FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT
and
NOTICE OF PROPOSED DECISION
for the
CENTENNIAL WATERSHED ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT
DOI-BLM-MT-B050-2015-011-EA

Introduction and Background

In 2014, a Bureau of Land Management (BLM) interdisciplinary team (IDT) assessed BLM-administered lands within the Centennial Watershed (CW) to determine whether the five Western Montana Land Health Standards were being met. Those standards include: Upland, Riparian and Wetland Areas, Water Quality, Air Quality, and Biodiversity. The assessment covered uplands, riparian/wetland areas, and forested habitats and was conducted in accordance with the 4180 Land Health Standards Manual. The Assessment Report was completed and released to the public in January 2015.

Following the Assessment, the BLM completed the Centennial Watershed Environmental Assessment (DOI-BLM-MT-B050-2015-011-EA) (EA) which analyzed and disclosed environmental impacts of implementing three management alternatives on the BLM administered land in the CW. The EA included management alternatives to address four key issues: Riparian, Wetland and Aquatic Habitat, Upland Health and Sagebrush Steppe Habitat, Forest and Woodland Habitat and Special Status Species Habitat. Additional resource concerns identified included; Noxious and Invasive Species, Socioeconomics, Wildland Urban Interface, Cultural and Paleontological Resources, Recreation and Travel Management, Visual Resource Management, Wilderness Characteristics and Air Quality.

Management alternatives are aimed at improving land health and enhancing biodiversity. The action alternatives analyzed in the EA were developed by the BLM in consultation with the grazing permittees, local landowners, conservation groups, state agencies, and other federal agencies. Additional information is available in the CW Assessment Report and the CW EA which are available at the Dillon Field Office or on the Internet at http://www.blm.gov/mt/st/en/fo/dillon)field_office.html.

Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI)

I have reviewed the Centennial Watershed EA (DOI-BLM-MT-B050-2015-011-EA), including the explanation and resolution of any potentially significant environmental impacts, and reviewed and thoroughly considered public comments regarding the EA. I have reviewed the Council of Environmental Quality (CEQ) regulations at 40 CFR 1508.27 which define significance and found the actions analyzed in the Centennial Watershed Environmental Assessment DOI-BLM-MT-B050-2015-011-EA do not constitute a major Federal action that will significantly affect the quality of the human environment. Therefore an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) will not be prepared.

The definition of significance includes both "context" and "intensity." These ten significance criteria are all related to "intensity."

(1) Impacts that may be both beneficial and/or adverse.
(2) The degree to which the proposed action affects public health or 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.
(4) The degree to which the effects on the quality or the human environment are likely to be highly controversial.
(5) The degree to which the possible effects on the human environment are highly uncertain or involve unique or unknown risks.
(6) The degree to which the action may establish a precedent for future actions with significant effects or represents a decision in principle about a future consideration.
(7) Whether the action is related to other actions with individually insignificant but cumulatively significant impacts.
(8) The degree to which the action may adversely affect districts, sites, highways, structures, or objects listed, or eligible for listing, in the National Register of Historic Places or may cause loss or destruction of significant scientific, cultural, or historical resources.
(9) The degree to which the action may adversely affect an endangered or threatened species or its habitat that has been determined to be critical under the Endangered Species Act of 1973.
(10) Whether the action threatens a violation of Federal, state, or local law or requirements imposed for the protection of the environment.

This document is adequate and in conformance with the Dillon Resource Management Plan (RMP) as required by 43 CFR 4100.0-8.

____//SIGNED//_____ __Sept. 25, 2015_____
Cornelia Hudson, Dillon Field Manager Date

Proposed Decision

Therefore, **it is my Proposed Decision** to implement Alternative B for livestock grazing, except for the Cocanougher Allotment, which will be a combination of Alternatives B and C. For the Forest and Woodland Treatments and Non-commercial mechanical/prescribed fire, I have decided to implement Alternative C. I have selected Alternative A, No Action (no change), regarding travel management on the Corral Creek Road and the proposed Boat Launch on Lima Reservoir. I have also decided to implement the Features Common to All Action Alternatives listed in the Centennial EA. These actions are further described below with the associated projects/programs.

The actions included in this Proposed Decision are described more specifically below, and in the CW EA (DOI-BLM-MT-B050-2015-011-EA). Please refer to the maps provided in the CW EA for further management and project clarification.

Centennial Watershed – July 2014

Livestock Management and Structural Projects:

I have decided to renew Term Grazing Permits for a ten-year period on the twenty-four allotments that were determined to be meeting Land Health Standards, needed no changes to facilitate improved livestock management, or on which current livestock grazing management

was not determined to be a causal factor for the failure to meet Land Health Standards. These allotments will continue to be managed as described under Alternative A with the Terms and Conditions shown below added.

These allotments include:

- 7L SGC, #20153
- Bean Place #10125
- Brundage Bridge, #20707
- Cayuse, #03234
- Centennial, #20710
- Centennial Isolated, #20641
- Curlew, #20199
- Davis SGC Common, #10737
- Duff Creek AMP, #20688
- Jones SGC, #20731
- Lima Reservoir AMP, #10151
- Long Creek SGC, #20154
- Mata-stib SGC, #10696
- Monida-Corral Creek, #00766
- Monida Hill, #20023
- Mud Lake, #30260
- Oxbow, #20735
- Passmore SGC, #20183
- Price Creek, #30040
- Ritchie SGC, #30610
- Saier Individual, #20169
- Sand Dunes, #20732
- Shineberger, #20159
- Tom Creek, #20701

I have decided to implement Alternative B for the Peet Creek, Shambo Units, Brundage Creek, Lousy Springs and McCandless Brothers allotments and a combination of Alternative B and C for the Cocanougher Individual allotment. Although these allotments met the five Rangeland Health Standards, there were site specific concerns, administrative changes, changes in season of use and/or structural projects that were addressed in the Centennial EA. Some of these changes were requested by the permittee. To address livestock induced resource concerns on the following six grazing allotments I have decided to implement Alternative B.

- Antelope Peak, #20179
- Fish Creek, #20172
- Long Creek AMP, #20154
- Morton Individual SGC, #20163
- Red Rock, #30636
- Rody Individual, #20685

The term grazing permits for these twelve allotments will be modified and issued for a period of ten years with new terms and conditions and/or range improvement projects to address

administrative changes or identified concerns.

Terms and Conditions:

In addition to the Terms and Conditions outlined below under individual allotments, the following terms and conditions will be added to all new livestock grazing permits:

- Use on the (allotment name) Allotment(s) will be in accordance with the Proposed Decision for the Centennial Watershed EA# DOI-BLM-MT-B050-2015-011-EA.
- All Term Grazing Permits will be amended to state that depredations from grizzly bears or wolves are possible.
- With prior approval, flexibility will be authorized for the season of use on each allotment if annual weather conditions and forage production warrant. The season of use begin and end dates may be adjusted up to seven days earlier or later than specified on the permit due to yearly variations in weather affecting forage production. Livestock may need to be removed from a specific pasture prior to the maximum number of days specified in the grazing schedule. If this occurs, the time allocated in subsequent pastures will be adjusted proportionally. Conversely, if annual production is unusually high, livestock may be allowed to remain in a given pasture for up to five additional days and the remainder of the rotation schedule adjusted accordingly.
- After consultation with the BLM, and written approval, the planned pasture grazing sequence (e.g. pasture rested) and/or season of use may be adjusted on a short term basis due to drought or other unforeseen natural events (e.g. flooding, wildfire). Authorized AUMs will not be exceeded by allowing this flexibility.
- With prior approval, more livestock may be grazed for a shorter period within the authorized season of use. However, the maximum authorized AUMs, as specified in the Term Grazing Permits cannot be exceeded by allowing this flexibility.
- Permittees or lessees shall provide reasonable administrative access across private and leased lands to the Bureau of Land Management for the orderly management and protection of the public lands.
- Annual utilization guidelines on cool season upland and riparian bunch grasses will be 50% (to maintain plant health/vigor).
- Utilization by livestock of sedge species in the riparian greenline (area of vegetation adjacent to the channel) on non-fisheries or non-native fisheries streams will leave a minimum of four inches of stubble. On westslope cutthroat trout (WCT) streams the guideline will be to maintain a herbaceous stubble height of at least 6 inches along the greenline and 3 inches on the flood plain to manage for the long term viability of remaining WCT populations.

The annual use guidelines will be added to the terms and conditions of the term grazing permits of all allotments included in the CW, as a tool to determine moves between pastures and/or off the allotment, and in conjunction with long term trend data to determine management effectiveness.

Administrative Actions:
AUMs reduced from current active use will be held in suspended non-use on the revised Term Grazing Permits.

