

United States Department of the Interior Bureau of Land Management

Environmental Assessment DOI-BLM-MT-B010-2013-0009-EA
Case file Number: N/A

Finding of No Significant Impact

Arrastra Creek Allotment Grazing Lease Renewal

Location: T15N, R10W, Sec. 32 & 33
T14N, R10W, Sec. 3-5, 8-10, 14-17, 21-23, 27, 28
Powell County, Montana

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Finding of No Significant Impact Determination

Based upon a review of the *Arrastra Creek Allotment Grazing Lease Renewal Environmental Assessment* (DOI-BLM-MT-B010-2013-0009-EA or 'the EA'), I have determined that the proposed action is not a major federal action and will not significantly affect the quality of the human environment, individually or cumulatively with other actions in the general area. No environmental effects meet the definition of significance in context or intensity as defined in 40 CFR 1508.27, nor do effects exceed those described in the *Record of Decision for the Garnet Resource Management Plan and the Environmental Impact Statement* (1986) and the *Garnet Resource Area Resource Management Plan* (1986), as amended, hereafter referred to as the *Garnet RMP*. Therefore, an environmental impact statement is not needed. This finding is based on the context and intensity of the alternatives as described below.

CONTEXT

The action involves renewing a ten year grazing lease and implementing riparian/aquatic restoration on public land administered by the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) in Powell County, Montana. The Alternative A (No Action) would renew the grazing term lease with the existing terms and conditions and grazing use criteria. Alternatives B (Proposed Action) and C would renew the grazing term lease with new and/or revised terms and conditions; install range improvements, and stream/riparian restoration.

INTENSITY

The following discussion is organized around the Ten Significance Criteria described in 40 CFR 1508.27 and incorporated into BLM's Critical Elements of the Human Environment list (H-1790-1), and supplemental Instruction Memorandum, Acts, regulations and Executive Orders. The following have been considered in evaluating intensity for this proposal.

Impacts may be both beneficial and adverse.

Chapters 4 and 5 of the EA discusses the direct, indirect and cumulative effects (beneficial and adverse) expected with implementation of the alternatives. None of the environmental effects discussed in detail in the EA are considered to be adversely significant, nor do the effects exceed those analyzed in the *Garnet Resource Management Plan/Environmental Impact Statement* (1985).

The degree to which the selected alternative will affect public health or safety.

There are no known public health or safety issues associated with the alternatives.

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

There are no prime farm lands as defined by 7 CFR 657.5, caves designated under 43 CFR 73, wild and scenic rivers (either designated or suitable), designated wilderness or wilderness study areas or areas of critical environmental concern (ACEC) designated under 43 CFR 1610.7-2 that are in the project area addressed in the EA.

The degree to which the effects on the quality of the human environment are likely to be highly controversial.

The types of proposed management activities and associated effects of the proposed action are routine in nature and would not be scientifically controversial.

The degree to which the possible effects on the human environment are highly uncertain or involve unique or unknown risks.

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

The degree to which the action may establish a precedent for future actions with significant effects or represents a decision in principle about a future consideration.

The actions considered in the proposed action were considered by the interdisciplinary team within the context of past, present, and reasonably foreseeable future actions. Significant cumulative effects are not predicted. A complete analysis of the direct, indirect, and cumulative effects of the alternatives is described in Chapters 4 and 5 of the EA.

Whether the action is related to other actions with individually insignificant but cumulatively significant impacts – which include connected actions regardless of land ownership.

The interdisciplinary team evaluated the possible actions in context of past, present and reasonably foreseeable actions. Significant cumulative effects are not predicted. A complete disclosure of the effects of the project is contained in Chapters 4 and 5 of the EA.

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

No districts, sites, highways, structures or other objects that are listed in or eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places will be adversely affected by implementing any of the alternatives. In addition, the implementation of the project will not cause the loss or destruction of significant scientific, cultural or historical resources.

The degree to which the action may adversely affect an endangered or threatened species or its habitat that has been determined to be critical under the Endangered Species Act of 1973, or the degree to which the action may adversely affect: 1) a proposed to be listed endangered or threatened species or its habitat, or 2) a species on BLM's sensitive species list.

Chapters 4 and 5 of the EA discusses the direct, indirect, and cumulative impacts to special status species. For section 7 ESA consultation, the BLM made effects determinations of “May Affect, Not Likely to Adversely Affect” bull trout and grizzly bear populations or habitats in the Arrastra Creek allotment and adjacent areas. The Arrastra Creek allotment has occupied habitat for the threatened grizzly bear and bull trout. Terms and conditions to properly dispose of livestock carcasses to eliminate the potential to attract bears; and to contact the authorities specified in the lease with any grizzly bear depredation/conflict will be added to the lease with implementation of the project. Implementation of the project is not expected to result in any adverse significant impacts to the grizzly bear or its habitat. Site-specific project design features were incorporated to minimize adverse effects to bull trout. Both the westslope cutthroat and gray wolf are BLM sensitive species and occupy or have habitat in the allotment or adjacent areas.

Section 7 ESA Consultation for the grizzly bear and bull trout was initiated on December 23, 2013. The FWS concurred with the BLMs effects determinations for the bull trout on February 5, 2014 and on February 6, 2014 for the grizzly bear.

Whether the action threatens a violation of a federal, state, local, or tribal law, regulation or policy imposed for the protection of the environment, where non-federal requirements are consistent with federal requirements.

The project does not violate any known Federal, State, or local law or requirements imposed for the protection of the environment and it is consistent with applicable land management plans, policies, and programs.

John W. Thompson, Acting Field Manager

Date