

ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

NV-040-06-043

GRAZING PERMIT RENEWAL FOR DEAN CARTER
NORTH CHOKECHERRY ALLOTMENT

United States Department of the Interior
Bureau of Land Management
Ely Field Office

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I. INTRODUCTION

Background Information

This environmental assessment (EA) addresses the impacts to public land resources from a proposal to renew the term grazing permit for Dean Carter on the North Chokecherry Allotment (20134). This EA fulfills the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) requirement for site-specific analysis of resource impacts. Both the proposed action and alternatives to the proposed action are considered. This EA also analyzes information to determine whether to prepare an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) or issue a “Finding of No Significant Impact” (FONSI). A FONSI documents why implementation of the selected action will not result in environmental impacts that significantly affect the quality of the human environment.

This EA is tiered to and incorporates by reference the Schell Management Framework Plan (MFP) and Schell Grazing Environmental Impact Statement (EIS), approved June, 1983, and the subsequent Record of Decision (ROD), approved July 1983. These broad, long term land use planning documents implemented decisions regarding rangeland management in the Ely District. The North Chokecherry Allotment has been designated as management category “custodial” (C).

Standards and Guidelines for Grazing Administration were developed by the Northeastern Great Basin Resource Advisory Council (RAC) and approved by the Secretary of the Interior on February 12, 1997. Vegetation Guidelines were approved in March 2004, and added as Appendix A. The Standards and Guidelines reflect the stated goals of improving rangeland health while providing for the viability of the livestock industry, all wildlife species, and wild horses and burros in the Northeastern Great Basin Area. Standards are expressions of physical and biological conditions required for sustaining rangelands for multiple uses. Guidelines point to management actions related to livestock grazing for achieving the Standards.

This EA also summarizes information from the associated Standards Determination Document (SDD – Appendix I) that evaluates whether current livestock management practices are conforming to the approved Standards and Guidelines for Rangeland Health for the North Chokecherry Allotment.

The term grazing permit under consideration authorizes grazing use within the North Chokecherry Allotment. Cattle are the authorized kind of livestock. The permit would be for a period of ten years. The base property for the permit would be approximately 570 acres of privately owned land in Millard County, Utah. The grazing permit area occurs primarily within White Pine County, Nevada. The permit area also occurs within Millard County, Utah (Figures 1 & 2). The permit area is situated in the east portion of the Ely District BLM, approximately 55 miles east of Ely, Nevada. The permit area occurs within the Hamblin Valley Watershed. The current term permit for the North Chokecherry Allotment has been issued for the period 10/01/1999 to 05/15/2009. A grazing preference statement shows that the current forage allocation of 770 cattle AUMs has been in effect since 1985 or earlier, when the permit was held by Wheeler Land and Livestock Company.

A Grazing Final Multiple Use Decision (FMUD) has not been accomplished for the North Chokecherry Allotment to date. A grazing decision is essentially a document that determines whether changes in livestock management practices are necessary for a defined administrative area. An environmental

assessment (EA) and Decision Record with Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) was completed for a term permit renewal for the allotment in September, 1999. As a result of the EA and FONSI, the season of use for cattle grazing on the North Chokecherry Allotment was changed from 03/01 – 06/15 to 10/01 – 05/15.

An assessment of the rangeland health is being conducted during the permit issuance (renewal) process. Standards for Rangeland Health were evaluated by a BLM interdisciplinary team on January 31, 2007 for the North Chokecherry Allotment. The interdisciplinary team (consisting of Rangeland Management Specialists, Wildlife Biologist, Weeds Specialist, Archaeologist, Watershed Specialist, Wilderness Specialist, Soils Specialist, and others) utilized several scientifically based documents and official publications to complete the assessment. These documents include the Eastern White Pine County Soil Survey (USDA-SCS 2004), Range Site Descriptions (USDA-SCS 2003), Interpreting Indicators of Rangeland Health (USDI-BLM et al. 2005), Sampling Vegetation Attributes (USDI-BLM et al. 1996), the Nevada Rangeland Monitoring Handbook (USDA-SCS et al. 1984), and The National Range and Pasture Handbook (USDA NRCS 2003). For a complete list of references, see Appendix IV. The interdisciplinary team also used rangeland monitoring data, professional observations, and photographs to evaluate achievement of the Standards and conformance to the Guidelines.

All scientifically based documents and rangeland monitoring data are available for public inspection at the Ely Field Office during business hours.

“Standard Riparian Functioning Condition Checklists” (USDI-BLM 2000) have not been completed for the North Chokecherry Allotment, since there are no public land riparian systems present on the allotment. Livestock use of the allotment is dependent on water hauling to troughs.

Standards Achievement

Rangeland monitoring data for the North Chokecherry Allotment is summarized in the Standards Determination Document that is associated with this Term Permit Renewal EA (Appendix I). As a result of the I.D. Team assessment and monitoring data review, it has been determined that two of three Standards for Rangeland Health are being achieved on the North Chokecherry Allotment. The third Standard is not applicable. The condition of the vegetative communities is adequate to authorize the permit renewal. A summary of this finding for the allotment follows:

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|--|------------------|
| 1. Upland Sites Standard | (Achieved) |
| 2. Riparian and Wetland Sites Standard | (Not applicable) |
| 3. Habitat Standard | (Achieved) |

Guidelines Conformance

As a result of the assessment and monitoring data review, it has been determined that current livestock grazing management practices conform to the following guidelines:

Current livestock management practices conform to Guidelines 1.1 and 1.3. Guideline 1.2 is not applicable to the assessment area at this time. Management practices conform to Guidelines 3.2, 3.3, and 3.6. Guidelines 3.1, 3.4, and 3.5 are not applicable to the assessment area at this time. Refer to

Appendix I for the Guidelines Conformance Review on page 24.

Need for the Proposal

The need for the proposal is to fully process the renewal of the term grazing permit for Dean Carter in accordance with all applicable laws, regulations, and policies with terms and conditions of grazing use that conform to the Standards and Guidelines for Grazing Administration and the other pertinent land use objectives for livestock use. The grazing permit would be renewed for a period of ten years. In accordance with Title 43 CFR 4130.2(a), "Grazing permits or leases shall be issued to qualified applicants to authorize use on the public lands and other lands under the administration of the Bureau of Land Management that are designated as available for livestock grazing through land use plans." Dean Carter meets all of the qualifications to graze livestock on public lands administered by the BLM according to Chapter 1 of BLM Manual H-4110, "Qualifications, Permitted Use, and Allotment Transfers."

Relationship to Planning

The proposed action is consistent with the Federal, State, and local laws, regulations, policies, and plans to the maximum extent possible. The proposed action would be in conformance with the Schell Management Framework Plan (MFP) and the Schell Grazing Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) dated June, 1983 and the subsequent Record of Decision (ROD) dated July 1983. The proposed action would implement the management decisions from these approved Land Use Planning Documents regarding range (p.7-ROD) and watershed condition (p.6-ROD). The proposed action would also be in conformance with the White Pine County Elk Management Plan approved March 1999. The proposed action would also be consistent with the objectives of the President's Healthy Forests Initiative for Wildfire Prevention and Stronger Communities (August 22, 2002). The project is also consistent with the White Pine County Land Use Plan of May, 1998 which states the following:

- "The federal government should continue to make the public rangelands economically and realistically available for livestock grazing, along with the other multiple use objectives." (page 7)

The proposed action has been analyzed within the scope and intent of the following agreements, policies, acts, regulations, executive orders, and manuals listed below:

- State Protocol Agreement between the Bureau of Land Management, Nevada and the Nevada State Historic preservation Office (1999).
- Migratory Bird treaty Act (1918 as amended) and Executive Order 13186 (1/11/01).
- Ely District Policy: Management Actions for the Conservation of Migratory Birds (5/01/01).
- Wilderness Act of 1964.
- BLM Manuals 8560, H-8560-1, and 8561 (Wilderness Management).
- BLM Manual 8400 – Visual Resources Management
- Greater Sage Grouse Conservation Plan for Nevada and Eastern California (June 30, 2004)

Relationship to Bureau of Land Management Guidance

The Proposed Action also complies with Nevada BLM Instruction Memorandum (IM) No. NV-2006-0034, which provides guidance to facilitate the preparation of grazing permit renewal Environmental Assessments (EAs) as per the requirement set forth in BLM Washington Office IMs WO 2003-071 and WO 2004-126.