Distribution:
The BLM encourages, and if warranted, will require use of temporary electric fence, livestock supplement (e.g., salt, protein block) placement, riding, and herding as a means of improving livestock distribution in all alternatives. When used, livestock supplement shall be placed on ridges or terraces at least ¼ mile from the nearest livestock water source.

Drought
During drought years when forage production is considerably reduced, the Dillon Field Office will follow the BLM drought policy Titled "Bureau of Land Management, Policy for Administering Public Land Grazing in Montana, North and South Dakota During Periods of Drought and the BLM's National Drought Policy which is outlined in Washington Office Instruction Memorandum 2013-094.

Water Developments
- Prior to applying for surface water rights, recognizing that the CW lies in a Closed Basin, the BLM will confer with Montana Department of Natural Resources and Conservation (DNRC) and follow DNRC guidance to determine water right feasibility. If feasible, the BLM will file an Application for Beneficial Water Use Permit. DNRC form 600, will be filed prior to construction for surface water appropriations. DNRC will be consulted early in the process in an effort to complete the projects in a timely manner.
- Notice of Completion of Groundwater Development, DNRC Form 620 Exempt Well, will be submitted for groundwater developments (developed springs and drilled wells), with a maximum use of 35 GPM and 10 AC-FT or less post construction.
- An application to Change a Water Right, DNRC Form 606, will be filed prior to adding new tanks (points of use) to projects with existing Statements of Claim, Beneficial Water Use Permits or Notices of Completion of Groundwater Development.
- All old materials (pipeline, troughs, head boxes, etc.) will be cleaned up and removed when springs are re-developed, maintained or abandoned.
- Prior to developing water resources all applicable State and Federal Permits will be obtained and the terms and conditions applied.
- Flow measurements, i.e., gallons per minute, will be collected on all springs which are being considered for development. Springs that have inadequate flows to provide a reliable water source for authorized livestock, while maintaining wetland/riparian habitat will not be developed. Adequate water will be left at the spring source to maintain wetland hydrology, hydric soils and hydric vegetation.
- Spring sources and associated riparian wetland habitat will be fenced to exclude livestock use on new spring developments.
- No new permanent roads will be authorized in conjunction with new water developments. Permit holders may be authorized to travel along pipeline routes to perform maintenance as defined in the term grazing lease.
- Soil disturbance resulting from project construction will be seeded with a native seed mix during the fall, following construction.

- All water developments and troughs no longer in use will be removed, but spring exclosure fences may be retained and maintained.
- Functional spring developments will be maintained prior to the livestock grazing season of use for each specific allotment (4130.3-1(c)). Annual maintenance projects could include: repairing wire or wood exclosure fences, cleaning out head boxes, removing dirt and debris from water troughs, repairing plumbing hardware, fixing damaged posts and braces and ensuring wildlife escape ramps are present, accessible and functional.

Fences
- Any new or replacement boundary fences will normally be a four-wire fence and any new interior (pasture) fences will normally consist of three wires, constructed in conformance with BLM Fencing Handbook H-1741-1.
- All old materials (wire, steel and wood posts, etc.) will be cleaned up and removed when fences are re-built, maintained or abandoned.
- High tensile electric fences will be considered in areas where they may provide an effective alternative to traditional barbed wire construction. These will also be constructed in conformance with BLM Fencing Handbook H-1741-1.
- Fences around springs or tanks will be modified to prevent avian predators from using posts as hunting perches. Modifications include installing spikes or cone-tops to wood posts, replacing wood posts with metal t-posts, and using metal t-posts instead of wood posts and jack and rail, where practical.
- New fence construction that is determined to be in a high use area for sage grouse will be marked with flight diverters to reduce collisions.
- Dysfunctional fences on public lands will be removed, modified and/or rebuilt. Unnecessary fences on public land will be removed, specifically in the Curlew and Rody allotments.
- Existing BLM fences that impede wildlife movement will be modified or rebuilt to BLM specifications on a prioritized schedule.

Allotment-Specific Livestock Management and Range Improvement Structural Projects
The following section describes the allotment-specific livestock management changes and proposed rangeland improvement projects. The proposed projects are shown on individual Allotment Maps in Appendix A of the CW EA (available at the Dillon Field Office or on the Internet at http://www.blm.gov/mt/st/en/fo/dillon_field_office.html.)

Antelope Peak #20179

Grazing Management:
- No livestock grazing will be authorized in the riparian exclosure.
- The 10 AUMs located in the riparian exclosure will be removed from the grazing permit. The grazing rotation will remain unchanged from the No action alternative.

Projects:
- Construct a riparian exclosure fence around wetland #1750 in the Poor Farm pasture (approximately 10 acres).

Table 1. Current Terms and Conditions for Antelope Peak Allotments.

Allotment/ Category	Begin Date	End Date	Percent Public Land	Active AUMs
Antelope Peak	06/01	11/30	36	567

Table 2. Proposed Terms and Conditions for Antelope Peak Allotments.

Allotment/ Category	Begin Date	End Date	Percent Public Land	Active AUMs
Antelope Peak	06/01	11/30	42	557

Brundage Creek #20708

Grazing:
Grazing within the Brundage Spring allotment will be deferred until after August 1st every third year.
Grazing will not begin before July 1 on the Brundage Creek allotment and July 20 on the Brundage Spring allotment.

Administrative:
- There are two pastures in the Brundage Creek Allotment (East and West). The base private property for the allotment has been divided between two separate entities (Stibal Ranch and Charles Stibal LLC). As a result, the east pasture will be grazed by the current permittee (Stibal Ranch LLC) and will continue to be called the Brundage Creek allotment with 419 active AUMs. A Term Grazing Permit for livestock grazing in the west pasture will be offered to Charles Stibal Ranch LLC. A new allotment called Brundage Spring will be created that will include 493 AUMs originally located in the Brundage Creek Allotment.

Table 3. Current Terms and Conditions for Brundage Creek Allotment.

Allotment/ Category	Begin Date	End Date	Percent Public Land	Active AUMs
Brundage Creek	06/01	11/30	85	912

Table 4. Proposed Terms and Conditions for Brundage Creek Allotment.

Allotment/ Category	Begin Date	End Date	Percent Public Land	Active AUMs
Brundage Creek	07/20	11/30	66	419

Table 5. Proposed Terms and Conditions for Brundage Spring Allotment.

Allotment/ Category	Begin Date	End Date	Percent Public Land	Active AUMs
Brundage Spr.	07/01	11/30	66	493

Cocanougher Individual #10738

Grazing Management:

- This allotment has two pastures: BLM riparian pasture and the South pasture.
- The period of use in the BLM riparian pasture will be for up to 15 days two out of three years after September 1st and rested every third year. The riparian pasture could be grazed for a maximum of two years (not consecutive) for up to 15 days in the early summer (June/July) in a 10-year period. If the Riparian pasture is grazed in early summer it will not be grazed that fall.
- The current grazing permittee agrees to maintain the riparian fence that surrounds the pasture.
- Grazing in the South pasture will be the same as the No Action alternative.

Projects:

- The existing riparian pasture fence (east side) will be moved to follow the BLM/private land boundary where needed.

Table 6. Current Terms and Conditions for Cocanougher Allotment.

Allotment/ Category	Begin Date	End Date	Percent Public Land	Active AUMs
Cocanougher-C	4/25	10/30	100	10

Table 7. Proposed Terms and Conditions for the BLM Riparian Pasture in the Cocanougher Allotment, Alternative B.

Allotment/ Category	YEAR	Begin Date	End Date	Percent Public Land	Active AUMs
Cocanougher-C	Year 1	9/01	10/31	100	30
	Year 2	9/01	10/31		30
	Year 3	Rest	Rest		0

Under Alternative B, the permittee will have the option to graze for 15 days during the period of June 1 to July 31 two years of out the next 10. If permittee grazes the riparian pasture in June and/or July, no grazing will occur that fall.

Table 8. Proposed Terms and Conditions for the South Pasture in the Cocanougher Allotment, Alternative B.

Allotment/ Category	Begin Date	End Date	Percent Public Land	Active AUMs
Cocanougher-C	4/25	10/30	100	10

Fish Creek #20172 (map #6)

Grazing Management:

- Both the east and west pastures of the Fish creek allotment will receive growing season rest every other year.

- Maximum duration of grazing use for each BLM pasture when grazed in the spring is 32 days. The spring grazing period is June 13 to July 16.
- Authorized grazing in the fall pasture will be reduced from 23 to 18 days. The fall grazing period is September 30 to October 18.
- Use in the riparian pasture will be for up to five days in spring (June 13 to July 16) every other year.
- Kind and number of livestock would be 568 cattle.

Projects:

- Build about two miles of fence around reaches 314 and 315 to create a riparian pasture. This riparian pasture will be rested every other year.

Table 9. Grazing Rotation for Fish Creek.

