

ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT CHECKLIST
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| EA Number: NM-510-2006-0106 Preparer: Dave Arthun | | | Action Type: Grazing Permit Renewal Project Name: Teel Place #64074 | | |
|---|-------------|--------------|---|---|----------|
| Resource / Activity | Not Present | Not Affected | **May Be Affected | Reviewer | Date |
| Air Quality* | | | ✓ | /s/ Michael McGee Hydrologist | 5/2/2006 |
| Floodplains* | ✓ | | | | |
| Soils/Watershed | | | ✓ | | |
| Water Quality- Drinking/Ground* | | | ✓ | /s/ Michael McGee /s/ Hydrologist/Geologist*** | 5/2/2006 |
| Vegetation | | | x | /s/ John Spain Rangeland Management Spec | 5/12/06 |
| Livestock Grazing | | | x | | |
| Invasive, Nonnative Species* | x | | | /s/ John Spain Range Mgmt Spec/Nox. Weed Spec | 5/12/06 |
| Wastes, Hazardous or Solids* | | | | Hazardous Waste Spec. | |
| Prime/Unique Farmlands* | x | | | Irene Gonzales Realty Specialist | 04-25-06 |
| Lands/Realty/ROW | | x | | | |
| Fluid Minerals | | | | /s/ Pet Eng/Geologist/Sur. Prot. Spec. | |
| Mining Claims | ✓ | | | /s/ Geologist | 04/25/06 |
| Mineral Materials | | ✓ | | /s/ Jerry Dutchover | |
| Threatened or Endangered Species* | X | | | /s/ D Baggao Wildlife Biologist | 4/13/06 |
| Wetlands/Riparian Zones* | X | | | | |
| Wildlife Habitat | | | x | | |
| Native American Religious Concerns* | | X | | Pat Flanary Archaeologist | 4/11/06 |
| Cultural Resources* | | X | | | |
| Areas of Critical Environmental Concern* | X | | | /s/ J H Parman | 4/11/06 |
| Low Income & Minority Population Concerns | | X | | Planning & Env. Coordinator | |
| Wild/Scenic Rivers* | x | | | Paul Happel Outdoor Recreation Planner/NRS | 4/18/06 |
| Wilderness* | x | | | | |
| Cave/Karst Resources | | x | | | |
| Outdoor Recreation | | x | | | |
| Visual Resources | | x | | | |
| Access/Transportation | x | | | | |

* "Critical Element" - must be addressed in all NEPA documents.

** "Affected Element" - must be addressed in the attached Environmental Assessment.

*** "Hydrologist/Geologist" – Hydrologist will be the primary lead for "Water Quality- Drinking/Ground" with Resource projects such as fire, fuels, and grazing EA's etc... The Petroleum Geologist will be the primary lead for "Water Quality- Drinking/Ground" with Minerals or oil and gas projects such as Application For Permit To Drill and Sundry Notices etc...



United States Department of the Interior

BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT

Pecos District
Roswell Field Office
2909 W. Second
Roswell, New Mexico 88201

In reply refer to:
NM510(4160)
Allot: 64074

Certified Mail No: 7099 3220 0002 6402 3414

John Crook
431 Walnut Draw Road
Lake Arthur, NM 88253

FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT (FONSI) AND NOTICE OF PROPOSED DECISION EA#NM510-2006-0106

Dear Mr. Crook:

The Roswell Field Office has completed an Environmental Assessment EA#NM-510-2006-0106 for the renewal of a grazing permit/lease for the Allotment #64074.

FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT/RATIONALE

FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT: I have reviewed this environmental assessment including the explanation and resolution of any potentially significant environmental impacts. I have determined the proposed action and alternatives will not have significant impacts on the human environment and that preparation of an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) is not required.

Rationale for Recommendations: The proposed action and alternatives would not result in any undue or unnecessary environmental degradation. The proposed action and alternatives will be in compliance with the Roswell Resource Management Plan and Record of Decision (October, 1997).

My proposed decision is as follows:

1. Offer a new ten year grazing permit from May 15, 2006 to February 28, 2016. Your current grazing permit expires on February 28, 2008. Upon acceptance and approval of the new permit your existing permit will be renewed.
2. Active permitted use is for 11 animal unit (AUs), corresponding to 132 animal unit months (AUMs) at 100 percent Public Land.

Rationale

Resource conditions on the allotment are sufficient and sustainable to support the level of use outlined in the grazing permit and/or the grazing lease. This action benefits the Bureau of Land Management's grazing administration program efforts to coordinate New Mexico Public Land Health Assessments with permit renewals.

Right of Protest and Appeal

Any applicant, permittee, lessee or other interested public may protest a proposed decision under Sec. 43 CFR 4160.1 and 4160.2, in person or in writing to the Field Office Manager, 2909 West Second, Roswell, NM 88201 within 15 days after receipt of such decision. The protest, if filed, should clearly and concisely state the reason(s) why the proposed decision is in error.

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

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

Any applicant, permittee, lessee or other person whose interest is adversely affected by the final decision may file an appeal in accordance with 43 CFR 4.470 and 43 CFR 4160.3 and 4160 .4. The appeal must be filed within 30 days following receipt of the final decision, or within 30 days after the date the proposed decision becomes final. The appeal may be accompanied by a petition for a stay of the decision in accordance with 43 CFR 4.471 and 4.479, pending final determination on appeal. The appeal and petition for a stay must be filed in the office of the authorized officer, as noted above. The appellant must serve a copy of the appeal by certified mail on the Office of the Solicitor, U.S. Department of the Interior, P. O. Box 1042, Santa Fe, NM 87504 and person(s) named [43 CFR 4.421(h)] in the Copies sent to: section of this decision.

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

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

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

As noted above, the petition for stay must be filed in the office of the authorized

officer and served in accordance with 43 CFR 4.473. If a petition for stay is not granted, the decision will be put into effect following the 30-day appeal period. Appeals can be filed at the following address:

Field Office Manager
Bureau of Land Management
Roswell Field Office
2909 West Second Street
Roswell, NM 88201

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

If you have any questions, feel free to contact me at 505-627-0272.