Identification of Issues (Scoping)

In order to identify potential issues, internal scoping was conducted for this permit renewal proposal by resource specialists during a meeting held January 31, 2007 at the Ely BLM Field Office. At that time, no resource value issues were identified. Meeting participants identified that external consultation would include general public notification via the Ely BLM web page, plus hard copies of the EA mailed directly to certain interested publics. Also, it was determined that Native American Coordination would need to occur. Additionally, the public has been invited to provide input concerning this action and will continue to be afforded the opportunity to provide comments. Thus far, no issues have been identified as a result of public scoping.

After internal scoping, two new issues were identified for scoping in this EA. Southern Nevada Water Authority (SNWA) has proposed a groundwater development project that would partially occur in the same area as the proposed action. Additionally, new legislation (P.L. 109-432) has transferred National Forest Service (NFS) lands to the BLM, and a new wilderness (Highland Ridge Wilderness) has been created in and abutting the permit renewal area. The two new resource issues are discussed in the cumulative impacts section of this EA.

II. DESCRIPTION OF THE PROPOSED ACTION AND ALTERNATIVES

Proposed Action

In order to meet the need for the proposal, the BLM would fully process and issue a new term grazing permit to Dean Carter (operator # 2704431) and authorize livestock grazing on the North Chokecherry Grazing Allotment. The allotment includes approximately 8,700 public land acres (Figure 1). The current term permit and allotment information follows:

Allotment Number	Allotment Name	Livestock Number/Kind	Grazing Period		% Public* Land (Billing)	Type Use	AUMs**
			Begin	End			
20134	North Chokecherry	110 Cattle	10/15	05/15	100	Active	774

* The allotment is billed at 100% public land through the Rangeland Administrative Billing System (RAS).

** The active preference for the allotment is 770 AUMs. The 774 AUMs presented is a rounded figure based on the 110 cattle grazing from October 15 through May 15.

The allotment summary as it appears on the current term permit is as follows:

<u>Allotment</u>	<u>Active</u>	<u>Preference</u>		<u>Total</u>
		<u>Suspended</u>		
20134 North Chokecherry	770	0		770

The proposed action is to renew the grazing permit without any fundamental changes to the terms and conditions of the permit (status quo). The cattle numbers, season of use, and areas of use would remain the same. Appendix II lists the specific terms and conditions that will be included as part of the grazing permit. Allowable use levels for key forage species will be included in the new permit. Allowable use levels are a quantification of Land Use Plan vegetative objectives. Stipulations regarding allowable activities in the Highland Ridge Wilderness will also be included in the new permit. The issuance of the term grazing permit would be for a period of ten years from 03/01/07 to 02/28/17.

Proposed Action - Monitoring

Rangeland monitoring data would continue to be collected for the North Chokecherry Allotment to determine if the livestock management practices as authorized by this permit renewal are conforming to the Standards and Guidelines for Rangeland Health and other vegetative and multiple use objectives for the allotment. Monitoring and data collection would continue in the form of establishing key areas, measuring utilization levels, frequency trend, ecological condition, vegetation cover, observed apparent trend, actual use reports, climate studies, professional observation, photos, and compliance checks. Monitoring may also continue according to broad watershed assessment of the Hamblin Valley Watershed.

Prior to authorizing annual grazing use, monitoring would be conducted to determine forage availability, grazing use areas and grazing management practices. Following the grazing period, monitoring would be conducted to determine overall utilization levels and grazing use patterns.

The term permit renewal area would also be monitored on a periodic basis by both BLM and the grazing permittee for noxious weeds or non-native invasive species. Control treatments would be initiated on noxious weed populations that become established in the project area.

If a future monitoring assessment results in a determination that additional changes in grazing management practices are necessary for compliance with the Standards for Rangeland Health, the grazing permit or lease would be reissued subject to revised terms and conditions.

Other Alternatives

Since the proposed action is to renew the grazing permit without any changes (status quo), the proposed action and the “no action alternative” are one in the same. Thus the “no action alternative” will not be further addressed.

No Grazing Alternative

The No Grazing alternative was addressed in the Schell Draft Grazing EIS. The EIS analyzed the

impacts of grazing through a proposed action and four alternatives. Not issuing term grazing permits was considered as an alternative but eliminated from detailed analysis. The Code of Federal regulations at CFR 4130.2 requires the issuance of grazing permits to qualified applicants. According to the BLM Grazing Regulations effective August 11, 2006 (CFR Subpart 4100.0-2 (a), Objectives), the objectives of the regulations are to in part”provide for the sustainability of the western livestock industry and communities that are dependent upon productive, healthy public rangelands.”

No additional site specific alternatives are necessary for analysis since there are no unresolved conflicts concerning alternative uses of available resources.

III. DESCRIPTION OF THE AFFECTED ENVIRONMENT

Introduction

In addition to the description of the affected environment presented below, the affected environment is also described in the Schell Grazing EIS.

General Area Description

The North Chokecherry Allotment (20134) encompasses approximately 8,700 public land acres. The allotment is situated in Snake Valley, on the eastern side of the Snake Mountain Range, southwest of the community of Garrison, Utah. The allotment is fenced on three sides. The eastern boundary of the allotment (fenced) occurs in Utah, following a county road running from southwest to northeast along the Burbank Meadows and private ground. The Utah portion of the allotment was formerly called the Burbank Allotment. The western boundary of the allotment is the former Humboldt National Forest (unfenced). The northern and southern boundaries of the allotment are fenced. The allotment is located primarily within White Pine County, Nevada, in the eastern portion of the Ely BLM District approximately 50 miles east of Ely, Nevada. Elevations range from about 5,450 feet near the State Line at valley bottom to 6,300 feet on the east slopes of the Snake Range. The topography of the area is typical of that found in the Basin and Range Physiographic Province of the western United States. The geographic aspect of the allotment occurs on gentle east facing alluvial fans and relatively flat lands. Average annual precipitation is 6 – 10 inches. Salt desert shrub plant communities occur in the lower portions of the allotment while sagebrush/perennial grass communities that contain scattered pinyon/juniper trees occur on the benches and higher elevation sites. Water is provided in the allotment to temporary troughs at water haul locations.

The North Chokecherry Allotment occurs within the Hamblin Valley Watershed. The allotment also occurs within the Great Salt Lake Area (028A) Major Land Resource Area (MLRA).

The grazing permit renewal area does not occur within a Wild Horse Herd Management Area.

Critical Elements of the Human Environment & Other Resource Values

The following resources, which have been identified as “critical elements of the human environment” according to BLM Manual 1790-1, do not occur within the affected environment.