Year	Riparian Pasture	West	East	BLM AUMs
1	5 days in spring (47 AUMS)	18 days in fall 168 AUMs	27 days in spring 252 AUMs	467
2	Rest	32 days in spring 299 AUMs	18 days in fall 168 AUMs	467
Repeat Rotation				

Table 10. Current Terms and Conditions for Fish Creek Allotment.

Allotment/ Category	Begin Date	End Date	Percent Public Land	Active AUMs
Fish Creek I	06/13	7/02	50	148
	7/03	7/16		101
	9/30	10/22		265

Total AUMs for the allotment is **514**.

Table 11. Proposed Terms and Conditions for Fish Creek Allotment.

Allotment/ Category	Begin Date	End Date	Percent Public Land	Active AUMs	Total AUMs
Fish Creek I	06/13	7/16	50	299	467
	9/30	10/18		168	

Total AUMs for the allotment is **467**.

Long Creek AMP #20154 (map #8)

Grazing Management:

- The duration of livestock grazing use will be reduced in the West Creek Pasture from 45 days to 30 days and riding livestock out of riparian areas will be required.

- Authorized livestock use in the West Creek pasture will be reduced from 400 AUMs to 265 AUMs.
- One of the three pastures (West Creek, West Long and East Creek) will receive complete rest every year.

Projects:
- BLM will lease water from West Creek or develop water from or a nearby spring to provide an off-site 1,000g livestock watering trough in T13S, R4W, Section 6.

Table 12. Current Terms and Conditions for Long Creek AMP.

Allotment/ Category	Pastures	Grazing Period Length	Authorized Grazing Period	Percent Public Land	Active AUMs
Long Creek AMP, I	West Creek	45 Max Days	May 1 to December 15	100	**400**
	West Long	45 Max Days	May 1 to December 15		500
	East Long	45 Max Days	May 1 to December 15		445

*Total AUMs on the grazing permit would be **1345**.

Table 13. Proposed Terms and Conditions for Long Creek AMP Allotment, Alternative B.

Allotment/ Category	Pastures	Grazing Period Length	Authorized Grazing Period	Percent Public Land	Active AUMs
Long Creek AMP, I	West Creek	30 Max Days	July 1 to December 15	100	**265**
	West Long	45 Max Days	July 1 to December 15		500
	East Long	45 Max Days	July 1 to December 15		445

*Total AUMs on the grazing permit would be **1210**.

Lousy Springs #00763 (map #1)

Administrative:
- The base private property for this allotment has changed parties. As a result, grazing preference for the allotment will be offered to the Charles Stibal Ranch LLC.

Table 14. Current Terms and Conditions for Lousy Springs Allotment, Alternative B.

Allotment/ Category	Begin Date	End Date	Percent Public Land	Active AUMs
Lousy Springs-C	5/01	11/30	100	110

McCandless Brothers SGC, 20185 (Map #9)

Grazing Management:

- The allotment will be rested at least every other year.

Administrative:

- Two additional tracts of public land will be added to the McCandless Brothers SGC allotment with an additional 10 AUMs. Both tracts are 40 acres in size and located in the SE of the SE ¼ of section 8 and the SW of the SW ¼ of Section 20 T14S, R1E. Both of these tracts were previously unallotted but have been fenced inside the refuge boundary for the last 10+ years. Both 40 acre tracts met BLMs Rangeland Health standards.
- The McCandless Brothers SGC will be changed to a Resource Reserve allotment. No BLM grazing permittee will be assigned to this allotment. The US Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) Red Rock Refuge will have the lead in managing this allotment through a Memorandum of Understanding with the BLM. The Red Rock Refuge will coordinate with the BLM annually regarding livestock grazing use within the allotment.

Table 15. Current Terms and Conditions for McCandless Brothers SGC Allotment.

Allotment/ Category	Begin Date	End Date	Percent Public Land	Active AUMs
McCandless Brothers SGC, (C)	06/01	10/31	100	10

Table 16. Proposed Terms and Conditions for McCandless Brothers SGC Allotment.

Allotment/ Category	Year	Begin Date	End Date	Percent Public Land	Active AUMs
McCandless Brothers SGC, (C)	Year 1	06/01	10/31	100	20
	Year 2	Rest			0

Use would be on a temporary non-renewable use basis.

Morton Individual SGC #20163 (map #9)

Grazing Management:

- The allotment will be grazed for a maximum of 15 days for up to the authorized AUMs during odd years and rested the entire grazing season during even years.

Projects:

- Construct up to 2.0 miles of fence along the BLM/private land boundary.

Table 17. Current Terms and Conditions for Morton Individual SGC Allotment.

Allotment/ Category	Begin Date	End Date	Percent Public Land	Active AUMs
Morton Individual SGC - C	05/15	11/14	100	11

Table 18. Proposed Terms and Conditions for Morton Individual SGC Allotment, Alternative B.

Allotment/ Custodial	Year	Begin Date	End Date	Public Land	Active AUMs
Morton Individual SGC - C	Year 1	6/01	11/15	100	11
	Year 2	REST			0

Peet Creek #10730 (map #3)

Grazing Management:

- The allotment consists of three pastures (Lower East, Lower West and Upper).
- Grazing will not begin until July 1st.
- Upper Pasture will be rested once every third year with riding required during grazing years.

Projects:

- Construct 1.0 mile of fence along the BLM/state land boundary.

Table 19. Current Terms and Conditions for Peet Creek Allotment.

Allotment/ Category	Begin Date	End Date	Percent Public Land	Active AUMs
Peet Creek /I	05/15	11/14	30	231

Table 20. Proposed Terms and Conditions for Peet Creek Allotment, Alternative B.

Allotment/ Category	Year	Begin Date	End Date	Percent Public Land	Active AUMs
Peet Creek/I	1	07/01	11/14	30	231
	2	07/01	11/14		231
	3 (no graze upper pasture)	07/01	11/14		75
	Repeat Schedule				

Red Rock #30636 (map #10)

Grazing Management

- There are two pastures in this allotment: Red Rock and Upper pasture.
- The BLM administered land south of Lima Reservoir Road (Red Rock pasture) will be rested once every third year. Use in the Upper Pasture would remain custodial use.

•The number of authorized days in the Red Rock pasture will not exceed 14 days annually.
•There are 56 BLM AUMs authorized for the Red Rock pasture and 30 AUMs for the Upper pasture.
•No grazing before June 1st on allotment.

Table 21. Grazing Management for the Red Rock Pasture, Alternative B.

Allotment /Category	Year	Begin Date	End Date	Active AUMs
Red Rock	1	6/1	6/14	56
	2	8/10	8/24	56
	3	Rest	Rest	0

Projects:
•Rebuild/repair the west boundary fence (about 400 yards) of the Red Rock pasture between BLM and private lands.
•Remove the dysfunctional interior fence on the north side of the Red Rock pasture.
•Install a cattle guard on the northwest corner of the allotment to prevent unauthorized livestock from entering the allotment.
•Rebuild the fence on the south side of the allotment (about 1 mile of fence).

Table 22. Current Terms and Conditions for Red Rock Allotment.

Allotment/ Category	Begin Date	End Date	Percent Public Land	Active AUMs
Red Rock M	4/01	11/30	100	86

Table 23. Proposed Terms and Conditions for Red Rock Allotment, Alternative B.

Allotment/ Category	Year	Begin Date	End Date	Percent Public Land	Active AUMs
Red Rock M	1	6/01	2/28	100	86
	2	6/01	2/28		86
	3 (no graze Red Rock Pasture)	6/01	2/28		30
	Repeat Rotation				

Rody Individual #20685 (map #10)

Grazing Management:
•The allotment will be grazed for no more than 60 days each year during the period of 7/01 to 11/01.

Projects:
•Reconstruct about one mile of the allotment boundary fence.

Table 24. Current Terms and Conditions for Rody Individual Allotment.

Allotment/ Category	Begin Date	End Date	Percent Public Land	Active AUMs
Rody Individual C	05/15	11/01	100	31

Table 25. Proposed Terms and Conditions for Rody Individual Allotment, Alternative B.

Allotment/ Category	Begin Date	End Date	Percent Public Land	Active AUMs
Rody Individual C	07/01	11/01	100	31

Shambo Units #20152 (map #3)

Grazing Management:
•Rest two of the three pastures each year.
•Graze one pasture each year.
•For the pasture being grazed, reduce authorized use period from 120 to 100 days.

Projects:
•Slightly change the placement of the allotment boundary fence in T14S, R3W, section 35 to follow the ridge rather than its current location where snow load tears it down annually.

Administrative:
•Upon construction of the fence re-alignment, 29 acres of BLM administered land and an associated 5 AUMs will be excluded from the Shambo Units allotment and included in the adjacent landowner's private land pasture. These 29 acres BLM administered acres including 5 AUMs will then be offered to the adjacent permittee for grazing use and a term grazing permit for custodial use will be issued to him.