Sincerely,

/s/ Eddie Bateson 5/15/2006

Eddie Bateson
Field Office Manager

Copies sent to (by certified mail):

NM Department of Game and Fish #7099 3220 0002 6402 3421
Attn: Jan Ward
P. O. Box 25112
Santa Fe, NM 87504

Forest Guardians #7099 3220 0002 6402 3438
Attn: John Horning
312 Montezuma Suite A
Santa Fe, NM 87501

NM Cattle Growers' Assn #7099 3220 0002 6402 3445
Attn: Caren Cowan
P. O. Box 7517
Albuquerque, NM 87194

NM State Land Office #7099 3220 0002 6402 3452
Attn: Robyn Tierney
P. O. Box 1148
Santa Fe, NM 87504-1108

ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

For

Section 3

GRAZING AUTHORIZATION

Township 15 S., Range 23 E.

ALLOTMENT #64074

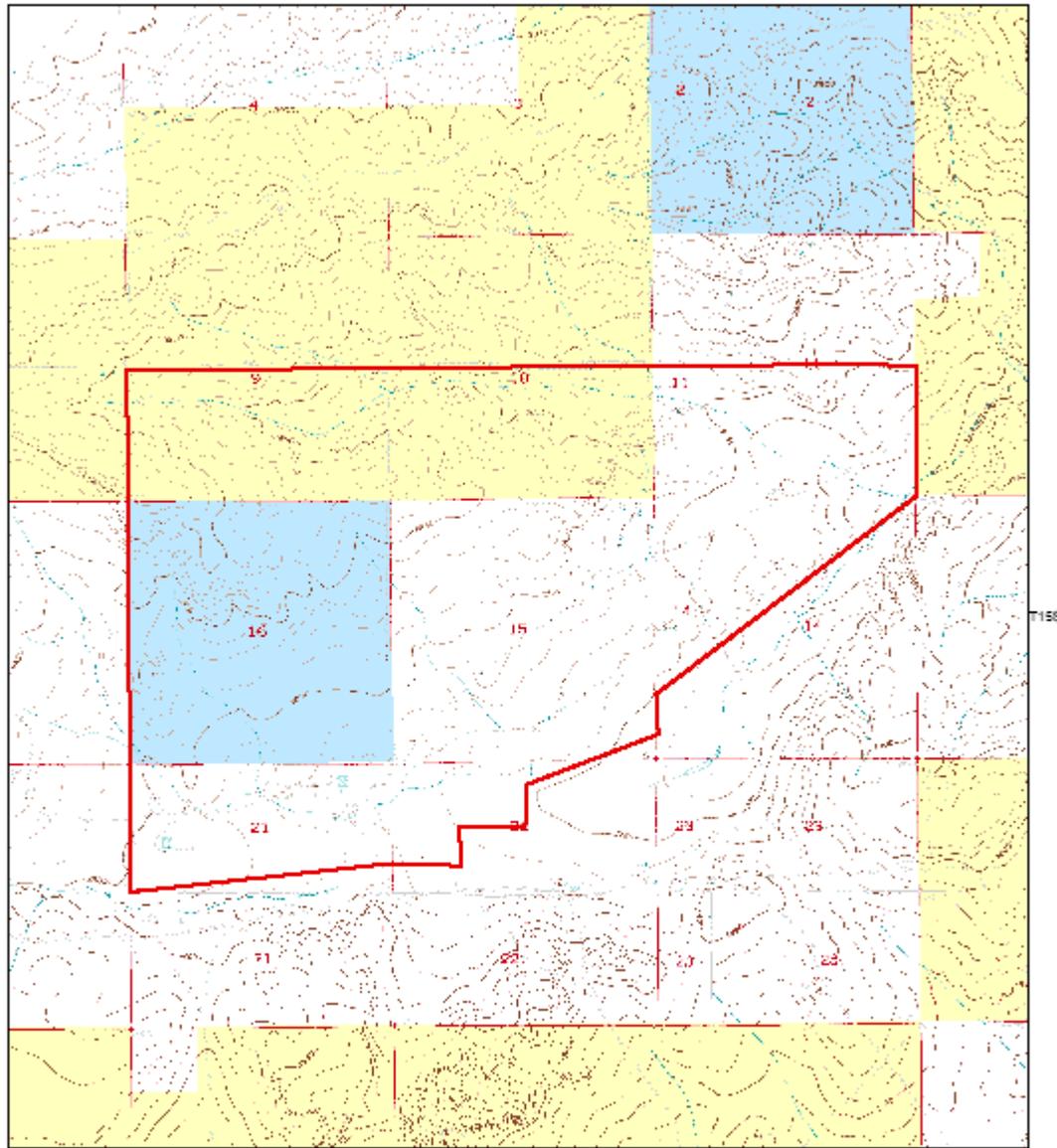
NM-510-2006-0106

March 2006

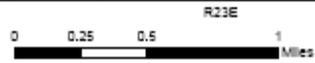
**U.S. Department of the Interior
Bureau of Land Management
Pecos District
Roswell Field Office
Roswell, New Mexico**



Teel Place - 64074



- State Land
- Public Land
- Private Land



Allotment Boundary

No warranty is made by the Bureau of Land Management as to the accuracy, reliability, or completeness of these data for individual use or aggregate use with other data. Original data was compiled from various sources. Spatial information may not meet National Map Accuracy Standards. This information may be updated without notification.

Produced by the RFO GIS Specialist on Feb. 23, 2006.

I. Introduction

When authorizing livestock grazing on public range, the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) has historically relied on a land use plan and environmental impact statement to comply with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA). A recent decision by the Interior Board of Land Appeals, however, affirmed that the BLM must conduct a site-specific NEPA analysis before issuing a permit or lease to authorize livestock grazing. This environmental assessment fulfills the NEPA requirement by providing the necessary site-specific analysis of the effects of issuing a new grazing permit/lease on allotment #64074.

