

U.S. Department of the Interior
Bureau of Land Management
White River Field Office
220 E Market St
Meeker, CO 81641

ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

NUMBER: DOI-BLM-CO-110-2012-0012-EA

CASEFILE/GRAZING PERMIT NUMBER: 0501446

PROJECT NAME: Grazing Permit for the Lower Fourteen Mile (06014), Johnson-Trujillo (06338), Douglas Creek (06342), and Coal Oil (06313) Allotments

LEGAL DESCRIPTION:

Township	Range	Sections, Lots, or Portions Thereof
2 North	103 West	24-27, 33-36
1 North	103 West	1, 2, 3, 11, 12
1 North	102 West	All
2 North	102 West	29-34
1 South	103 West	1, 2, 11, 12, 13
1 South	102 West	3-9, 17, 18
1 North	101 West	7, 18, 19, 30, 31
2 South	95 West	26, 27, 34, 35
3 South	95 West	2, 3, 9-15, 23

APPLICANT: Sam and Cheri Robinson

PURPOSE & NEED FOR THE ACTION: The purpose of this action is to renew a qualified applicant's grazing permit, and to modify the permit so progress can continue to be made to meet public land health standards while meeting the applicant's need. The need for the action is established by the BLM's responsibility under the Federal Lands Policy Management Act (FLPMA) and the Taylor Grazing Act, to respond to an applicant's request for a grazing authorization on public lands.

Decision to be Made: The BLM will decide whether or not to issue a grazing permit, and if so, with what terms and conditions.

SCOPING, PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT, AND ISSUES:

Scoping: Scoping was the primary mechanism used by the BLM to initially identify issues. Internal scoping was initiated when the project was presented to the White River Field Office (WRFO) interdisciplinary team on 11/15/2011. External scoping was conducted by posting this project on the WRFO's on-line National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) register on 03/20/2012.

Issues: No issues were identified during public scoping.

DESCRIPTION OF PROPOSED ACTION AND ALTERNATIVES:

Background/Introduction: Table 1 shows an acreage breakdown of the allotments involved with this permit renewal.

Table 1. Allotments Included in Permit #0501446

Allotment Name	Number	BLM Acres	State Acres	Private Acres	Total Acres
Lower Fourteen Mile	06014	3,030	0	854	3,884
Johnson-Trujillo	06338	19,263	0	147	19,410
Douglas Creek	06342	5,144	0	271	5,415
Coal Oil	06313	4,504	0	0	4504
Total acres:		31,941	0	1,272	33,213

The Coal Oil allotment is located approximately two miles northwest of the Rangely, Colorado in western Rio Blanco County. The Coal Oil allotment boundaries are formed by Highway 64 on the eastern boundary in Coal Oil Basin, a fenceline running across the top of Raven Ridge creates the western boundary, and Rio Blanco County Road (RBC) 102 and the White River form the southern boundary. The north boundary of the allotment is formed by a combination of fences and natural drainages within Coal Oil Basin (Map 1).

The Douglas Creek allotment is located directly south of Rangely, CO in western Rio Blanco County. The eastern border of the allotment is the Douglas Creek Drainage and the north boundary of the allotment is along the edge of the Rangely city limits. The western border of the allotment follows (RBC) 23 also known as the Dragon Road. The southern portion of the allotment is formed using various topographic barriers and drainages (Map 2).

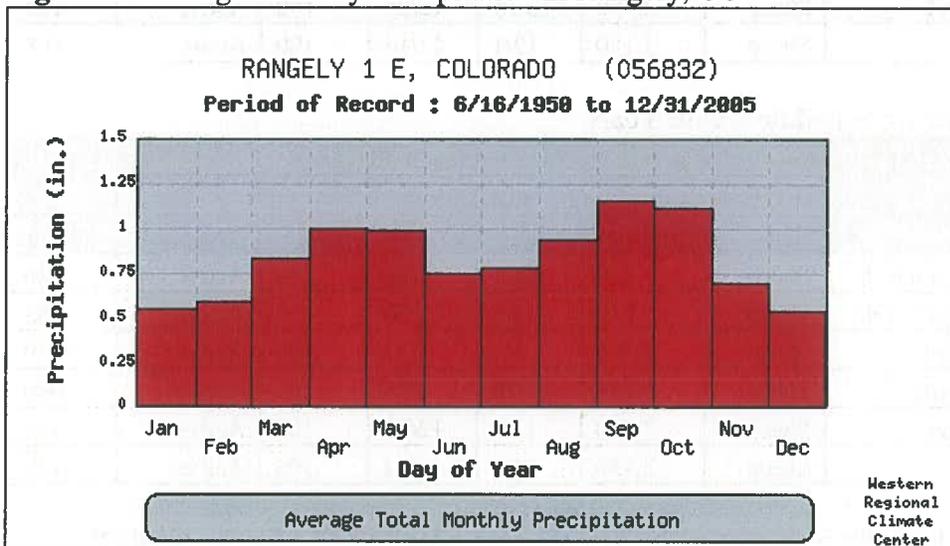
Johnson-Trujillo is adjacent to the Douglas Creek allotment to the west. Johnson-Trujillo shares its east border with the Douglas Creek allotment along the dragon road. The northern border of the allotment generally follows the White River, and the western and southern borders are a combination of fences and topographic features to mark the boundaries (Map 3).

The Lower Fourteen Mile allotment is located along upper Piceance Creek north of RBC 5. The western boundary of the allotment runs north from RBC 5 along the ridge top east of Pre-emption gulch. The boundary then turns west and goes into the bottom of thirteen-mile gulch.

The boundary then turns to the south and goes down the ridge-top between Dark Canyon and Gigandet Canyon. It then drops into Fourteen-mile canyon and goes east for 1.4 miles in the bottom of Fourteen-mile before turning back to the south along the top of an unnamed ridge back to RBC 5 (Map 4).

Annual precipitation for the three allotments near Rangely, Colorado is 9.88 inches, with the wettest months being September and October (see Figure 1). Precipitation has been below average in the years 2000, 2002-2004, and the spring of 2006. In 2012, the area also experienced extreme drought through August. Below average precipitation levels create a drought situation of lowered vegetative growth. In 2005 and 2011, the area received favorable moisture levels and timing that bolstered plant production.

Figure 1: Average Monthly Precipitation in Rangely, CO



Annual precipitation around the Lower Fourteen Mile allotment averages between 12-16 inches. Snowfall, which accounts for about 45 percent of the annual precipitation, occurs from mid October to late April and accumulates on the ground from December through March. The area also receives larger amounts of precipitation in the spring from April to May which is the source of most of the precipitation for vegetative growth.

Grazing allotments within the (WRFO) have been placed in one of three management categories that define the intensity of management: (1) Improve, (2) Custodial and (3) Maintain. These categories broadly define rangeland management objectives in response to an analysis of an allotment's resource characteristics, potential, opportunities, and needs. The four allotments analyzed in this document are classified as follows:

- Lower Fourteen Mile – Improve
- Johnson-Trujillo – Maintain
- Douglas Creek – Maintain
- Coal Oil - Custodial

Proposed Action (Alternative A): The Proposed Action is for a modified renewal of Sam and Cheri Robinson’s permit for a ten year period as outlined in tables 2 and 3.

Table 2: Proposed Grazing Schedule – Even Years

Even Year Grazing Schedule for Sam Robinson 0501446								
Allotment		Livestock		Grazing Period				
Number	Name	Kind	Number	Begin	End	% PL	Type Use	AUMs
06014	Lower Fourteen Mile	Sheep	430	5/21	6/30	74	Active	86
06014	Lower Fourteen Mile	Sheep	850	11/1	11/20	74	Active	83
06338	Johnson-Trujillo	Sheep	2,550	3/1	3/31	100	Active	520
06338	Johnson-Trujillo	Sheep	2,150	12/26	2/28	100	Active	1,090
06342	Douglas Creek	Sheep	2,550	4/1	4/14	100	Active	235
06342	Douglas Creek	Sheep	2,550	12/15	12/25	100	Active	184
06313	Coal Oil	Sheep	2,150	12/1	12/14	100	Active	198

Table 3: Proposed Grazing Schedule – Odd Years

Odd Year Grazing Schedule for Sam Robinson 0501446								
Allotment		Livestock		Grazing Period				
Number	Name	Kind	Number	Begin	End	% PL	Type Use	AUMs
06014	Lower Fourteen Mile	Sheep	430	5/21	6/30	74	Active	86
06014	Lower Fourteen Mile	Sheep	850	11/1	11/20	74	Active	83
06338	Johnson-Trujillo	Sheep	2,550	3/1	3/31	100	Active	520
06338	Johnson-Trujillo	Sheep	2,150	12/26	2/28	100	Active	1,090
06342	Douglas Creek	Sheep	2,550	12/1	12/25	100	Active	419
06313	Coal Oil	Sheep	2,150	4/1	4/14	100	Active	198

This Proposed Action includes a change in the percent public land (%PL) for the Coal Oil allotment. Currently this allotment is shown as 63% PL, with a large majority of the private land owned by Chevron. The Proposed Action will include separating out the private lands owned by Chevron USA Inc. (henceforth Chevron) keeping only BLM lands as part of the Coal Oil allotment. Management of private lands surrounding the BLM will be the responsibility of the private land owners.

This proposal also includes a reduction in AUMs on the Johnson-Trujillo, Douglas Creek, and Coal Oil allotments. On Johnson-Trujillo, there would be a 412 AUM reduction, on the Douglas Creek allotment there would be a 122 AUM reduction, and on Coal Oil there would be a 97 AUM reduction. These reductions are the result of a slight reduction in sheep numbers from 2,650 to 2,550, and the addition of the Coal Oil allotment to the permittees’ permit. The Coal Oil allotment was recently acquired by the applicant, and the addition of the Coal Oil allotment allows the rancher to spread out use over a larger area.

With the exception of Lower Fourteen Mile, use will remain primarily in the winter with some used extending into the early spring. Early spring use in April will be rotated between the Coal Oil and Douglas Creek allotments. This will reduce use during the critical growth period on these two allotments, and increase the opportunity for plant maintenance recovery.

The Lower Fourteen Mile allotment is used in the spring/early summer for a short time and then again in the fall for a short time. Use in the spring is considered light and should provide adequate time for vegetative growth, reproduction, and recovery.

Limits of Flexibility:

The permittee will be provided flexibility during the grazing year from the submitted plan of operation for which does not require prior approval from the BLM. This flexibility will be limited to on or off dates and number of animals to adjust to changing climatic changes, forage variability, and operational needs. This flexibility will be limited to 10 days either side of the on or off dates provided total days of use do not exceed 10 days from the schedule approved in the annual plan of operations. The permittee will also be able to adjust number of animals by 10% (+/-) from the annual plan of operation provided the total AUMs used does not exceed the AUMs scheduled.

Flexibilities that require approval by the BLM are adjustments made beyond the above criteria. BLM approved flexibilities and/or changes to this plan may be required due to such factors as forage influences from grazing, drought, fire, and/or water availability.

Rangeland Improvements Necessary to Implement the Grazing System:

No rangeland improvements (RI) are proposed to implement the grazing system. Herders will constantly be with sheep keeping them in the proper area removing the need for additional fencing on the Coal Oil allotment where private lands will be separated from the BLM land. Future evaluations of allotment conditions may identify improvements that would aid in achieving objectives in which case, a separate Environmental Assessment (EA) would be completed to approve any such new RI on a site specific basis.

Grazing Permit Terms and Conditions: The following terms and conditions as required by 43 CFR 4130.3 would be included in the grazing permit issued under this alternative:

1. The permittee or lessee must provide reasonable administrative access across private and leased lands to the BLM for the orderly management and protection of the public lands, as outlined 43 CFR 4130.3-2(h).
2. It is unlawful for the permittee, agents or employees to knowingly disturb or collect cultural, historical or paleontological materials on public lands. If cultural, historical or paleontological materials are found, including human remains, funerary items or objects of cultural patrimony. The permittee is to stop activities that might disturb such materials, and notify the authorized officer immediately.
3. No grazing use can be authorized under this grazing permit/lease during any period of delinquency in the payment of amounts due in settlement for unauthorized grazing use.
4. Grazing use authorized under this grazing permit/lessee may be suspended, in whole or in part, for violation by the permittee/lessee of any of the provisions of the rules or regulations now or hereafter approved by the Secretary of the Interior.

5. This grazing permit/lease is subject to cancellation, in whole or in part, at any time because of:
 - a. Noncompliance by the permittee/lessee with rules and regulations now or hereafter approved by the Secretary of the Interior.
 - 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 herein.
 - e. Repeated willful unauthorized grazing use
6. This grazing permit/lease is subject to the provisions of executive Order NO. 11246 of September 24, 1965, as amended, which sets forth nondiscrimination clauses. A copy of this order may be obtained from the authorized officer.
7. The permittee/lessee must own or control and be responsible for the management of the livestock authorized to graze under this grazing permit/lease.
8. The authorized officer may require counting and/or additional/special marking or tagging of the livestock authorized to graze under this grazing permit/lease.
9. The permittee's/lessee's grazing case file is available for public inspection as required by the Freedom of Information Act.
10. In order to improve livestock distribution on the public lands, all salt blocks and/or mineral supplements will not be placed within a 1/4 mile of any riparian area, wet meadow, or watering facility (either permanent or temporary) unless stipulated through a written agreement or decision in accordance with 43 CFR 4130.3-2(c).
11. In accordance with 43 CFR 4130.8-1(F): Failure to pay grazing bills within 15 days of the due date specified in the bill shall result in a late fee assessment. Payment made later than 15 days after the due date, shall include the appropriate late fee assessment. Failure to make payment within 30 days may be a violation of 43 CFR Sec. 4140.1(b) (1) and shall result in action by the authorized officer under 43 CFR Secs. 4150.1 and 4160.1-2 (Trespass).

Continuation of Current Management (Alternative B):
 Renewal of Sam Robinson’s permit (0501446) as outlined in table 4.

Table 4: Current Grazing Schedule on Authorization #0501446

Continuation of Current Grazing Management								
Allotment		Livestock		Grazing Period				
Number	Name	Kind	Number	Begin	End	% PL	Type Use	AUMs
06014	Lower Fourteen Mile	Sheep	430	5/21	6/30	74	Active	86
06014	Lower Fourteen Mile	Sheep	850	11/1	11/20	74	Active	83
06338	Johnson-Trujillo	Sheep	2,650	3/1	4/15	100	Active	802
06338	Johnson-Trujillo	Sheep	2,650	12/21	2/28	100	Active	1,220
06342	Douglas Creek	Sheep	2,650	4/16	4/26	100	Active	192
06342	Douglas Creek	Sheep	2,650	12/1	12/20	100	Active	349
06313	Coal Oil	Sheep	615	12/16	2/28	63	Active	191
06313	Coal Oil	Sheep	615	3/1	4/10	63	Active	104

The continuation of current management alternative would keep private lands associated with the Coal Oil allotment incorporated within the allotment boundary. No new RI would be necessary for implementation and all standard grazing terms and conditions will be incorporated into the permit.

No Livestock Grazing (Alternative C): Alternative C would be to deny the applicants’ application for renewal, and no grazing permit would be issued for the Lower Fourteen Mile, Coal Oil, Douglas Creek, and Johnson-Trujillo grazing allotments.

ALTERNATIVES CONSIDERED BUT NOT CARRIED FORWARD: None.

PLAN CONFORMANCE REVIEW: The Proposed Action is subject to and has been reviewed for conformance with the following plan (43 CFR 1610.5, BLM 1617.3):

Name of Plan: White River Record of Decision and Approved Resource Management Plan (White River ROD/RMP).

Date Approved: July 1, 1997

Decision Number/Page: Page 2-23

Decision Language: “With minor exceptions, livestock grazing will be managed as described in the 1981 Rangeland Program Summary (RPS). That document is the Record of Decision for the 1981 White River Grazing Management Final Environmental Impact Statement (Grazing EIS).”

AFFECTED ENVIRONMENT & ENVIRONMENTAL CONSEQUENCES

Standards for Public Land Health: In January 1997, the Colorado BLM approved the Standards for Public Land Health. These standards cover upland soils, riparian systems, plant and animal communities, special status species, and water quality. Standards describe conditions needed to sustain public land health and relate to all uses of the public lands. Because a standard exists for these five categories, a finding must be made for each of them in an environmental analysis (EA). Table 5 summarizes the assessment of each public land health standard for each allotment. The findings are located in specific elements listed below.

Table 5: Summary of Assessment of the Standards for Public Land Health

Standard	Current Situation			With Proposed Action		With No Grazing	
	Achieving or Moving Towards Achieving	Not Achieving	Causative Factors	Achieving or Moving Towards Achieving	Not Achieving	Achieving or Moving Towards Achieving	Not Achieving
#1-Upland Soils							
Lower Fourteen Mile	2,917	113	Historic Grazing, O&G Development	2,942	88	2,972	78
Coal Oil	4,241	263	Historic Grazing, O&G Development, Recreation	4,350	154	4,404	100
Douglas Creek	4,864	250	Historic Grazing, O&G Development, Recreation	4,914	200	4,929	185
Johnson Trujillo	18,701	562	Historic Grazing, O&G Development, Recreation	18,778	485	18,803	460
#2-Riparian Systems							
Lower Fourteen Mile	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Coal Oil	2.3	0	N/A	2.3	0	2.3	0
Douglas Creek	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Johnson Trujillo	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
#3-Plant Communities							
Lower Fourteen Mile	2,917	113	Historic Grazing O&G Development	2,942	88	2,972	78
Coal Oil	4,241	263	Historic Grazing, O&G Development, Recreation	4,350	154	4,404	100
Douglas Creek	4,864	250	Historic Grazing, O&G	4,914	200	4,929	185

Standard	Current Situation			With Proposed Action		With No Grazing	
	Achieving or Moving Towards Achieving	Not Achieving	Causative Factors	Achieving or Moving Towards Achieving	Not Achieving	Achieving or Moving Towards Achieving	Not Achieving
			Development, Recreation				
Johnson Trujillo	18,701	562	Historic Grazing, O&G Development, Recreation	18,778	485	18,803	460
#3-Animal Communities							
Lower Fourteen Mile	2,917	113	Historic Grazing O&G Development	2,942	88	2,972	78
Coal Oil	4,241	263	Historic Grazing, O&G Development, Recreation	4,350	154	4,404	100
Douglas Creek	4,864	250	Historic Grazing, O&G Development, Recreation	4,914	200	4,929	185
Johnson Trujillo	18,701	562	Historic Grazing, O&G Development, Recreation	18,778	485	18,803	460
#4-Special Status, T&E Species							
Lower Fourteen Mile	2,917	113	Historic Grazing O&G Development	2,942	88	2,972	78
Coal Oil	4,241	263	Historic Grazing, O&G Development, Recreation	4,350	154	4,404	100
Douglas Creek	4,864	250	Historic Grazing, O&G Development, Recreation	4,914	200	4,929	185
Johnson Trujillo	18,701	562	Historic Grazing, O&G Development, Recreation	18,778	485	18,803	460
#5-Water Quality							
Lower Fourteen Mile	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Coal Oil	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Douglas Creek 303 (d) list	0	7	Sediment Load	0	7	0	7
Johnson Trujillo	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A

Cumulative Effects Analysis Assumptions: Cumulative effects are defined in the Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ) regulations (40 CFR 1508.7) as “...the impact on the environment that results from the incremental impact of the action when added to other past, present, and reasonably foreseeable actions regardless of what agency (Federal or non-Federal) or person undertakes such other actions.” Table 6 lists the past, present, and reasonably foreseeable future actions within the area that might be affected by the Proposed Action; for this project the area considered was the Douglas Creek, Johnson-Trujillo, Coal Oil, and Lower Fourteen Mile allotments. However, the geographic scope used for analysis may vary for each cumulative effects issue and is described in the Affected Environment section for each resource.

Table 6: Past, Present, and Reasonably Foreseeable Actions

Action Description	STATUS		
	Past	Present	Future
Livestock Grazing	X	X	X
Wild Horse Gathers			
Recreation	X	X	X
Invasive Weed Inventory and Treatments	X	X	X
Range Improvement Projects : Water Developments Fences & Cattleguards	X	X	X
Wildfire and Emergency Stabilization and Rehabilitation	X	X	X
Wind Energy Met Towers			X
Oil and Gas Development: Well Pads Access Roads Pipelines Gas Plants Facilities	X	X	X
Power Lines	X	X	X
Seismic	X	X	X
Vegetation Treatments	X	X	X

Affected Resources:

The CEQ Regulations state that NEPA documents “must concentrate on the issues that are truly significant to the action in question, rather than amassing needless detail” (40 CFR 1500.1(b)). While many issues may arise during scoping, not all of the issues raised warrant analysis in an environmental assessment (EA). Issues will be analyzed if: 1) an analysis of the issue is necessary to make a reasoned choice between alternatives, or 2) if the issue is associated with a significant direct, indirect, or cumulative impact, or where analysis is necessary to determine the significance of the impacts. Table 7 lists the resources considered and the determination as to whether they require additional analysis.