Table 26. Current and Proposed Terms and Conditions for Shambo Units Allotment.

Allotment/ Category	Begin Date	End Date	Percent Public Land	Active AUMs
Shambo Units I	07/10	11/30	69	1146

Forest and Woodland Treatments
Commercial Harvest
I have decided to implement Alternative C for the Forest and Woodland Treatments identified in the CW EA. My decision will allow thinning of high density conifer stands, harvest of conifers in and around aspen stands, salvage harvest of dead/dying timber, sanitation harvest of live trees, and opportunities for commercial removal of biomass. Non-commercial mechanical treatments

and/or prescribed fire will also be allowed to reduce residual slash after harvest activities, promote aspen, and reduce conifer expansion into aspen and sagebrush. Additionally, five needle pine (whitebark and limber pine) protection/enhancement actions, as described below, will be implemented where appropriate within the CW.

The table below outlines the treatment units, objectives, treatment type, and the affected allotments. Unit locations and boundaries are shown on Map 2, Appendix A, of the Centennial Watershed EA (DOI-BLM-MT-050-2015-0011-EA).

Table 27. Commercial Harvest Treatments

Unit Name	Allotment(s)	Acres	Objective(s)	Treatment Type (s)
Amelia Creek	Unallotted	268	Restore historic conifer stand composition, structure and density; increase residual tree vigor; increase stand resiliency to future insect/disease; aspen restoration/promotion; salvage dead/dying timber.	Commercial Harvest
Corral West	Price Creek	103		Commercial Harvest
Lone Butte	Fish Creek	77		Commercial Harvest
AK Corral	Morton Individual/Tom Creek	579		Commercial Harvest
Totals		1,027		

Description of Commercial Harvest Treatments

The silvicultural prescription in Douglas-fir and mixed conifer stands will focus on thinning green trees across all diameters < 32" DBH, leaving those with healthy crowns and minimal budworm damage, to create a residual stand with an average basal area of 60ft^2/acre, with a range from 20-100ft^2/acre. The goal will be to restore historic forest structure, creating stands more resilient to future drought, insects and disease, and wildfire. Where spruce is dominant, spruce trees may be harvested in irregularly shaped patches, creating small openings and group reserve areas. The silvicultural prescription in commercial harvest units affected by current or past insect and disease activity will focus on the salvage harvest of dead and dying trees, removing up to 90% of dead trees. Up to 100% of green trees with evidence of successful beetle attack will also be harvested and removed.

Where viable aspen stands exist (defined as five or more live stems greater than 1" DBH and/or greater than 5' tall within a one hundred foot radius), all merchantable size conifers < 32" DBH within one hundred feet from the edge of the aspen stand will be cut. Where possible, non-merchantable conifers within the same area will be cut and left on-site as a browse barrier.

Five needle pines (limber and/or whitebark pine) will not be cut unless they are deemed a safety hazard. At a minimum, an average of two to five existing snags or green recruitment snags will be left per acre within treatment units. Priority of snags to be left will be given to those with evidence of wildlife use or with wildlife-use characteristics such as forks, broken tops, or large horizontal branches. Scattered patches of uncut timber will be left within treatment units to provide hiding cover and break up sighting distances.

Up to a total of seven miles of new temporary road will be constructed to implement commercial timber harvest in Alternative C. Up to four stream crossings may be required and are allowed for implementation; two within the Amelia Creek harvest unit, and two within the AK Corral harvest unit. Utilizing various logging methods and road access negotiations with the Red Rock Lakes National Wildlife Refuge (RRLNWR) and/or adjacent private landowners may reduce the number of miles of temporary road construction and/or stream crossings.

The northeastern boundary of the Corral West commercial harvest unit is the existing road that parallels the East Fork of Corral Creek. One portion of the existing road, approximately 250 yards in length, is within the riparian area and is not suitable for hauling. To reduce the potential for sediment input to the creek, this unsuitable portion of the existing road will be physically closed to all motorized vehicles and a permanent re-route will be constructed upslope, away from the riparian area. Other portions of the existing road may require blading and/or upgrades to ensure adequate drainage and the safe passage of vehicles. Blading and/or upgrades of existing road are not considered new road construction. The East Fork of Corral Creek road is currently not a designated open route available to the public, and it will remain so post-harvest treatment.

The implementation of the AK Corral commercial harvest unit will utilize the existing road system from past commercial harvest activities where possible. Existing roads may require blading and/or upgrades to ensure adequate drainage and the safe passage of vehicles. Upgrades to existing roads are not considered new road construction. Commercial harvest activity east of Corral Creek will be visible from the county road, and therefore noticeable to the casual observer. To address visual resource management considerations, harvest activity along the Corral Creek road will be limited to the commercial salvage of dead and/or dying trees within 100 feet of the Corral Creek road, until the Corral Creek stream crossing. Beyond the stream crossing, commercial harvest will be implemented to meet silvicultural and fuel reduction objectives.

Design Features for Commercial Harvest Treatments

The following design features will be common to all Commercial Harvest Treatments.

- Montana Forestry Best Management Practices (BMPs) and the State of Montana Streamside Management Zone (SMZ) law and rules will be followed for all treatments or road construction/maintenance activities in or near riparian areas. Guidelines as described in the Montana SMZ law (available at http://www.mt.nrcs.usda.gov/technical/ecs/forestry/technotes/forestryMT18/) will be the minimum standard design features, unless alternative practices authorizations are obtained.
- If market conditions permit, biomass material may be removed from within treatment units. Sufficient residual biomass material will be left on site to maintain nutrient recycling and desirable micro-site conditions.
- Existing roads which are not designated open routes may be used for Forest and Woodland Treatments, and will be closed following use.
- Forest and Woodland Treatment units will be monitored for noxious weeds and cheatgrass and treated if necessary.

- Forest and Woodland Treatment units will be surveyed for northern goshawk and great gray owl nesting prior to implementation. If a goshawk or great gray owl nest is found in a treatment unit, timing stipulations will be enforced to avoid disturbing nesting activity.
- Foresters, fuels specialists, and wildlife biologists will coordinate the timing of forest and woodland treatments (seasonally and yearly), and the area treated per year to minimize conflicts with wildlife (i.e. elk calving habitat). If warranted, seasonal timing restrictions may be specified in treatment contracts/and or burn plans.
- A food storage stipulation will be included in timber harvest contracts to reduce conflicts with bears.
- Treatment areas for commercial harvest are shown on Map 2, Appendix A. Actual harvest units will be within these areas identified, but may not cover the entire acreage within. In addition, some commercial harvest unit boundaries may overlap with prescribed burn units.
- Sale contract terms will be between 12 -36 months. Factors influencing timing will be dependent on the size of the treatment unit, wildlife issues, and/or area closures.
- Conventional ground-based or helicopter harvesting equipment will be used. Ground based harvest techniques will include hand or machine felling (on slopes <45%) and then tractor and/or cable yarding the merchantable timber to landings. Ground-based harvest equipment generally requires yarding distances of up to 1,500' for practical operations and access to log landings.
- Standard timber sale contract provisions which provide protection from erosion, sedimentation, and soil compaction will be adhered to. Timber sale contracts will be made available to the general public upon advertisement.
- Off-road vehicles and equipment will be required to be pressure washed to remove weeds and weed seeds prior to starting operations.
- Log landings will be located in areas free of, or treated for, noxious weeds. Upon completion of use, landings will be reseeded with native grasses/forbs.
- Use of existing roads will be evaluated on a case-by-case basis to determine if additional safety and/or watershed protection measures would be needed. Upgrades may include, but would not be limited to: blading, filling in low spots, installing drain dips, removal of established vegetation within the ROW for sighting distances, and minor re-routes of up to 500 feet.
- Construction standards on new temporary roads will be to the minimum required for safe transport of merchantable material. Road locations will be designed to minimize the number of stream or wet area crossings. Exact road locations may be adjusted to avoid archaeological and/or sensitive plants and wet areas, to adhere to SMZ laws, to provide best access for yarding, or to reduce the amount of road construction. Road mileage amounts identified in this EA will not be exceeded without additional NEPA clearance.
- All applicable State and Federal Permits required for the installation of stream crossings within the project area will be obtained, and permit conditions will be followed.
- All currently closed two-track and new temporary roads used for forest health treatments will be closed upon the completion of forest management activities. Road closures currently posted and enforced with gates will continue to be closed with gates, and will not be physically closed. Post-treatment physical road closures will be accomplished by constructing berms and/or placing slash material on the road surface to preclude all motorized vehicle use and reseeding with native grasses/forbs.

