



United States Department of the Interior

BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT

Elko District Office

3900 Idaho Street

Elko, Nevada 89801-4211

http://www.blm.gov/nv/st/en/fo/elko_field_office.html



In Reply Refer To:
4130 (NVE0200)

**United States Department of the Interior
Bureau of Land Management
Elko District**

**FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT
Bellinger Seeding Allotment Grazing Permit Renewal Environmental Assessment**

DOI-BLM-NV-N020-2010-0016

Based on the Environmental Assessment (EA) for the permit renewal of grazing permit authorization number 2703224 on the Bellinger Seeding Allotment (**EA# DOI-BLM-NV-N020-2010-0016**), I have determined that implementation of the proposed action and associated range improvements, as described and analyzed in the EA, will not significantly affect the quality of the human environment. Therefore, preparation of an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) is not required prior to my issuance of the decision.

This finding is based on my consideration of the Council on Environmental Quality's (CEQ) criteria for significance (40 CFR 1508.27) with regard to the context and the intensity of impacts, as discussed in the EA and summarized below.

Context:

The alternatives chapter of the EA focuses on livestock grazing management on 2,413 acres of public land and 43 acres of private land within the Bellinger Seeding Grazing Allotment located south of Elko and adjacent to the community of Spring Creek, NV; the allotment is bounded to the east by Rabbit Creek, Spring Creek subdivisions to the south and west, and the Elko Hills to the north. The BLM has issued three documents specifically addressing livestock grazing management on the allotment; the 1988 Agreement... for the Bellinger Seeding Allotment and the 2008 and 2009 Northeastern Great Basin Draft Standards and Guidelines Assessments for Rangeland Health. The 2008 and 2009 Draft Assessments concluded that all standards and guidelines have been met by the existing grazing permit terms and conditions and that current livestock grazing practices on the Bellinger Seeding Allotment are in conformance with standards and guidelines.

Intensity:

1) *Impacts that may be both beneficial and adverse.*

The analysis identifies any beneficial or adverse impacts on wildlife species, vegetation, livestock grazing, and soil and cultural resources of concern that may arise as a result of the proposed grazing permit renewal and range improvement projects. Measures are incorporated to avoid or reduce adverse impacts from grazing, conserve habitat for the sensitive species, and identify and protect cultural resources.

The analysis of monitoring data included within the July 2009 Draft Standards and Guidelines Assessment and the EA concluded that all standards and guidelines and multiple use objectives have been met.

2) *The degree to which the proposed action affects public health or safety.*

The proposed action and proposed range improvements will have no effect on 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.*

The proposed plan incorporates procedures for the protection and management of historic and cultural resources and other unique areas in the Bellinger Seeding Allotment. No riparian areas or ground water, park lands, special recreation management areas, prime or unique farmlands, or wild and scenic rivers exist in the allotment or would be affected by the proposed action.

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

The analysis contained within the July 2009 Draft Standards and Guidelines Assessment and EA concludes that existing management is meeting all applicable standards for rangeland health and other multiple use objectives. The BLM mailed a scoping letter on July 17, 2009 to the Interested Public and permittee asking for input on grazing management alternatives. In response, the BLM received an email from Western Watersheds Project (WWP) on July 20, 2009. The comments from WWP were reviewed by the BLM through an interdisciplinary process and it was concluded that no additional studies or analysis were needed. Based on the above information, I have concluded that the effects would not be highly controversial.

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

The proposed action and proposed range improvements would have effects that are predictable and well known. There are no known risks of concern associated with this permit renewal for ongoing grazing. The analysis is based on monitoring information, and all livestock grazing authorizations are subject to applicable procedures to prevent undue environmental harm and risk. Proposed grazing system provisions allow for adaptive management to meet resource objectives and includes continual monitoring and evaluation of monitoring data to address any uncertainty as to effects on an annual basis.

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.*

The ten-year grazing permit includes terms and conditions to protect resources from significant adverse effects. Proposed grazing system provisions include annual planning with permittees and BLM approval component to ensure that resource protection objectives are met. This action does not make any commitments for BLM approval for any future actions. All proposed livestock management decisions would continue to be subject to further consideration in accordance with BLM grazing regulations, NEPA regulations and other pertinent policies.

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

All resources are evaluated for cumulative impacts in the EA, and no significant impacts of concern are identified. As a standard procedure, cumulative impacts would continue to be subject to further review as projects or changes to grazing are proposed, and on a site-specific basis.

8) *The degree to which the action may adversely affect districts, sites, highways, structures, or objects listed in or eligible for listing in the NRHP or may cause loss or destruction of significant scientific, cultural, or historic resources.*

The proposed plan incorporates special design features to identify and protect significant cultural resources from adverse effects.

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 ESA of 1973.*

No listed species are known to occur within the Bellinger Seeding Allotment, and no critical habitat for any species has been designated in the area. As discussed for “special status species” in the EA, the allotment does provide habitat for one candidate species (greater sage-grouse) and several BLM-sensitive species of concern. The proposed action and proposed range improvements include measures to prevent adverse impacts to these species and conserve their habitats, and are not expected to result in the listing of any species of concern.

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

The proposed action has been developed in coordination with Nevada Department of Wildlife. There are no concerns about violating Federal, State or local law.

/s/

David Overcast
Manager, Tuscarora Field Office

January 11, 2010

Date