be employed to control noxious weeds on public lands.

Mitigative Measures: None

Name of specialist and date: Curtis Bryan 3/20/06

### **MIGRATORY BIRDS**

Affected Environment: The Stagecoach Allotment provides both foraging and nesting habitat for a variety of migratory birds. One species on the USFWS's Bird of Conservation Concern List, Williamson's sapsucker, likely nests in the area. Additional bird species that may nest in the allotment include mountain bluebird and orange-crowned warbler.

Environmental Consequences: Livestock grazing under either the Proposed Action or the No Action Alternative has a low potential to result in the take of any migratory bird. Grazing by sheep or cattle could result in the accidental destruction of ground nests through trampling. This impact is expected to be minimal and isolated and would not influence populations of migratory birds on a landscape level.

Mitigative Measures: None

Name of specialist and date: Desa Ausmus 3/8/06

### **NATIVE AMERICAN RELIGIOUS CONCERNS**

Affected Environment: A letter was sent to the Uinta and Ouray Tribal Council, Southern Ute Tribal Council, Ute Mountain Utes Tribal Council, and the Colorado Commission of Indian Affairs on 11 January 2006. The letter discussed the range permits that the BLM would be working on in FY06/FY07. Comments received from the Tribal Council's did not foresee any impacts. No other comments were received (Letters on file at the Little Snake Field Office, Craig, Colorado.)

Name of specialist and date: Henry S. Keesling 3/7/06

### **PRIME & UNIQUE FARMLANDS**

Affected Environment: Not present

Environmental Consequences: None

Mitigative Measures: None

Name of specialist and date: Ole Olsen 3/24/06

### **T&E SPECIES - SENSITIVE PLANTS**

Affected Environment: There are no BLM sensitive plant species present on the Stagecoach Allotment #04642.

Environmental Consequences: None

Mitigative Measures: None

Name of specialist and date: Hunter Seim 3/8/06

### **T&E SPECIES – ANIMALS**

Affected Environment: Public lands within the allotment do not provide habitat for any federally listed threatened or endangered animal species. The allotment provides general habitat for the Columbian sharp-tailed grouse, a BLM sensitive species. The allotment does not provide any critical habitat, such as nesting or winter, for sharp-tailed grouse.

Environmental Consequences: No Federally ESA listed animal species would be affected by the proposed action or the no action alternative. An allotment visit was conducted in the fall of 2005. Sharp-tailed grouse habitat in the allotment was found to be in excellent condition, providing adequate forage and cover during all seasons. The proposed action would change the class of livestock from cattle to sheep. Sheep typically favor shrubs and forbs over grasses throughout much of the grazing season, but grasses are utilized as well. A change in livestock class would likely decrease utilization on grasses and increase utilization on forbs and shrubs. However, the native shrub and forb component of the ecosystem exhibited high vigor and would be resilient to the new grazing system. The proposed action would result in negligible decreases in shrubs and forbs. The proposed action is not expected to have significant impacts to grouse or grouse habitat within the allotment. Under the no action alternative, the grazing system would not change, and the habitat would continue to provide suitable, productive habitat for sharp-tailed grouse.

Mitigative Measures: None

Name of specialist and date: Desa Ausmus 3/14/06

## **T&E SPECIES – PLANTS**

Affected Environment: There are no federally listed threatened or endangered plant species present on the Stagecoach Allotment #04642.

Environmental Consequences: None

Mitigative Measures: None

Name of specialist and date: Hunter Seim 3/8/06

## **WASTES, HAZARDOUS OR SOLID**

Affected Environment: None

Environmental Consequences: The change of class of livestock from cattle to sheep will not impact hazardous material.

Mitigative Measures: None

Name of specialist and date: DJ 3/8/06

## **WATER QUALITY - GROUND**

Affected Environment: The areas affected by the proposed action will have some ground water aquifers containing meteoric water. The ground water quality in the areas will range from potable to useable in aquifers within porous and fractured formations (mostly sandstone).

Environmental Consequences: Due to the small number of livestock and the small area affected, they will be no adverse impacts to ground water quality within the proposed action area. The proposed action will be conducted in accordance with existing Colorado laws for water quality. Specifically, all permit activities must comply with the applicable water quality regulations in The Colorado Water Quality Control Act, and they will be in conformance with the classifications and numeric standards for water quality established by the Colorado Water Quality Control Commission.

Mitigative Measures: None

Name of specialist and date: Fred Conrath 03/21/06

## **WATER QUALITY - SURFACE**

Affected Environment: The headwaters of both Middle Creek and an unnamed stream drainage originate on the public land parcel and flow northeasterly into Stagecoach Reservoir.