Table 7: Resources and Determination of Need for Further Analysis

Determination¹	Resource	Rationale for Determination
Physical Resources		
PI	Air Quality	See discussion below.
NI	Geology and Minerals	Renewal of the grazing permit would have no impact on geologic or mineral resources.
PI	Soil Resources*	See discussion below.
PI	Surface and Ground Water Quality*	See discussion below.
Biological Resources		
PI	Wetlands and Riparian Zones*	See discussion below.
PI	Vegetation*	See discussion below.
PI	Invasive, Non-native Species	See discussion below.
PI	Special Status Animal Species*	See discussion below.
NP	Special Status Plant Species*	Known occurrences of special status plant species are over 600 m to the west of the Proposed Action. Special status plant species will not be affected by the Proposed Action.
PI	Migratory Birds	See discussion below.
PI	Aquatic Wildlife*	See discussion below.
PI	Terrestrial Wildlife*	See discussion below.
NP	Wild Horses	The permit renewal is not located within the Piceance-East Douglas Herd Management Area, the North Piceance or West Douglas Herd Areas.
Heritage Resources and the Human Environment		
PI	Cultural Resources	See analysis below.
PI	Paleontological Resources	See analysis below.
NP	Native American Religious Concerns	No places of Native American concern have been identified within the allotment. Tribes have been notified of allotment renewal.
NI	Visual Resources	No impacts to Visual Resources are anticipated as a result of this project.
NI	Hazardous or Solid Wastes	Impacts from hazardous wastes and solids are expected to be minimal. Vehicular travel within the allotments to move sheep camps and sheep does create an opportunity for the release of fuel and oil from the vehicle if there is an accident, but these impacts are expected to be minimal.
NI	Fire Management	No impacts to the ability to follow the fire management plan are anticipated as a result of the Proposed Action.
NI	Social and Economic Conditions	There would not be any substantial changes to local social or economic conditions.

Determination ¹	Resource	Rationale for Determination
NP	Environmental Justice	According to the Census Bureau statistics (2000), there are no minority or low income populations within the WRFO.
Resource Uses		
PI	Forest Management	See discussion below.
PI	Rangeland Management	See discussion below.
NI	Floodplains, Hydrology, and Water Rights	Sheep grazing under the Proposed Action or under continued management is unlikely to impact hydrology, floodplains or water rights, since the primary impacts will be in the uplands and there will be limited use of floodplains or stream channels due to winter and early spring use as proposed under each scenario.
NI	Realty Authorizations	There are existing rights-of-way within the grazing allotments but no impacts are anticipated as a result of sheep grazing.
NI	Recreation	No impacts to Recreation are anticipated as a result of this project.
NI	Access and Transportation	No impacts to Access and Transportation are anticipated as a result of this project.
NP	Prime and Unique Farmlands	There are no Prime and Unique Farmlands within the project area.
Special Designations		
NI	Areas of Critical Environmental Concern	Portions of the White River Riparian ACEC fall within the Proposed Action. However, the ACEC will not be affected by the Proposed Action; most grazing will occur during the winter months or is alternated between two allotments during the growing season, limiting impacts to plant populations. Impacts to wildlife species are addressed in the <i>Terrestrial</i> and <i>Aquatic Wildlife</i> sections.
NP	Wilderness	There are no WSAs in the project area.
NP	Wild and Scenic Rivers	There are no Wild and Scenic Rivers in the WRFO.
NI	Scenic Byways	No impacts to the Dinosaur Diamond Scenic Byway are anticipated as a result of this project.

¹ NP = Not present in the area impacted by the Proposed Action or Alternatives. NI = Present, but not affected to a degree that detailed analysis is required. PI = Present with potential for impact analyzed in detail in the EA.

* Public Land Health Standard

AIR QUALITY

Affected Environment: The Proposed Action is an attainment area for national and state air quality standards, based on a review of designated non-attainment areas for criteria pollutants, published by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA 2012). The Proposed Action is 10-miles from any special designation airsheds or non-attainment areas. Non-attainment areas are areas designated by U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) as having air pollution levels that persistently exceed the national ambient air quality (NAAQ) standards. The closest special designation areas are Dinosaur National Monument which is located northwest of the project area (designated Class II airshed with Prevention of Significant Deterioration (PSD) with thresholds for sulfur oxides and visibility).

The Proposed Action is in Rio Blanco County within the Western Counties Monitoring Region of Colorado. The 2010 CDPHE monitoring assessment showed four gaseous pollutant monitoring sites and 11 particulate monitoring sites in the Western Counties area (APCD 2012). Local air quality parameters including particulates are being measured at monitoring sites located at Meeker, Rangely, Dinosaur and Ripple Creek Pass near the Flat Tops Wilderness Area. The closest location for an Interagency Monitoring of Protected Visual Environments (IMPROVE) site is near the Flat Tops Wilderness, northeast of the Project Area. IMPROVE sites measure visibility impairment from air borne particles.

Environmental Consequences of the Proposed Action (Alternative A):

Direct and Indirect Effects: This Proposed Action would authorize livestock grazing in four allotments in Rio Blanco County for sheep on 31,941 acres of public lands. The environmental consequences to air quality from Alternative A would include the periodic and local production of dust due to sheep trailing and minor disturbance from the sheep camp. Dust levels may be noticeable locally and especially during drier times when sheep herds are moved to new areas. The Colorado Air Pollution Control Division (APCD) estimates the maximum PM₁₀ levels (24-hour average) in rural portions of western Colorado to be near 50 micrograms per cubic meter ($\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$). The increase in airborne particulate matter expected from the Proposed Action is not expected to exceed Colorado ambient air quality (CAAQ) or NAAQ standards on an hourly, 8-hour average or daily basis.

Cumulative Effects: Statewide, more than 70 percent of PM₁₀ (coarse particles) are created from windblown dust and soil from roads, fields and construction sites. A smaller percentage of coarse particles comes from automobile and diesel engine exhaust, soot from wood fires, and sulfates and nitrates from combustion sources such as industrial boilers (CAQCC 2011). There have been several PM₁₀ exceedances in recent years (past 10 years) in the Western Counties area. All recent exceedances were caused by dust storms from regional blowing dust/high wind events, which are natural and uncontrollable, and are likely “exceptional” events, and therefore would not require a change in regulation.

Industrial facilities in White River Basin include coal mines, soda ash mines, and natural gas processing plants. Due to these industrial uses, increased population and oil and gas development in this region, emissions of air pollutants in the White River Basin due to exhaust emissions and dust (particulate matter) are likely to increase into the future. Despite increases in emissions, overall air quality conditions in the White River Basin are likely to continue to be good for some time due to effective atmospheric dispersion conditions and limited transport of air pollutants from outside the area.

Environmental Consequences of Continuation of Current Management (Alternative B):

Direct and Indirect Effects: As with the Proposed Action, the environmental consequences to air quality from Alternative A would include the periodic and local production of dust due to sheep trailing. Dust levels may be noticeable locally and especially during drier times. The increase in airborne particulate matter from current management would not exceed CAAQ or NAAQ standards on an hourly, 8-hour average or daily basis.

Cumulative Effects: Impacts for the continuation of current management along with other activities in the basin are likely to increase the emission of particulate matter, but overall air quality conditions in the White River Basin are likely to continue to be good for some time due to effective atmospheric dispersion conditions and limited transport of air pollutants from outside the area.

Environmental Consequences of No Livestock Grazing (Alternative C):

Direct and Indirect Effects: Impacts from the No-Action Alternative would result in no dust production due to grazing activities.

Cumulative Effects: Overall air quality conditions in the White River Basin are likely to continue to be good for some time due to effective atmospheric dispersion conditions and limited transport of air pollutants from outside the area with or without grazing in this allotment.

Mitigation: None.

SOIL RESOURCES

Affected Environment: Tables 8-11 are a breakdown of soil units and associated ecological sites for the Coal Oil, Douglas Creek, Johnson-Trujillo, and Lower Fourteen Mile allotments. Soils analyzed in this document have been covered in the Rio Blanco County Soil Survey.

Table 8: Soil Units in the Douglas Creek Allotment.

Douglas Creek (06342)		
Soil Units		
Soil Unit	Ecological Site	BLM Acres
Badland	None	191
Billings silty clay loam,0-5%slopes	Alkaline Slopes	100
Cliffdown-Cliffdown Variant complex,5-65%slopes	Salt-desert Breaks	52
Kinnear fine landy loam,1-5%slopes	Loamy Salt-desert	60
Moyerson stony clay loam,15-65%slopes	Clayey Slopes	1,981
Piceance fine sandy loam,5-15%slopes	Rolling Loam	206
Rentsac-Moyerson-RockOutcrop,complex,5-65%slps	PJ Woodlands/Clayey Slopes	1,546
Rock Outcrop	None	117
Torrifluvents, gullied	None	179
Torrorthents-RockOutcrop, complex,15-90%slopes	Stoney Foothills	434
Turley fine sandy loam,0-3%slopes	Alkaline Slopes	103
Turley fine sandy loam,3-8%slopes	Alkaline Slopes	115
Uffens loam,0-5%slopes	Alkaline Slopes	60
Total:		5,144

Table 9: Soil Units in the Coal Oil Allotment

Coal Oil (06313)		
Soil Units		
Soil Unit	Ecological Site	BLM Acres
Badland	None	2,060
Billings silty clay loam,0-5%slopes	Alkaline Slopes	166
Billings-Torrifluents complex,gullied,0-5%slopes	Alkaline Slopes/None	70
Chipeta silty clay loam,3-25%slopes	Clayey Saltdesert	419
Chipeta silty clay loam,3-25%slopes,eroded	Clayey Saltdesert	99
Chipeta-Killpack silty clay loam,3-15%slopes	Clayey Saltdesert	563
Cliffdown-Cliffdown Variant complex,5-65%slopes	Saltdesert Breaks	205
Colorow sandy loam	Sandy Saltdesert	91
Fluvaquents, frequently flooded	Riverbottom	12
Kinnear fine landy loam,1-5%slopes	Loamy Saltdesert	20
Rock Outcrop	None	449
Turley fine sandy loam,0-3%slopes	Alkaline Slopes	5
Turley fine sandy loam,3-8%slopes	Alkaline Slopes	339
Water	None	6
Total:		4,504

Table 10: Soil Units in the Johnson-Trujillo Allotment

Johnson-Trujillo (06338)		
Soil Units		
Soil Unit	Ecological Site	BLM Acres
Badland	None	189
Cliffdown-Cliffdown Variant complex,5-65%slopes	Saltdesert Breaks	128
Colorow sandy loam	Sandy Saltdesert	10
Fluvaquents, frequently flooded	Riverbottom	3
Forelle loam, 3-8%slopes	Rolling Loam	20
Gaynor-Midway silty clay loam,dry2-25%	Silty Saltdesert	121
Glendive fine sandy loam	Foothills Swale	22
Kinnear fine landy loam,1-5%slopes	Loamy Saltdesert	145
Kobar silty clay loam,0-3%slopes	Deep Clay Loam	11
Moyerson stony clay loam,15-65%slopes	Clayey Slopes	1,329
Nihill channery sandy loam,5-50%slopes	Saltdesert Breaks	148
Patent loam,3-8%slopes	Rolling Loam	99
Piceance fine sandy loam,5-15%slopes	Rolling Loam	1,212
Redcreek-Rentsac complex,5-30%slopes	PJ woodlands/PJ woodlands	1

Rentsac channery loam,5-50%slopes	Pinyon Juniper woodlands	885
Rentsac-Moyerson-RockOutcrop,complex,5-65%slps	PJ Woodlands/Clayey Slopes	11,889
Rentsac-Piceance complex,2-30%slopes	PJ woodland/Rolling Loam	18
Rock Outcrop	None	346
Torrifluents, gullied	None	114
Torriorthents-RockOutcrop, complex,15-90%slopes	Stoney Foothills	1,726
Turley fine sandy loam,0-3%slopes	Alkaline Slopes	98
Turley fine sandy loam,3-8%slopes	Alkaline Slopes	404
Uffens loam,0-5%slopes	Alkaline Slopes	38
Walknolls channery sandy loam,5-50%slopes	Saltdesert Breaks	61
Water	None	1
Yamac Loam,2-15%slope	Rolling Loam	245
Total:		19,263

Table 11: Soil Units in the Lower Fourteen Mile Allotment

Lower Fourteen Mile (06014)		
Soil Units		
Soil Unit	Ecological Site	BLM Acres
Barcus channery loamy sand,2-8%slopes	Foothills Swale	4
Castner channery loam, 5-50%slopes	Pinyon-Juniper woodlands	1,018
Glendive fine sandy loam	Foothills Swale	121
Havre loam,0-4%slopes	Foothill Swale	1
Irigul-Parachute complex,5-30%slopes	Loamy Slopes/Mountain Loam	203
Parachute Loam,25-75%loeps	Brushy Loam	45
Redcreek-Rentsac complex,5-30%slopes	PJ woodlands/PJ woodlands	112
Rentsac channery loam,5-50%slopes	Pinyon Juniper woodlands	1,144
Shawa loam,3-8%slopes	Deep Loam	3
Torriorthents-RockOutcrop, complex,15-90%slopes	Stoney Foothills	143
Veatch channery loam,12-50%slopes	Loamy Slopes	236
Total:		3,030

Soils that are occupied with plant communities rated as a mid seral, late seral or Potential Natural Community (PNC) have sufficient cover of desirable plant species to produce adequate litter and ground cover to minimize runoff and provide for soil protection (refer to the Vegetation section below). These soils are meeting the Colorado Public Land Health Standard for upland soils. The Coal Oil allotment has 4,241 BLM acres of the 4,504 acres classified, (95 percent) achieving or moving towards achieving the Standards for Public Land Health. The Lower Fourteen Mile allotment has 2,917 of 3,030 acres meeting (96 percent), the Douglas Creek allotment has 4,864 of 5,114 (95 Percent) meeting, and the Johnson-Trujillo allotment has 18,701 of 19,263 (97

percent) meeting land health standards. (Refer to the below Vegetation section of this document).

Soils that have sites rated as early seral plant communities do not have sufficient diversity and/or cover of native plant species to provide effective ground cover to prevent overland flow, runoff, and general soil degradation. These soils are experiencing a certain degree of pedestaling, minor expression of rills, and some areas have active gully erosion. Past evidence of gully erosion forming incised washes is common throughout the allotments. The Coal Oil Basin allotment has 263 acres not meeting, the Lower Fourteen Mile allotment has 113 acres not meeting, Douglas Creek has 250 acres not meeting, and Johnson-Trujillo has 562 acres not meeting. Erosion is most evident within the salt desert communities whose soils have a high clay content or in areas with little vegetative understory to provide soil protection. The early seral sites have soils that are typically within drainage bottoms and toe slopes that are found on soil units such as Chipeta-Killpack silty clay loam, 3-15 percent slopes and Chipeta silty clay loam, 3-25 percent slopes.

Environmental Consequences of the Proposed Action (Alternative A):

Direct and Indirect Effects: Impacts to soils generally include compaction from trampling/trailing, and increased opportunity for erosion due to the removal of vegetation that protects soils from rainfall impact and overland flow. Areas of common congregation such as around water and in bedding areas are where these impacts are expected to be the greatest. Loss of topsoil from erosion can impact plant production, and provide an opportunity for invasive annual species such as cheatgrass and various annual mustards to establish on a site and become a dominant part of the plant community.

The Proposed Action does provide adequate protection for soils. Use on the Coal Oil, Douglas Creek and Johnson/Trujillo allotments is primarily dormant season use when snow is on the ground, and vegetation is dormant. Use during this time period has minimal impacts on soil since the ground is often frozen. During the spring when the snow is melting, soils can be saturated and can create larger trails and deep hoof prints which could lead to increased erosion and loss of plant life, but these impacts are expected to be minimal. There is some use permitted during the critical growth period in the spring, but this use is rotated every other year between the Coal Oil and Douglas Creek allotments providing opportunity for plant recovery and regrowth every other year. This use is only permitted during early April, and there is adequate time after sheep leave the allotment for plant regrowth necessary to protect soils.

Use on the Lower Fourteen Mile allotment is scheduled for late spring/early summer, and some use in the fall. Use in the early summer is at the very end of the growing season and is expected to be light. There will be ample opportunity for vegetative growth throughout the spring, and opportunity for re-growth after livestock have left the allotment which is adequate to protect soils. Use permitted in the fall will primarily be dormant season use when soils are frozen, and protected from impacts from trailing and livestock congregation.

Cumulative Effects: Past and current livestock use on the allotment has created some impacts to soils within the grazing allotments. Historical grazing practices has created trails and areas of erosion where soils are exposed and do not have vegetation with root masses adequate to protect them from rainfall impact and overland flow. Grazing is expected to continue into the

future and implementation of the Proposed Action is expected to provide the greatest opportunity for protection of soils into the future.

Environmental Consequences of Continuation of Current Management (Alternative B):

Direct and Indirect Effects: The continuation of current management alternative authorizes use on the Douglas Creek and Johnson-Trujillo allotments that is not within the estimated carrying capacity for these allotments (See Range Management Section).

The greatest impacts of authorizing use beyond the landscape's ability to support it would mostly occur within the mid seral sites and to a lesser degree within the late seral ecological areas. There would be potential to convert the mid seral areas to early seral by lessening the competitive ability of native, perennial vegetation against non-native plants. Conversion of mid-seral ecological sites to early seral will decrease the amount of vegetation and litter on the soil surface needed to protect soils from erosion. Loss of topsoil will further inhibit the plant community and lead to increased losses in soil and increased gulying over time.

The permittee has been generally operating under their authorized AUMs for the past several years (See Range Management Section). Areas that have not already been impacted from heavy historic use remain in good condition and have adequate vegetation and litter to protect soils.

Cumulative Effects: Past and current livestock use on the allotment has created some impacts to soils within the grazing allotments. Historical grazing practices have created trails and areas of erosion where soils are exposed and do not have vegetation with root masses adequate to protect them from rainfall impact and overland flow. Grazing is expected to continue into the future and implementation of the continuation of current management alternative has the potential to impact more ecological sites, especially those with a mid-seral rating.

Environmental Consequences of No Livestock Grazing (Alternative C):

Direct and Indirect Effects: The no grazing alternative will provide the greatest protection for soils within the four grazing allotments. The greatest benefits would be noticed in the mid-seral sites where plant communities will be able to proceed through succession. Many of the early seral sites that are not meeting public land health standards would continue not meeting the standards unless extensive management measures using tools such as herbicide, fire, and seeding are utilized to rejuvenate plant communities. Impacts such as compaction and trailing will no longer exist since sheep will no longer use the allotment, and historic trailing that is currently visible would heal over time and no longer be visible on the allotments.

Cumulative Effects: Past and current livestock use on the allotment has created some impacts to soils within the grazing allotments. Historical grazing practices has created trails and areas of erosion where soils are exposed and do not have vegetation with root masses adequate to protect them from rainfall impact and overland flow. Implementation of the no grazing alternative would allow areas where trailing and livestock congregation has occurred in the past to heal over time. Areas heavily impacted where plant communities have been altered would not change in appearance much unless extensive management is done, and these area would continue to experience some level of erosion.

Mitigation: None.

Finding on the Public Land Health Standard #1 for Upland Soils: The 1,188 acres of early seral communities are mostly not meeting the Standards due to a high composition of cheatgrass, an invasive annual grass. Cheatgrass does not have a root mass capable of anchoring soils, and these areas generally experience a certain level of topsoil loss from erosion. The remaining 30,761 acres of all other seral communities (Mid – PNC) and areas that were not classified are currently meeting standards and make up the majority of the acres on the grazing allotments. Implementation of the Proposed Action will maintain and improve the ability of the rangelands to meet the Standards in the future.

SURFACE & GROUND WATER QUALITY

Affected Environment: The Proposed Action would permit grazing in four allotments including Coal Oil, Douglas Creek, Johnson-Trujillo and Lower Fourteen Mile allotments for a total of 31,941 acres of public land. The grazing permit would allow the grazing of sheep on these lands, mostly in the winter, but also in early spring. The Coal Oil allotment is located approximately 2 mile northwest of the Rangely in saline soils derived from Mancos shale adjacent to the White River. The Douglas Creek allotment is located directly south of Rangely and includes 7 to 8 miles of Douglas Creek (listed on the 303(d) list of impaired waters for sediment).

The Johnson-Trujillo allotment is adjacent to the Douglas Creek allotment to the west and is on the south side of the White River. The Lower Fourteen Mile allotment is located along upper Piceance Creek north of RBC 5. Support for sheep grazing typically requires a temporary hearing camp with a camp trailer and facilities for keeping a horse. These camps are set up in proximity to the herd and moved as the herd is moved. The camp trailer is typically towed in ahead of time and requires no road improvements and minimal surface disturbance.