- 1) Areas of Critical Environmental Concern, and Wild and Scenic Rivers.
- 2) Floodplains and Wetlands.
- 3) Prime or Unique Farmlands.
- 4) Wild Horses and Burros
- 5) Hazardous or Solid Wastes

The following resource values have been identified by the BLM interdisciplinary team as resources in the affected environment that need a site specific discussion:

Critical Elements of the Human Environment - Air Quality, Cultural Resources, Migratory Birds, Noxious Weeds and Invasive Non-Native Species, Special Status Species, Water Quality, and Wilderness Values.

Other Resource Values - Range/Livestock, Vegetation, Soils, Wildlife, Recreation, Social and Economic Values, and Visual Resources.

A discussion of both classes of values follows:

Air Quality

It is expected that the air quality within the term permit renewal area is within acceptable limits and meeting State of Nevada standards. The allotment is not within an area of residential and industrial development. Occasional high winds generate dust storms and dust devils from fine sediments that temporarily cloud air quality and limit visibility. There are currently no activities occurring in the allotment or the general landscape area which would affect air quality standards.

Cultural Resources

Historic sites, isolates, and prehistoric lithic/shard scatters occur in the renewal area allotment. A cultural resources sensitivity map has been generated for the North Chokecherry Allotment showing that cultural resource sensitivity varies from low to high. A Cultural Resources Inventory Needs assessment has been prepared and signed for this permit renewal.

All ground disturbing activities that may occur within the term permit renewal area would be subject to the Archaeological Resources Protection Act of 1979 review, Section 106 review, and if needed, State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) consultation as per BLM Nevada’s implementation of the protocol for cultural resources. No ground disturbing activities are currently planned by BLM for the term permit renewal area.

Migratory Birds

Federal agencies are required to protect migratory birds and their habitat. This is according to the Migratory Bird Treaty Act of 1918 and subsequent amendments (16 U.S.C. 703-711) and Executive Order 13186 issued January 11, 2001. Appropriate habitat for migratory birds occurs in the North Chokecherry Allotment. No formal surveys for migratory birds have been conducted in the allotment.

Noxious Weeds and Invasive, Non-Native Species

The Ely weeds inventory (Weedpoints_012607) indicates that there are no noxious weeds present on public lands in the Nevada portion of the North Chokecherry Allotment. Weed survey data is not available for the Utah portion of the allotment or for the USFS land that has recently been transferred from the Forest Service to BLM. A few salt cedar trees (Tamarix spp.) have been inventoried on Big Springs Creek, approximately 1.5 miles south of the allotment. The invasive annual grass cheatgrass (Bromus tectorum) is present in the allotment in varying densities. Small patches of the invasive species halogeton (Halogeton glomeratus) and Russian thistle (Salsola kali) also occur in the allotment, primarily along roadways. A noxious weed risk assessment is included as Appendix III to this document. The risk assessment indicates a moderate risk (12) for the spread of noxious weeds with continued livestock grazing.

Special Status Species (Federally listed, proposed or candidate Threatened or Endangered Species, and BLM State Sensitive Species)

The bald eagle, a federally listed Threatened Species, has been observed on the North Chokecherry Allotment in winter. The bald eagle has been proposed for delisting across its range. The peregrine falcon, a BLM listed State Sensitive Species, may use the allotment. No sightings have been reported to BLM. Other BLM State Sensitive Species that are expected to use the allotment include the golden eagle, burrowing owl, prairie falcon, and loggerhead shrike. There are no ferruginous hawk nest sites or other raptor nesting areas identified in BLM computer shape files. NDOW State Sensitive Species that are expected to use the allotment include the sage thrasher and brewer's sparrow. There are no Threatened/Endangered fish or plant species known to occur on the North Chokecherry Allotment. There is no known pygmy rabbit habitat on the allotment.

Greater Sage Grouse

The greater sage grouse is considered a BLM State Sensitive Species. There are no known sage grouse leks (strutting grounds) on the allotment. A lek that is 2 miles north of the allotment was last monitored as active in 1982. There has been no documented sage grouse use of the allotment for many years. NDOW shape files identify the allotment as year-long sage grouse habitat. NDOW shape files also identify the southeast third of the allotment as sage grouse nesting habitat. The allotment is within the Spring Valley/Garrison Population Management Unit, which consists of approximately 1,132,049 acres.

Water Quality (drinking/ground)

There is no known drinking water within the allotment. There are no public land riparian systems in the allotment. Little is known about the deep ground water aquifers and associated geologic structures

beneath the land surface of this allotment.

Wilderness Values

As of January, 2007, a portion of the North Chokecherry Allotment now occurs within the newly created Highland Ridge Wilderness (White Pine County Public Lands Bill, Section 323, Public Law 109 – 432). Approximately 650 acres in the western portion of the allotment near the Chokecherry Creek drainage (dry) are within the wilderness, and are an addition to the National Wilderness Preservation System. The Highland Ridge Wilderness is administered by the Ely District BLM. Access to this portion of the wilderness is along a two track road that starts on Utah State Highway 21 south of Pruess Lake. Individuals or groups occasionally hike in this wilderness to experience solitude.

Apart from the Highland Ridge Wilderness, the nearest wilderness is the Fortification Range Wilderness (Lincoln County) approximately 24 miles to the southwest. The Moriah Wilderness occurs approximately 30 miles to the north. No areas of critical environmental concern (ACEC) have been identified within the term permit renewal area.

Range/Livestock

Historically, grazing has been a common land use in eastern Nevada since the late 1800s. Both cattle and sheep grazing occurred on this allotment. Cattle use occurred yearlong and sheep use occurred primarily during the winter period. The North Chokecherry Allotment is currently permitted for cattle grazing. Occasional sheep trailing (2 days per year) occurs in the allotment. Sheep move across the allotment between the Hamblin Valley Allotment to the south and the Baker Creek Allotment to the north.

Cattle use has averaged 623 AUMs the five years the allotment was grazed from 1999 through 2005 (seven years). Complete voluntary non – use was taken on the allotment during 2000/2001 and 2002/2003, primarily due to drought conditions. Drought conditions have been common in this allotment. Licensed use ranged from a high of 697 AUMs in 2005 to a low of 447 AUMs in 1999. Current active permitted use on the North Chokecherry Allotment is 770 AUMs. The grazing permittee has cooperated with BLM to voluntarily remove the livestock from the allotment earlier than the May 15 off date three times during the 1999 – 2007 timeframe.

Vegetation

The North Chokecherry Allotment occurs within Major Land Resource Area (MLRA) 028A – Great Salt Lake Area. The ecological sites (range sites) within the allotment have been described, classified, and studied by the Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS). The three vegetation types within the allotment are salt desert shrub, black sagebrush, and northern desert shrub (big sagebrush types). Scattered juniper and pinyon trees occur in the upper elevations of the allotment. The dominant vegetation consists of black sagebrush, Indian ricegrass, needleandthread grass, shadscale saltbrush, winterfat, and greasewood. Salt desert shrub and black sagebrush ecological sites compose approximately 90% of the land area of the allotment. Scattered juniper and pinyon trees occur on less than 5% of the allotment land area. The invasive annual grass cheatgrass is common in the allotment in varying densities. Other non-native invasive plants including halogeton, Russian thistle, and mustard

are present in the allotment. There are no known sensitive plant species in the allotment.