The scope of this document is limited to the effects of issuing a 10-year grazing permit. Other future actions such as range improvement projects will be addressed in a project specific environmental assessment. There are no current plans for additional management actions on this allotment.

1. Purpose and Need for the Proposed Action

The purpose of issuing a new grazing permit would be to reauthorize livestock grazing on public land on allotment #64074 and modify the permit term to coincide with the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) schedule for Public Land (Rangeland Health Assessments) with permit/lease renewals. The permit would specify the types and levels of use authorized, and the terms and conditions of the authorization pursuant to 43 CFR ' ' 4130.3, 4130.3-1, 4130.3-2 and 4180.1. The new permit would be issued for a term of up to, but not to exceed, ten years.

2. Conformance with Land Use Planning

The Roswell Resource Management Plan/Environmental Impact Statement (October 1997) has been reviewed to determine if the proposed action conforms to the land use plan's Record of Decision. The proposed action is consistent with the RMP/EIS.

3. Relationships to Statutes, Regulations, or Other Plans

The proposed action is consistent with the Federal Land Policy and Management Act of 1976 (43 U.S.C. 1700 et seq.); the Taylor Grazing Act of 1934 (43 U.S.C. 315 et seq.), as amended; the Clean Water Act (33 U.S.C. 1251 et seq.), as amended; the Endangered Species Act (16 U.S.C. 1535 et seq.) as amended; the Federal Rangelands Improvement Act of 1978 (43 U.S.C. 1901 et seq.); Executive Order 11988, Floodplain Management and Executive Order 11990, Protection of Wetlands.

II. Proposed Action and Alternatives

1. Proposed Action

Proposed action is to authorize John Crook, a grazing permit for BLM allotment #64074 (Teel Place). This permit would authorize 11 Animal Units (AU's) yearlong at 100 percent Federal

Range for 132 Animal Unit Months (AUM's). Cattle are the class of livestock proposed for authorization.

2. No Permit Authorization Alternative:

This alternative would not issue a new grazing permit. There would be no livestock grazing authorized on public land within allotment #64074.

3. Place the Allotment on a Percent Public Land Authorization:

Under this alternative the authorization would be changed from 100% public land. After consultations a forage allocation would be made for public, private and state land within the allotment; the percent of this forage base produced on public land would determine the percent public land for the authorization. This process would establish the level of permitted use in animal units for the allotment.

Historically those grazing authorizations for allotments within the Grazing District Boundary (Section 3 Permits under the Taylor Grazing Act) with less than 10-12% of the total allotment acreage comprised of public land and/or having less than 1500 acres of public land with no resource conflicts have been placed on 100% public land authorizations. Grazing authorizations for these allotments established the authorized livestock numbers based on forage production from public land; this is similar to the procedures used for Section 15 Leases outside the Grazing District boundary.

Long-term monitoring indicates a stable to improving trend and no resource conflicts exist. This alternative provides minimal benefit to either the grazing administration or resource management of the area. No further consideration or analysis of this alternative will be discussed in this document.

The following resources or values are not present or would not be affected: Prime/Unique Farmland, Areas of Critical Environmental Concern, Minority/Low Income Populations, Wild and Scenic Rivers, Hazardous/Solid Wastes, Wetlands/Riparian Zones, Floodplains, and Native American Religious Concerns. Cultural inventory surveys would continue to be required for public actions involving surface disturbing activities.

III. Affected Environment

A. General Setting

Allotment #64074 is located in Chaves County, approximately 28 miles south of Roswell, New Mexico. Land status is as follows:

BLM 693 acres
State 640 acres
Private 1760 acres

This allotment lies within the boundaries of the Roswell Grazing District established subsequent to the Taylor Grazing Act (TGA). Grazing authorization on public land inside the Grazing District boundary is governed by Section 3 of the TGA. Livestock numbers for the ranch are controlled under this Section 3 permit, the permittee is billed for the amount of forage available for livestock on public land. Most recent vegetation monitoring studies in 2004 are used to determine the allowable number of livestock on the ranch.

The following resources or values are not present or would not be affected: Prime/Unique Farmland, Areas of Critical Environmental Concern, Minority/Low Income Populations, Wild and Scenic Rivers, Hazardous/Solid Wastes, Wetlands/Riparian Zones, Floodplains, and Native American Religious Concerns. Cultural inventory surveys would continue to be required for public actions involving surface disturbing activities.

1. Soil

In general, the soil in the area is very shallow and well drained to moderately deep. The surface layers are loam and fine sandy loam. overlying dense layers of soft or cemented layers of gypsum material. This area is covered in The Soil Survey of Chaves County New Mexico, Southern Part, published by the Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS). A copy of this publication may be reviewed at the BLM Roswell Field Office or at the local NRCS office: Major soil associations on this allotment are:

Tencee-Upton complex:

Tencee soil makes up 55 percent of the map unit. This map unit is in the Southern Desertic Basins, Plains, and Mountains Major Land Resource Area. The runoff class is medium. The depth to a restrictive feature is 7 to 20 inches to a petrocalcic and is well drained. The slowest soil permeability within a depth of 60 inches is moderate. Available water capacity within a depth of 60 inches is very low, and shrink swell potential is low. Annual flooding is none, and annual ponding is none. The minimum depth to a water table is greater than 6 feet. The maximum calcium carbonate equivalent within a depth of 40 inches is 45 percent. In the soil profile, there are no saline horizons, and there are no sodic horizons. This component is in the Gravelly ecological site.

Upton soil makes up 35 percent of the map unit. This map unit is in the Southern Desertic Basins, Plains, and Mountains Major Land Resource Area. The runoff class is medium. The depth to a restrictive feature is 7 to 24 inches to a petrocalcic and is well drained. The slowest soil permeability within a depth of 60 inches is moderate. Available water capacity within a depth of 60 inches is very low, and shrink swell potential is low. Annual flooding is none, and annual ponding is none. The minimum depth to a water table is greater than 6 feet. The maximum calcium carbonate equivalent within a depth of 40 inches is 75 percent. In the soil profile, the maximum salinity is very slight, and there are no sodic horizons. This component is in the Shallow ecological site.