Coal Oil, Douglas Creek, and Johnson-Trujillo allotments are in watersheds tributary to the White River from Douglas Creek to the Utah border which is segment 22 and is protected for warm water 2 aquatic life, potential primary recreation and agriculture. The mainstem of the White River from Douglas Creek to the Utah is segment 21 and protected for warm water 1 aquatic life, existing primary contact recreation, water supply and agriculture. Most of the surface water features in the allotment are ephemeral systems flowing only in response to stormwater from spring snow melt or rain storms. These systems are typically incised with gullies and terraces in most of the valley bottoms.

The Fourteen Mile allotment is in the Piceance Creek watershed and segment 16, which is protected for warm water 2 aquatic life, potential primary contact recreation and agriculture. The mainstem of Piceance Creek (segment 14a) is protected for aquatic life cold water 1.

The list of impaired waters is given in Regulation #93 and the most current list became effective on March 30, 2012 (WQCC 2012). Douglas Creek (segment 22) has been listed on the 303(d) list for impaired waters since 1998 and has been a low priority for Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) development; the Douglas Creek allotment has about 7 miles of Douglas Creek above

the confluence with the White River. The Fourteen Mile allotment is upstream of two segments of Piceance Creek that are listed on the impaired waters list. Piceance Creek from Willow Creek to Hunter Creek is listed for total recoverable iron and is a high priority for development of a TMDL. Piceance Creek from Ryan Gulch to the confluence with the White River is listed provisionally for aquatic life with a low priority.

According to the Vegetation, Soils and Range sections of this environmental assessment the Coal Oil allotment generally has altered structural/functional plant communities with the plant community understory dominated by invasive, non-native plant species (e.g., cheatgrass) and some noxious weeds. The soils in much of this allotment are saline and clayey and therefore more susceptible to downstream water quality impacts, due to eroded sediment and salts from these soils.

Groundwater features in the allotment include at least 11 springs located in the allotments, see Table 12. The springs with numbers starting in 150 and 151 are located in tributaries to the White River near Rangely. Johnson Spring has particularly high conductivity and may be associated with Mancos shale; springs from this formation are typically high in dissolved solids which has a linear relationship to conductivity. Springs in the Fourteen Mile Allotment are generally lower in conductivity, with the exception of Gigandet Gulch Spring which may be from a deeper formation.

Table 12: Inventoried Perennial Springs Located on BLM Administered Land within the Project Area

Number	Name	Legal Location	Water Right	Inventory Year	Discharge (gpm)	SC*
150-01	Rangely Spring	1N 102W Sec. 11	Yes	1983	0.20	6,829
150-02	Johnson Spring	1N 102W Sec. 11	Yes	1983	0.09	11,211
150-03	Coal Mine Spring	1N 102W Sec. 11	Yes	1983	1.50	5,532
150-08	Russian Spring	1N 102W Sec. 11	No	1983	N/R ¹	8,938
151-01	Hardway Spring	1N 102W Sec. 10	No	1983	1.90	3,400
151-04	Mile High Spring	1N 102W Sec. 6	Yes	2005	0.01	6,638
170-16	Moonbeam Spring	2S 95W Sec. 26	Yes	1983	1,110.00	1,225
170-31	South Fourteen	3S 94W Sec. 11	Yes	1984	3.20	1,316
170-34	Central Fourteen	3S 94W Sec. 11	Yes	1984	4.40	1,602
170-35	East Fourteen Mile	3S 94W Sec. 12	No	1984	0.11	1,516
170-39	Gigandet Gulch Spring	3S 95W Sec. 3	No	1984	0.30	9,607

*SC is specific conductivity ($\mu\text{S}/\text{cm}$) and measures the ability of water to conduct electricity across a known distance and typically has a linear relationship to dissolved solids.

Environmental Consequences of the Proposed Action (Alternative A):

Direct and Indirect Effects: The Proposed Action will include a slight reduction in animal unit months (AUMs) on the Douglas Creek, Coal Oil, and Johnson/Trujillo allotments from current management. Season of use will remain as primarily winter use with some use extending

¹ N/R is data that was not recorded

into the early spring. Use in April will be alternated between the Douglas Creek and Coal Oil allotments to meet rest/rotation requirements (See Range Management Section). Use on the Lower Fourteen Mile allotment will remain the same as the previous permit.

In general, sheep use uplands for grazing and do not have direct impacts to surface water except as a water source. Since much of the authorized grazing will be in the winter, sheep will use snow as a primary water source and therefore impacts on surface waters are expected to be limited to vegetation disturbance associated with grazing and trailing mostly in the uplands.

Grazing removes vegetation that may help reduce rain splash erosion, lessen surface runoff and livestock often preferentially remove grass and forb species. Hoof action from trailing creates preferential flow paths that can concentrate overland flow and intercept subsurface flows. Vegetation loss and trailing would be expected to contribute to potential increases in sediment production from exposed soils, gully initiation and channel erosion in some locations. This is most likely in Coal Oil basin due to the poor soils.

Fifteen livestock concentration areas on BLM administered lands were identified (see the Cultural Resources section). Impacts from sheep use around concentration areas include compaction and direct impacts to vegetation from grazing. Springs can experience water quality impacts from hoof action and grazing near the source. In some cases trampling can cause springs to cease production or result in more standing water susceptible to evaporation.

There is no reason to believe that sheep grazing on the Fourteen Mile allotment would impact the water quality of 303(d) listed stream segments 14a and 15 on the mainstem of Piceance Creek. Total recoverable iron in waters downstream is unlikely to change due to upland grazing in the winter and early spring by sheep. The provisional listing for aquatic life on stream segment 15 has not identified a water quality parameter that may be responsible for the macroinvertebrate community not being what would be expected for a Colorado Reference Site. Further samples and analysis are needed to identify factors that would influence the aquatic life of this segment.

Sediment in Douglas Creek (segment 22) could potentially be impacted from grazing activities. However, since livestock use is going to be in winter and early spring (every other year), sheep grazing as described in the Proposed Action is unlikely to impact water in Douglas Creek.

The soils section describes many areas with alkaline and saline soils corresponding to outcrops of geologic features that naturally occur throughout the Coal Oil allotment. Once these soils are disturbed (i.e., from hoof action or removal of perennial vegetation during grazing), the potential for the release of sediment and salt is increased. All of the soils within the project area have the potential to create water quality-related sediment and/or salinity problems when disturbed, but this is especially true in the Coal Oil allotment. Salts from these eroded soils are likely to move surface waters such as the White River and Piceance Creek during storm events.

The BLM-WRFO manages grazing on public lands according to the 1997 RMP for the WRFO that outlines Standards and Guidelines for Public Land Health and Colorado Livestock Grazing Management Guidelines. These Standards include guidelines for upland soils, riparian systems, healthy desirable plant species, and water quality (both surface and ground). All the allotments

besides the Coal Oil allotment are meeting standards on more than 90 percent of the public lands (see the Vegetation section). With good grazing management, mitigation below and the proposed grazing schedule impacts are not expected beyond those typically experienced on public lands with multiple uses.

Cumulative Effects: Oil and gas development occurs in each of the allotments. The Fourteen Mile allotment is in what is called the Mesaverde Gas Play Area where extensive oil and gas development is expected. It is estimated that well pads are likely to occur at about a 2-3 well pads per square mile. There are also current oil and gas wells including exploration wells at about a 1-2 well pad per square mile density in the allotments around Rangely. Oil and gas development typically includes surface disturbance for well pads, pipelines, roads and support facilities. Dispersed recreation also occurs on public lands including off-highway vehicle use, hunting and other activities. In general, the Proposed Action and other activities would increase sediment and salt loading to the White River but are not likely to exceed State standards for water quality even with cumulative impacts.

Environmental Consequences of Continuation of Current Management (Alternative B):

Direct and Indirect Effects: This alternative would continue the current grazing management. In general, current management includes more AUMs than the Proposed Action. Impacts would be similar in nature to those described for the Proposed Action but are likely to be greater with more AUMs.

Cumulative Effects: Cumulative impacts would be similar in nature to those described for the Proposed Action with a decrease in potential erosion due to a lower grazing intensity.

Environmental Consequences of No Livestock Grazing (Alternative C):

Direct and Indirect Effects: No impacts to vegetation or localized erosion from concentrated grazing use would occur from livestock under this alternative. Therefore, this alternative would have the least potential for impacting surface and groundwater resources.

Cumulative Effects: Cumulative impacts would be similar in nature to those described for the Proposed Action with no impacts from livestock grazing.

Mitigation: The following should be added as conditions of approval:

1. Immediate action should be taken to reduce trailing issues when they are observed. If accelerated erosion (rilling, gullyng etc.) is occurring due to trailing please contact the authorized officer to determine if a change in management or a rangeland development project should be constructed or the grazing approach altered to reduce impacts.

Finding on the Public Land Health Standard #5 for Water Quality: None of the alternatives are likely to cause the exceedance of the Colorado water quality standards or change the status of listed streams under section 303(d) of the clean water act.

WETLANDS AND RIPARIAN ZONES

Affected Environment: There are two riparian systems present within the vicinity of the Proposed Action. Reaches four and five of Douglas Creek run in and out of the Douglas Creek allotment, and the White River runs through portions of the Coal Oil allotment.

Douglas Creek was surveyed in May of 2010, and reaches four and five were both identified as being in proper functioning condition (PFC). No notable livestock use was noticed on either reach, and the channel was stable.

The White River was assessed in April, 2011 and is classified as PFC. Livestock use around the river was minimal except around the Robinson Corrals located in Township 1 North, Range 103 West NW1/4 of section 12. These corrals are located right along the river and are used for livestock sorting. Congregated use by livestock was noted around the corrals and is to be expected. There was a recent project completed by the BLM to remove Tamarisk (*Tamarix ramosissima*) and Russian-olive (*Elaeagnus angustifolia*) using cut-stump treatments in the riparian corridor. Treatments appeared to be effective, and riparian widening was noted in the treatment areas.

The riparian area along the White River is impacted by private land uses above and below the BLM lands, and there is a large man-made dam called the Taylor Draw Dam approximately 12.25 miles up-river. The Dam controls flows of the river and impacts downstream flows, flooding, and the flood plain. The 1997 White River RMPA/ROD states that releases from Taylor Draw dam will mimic natural flow rates to maintain natural flows for the river.

Objectives of the White River ROD/RMP are to insure riparian areas on BLM lands are in a proper functioning condition (PFC) (White River RMP page 2-14). A PFC system has adequate riparian vegetation with developed root masses to stabilize banks or landforms present to dissipate energy of high water flows, thereby reducing erosion (White River RMP pages 2-15, 2-16).

Environmental Consequences of the Proposed Action (Alternative A):

Direct and Indirect Effects: The Proposed Action has potential to impact riparian systems due to grazing and trampling by livestock. These impacts are expected to be minimal since livestock will generally depend on snow for water during the winter months when the majority of grazing takes place. This alleviates the need for livestock to trail to live water and will minimize use in the riparian corridor.

Spring use on the Coal Oil allotment and Douglas Creek allotment will potentially have higher use in the riparian areas due to lack of snow. During this time, livestock will be more dependent on water in Douglas Creek and the White River. Spring use on these allotments will be rotated and will provide adequate rest for the riparian areas every other year, and use is limited to a two week period to allow ample opportunity for regrowth and recovery after grazing.

Previous use on the allotments has shown minimal impacts on the riparian areas from livestock, and the proposed grazing schedule provides more time for rest and recovery than previous schedules, especially on the Coal Oil allotment where there was spring use every year.

Use around the Robinson Corrals is expected to continue at a higher level for livestock sorting and shipping. This area is a livestock congregation area, but use of the corrals is generally for no more than one or two days while livestock are being gathered, sorted, and shipped.

Noxious weeds were noted in both riparian corridors, and use of the area by livestock does increase the possibility of transporting new weed species into riparian corridors or possible spread of weeds from riparian areas into the uplands.

Cumulative Effects: Past and present land uses above and below stream from the analysis area has created some areas along riparian zones where there is some degradation. Taylor Draw Dam regulates stream flows and impacts natural flooding events which are necessary for riparian maintenance. Livestock use in the analysis area is minimal on BLM lands and is expected to continue with implementation of the Proposed Action since livestock generally use the area when snow is on the ground and they do not depend on riparian areas for water.

Environmental Consequences of Continuation of Current Management (Alternative B):

Direct and Indirect Effects: Impacts from the continuation of current management are similar to those analyzed above. The primary impacts will be livestock trampling and grazing of vegetation and the potential transport of noxious weed seeds and propagules to and from riparian areas. Use around the Robinson Corrals is expected to continue as analyzed above as an area of livestock congregation during gathering, sorting, and shipping.

The current management had minimal impacts to riparian corridors up to this point since both riparian areas were recently assessed as PFC. Minimal livestock use was noted except around the Robinson Corrals. There is no reason to believe that this would change should there be a continuation of current management since the primary use period is during the winter when livestock depend more on moisture in the snow to meet their needs; however current management does permit spring use on the Coal Oil allotment on a yearly basis which minimizes rest/recovery periods for the area. Use in the riparian areas during the spring does have the potential to increase as snow melts and livestock begins to rely more heavily on live water.

Cumulative Effects: Past and present land uses above and below stream from the analysis area has created some areas along riparian zones where there is some degradation. Taylor Draw Dam regulates stream flows and impacts natural flooding events which are necessary for riparian maintenance. Livestock use in the analysis area is minimal on BLM lands and is expected to continue with implementation of the continuation of current management since livestock generally use the area when snow is on the ground and they do not depend on riparian areas for water.

Environmental Consequences of No Livestock Grazing (Alternative C):

Direct and Indirect Effects: No grazing would provide the greatest opportunity for maintenance and improvement of riparian health. No livestock trampling or grazing would occur on vegetation, and the transport of noxious weeds to or from riparian areas as a result of livestock would be halted. Use around the Robinson Corrals would also no longer take place and provide an ideal opportunity for the heavy use area around the corrals to recover.

The riparian area along the White River will continue to be impacted by use of private lands above and below the BLM, and Taylor Draw Dam will continue to impact flows of the river and therefore influence the riparian characteristics of the area.

Cumulative Effects: Past and present land uses above and below stream from the analysis area has created some areas along riparian zones where there is some degradation. Taylor Draw Dam regulates stream flows and impacts natural flooding events which are necessary for riparian maintenance. Livestock use in the analysis area is minimal on BLM lands and is expected to continue with implementation of the no grazing alternative since livestock generally use the area when snow is on the ground and they do not depend on riparian areas for water.

Mitigation: None.

Finding on the Public Land Health Standard #2 for Riparian Systems: The riparian systems in Douglas Creek and the White River are currently meeting land health standards and were classified as PFC in 2010 and 2011. Livestock use in the riparian areas was minimal, and it is expected to continue as minimal if use is permitted as shown in alternative A or B.

Both riparian areas had several noxious weeds present such as salt cedar, Russian-olive, hoary cress, Canada thistle, and bull thistle. Treatments of Russian-olive and salt cedar have been completed on portions of both corridors and appear to be aiding in the widening of the flood plain along the White River.

VEGETATION

Affected Environment: Table 13 lists the plant community appearance for the Ecological sites or woodland types on allotments associated with the Proposed Action, along with the predominant plant species comprising the composition of each community. Forb species, though important to the diversity of a community and making up to 25 to 30 percent of the composition of several of the plant communities listed, are not presented in the following table because they generally are not contributors to the appearance or dominance of the community.

Table 13: Ecological Sites and Plant Community Appearance for Grazing Allotments

Ecological Site / Woodland Type	Plant Community Appearance	Predominant Plant Species in the Plant Community
Alkaline Slopes	Sagebrush/grass Shrubland	Wyoming big sagebrush, winterfat, low rabbitbrush, wheat grasses, Indian rice grass, squirreltail
Brushy Loam	Deciduous Shrub/grass Shrubland	Serviceberry, oakbrush, snowberry, mountain brome, slender wheatgrass, western wheatgrass, Letterman and Columbia needle grasses
Clayey Saltdesert	Salt Desert Shrubland	Gardner saltbush, shadscale, mat saltbush, galleta, Salina wildrye, squirreltail, Indian rice grass

Clayey Slopes	Grassland	Salina wildrye, mutton grass, western wheatgrass, junegrass, squirreltail, shadscale
Deep Clay Loam	Grass/Open Shrub Shrubland	Western wheatgrass, slender wheatgrass, mutton grass, squirreltail, junegrass, Letterman and Columbia needle grasses, mountain big sagebrush
Deep Loam	Grassland	Bluebunch wheatgrass, muttongrass, needle-and-thread, western wheatgrass, slender wheatgrass, big sagebrush, serviceberry, snowberry
Foothill Swale	Grass/Open Shrub Shrubland	Basin wildrye, western wheatgrass, slender wheatgrass, streambank wheatgrass, Indian ricegrass, Nevada bluegrass, basin big sagebrush, fourwing saltbush, rubber rabbitbrush
Loamy Saltdesert	Grass/Salt Desert Shrubland	Needle-and-thread, galleta, Sandberg bluegrass, squirreltail, Indian ricegrass, Gardner saltbush, shadscale, winterfat, horsebrush
Loamy Slopes	Mix Shrub/grass Shrubland	Mountain mahogany, bitterbrush, serviceberry, mountain big sagebrush, beardless bluebunch wheatgrass, western wheatgrass, June grass, Indian rice grass
Riverbottom	Riparian	Sedges, rushes, cottonwoods, and willow
Rolling Loam	Sagebrush/grass Shrubland	Wyoming big sagebrush, winterfat, low rabbitbrush, horsebrush, bitterbrush, western wheat grass, Indian rice grass, squirreltail, junegrass, Nevada and sandberg bluegrass
Saltdesert Breaks	Salt Desert Shrubland	Galleta, salina wildrye, squirreltail, Indian ricegrass, needle-and-thread, shadscale, winterfat
Sandy Saltdesert	Grass/Salt Desert Shrubland	Needle-and-thread, Indian ric grass, sand dropseed, sandberg bluegrass, squirreltail, galleta, shadscale, winterfat, horsebrush
Silty Saltdesert	Grass/Salt Desert Shrubland	Galleta, salina wildrye, bottlebrush squirreltail, winterfat, shadscale, spiny horsebrush, budsage, Indian Ricegrass, and bluegrass
Stony Foothills	Grass/Open Shrub Shrubland	Beardless bluebunch wheatgrass, western wheatgrass, needle-and-thread, junegrass, Indian ricegrass, fringed sage, Wyoming big sagebrush, black sage, serviceberry, pinyon and juniper
Pinyon/Juniper	Pinyon/Juniper Woodland	Pinyon pine, Utah juniper, mountain mahogany, bitterbrush, serviceberry, Wyoming big sagebrush, beardless bluebunch wheatgrass, western wheatgrass, junegrass, Indian rice grass, mutton grass

Figure 2 is a representation of the vegetation growth periods for different vegetation types found on allotments associated with the permit renewal. These dates are based upon estimated averages and can vary from year to year dependent upon climatic conditions.

Figure 2: Vegetative Growth Periods on Allotments Associated with the Permit Renewal

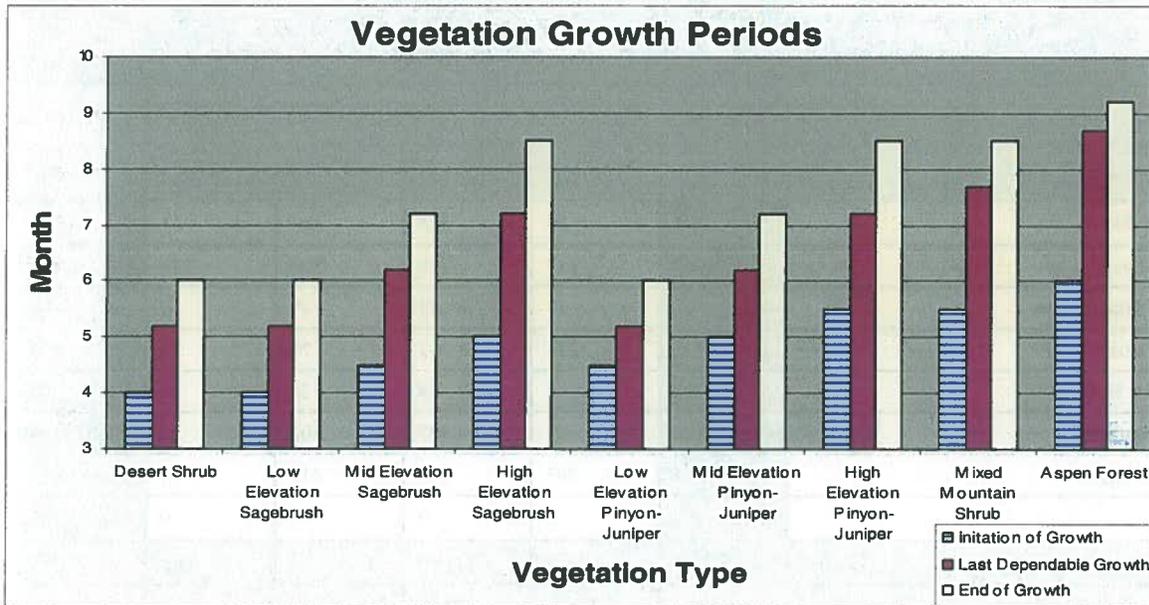


Table 14 shows the seral rating used by the BLM to rate rangeland vegetation communities in comparison to the Potential Natural Plant Community (PNC) for a particular ecological site.