Soils

The soils in the North Chokecherry Allotment are primarily loamy soils, derived from material eroded from the Snake Range Mountain Block. The soils are primarily alluvial, occurring on the alluvial fans and old beach lake plains on the east side of the Snake Mountain Range. The main Soil Mapping Unit (SMU) is 1388, an Eastmore – Summermute – Ursine Association. These soils are duripan soils that have a restrictive layer going to 20” deep. This restrictive layer limits plant rooting depth. The soils are moderately susceptible to wind or water erosion. The soils on the benches and higher elevation sites (SMU 1386) are generally less susceptible to erosion and compaction than the more fragile silts near the valley bottom. Soils in the North Chokecherry Allotment vary in depth, percolation rates, and water holding capacity.

Wildlife

The North Chokecherry Allotment is within Nevada Division of Wildlife Big Game Management Area 11, Unit 115. The allotment provides habitat for mule deer, pronghorns and Rocky Mountain elk. Due to the fact that there are no perennial water sources in the allotment, numbers of big game and trophy game species are limited. Big game browse-class shrubs are very limited in the western portions of the allotment. The allotment receives year-long antelope use and minimal winter/early spring use by deer and elk. Approximately 1,000 acres of deer spring range in the western portion of the allotment are identified on BLM’s Geographic Information System (GIS) Data Base. This data base also identifies the entire allotment as year-long antelope and elk range.

The allotment provides habitat for coyotes, rabbits, badgers, bobcats, fox, sagebrush obligate birds, and other small mammals and reptiles. No fisheries occur in the area of the proposed action. No big horn sheep habitat occurs anywhere near the proposed action. There are no wildlife water guzzlers on the allotment.

Recreation

Recreation in this area includes large and small game hunting, trapping, wildlife observation and photography, hiking, horse back riding, off highway vehicle (OHV) exploration, occasional primitive camping, antler collection and fossil hunting. The area is very isolated, undeveloped, and lacks water sources. There are no developed recreational facilities on the allotment.

Social and Economic Values

The farming and ranching lifestyle has been and continues to be important in White Pine County and the State of Nevada. The local economy of White Pine County has been dependent on farming and ranching activity. Taxes generated from agricultural activity benefit the county.

Visual Resources

The Visual Resource Management (VRM) System provides a way to identify and evaluate scenic values

to determine the appropriate levels of management. It also provides a way to analyze potential visual impacts and apply visual design techniques to ensure that surface disturbing activities are in harmony with their surroundings. The allotment occurs in a scenic area typical of the intermountain great basin landforms. There are no unique visual resources within the allotment. The allotment primarily occurs within a Visual Resource Management (VRM) Class 4 Zone. That portion of the allotment within the Highland Ridge Wilderness is associated with a VRM Class 1 Zone.

IV. ENVIRONMENTAL CONSEQUENCES

The environmental consequences of grazing were analyzed in the Schell Management Framework Plan and Grazing Environmental Impact Statement (MFP/EIS), approved June 1983. The proposed permit renewal is within the array of options identified for the proposed action and alternatives as analyzed in the EIS. There have been no major changes made with the proposed term permit renewal that differ from the rangeland management actions presented and analyzed in the EIS. The following site specific analysis discusses the environmental consequences (impacts) associated with the proposed action.

Since the proposed action is to renew the grazing permit without any changes, the proposed action and the “no action alternative” (status quo) are one in the same. Thus there is no need to present the impacts of a “no action alternative.” Cumulative impacts are discussed at the end of this section.

The following resources, which have been identified as “critical elements of the human environment” according to BLM Manual 1790-1, do not occur and would not be impacted or adversely affected by the proposed term permit renewal.

- 1) Areas of Critical Environmental Concern, and Wild and Scenic Rivers.
- 2) Floodplains and Wetlands.
- 3) Prime or Unique Farmlands.
- 4) Wild Horses and Burros.
- 5) Hazardous or Solid Wastes.

The environmental consequences of the following resources, which have also been identified as “critical elements of the human environment” have been considered. A short discussion is presented for each resource. These resources generally would not be impacted by the proposed term permit renewal (No affect).

Environmental Justice.

No disparate impacts would occur to low income or minority peoples.

Migratory Birds.

Impacts to migratory birds would be minor and largely undetectable. Migratory bird nesting and brooding habitat should not be affected. Long term population trends of migratory birds should not be affected. Cattle grazing would occur for two weeks at most in this allotment during the nesting period of May 1 to July 15.

Native American Religious Concerns.

A Tribal coordination meeting was held at the Ely BLM Field Office on July 20, 2006. No concerns were expressed by Native Americans at this meeting in regard to the proposed action.

Water Quality (Drinking/Ground).

Sources of surface drinking water do not occur within the impact area of the proposed term permit renewal. There are no domestic wells in the area. The ground water, located in a deep aquifer geologic structure, would not be impacted by the proposed term permit renewal.

Wilderness Values

As previously mentioned, approximately 650 acres in the western portion of the allotment near the Chokecherry Creek drainage (dry) are within the newly created Highland Ridge Wilderness, and are an addition to the National Wilderness Preservation System (PL 109 – 432). This portion of the wilderness is seldom visited. Access is very limited. There are no known hiking trails in the area. Water sources are extremely scarce. The two existing springs in the area, North Spring and South Spring, are believed to be dry. Thick juniper and pinyon trees in the wilderness make access very difficult. Individuals or groups occasionally hike in this wilderness to experience solitude. No impacts to wilderness are anticipated as a result of the proposed action.

Anticipated Impacts of the Proposed Action

Anticipated Impacts of the Proposed Action - Critical Elements of the Human Environment

The following resource values, which are also considered critical elements of the human environment, have been identified by resource specialists as potentially affected by the proposed action:

Air Quality

Very minor impacts to air quality would be expected as a result of the term permit renewal. There would be minor dust associated with normal livestock movement or concentrations around temporary water haul locations. Dust would be temporary and would dissipate quickly. Dust is not expected to exceed Nevada and National Ambient Air Quality Standards. It is expected that dust emissions from livestock activity would not affect any Class I air quality areas.

Cultural Resources

It is unlikely there would be any impacts to cultural resources or Historic Properties by the term permit renewal. A small number of dispersed cattle grazing primarily during the winter use period would not be expected to bury cultural resources or to cause them to be unrecognizable by soil disturbance.

Noxious Weeds and Invasive, Non-Native Species

The grazing permit renewal and the continuation of existing livestock management practices could result

in an increase in noxious weeds to the permit renewal area. The Risk Factor for spread of noxious weeds is low at the present time (See Appendix III for the Noxious Weed Risk Assessment). Localized areas of livestock concentration or disturbance could increase the risk for spread of noxious weeds. Grazing use may cause an increase in invasive plants such as cheatgrass or halogeton, depending on climate, stocking level, timing of grazing, presence or absence of fire, and other factors. Livestock grazing could also help prevent a catastrophic fire by keeping fine fuels in check. A catastrophic wildfire could lead to a complete loss of the native plant community. The salt cedar that has been inventoried on Big Springs Creek would not spread as a result of the proposed action.

Special Status Species (Federally listed, proposed or candidate Threatened or Endangered Species, and BLM State Sensitive Species.

The proposed permit renewal is expected to have no affect on habitat values for the bald eagle or peregrine falcon. The bald eagle is considered a transitory migrant in the permit renewal area. The proposed action will not contribute to the need to list any sensitive species as threatened or endangered. The proposed action would be in accordance with the Nevada Governor's Plan for the Greater Sage Grouse which lists vegetation cover objectives for grouse.

No special status plants are located in the term permit renewal area, thus special status plants would not be affected by the proposal.