- Prescribed burning treatments to consume residual slash and/or to kill understory conifers less than 30 feet tall may be completed within all commercial harvest units, predominantly in Douglas-fir/mixed conifer stands.
- Disturbance to regeneration in old harvests will be minimized as far as is practicable. Exceptions may include but are not limited to: clearing of road ROW vegetation, landing areas, and designated temporary skid trails.
- Contract stipulations for temporary skid trails will address spacing and slopes allowed for trails as well as avoidance areas. Constructed trails may be allowed where necessary with restrictions based on local site conditions. Rehabilitation of constructed trails and any other main trails will be required upon completion of harvest operations.
- Haul routes for removal of commercial product will be determined by utilizing public access routes where feasible. Sale purchasers may elect to utilize access through private lands.

Stream Crossings

- All applicable State and Federal Permits will be obtained and all permit conditions will be followed for construction of stream crossings.
- The most appropriate stream crossings, e.g. culverts, hardened crossings or temporary bridges will be selected based on site specific conditions and impacts, floodplain fill, economics, road safety as well as impacts to stream channel and vegetation.
- Temporary and/or permanent culverts placed under roads will be adequately sized to maintain stream dimensions, patterns and profiles.

Five Needle Pine Treatments

- Cones will be collected on whitebark and/or limber pine trees suspected to be resistant to white pine blister rust and will be sent for testing to determine their resistance level and/or stored for future planting.
- Pheromones (e.g., verbenone) will be applied to selected trees to protect them from attack by mountain pine beetle. (Refer to Pheromone Use in the Dillon Field Office EA #DOI-BLM-B050-2011-007-EA).
- Additional cones will be collected as funding and cone crops allow. This seed may be sent to the national seed bank and genetic restoration program and/or incorporated into an office-wide operational collection that has been banked for future management efforts.
- Planting of whitebark and/or limber pine seeds or seedlings may be completed on a case-by-case basis in suitable habitats including, but not limited to: areas burned by wildfire, areas that have experienced extensive over-story mortality from mountain pine beetle and/or white pine blister rust, areas with low age class diversity, or where natural regeneration is not occurring within existing five needle pine habitat. Within the Centennial WSA, planting whitebark and/or limber pine seedlings will be done in accordance with the manual for BLM's Management of Wilderness Study Areas. The goal of planting five needle pine seedlings will be to re-establish a viable population of native trees with some degree of resistance to non-native white pine blister rust.
- Outside the Centennial WSA, conifers within the vicinity of healthy whitebark and/or limber pine that are competing for available resources, or could cause damage in the event of wildfire, may be cut and left on site.
- Outside the Centennial WSA where natural whitebark pine regeneration is establishing, dead trees may be hand felled to protect against trampling (wildlife and/or livestock) in areas of

concern. This will be isolated to small areas less than one acre in size and within areas that protection of the regeneration is a high priority (i.e. where mature tree mortality from mountain pine beetle or white pine blister rust is high).

Non-Commercial Mechanical/Prescribed Fire Treatments

I have decided to implement Alternative C for non-commercial mechanical/prescribed fire treatments identified in the CW EA. Treatment unit names, acres, objectives, treatment types, and the affected allotments are listed on the table below. Unit locations and boundaries are shown on Map 2, Appendix A, of the Centennial Watershed EA (DOI-BLM-MT-050-2015-0011-EA).

Table 28. Non-commercial mechanical/prescribed fire treatments.

Unit Name	Allotment	Acres	Objective(s)	Treatment Type(s)
Shambo	Duff Creek	3645	Resiliency/ seral diversity/fuel breaks	Non-commercial mechanical/Broadcast Rx fire
Corral West	Price Creek	262	Reduce conifer expansion into sagebrush/grassland	Non-commercial mechanical/Broadcast Rx fire
PC1A	Price Creek	47	Maintain Douglas-fir savannah	Non-commercial mechanical/Broadcast Rx fire
PC1B	Price Creek	229	Maintain Douglas-fir savannah	Non-commercial mechanical/Broadcast Rx fire
PC2A	Price Creek	257	Maintain Douglas-fir savannah	Non-commercial mechanical/Broadcast Rx fire
PC2B	Price Creek	100	Maintain Douglas-fir savannah	Non-commercial mechanical/ Broadcast Rx fire
PC3A	Price Creek	23	Maintain Douglas-fir savannah	Non-commercial mechanical/Broadcast Rx fire
PC3B	Price Creek	75	Maintain Douglas-fir savannah	Non-commercial mechanical/Broadcast Rx fire
Price West	Price Creek	248	Reduce conifer expansion/ promote aspen regeneration	Non-commercial mechanical/Broadcast Rx fire
Price East	Price Creek/Peet Creek	1010	Reduce conifer expansion/ promote aspen regeneration	Non-commercial mechanical/Broadcast Rx fire
Peet West	Peet Creek	676	Reduce conifer expansion/ promote aspen regeneration	Non-commercial mechanical/Broadcast Rx fire

Unit Name	Allotment	Acres	Objective(s)	Treatment Type(s)
Peet East	Peet Creek	412	Reduce conifer expansion/ promote aspen regeneration	Non-commercial mechanical/Broadcast Rx fire
BC1	Shambo Units	43	Maintain Douglas-fir savannah	Non-commercial mechanical/Broadcast Rx fire
Bean	Shambo Units	534	Reduce conifer expansion in existing parks, Promote 5 needle pine regeneration	Non-commercial mechanical/Broadcast Rx fire
Bear North	Shambo Units	454	Reduce conifer expansion/ promote aspen regeneration	Non-commercial mechanical/Broadcast Rx fire
Bear South	Shambo Units	835	Reduce conifer expansion in existing parks, Promote 5 needle pine regeneration	Non-commercial mechanical/Broadcast Rx fire
TOTAL		**8,850**		

The overall goal of non-commercial mechanical/prescribed fire treatments is to restore ecological conditions and fuel loadings through the use of prescribed fire and other treatment methods. Reducing fuels within the wildland interface is a priority, but management actions should also focus on maintaining fire dependent ecosystems and restoring those outside their natural balance though mechanical, chemical and prescribed fire treatments (2006 Dillon RMP).

Conifer expansion treatments utilizing mechanical methods and/or prescribed fire will focus on areas where conifers have most noticeably expanded into open parks, aspen and sagebrush/grassland, compared to historic aerial photographs and field reconnaissance. The primary goal will be to kill/remove 60% or more of conifers less than 30 feet tall. Treatment methods will be a combination of cutting (lop and scatter) and/or prescribed fire. Actual prescribed fire treatment boundaries within the units identified on Appendix A, Map 2 will be based on topographic features such as ridges and drainages, and man-made features such as trails and roads. When using prescribed fire to reduce conifer expansion into sagebrush habitat, an emphasis will be placed on maintaining 50% or more of the mature sagebrush canopy cover on a drainage (HUC 6) basis.

Other treatments included within Alternative C include maintenance burns within previously harvested timber stands. In these units prescribed fire will be used to maintain open-growing Douglas-fir forest structure, reduce residual jackpot fuels, and to promote aspen regeneration. Where aspen is present, or has the potential to be present, a combination of mechanical treatment and prescribed fire will be utilized to kill and/or remove competing conifers from existing aspen stands, and promote suckering using fire as a disturbance agent.

In addition to utilizing non-commercial mechanical/prescribed fire treatments to reduce conifer expansion and to maintain Douglas-fir stands in completed timber harvest units, the Shambo

treatment will be implemented to promote large-scale forest resiliency and diversity. This will be achieved through attaining measureable fire effects on at least 60% of the area identified on Map 2, Appendix A of the CW EA. Measurable fire effects will include reductions in existing fuel loads (tons/acre), flame lengths, and fireline intensities, associated with a change in existing fuel models. Treatment areas within wilderness study area boundaries will be confined to primarily broadcast fire with little or no mechanical fuel modifications to ensure protection and enhancement of wilderness characteristics. Treatments will occur in early spring or late fall to ensure existing fuels are readily available to support fire spread as planned.