Table 14: Ecological Site Similarity Ratings used for Rating Plant Communities

ECOLOGICAL SITE SIMILARITY RATINGS	
Seral Rating	% Similarity to the Potential Natural Plant Community (PNC)
Potential Natural community (PNC)	76-100% composition of species in the PNC
Late-Seral	51-75% composition of species in the PNC
Mid-Seral	26-50% composition of species in the PNC
Early-Seral	0-25% composition of species in the PNC

Tables 15, 16, 17, and 18 show an estimate of the public land acreage falling within one of the seral ratings for each ecological site on allotments associated with this permit renewal. These estimates are based upon professional judgments of the Rangeland Management Specialist trained in the use of the rating system. Ecological sites were visited during the 2010 and 2011 field seasons for a plant community assessment of the Colorado Public Land Health Standards for each allotment. Historical grazing practices (spring use, over utilization, etc.) and prolong drought conditions have created the situation of early seral plant communities not meeting the rangeland health standards. The early seral sites not meeting standards have crossed a threshold and are nearly irreversible regardless of the livestock management without some form of disturbing activity such as fire or chemicals.

Table 15: Ecological Site Similarity Ratings for Douglas Creek

Douglas Creek (06342)						
Ecological Site Similarity Rating						
Ecological Site	Total BLM ACRES	PNC	Late Seral	Mid Seral	Early Seral (Not Meeting Standards)	BLM Acres Classified
Alkaline Slopes	377	58	154	124	41	377
Brushy Loam	1,983	614	728	520	121	1,983
Loamy Salt-desert	60	17	24	19	0	60
Rolling Loam	206	18	91	74	23	206
Salt-desert Breaks	52	9	8	24	11	52
Stony Foothills	434	91	187	102	54	434
Pinyon/Juniper	1,546	547	588	411	0	1,546
None	486	0	0	0	0	0
Total:	5,144	1,354	1,780	1,274	250	4,658
% BLM Acres Classified:		29%	38%	27%	5%	

The Douglas Creek allotment has 95 percent of the public land acres meeting standards for public land health. Approximately five acres are not meeting standards primarily within the brushy loam ecological site. There are 1,983 acres of brushy loam and 121 acres (6 percent) are not meeting standards. The largest percentage of an ecological site that is not meeting standards is in the salt-desert breaks (21 percent).

Table 16: Ecological Site Similarity Ratings for Johnson Trujillo

Johnson Trujillo (06338)						
Ecological Site Similarity Rating						
Ecological Site	Total BLM ACRES	PNC	Late Seral	Mid Seral	Early Seral (Not Meeting Standards)	BLM Acres Classified
Alkaline Slopes	540	133	198	135	74	540
Clayey Slopes	1329	454	451	301	123	1329
Deep Clay Loam	11	0	6	5	0	11
Foothill Swale	22	0	0	0	22	22
Loamy Salt-desert	145	25	41	38	41	145
Riverbottom	3	0	0	3	0	3
Rolling Loam	1575	405	603	441	126	1575
Salt-desert Breaks	338	98	111	88	41	338
Sandy Salt-desert	10	0	3	7	0	10
Silty Salt-desert	121	34	51	24	12	121
Stony Foothills	1726	456	649	498	123	1726
Pinyon/Juniper	12793	4573	6174	2046	0	12793

None	650	0	0	0	0	0
Total:	19263	6178	8287	3586	562	18613
% BLM Acres Classified:		33%	45%	19%	3%	

On Johnson/Trujillo, 97 percent of public acres are rated as mid-late seral and are meeting public land health standards. The largest percentage of acres not meeting standards are on the foothill swale (100 percent) ecological site. Other ecological sites that have areas not meeting standards are Rolling Loam, Stony Foothills, and Clayey Slopes.

Table 17: Ecological Site Similarity Ratings for Coal Oil

Coal Oil (06313)						
Ecological Site Similarity Rating						
Ecological Site	Total BLM ACRES	PNC	Late Seral	Mid Seral	Early Seral (Not Meeting Standards)	BLM Acres Classified
Alkaline Slopes	579	121	198	184	76	579
Clayey Saltdesert	1081	188	456	326	111	1081
Loamy Saltdesert	20	0	8	9	3	20
Riverbottom	12	0	0	12	0	12
Saltdesert Breaks	205	25	61	58	61	205
Sandy Saltdesert	91	11	44	24	12	91
None	2516	0	0	0	0	0
Total:	4504	345	767	613	263	1988
% BLM Acres Classified:		17%	39%	31%	13%	

Coal Oil has the largest percentage of public acres not meeting standards. Approximately 263 acres of the 4,504 acres (13 percent) are not meeting standards. Alkaline Slopes, Clayey Saltdesert, and Saltdesert Breaks are the primary ecological sites with acres not meeting standards.

Table 18: Ecological Site Similarity Ratings for Lower Fourteen Mile

Lower Fourteen Mile (06014)						
Ecological Site Similarity Rating						
Ecological Site	Total BLM ACRES	PNC	Late Seral	Mid Seral	Early Seral (Not Meeting Standards)	BLM Acres Classified
Brushy Loam	45	9	17	14	5	45
Deep Loam	3	0	3	0	0	3
Foothill Swale	125	18	33	31	43	125
Loamy Slopes	439	77	144	171	47	439
Stony Foothills	143	23	58	44	18	143
Pinyon/Juniper	2275	877	744	654	0	2275

Total:	3030	1004	999	914	113	3030
% BLM Acres Classified:		33%	33%	30%	4%	

Lower Fourteen Mile has 96 percent of public acres meeting land health standards. Foothill swales are the primary ecological site (34 percent) that are not meeting standards. Loamy Slopes, Stony Foothills, Brushy loam ecological sites are other ecological sites with areas not meeting standards.

On all four allotments, the primary reason for not meeting standards is due to an increased level of annual invasive species such as cheatgrass (*Bromus tectorum*), mustards (*Alyssum spp.*), and pepperweeds (*Lepidium spp*). These areas lack adequate levels of cool-season and warm-season native perennials with adequate cover and root-masses capable of anchoring soils. This will result in increased soil loss on these sites, and annual species listed above do not provide adequate forage for grazing animals such as livestock and wildlife.

Environmental Consequences of the Proposed Action (Alternative A):

Direct and Indirect Effects: The Proposed Action will include a slight reduction in animal unit months (AUMs) on the Douglas Creek, Coal Oil, and Johnson/Trujillo allotments. Season of use will remain as primarily winter use with some use extending into the early spring critical growth period. Use in April will be alternated between the Douglas Creek and Coal Oil allotments to meet rest/rotation requirements (See Range Management Section). Use on the Lower Fourteen Mile allotment will remain the same as the previous permit. The permit includes use in late spring/early summer and some use in the fall.

Impacts to vegetation will include trampling by livestock and grazing use on grasses, forbs, and shrubs. Impacts will be limited since most of the use will occur in the winter while vegetation is dormant. Dormant season use has less impact to individual plant vigor, reproduction, and vegetative growth as opposed to use during the growth period or during summer months. Use is targeted to stay within 40-60 percent outlined in the 1997 White River ROD/RMP which will help maintain plant community health. Use that occurs during the growing season (4/1-5/31) is alternated between the Coal Oil and Douglas Creek allotment. This will allow for recovery from growing season use every other year, and provides opportunity for seed head production, increased plant vigor, and increased vegetative growth.

Overall, the proposal will have the greatest positive impact on the mid and late seral ecological sites, such as an increase in perennial plant cover. On PNC ecological sites, a neutral to slightly positive impact will occur as these sites are already meeting or exceeding the standards for public land health. On most early seral sites, the present situation will typically continue at their current state unless some influencing agent was implemented such as fire/seeding because most of these sites have crossed a threshold of cheatgrass/annual invasive domination. Current early seral ecological sites within the allotments are a result of historic/current critical growing season use (lambling), prolong drought conditions, and abundant oil and gas activities. Therefore, these situations have created an opportunity for cheatgrass establishment and dominance within early seral communities.

Cumulative Effects: Past and current livestock use on the allotment has created some impacts to soils within the grazing allotments. Historical grazing practices has created trails and areas of erosion where soils are exposed and do not have vegetation with root masses adequate to protect them from rainfall impact and overland flow. Grazing is expected to continue into the future and implementation of the Proposed Action is expected to provide the greatest opportunity for protection of vegetation into the future. There are not expected to be any cumulative impacts to vegetative communities from implementation of the Proposed Action.

Environmental Consequences of Continuation of Current Management (Alternative B):

Direct and Indirect Effects: The continuation of current management alternative authorizes increased use on the Douglas Creek and Johnson-Trujillo allotments that is not within the estimated carrying capacity for these allotments (See Range Management Section).

The greatest impacts of authorizing use beyond the landscapes ability to support them would mostly occur within the mid seral sites, and to a lesser degree within the late seral ecological areas. There would be potential to convert the mid seral areas to early seral by lessening the competitive ability of native, perennial vegetation against non-native plants. The greatest concern would be within the western wheatgrass and/or needle-and-thread grass communities being converted to a sole understory of cheatgrass.

The permittee has been generally operating under their authorized AUMs for the past several years (See Range Management Section). Areas that have not already been impacted from heavy historic use remain in good condition and utilization studies conducted within the allotment are within the 40-60% target described in the 1997 White River ROD/RMP.

Cumulative Effects: Past and present impacts are similar to those analyzed in the Proposed Action. Future grazing if the continuation of current management alternative is implemented could potentially lead to further degradation of some rangelands due to critical growing season use. The continuation of current management provides no rest/rotation management on the Douglas Creek and Johnson-Trujillo allotments. This could create the potential for conversion of high use areas to cheatgrass if there is not adequate time for plant recovery and maintenance after use by livestock.

Environmental Consequences of No Livestock Grazing (Alternative C):

Direct and Indirect Effects: Under a no grazing by livestock alternative, most localities that are being grazed by sheep would experience a short-term increase in both perennial plant cover and soil surface litter accumulation. Mid and late seral ecological sites would likely experience the greatest benefit in increased perennial plant cover, such as western wheatgrass. On early seral ecological sites such as salt-desert rangelands dominated by cheatgrass, the majority of areas are not expected to change significantly in perennial plant cover because they have crossed a threshold of brush and/or annual plant domination. The PNC ecological sites would continue to meet standards and experience minimal changes in plant species composition and diversity.

The proliferation of cheatgrass would be lessened as the interspersed native grass community would have a greater chance of completing a full growth cycle without being grazed by livestock. Therefore, the native community would have a greater ability to compete with

cheatgrass. Such an effect would occur principally within the mid seral plant communities that have not crossed a threshold of annual plant domination. However, this effect would be limited in nature due to the current cheatgrass domination of early seral plant communities that have crossed a threshold and due to other grazers within the area.

Cumulative Effects: Past and present impacts are similar to those analyzed in the Proposed Action. Under the no grazing alternative, there would be no cumulative impacts to vegetative communities if this alternative was implemented.

Mitigation: None.

Finding on the Public Land Health Standard #3 for Plant and Animal Communities:): The 1,180 acres of early seral communities are mostly not meeting the Standards due to a high composition of cheatgrass, an invasive annual grass. The remaining 30,761 acres of all other seral communities (Mid – PNC) and areas that were not classified are currently meeting standards and make up the majority of the acres on the grazing allotments. Implementation of the Proposed Action will maintain and improve the ability of the rangelands to meet the Standards in the future.

INVASIVE, NON-NATIVE SPECIES

Affected Environment: Cheatgrass is an invasive, non-native, annual, highly competitive plant species that is the dominate understory component on portions of all of the allotments. This grass can account for approximately 75-80 percent of the species composition or 30-35 percent of the canopy cover in these areas. Ecological site acres not meeting Public Land Health Standards can mostly be attributed to the prevalence of cheatgrass and other invasive annuals within the natural plant community (Coal Oil Allotment – 263 acres, Douglas Creek – 250 acres, Johnson-Trujillo – 562 acres, and Lower Fourteen Mile – 113 acres). Thus, these plant communities have sufficient cheatgrass in the plant composition and insufficient desirable perennial species to maintain a healthy, viable plant community that meets Public Land Health Standards (see Vegetation Section for greater analysis).

Halogeton is an invasive, non-native plant species that is also common within the allotments, particularly within disturbed areas (pipelines, roads, pads, etc.). It favors dry deserts, barren areas, overgrazed rangelands, roadsides, and other disturbed areas where native vegetation has been removed. Halogeton is especially abundant in alkaline or saline soils and cannot compete effectively with healthy rangeland plants. Therefore, control involves keeping a robust cover of desirable plant communities. Coal Oil Basin has been particularly impacted from previous drought conditions, and oil and gas development thus lowering rehabilitation efforts of seeded species along newly disturbed oil and gas developments that enables halogeton to become established within the plant community.

Russian olives and tamarisks are invasive, non-native species that form a robust community along the White River corridor (2 ¼ BLM miles). Tamarisks are also scattered across the

allotment to a slight degree in areas with increase water saturation, such as seeps and earthen reservoirs (see vegetation and/or wetland and riparian zones sections for greater analysis).

Hoary cress (whitetop), a Colorado listed noxious weed, is found along the White River Corridor and associated floodplains. It is a creeping perennial capable of vigorous growth on alkaline soils such as found in the Coal Oil, Douglas Creek, and Johnson-Trujillo allotments.

The WRFO policy is to actively control initial outbreaks of noxious weeds, thus preventing spread and lowering long-term rangeland health. In areas with a greater infestation of noxious weeds, policy is to control these plants into a maintenance phase. Overall, noxious weeds are minimal with limited treatment needs in the allotments on BLM administered lands.

Environmental Consequences of the Proposed Action (Alternative A):

Direct and Indirect Effects: The Proposed Action will enable native plant communities a greater competitive interaction with invasive plants through reduced use by livestock and shortened season of use. Thereby, the proposal will provide a greater opportunity for the replenishment of root reserves, biomass accumulation, and plant propagation of native species; which will aid in the rangeland's ability to naturally compete with invasive, non-native species. This effect would be slight in nature due to the threshold that has been crossed by cheatgrass domination.

The greatest net benefit would occur in mid and late seral ecological areas that have native vegetation mixed with cheatgrass and/or halogeton. A healthy rangeland plant community has the ability to out compete halogeton, thereby limiting its extent to high impact locations and disturbed areas.

On early seral ecological sites, such as the monoculture of cheatgrass with no measurable native populations, the majority of areas are not expected to change in perennial cover because they have crossed a threshold of annual plant domination. A human induced disturbance (seeding, mechanical, chemical, etc) would be required to reverse this situation and enable perennial vegetation to become established.

The proposal will have little to no influence on the hoary cress, tamarisks and/or Russian olive populations along the White River corridor, as these populations are generally not related to livestock grazing. The establishment and dominance of hoary cress, tamarisks, and/or Russian olives are related to moisture availability and abundant upstream seed sources.

Livestock in the allotment do provide the opportunity for weeds to be spread within the allotment or new weeds to be established from outside allotment. Seeds and propogules readily attach to the wool on sheep or can be transferred in feces onto the allotment.

Grazing permittees are important to the discovery and control of noxious weeds due the permittees' on the ground affiliation and knowledge of assigned allotments.

Cumulative Effects: Past and current land uses from dispersed recreation, oil and gas development, and livestock grazing have all contributed to the introduction of noxious and

invasive weeds into the analysis area. Implementation of the Proposed Action still has the potential to introduce new populations of weeds into the analysis area, but there are not anticipated to be cumulative effects that impact vegetative communities.

Environmental Consequences of Continuation of Current Management (Alternative B):

Direct and Indirect Effects: Mid and late seral ecological potentially affected by grazing would be relatively less resistant to the invasion and proliferation of noxious weeds and/or invasive plants. Cheatgrass communities on mid seral sites would continue in their current state with a potential for a slight decline of desired vegetation towards early seral conditions.

On the majority of early seral ecological sites, such as the monoculture of cheatgrass lacking perennial understory cover, the majority of areas are not expected to change in perennial ground cover because they have crossed a threshold of annual plant domination.

Continuation of current grazing will have little to no influence on the hoary cress, tamarisks, and/or Russian olive populations along the White River corridor, as these populations are generally not related to livestock grazing. The establishment and dominance of hoary cress, tamarisks, and/or Russian olives are related to moisture availability and abundant upstream seed sources.

Cumulative Effects: Cumulative impacts are similar to those analyzed in the Proposed Action.

Environmental Consequences of No Livestock Grazing (Alternative C):

Direct and Indirect Effects: The impact of adopting this alternative would generally be similar to that of the Proposed Action with respect to the occurrence and proliferation of noxious weeds. The causal factor for the occurrence of noxious weeds is related to the seed source along the White River, with grazing by sheep having little discernable influence on the community of noxious weeds within the Coal Oil allotment.

The proliferation of cheatgrass would be lessened as the interspersed native grass community would have a greater chance of completing a full growth cycle without being grazed by livestock, particularly within the critical growing season. Therefore, the native community would have a greater ability to compete with cheatgrass. Such an effect would occur principally within the mid seral plant communities that have not fully crossed a threshold of annual plant domination (see Vegetation Section). However, this effect would be limited in nature due to the current cheatgrass domination of early seral plant communities that have crossed a threshold and due to other grazers within the area.

No livestock grazing will eliminate the possibility of livestock carrying weed seeds and propagules onto the allotment in their wool and feces.

Cumulative Effects: Past and present impacts are similar to those analyzed in the Proposed Action. Implementation of the no grazing alternative will remove the potential for domesticated livestock to introduce new weeds into the analysis area and no cumulative impacts to noxious and invasive weed species management on rangelands would occur.

Mitigation: If noxious weeds are identified within the allotments and occur on BLM administrated lands, they will be treated by either a certified pesticide applicator or by the BLM permittee. If livestock grazing practices have resulted in the establishment and/or increased spread of noxious weeds, the permittee will be responsible for the management of these weeds as directed by the BLM.

SPECIAL STATUS ANIMAL SPECIES

Affected Environment: There are no threatened or endangered animal species that are known to inhabit or derive important use from the project area. Several BLM sensitive species inhabit or may potentially inhabit the project area including Brewer's sparrow, white-tailed prairie dog, burrowing owl, ferruginous hawk, northern goshawk and greater sage-grouse, a candidate for listing under the Endangered Species Act.

White-tailed prairie dog: White-tailed prairie dogs broadly encompass the mostly private lands between Raven Ridge and Highway 64 of the Coal Oil Basin allotment. Prairie dog involvement on public lands is minor (collectively roughly 200 or so acres) consisting of small, relatively scattered colonies.

Black-footed ferret: Potential black-footed ferret involvement would be confined to the Coal Oil Basin allotment. Black-footed ferrets are nearly solely reliant on prairie dogs as a source of food and cover. There has never been a verified siting of a black-footed ferret in the Rangely Oil Field and it is extremely unlikely the small, discontinuous colonies within the Coal Oil allotment would be capable of supporting ferrets.

Brewer's sparrow: Brewer's sparrows are common and widely distributed in virtually all big sagebrush, greasewood, saltbush, and mixed brush communities throughout the allotment. These birds are typically one of the most common members of these avian communities and breeding densities generally range between 10-40 pairs per 100 acres. Although most abundant in extensive stands of sagebrush, the birds appear regularly in small (one to two acre) sagebrush parks scattered among area woodlands.

Burrowing owl: Burrowing owls are associated with white-tailed prairie dog colonies as their burrow systems are important components for burrowing owl nesting habitat. This species is uncommon in this Resource Area. These birds return to occupy a maintained burrow system in early April and begin nesting soon after. Most birds have left the area by September. The nearest known burrowing owl nest is roughly two miles north of the Coal Oil Basin allotment.

Ferruginous hawk: Ferruginous hawks are relatively rare in the WRFO Resource Area. Typically returning in late-February these birds begin nesting in earnest by mid-April with young generally fledged by late-July. Nesting birds have been documented northwest of the Coal Oil Basin allotment; however there are no known locations within any of the allotments.

Northern goshawk: The Douglas fir and pinyon-juniper woodlands located in the Lower Fourteen Mile allotment have limited potential for supporting northern goshawk nesting activities, due to an open canopy structure and lack of large, continuous tracts of woodlands.

Goshawks typically nest in contiguous aspen or aspen/spruce/fir mix forests at elevations around 7,500 – 8,000 ft. Roughly 8 – 10 nests have been documented in mature components of pinyon-juniper woodlands at elevations around 6,000 ft. There are no known goshawk nests within a dozen miles of the Lower Fourteen Mile allotment.