Drainage from the western portion of this tract would flow towards an unnamed tributary which flows northwesterly to the Yampa River. Stagecoach Reservoir is listed on the Monitoring and Evaluation List for suspected impairment by Dissolved Oxygen (DO).

Environmental Consequences: Water quality will likely continue to be met for the Yampa River, Middle Creek and the other unnamed tributaries of the Yampa River and Stagecoach Reservoir regardless of the alternative selected. No measurable effect to DO levels in Stagecoach Reservoir will result from implementing either of the grazing alternatives.

Mitigative Measures: None

Name of specialist and date: Ole Olsen 3/24/06

### **WETLANDS/RIPARIAN ZONES**

Affected Environment: No riparian system is known to occur on the public lands.

Environmental Consequences: None

Mitigative Measures: None

Name of specialist and date: Ole Olsen 3/24/06

### **WILD & SCENIC RIVERS**

Affected Environment: Not present

Environmental Consequences: Not applicable

Mitigative Measures: Not applicable

Name of specialist and date: Jim McBrayer 5/4/06

### **WILDERNESS, WSAs**

Affected Environment: Not present

Environmental Consequences: Not applicable

Mitigative Measures: Not applicable

Name of specialist and date: Jim McBrayer 5/4/06

### **NON-CRITICAL ELEMENTS**

## **SOILS**

Affected Environment: Soils are well covered by mountain shrub and aspen communities with a diverse understory of forbs and grasses. Soils were determined to be stable based on the soil surface characteristics observed on the allotment. No visual evidence of soil or litter movement caused by rain or surface water flows was apparent; no rills or gullies were present. The plant communities provide good cover over the soils, as well as good diversity, density and composition of plant species to provide for a mixture of root types for holding upland soils in place.

Environmental Consequences: None

Mitigative Measures: None

Name of specialist and date: Ole Olsen 3/24/06

## **VEGETATION**

Affected Environment: Vegetation on the allotment consists of a mix of mountain shrub and aspen communities. Dominant shrubs include serviceberry, snowberry, rose and rubber rabbitbrush. There is a large and diverse understory component of forbs and grasses, including brome, bluegrass, wheatgrass, and wild rye.

Environmental Consequences: Vegetative conditions under the current grazing scenario are good. If sheep are authorized to use the area, there will be more use on forbs and possibly shrubs and less use on grasses. Use by sheep would be expected to be light, with a reduction in use on grass species as well. Herding of sheep would prevent overuse in any one area.

Mitigative Measures: None

Name of specialist and date: Andrea Minor

## **WILDLIFE, AQUATIC**

Affected Environment: The allotment does not provide habitat for aquatic wildlife species.

Environmental Consequences: None

Mitigative Measures: None

Name of specialist and date: Desa Ausmus 3/8/06

## **WILDLIFE, TERRESTRIAL**

Affected Environment: The Stagecoach Allotment is composed mostly of aspen and mixed aspen/conifer woodlands. It provides habitat for big game species as well as small mammals and birds.

Environmental Consequences: A visit to the allotment in 2005 showed the vegetative community to be in good condition, providing suitable and productive habitat for terrestrial wildlife. The proposed action would change the class of livestock from cattle to sheep. Sheep typically favor shrubs and forbs over grasses throughout much of the grazing season, but grasses are utilized as well. A change in livestock class would likely decrease utilization on grasses and increase utilization on forbs and shrubs. However, the native shrub and forb component of the ecosystem exhibited high vigor and would be resilient to the new grazing system. The Proposed Action would not significantly impact terrestrial wildlife habitat within this allotment. The No Action alternative would continue to provide suitable and productive wildlife habitat.

Mitigative Measures: None

Name of specialist and date: Desa Ausmus 3/14/06

**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		FC 3/21/06	
Forest Management		DJ 3/8/06	
Hydrology/Ground		FC 3/21/06	
Hydrology/Surface		OO 3/24/06	
Paleontology		RE 3/7/06	
Range Management		AJM 3/23/06	
Realty Authorizations	LM 3/9/06		
Recreation/Travel Mgmt		RS 3/21/06	
Socio-Economics		LM 3/9/06	
Solid Minerals		RE 3/7/06	
Visual Resources		JM 3/20/06	
Wild Horse & Burro Mgmt	AJM 3/6/06		

**CUMULATIVE IMPACTS SUMMARY:** Due to the inaccessibility of this parcel to the public, there are few impacts not related to livestock grazing. Adverse impacts to public land health due to this occasional use have not been noted.