The following design features will be common to all Non-Commercial Mechanical/Prescribed Fire Treatment Units

- As per 2006 Dillon Resource Management Plan, use both prescribed fire and mechanical treatments to treat conifer expansion in the non-forested habitat types, including treating conifer expansion in Wilderness Study Areas where it is determined wilderness values will be enhanced.
- A burn plan will be prepared and approved prior to implementing prescribed fire treatments (See Appendix A, Map 2 for unit boundaries).
- Treatments within Wilderness Study Area boundaries will be limited to primarily prescribed fire to ensure protection and enhancement of wilderness characteristics.
- One season of rest from livestock grazing may be needed prior to burning to allow sufficient growth of fine fuels (grasses) to ensure a successful burn. At least two growing seasons of rest from livestock grazing will be required following burns to allow re-growth and re-establishment of vegetation in the treated areas.
- Treatment units will be monitored for noxious weeds and cheatgrass, and treated both pre-and post-treatment.
- Staging areas to complete treatment will be located in areas free of, or treated for, noxious weeds.
- Temporary fencing or hot tape (electric fence) may be used to allow the appropriate rest before or after a prescribed fire treatment.
- Units will be burned as fuel and weather conditions allow. Fire mangers will coordinate the timing of prescribed fire treatments (seasonally) and the area treated per year to minimize public resource use conflicts.
- Fire managers and wildlife biologists will coordinate the timing of prescribed fire treatments (seasonally and yearly), and the area treated per year to minimize conflicts with wildlife (i.e. elk calving habitat).
- The implementation of prescribed fire treatments will occur over the next ten years.
- Burn units will be surveyed for special status species prior to the burning event and appropriate stipulations will be implemented to reduce impacts to these species.
- In allotments where prescribed burns occur, grazing AUMs will not be increased. However, livestock grazing distribution may change within the allotment due to increased palatability and availability of forage. No increases in AUMs are proposed in any grazing allotment in the CW where a prescribed burn is completed.

Fire Management

Wildland fire management within the Centennial watershed will be implemented in accordance with the 2006 Dillon RMP. The Centennial watershed is classified under fire management

Category C within the RMP. Category C identifies "areas where fire is desired to manage ecosystems, but there are significant constraints that must be considered for its use." Those constraints may include: loss of livestock forage, wildlife seasonal habitat and migration corridors, sensitive species habit, and the fragmentation of sagebrush habitat from private land uses.

Travel Management

Travel management will be implemented as prescribed in the Dillon RMP. Roads identified as open to public use will be signed with a white arrow symbol on a flexible sign post. Roads not identified as open to public use would be:

- Left unsigned unless there is evidence of regular use.
- Signed closed if there is evidence of regular use.
- If signing is ineffective at discouraging use, roads would be obliterated to the extent possible (made unnoticeable), at least at the intersection with an open route, or physically closed when continued use is causing significant unacceptable resource impacts or user conflicts.
- No change will be made to the route known as Corral Creek Road in the east end of the valley near Nemesis Mountain. The road will remain open to the gate as it has been for the past 15 years, but would not be opened for further motorized access. An interpretive sign will be placed at the gate indicating public land access and trails beyond the gate. Parking will be available along the existing road, up to the gate.
- The trail known as the Blair Lake Loop Trail would be added to the list of maintained trails within the Centennial Mountains. This trail was once identified as part of the Continental Divide National Scenic Trail (CDT), but the CDT designation has since been relocated and maintained to a higher standard. The Blair Lake Loop Trail would continue to receive a lower level of maintenance than the currently designated CDT, but would be maintained to a minimal level to preserve the loop trail opportunity.
- A boat ramp will not be installed along the north side of Lima Reservoir.
- Several route segments that were incorrectly mapped in the area around Lima Reservoir would be corrected. Routes that are accessible to the public from nearby county roads, and are currently being used by motor vehicles for recreational access would be designated open on future travel maps, and within the BLM designated routes database. Some roads that are not accessible were incorrectly shown as designated routes and would be shown as closed on future travel maps and within the BLM designated routes database. These routes are shown on the Centennial EA, Appendix A, Map #4.
- A route would be designated open in the area of Wolverine Creek where a prior public access easement across State Lands once provided access into the south end of the Gravelly Mountains. The route, which would restore public access, would be designed to reduce wetland impacts and minimize stream crossings. (See Centennial EA, Appendix A, Map #4). Up to six culvert will be placed along the route. A culvert will also be placed on Reach #1600 (West Creek) on BLM administered land where the road crosses the creek.
- Up to four stream crossings would be installed along the Fish Creek Road, a route designated open to public motorized vehicle use in an effort to improve public access and safety and reduce stream impacts including excessive sediment inputs.

Noxious and Invasive Species:

Management of noxious weeds will continue in cooperation with Beaverhead County, federal and state agencies, private landowners and other partners. All invasive species on the Montana State Noxious Weed list will be treated to the degree financial resources allow. Areas where private landowners cooperate, participate, and support the BLM's weed management strategies, are given a higher priority for treatment. Any new noxious weed infestations will be targeted for prompt eradication before they have a chance to get well established. Educational signs will be placed at all access points to the Continental Divide trail on BLM managed lands showing what Rush skeletonweed looks like and the actions to take if an infestation is found.
Seed head weevils, *Larinus minutus,* root boring weevils, *Cyphocleonus achates,* and root boring moths, *Agapeta zoegana*, will be released as biological control agents on larger infestations of spotted knapweed to reduce the plant's competitiveness and help control the spread of knapweed by reducing seed production. When a biological control becomes available for houndstongue it will be considered for release on infestations within the watershed. Aerial application of herbicides will not occur during migratory bird nesting between April 15th and August 1st depending on the current year's weather and its effect on timing of nesting. Aerial application will occur prior to mule deer and elk arrival on winter range to avoid disturbing these species.

Red Rock Allotment

- Conduct two cooperative spray days with Beaverhead County. One spray day will be held at the beginning of the season (May/June) and one at the end (September/October).
- At the end of the second grazing season, areas in which the densest infestations of noxious weeds occur and native plant occurrence and diversity is low will be seeded with a competitive native seed mix. The following year in the grazing rotation is a rest year for the allotment which will allow the reseeded areas one full growing season to establish.

Rody Allotment

- Annually, treat the noxious weeds in this allotment two weeks before cattle are to be turned out.
- Reseed any areas where the weed infestations were large and dense enough that treatment of the noxious weeds results in little, if any, native vegetation remaining.

Special Status Species:

Special Status Plant Habitat

- Activities that disturb mineral soil (such as blading, plowing, ripping, etc.) may not be allowed within the boundaries of populations of special status plant species. In habitats likely to support rare plants, field inspections would be conducted to search for special status plant species prior to authorizing surface disturbing activities. If rare plants are found in the course of the botanical survey, adverse impacts will be mitigated through project redesign or abandonment.
- Use mechanical means (i.e. hand tools or tractor and disc) to destabilize sand dunes in several small (< one acre) localized areas throughout the Centennial Sand Dunes ACEC to create and maintain early seral habitat for sensitive plant species. Cumulatively, up to 50 acres may be treated.

Special Status Fish and Wildlife Habitat

BLM will continue to participate with cooperative WCT and arctic grayling restoration projects within the Centennial Watershed. The BLM, in cooperation with other agencies and partners, will continue to monitor all known sage grouse leks. In areas where sage grouse use may be more concentrated, such as in close proximity leks or wintering areas, fences will be marked so they are more visible and collision with wires is reduced. The BLM will maintain existing sagebrush habitat so that 70% or more of big sagebrush communities provide vegetative composition and structure for sagebrush obligate species and sagebrush canopy cover of 15-25% with an average of 6 to 7 inches of herbaceous understory for nesting/early brood rearing and maintain or increase composition of highly nutritious forbs (e.g. composites and legumes) in nesting/early brood rearing habitat within site potential (2006 Dillon RMP).

- Remove the remains of the old logging bridge on Bean Creek in section T 15N, R. 3W, Section 31 and restore the stream channel to natural configuration.
- Continue WCT population monitoring on a five-year basis in Bean Creek to track potential changes resulting from the riparian conifer treatment.
- Initiate riparian willow/sedge restoration (plant willows and sedge) along Bean Creek within the riparian area that was treated in 2013.
- Construct in-stream sediment traps (beaver dam mimicry structures) to reduce sediment levels originating from channel erosion in an area of old beaver ponds in East Fork Peet Creek. Construction of the structures will consist of using locally collected material. Hand tools will be used to drive wooden stakes into the stream channel. Smaller diameter willow shoots will then be woven through the stakes to form a "wicker" type weir.
- Remove two peregrine falcon hack towers on BLM administered lands located in sage grouse breeding and brood rearing habitat within the Oxbow and Monida Hill allotments.
- Seed forbs on approximately 50 acres within the Antelope Peak allotment where an unauthorized aerial spraying of sagebrush occurred and removed the forb component.
- Remove conifer encroachment in riparian meadow habitat adjacent to portions of Bean, Bear, Peet and Price Creeks as described below.

  A variety of tools will be used to treat up to five miles of riparian habitat to reduce/remove conifers within historic meadow areas along these riparian zones. Treatments would primarily target Douglas-fir and lodgepole pine (< 20" dbh) although some Engelmann spruce up to 20" dbh may also be removed. No five-needle pine or larger Douglas-fir (>20" dbh) would be removed. Table 29 below outlines the proposed units, objectives, and treatment types for riparian conifer treatments. Unit locations and boundaries are shown on Appendix A, Map #3.
- In riparian conifer treatments, the goal would be open up the meadow habitat along the riparian zone to facilitate the recruitment of more herbaceous and deciduous woody vegetation and retain these areas as open meadows instead of forested habitat. The width of the riparian zone varies widely depending on valley type, landform and vegetation.