Greater sage-grouse: The southern tip of the Johnson-Trujillo allotment overlaps with approximately 1,000 acres general greater sage-grouse habitat as mapped by Colorado Parks and Wildlife. With the exception of 100-145 acres of small, scattered sagebrush communities, the remainder of this acreage is largely pinyon-juniper dominated and as such provides little if any utility for sage-grouse. There has been no evidence of use by sage-grouse in recent years which is likely a factor of limited sagebrush habitat in addition to the fact this area is located along the extreme periphery of mapped sage-grouse range. The nearest known active lek is approximately 20 miles from the allotment boundary.

Northern leopard frog and Colorado pikeminnow: See discussion in Aquatic Wildlife section.

Environmental Consequences of the Proposed Action (Alternative A):

Direct and Indirect Effects: The Proposed Action is not expected to have any measureable influence on ferruginous hawk, northern goshawk or greater sage-grouse. There is extremely low potential for species occupation in these allotments due to lack of suitable habitat.

Under the Proposed Action, winter and spring use of the Coal Oil Basin allotment would alternate years, allowing rest during the early portions of the growing season every other year. As proposed, spring grazing will be short duration (14 days vs. 41 days) at a higher intensity than what is currently authorized. Alternating spring use in this allotment will allow vegetation a recovery period that currently is not provided. It is expected that alternating growing season use would allow greater vegetative expression and increased plant vigor over time. Improvements in herbaceous understory resulting from the Proposed Action would likely benefit prairie dogs (with regards to forage base) and consequently burrowing owl. The proposed grazing system would provide the greatest benefit to Brewer's sparrow, a low shrub nesting species, by enhancing cover resources. The most noticeable improvements would be in the allotments approximately 613 acres (31 percent) of mid seral communities and to a lesser degree late seral communities (39 percent). Vegetation improvements in early seral communities would be nominal and would not be expected to provide any noticeable benefit to Brewer's sparrow or prairie dogs and associated species.

It is expected that improvements in vegetative conditions resulting from alternated spring use in the Douglas Creek allotment would be similar to those discussed for the Coal Oil allotment for Brewer's sparrow.

Cumulative Effects: Cumulatively, effects from the Proposed Action would be most noticeable in the Coal Oil allotment as this area is currently and has historically experienced heavy energy-related development. It is expected that the greatest improvements in vegetative composition would be in the roughly 613 acres (31 percent) of mid seral communities and in the 767 acres (39 percent) of late seral to a lesser degree. Due to the dominance of invasive species

such as cheatgrass, halogeton, and mustard, substantial improvements in the 263 acres (13 percent) of early seral communities would not be expected.

Environmental Consequences of Continuation of Current Management (Alternative B):

Direct and Indirect Effects: Effects of the current grazing system on ferruginous hawk, northern goshawk and greater sage-grouse would be identical to those discussed in the Proposed Action.

Discussions in the Migratory Bird section would be directly applicable to Brewer's sparrow.

Continuation of the current grazing system would not allow for any substantial improvements in vegetation density or composition. Currently the AUMs in the Johnson-Trujillo, Douglas Creek and Coal Oil allotments are exceeding what is permitted. Continuation of this grazing system will likely lead to further degradation particularly in the ~5,500 acres of mid seral and 10,800 acres of late seral communities. Prairie dog and Brewer's sparrow would likely be most influenced by negative shifts in vegetative character as forage and cover resources would be reduced.

Cumulative Effects: Cumulative effects would be similar to those discussed in the Terrestrial Wildlife section.

Environmental Consequences of No Livestock Grazing (Alternative C):

Direct and Indirect Effects: Effects of the current grazing system on ferruginous hawk, northern goshawk and greater sage-grouse would be identical to those discussed in the Proposed Action.

Influences on special status species would be similar to those discussed in both the Migratory Bird section and the Terrestrial Wildlife section.

Cumulative Effects: There would be no contribution to previous or existing disturbances under the no grazing alternative.

Mitigation: None.

Finding on the Public Land Health Standard #4 for Special Status Species: Approximately 1,188 acres (4 percent) of public lands within these allotments are currently not meeting the Land Health Standards (see Vegetation Section for breakdown by allotment), due mainly to the persistence of invasive, annual species such as cheatgrass, halogeton, and mustards. While the proposed grazing system would allow for overall improvements in herbaceous quality, it is unlikely that vegetative improvements would be realized in these early seral communities within the life of the permit. The most noticeable improvements are expected to be in the roughly 6,400 acres (~23percent) of mid seral communities within these allotments. Shifts in vegetative composition (from a more annual dominated to perennial dominated) would be expected over time. The no grazing alternative would not detract from the continued meeting of the Land Health Standards.

MIGRATORY BIRDS

Affected Environment: The allotments span a variety of habitat types from lower elevation sage-steppe and saltbush communities to mid to upper elevation pinyon-juniper and Douglas fir woodlands. A variety of migratory birds fulfill nesting functions in these communities during the breeding season (typically May – July). The BLM lends increased management attention to migratory birds listed by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) as Birds of Conservation Concern (BOCC). These are bird populations that monitoring suggests are undergoing range-wide declining trends and are considered at risk for becoming candidates for listing under the Endangered Species Act if not given due consideration in land use decisions. These species include juniper titmouse, Cassin's finch and pinyon jay (PJ associates) and Brewer's sparrow (sagebrush shrubland associate) which is discussed in the Special Status Animal Species section. In general, birds associated with the project area are well distributed in extensive suitable habitats throughout the WRFO and northwest Colorado and habitat-specific bird assemblages appear to be composed and distributed appropriately to the normal range of habitat variability.

Environmental Consequences of the Proposed Action (Alternative A):

Direct and Indirect Effects: Dormant season use in the Lower Fourteen Mile (11/1 – 11/20), Johnson-Trujillo(12/26 – 2/28), Douglas Creek (12/1 – 12/25) and Coal Oil Basin (12/1 – 12/14) would not coincide with and would have virtually no influence on migratory bird nesting activities.

Proposed spring use of the Johnson-Trujillo allotment would not coincide with or have any potential to influence nesting activities/outcomes of breeding raptors or nongame migratory bird species. Livestock removal by 3/31 would allow roughly six weeks of vegetation growth prior to the migratory bird nesting period. Similarly, proposed spring use of the Douglas Creek and Coal Oil Basin allotments would allow approximately four weeks of vegetation growth prior to any earnest nesting attempts. As proposed, the Douglas Creek and Coal Oil Basin allotments would alternate grazing in the spring, allowing rest during the growing season in alternating years. This would allow for increased perennial expression, particularly in mid seral communities and overall improvements in plant vigor. This grazing system would provide the greatest benefit to ground and low shrub nesting species by increasing the cover and forage base.

Proposed use of the Lower Fourteen Mile allotment would allow grazing during the late-spring and early summer months (5/21 – 6/30) annually, coinciding with much of the migratory bird nesting period. Typically, sheep are herded through an area; therefore they do not tend to concentrate in an area for an extended period of time as cattle may. While reductions in vegetative cover would be expected, these reductions would likely not be as dramatic as with cattle. As sheep move through an area there would be greater potential for nests to be disrupted, particularly ground and low shrub nesting species. It should be noted that approximately 75 percent of this allotment is classified as pinyon-juniper woodland (consisting of steep, rugged terrain). Those bird species associated with this habitat type would tend to nest high enough above the ground so as not to be disrupted.

Cumulative Effects: Cumulative effects would be similar to those discussed in the Terrestrial Wildlife section.

Environmental Consequences of Continuation of Current Management (Alternative B):

Direct and Indirect Effects: Impacts to migratory bird species and associated habitats in the Lower Fourteen Mile allotment would be identical to those discussed in the Proposed Action as there is no change to the grazing system.

Under the current grazing system livestock are grazed annually during the early growing season in the Johnson-Trujillo, Douglas Creek and Coal Oil Basin allotments. These allotments are currently exceeding available AUMs (see Rangeland Management section) and it is suspected that continuation of this grazing system may only aggravate vegetative conditions, particularly in the mid seral communities. Currently 19 percent of the Johnson-Trujillo, 31 percent of the Coal Oil allotment and 28 percent of the Douglas Creek allotment are classified as mid seral. Continuation of the grazing system has the potential to alter the vegetative composition, increasing annual species and suppressing perennial expression over time. It is suspected that in the long term, nest densities in these communities would be suppressed to some degree.

Cumulative Effects: Cumulative effects would be similar to those discussed in the Terrestrial Wildlife section.

Environmental Consequences of No Livestock Grazing (Alternative C):

Direct and Indirect Effects: Removal of livestock from the allotment would be similar to those discussed in the Terrestrial Wildlife section. Improvements in vegetative composition, density and vigor would be expected throughout the allotment's mid and late seral communities. It is unlikely that there would be any noticeable improvements in the allotments ~1,200 acres of early seral communities (dominated by annual invasives) and nest densities would be expected to be suppressed to some extent in these areas.

Cumulative Effects: There would be no contribution to previous or existing disturbances under the no grazing alternative.

Mitigation: None.

AQUATIC WILDLIFE

Affected Environment: Portions of Douglas Creek weave along the eastern edge of the Douglas Creek allotment. Douglas Creek supports higher-order aquatic vertebrates including speckled dace (native) and northern leopard frog, a BLM sensitive species. The Coal Oil allotment captures a small stretch of the White River which supports several native and nonnative fish species. The White River from Rio Blanco Lake downstream to the Utah border is designated critical habitat for the Colorado pikeminnow, a federally endangered fish species. Occupied habitat occurs from Taylor Draw Dam downstream to the Utah border. Riparian health assessments conducted on Douglas Creek in 2010 and the White River in 2011 classified both systems as properly functioning and, with the exception of the corrals along the White River (see Riparian/Wetlands section), there was no notable indication of excessive livestock use.

Environmental Consequences of the Proposed Action (Alternative A):

Direct and Indirect Effects: The proposed grazing schedule would alternate spring use of the Coal Oil and Douglas Creek allotments, with the Douglas Creek allotment being grazed annually for much of December (dormant season use). The proposed grazing system is not expected to have substantial influence on aquatic wildlife or associated habitats. The current grazing system appears to be compatible with continued maintenance of riparian character. Alternating spring use, as proposed, would allow for greater riparian expression over time; however any noticeable increase/improvements to aquatic wildlife populations would not be expected.

Cumulative Effects: Currently there is no indication that grazing has any negative influence on aquatic wildlife or associated habitats and, being that the proposed grazing system would allow for improvements in riparian health, the Proposed Action would not be expected to add substantially to past, current or future disturbances (namely energy-related) within the project area.

Environmental Consequences of Continuation of Current Management (Alternative B):

Direct and Indirect Effects: The current grazing system does not appear to have any negative influence on aquatic wildlife populations, nor does it appear to be detracting from the continued maintenance of riparian character along these systems as wildlife habitat. Based on most recent stream assessments conducted in 2010 (Douglas Creek) and 2011 (White River), both systems appear to be in proper functioning condition, with no outward evidence of excessive livestock use.

Cumulative Effects: Cumulative effects would be similar to those discussed in the Proposed Action.

Environmental Consequences of No Livestock Grazing (Alternative C):

Direct and Indirect Effects: While livestock removal would provide a benefit to riparian vegetative health, leading to incremental improvements in channel conditions, the no grazing alternative would likely have no measureable influence on aquatic wildlife. Both Douglas Creek and the White River are currently in proper functioning condition with no apparent negative influence on aquatic conditions in relation to the continued support of aquatic wildlife.

Cumulative Effects: There would be no contribution to previous or existing disturbances under the no grazing alternative.

Mitigation: None

Finding on the Public Land Health Standard #3 for Plant and Animal Communities:

The Land Health Standards for aquatic wildlife communities are currently being met within the allotment. Both Douglas Creek and the White River are in proper functioning condition with no evidence of livestock influence on either system. Neither the Proposed Action and No Action Alternative, nor no grazing alternative are expected to detract from the continued maintenance of the Land Health Standards.

TERRESTRIAL WILDLIFE

Affected Environment: The four allotments span elevations that generally support big game during the winter months. The Coal Oil Basin and Lower Fourteen Mile allotments are categorized by Colorado Parks and Wildlife (CPW) as big general winter range. These ranges receive the heaviest use by deer from October through April and September through December, respectively. The Johnson-Trujillo and Douglas Creek allotments are located in mule deer severe winter range and winter concentration areas - a specialized component of winter range that periodically supports virtually all an area's deer under the most severe winter conditions (i.e., extreme cold and heavy snow pack). These ranges typically receive the heaviest use from January through April.

Mature components of pinyon-juniper (~16,600 acres in Johnson-Trujillo, Douglas Creek and Lower Fourteen Mile allotments) may provide suitable nesting substrate for several raptor species including red-tailed hawk, accipitor species, and several owl species. Rock outcrops may provide potential nest substrate for golden eagle and red-tailed hawk. There are dozens of known (historic) raptor nests located throughout the four allotments.

Limited information exists on small mammal use and distribution within the allotments; however it is suspected that nongame species using the allotment's habitats are typical and widely distributed in extensive like habitats across the Resource Area and northwest Colorado. There are no narrowly endemic or highly specialized species known to inhabit those lands potentially influenced by this action. Approximately four percent of the allotment is classified as an early seral community due to its dominance of annual, invasive species. These early seral communities normally have limited forage and/or cover value for nongame birds and mammals, and while breeding densities may be reduced in these small inclusions, it is suspected that community diversity and densities across the allotment as a whole are not strongly suppressed or below their potential. Non-game populations associated with the upland communities, particularly dense mountain shrub basins that retain more fully developed understories, likely occur at densities that approach habitat potential. The abundance of non-game animals associated with gentle gradient upland shrub types where the ecological status of herbaceous ground cover is classified as mid-seral are likely suppressed to some degree, but population viability probably remains relatively intact.

Environmental Consequences of the Proposed Action (Alternative A):

Direct and Indirect Effects: Proposed dormant season use of the Lower Fourteen Mile allotment (11/1 – 11/20) would coincide with a portion of the big game winter use period. While there is likely some degree of competition, particularly in extreme winters, there is no evidence of chronic or ongoing conflicts between livestock and big game. As proposed, livestock grazing is not expected to have any noticeable bearing on the availability of forage for deer during the winter months. Late-spring and early-summer use in the Lower Fourteen Mile allotment would coincide with portions of the raptor breeding season; however the proposed grazing schedule is not anticipated to directly influence nest success/outcome of woodland raptors. Livestock use tends to be concentrated in open, gentler terrain with only incidental use in steeper, wooded areas which are occupied by nesting raptors. Approximately four percent of the Lower Fourteen Mile

allotment is classified as early seral (confined mainly to the valley bottoms and toe slopes) with another 30 percent categorized as mid seral. It is suspected that these communities would remain static with little room for improvement as there is no change from current management.

The proposed grazing schedule for the Johnson-Trujillo allotment would not coincide with or have any potential to influence nesting activities/outcomes of breeding raptors. Livestock removal by 3/31 will effectively avoid the raptor nesting season. Livestock-big game use will be synchronous throughout all of the winter and into the early spring season (12/26 – 3/31). It is suspected that there will be some level of competition particularly for woody browse, but based on allotment inspections there does not appear to be any evidence of prolonged use by big game or livestock. Removal of livestock by the end of March will allow big game sole access to early emergent grasses and forbs during the early spring. Reductions in spring use (~35 percent) would allow for improvements in overall plant vigor and composition which over time would benefit both big game and nongame species alike.

The Coal Oil Basin allotment receives light use by big game (predominately pronghorn) during the winter months. Grazing for a two week period during December is not expected to have any negative influence on big game populations nor is it expected to substantially reduce forage quality or availability. As proposed, spring and winter livestock use would alternate years, allowing for rest during the early portions of the growing season in alternating years. Under this grazing system, improvements in plant vigor and herbaceous perennial expression would be expected over time. These improvements would provide the greatest benefit to nongame mammal and bird species by increasing cover availability and vegetative composition. Currently approximately 13 percent (263 acres) of this allotment is classified as an early seral community due to the widespread presence of annual invasive species such as cheatgrass. The proposed grazing system would likely only provide nominal improvements in these early seral communities, however it is expected that resting every other year would allow for improvements (e.g., greater perennial expression) in the roughly 600 acres (31 percent) of mid seral communities.

Proposed winter use in the Douglas Creek allotment is not expected to have any substantial influence on big game populations or forage availability. Removal of livestock by 12/25 would effectively avoid nearly the entire big game critical winter use period. Similarly, the proposed grazing schedule would effectively avoid the raptor nesting season. Effects from alternating spring use would be similar to those discussed above for the Coal Oil allotment.

Cumulative Effects: Cumulatively, effects from the Proposed Action would be most noticeable in the Coal Oil allotment as this area is currently and has historically experienced heavy energy-related development. While the proposed grazing system would lead to improvements in overall vegetative condition, currently approximately 13 percent (263 acres) of public lands within this allotment are not considered to be meeting the land health standards due to the presence of invasive species such as cheatgrass, halogeton, and mustard.

Environmental Consequences of Continuation of Current Management (Alternative B):

Direct and Indirect Effects: Effects would be the same for the Lower Fourteen Mile

allotment as those discussed in the Proposed Action as there is no change from current management.

Continuation of the current grazing system in the Johnson-Trujillo, Douglas Creek and Coal Oil allotments would not allow for any improvements in vegetative condition and because these allotments are currently exceeding available AUMs (see Rangeland Management section), may potentially lead to further declines (e.g., conversion of mid seral to early seral) in vegetation condition in the long term. Currently over four percent of these allotments are classified as early seral, with another 21 percent classified as mid seral. In general, annual dominated communities lack the diversity in nongame species as those with more fully developed understories.

Cumulative Effects: Cumulative impacts would be similar to those discussed in the Proposed Action. The current grazing system is not expected to add substantially to ongoing and proposed influences (namely energy-related), however vegetation improvements in regards to terrestrial wildlife habitat would not be as pronounced.

Environmental Consequences of No Livestock Grazing (Alternative C):

Direct and Indirect Effects: Livestock removal would allow for an increase in perennial vegetative cover, plant vigor and litter accumulation, particularly in the 6400 acres of mid seral communities. The most noticeable response would likely be for nongame mammals and bird populations, who would benefit with increasing vegetative cover, forage and litter cover. Increases would be most prominent in those areas favored by livestock (bottomlands, mildly-sloped terrain and areas in close proximity to water) that are grazed synchronous with the migratory bird nesting season.

Cumulative Effects: There would be no contribution to previous or existing disturbances under the no grazing alternative.

Mitigation: None.

Finding on the Public Land Health Standard #3 for Plant and Animal Communities: Overall, the allotment generally meets the Land Health Standard for terrestrial wildlife at the landscape level. Based on rangeland assessments approximately four percent of grazable public lands are considered to be in an early seral state dominated by invasive, and annuals are not considered to be meeting the Land Health Standards. These communities likely detract to a certain extent from habitat character and/or function, particularly for migratory birds and small mammals. The Proposed, Current Management and No Action alternatives would not be expected to yield major improvements in these early seral communities. The proposed grazing schedule is not expected to impede continued maintenance of these standards. Similarly, there is no evidence to suggest that current grazing practices are aggravating deficiencies in the utility or available extent of terrestrial wildlife habitat.

CULTURAL RESOURCES

Affected Environment: Grazing permit renewals are undertakings under Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act. Range improvements associated with the allotment (e.g., fences, spring improvements) are subject to compliance requirements under Section 106 and will undergo separate standard cultural resources inventory and evaluation procedures. During Section 106 review, a cultural resource assessment (#12-012) was completed for the Coal Oil, Douglas Creek, Johnson-Trujillo, and Lower Fourteen Mile allotments by Kristin Bowen, White River Field Office (WRFO) Archaeologist. The assessment followed the procedures and guidance outlined in the 1980 National Programmatic Agreement Regarding the Livestock Grazing and Range Improvement Program, IM-WO-99-039, IM-CO-99-007, IM-CO-99-019, and IM-CO-01-026. The results of the assessments are summarized in the tables below. Copies of the cultural resource assessments are in the WRFO archaeology and allotment files.

Coal Oil Allotment - One historic mine housing complex, a prehistoric hearth, and two prehistoric open camps have been recorded in this allotment along with seven prehistoric isolated finds. The allotment does not have a high potential of containing potentially eligible sites.

Table 19: Cultural Resources Literature Review Results for the Coal Oil Allotment

CULTURAL RESOURCES LITERATURE REVIEW RESULTS				
Allotment Number	Percent of Allotment Previously Inventoried	Number of Sites Known in Allotment	High Potential of Historic Properties	Number of Historic Properties to be Visited
6313	~19 %	4	No	1
Management Recommendations (Additional inventory required and/or historic properties to be visited)		There are 2 areas of livestock concentration in the allotment, two acres of survey should be done at each location. 5RB2258 should be monitored for livestock damages.		

Douglas Creek Allotment- One listed National Register District (Canyon Pintado), four prehistoric rock art sites, eight prehistoric open camps, one prehistoric sheltered camp, three prehistoric open architectural sites, four prehistoric open lithic sites, and one protohistoric rock art site have been recorded in this allotment along with thirteen prehistoric, two historic, and one protohistoric isolated finds. The sites likely represent a time frame from the Archaic (c. 3,000 BC) to historic times, with identified Fremont and Ute sites.