Reakor-Tencee complex:

The Reakor soil consists of deep, well drained alluvium on uplands and valley fans. Effective rooting depth is 65 inches or more with a moderately calcareous profile and moderately calcareous in the surface layer and strongly calcareous below. This soil is moderately alkaline throughout with moderate permeability. Available water capacity is 9 to 12 inches. Effective rooting depth is 65 inches or more. This component is a Loamy ecological site.

Tencee soil makes up 55 percent of the map unit. This map unit is in the Southern Desertic Basins, Plains, and Mountains Major Land Resource Area. The runoff class is medium. The depth to a restrictive feature is 7 to 20 inches to a petrocalcic and is well drained. The slowest soil permeability within a depth of 60 inches is moderate. Available water capacity within a depth of 60 inches is very low, and shrink swell potential is low. Annual flooding is none, and annual ponding is none. The minimum depth to a water table is greater than 6 feet. The maximum calcium carbonate equivalent within a depth of 40 inches is 45 percent. In the soil profile, there are no saline horizons, and there are no sodic horizons. This component is in the Gravelly ecological site.

Sotim Series: The Sotim series consists of deep, well drained soil formed in alluvium on uplands with 0 to 5 percent slopes. The surface layer is reddish brown fine sandy loam about 7 inches thick. The subsoil is reddish brown and yellow light clay loam about 10 inches thick. The soil profile is moderately calcareous in the surface layer and subsoil upper part of the subsoil and strongly calcareous below. It is moderately alkaline throughout. Permeability is moderately slow and available water capacity is 9 to 11 inches. Effective rooting depth is 60 inches or more. Runoff is medium and water and soil blowing hazard is moderate. This component is in the Loamy ecological site.

Torriorhents, very steep: This soil occurs in the east-central part of the survey area and along the High Plains escarpments. Slopes are 30 to 80 percent or more. The soil is mainly steep and very steep, calcareous, gravelly and cobbly. The texture is medium to coarse and commonly stratified. Runoff is very rapid and water erosion is severe. The hazard of soil blowing is moderate. Gullies are common. This component is in the Breaks ecological site.

3. Vegetation

This allotment lies within the Grassland and Mixed Desert Shrub Community Types as identified in the Roswell Resource Management Plan/Environmental Impact Statement (RMP/EIS). Vegetative communities managed by the Roswell Field Office are identified and explained in the RMP/EIS. Appendix 11 of the draft RMP/EIS describes the Desired Plant Community (DPC) concept and identifies the components of each community.

Grassland Community. The distinguishing feature for the grassland community is that grass species typically comprises 75% or more of the potential plant community. The community also includes shrub, half-shrub, and forb species. The percentages of grasses, forbs, and shrubs

actually found at a particular location will vary with recent weather factors, past resource uses and the potential of the site.

The potential plant community vegetation in the Grassland Community consists of the following grasses: Bluestem species (*Andropogon* spp.) sideoats grama (*Bouteloua curtipendula*), black grama (*Bouteloua eriopoda*), blue grama (*Bouteloua gracilis*), hairy grama (*Bouteloua hirsuta*), tobosa (*Pleuraphis mutica*), sand dropseed (*Sporobolus cryptandrus*), vine mesquite (*Panicum obtusum*), fluffgrass (*Dasyochloa pulchella*), burrograss (*Scleropogon brevifolius*), plains bristlegrass (*Setaria macrostachya*), threeawn (*Aristida* spp.), and bush muhly. The shrub component would include such species as skunkbush sumac (*Rhus aromatica*), yucca (*Yucca* spp.), cactus (*Opuntia* spp.), winterfat (*Krascheninnikovia lanata*), four-wing saltbush, mormon tea (*Ephedra* spp.) and dalea (*Dalea* spp.). The forbs would include buckwheat (*Eriogonum* spp.), croton (*Croton* spp.), globemallow (*Sphaeralcea* spp.), and threadleaf groundsel (*Senecio douglasii*).

Mixed Desert Shrub Community. This community type is topography influenced by drainages, fans and mesas with shrubs and half-shrubs comprising from 10 to 35 percent of the potential plant community.

The potential plant community vegetation in the Mixed Desert Shrub Community consists of the following species: creosote (*Larrea tridentata*), mesquite (*Prosopis glandulosa*), tarbush (*Flourensia cernua*), four-wing saltbush (*Atriplex canescens*), little leaf sumac (*Rhus microphylla*), javelinabush (*Condalia* spp.), dogweed (*Dyssodia* spp.), feather dalea (*Dalea formosa*) and sage (*Artemisia* spp.). Common cacti encountered are claret cup (*Echinocereus triglochidiatus*), cholla (*Opuntia imbricata*), prickly pear (*Opuntia engelmannia*), and eagle claw (*Echinocactus horizonthalonius*). Forbs include plantain (*Plantago* spp.), globemallow (*Sphaeralcea* spp.), and buckwheat (*Eriogonum* spp.). Grasses include fluffgrass (*Dasyochloa pulchella*), sideoats grama (*Bouteloua curtipendula*), black grama (*Bouteloua eriopoda*), blue grama (*Bouteloua gracilis*), dropseed (*Sporobolus* spp.), bush muhly (*Muhlenbergia porteri*), tobosa (*Pleuraphis mutica*), burrograss (*Scleropogon brevifolius*), vine mesquite (*Panicum obtusum*), threeawn (*Aristida* spp.), wolftail (*Lycurus phleoides*), alkali sacaton (*Sporobolus airoides*) and gyp grama (*Bouteloua breviseta*). The percentages and species of grasses, forbs, and shrubs actually found at a particular location will vary with recent weather factors, past resource uses and the potential of the site.

The primary ecological (range) sites for the allotments are Sandy SD-3 and Loamy SD-3 for the Grassland Community and Shallow SD-3 for Mixed Desert Shrub. Ecological site descriptions are available for review at the Roswell BLM office or any Natural Resources Conservation Service office or may be accessed at www.nm.nrcs.usda.gov.