Table 29. Riparian Conifer Treatments.

Unit Name	Allotment	Reach Name and #	Miles	Objective(s)*	Treatment Type(s)
Bean	Shambo Units	300	.75	↓ conifer to improve riparian function, fish habitat and water quality and enhance biodiversity	Mechanical treatment (chainsaw)
Bear	Shambo Units	1645	.75	↓ conifer to improve riparian function and water quality and enhance biodiversity.	Mechanical treatment (chainsaw)
Price	Price Creek	350, 351, 349, 354, 356	2.0	↓ conifer to restore riparian function, increase aspen and enhance biodiversity.	Mechanical treatment (chainsaw)
Peet	Peet Creek	1654, 346, 344, 343, 345, 1655	2.0	↓ conifer to maintain riparian function and biodiversity and improve fisheries habitat.	Mechanical treatment (chainsaw)
TOTAL MILES			**5.5**		

* Abbreviations: ↑=increase ↓=decrease

Riparian, Wetland and Aquatic Habitat

- Work with MT FWP to re-locate beavers into drainages with adequate habitat to sustain the reintroduction.
- Pending the results of the current hydrologic research being completed by Montana State University and University of Montana-Western in partnership with TNC in Centennial Valley, construct beaver mimicry structures within stream reaches that the research shows will provide the most benefits to riparian/wetland habitat. Two designs of structures will be completed (brush or gravel). Up to five gravel structures will be engineered and constructed and up to 30 small brush structures will be constructed. E channel stream reaches along the valley bottom will likely benefit most from these structures (i.e. Jones Creek reach 320, Bean Creek reach 300, Bear Creek reach 1645). All necessary clearances will be completed and best management practices will be followed in constructing the beaver mimicry structures. Other than the East Fork Peet Creek structures discussed in Alternative B, none of these beaver mimicry structures will be located within the Centennial Mountain WSA without additional NEPA documentation.

Wilderness

There is no congressionally designated wilderness within the Centennial Watershed planning area. The 27,691 acre Centennial Mountains Wilderness Study Area will continue to be managed in accordance with BLM Manual 6330, *Management of BLM Wilderness Study Areas* until such time as it is either designated as wilderness or released from further consideration as

wilderness by Congress. BLM Manual 6330 replaces the Interim Management Policy for Lands Under Wilderness Review, but retains the overarching guidance of managing to preserve the wilderness characteristics that existed at the time of the original wilderness inventory from the early 1980s. This policy is referred to as the "non-impairment" policy.

Recreation
Dispersed recreational activities will continue to be managed consistent with other resource management objectives. Special Recreation Permits will continue to be considered on a case-by-case basis with the exception of big game hunting. Outfitted big game hunting will continue to be limited to existing permits and use levels. Opportunities for big game hunting, wildlife viewing, horseback riding, and other backcountry recreation will be maintained.

Cultural and Paleontological Resources
As required by Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act, a Class III cultural resource inventory is required prior to the implementation of any proposed range or habitat improvement projects. Should significant cultural resources be identified, impacts will be mitigated through project abandonment or redesign. Care will be taken to avoid and protect significant cultural resources and any standing structures (should they be present) during the course of any proposed project. As required by the Paleontological Resources Preservation Act, a paleontological inventory is required in areas with a high potential for paleontological resources prior to the implementation of any proposed range or habitat improvement projects. Should paleontological resources be identified, impacts will be mitigated through project abandonment or redesign. In addition, personnel from the BLM should be notified of the presence and location of any cultural or paleontological resources encountered by contractors or lessees during the course of operations on public lands.

Monitoring
Under all alternatives, resource monitoring will be initiated or continued to measure progress toward meeting site-specific objectives. Monitoring will be done according to the monitoring plan shown as Appendix B to the Centennial Watershed EA.

Rationale for Decision

My decision is based on the Centennial Watershed Assessment Report, the Centennial Watershed EA (DOI-BLM-MT-B050-2015-011-EA), detailed reports and site-specific monitoring and assessments in the related allotment files, first-hand knowledge of my staff and I, meetings with public stakeholders and review of public comments. I have reviewed the alternatives analyzed in detail to determine if they were responsive to the purpose and need for this proposal and the issues relevant to it. I also reviewed the alternatives that were considered but not analyzed in detail to help me decide if the analysis had considered a reasonable range of alternatives. I find that the alternatives considered address the key issues and provide a reasonable range to consider.

It is necessary to change livestock management on six of the Centennial Watershed allotments to be consistent with the BLM's Standards and Guidelines for Rangeland Health and to ensure progress is made toward achieving the objectives of the proposed action. Implementing the

management strategies as detailed above authorizes sustainable use of public lands while making progress toward meeting the land health standards and site-specific resource objectives identified for BLM-administered lands within the Centennial Watershed. The BLM's analysis shows that the management plans described above will allow progress towards meeting the resource management goals and objectives identified for the six grazing allotments, as well as initiating significant progress toward meeting the Land Health Standards (43 CFR 4180) where concerns were identified. Progress will be determined by continuing trend monitoring.

The livestock management strategies I have selected include shorter grazing periods, additional rest, reduced active AUMs, construction of range improvement projects, such as riparian pastures or exclosures, and/or grazing guidelines which are anticipated to enhance herbaceous plant vigor, production, and residual cover on BLM-administered lands within the watershed. This is expected to maintain good sagebrush habitat conditions for sagebrush obligate species, and enhance habitat for big game and many other wildlife species. Functional-at risk riparian and wetland habitats are expected to trend toward proper functioning condition under these livestock management strategies. Increased vegetative cover in the uplands and improving riparian areas will result in reduced sediment input in streams thereby improving water quality on a localized scale.

I have determined that all grazing permittees/lessees currently permitted on the CW allotments have satisfactory records of performance and are in substantial compliance with the terms and conditions of their existing Federal grazing permits that are being renewed with this decision.

The diversity of seral stages and structures in forested habitats will increase within the CW through the actions selected. The combination of treated and untreated areas will increase horizontal structural diversity, and will break up fuel continuity. In specific forest stands, spruce budworm and Douglas-fir beetle hazard will be reduced through thinning and decreased inter-stand competition. Post-treatment, these stands will be more likely to survive attack by insects, and will exhibit less mortality than untreated areas during epidemic insect outbreaks. Salvage harvest of insect-killed timber will recover wood product value that would be lost without treatment, and harvesting the trees will facilitate regeneration sooner, providing hiding and thermal cover in an area surrounded by standing dead trees and/or deadfall. Timber and forest products will be offered to businesses and residents in the area which is expected to help the local economy. Maintaining/restoring aspen stands will improve habitat for many species of wildlife by improving diversity and increasing this limited habitat type. Increasing aspen within drainages that have converted to conifer will allow beavers to inhabit these areas as they have in the past. In addition, the proposed actions are expected to result in habitat that is more resilient to unforeseen events, such as drought, wildfire and climate change.

Non-commercial mechanical/prescribed fire treatments will focus on increasing seral/age class diversity, maintaining open-growing Douglas-fir forest structure in previously harvested stands, promoting five needle pine regeneration, reducing conifer expansion into sagebrush/grasslands, and promoting aspen regeneration. Re-introducing fire as a natural disturbance agent through the use of prescribed fire will result in a mosaic of plant communities and diversity of successional stages in all habitat types where treatments occur. This will increase decision maker's ability to allow wildfire as a natural disturbance in the future. Treatments to reduce conifer expansion into mountain big sagebrush and three tip sagebrush will result in short-term change within sagebrush

habitat, converting these sagebrush/forested areas to early seral stage sagebrush habitat with a grassland aspect and a minor forest canopy. Recovery of sagebrush habitat will facilitate the BLM's goals and objectives of maintaining and improving sagebrush/grassland habitat. Based on past prescribed fires in the watershed, it will take 20-30 years to move through early and mid seral stages to get back to current sagebrush cover, seral and structural diversity within treated sagebrush habitats. By creating a mosaic of age classes in the sagebrush canopy, more edge is created. Removing the conifer expansion will increase the seral and structural diversity of the sagebrush steppe habitat.

The beaver mimicry structures and working with MT FWP to re-introduce beavers within drainages that can sustain their use will result in larger riparian and wetland areas with increased water holding capacity.

Westslope cutthroat trout habitat on BLM lands will be improved over the long term by implementing this plan, specifically by implementing the projects planned for Peet Creek, Bear Creek and Bean Creek.

Greater sage grouse habitat will be improved and sage grouse mortality reduced by implementing the conservation actions identified in this plan. Removal of the Peregrine falcon hack towers near sage grouse leks will reduce the threat of predation to sage grouse during breeding and brood rearing.