Table 20: Cultural Resources Literature Review Results for the Douglas Creek Allotment

CULTURAL RESOURCES LITERATURE REVIEW RESULTS				
Allotment Number	Percent of Allotment Previously Inventoried	Number of Sites Known in Allotment	High Potential of Historic Properties	Number of Historic Properties to be Visited
6342	~54 %	23	Yes	7
Management Recommendations (Additional inventory required and/or historic properties to be visited)		There are 5 areas of livestock concentration in the allotment, one acre of survey should be done at each location. 5RB747, 5RB752, 5RB1852, 5RB3080, 5RB3081, 5RB3082, and 5RB3083 should be monitored for livestock damages.		

Johnson-Trujillo Allotment- Of the 143 recorded sites in this allotment, 49 are prehistoric, 68 are historic, 6 are protohistoric, 1 is unknown, 9 are multicomponent sites, and there are 10 modern Paco Chacon sites. Recorded prehistoric sites consist of rock art, granaries, drilled hole/ structural sites, open lithic, open camps, and protohistoric wickiups. Recorded historic sites consist of a very high number of sheepherder camps, as well as rock art, roads, corrals, brush fences, animal traps, a coal mine, a bridge, and a sweat lodge. The sites likely represent a time frame from the Archaic (c. 3,000 BC) to historic times, with identified Fremont, Ute, and Navajo sites. Unique to this allotment are rock art sites that date to the 1970s by a sheepherder, Paco Chacon, which are treated as potentially eligible to the NRHP, even though they do not meet the usual standard of being older than 50 years.

Table 21: Cultural Resources Literature Review Results for the Johnson-Trujillo Allotment

CULTURAL RESOURCES LITERATURE REVIEW RESULTS				
Allotment Number	Percent of Allotment Previously Inventoried	Number of Sites Known in Allotment	High Potential of Historic Properties	Number of Historic Properties to be Visited
6338	~17 %	143	Yes	15
Management Recommendations (Additional inventory required and/or historic properties to be visited)		There are 6 areas of livestock concentration of varying sizes, approximately 30 acres total should be surveyed in the allotment. 5RB.1967, 5RB.1969, 5RB.2222, 5RB.2627, 5RB.3008, 5RB.3011, 5RB.3031, 5RB.3039, 5RB.3040, 5RB.3041, 5RB.3051, 5RB.3288, 5RB.3340, 5RB.3515, 5RB.4292 should be monitored for livestock damages.		

Lower Fourteen Mile Allotment- One historic road, and one historic irrigation ditch have been recorded in this allotment along with two historic isolated finds. The allotment does not have a high potential of containing potentially eligible sites.

Table 21: Cultural Resources Literature Review Results for the Lower Fourteen Mile Allotment

CULTURAL RESOURCES LITERATURE REVIEW RESULTS				
Allotment Number	Percent of Allotment Previously Inventoried	Number of Sites Known in Allotment	High Potential of Historic Properties	Number of Historic Properties to be Visited
6014	~1 %	2	No	0
Management Recommendations (Additional inventory required and/or historic properties to be visited)		There are 2 areas of livestock concentration in the allotment, one acre of survey should be done at each location.		

The percentages of the allotments that have been previously surveyed is based off of BLM GIS data and is an approximate and does not necessarily represent Class III surveys that were done to current standards. Previous inventories in the Coal Oil and Lower Fourteen Mile allotments show a low potential of them containing historic properties, that is, sites that are eligible, or potentially eligible to the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP). Based on available data, a high potential for historic properties occurs in the Douglas Creek and Johnson-Trujillo allotments. Historic properties in these allotments are primarily prehistoric, and there is a higher percentage of fragile site types than is typical of any random area in northwest Colorado.

Fifteen livestock concentration areas (a total of 41 acres) were identified in 2011 by Matt Dupire, BLM WRFO Range Specialist for the Sam Robinson Permit Renewal. There were no previously recorded potentially eligible sites within 200 meters of any identified livestock concentration area. The identified concentration areas are to be surveyed prior to the renewal of the permit in another ten years. Additionally 23 historic properties have been identified as being impacted or threatened by livestock grazing in the allotment and need to be monitored prior to the renewal of the permit in another ten years.

If historic properties are located during any subsequent field inventories in this area, and the BLM determines that grazing activities are adversely impacting the properties, mitigation will be identified and implemented in consultation with the Colorado State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO).

Environmental Consequences of the Proposed Action (Alternative A):

Direct and Indirect Effects: 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 (Broadhead 2001, Osbourn et al. 1987). Indirect impacts include soil erosion, gulying, and increased potential for unlawful collection and vandalism (Broadhead 2001, Osbourn et al. 1987). Continued livestock use in these concentration areas may cause substantial ground disturbance and cause irreversible adverse effects to historic properties. Continued livestock management is appropriate, as long as identified grazing impacts are properly mitigated.

Fieldwork to date shows that in most allotments, livestock concentration areas are found near water or salting sources, or areas where animals bed down, and are the main areas where archaeological sites may be impacted. However, in the adjacent Cathedral Bluffs allotment, the main concern is the high percentage of rock art sites on cliff faces where cattle naturally take refuge from the sun. Both the Douglas Creek allotment and the Johnson-Trujillo allotment have a high percentage of sensitive site types, like rock art, and granaries that are found in the same cliff face locations, having a high potential to be impacted by livestock. As the Proposed Action is for sheep use instead of cattle, like the nearby Cathedral Bluffs allotment, impacts to rock art and structures should be less damaging.

Cumulative Effects: Past and present land uses such as oil and gas development and livestock grazing are expected to continue to occur in the future. The livestock impacts described above, such as increased wind and water erosion, trampling, and so on will continue.

Environmental Consequences of Continuation of Current Management (Alternative B):

Direct and Indirect Effects: Continuation of the current level of livestock grazing is not expected to differ substantially from the Proposed Action in terms of its effect to cultural resources.

Cumulative Effects: Same as Alternative A.

Environmental Consequences of No Livestock Grazing (Alternative C):

Direct and Indirect Effects: While a no grazing alternative alleviates potential damage from livestock activities, cultural resources are constantly being subjected to site formation processes or events after creation (Binford 1981, Schiffer 1987). These processes can be both cultural and natural and take place in an instant or over thousands of years. Cultural processes include any activities directly or indirectly caused by humans. Natural processes include chemical, physical, and biological processes of the natural environment that impinge and or modify cultural materials.

Cumulative Effects: Livestock will not continue to contribute to cumulative impacts to cultural resources.

Mitigation:

1. The permittee is responsible for informing all persons who are associated with the allotment that they will be subject to prosecution for knowingly disturbing archaeological sites or for collecting artifacts. If archaeological materials are discovered as a result of operations under this authorization, the permittee must immediately contact the appropriate BLM representative.
2. Pursuant to 43 CFR 10.4(g), the permittee must notify the AO, by telephone and 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), the permittee must stop activities in the vicinity of the discovery and protect it for 30 days or until notified to proceed by the AO.
3. Over the next ten years 15 livestock concentration areas will be surveyed. Sites 5RB747, 5RB752, 5RB1852, 5RB1967, 5RB1969, 5RB2222, 5RB2258, 5RB2627, 5RB3008, 5RB3011, 5RB3031, 5RB3039, 5RB3040, 5RB3041, 5RB3051, 5RB3080, 5RB3081, 5RB3082, 5RB3083, 5RB3288, 5RB3340, 5RB3515, and 5RB4292 will be monitored and if damage is actively continuing to occur, mitigation measures will be developed and implemented.

PALEONTOLOGICAL RESOURCES

Affected Environment: The proposed project area is located in the following formations: (Tweto 1979), (c.f. Armstrong and Wolny 1989):

- Uinta Formation—PFYC 5—Eocene mammals (titanotheres, uintatheres, miacid carnivores, possibly others), reptiles (turtles and crocodilians), fish (vertebrae, spines, and scales, likely including Lepisosteidae), gastropods (high-spined and turitellid snails), insect larvae, and plants (leaves, wood, algae, etc.).
- Green River Formation, Parachute Creek Member—PFYC 5—fossil reptiles (lizards, crocodilians, turtles), bats, insects (including eggs & larvae, scorpion ants, beetles, gnats, and mosquitoes), and plants (including algae reefs, ferns, horse-tails, seeds, flowers, fruit, oaks, maples, sassafras, figs, magnolias, etc.).
- Mesaverde Group or Formation, Upper part—PFYC 5—dinosaurs, reptiles (turtles & crocodilians), mammals, fish, ichnological traces, snails, plants, and coal beds.

- Undifferentiated Green River Formation, Lower Part and Wasatch Formation—PFYC 5—Paleocene and Eocene mammals (including perissodactyls, tapiroids, condylarths, primates, insectivores, marsupials, creodonts, carnivores, and multituberculates), reptiles (including crocodylians, turtles, and lizards), birds (including eggs), amphibians, fish, invertebrates (non-marine mollusks and ostracoda), and various floras.
- Modern Alluvium—PFYC 2—Holocene animals, including bison and horses.
- Segoe Sandstone, Buck Tongue of Mancos Shale, and Castlegate Sandstone—PFYC 3b—marine ichnological traces (other than Ophiomorpha) and possibly other marine fossils.
- Mancos Shale—PFYC 3a—In and near the Piceance Basin, this formation produces fish (fish scales, bones, and sharks' teeth), invertebrates (ammonites, baculites, scaphites, bryozoans, brachiopoda, clams, oysters, belemnites), ichnological traces (crayfish burrows), pollen, and plant fragments. Elsewhere, Mancos shale is known to produce marine reptiles (mosasaurs and plesiosaurs) and duckbill dinosaurs (hadrosaurids).

The allotment ranges from units which the BLM, Colorado State Office (COSO) has classified as PFYC 5 as they have a very high occurrence of containing scientifically significant fossils down to PFYC 2 units, which are not likely to contain significant fossils. Both the Douglas Creek and Jonhson-Trujillo allotments contain recorded paleontological localities.

Environmental Consequences of the Proposed Action (Alternative A):

Direct and Indirect Effects: In general, paleontological materials (fossils) are not considered to be endangered by normal grazing activities. Direct impacts to fossil materials may occur in areas of exposed bedrock, or where livestock congregate. Direct impacts can include damage or destruction of fossils, and the disturbance of the stratigraphic context in which they are located. Since in situ fossils are seldom encountered in alluvial areas where livestock tend to concentrate, the potential for damage to undisturbed fossil remains is low. Indirect impacts may include a reduction in vegetative cover, causing wind and water erosion, and unlawful collection. The short time period of pasture use, and pasture rotation, should have the effect of decreasing any potential damage to existing fossil resources by decreasing the time frame for impacts on any given location.

Cumulative Effects: Past and present land uses such as oil and gas and other human developments, foraging by deer and elk, and livestock grazing are expected to continue to occur in the future. However, there should be minimal cumulative effects to fossil resources from livestock grazing.

Environmental Consequences of Continuation of Current Management (Alternative B):

Direct and Indirect Effects: Continuation of the current level of livestock grazing is not expected to differ substantially from the Proposed Action in terms of its effect to fossil resources.

Cumulative Effects: Same as Alternative A.

Environmental Consequences of No Livestock Grazing (Alternative C):

Direct and Indirect Effects: Direct and indirect impacts to paleontological resources from grazing activities would cease. Exposed fossil materials would still be subject to potential impacts from humans, foraging by deer and elk, and other natural processes.

Cumulative Effects: Livestock will not continue to contribute to cumulative impacts to fossil resources.

Mitigation: The applicant is responsible for informing all persons who are associated with the project operations that they will be subject to prosecution for disturbing or collecting vertebrate fossils, collecting large amounts of petrified wood (over 25lbs./day, up to 250lbs./year), or collecting fossils for commercial purposes on public lands. If any paleontological resources are discovered as a result of operations under this authorization, the applicant must immediately contact the appropriate BLM representative.

FOREST MANAGEMENT

Affected Environment: The project area includes different aged stand classes of pinyon-juniper woodland that was described by a survey performed by White River Field Office personnel from 2003-2005. The following table lists the woodland communities and associated Geographic Reference Areas (GRAs) in the allotments associated with the Proposed Action.

Table 22: Woodland Communities within Robinson Grazing Permit Renewal

Allotment #	Community Type	GRA	BLM Acres	Percent of the allotment
06014		Piceance	685	
	Forest Interface		684	99.9%
	Pinyon (DE)		0.5	<1%
06313		Wolf Creek/Red Wash	2,100	
	Juniper (DE)		1,584	75.4%
	Juniper (PE-M)		516	24.6%
06338		Douglas/Cathedral	11,791	
	Juniper (DE)		3,262	27.7%
	Juniper (PE-M)		7,362	62.4%
	Juniper (PE-Y)		17	<1%
	Pinyon/Juniper (DE)		32	<1%
	Pinyon/Juniper (PE-M)		1,093	9.3%
06342		Douglas/Cathedral	2,080	
	Juniper (DE)		907	43.6%
	Juniper (PE-M)		1,060	51.0%
	Pinyon/Juniper (DE)		114	5.5%

Community Type Descriptions:

DE - Dry Exposures Habitat Types

PE - Productive Exposure Habitat Types

M - Mature

Y - Young

Within the 1997 White River ROD/RMP all of the pinyon/juniper woodlands in the Wolf Ridge/Red Wash GRA are classified as non-commercial based on productivity and harvest suitability. These woodlands are not considered in the decadal harvest for the WRFO, and will not be managed for commercial firewood production. Woodlands in this GRA are available for harvest by private individuals. The majority of harvesting is for fuel wood and fence posts. These woodlands are available for manipulation to enhance other resource values. Commercial harvest is allowable on a portion of the Douglas/Cathedral and Piceance GRA's. Woodlands in these GRAs are available for harvest by private individuals as well.

BLM weed crews have been treating Russian olive and tamarisk on the Johnson-Trujillo Allotment. Canada and bull thistle, Russian knapweed, and white top are also being spot treated along the river in this allotment. All allotments are being spot treated for halogeton and cheatgrass.

Environmental Consequences of the Proposed Action (Alternative A):

Direct and Indirect Effects: Livestock grazing in general has not been shown to directly impact existing pinyon/juniper woodlands. Early season grazing should have no direct impact on woodland communities.

Livestock grazing may play some role in increasing invasion of pinyon/juniper woodlands on sagebrush sites by decreasing the competitive nature of native plant communities. If the early season grazing negatively affects the native species vigor, then there may be a potential for invasive species encroachment. However, the early season grazing may also provide pressure on non-native cool season species to negatively impact their growth, providing the native species with a competitive advantage for the growing season.

Cumulative Effects: Grazing decreases fine fuel loading decreasing the intensity and frequency of fires which would kill seedling and sapling trees. There would be an increase in the litter and fine fuels potentially increasing the frequency of fires which would limit the encroachment of pinyon/juniper woodlands into sagebrush types.

Environmental Consequences of Continuation of Current Management (Alternative B):

Direct and Indirect Effects: Livestock grazing in general has not been shown to directly impact existing pinyon/juniper woodlands. Livestock grazing may play some role in increasing invasion of pinyon/juniper woodlands on sagebrush sites by decreasing the competitive nature of native plant communities.

Cumulative Effects: Grazing decreases fine fuel loading, decreasing the intensity and frequency of fires which would kill seedling and sapling trees. There would be an increase in the litter and fine fuels potentially increasing the frequency of fires which would limit the encroachment of pinyon/juniper woodlands into sagebrush types.

Environmental Consequences of No Livestock Grazing (Alternative C):

Direct and Indirect Effects: The lack of livestock grazing may play some role in decreasing invasion of pinyon/juniper woodlands on sagebrush sites by increasing the competitive nature of native plant communities due to the lack of grazing pressure. There would be a rapid increase in fine fuel loadings in the sagebrush types. If not suppressed, fire frequencies

would increase significantly with sagebrush communities burning at a rate closer to the natural fire return interval for this plant community. These fires are expected to carry into the pinyon/juniper associations creating stand-replacing fires. Over the long-term pinyon/juniper woodlands would be relegated to those areas that are fire resistant such as bluffs and areas containing rimrock. The distribution of pinyon/juniper would be the same as before European influence, in theory. Large scale stand replacing fires in the pinyon/juniper type are expected to carry into the heads of the draws and also remove the Douglas-fir stands.

Cumulative Effects: With no commitment by the grazing permittee but continued commitment by the BLM the area of current weed infestations on BLM are expected to decline to a maintenance level. New weed infestations, within the pinyon/juniper woodlands, derived from the private lands are expected and without discovery could expand to the size requiring large scale herbicide application. In this case there would be a loss of woodland acreage.

Mitigation: None.

RANGELAND MANAGEMENT

Affected Environment: Sam and Cheri Robinson (0501446) are the BLM authorized grazing permit holders on the Lower Fourteen Mile (06014), Johnson-Trujillo (06338), Douglas Creek (06342), and Coal Oil (06313) allotments. The permittees use these allotments primarily for use from 12/1 until 4/15. Use does occur on the Lower Fourteen Mile allotment in the late spring/early summer months (5/21-6/30), and in the early fall (11/1-11/20).

Tables 23-27 (Acres & AUM Breakdown) is a summarization of the individual Livestock Grazing Capacity tables, which are broken down by surface ownership (BLM, private, State of Colorado), soil units and Acres/AUM for each allotment. As stated earlier, an AUM is the amount of forage necessary for the sustenance of 1 cow for a period of 1 month. The acres & AUM tables show an estimated carrying capacity (AUMs) of livestock for land ownership of all allotments and pastures associated with the Proposed Action. The Percent Public Land (% PL), which is the percentage of BLM AUMs in relation to total AUMs, was determined for all each of the allotments. The Coal Oil, Douglas Creek, and Johnson-Trujillo allotments all are made up of 100 percent public land. The grazing permittees submitted a *Grazing Application for Permit Renewal* that was developed with the BLM, and the livestock grazing capacity analysis of forage production was used to determine the rangeland's available forage contribution (AUMs), even though in certain instances the estimated grazing capacity exceeds that within the *Grazing Application for Permit Renewal* and Proposed Action. Reasons for the higher livestock carrying capacity AUMs are that the application and Proposed Action take into consideration such factors as available water distance from water to foraging areas, cattle distribution, and herding practices.

Tables 23-27 are also based upon a moderate stocking level that is generally less than the stocking rates recommended by the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) for the specific ecological sites. The reason for this is in consideration of a moderate stocking level that meets Public Land Health Standards in relation to the rangeland's carrying capacity and current rangeland conditions. Under management by the Robinson's, these allotments have been stocked at a low to moderate level.

Table 23: AUM Calculation Table for the Coal Oil Allotment

Coal Oil			
Ecological Site	BLM Acres	Acres/AUM	BLM AUMs
Alkaline Slopes	509	10	51
Alkaline Slopes/None	70	10	7
Clayey Saltdesert	1,081	10	108
Loamy Saltdesert	20	10	2
None (Rock Outcrop, Badland)	2,516	0	0
Riverbottom	12	20	1
Saltdesert Breaks	205	10	20
Sandy Saltdesert	91	10	9
Total AUMs			198

Table 24: AUM Calculation Table for the Douglas Creek Allotment

Douglas Creek			
Ecological Site	BLM Acres	Acres/AUM	BLM AUMs
Alkaline Slopes	377	8	47
Clayey Slopes	1,982	9	220
Loamy Saltdesert	60	12	5
None	486	0	0
PJ Woodlands/Clayey Slopes	1,546	20	77
Rolling Loam	206	7	29
Saltdesert Breaks	52	7	7
Stoney Foothills	434	10	43
Total AUMs			428

Table 25: AUM Calculation Table for the Johnson-Trujillo Allotment

Johnson-Trujillo AUM Allocation			
Ecological Site	BLM Acres	Acres/AUM	BLM AUMs
Alkaline Slopes	540	8	68
Clayey Slopes	1,329	7	190
Deep Clay Loam	11	7	2
Foothills Swale	22	3	7
Loamy Saltdesert	145	8	18

None	650	0	0
PJ Woodlands/Clayey Slopes	12,793	15	853
Riverbottom	3	20	0
Rolling Loam	1,575	6	263
Salt-desert Breaks	338	8	42
Sandy Salt-desert	10	8	1
Silty Salt-desert	121	8	15
Stoney Foothills	1,726	8	216
Total AUMs			1,675

Table 26: AUM Calculation Table for private lands the Lower Fourteen Mile Allotment

Lower Fourteen Mile (Private Lands)			
Ecological Site	Acres	Acres/AUM	Pvt. AUMs
Foothills Swale	136	7	19
Loamy Slopes	134	8	17
Loamy Slopes/Mountain Loam	25	8	3
PJ Woodlands	453	20	23
Stoney Foothills	105	12	9
AUMs			71

Table 27: AUM Calculation Table for BLM Lands in the Lower Fourteen Mile Allotment

Lower Fourteen Mile (BLM Lands)			
Ecological Site	BLM Acres	Acres/AUM	BLM AUMs
Brushy Loam	45	7	6
Deep Loam	3	8	0
Foothills Swale	125	7	18
Loamy Slopes	236	10	24
Loamy Slopes/Mountain Loam	203	10	20
PJ woodlands	2,275	20	114
Stoney Foothills	143	12	12
AUMs			194
Total AUMs			265
% PL			73%

Tables 28-31 reflect AUMs used (billed AUMs based on actual use report), from 2004-2011. As shown in the tables below, the permittees have typically operated below the current active AUMs (Grazing Capacity). The Lower Fourteen Mile allotment is generally used at or near full capacity every year, but stocking rate is below the estimated AUMs for the allotment as shown in the AUM tables above. The Johnson Trujillo allotment on average ran 1,637 AUMs which is above what is proposed (1,610), but the addition of the Coal Oil allotment and the ability to spread livestock over a larger area should account for the decrease in the authorized AUMs in the Proposed Action. Thus the ranch has operated with proper stewardship of the rangelands by running at or below the estimated livestock grazing capacity, thereby aiding in plant growth and recovery.