The Roswell Field Office conducted rangeland health assessments at one (1) study site (a non-permanent study) within the Teel Place Allotment #64074 in 2004. These assessments evaluated at the Soil/Site Stability, Hydrologic Function and Biotic Integrity indicators within the vicinity of each study site. Existing monitoring data was incorporated into and in support of these field assessment. Twenty-two indicators for Rangeland Health were evaluated for the public land on

the Teel Place allotment #64074. Ten of these assessed soil site stability, 11 hydrologic functions and 13 biotic integrity. These qualitative assessments in conjunction with quantitative information gathered from previous data collected one location were utilized to assess the rangeland health of the public land within the allotment. This allotment is in the "C" (custodial) category due to the small amount of public land present. Several years of dry conditions have impacted this site and the surrounding area. A majority of indicators assessed rated in the Moderate category with soil, hydrologic and biotic indicators. Some indicators, however, were rated Moderate to Extreme, specifically Bare Ground and Invasive Plants. Although the Allotment meets the Upland and Biotic standards (no Riparian issues were present), the Assessment Team felt the encroachment of creosote (*Larrea tridentata*) was a concern. A more rigorous regiment of monitoring is recommended and steps may need to be taken to eradicate the shrub component.

4. Wildlife

The allotment provides habitat for small animals, birds, rodents, and a sustainable population of mule deer (*Odocoileus hemionus*) and pronghorn (*Antilocapra americana*). The area does contain brush or tree species that could provide quality cover for the larger animals. Other game species occurring within the area include mourning dove (*Zenaida macroura*), and scaled quail (*Callipepla squamata*). Raptors that utilize the area on a more seasonal basis include the Swainson's hawk (*Buteo swainsoni*), red-tailed hawk (*Buteo jamacensis*), ferruginous hawk (*Buteo regalis*), American kestrel (*Falco sparverius*), and great-horned owl (*Bubo virginianus*). Numerous passerine birds utilize the grassland areas due to the variety of grasses, forbs, and shrubs. The most common include the western meadowlark (*Sturnella neglecta*), mockingbird (*Mimus polyglottos*), horned lark (*Eremophila alpestris*), killdeer (*Charadrius vociferus*), loggerhead shrike (*Lanius ludovicianus*), and vesper sparrow (*Pooecetes gramineus*).

The warm prairie environment supports a large number of reptile species. The more common reptiles include the short-horned lizard (*Phrynosoma douglasii*), lesser earless lizard (*Holbrookia maculata*), eastern fence lizard (*Sceloporus undulatus*), coachwhip (*Masticophis flagellum*), bullsnake (*Pituophis melanoleucus sayi*), prairie rattlesnake (*Crotalus v. viridis*), and western rattlesnake (*Crotalus viridis*).

A general description of wildlife occupying or potentially utilizing the proposed action area is located in the Affected Environment Section (p. 3-62 to 3-71) of the Draft Roswell RMP/EIS (9/1994).

5. Threatened and Endangered Species

There are no known resident populations of threatened or endangered species on this allotment. A list of federal threatened, endangered, and candidate species reviewed for this EA can be found in Appendix 11 of the Roswell RMP (AP11-2). Of the listed species, avian species such as the bald eagle (*Haliaeetus leucocephalus*) and peregrine falcon (*Falco peregrinus*) may be observed in the general geographic area during migration or the winter months. There are no known

records of these species having occurred on the allotment, and no designated critical habitat areas are within the allotment.

6. Livestock Management

This allotment is a "C" (custodial) category due to the small amount of public land present. Normally, the use of Section 3 permits are established by forage allocated by, or under guidance of, an applicable land use plan for livestock grazing in an allotment under a permit or lease and is expressed in AUM's. Vegetation monitoring studies will be continued and subsequent adjustments will be based upon the Resource Management Plan decisions and results of monitoring studies.

7. Visual Resources

The allotment is located in a Class IV Visual Management Area. The Class IV rating means that contrasts may attract attention and be a dominant feature in the landscape in terms of scale. However, the changes should repeat the basic elements of the landscape.

8. Water Quality Drinking/Ground

No perennial surface water is found on public land on this allotment. Fresh water sources are in the Quaternary Alluvium and the San Andres Formation. Depth to fresh water has been found at approximately 60 to 240 feet in the Quaternary Alluvium and the San Andres Formation (New Mexico State Engineer Office data).

9. Air Quality

Air quality in the region is generally good. The allotment is in a Class II area for the Prevention of Significant Deterioration of air quality as defined in the public Clean Air Act. Class II areas allow a moderate amount of air quality degradation.

10. Recreation

Recreation opportunities are very limited in this grazing allotment because the public has limited legal/physical access to public land. The parcels of public land within this allotment are scattered and are generally surrounded by private land.

Off Highway Vehicle designation for public land within this allotment are classified as "Limited" to existing roads and trails.

11. Cave/Karst

This allotment is not located within a designated area of low karst and cave potential. A complete significant cave or karst inventory has not been completed for public land located on this grazing allotment. Presently, no known significant caves or karst features have been

identified within this allotment. If at a later date, a significant cave or karst feature is located on public lands within this allotment, that cave or feature may be fenced to exclude livestock grazing and Off Highway Vehicle Use. A separate Environmental analysis would be prepared to construct this enclosure fence.

12. Noxious Weeds

Noxious and Invasive species: A noxious weed is defined as a plant that causes disease or has other adverse effects on the human environment and is, therefore, detrimental to the public health and to the agriculture and commerce of the United States. Generally, noxious weeds are aggressive, difficult to manage, parasitic, are carriers or hosts of harmful insects or disease, and are either native, new to, or not common in the United States. In most cases, however, noxious weeds are non-native species.

