

**United States Department of the Interior
Bureau of Land Management**

**Finding of No Significant Impact
Environmental Assessment
DOI-BLM-CO-S010-2012-0034 EA**

January 2016

**Term Grazing Permit Renewal
Gypsum Valleys Allotment (#08068)**

Location: Gypsum Valleys Grazing Allotment

Applicant/Address: Jimmy G. Suckla & Larry L. Suckla

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FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT

Environmental Assessment

DOI-BLM-CO-S010-2012-0034

Term Grazing Permit Renewal on the Gypsum Valleys (#08068) Allotment

INTRODUCTION:

The Bureau of Land Management (BLM) has conducted an environmental analysis (DOI-BLM-CO-S010-2012-0034) for a proposed action to address the renewal of a new 10-year term grazing permit for the Gypsum Valleys Allotment (#08068) in the Big Gypsum and Little Gypsum Valleys area in San Miguel County. The project would authorize the re-issuance of a 10-year term grazing permit to Jimmy G. Suckla and Larry L. Suckla for grazing within the Gypsum Valleys Allotment (#08068). This new 10-year term grazing permit would authorize 1,176 animal units months (AUMs) of forage for grazing use by cattle in this allotment. All authorized grazing use would be in accordance with the livestock management actions outlined in the Adaptive Management Alternative (Alternative C) of the environmental assessment.

The underlying need for the proposal would be met while accomplishing the objective of continuing to authorize permitted livestock grazing on the public lands consistent with the BLM's multiple use mandate defined by the Federal Land Policy and Management Act (FLPMA) at 1-2 and the approved Tres Rios Field Office Resource Management Plan (RMP, 2015) and Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS, 2013), while modifying current management to provide for improvement in land health consistent with FLPMA (pg. 2), the approved Resource Management Plan (pg. II-50) and the federal grazing regulations pertaining to the Fundamentals of Rangeland Health and Standards and Guidelines for Grazing Administration at 43 CFR § 4180.

The Gypsum Valleys Allotment project area consists of approximately 41,000 acres of public land and 4,100 acres of private lands. Geographically the allotment encompasses the Big Gypsum and Little Gypsum Valleys. The northwestern most corner of the allotment borders the Utah State line and Coyote Wash and runs southeast along county road 20R to Highway 141, creating the southwest boundary. Elevations range from 5,500' to 7,700' in elevation and are characterized by plant communities ranging from lower elevation salt desert shrub and shortgrass plant communities to black and/or big sagebrush communities, through the pinyon-juniper vegetation types. The Environmental Assessment (DOI-BLM-CO-S010-2012-0034) is attached to this Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI). A no action alternative, Permittees Proposed Alternative, Adaptive Management Alternative, Reduced Grazing Alternative and a No Grazing Alternative were analyzed in the environmental assessment.

FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT:

Based upon a review of the EA and the supporting documents, I have determined that the project is not a major federal action and will not significantly affect the quality of the human environment, individually or cumulatively with other actions in the general area. No environmental effects meet the definition of significance in context or intensity as defined in 40 CFR 1508.27 and do not exceed those effects described in the Tres Rios Field Office RMP/FEIS. Therefore, an environmental impact statement is not needed.

This finding is based on the context and intensity of the project as described:

Context: The project is a site-specific action directly involving approximately 41,000 acres of BLM administered land that by itself does not have international, national, regional, or state-wide importance.

Intensity: The following discussion is organized around the Ten Significance Criteria described in 40 CFR 1508.27 and incorporated into resources and issues considered (includes supplemental authorities Appendix 1 H-1790-1) and supplemental Instruction Memorandum, Acts, regulations and Executive Orders.

The following have been considered in evaluating intensity for this proposal:

- 1. Impacts may be both beneficial and adverse.** The proposed action would impact resources as described in the EA. Mitigating measures to reduce impacts to upland soils, watershed conditions, wetlands/riparian zones, vegetation, noxious and invasive non-native species, wildlife, special status species, and cultural resources were incorporated in the design of the action alternative. None of the environmental effects discussed in detail in the EA and associated appendices are considered significant, nor do the effects exceed those described in the 2015 Tres Rios Field Office, RMP/FEIS.
- 2. The degree to which the selected alternative will affect public health or safety.** The health and safety of the general public would not be affected by this action.
- 3. Unique characteristics of the geographic area such as proximity to historic or cultural resources, park lands, prime farm lands, wetlands, wilderness, wild and scenic rivers, or ecologically critical areas.** Known historic and/or cultural resources of the area have been inventoried and potential impacts mitigated in the design of the alternatives. The following issues were considered and are either not present or would not be affected by the Proposed Action and do not detailed analysis: Visual Resources (*no effect*), Water Quality (*no effect*), Wilderness/Wilderness Study Areas (*no effect*), Gypsum Valleys ACEC (*no effect*), Native American Religious Concerns (*no effect*) Migratory Birds (*no effect*).
- 4. The degree to which the effects on the quality of the human environment are likely to be highly controversial.** There is no scientific controversy over the nature of the impacts.
- 5. The degree to which the possible effects on the human environment are highly uncertain or involve unique or unknown risks.** The project is not unique or unusual. The BLM has experience implementing similar actions in similar areas. The environmental effects to the human environment are fully analyzed in the EA. There are no predicted effects on the human environment that are considered to be highly uncertain or involve unique or unknown risks.

6. **The degree to which the action may establish a precedent for future actions with significant effects or represents a decision in principle about a future consideration.** The actions considered in the selected alternative were considered by the interdisciplinary team within the context of past, present, and reasonably foreseeable future actions. Significant cumulative effects are not predicted. A complete analysis of the direct, indirect, and cumulative effects of the selected alternative and all other alternatives is described in Chapter 4 of the EA.
7. **Whether the action is related to other actions with individually insignificant but cumulatively significant impacts – which include connected actions regardless of land ownership.** The interdisciplinary team evaluated the possible actions in context of past, present and reasonably foreseeable actions. Significant cumulative effects are not predicted. A complete disclosure of the effects of the project is contained in Chapter 4 of the EA.
8. **The degree to which the action may adversely affect districts, sites, highways, structures, or other objects listed in or eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places or may cause loss or destruction of significant scientific, cultural, or historical resources.** The project will not adversely affect districts, sites, highways, structures, or other objects listed in or eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places, nor will it cause loss or destruction of significant scientific, cultural, or historical resources.
9. **The degree to which the action may adversely affect an endangered or threatened species or its habitat that has been determined to be critical under the Endangered Species Act of 1973, or the degree to which the action may adversely affect: 1) a proposed to be listed endangered or threatened species or its habitat, or 2) a species on BLM's sensitive species list.** The proposed project was found to have no effect to federally listed species or BLM designated special status species.
10. **Whether the action threatens a violation of a federal, state, local, or tribal law, regulation or policy imposed for the protection of the environment, where non-federal requirements are consistent with federal requirements.** The project does not violate any known federal, state, local or tribal law or requirement imposed for the protection of the environment. State, local, and tribal interests were given the opportunity to participate in the environmental analysis process. Furthermore, as a result of tribal coordination for this project no concerns were identified for the proposed project.



Authorized Officer

1-11-10

Date