Anticipated Impacts of the Proposed Action - Other Resource Values

The following resource values have also been identified by resource specialists as potentially affected by the proposed action:

Range/Livestock

According to the proposed action, grazing would continue as it has in the past. Livestock management practices would remain similar to recent historical practices. Cattle use would occur primarily during the winter and early spring period. Cattle distribution would continue to be controlled through water hauling. Water hauling sites would be rotated each year. Livestock would be removed from the allotment in April or May. Utilization of key forage plants is expected to be moderate or less, and would achieve allowable use levels. Moderate use stimulates new plant growth and allows for seed to be produced. New growth is favored by wildlife and livestock, and maintains plant vigor. Through good cattle distribution and moderate utilization, progress would be made towards healthy ecological conditions including enhanced forage production, ground cover, vigor, species composition, diversity, range trend, and watershed health.

It is possible that local areas of over-utilization of key forage plants could result from use by cattle. This possibility would be monitored and actions taken to correct the problem. Cheatgrass would continue to be targeted for use in early spring. Utilization of cheatgrass would help prevent catastrophic wildfire. Wildfire in this allotment would lead to a loss of native plants and an increase in cheatgrass. The proposed action would achieve or make significant progress towards achieving the Standards and conforming to the Guidelines for Rangeland Health and the other multiple use resource objectives for the allotment.

The proposed permit renewal would facilitate livestock management and provide stability to the livestock operation.

Vegetation

The term permit renewal would be expected to lead to vegetation impacts such as maintaining current vegetation composition and cover, maintaining vegetation production and forage availability, stimulation of new growth, and stabilization of rangeland condition and trend. Limited spring cattle use along with distribution of grazing would allow native plants to set seed. During many recent drought years native plants have not produced much seed. Disturbed areas of vegetation of approximately ½ acre could develop around temporary water haul locations. Vegetation would be crushed and potentially disappear from these locations.

Soils

Soils would maintain structure, percolation characteristics, and water holding capacity according to the livestock management practices implemented by the proposed action. Soils would remain stable, with biotic crusts in place, and would be resistant to wind or water erosion and resistant to invasive species spread. Adequate vegetative cover would help protect soils and would result in adequate litter to protect soils and recycle nutrients. Small disturbed or compacted areas of soil of approximately ½ acre could develop around temporary water haul locations.

Wildlife

It is expected that wildlife habitat would not change measurably as a result of the proposed action. To the extent that moderate livestock grazing stimulates new plant growth, that growth will be available for wildlife. It has been shown by scientific studies and professional observation that wildlife prefer new growth brought about by moderate grazing. The habitat requirements of sagebrush obligate species, including several species of birds, would not change. Water availability would increase for wildlife at temporary water haul sites. Because water would not be provided year-round at temporary water haul sites, some stress may result to localized wildlife populations when the water is shut off. Some wildlife drownings could occur even though wildlife escape ramps would be placed in the troughs.

Recreation

There would be minimal impacts to existing recreational activities as a result of the term permit renewal. To the extent that wildlife populations benefit from moderate livestock grazing, wildlife-related recreation such as hunting, wildlife viewing, antler collection, photography, and off-highway vehicle (OHV) use could be enhanced to a slight degree.

Visual Resource Management (VRM)

When temporary water haul sites are used, the temporary water haul sites would introduce visual contrasts into the landscape. Temporary water haul sites would not be visible from the highway that runs from Garrison, Utah to Milford, Utah. The proposed term permit renewal would be consistent with

the Visual Resource Management (VRM) Class IV and Class I objectives for this area. Care will be taken as to the location and disturbance of temporary water haul sites.

Lands

Legislation (P.L. 109-432, White Pine County Lands Bill) has transferred National Forest Service (NFS) lands to the BLM, and a new wilderness (Highland Ridge Wilderness) has been created in and abutting the permit renewal area. Approximately 650 acres of the Highland Ridge Wilderness now occur within the existing boundary of the North Chokecherry Allotment. Approximately 200 acres of former NFS lands are expected to be blended into the allotment, that are not within the wilderness. This action is discussed above under the Wilderness Values section and in the ***Cumulative Impacts*** section of this EA.

Social and Economic Values

The lifestyles or culture of local residents would not be impacted. The proposed term permit renewal would provide economic benefits for the livestock permittee in this area by maintaining the grazing permit and by maintaining the economic stability and efficiency of their overall operation. The proposed permit renewal would facilitate livestock management.

Water Quantity

Implementing the term permit renewal action would maintain water availability for livestock and wildlife to the amount provided by temporary water haul sites. The location and number of water haul sites will vary annually in the North Chokecherry Allotment. Each grazing season approximately 12 1,000 gallon round steel troughs are used to supply water.

Cumulative Impacts

Cumulative impacts are impacts to the environment or resource values that result from the incremental or combined impact of the Proposed Action when added to other past, present, and reasonably foreseeable future actions, regardless of what agency or person undertakes such other actions. Cumulative impacts can result from individually minor but collectively important actions taking place over a period of time.

According to the 1994 BLM Handbook “Guidelines for Assessing and Documenting Cumulative Impacts,” the cumulative analysis can be focused on those issues and resource values identified during scoping that are of major importance. No issues or resource values of major importance were identified during the EA scoping period. However, since the scoping period the Southern Nevada Water Authority Groundwater Development Project has been identified as an issue of major importance. This issue is discussed below. A general discussion of past, present, and reasonably foreseeable future actions is also presented.

Past Actions

There have been limited previous actions occurring in the project area. Limited historical mineral mining has occurred on the east side of the Snake Mountain Range. There has been no historical oil or gas production and minimal oil exploration in the area. There are no known reclaimed oil exploration

pads in the North Chokecherry Allotment. An old above ground single wooden pole/four strand power line and associated right-of-way and maintenance road run north/south through sections 24, 25, and 36, Township 11N., Range 70 E. Woodcutting and pinyon nut gathering have been minimal. Hunting, trapping, wildlife viewing, and other recreational activities including OHV use have been minimal, in part due to the isolated geographic position of the allotment. Small two track roads associated with these activities are not extensive and have not altered the landscape. Wildfires have not been frequent or catastrophic. Wildlife use has not been intensive in the area and has not fundamentally altered the plant communities. Livestock grazing has been intensive historically and together with climate, drought, lack of wildfire, road establishment, and/or other factors, may be a contributing factor to the presence of invasive plant species. Allotment boundary fences have been constructed to improve livestock management and provide for improved administration of rangelands. Rangeland monitoring has been a common activity in the area.

An environmental assessment (EA) and Decision Record with Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) was completed for a term permit renewal for the allotment in September, 1999. As a result of the EA and FONSI, the season of use for cattle grazing on the North Chokecherry Allotment was changed from 03/01 – 06/15 to 10/01 – 05/15.

Present Actions

Current activities or projects occurring in the project area are very limited. There is no current mineral mining, oil and gas exploration, or wind energy testing. Woodcutting and pinyon nut gathering are minimal. Recreational activities including OHV use are currently minimal. There is only occasional use of the small two track roads in the area. There have been no recent wildfires. Current livestock grazing and wildlife use are not intensive in the area. Dean Carter has grazed at less than active permitted use in the area for the past few grazing years, and has completely rested the allotment two different years. The permitted area continues to be monitored to determine if grazing management practices are meeting the healthy rangelands, watershed, and vegetative objectives for the allotment.

In January 2007, the NFS transferred approximately 200 acres of land to the BLM that are immediately west of the unfenced North Chokecherry Allotment boundary (see Figure 3). This was in accordance with legislation for the White Pine County Public Lands Bill (PL 109 -432). This portion of land is not within the Highland Ridge Wilderness. The BLM expects to administer and blend this portion of land into the North Chokecherry Allotment. Grazing has been very slight in this area over the past several years. Cattle tend to avoid the area because of dense juniper and pinyon tree growth.