The list currently includes the following weeds: 1) African rue (*Peganum harmala*), 2) black henbane (*Hyoscyamus niger*), 3) bull thistle (*Cirsium vulgare*), 4) camelthorn (*Alhagi pseudalhagi*), 5) Canada thistle (*Cirsium arvense*), 6) dalmatian toadflax (*Linaria genistifolia* ssp. *Dalmatica*), 7) goldenrod, (*Solidago Canadensis*) 8) leafy spurge (*Euphorbia esula*), 9) Malta starthistle (*Centaurea melitensis*), 10) musk thistle (*Carduus nutans*), 11) poison hemlock (*Conium maculatum*), 12) purple starthistle (*Centaurea calcitrapa*), 13) Russian knapweed (*Centaurea repens*), 14) Scotch thistle (*Onopordum acanthium*), 15) spotted knapweed (*Centaurea maculosa*), 16) teasel (*Dipsacus fullonum*), 17) yellow starthistle (*Centaurea solstitialis*), 18) yellow toadflax (*Linaria vulgaris*), 19) Russian olive (*Elaeagnus angustifolia*), 20) Saltcedar (*Tamarix chinensis*), 21) Siberian elm (*Ulmus pumila*).

Of the noxious weeds listed, the ones with known populations in the Roswell District are African rue, non-native thistles (*Cirsium* spp.) such as bull thistle and Canada thistle, musk thistle, leafy spurge, poison hemlock, teasel, Russian olive, salt cedar, Siberian elm, goldenrod, Malta starthistle, Russian knapweed, and Scotch thistle. Also "problem weeds" of local concern are cocklebur (*Xanthium* spp.), buffalobur (*Curcubita foetidissima*) and spiny cocklebur (*Xanthium spinosum*). "Problem weeds" are those weeds which may be native to the area but whose populations are out of balance with other local flora.

No known populations of noxious weeds are present on the allotment.

IV. Environmental Impacts

A. Impacts of the Proposed Action

1. Soil

Grazing activities will continue to have some impact to the soil. These impacts may include: removal of standing vegetation and litter; soil compaction along livestock trails or soil compaction may occur if livestock are concentrated during prolonged periods when the soil is wet. These effects can lead to reduced infiltration rates and increased runoff. Reduced vegetative cover and increased runoff can result in higher erosion rates and soil losses, making it more difficult to produce forage and to protect the soil from further erosion. These adverse effects can be greatly reduced by maintaining adequate vegetative cover on the soil.

Proper utilization levels and grazing distribution patterns are expected to retain sufficient vegetative cover on the allotment as a whole and this would maintain the stability of the soil. Soil compaction and excessive vegetative use would occur at small, localized areas such as drinking locations, along trails and at bedding areas.

2. Vegetation

Vegetation would continue to be grazed and trampled by domestic livestock as well as other herbivores. Ecological condition and trend is expected to remain stable and/or improve over the long term with the proposed authorized number of livestock and existing pasture management. Rangeland monitoring data indicates that there is an adequate amount of forage for the multiple resource use objectives.

3. Wildlife

Domestic livestock would continue to utilize vegetative resources needed by a variety of wildlife species for life history functions within this allotment. The magnitude of livestock grazing impacts on wildlife is minimal in this area. Numerous residential developments and private land uses have impacted habitat over the years of development of the area. Cover habitat for wildlife would remain the same as the existing situation. Maintenance and operation of existing base water would continue to provide dependable water sources for wildlife, as well as livestock.

4. T &E species

Livestock grazing resulting from issuing a grazing lease, may affect, but not likely to adversely affect the bald eagle. It is expected that habitat and range condition would be maintained or improved by authorizing grazing conducive with multiple resource vegetative production goals. Habitat for wintering bald eagles would not be negatively impacted by livestock grazing. There would be no impact to the peregrine falcon since important riparian nesting sites are not found on this allotment.

5. Livestock Management

No adverse impacts are anticipated under the proposed action. If future monitoring indicates a need for an adjustment in livestock numbers, this determination will be made in accordance with established protocols.

6. Visual Resources

The continued grazing of livestock would not affect the form or color of the landscape. The primary appearance of the vegetation within the allotment would remain the same. All new improvements such as water tanks or above ground structures shall be painted Olive Green.

7. Water Quality Drinking/Ground

Direct impacts to surface water quality would be minor, short-term impacts during stormflow. Indirect impacts to water-quality related resources, such as fisheries, would not occur. The proposed action would not have a significant effect on ground water. Livestock would be dispersed over the allotment, and the soil would filter potential contaminants.

8. Air Quality

Dust levels under the proposed action would be slightly higher than under the no grazing alternative due to allotment management activities. The levels would be within the limits allowed in a Class II area for the Prevention of Significant Deterioration of air quality.

9. Recreation

Grazing should have little or no impact on the dispersed recreational opportunities within this allotment. The evidence or presence of livestock can negatively affect visitors who desire solitude, unspoiled landscape views, or to hike without seeing signs of livestock. However, grazing can benefit some forms of recreation, such as hunting, by creating new water sources for game animals.

10. Caves/Karst

No known significant caves or karst features are known to exist on public land located within this allotment. Grazing would not affect the karst resources. This allotment is located within a designated area of Low Karst or Cave Potential.

11. Non-native and Invasive species

There are no known noxious weed populations found within this allotment.

By keeping structures out of floodplains, impacts should not occur.

B. Impacts of the No Livestock Grazing Alternative.

1. Soil

Soil compaction would be reduced on the allotment around old trails and bedding grounds. There would be a small reduction in soil loss on the allotment.

2. Vegetation

It is expected that the number of plant species found within the allotment will remain the same, however, there would be small changes in the relative percentages of these species. Vegetation will continue to be utilized by wildlife. There would be an increase in the amount of standing vegetation.

3. Wildlife

Conflicts between wildlife and livestock for habitat and dietary needs would not exist under this alternative.

4. T&E Species

There would be no impacts to threatened or endangered species or habitat.

5. Livestock Management

The forage from public land would be unavailable for use by the permittee. This would have a significant adverse economic impact to the livestock operation. If the No Grazing alternative is selected, the owner of the livestock would be responsible for ensuring that livestock do not enter Public Land [43 CFR 4140.1(b)(1)]. The intermingled land status on the allotment makes it economically unfeasible to fence out the public land and use only the private land. The remaining private land could not support the number of livestock currently authorized and the lower number of livestock would not provide the level of potential income the operator is accustomed to.