Table 28: Actual Use on the Douglas Creek Allotment from 2004-2011

Historic AUM Use Douglas Creek	
Grazing Year (03/01-02/28)	AUMs Authorized
2011	188
2010	227
2009	506
2008	348
2007	101
2006	382
2005	540
2004	473
Average AUM Use	346
Active AUMs	540
% of Active AUMs Used.	64%

Table 29: Actual Use on the Johnson Trujillo Allotment from 2004-2011

Historic AUM Use Johnson-Trujillo	
Grazing Year (03/01-02/28)	AUMs Authorized
2011	1,995
2010	2,103
2009	1,764
2008	1,220
2007	802
2006	1,446
2005	2,022

2004	1,743
Average AUM Use	1,637
Active AUMs	2,022
% of Active AUMs Used.	81%

Table 30: Actual Use on the Lower Fourteen Mile Allotment from 2004-2011

Historic AUM Use Lower Fourteen Mile	
Grazing Year (03/01-02/28)	AUMs Authorized
2011	98
2010	0
2009	169
2008	169
2007	169
2006	169
2005	169
2004	169
Average AUM Use	139
Active AUMs	169
% of Active AUMs Used.	82%

Table 31: Actual Use on the Coal Oil Allotment in 2011

Historic AUM Use Coal Oil	
Grazing Year (03/01-02/28)	AUMs Authorized
2011	28
Average AUM Use	28
Active AUMs	296
% of Active AUMs Used.	9%

The Coal Oil, Douglas Creek, and Johnson-Trujillo allotment have few water developments within the allotments. Since allotments are primarily used in the winter, permittees depend on snow to water livestock within these allotments. Using snow allows more of the allotment to be used and use is more evenly distributed across the allotment. Once snow has melted in early spring, livestock do depend more on water developments, and that is why the Coal Oil and Douglas Creek allotments are used for spring use. Both of these allotments are adjacent to the White River where livestock have access to live water.

Environmental Consequences of the Proposed Action (Alternative A):

Direct and Indirect Effects: The proposed grazing permit's active AUMs are based upon tables 23-27 (livestock carrying capacity tables). Therefore, the proposal alters active AUMs to a

level that is in accordance with the ability of the rangelands to produce forage, be grazed, and still meet land health standards (LHS) over time. This proposal also takes into account the permittees requests and will not inhibit their operation.

The proposed grazing schedule also makes progress towards meeting rest/deferment requirements of the 1997 White River RMP/ROD. Spring use will be rotated between the Douglas Creek and Coal Oil allotments on an even/odd year basis. This will meet the 1997 ROD/RMP requirements for Douglas Creek and makes significant progress towards meeting requirements within the Coal Oil allotment. Previously, the Coal Oil allotment was used every year during the spring growth period, and under the Proposed Action, use would be every other year.

The Lower Fourteen Mile allotment has a rest/deferment period of 4/10 to 7/15 every other year. The Proposed Action does not meet this requirement; however only 86 AUMs of the available 265 AUMs (32 percent) are proposed during this rest period and the allotment is only being used for nine days of the growth period for the area (5/21 to 5/31). The nine days of use during the spring growing season equal 23 BLM AUMs. This light use during the rest period along with light use during the actual spring growth period will still allow the allotment to meet land health standards.

Cumulative Effects: This area has experienced a high level of grazing in the past that has partially contributed to some areas not meeting land health standards. Areas not meeting land health standards have crossed a transitional threshold than will not be reversed from grazing management alone. Current grazing has been reduced from historical grazing levels, and the majority of grazing is done in the winter when vegetation is dormant and more tolerant to grazing. There is currently some critical growing season use that does not have any rotation associated with it that could be potentially harmful to rangelands. Future grazing under the Proposed Action would implement a rotation on critical growing season use that would provide time for plant health recovery and maintenance. Implementation of the Proposed Action is not anticipated to create cumulative impacts that will lead to further degradation of rangelands within the grazing allotments.

Environmental Consequences of Continuation of Current Management (Alternative B):

Direct and Indirect Effects: Continuation of the current permit would exceed available AUMs within the Coal Oil, Douglas Creek, and Johnson Trujillo allotments. Table 32 shows the available AUMs based on tables 23-27 and what the current permit authorizes.

Table 32: Available AUMs versus Permitted AUMs

Allotment	AUMs Available	Permitted AUMS	% Over
Coal Oil	198	295	50%
Douglas Creek	428	541	26%
Johnson-Trujillo	1675	2022	21%

By exceeding available AUMs within the permitted allotments, grazing use will be heavy to extreme and limit the areas ability to continue to meet LHS. Heavy to extreme grazing use also

reduces canopy cover which protects soils. This situation increases the likelihood of soil movement on the allotment.

This alternative also permits spring use on both the Douglas Creek and Coal Oil allotments every year and provides no spring rest or deferment like the Proposed Action. Use during the critical growth period has the greatest impact on individual plants because this is when they put on the most biomass and produce seed-heads for reproduction. In these areas, there is little moisture in the summer and there is limited opportunity for regrowth if use is heavy in the spring and there is no rest period. This heavy use with combined with no re-growth provides an opportunity for weedy annuals such as cheatgrass to establish and eventually get a strong-hold within the plant community.

Use within the Lower Fourteen Mile allotment is no different from the Proposed Action in this alternative and impacts were addressed above.

Cumulative Effects: Past and present impacts are similar to those analyzed in the Proposed Action. Future grazing if the continuation of current management alternative is implemented could potentially lead to further degradation of some rangelands due to critical growing season use. The continuation of current management provides no rest/rotation management on the Douglas Creek and Johnson-Trujillo allotments. This could create the potential for conversion of high use areas to cheatgrass if there is not adequate time for plant recovery and maintenance after use by livestock.

Environmental Consequences of No Livestock Grazing (Alternative C):

Direct and Indirect Effects: The no grazing alternative will provide the greatest opportunity for plant health and maintenance. The areas that would receive the greatest benefit are those that are rated as mid-seral and on the verge of not meeting land health standards. This alternative would violate the Taylor Grazing Act which outlines livestock grazing as an acceptable multiple use and provides an opportunity for qualified grazing applicants to graze public lands.

Cumulative Effects: Past and present impacts are similar to those analyzed in the Proposed Action. Under the no grazing alternative, there would be no cumulative impacts to rangelands if this alternative was implemented.

Mitigation: None.

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1979 Geologic Map of Colorado. United States Geologic Survey, Department of the Interior, Reston, Virginia.

TRIBES, INDIVIDUALS, ORGANIZATIONS, OR AGENCIES CONSULTED:

Native American tribes were notified of this grazing renewal as part of the annual Bureau of Land Management (BLM) White River Field Office's (WRFO) scoping letter to inform the tribes of the proposed projects in the field office area which will be subject to National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) analysis and implemented in 2012. The following tribes were notified: Ute Mountain Ute Tribe, Southern Ute Indian Tribe, Ute Indian Tribe of the Uintah and Ouray Reservation, and the Eastern Shoshone Tribe. As of 5/22/2012 no issues pertaining to this renewal have been identified.

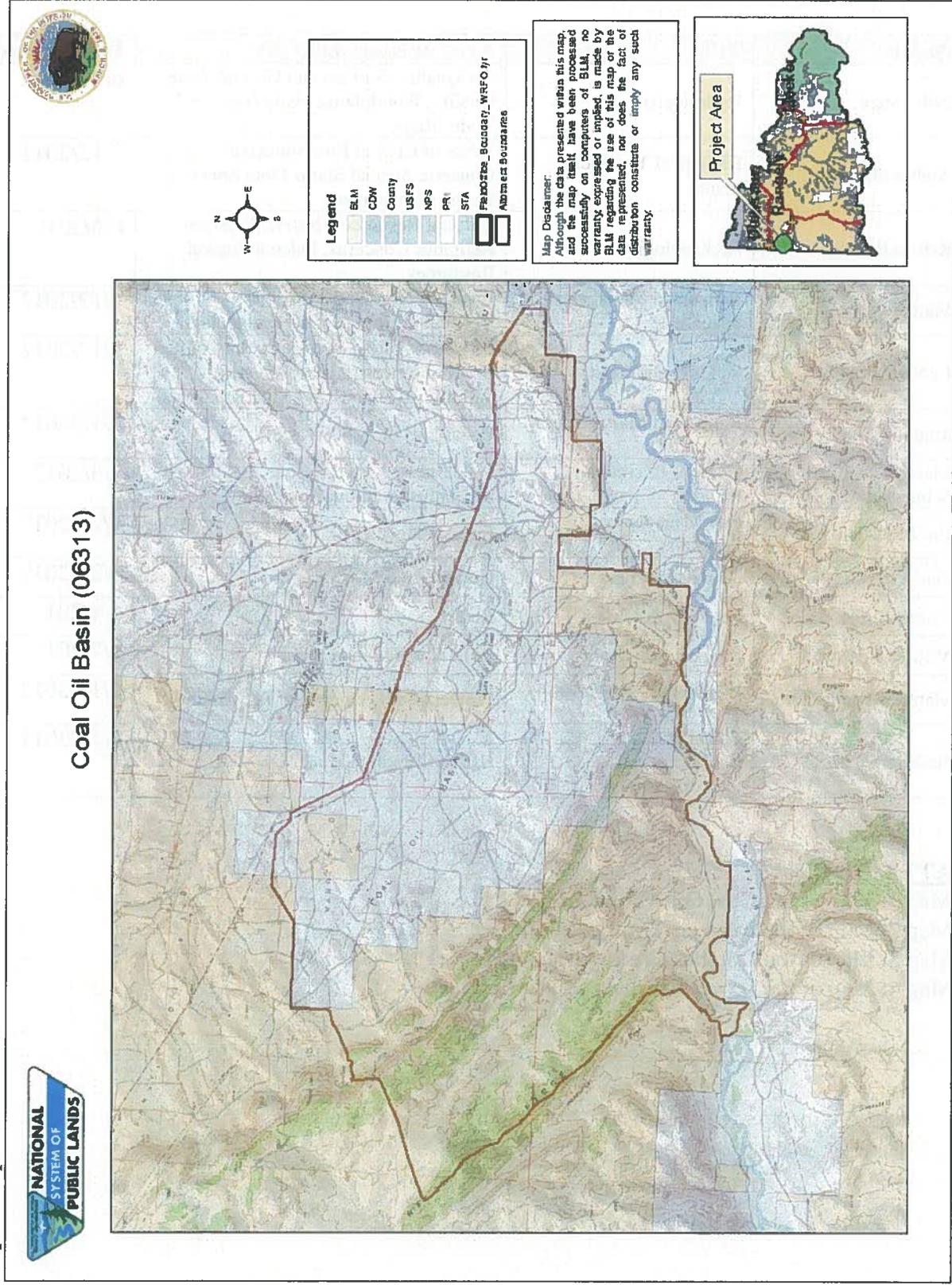
INTERDISCIPLINARY REVIEW:

Name	Title	Area of Responsibility	Date Signed
Bob Lange	Hydrologist	Air Quality; Surface and Ground Water Quality; Floodplains, Hydrology, and Water Rights	6/19/2012
Amber Shanklin	Biological Technician - Plants	Areas of Critical Environmental Concern; Special Status Plant Species; Forest Management	7/12/2012
Kristin Bowen	Archaeologist	Cultural Resources; Native American Religious Concerns; Paleontological Resources	6/5/2012
Matthew Dupire	Rangeland Management Specialist	Invasive, Non-Native Species; Vegetation; Rangeland Management	7/12/2012
Lisa Belmonte	Wildlife Biologist	Migratory Birds; Special Status Animal Species; Terrestrial and Aquatic Wildlife; Wetlands and Riparian Zones	7/12/2012
Matthew Dupire	Rangeland Management Specialist	Hazardous or Solid Wastes	7/12/2012
Chad Schneckenburger	Outdoor Recreation Planner	Wilderness; Visual Resources; Access and Transportation; Recreation,	4/3/2012
Jim Michels	Fire Management Specialist	Fire Management	4/25/2012
Paul Daggett	Mining Engineer	Geology and Minerals	4/24/2012
Stacey Burke	Realty Specialist	Realty	5/4/2012
Melissa J. Kindall	Range Technician	Wild Horse Management	5/7/2012
Matthew Dupire	Rangeland Management Specialist	Project Lead – Document Preparer	6/18/2012
Heather Sauls	Planning & Environmental Coordinator	NEPA Compliance	7/14/2013

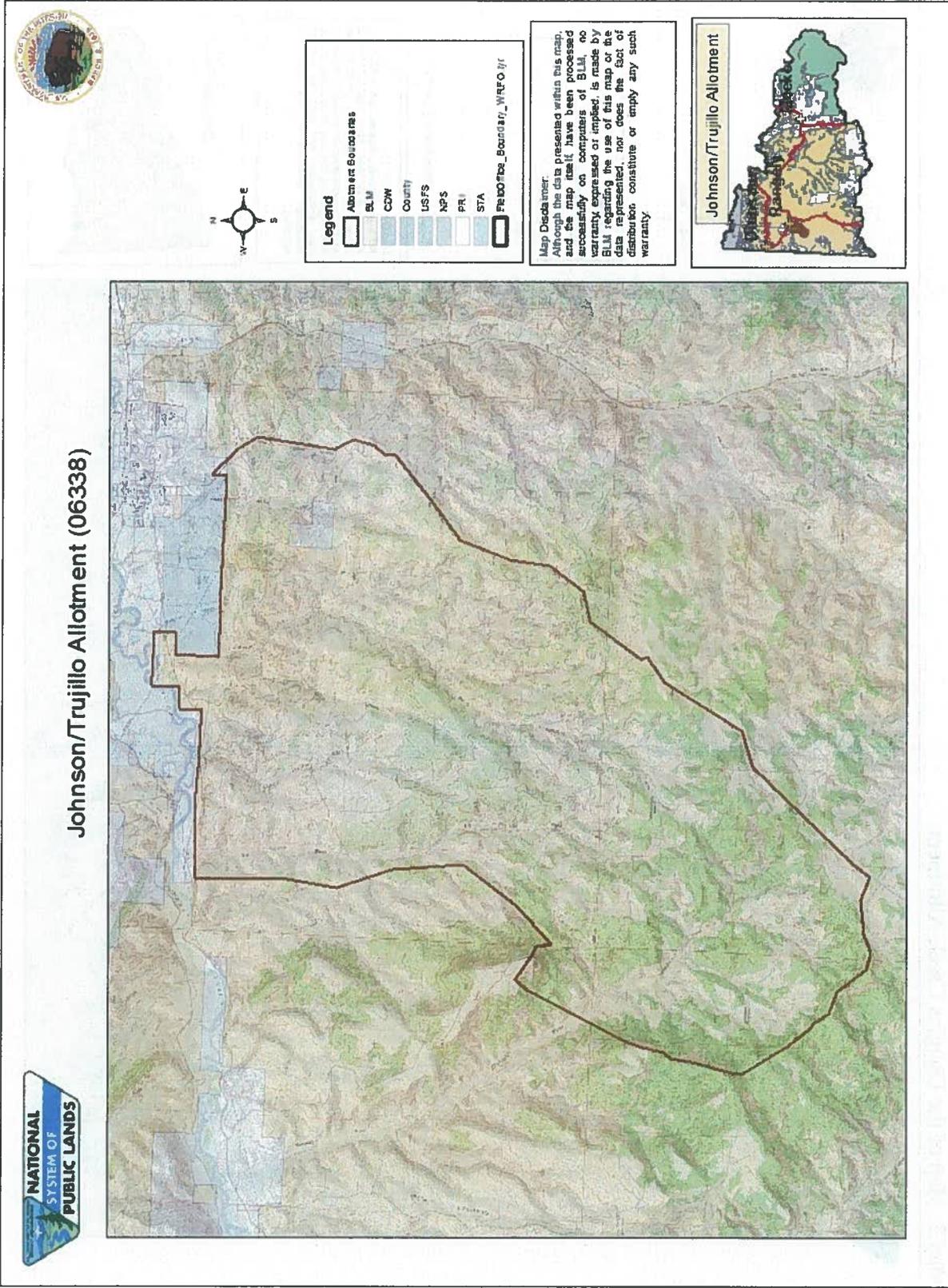
ATTACHMENTS:

- Map 1: Map of the Coal Oil Allotment
- Map 2: Map of the Johnson-Trujillo Allotment
- Map 3: Map of the Douglas Creek Allotment
- Map 4: Map of the Lower Fourteen Mile Allotment