An environmental assessment is also being issued for a grazing permit renewal for Dean Carter and Sons (Operator # 2705027) on the Rattlesnake Allotment (01058). The proposed action would authorize 169 cattle from 10/01 - 05/01 for 1,183 AUMs. This would be a change from the current permit, which sets a season of use until 05/31.

Reasonably Foreseeable Future Actions

It is reasonable to expect that the grazing permit as proposed by this EA would become active and cattle would be permitted to graze the North Chokecherry Allotment. Rangeland monitoring is expected to continue in about the same manner and scope as it has in the past. Monitoring would continue to

evaluate the ecological sites to determine if Rangeland Health Standards and other vegetative objectives are being achieved. Dozens of grazing term permit renewals are expected to be completed each year through 2009 and during subsequent years.

Southern Nevada Water Authority (SNWA) has applied to the BLM for rights-of-way to construct and operate a groundwater development project. The Clark, Lincoln, and White Pine Counties Groundwater Development Project is currently undergoing environmental analysis and is expected to be operational by 2014. The entire North Chokecherry Allotment is within the potential well exploration area for segment 8 (Snake Valley Basin) of the proposed groundwater development project. The number and exact location of water wells and associated pipelines and infrastructure is not known at this time. The scientific community and many individuals have speculated that the groundwater development could lead to drying of the earth surface and a consequent change or loss to the vegetation resource. This would have a direct impact on livestock grazing, soils, vegetation, and wildlife in the allotment. The potential also exists that SNWA well water could become available for livestock in the permit renewal area through agreement between SNWA, BLM, and the livestock permittee. This could improve livestock management and distribute livestock use, resulting in improved ecological health of the native plant communities.

If water wells, pipelines, and associated infrastructure are established and operated in the area of this term permit renewal, then recreational activities would be expected to increase somewhat in the North Chokecherry Allotment. These activities might include primitive camping, trailer camping, OHV use, wood cutting, pinyon nut gathering, hunting, hiking, wilderness exploration, antler collection, and similar activities. There is the likelihood that invasive species spread could occur with the groundwater development project. A noxious weed risk assessment would be prepared for the SNWA project.

Outside of the SNWA project, no other public lands actions are planned for the project area in the near future. There are no anticipated increases in mining, oil & gas development, wind energy testing, woodcutting, pinyon nut gathering, OHV use, hunting, trapping, recreational camping or hiking, horse back riding, or fossil collection in the area in the reasonably foreseeable future.

A new resource management plan and environmental impact statement (RMP/EIS) is currently being developed for the Ely Field Office BLM area. The draft RMP/EIS was sent out for a 120 day public comment and review period, which closed on November 28, 2005. According to the new RMP/EIS, resource management would occur on a watershed basis. The area of the proposed action occurs within the Hamblin Valley Watershed. Broad watershed assessment of this watershed is expected to be accomplished by BLM within the next ten years. The assessment will determine if further changes in grazing management practices are needed to conform with the Standards and Guidelines for Rangeland Health. The assessment may also recommend sagebrush restoration treatments or other vegetative treatments designed to maintain or improve ecological health.

Cumulative Impacts Conclusion

No cumulative impacts of major concern are anticipated in the near future to resource values as a result of the proposed project in combination with any other past, current, or reasonably foreseeable future projects or activities. There should be no noticeable overall changes to the affected environment. Implementation of the proposed action would continue to achieve Rangeland Health Standards. As the

SNWA groundwater project gets underway, rangeland monitoring of the ecological sites is expected to intensify to determine if project development and aquifer pumping events have an effect on resource values in the area.

V. PROPOSED MITIGATING MEASURES

Appropriate mitigation has been included as part of the proposed action (mitigation measures for weeds are identified in the Noxious Weed Risk Assessment in Appendix 3). No additional mitigating measures are proposed based on this environmental analysis.

VI. SUGGESTED MONITORING

Appropriate monitoring has been included in the proposed action. No additional monitoring has been suggested by the BLM interdisciplinary team at this time.

VII. CONSULTATION AND COORDINATION

Public Interest and Record of Contacts

There is a general public interest in the proper grazing management of public lands. Dean Carter has a strong interest in this grazing permit renewal.

On July 20, 2006 the Dean Carter Term Permit Renewal proposal was presented to a Tribal coordination meeting at the Ely BLM Field Office. No concerns were identified during this meeting. There were no questions or comments regarding the proposal from the Tribal participants. On June 19, 2006 the project was presented to the Ely BLM internal scoping team and no issues were identified.

A scoping letter was mailed to interested publics and the grazing permittee regarding the permit renewal action in September of 2006, requesting comments by October 11. A letter was also sent to the Fillmore District BLM in September regarding the permit renewal. No comments have been received to date concerning these letters. A project summary of this term permit renewal was posted on the BLM external website in November, 2006. No comments have been received to date regarding the posting. Another coordination letter was mailed to Dean Carter dated February 14, 2007, requesting participation in the range monitoring and the permit reinstatement process.

This preliminary EA will be posted for a thirty day public review and comment period on the Ely BLM external website. A hard copy of the EA will also be mailed to those interested publics who have requested it, and who have expressed an interest in range management actions on the North Chokecherry Allotment. Changes in the EA based upon public input will be made as appropriate.

Interested publics will again be notified by mail or e-mail when the final EA is completed and the Decision Record/Finding of No Significant Impact (DR/FONSI) is signed. These documents will also be mailed to interested publics that have requested a hard copy. The signed DR/FONSI initiates a 15 day protest period and a 30 day appeal period.

Before including addresses, phone numbers, e-mail addresses, or other personal identifying information

in comments, you should be aware that the entire comment – including personal identifying information- may be made publicly available at any time. While you can ask us in your comment to withhold your Before including addresses, phone numbers, e-mail addresses or other identifying information in personal identifying information from public review, we cannot guarantee that we will be able to do so.

The Ely Field Office mails an annual Consultation, Cooperation, and Coordination (CCC) Letter to individuals and organizations that have expressed an interest in rangeland management related actions. Those receiving the annual CCC Letter have the opportunity to request from the Field Office more information regarding specific actions. Those requesting notification of range improvement actions are requested to respond if they want to receive a copy of the final EA and signed Decision Record/Finding of No Significant Impact. The following individuals and organizations, who were sent the annual CCC letter in January 2007 or January 2006, have requested additional information regarding rangeland related actions or programs within the North Chokecherry Grazing Allotment:

Curtis A. Baughman, Nevada Division of Wildlife
Steven Carter
Peter Ford
Steve Foree, Nevada Division of Wildlife
Lincoln County Commissioners
Curt Leet
Betsy Macfarlan, ENLC
Cindy MacDonald
John McLain, Resource Concepts, Inc.
Nevada State Clearinghouse
Western Watersheds Project, Katie Fite

Record of Personal Consultation and Coordination

Dean Carter, Minersville, Utah
Rodney Carter, Minersville, Utah

B. Internal District Review

Steve Leslie	Wilderness
Dave Jeppesen	Recreation, Visual Resources
Mark Lowrie	Rangeland Resources/ Environmental Coordination/ Noxious Weeds/Wildlife
Bonnie Waggoner	Noxious Weeds
Elvis Wall	Native American Religious Concerns
Carolyn Sherve-Bybee	Environmental Coordination
Susan Howle/Sheri Wysong	Environmental Coordination
Brad Pendley/Steve Abele	Wildlife/T&E Species/Riparian/Migratory Birds
Lisa Gilbert/Joshua Hopper	Cultural Resources
Melanie Peterson	Hazardous and Solid Wastes
Kari Harrison	Soil/Water/Air
Gary Medlyn	Watershed Assessment
Kyle Hansen	Environmental Coordination

Appendix I
STANDARDS DETERMINATION DOCUMENT
Dean Carter Term Permit Renewal
North Chokecherry Allotment
EA NV-040-06-043

Standards and Guidelines Assessment

Standards and Guidelines for Grazing Administration were developed by the Northeastern Great Basin Area Resource Advisory Council (RAC) and approved by the Secretary of the Interior on February 12, 1997. Standards and Guidelines reflect the stated goals of improving rangeland health while providing for the viability of the livestock industry, all wildlife species and wild horses and burros in the Northeastern Great Basin Area. Standards are expressions of physical and biological conditions required for sustaining rangelands for multiple uses. Guidelines point to management actions related to livestock grazing for achieving the Standards.