6. Visual Resources

There would be no change in the visual resources.

7. Water Quality

There could be a slight improvement in water quality due to the minor reductions in sediment loading during stormflow.

8. Air Quality

There would be a slightly less dust under this alternative versus the proposed alternative, but this would be negligible when considering all sources of dust.

9. Recreation

Impacts would be very minor under the alternative. No positive impacts from livestock watering locations would occur.

10. Caves/Karst

A complete significant cave or karst inventory has not been completed for public land located on this grazing allotment. Presently, no known significant caves or karst features have been identified within this allotment. If at a later date, a significant cave or karst feature is located on public land within this allotment, that cave or feature may be fenced to exclude livestock grazing and Off Highway Vehicle Use. A separate Environmental Analysis would be prepared to construct this enclosure fence.

11. Non-native and Invasive Species

There would be no change in the existing non-native/invasive species populations.

V. Public Land Health

Public Land (Rangeland) Health assessments were completed on the allotment during 2004. Based on the assessments and monitoring data a Determination was made that public land within this livestock grazing allotment is in conformance with the New Mexico Standards for Public Land Health and Guidelines for Livestock Grazing Management. A copy of this assessment can be accessed at www.nm.blm.gov/rfo/index.htm.

VI. Cumulative Impacts

All of the allotments that have permits/leases with the BLM will have to go through scoping and analysis in conformance with NEPA. Allotment #64074 is surrounded by others that will undergo this process. If the proposed action is selected, there would be no change in the cumulative impacts since it does not vary from the current situation.

If the no livestock grazing alternative is selected, there would be little change in the cumulative impact as long as the surrounding allotments continue to be stocked at their current level. If the permitted numbers are reduced on the surrounding ranches as well, the economics of the surrounding communities and/or minority/low income populations would be negatively impacted.

The No Grazing alternative was considered, but not chosen in the Rangeland Reform Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) Record of Decision (ROD) (p. 28). The elimination of

grazing in the Roswell Field Office Area was also considered but eliminated by the Roswell RMP/ROD (pp. ROD-2).

VII. Residual Impacts

Vegetative monitoring studies have shown that grazing, at the current permitted numbers of animals, is sustainable. If the mitigation measures are enacted, then there would be no residual impacts to the proposed action.

VIII. Socio-Economic Impacts

A description of the economic, social and cultural conditions by geographic region within New Mexico can be found in 2000 New Mexico Standards for Public Land Health and Guidelines for Livestock Grazing Management Final EIS. The impacts of authorizing grazing for this allotment under the Proposed Alternative on the economic, social and cultural conditions of southeast New Mexico would be positive. On a smaller scale, the impacts of authorizing grazing for this allotment under the Proposed Action on the economic, social and cultural conditions of Chaves County would also be positive.

IX. Mitigating Measures

Vegetation monitoring studies will continue to be conducted and the permitted numbers of livestock will be adjusted if necessary. If new information surfaces that livestock grazing is negatively impacting other resources, action will be taken at that time to mitigate those impacts. All new above ground structures such as water tanks or buildings shall be painted Olive Green to blend into the surrounding area. Fences and fence structures do not have to be painted and can be used as purchased from the manufacturer.

IX. BLM Team Members

John Spain - Rangeland Management Specialist
Helen Miller - Rangeland Management Specialist
Joseph Navarro - Rangeland Management Specialist
Dave Arthun – Rangeland Management Specialist
Ernest Jaquez - Wildlife Management Biologist
Paul T. Happel Natural Resource Specialist
Jerry Dutchover - Geologist
Michael McGee - Watershed Specialist
Pat Flannary – Archaeologist
Howard Parman – Environmental Planner
Tim Kreager – Assistant Field Office Manager, Resources



