



United States Department of the Interior



BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT
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FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT CROOKED CREEK PLANNING AREA LAND HEALTH ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

BACKGROUND

The Bureau of Land Management (BLM) initiated the Crooked Creek Planning Area Land Health Environmental Assessment (EA #DOI-BLM-MT-L060-2013-0021-EA) to analyze impacts of alternatives associated with renewing expiring grazing permits. The proposed action included the continuation of current grazing practices, modifications to grazing practices, administrative changes to permits, construction of range improvement projects, and noxious weed control.

FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT

On the basis of the analysis contained in Crooked Creek Planning Area Land Health Environmental Assessment (EA #DOI-BLM-MT-L060-2013-0021-EA), I find that the proposed action will not have a significant effect on the human environment. As a result of this analysis, an environmental impact statement will not be prepared.

This finding is based on the following reasons:

1. Impacts that may be both beneficial and adverse:

The beneficial effects of the Crooked Creek Planning Area Land Health Environmental Assessment include benefits to Greater Sage-Grouse habitat by 1) increasing residual forage in preferred priority and general habitat; and 2) removing conifer encroachment in those same habitats. The proposed action will also maintain or improve conditions on grazing allotments that are currently in conformance with Standards for Rangeland Health and Guidelines for Livestock Management.

Adverse effects include minor impacts to soils, vegetation, wildlife, and visual resources that will occur temporarily during construction of the Proposed Action. Long term effects would be limited in scope.

2. Degree of effect on public health and safety:

The proposed action will have no impact on 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 unique characteristics such as prime farmlands, wild and scenic rivers, parklands, wetlands, or ecologically critical areas in or near the project area.

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

Public input regarding the Proposed Action was solicited during the project planning process, during which no comments were received. The EA was released for a 30-day public review and comment period, which ended on December 13, 2013, during which no written comments were received.

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 preferred alternative.

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 preferred alternative neither establishes a precedent for future BLM actions with significant effects nor 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:

No individually or cumulatively significant impacts were identified for the preferred alternative. Any adverse impacts identified for the preferred alternative, in conjunction with any adverse impacts of other past, present, or reasonably foreseeable future actions will result in negligible to moderate impacts to natural and cultural resources.

8. Degree to which the action may adversely affect district, 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:

Impacts to cultural and historic resources will be similar to the no action alternative and do not appear to have potential to adversely affect historic and/or cultural properties.

9. Degree to which the action may adversely affect an endangered or threatened species or its critical habitat:

The preferred alternative does not appear to have potential adversely affect endangered or threatened species and critical habitat. The proposed action is also in conformance with objectives and guidance outlined in Instructional Memorandum No. IM-2012-043 which implements interim management policies and procedures for Greater Sage-Grouse.

10. Whether the action threatens a violation of federal, state, or local environmental protection law:

The preferred alternative violates no federal, state, or local environmental protection laws.

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Geoff Beyersdorf
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*Acting
For*

Jan 16, 2014

Date