This Standards Determination Document evaluates and assesses livestock grazing management achievement of the Standards and conformance with the Guidelines for the North Chokecherry Allotment (20134), in the Ely District BLM. This document does not evaluate or assess achievement of the Wild Horse and Burro or Off Highway Vehicle Standards or conformance to the respective guidelines. The North Chokecherry Allotment encompasses approximately 8,700 public land acres and is the permitted grazing allotment for the Dean Carter Term Permit Renewal (Operator # 2704431). The North Chokecherry Allotment has been classified by Land Use Planning Documents as a category “C” (custodial) allotment.

Standards for Rangeland Health were assessed by a BLM interdisciplinary team on January 31, 2007 on the North Chokecherry Allotment. The interdisciplinary team (consisting of Rangeland Management Specialists, Wildlife Biologist, Weeds Specialist, Archaeologists, Watershed Specialist, Wilderness Specialist, and others) utilized several scientifically based documents and official publications to complete the assessment. These documents include the Eastern White Pine County Soil Survey (USDA-SCS), Ecological Site Descriptions (USDA-SCS 1994), Interpreting Indicators of Rangeland Health (USDI-BLM et al. 2000), Sampling Vegetation Attributes (USDI-BLM et al. 1996), the Nevada Rangeland Monitoring Handbook (USDA-SCS et al. 1984), and The National Range and Pasture Handbook (USDA NRCS 2003). A complete list of references is included as Appendix IV to the Environmental Assessment.

The interdisciplinary team also used rangeland monitoring data, professional observations, and photographs to assess achievement of the Standards and conformance with the Guidelines.

Two key grazing areas on native range within the allotment were monitored during the summer of 2006. Key Area NC-01 was established in June 1999. Key Area NC-02 was established in March 2002. These key areas of salt desert shrub range, as well as other areas of the allotment, have been monitored for many years. The key areas have been selected based on accessibility, representative soils and ecological (range) sites, livestock use patterns, and permittee input. Ecological condition studies, vegetation cover studies, and key forage plant method utilization transects (KFPM) were completed at

each key area during the summer of 2006. Photographs were taken and professional observations noted. KFPM transects were also completed at other representative areas of the allotment in 2006, 2004, and 2002 (see monitoring data summary in Appendix I to this SDD).

“Standard Riparian Functioning Condition Checklists” (USDI-BLM 2000) have not been completed for the North Chokecherry Allotment, since there are no public land riparian systems present on the allotment. Livestock use of the allotment is dependent on water hauling to troughs.

All scientifically based documents and rangeland monitoring data are available for public inspection at the Ely Field Office during business hours.

The following Rangeland Health Standards information has been incorporated into Environmental Assessment NV-040-06-043.

PART 1. STANDARD CONFORMANCE REVIEW

Standard # 1. Upland Sites

Upland soils exhibit infiltration and permeability rates that are appropriate to soil type, climate and land form.

Soils indicators:

- ❖ Canopy and ground cover, including litter, live vegetation and rock, appropriate to the potential of the site.

Determination:

X Achieving the Standard

- Not achieving the Standard, but making significant progress towards
- Not achieving the Standard, not making significant progress towards

Guidelines Conformance:

X In conformance with the Guidelines (See Part 3. Guideline Conformance Review – p. 27)

- Not in conformance with the Guidelines

Conclusion:

Standard achieved. Vegetation cover studies, ecological condition studies, utilization studies, photographs, and professional observations indicate the majority of the allotment is achieving the Upland Sites Standard. Canopy and ground cover, including litter, live vegetation, and rock, are appropriate to ecological site potential. Utilization has been in conformance with the Guidelines for Rangeland Health and is within the range that scientific literature and experience indicates should allow for recovery. Key forage utilization accomplished in both salt desert shrub range (028AY012NV) and black sagebrush range (028AY013NV) has been generally moderate or less during the assessment

period. This promotes litter to stabilize upland sites. Biological crusts are present and there is no indication of excess compaction or trampling of soils. Both Key Areas are on landform slopes less than 5%. Mild slopes are contributing to stable soil conditions.

Standard #2. Riparian and Wetland Sites

Riparian and wetland areas exhibit a properly functioning condition and achieve State water quality criteria

This Standard was not evaluated since there are no public land riparian systems present in the North Chokecherry Allotment.

Standard #3. Habitat

Habitats exhibit a healthy, productive, and diverse population of native and/or desirable plant species, appropriate to the site characteristics, to provide suitable feed, water, cover and living space for animal species and maintain ecological processes. Habitat conditions meet the life cycle requirements of threatened and endangered species.

Habitat indicators:

- ❖ Vegetation composition (relative abundance of species); vegetation structure (life forms, cover, height, or age classes); vegetation distribution (patchiness, corridors); vegetation productivity; and vegetation nutritional value.

Determination:

X Achieving the Standard

- Not achieving the Standard, but making significant progress towards
- Not achieving the Standard, not making significant progress towards

X In conformance with the Guidelines (See Part 3. Guideline Conformance Review – p. 27)

- Not in conformance with the Guidelines

Conclusion:

Standard achieved. Ecological condition studies, vegetation cover studies, utilization studies, precipitation studies, photographs, and professional observations indicate the majority of the allotment is achieving the Habitat Standard. Vegetation composition and productivity are appropriate to the ecological site potential. Vegetation distribution is good to excellent in this allotment. Key forage utilization accomplished in both salt desert shrub range (028AY012NV) and black sagebrush range (028AY013NV) has been generally moderate or less during the assessment period. The ecological processes of the hydrologic cycle, nutrient cycle, and energy flow are being maintained. The majority of the allotment remains in a stable, resilient, ecologically healthy state, and has not transitioned or crossed a threshold to range dominated by shrubs or by invasive annual grasses or other introduced species. Although monitoring data indicates the shrub composition to be above the appropriate shrub

composition for the ecological site (NC-01, 2006), the shrubs are not overly dominant. Native species are diverse. Vegetation nutritional value has not been monitored for.

The presence of cheatgrass is a concern in this allotment. The fine fuels of cheatgrass could lead to a wildfire disturbance in salt desert shrub range that would result in elimination of native plants from this ecological site. Cheatgrass control measures (e.g. herbicide) may be appropriate for this allotment in the future.

PART 2. ARE LIVESTOCK A CONTRIBUTING FACTOR TO NOT MEETING THE STANDARDS?

Standard # 1. Soils.

No. The Upland Sites Standard for stable soils and hydrologic function is being achieved.