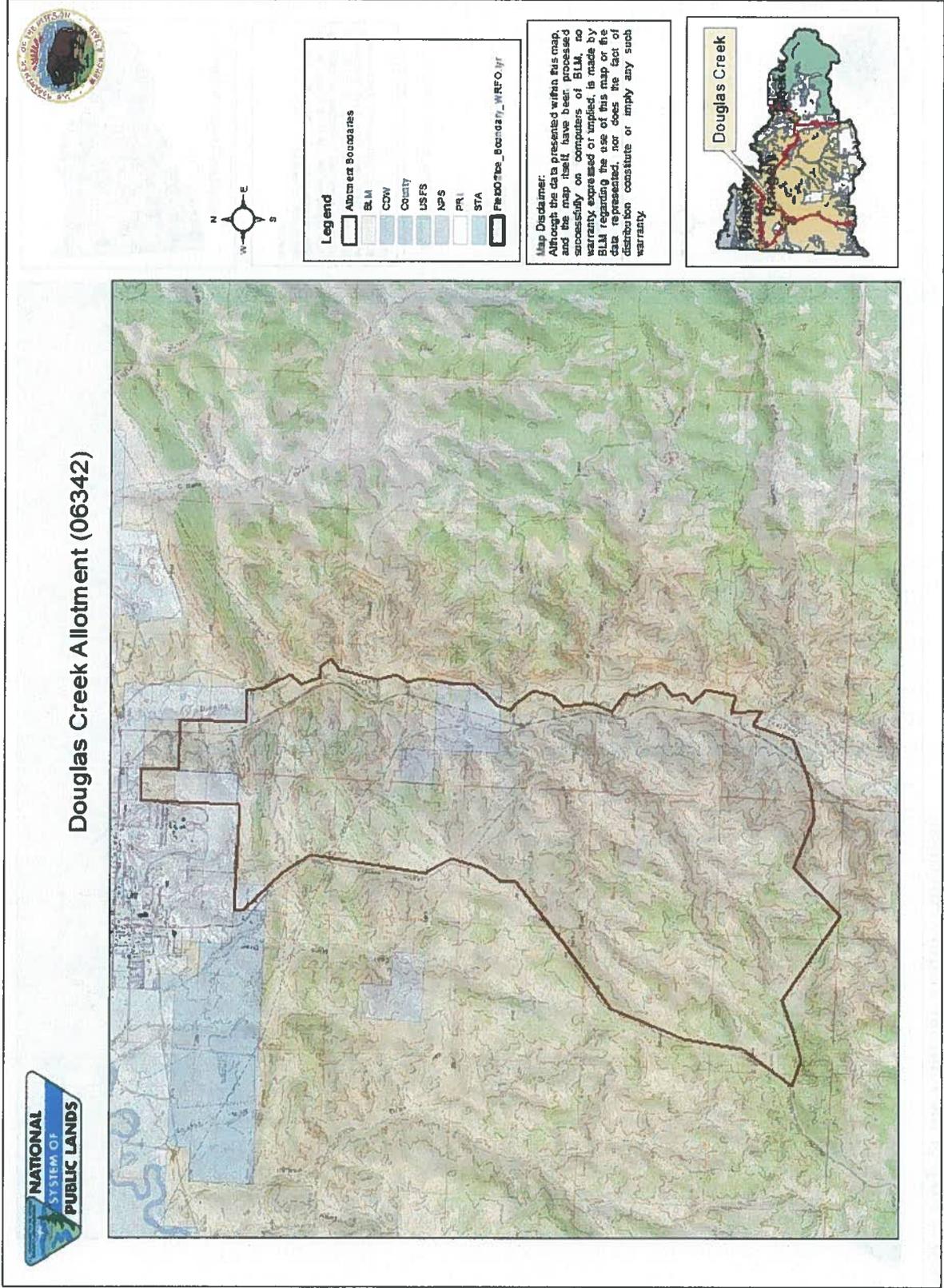
Map 1: Map of the Coal Oil Allotment



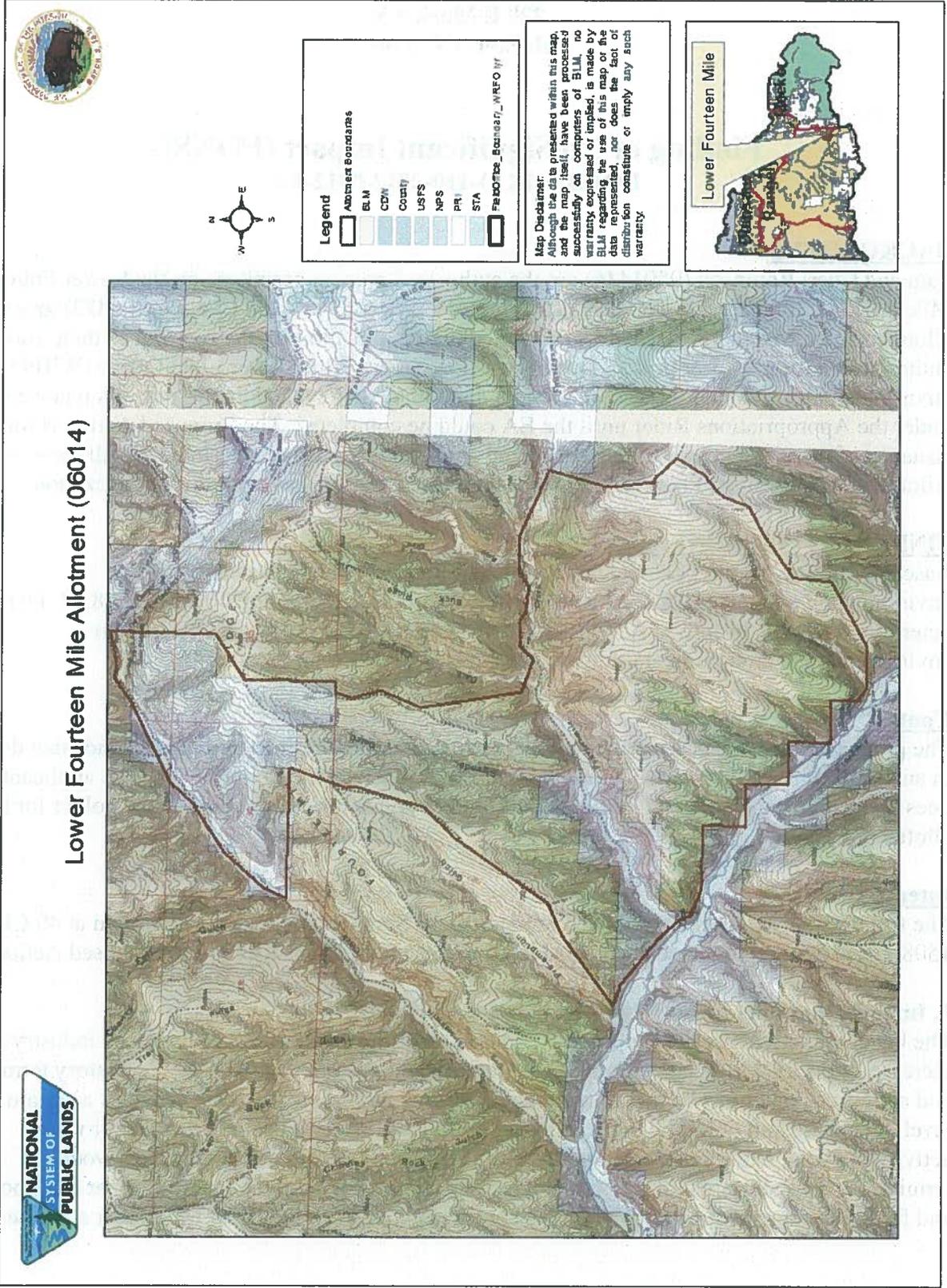
Map 2: Map of the Johnson-Trujillo Allotment



Map 3: Map of the Douglas Creek Allotment



Map 4: Map of the Lower Fourteen Mile Allotment



**U.S. Department of the Interior
Bureau of Land Management
White River Field Office
220 E Market St
Meeker, CO 81641**

**Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI)
DOI-BLM-CO-110-2012-0012-EA**

BACKGROUND

Sam and Cheri Robinson (0501446) are the authorized grazing permittees on the Lower Fourteen Mile (06014), Johnson-Trujillo (06338), Douglas Creek (06342), and Coal Oil (06313) grazing allotments. On March 15, 2010, they submitted their application for the renewal of their grazing authorization for a 10 year period. Due to workload in the White River Field Office (WRFO), an environmental assessment (EA) could not be done immediately, and the permit was renewed under the Appropriations Rider until the EA could be completed. The Proposed Action is for the issuance of a grazing permit to the authorized applicant for a 10 year period and will serve as the Allotment Management Plans (AMP) for the allotments associated with this authorization.

FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT

Based on the analysis of potential environmental impacts contained in the attached environmental assessment, and considering the significance criteria in 40 CFR 1508.27, I have determined that the Proposed Action will not have a significant effect on the human environment. An environmental impact statement is therefore not required.

Context

The project is a site-specific action directly involving BLM administered public lands that do not in and of itself have international, national, regional, or state-wide importance. The applicant does own some unfenced land within the allotments and is the current preference holder for the allotments.

Intensity

The following discussion is organized around the 10 Significance Criteria described at 40 CFR 1508.27. The following have been considered in evaluating intensity for this Proposed Action:

1. Impacts that may be both beneficial and adverse.

The beneficial effects of the Proposed Action include support of the local livestock industry and increased stewardship of public lands. The authorized livestock operator has mandatory terms and conditions that must be met to maintain their grazing preference. This provides a certain level of stewardship of public lands in that if these lands were to become degraded by any activity or event, natural or human in origin, grazing and or other authorized uses would be terminated. This stewardship role of the livestock operator not only mandates proper livestock and forage management but also provides communication with the BLM as to other activities or

events that could cause degradation to public lands. Adverse effects include minor impacts to soils and vegetation that will be limited in scope and are expected to be insignificant.

2. The degree to which the Proposed Action affects public health or safety.

There would be no impact to public health and safety.

3. Unique characteristics of the geographic area such as proximity to historic or cultural resources, park lands, prime farmlands, wetlands, wild and scenic rivers, or ecologically critical areas.

There are no park lands, prime farmlands, wild and scenic rivers, or ecologically critical areas in the area of Proposed Action. The Proposed Action does include some riparian along the White River that may be impacted during spring use in April, however impacts are expected to be limited in scope and are expected to be insignificant.

4. Degree to which the possible effects on the quality of the human environment are likely to be highly controversial.

Livestock grazing has occurred for many years on the Coal Oil, Douglas Creek, Johnson-Trujillo, and Lower Fourteen Mile Allotments. The White River ROD/RMP recommends a rest rotation for the Lower Fourteen Mile allotment from 4/10 through 7/15 every other year, for the Johnson-Trujillo and Douglas Creek allotments from 3/20-6/10 every other year, and the Coal Oil allotment from 3/5-6/1 every other year. While the Proposed Action does not fully implement this rest/rotation on the Lower Fourteen Mile and Johnson-Trujillo allotments, the maximum annual use within the Lower Fourteen Mile allotment would be for 39 of the 96 days of recommended rest at a low intensity, and 10 days out of 52 days of rest on the Johnson-Trujillo allotment. Thus, the Proposed Action is similar to what has been recommended for this allotment is not expected to generate controversy nor create any adverse impacts to BLM lands involved in this grazing permit renewal. The Coal Oil and Douglas Creek allotments are going to have spring use in April every other year, and meet the rest/rotation recommendations of the 1997 White River ROD/RMP.

5. Degree to which the possible effects on the quality of the human environment are highly uncertain or involve unique or unknown risk.

No highly uncertain or unknown risks to the human environment were identified during analysis of the Proposed Action.

6. 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 Proposed Action neither establishes a precedent for future BLM actions with significant effects nor represents a decision in principle about a future consideration. Livestock grazing of the proposed allotment has been evaluated since at least the 1981 Grazing Management EIS.

7. Whether the action is related to other actions with individually insignificant but cumulatively significant impacts.

No individually or cumulatively significant impacts were identified for the Proposed Action. Any adverse impacts identified for the Proposed Action, in conjunction with any adverse impacts

of other past, present, or reasonably foreseeable future actions will result in negligible impacts to natural and cultural resources.

8. The degree to which the action may adversely affect districts, sites, highways, structures, or objects listed on the National Register of Historic Places or may cause loss or destruction of significant scientific, cultural, or historical resources.

Mitigation has been provided to protect cultural resources eligible for listing in the NRHP. Any potential adverse effects have been mitigated.

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 (ESA) of 1973.

There are no listed or candidate species which inhabit or make substantial use of habitat within the project area. The Proposed Action should not adversely impact any endangered or threatened species.

10. Whether the action threatens a violation of Federal, State, or local law or requirements imposed for the protection of the environment.

Neither the Proposed Action nor impacts associated with it violate any laws or requirements imposed for the protection of the environment.

SIGNATURE OF AUTHORIZED OFFICIAL:


Field Manager

DATE SIGNED:

07/30/2013

Acting for Kent Walton



**U.S. Department of the Interior
Bureau of Land Management
White River Field Office
220 East Market Street
Meeker, CO 81641**



CO-110 (WRFO)
Sec 3. CF

Certified Mail No. 7011 2970 0002 0123 3923
Return Receipt Requested

July 30, 2013

Sam and Cheri Robinson
8712 RBC Road 5
Rifle, CO 81650

NOTICE OF PROPOSED DECISION

Dear Mr. and Mrs. Robinson:

Bureau of Land Management (BLM) White River Field Office (WRFO) has received your application for renewal of your grazing permit on 3/15/2010. The application has been reviewed for conformance with 43 CFR 4110.1(b)(2)(i), 4110.1(b)(2)(ii), and 4110.1(b)(2)(iii).

The proposed grazing schedule developed by yourself and WRFO was reviewed and analyzed during the permit issuance process. Land health assessments, field observations, and other information was evaluated and reviewed for the allotments. Information provided by you through consultation was also considered in development of the proposed grazing permit.

To comply with the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969, as amended, this office conducted an Environmental Assessment (EA) for the issuance of a new grazing permit to analyze and determine whether or not significant impacts would result from implementation of the proposed grazing permit. This review has now been completed in an Environmental Assessment which analyzed the proposed grazing programs as developed by BLM and yourselves. The EA resulted in a Finding of No Significant Impact. A copy of DOI-BLM-CO-110-2012-0012-EA is on file at the WRFO. The Proposed Action is subject to and has been reviewed for conformance with the following plan (43 CFR 1610.5, BLM 1617.3): White River Record of Decision and Approved Resource Management Plan (ROD/RMP), approved: July 1, 1997, pages 2-10 through 2-14, 2-22 through 2-26.

The EA analyzed three alternatives: The Proposed Action (Alternative A), The Continuation of Current Management (Alternative B), and a No Grazing Alternative (Alternative C). The BLM is mandated by regulations to take appropriate action as soon as practicable but not later than the start of the next grazing year upon determining that existing grazing management

practices or levels of grazing on public lands are significant factors in failing to achieve the Public Land Health Standards and conform with the Colorado Livestock Grazing Management Guidelines (43 C.F.R. 4180.2(c)).

Below is a brief description of Alternatives A and B in the environmental assessment. Alternative A is a grazing schedule developed to maintain areas currently meeting land health standards or maintain a trajectory towards meeting land health standards. It involves the implementation of a rotation between Douglas Creek and Coal Oil in the spring from 4/1 to 4/14 every other year and takes into consideration the deferment requirements of the White River Field Office 1997 Record of Decision/Resource Management Plan (WRFO ROD/RMP) (D-14). Alternative A addresses the number of livestock, season of use, duration, frequency, and intensity of grazing use to minimize impacts to vegetation and rangeland health (Guideline 2). The tables below outline Alternative A:

Even Year Grazing Schedule for Sam Robinson 0501446								
Allotment		Livestock		Grazing Period				
Number	Name	Kind	Number	Begin	End	% PL	Type Use	AUMs
06014	Lower Fourteen Mile	Sheep	430	5/21	6/30	74	Active	86
06014	Lower Fourteen Mile	Sheep	850	11/1	11/20	74	Active	83
06338	Johnson-Trujillo	Sheep	2,550	3/1	3/31	100	Active	520
06338	Johnson-Trujillo	Sheep	2,150	12/26	2/28	100	Active	1,090
06342	Douglas Creek	Sheep	2,550	4/1	4/14	100	Active	235
06342	Douglas Creek	Sheep	2,550	12/15	12/25	100	Active	184
06313	Coal Oil	Sheep	2,150	12/1	12/14	100	Active	198

Odd Year Grazing Schedule for Sam Robinson 0501446								
Allotment		Livestock		Grazing Period				
Number	Name	Kind	Number	Begin	End	% PL	Type Use	AUMs
06014	Lower Fourteen Mile	Sheep	430	5/21	6/30	74	Active	86
06014	Lower Fourteen Mile	Sheep	850	11/1	11/20	74	Active	83
06338	Johnson-Trujillo	Sheep	2,550	3/1	3/31	100	Active	520
06338	Johnson-Trujillo	Sheep	2,150	12/26	2/28	100	Active	1,090
06342	Douglas Creek	Sheep	2,550	12/1	12/25	100	Active	419
06313	Coal Oil	Sheep	2,150	4/1	4/14	100	Active	198

Alternative B is a continuation current grazing management. There is no built in rest or deferment for spring use. Douglas Creek would be used every year in the spring from 4/16 until 4/26. This alternative makes no progress towards meeting the rest/deferment requirements in the 1997 ROD/RMP. The table below outlines the grazing schedule for alternative B.

Continuation of Current Grazing Management								
Allotment		Livestock		Grazing Period				
Number	Name	Kind	Number	Begin	End	% PL	Type Use	AUMs
06014	Lower Fourteen Mile	Sheep	430	5/21	6/30	74	Active	86
06014	Lower Fourteen Mile	Sheep	850	11/1	11/20	74	Active	83

06338	Johnson-Trujillo	Sheep	2,650	3/1	4/15	100	Active	802
06338	Johnson-Trujillo	Sheep	2,650	12/21	2/28	100	Active	1,220
06342	Douglas Creek	Sheep	2,650	4/16	4/26	100	Active	192
06342	Douglas Creek	Sheep	2,650	12/1	12/20	100	Active	349
06313	Coal Oil	Sheep	615	12/16	2/28	63	Active	191
06313	Coal Oil	Sheep	615	3/1	4/10	63	Active	104

PROPOSED DECISION

In conformance with 43 CFR 4160.1, my proposed decision is to implement the Proposed Action (Alternative A), as mitigated in EA number DOI-BLM-CO-110-2012-0012-EA for authorization of livestock grazing on the Lower Fourteen Mile, Johnson-Trujillo, Douglas Creek and Coal Oil allotments for a period of 10 years expiring on February 28, 2023 as supported by 43 CFR 4130.2(d)(3)].

Grazing Permit Terms and Conditions: The following terms and conditions as required by 43 CFR 4130.3 would be included in the grazing permit issued under this alternative:

1. The permittee or lessee must provide reasonable administrative access across private and leased lands to the BLM for the orderly management and protection of the public lands, as outlined 43 CFR 4130.3-2(h).
2. It is unlawful for the permittee, agents or employees to knowingly disturb or collect cultural, historical or paleontological materials on public lands. If cultural, historical or paleontological materials are found, including human remains, funerary items or objects of cultural patrimony. The permittee is to stop activities that might disturb such materials, and notify the authorized officer immediately.
3. No grazing use can be authorized under this grazing permit/lease during any period of delinquency in the payment of amounts due in settlement for unauthorized grazing use.
4. Grazing use authorized under this grazing permit/lessee may be suspended, in whole or in part, for violation by the permittee/lessee of any of the provisions of the rules or regulations now or hereafter approved by the Secretary of the Interior.
5. This grazing permit/lease is subject to cancellation, in whole or in part, at any time because of:
 - a. Noncompliance by the permittee/lessee with rules and regulations now or hereafter approved by the Secretary of the Interior.
 - 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 herein.
 - e. Repeated willful unauthorized grazing use

6. This grazing permit/lease is subject to the provisions of executive Order NO. 11246 of September 24, 1965, as amended, which sets forth nondiscrimination clauses. A copy of this order may be obtained from the authorized officer.
7. The permittee/lessee must own or control and be responsible for the management of the livestock authorized to graze under this grazing permit/lease.
8. The authorized officer may require counting and/or additional/special marking or tagging of the livestock authorized to graze under this grazing permit/lease.
9. The permittee's/lessee's grazing case file is available for public inspection as required by the Freedom of Information Act.
10. In order to improve livestock distribution on the public lands, all salt blocks and/or mineral supplements will not be placed within a 1/4 mile of any riparian area, wet meadow, or watering facility (either permanent or temporary) unless stipulated through a written agreement or decision in accordance with 43 CFR 4130.3-2(c).
11. In accordance with 43 CFR 4130.8-1(F): Failure to pay grazing bills within 15 days of the due date specified in the bill shall result in a late fee assessment. Payment made later than 15 days after the due date, shall include the appropriate late fee assessment. Failure to make payment within 30 days may be a violation of 43 CFR Sec. 4140.1(b) (1) and shall result in action by the authorized officer under 43 CFR Secs. 4150.1 and 4160.1-2 (Trespass).

This proposed decision is being issued to you as an affected party under authority of 43 CFR 4160.1, and as qualified applicants under 4130.2(a) and (e). Changes being made to the existing permit, in the proposed grazing schedule are supported by regulation 43 CFR 4180.1(a) and (b) and 4180.2(c) which direct the authorized officer to take appropriate action as soon as practicable but not later than the next grazing year upon determination that existing grazing management needs to be modified to ensure the Fundamentals of Rangeland Health and Standards and Guidelines are being met. Proposed changes are also supported by 43 CFR 4180.2 (e) (1-7) and (10-12). Proposed decreases in permitted use are addressed in 43 CFR 4110.3-2(b). The Proposed Action is subject to and has been reviewed for conformance with the following plan (43 CFR 1610.5, BLM 1617.3); White River Record of Decision and Approved Resource Management Plan (ROD/RMP), approved: July 1, 1997, pages 2-10 through 2-14, 2-22 through 2-26.

RIGHT OF PROTEST AND/OR APPEAL

Any applicant, permittee, lessee or other interested publics may protest a proposed decision under Sec. 43 CFR 4160.1 and 4160.2, in person or in writing to Kent Walter, Field Manager White River Field Office, 220 E. Market Street, Meeker, CO 81641 within 15 days after receipt of such decision. The protest, if filed, should clearly and concisely state the reason(s) why the proposed decision is in error.

In accordance with 43 CFR 4160.3 (a), in the absence of a protest, the proposed decision will become the final decision of the authorized officer without further notice unless otherwise provided in the proposed decision.

In accordance with 43 CFR 4160.3 (b) upon a timely filing of a protest, after a review of protests received and other information pertinent to the case, the authorized officer shall issue a final decision.

Any applicant, permittee, lessee or other person whose interest is adversely affected by the final decision may file an appeal (*in writing*) in accordance with 43 CFR 4.470 and 43 CFR 4160.4. The appeal must be filed within 30 days following receipt of the final decision or within 30 days after the date the proposed decision becomes final. The appeal may be accompanied by a petition for a stay of the decision in accordance with 43 CFR 4.471 pending final determination on appeal. The appeal and petition for a stay must be filed in the office of the authorized officer, as noted above. The person/party must also serve a copy of the appeal on the Office of the Solicitor, Rocky Mountain Region, Denver Field Office, U.S. Department of the Interior, 755 Parfet Street, Room 151, Lakewood, CO 80215.

The appeal shall state the reasons, clearly and concisely, why the appellant thinks the final decision is in error and otherwise complies with the provisions of 43 CFR 4.470.

Should you wish to file a petition for a stay, see 43 CFR 4.471 (a) and (b). In accordance with 43 CFR 4.471(c), a petition for a stay must show sufficient justification based on the following standards:

- (1) The relative harm to the parties if the stay is granted or denied.
- (2) The likelihood of the appellant's success on the merits.
- (3) The likelihood of immediate and irreparable harm if the stay is not granted, and
- (4) Whether the public interest favors granting the stay.

As noted above, the petition for stay must be filed in the office of the authorized officer and served in accordance with 43 CFR 4.471.

Any person named in the decision who receives a copy of a petition for a stay and/or an appeal, see 43 CFR 4.472(b) for procedures to follow if you wish to respond

If you have any questions, contact either Matt Dupire at 970-878-3839, or myself at 970-878-3800.

Sincerely,


Kent Walter
Field Manager

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