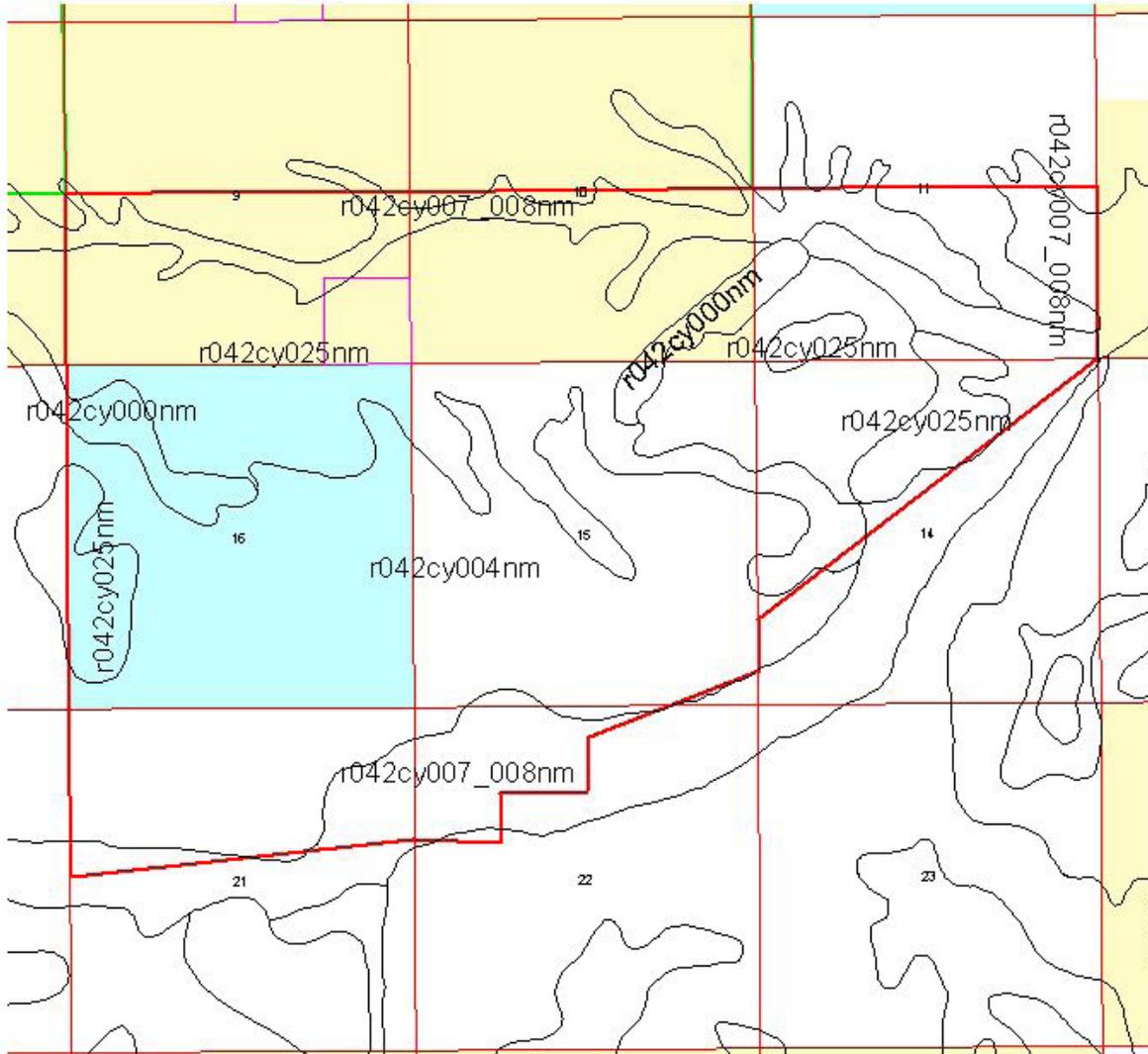


Rangeland Health Assessment Ecological Sites



Allotment 64074

T15.R23E



T15S.R23E

0.5 0 0.5 Miles



Public



Study Plots



State



Private



Study Locations

Pasture Boundary

Ecological Sites

Allotment Boundary

Produced by the Roswell Field Office
GIS Intern on July 25, 2003.

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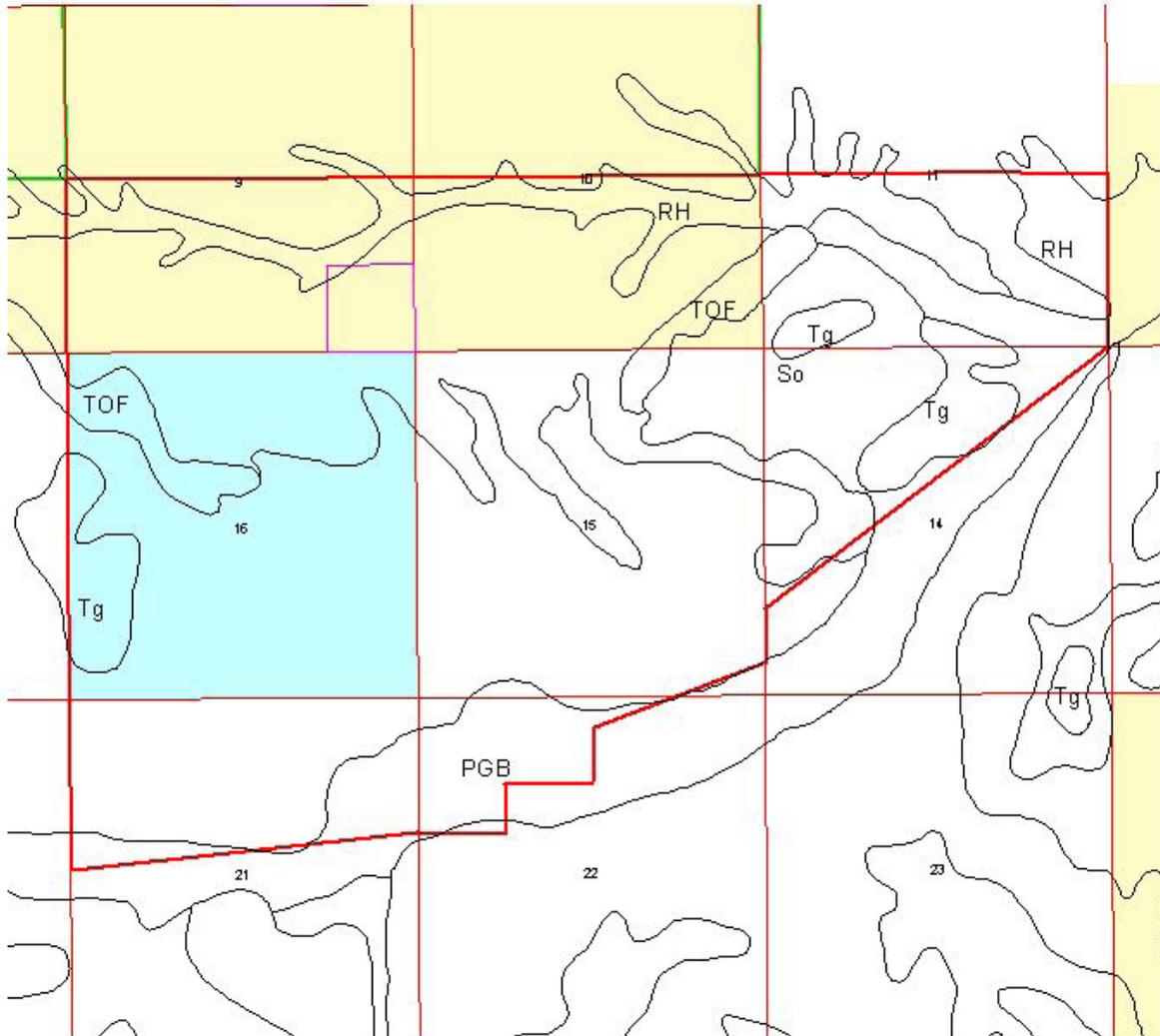


Rangeland Health Assessment Soil Mapping Units



Allotment 64074

T15.R23E



0.5 0 0.5 Miles

T15S.R23E



Public



Study Plots



State



Private



Study Locations



Pasture Boundary



Soil Mapping Units



Allotment Boundary

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