## **STANDARDS**

**PLANT AND ANIMAL COMMUNITY (animal) STANDARD:** A visit to the allotment in 2005 showed that this standard was met on the allotment. The vegetative community has very high vigor and provides productive habitat for a variety of big game, small mammal and songbird species. Both the Proposed Action and the No Action Alternative should continue to meet this standard.

Name of specialist and date: Desa Ausmus 3/14/06

**SPECIAL STATUS, THREATENED AND ENDANGERED SPECIES (animal) STANDARD:** There are no threatened or endangered animal species or habitat present on public lands within this allotment. The allotment provides habitat for the Columbian sharp-tailed grouse, a BLM sensitive species. The allotment is currently in excellent condition, providing suitable habitat for this species. Both the Proposed Action and the No Action Alternative should continue to meet this standard.

Name of specialist and date: Desa Ausmus 3/14/06

**PLANT AND ANIMAL COMMUNITY (plant) STANDARD:** An interdisciplinary team conducted a Landscape Health Assessment in July of 2005 and found this standard to be met. The vegetative community was productive and contained a high diversity of species. Both the Proposed Action and No Action Alternative would allow this standard to continue to be met in the future.

Name of specialist and date: Andrea Minor 3/6/06

**SPECIAL STATUS, THREATENED AND ENDANGERED SPECIES (plant) STANDARD:** There are no federally listed threatened or endangered or BLM sensitive plant species present on the Stagecoach Allotment #04642. This standard does not apply.

Name of specialist and date: Hunter Seim 3/8/06

**RIPARIAN SYSTEMS STANDARD:** No riparian system is known to occur on the public lands in the Stagecoach Allotment. This standard does not apply.

Name of specialist and date: Ole Olsen 3/24/06

**WATER QUALITY STANDARD:** The water quality standard for healthy rangelands will be met with implementation of either the Proposed Action or No Action Alternatives. Runoff from snowmelt and summer storms will drain from the Stagecoach Allotment into stream segments that are presently supporting classified uses. No stream segments are listed as impaired. Dissolved oxygen levels in Stagecoach Reservoir will not be affected by either alternative.

Name of specialist and date: Ole Olsen 3/24/06

**UPLAND SOILS STANDARD:** The upland soil standard for healthy rangelands will be met with the implementation of either the Proposed Action or No Action Alternatives. Upland soils were determined to be very stable during the allotments resource evaluation.

Name of specialist and date: Ole Olsen 3/24/06

**PERSONS/AGENCIES CONSULTED:** Stagecoach Ski Corp., Uintah and Ouray Tribal Council, Colorado Native American Commission, Colorado State Historic Preservation Office.

## FONSI

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.

## **MITIGATION MEASURES:**

### **Cultural:**

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

Springs, riparian areas, streams or creeks, and intermittent drainage will have a Class III survey in the area of concentration that includes an additional 50 feet around the impacted area. Identified cultural resources will be recorded to include the total site area and mitigation developed.

Springs will have a Class III survey in the area of concentration and include an additional 50 feet around the impacted area. Identified cultural resources will be recorded to include the total site area and mitigation developed.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

**COMPLIANCE PLAN(S):** Compliance with the renewed grazing lease and its associated terms and conditions will be accomplished through the Little Snake Range Management Program. As priorities and funding allow, livestock grazing will be monitored, including periodic utilization checks and allotment condition evaluations, to determine whether annual use is consistent with the grazing preference and to assure compliance. Periodic assessments will be conducted to determine land health standards. Changes will be made to the lease, based on monitoring and/or assessments, when determined necessary to further protect land health.

**SIGNATURE OF PREPARER:**

**DATE SIGNED:**

**SIGNATURE OF ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEWER:**

**DATE SIGNED:**

**SIGNATURE OF AUTHORIZED OFFICIAL:**

**DATE SIGNED:**

**ATTACHMENTS:**

Attachment 1. Map

Attachment 2. Standard and Common Terms and Conditions

## ATTACHMENT 2

### 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**

- 1) Grazing use will not be authorized in excess of the amount of specified use 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.
- 2) Unless otherwise specified, 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 these terms needs to recognize recurring livestock management that includes opportunity for regrowth, opportunity for spring growth prior to grazing, or growing season deferment.
- 3) 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.
- 4) 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.

- 5) 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.

- 6) 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.
- 7) 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.
- 8) Application of a chemical or release of pathogens or insects on public lands must be approved by the authorized officer.
- 9) 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.