



United States Department of the Interior



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**United States Department of the Interior
Bureau of Land Management
Elko, Nevada**

FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT Snow Water Lake and Warm Creek Allotments Grazing Permit Renewal Decision DOI-BLM-NV-E030-2012-0519-EA

Based on the environmental assessment (EA) for the Grazing Permit Renewal Decision for the Snow Water Lake and Warm Creek Allotments (DOI-BLM-NV-E030-2012-0519-EA), I have determined that the Proposed Action, 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.

BLM has made slight modifications to the original EA in response to issues raised by the protest to the Proposed Grazing Decision serving as the decision record for this EA. This Finding of No Significant Impact replaces the similar finding signed for this EA on September 13, 2013.

Context:

The Proposed Action focuses on livestock grazing management on 19,586 acres of public land intermixed with 1,537 acres of private land within the Snow Water Lake and Warm Creek Grazing Allotments located on the eastern flank of the East Humboldt Range in east-central Elko County. The BLM issued a Standards and Guidelines for Rangeland Health Assessment in March 2012. The assessment reached draft conclusions that current management was meeting all applicable objectives.

Intensity:

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

The analysis identifies both beneficial and adverse impacts to wetlands, riparian zones and aquatic and avian species 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 sensitive species, and identify and protect cultural resources.

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

The proposed action 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 grazing permit incorporates procedures for the protection and management of historic and cultural resources and other unique areas in the Snow Water Lake and Warm Creek Allotments. No park lands, special recreation management areas, prime or unique farmlands, or wild and scenic rivers exist within the allotments. Wildlife habitat and wetlands, including springs, have been monitored and analyzed for effects of grazing against established management objectives. The analysis concluded that implementing the proposed action is expected to provide for significant progress towards and/or attainment of the riparian and wildlife habitat standards and objectives throughout the allotment as defined by 43 CFR §4180.

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 EA concludes that the proposed action will result in significant progress towards achievement of multiple use objectives and the Standards and Guidelines for Rangeland Health. Ecological conditions on the allotment have shown consistent maintenance or improvement, and conditions are expected to continue to improve under the proposed action.

BLM received four timely comment letters during the public review period of the Standards and Guidelines for Rangeland Health Assessment. Most comments submitted dealt with the proposed conversion of the permit to domestic horses. BLM has addressed the received comments in the analysis contained within the EA, and BLM considers the effects to 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.*

Possible effects are neither highly uncertain nor do they include unique or unknown risks. The analysis is based on monitoring information, and all livestock grazing authorizations are subject to applicable procedures to prevent undue environmental harm and risk.

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. This action does not make any commitments for BLM approval for any future actions beyond those outlined in the proposed action. All future proposed livestock management actions not described in the proposed action would continue to be subject to further consideration in accordance with BLM grazing and NEPA regulations and 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 are identified. As a standard procedure, cumulative impacts would continue to be subject to further review as new projects are proposed, and on a site-specific basis.