Habitat for three sensitive plant species will be improved on a localized basis within the Centennial Sand Dunes ACEC and will be maintained within the rest of the watershed.

Protecting individual whitebark and limber pine trees, and collecting cones from these trees will contribute to the genetic breeding program, and could help the long-term sustenance of these species on the landscape. Improving whitebark and limber pine will promote habitat and encourage this food source for wildlife species, such as red squirrels, Clark's nutcrackers, and bears.

Prevention, detection, treatment and monitoring of noxious weeds will continue or be intensified in the CW to maintain/increase biodiversity. Aggressive treatment of all noxious and invasive species will result in meeting the objectives for weed management outlined in the CW Watershed EA. These objectives include; containment, control and/or eradication of existing infestations of noxious weeds using Integrated Weed Management methods, preventing establishment of new infestations, and preventing or minimizing the spread of cheatgrass. Interpretive signs at the trail head of the Continental Divide Trail are intended to help with early detected on new infestations.

The proposed travel management changes in the Lima Reservoir AMP, Monida Hill, Mud Lake and Shineberger will correct mapping errors and refine decisions to better reflect the wheeled motorized vehicle use. The travel management decision in the Wolverine Creek area will improve motorized access to the southern end of the Gravelly Mountains to National Forest lands. Existing motorized access will be maintained and better identified (fence, interpretive signing) in the Corral Creek area. The decision to not open additional motorized access of up to 1.3 miles better adheres to the Dillon RMP, travel management direction for the Centennial Mountains and the Centennial Mountain ACEC special management provisions found on page

21 of the Dillon RMP. In addition, selecting the No Action alternative for the Corral Creek road will not increase road density and user conflicts within occupied grizzly bear habitat.

The decisions meet the non-impairment criteria for Wilderness Study Areas and are expected to maintain or improve wilderness characteristics within the Centennial Mountains WSA.

The decisions outlined above are not expected to have an overall negative impact on socio-economics of the local community or high impacts to any individual or group of public land users.

The plan outlined in this decision is in conformance with Dillon RMP including the Land Use Plan Amendment for Greater sage grouse. This plan has been reviewed to determine if the Proposed Action conforms with the land use plan terms and conditions as required by 43 CFR 1610.5. The proposed decision is also in conformance with the Federal Land Policy and Management Act, the Taylor Grazing Act, the Standards for Rangeland Health and Guidelines for Grazing Management (43 CFR 4180) and with BLM policies and Federal regulations.

The proposed action was developed while considering the goals, objectives and management recommendations in the Memorandum of Understanding and Conservation Agreement for Westslope Cutthroat Trout in Montana, the BLM's National Sage-grouse Strategy, the Management Plan and Conservation Strategies for Sage Grouse in Montana and the BLM's Greater Sage-Grouse Interim Management Policies and Procedures.

In response to the BLM's request for comments, questions, and concerns on the Centennial Watershed EA (DOI-BLM-MT-050-2015-011-EA), several individuals or organizations submitted comments. I have considered their comments prior to making the proposed decision outlined above. The BLM welcomes and appreciates the input and interest expressed in the management of the public's land.

Authority

The authority under which this decision is contained in Title 43 of the Code of Federal Regulations. The Land Use Plan and Rangeland Management program authority is found in 43 CFR 4100, the Forest Management Program authority is found in 43 CFR 5003. Pertinent authorities for administrative remedies are stated below.

4160.1(a) **Proposed Decisions** - Proposed decisions shall be served on any affected applicant, permittee, or lessee and any agent and lien holder of record, who is affected by the proposed actions, terms or conditions, or modification relating to applications, permits, and agreements (including range improvement permits) or leases, by certified mail or personal delivery. Copies of proposed decisions shall also be sent to the interested public.

4160.2 **Protests** - Any applicant, permittee, lessee, or other affected interests may protest the proposed decisions under Sec. 4160.1 of this title in person or in writing to the authorized officer within 15 days after receipt of such decision.

4160.3 **Final decisions**
(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.
(b) Upon the timely filing of a protest, the authorized officer shall reconsider her/his proposed decision in light of the protestant's statement of reasons for protest and in light of other information pertinent to the case. At the conclusion to her/his review of the protest, the authorized officer shall serve her/his final decision on the protestant or her/his agent, or both, and the interested public.
(c) A period of 30 days following receipt of the final decision, or 30 days after the date the proposed decision becomes final as provided in paragraph (a) of this section, is provided for filing an appeal and petition for stay of the decision pending final determination on appeal. A decision will not be effective during the 30-day appeal period, except as provided in paragraph (f) of this section. See 4.21 and 4.470 of this title for general provisions of the appeal and stay process.

4160.4 **Appeals -** Any person whose interest is adversely affected by a final decision of the authorized officer may appeal the decision for the purpose of a hearing before an administrative law judge by following the requirements set out in 4.470 of this title. As stated in that part, the appeal must be filed within 30 days after the receipt of the decision or within 30 days after the date the proposed decision becomes final as provided in 4160.3(a). Appeals and petitions for a stay of the decision shall be filed at the office of the authorized officer. The authorized officer shall promptly transmit the appeal and petition for stay and the accompanying administrative record to ensure their timely arrival at the appropriate Office of Hearings and Appeals.

5003.2 **Notice of forest management decisions**
(a) The authorized officer shall, when the public interest requires, specify when a decision governing or relating to forest management shall be implemented through the publication of a notice of decision in a newspaper of general circulation in the area where the lands affected by the decision are located, establishing the effective date of the decision. The notice in the newspaper shall reference 43 CFR subpart 5003—Administrative remedies.
(b) When a decision is made to conduct an advertised timber sale, the notice of such sale shall constitute the decision document.
(c) For all decision relating to forest management except advertised timber sales, the notice and decision document shall contain a concise statement of the circumstances requiring the action.

Provisions for Protest and Appeal

Protests

The decision to implement Salvage/Commercial Harvest treatments is not protestable at this time. Under BLM regulations, the Decision to conduct an advertised timber sale does not become final until a Timber Sale Notice is published in local papers (43 CFR 5003.3).

Any other actions described in this Decision may be protested by any applicant, permittee, lessee, or other interested public. A Protest related to non-commercial mechanical and/or prescribed fire treatments taking place on forest land must be filed in this office within 15 days

of the effective date of this Decision in accordance with 43 CFR 5003.3. A legal notice regarding forest management activities related to non-commercial mechanical treatments and/or prescribed fire will be posted concurrent with the protest period of this Proposed Decision. A Protest related to grazing management and associated activities (i.e. water developments, fencing modifications, etc.) must be filed in this office within 15 days of receiving this Decision in accordance with 43 CFR 4160.1.

The protest period for this proposed decision will end on **October 13, 2015.**
Protests may be received in person or in writing to:

Cornelia Hudson
Field Manager
1005 Selway Drive
Dillon, Montana 59725

The protest, if filed, should clearly and concisely state the reason(s) as to why the Proposed Decision is in error.

In the absence of a protest, the Proposed Decision will become my final decision.

Appeals

Any applicant, permittee, lessee, or other person whose interest is adversely affected by the final decision may file an appeal and petition for stay of the decision pending final determination on appeal under 43 CFR 4160.4, '4.21, and '4.470. The appeal and petition for stay must be filed in writing within 30 days following receipt of the final decision. The appeal, or the appeal and petition for stay, must be in writing and delivered in person, via the United States Postal Service mail system, or other common carrier, to the Dillon Field Office as noted above. The BLM does not accept appeals by facsimile or email.

The appeal shall state the reason(s), clearly and concisely, why the appellant thinks the final decision is in error.

Should you wish to file a motion for stay, the appellant shall 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.

Within 15 days of filing the appeal, or the appeal and petition for stay, with the BLM officer named above, the appellant must serve copies to any other person named in this decision and to the Office of the Solicitor located at the U.S. Department of the Interior, Office of the Solicitor, 2021 4th Avenue North, Suite 112, Billings, MT 59101 in accordance with 43 CFR 4.70 (a) and 4.471(b).

Any person named in the decision from which an appeal is taken (other than the appellant), who wishes to file a response to the petition for a stay, may file with the Office of Hearings and Appeals a motion to intervene in the appeal, together with the response, within 10 days after receiving the petition. The address for the Office of Hearings and Appeals is:

Office of Hearings and Appeals
Department Hearings Division
405 South Main Street, Suite 400
Salt Lake City, Utah 84111

Within 15 days after filing, the person must serve copies on the appellant, the Office of the Solicitor, and any other person named in the decision (43 CFR 4.472(b)).

____//SIGNED//_____ __Sept. 25, 2015_____
Cornelia Hudson, Dillon Field Manager Date