Standard # 2. Riparian and Wetland Sites

No. This Standard is not applicable to the North Chokecherry Allotment, since there are no public land riparian systems on the North Chokecherry Allotment.

Standard # 3. Habitat

No. The Habitat Standard is being achieved.

PART 3. GUIDELINE CONFORMANCE REVIEW

GUIDELINES:

1.1 Management practices will maintain or promote upland vegetation and other organisms and provide for infiltration and permeability rates, soil moisture storage, and soil stability appropriate to the ecological site within management units.

1.2 When grazing practices alone are not likely to restore areas of low infiltration or permeability, land management treatments should be designed and implemented where appropriate.

1.3 Management practices are adequate when significant progress is being made toward this Standard.

Current livestock grazing management practices conform with Guidelines 1.1 and 1.3. Guideline 1.2 is not applicable to the assessment area at this time.

GUIDELINES:

3.1 Management practices will promote the conservation, restoration, and maintenance of habitat for threatened and endangered species, and other special status species as may be appropriate.

3.2 Intensity, frequency, season of use and distribution of grazing use should provide for growth and reproduction of those plant species needed to reach long-term land use plan objectives. Measurements of ecological condition and trend/utilization will be in accordance with techniques identified in the Nevada Rangeland Monitoring Handbook.

3.3 Grazing management practices should be planned and implemented to allow for integrated use by domestic livestock, wildlife, and wild horses consistent with land use plan objectives.

3.4 Where grazing practices alone are not likely to achieve habitat objectives, land treatments may be designed and implemented as appropriate.

3.5 When native plant species adapted to the site are available in sufficient quantities, and it is economically and biologically feasible to establish or increase them to meet management objectives, they will be emphasized over non-native species.

3.6 Management practices are adequate when significant progress is being made toward this Standard.

Current livestock grazing management practices conform with Guidelines 3.2, 3.3, and 3.6. Guidelines 3.1, 3.4, and 3.5 are not applicable to the assessment area at this time.

VEGETATION MANAGEMENT GUIDELINES

Current livestock management practices are in conformance with Salt Desert Shrublands Guideline # 1 which states:

“Grazing should generally be limited to very early season grazing or dormant season rather than year round. If very early season grazing is permitted or prescribed to control cheatgrass early in spring, grazing should be terminated early enough to allow perennial plant species to set seed.”

PART 4. MANAGEMENT PRACTICES TO CONFORM WITH GUIDELINES AND ACHIEVE STANDARDS

1. Maintain the current season of use for cattle grazing from 10/15 to 5/15.
2. Maintain the current stocking level of 110 cattle for 770 AUMs.
3. An allowable use level will be established as 45% of the current year's growth by weight for the key native species Indian ricegrass and whitesage in the North Chokecherry Allotment. Utilization will be measured at established key grazing areas or other sites representative of the dominant vegetation in the use area.
4. Rotate temporary water haul locations each year the allotment is grazed.
5. Salt blocks and nutritional supplements will be located at least ¼ mile away from temporary water haul locations. Supplement locations should be moved every year.
6. Coordinate with the grazing permittee on an annual basis to implement grazing management practices that (a) maintain sufficient residual vegetation and litter, (b) promote attainment or maintenance of proper functioning condition, and (c) meet desired plant physiological and reproductive requirements.

Prepared by:

Mark Lowrie, Rangeland Management Specialist

Date

Reviewed by:

Chris Mayer, Lead Rangeland Management Specialist

Date

I concur:

William E. Dunn
Assistant District Manager
Renewable resources

Date

Standards Determination Document
Appendix I
Monitoring Data for the North Chokecherry Allotment

Findings: *Monitoring data results describing current resource conditions for Key Areas and study sites in the North Chokecherry Allotment as they relate to the above Upland Sites Standard and soils indicators are as follows:*

The North Chokecherry Allotment occurs within Major Land Resource Area (MLRA) 028A, the Great Salt Lake Area. The major Soil Mapping Unit (SMU) in the allotment is a 1388, an Eastmore – Summermute - Ursine Association. Both Key Areas in the allotment occur within this SMU. This SMU represents about 90% of the land area of the allotment. The Loamy 5-8” ecological site (NC-01 and NC-02) commonly occurs with ecological sites 028AY013NV (Eastmore) and 028AY018NV (Summermute), which are the two major ecological sites associated with the 1388 SMU.

Table 1. Vegetation Canopy and Ground Cover Data, North Chokecherry Allotment

Key Area/ Date	Vegetative Canopy Cover/Litter	Biological Surfaces	Soil Compaction/ Infiltration
NC-01/ 6/30/06	12.69 feet/ 5.76 feet	Present	No compaction
NC-02/ 6/30/06	27.96 feet/ 2.28 feet	Present	No compaction

Utilization of Indian ricegrass for the 2006 grazing year was 43% at Key Area NC-01 on June 30, 2006. Utilization of winterfat was 54%. Ricegrass in the utilization cage was dry, without much green growing beneath cured forage. Ricegrass was of fair vigor, with green leaves to 5”. Winterfat in the utilization cage was of good vigor to 6” high. Cheatgrass was very common in the area. Utilization of Indian ricegrass was 38% at Key Area NC-02 on June 30, 2006. Utilization of winterfat was 52%. Soils were observed to be stable with biotic crusts in place. Cheatgrass was abundant in the area.

Overall in the allotment, soils were observed to be stable. Soil surfaces were stabilized by litter and organic matter. Biotic crusts such as lichens and mosses were present. Soils were not compacted, indicating appropriate infiltration and percolation of water. Generally, native plants were not pedestalled, indicating minimal wind or water erosion of topsoil. The invasive non-native annual grass cheatgrass was present and common at both Key Areas NC-01 and NC-02. The frequency or size of rocks was not recorded.

The canopy and ground cover at the two upland Key Grazing Areas in the North Chokecherry Allotment were found to be similar to the potential of the ecological site. Both Key Areas NC-01 and NC-02 are located within a Loamy 5-8” P.Z. Ecological Site (028AY012NV). Shadscale, bud sagebrush, and Indian ricegrass dominate the plant community. Approximate ground cover (basal and crown) is 15 to 25 percent. This compares to 13 percent at NC-01 and 28 percent at NC-02. Key Area NC-01 is located on a 5% slope and Key Area NC-02 is located on a 0% slope. Mild slopes contribute to stable soil conditions.

Forage Utilization – North Chokecherry Allotment

A summary of 9 Key Forage Plant Method Utilization Transects (KFPM) conducted in the North Chokecherry on June 30, 2006 for grazing use by herbivores up to that point in the 2006 grazing year beginning in November, 2005 indicated moderate or less use of the key forage species winterfat, and light or less use of the key forage species Indian ricegrass.

A Use Pattern Map (UPM) was created for the allotment in April, 2004, following grazing use by cattle beginning in November, 2003 and ending April 15, 2004. The map was based on 14 KFPM transects. Photos were taken at Key Areas. The following Table summarizes the UPM results, listing the acres by use class:

Table 2. Number of acres of herbivory utilization according to use class. North Chokecherry Allotment 2003/2004.

Allotment	Slight (0-20%)	Light (21-40%)	Moderate (41-60%)	Heavy (61-80%)
North Chokecherry	1,000 acres	3,000 acres	3,900 acres	800 acres

Professional observations noted on the KFPM utilization forms indicated the following vegetation conditions on April 22, 2004:

1. Cheatgrass was estimated to compose about 5% by weight of the current annual plant community production in black sagebrush range 0.3 miles into the north portion of the allotment. Fair green up on Orhy, Stco.
2. At transect #4, a good component of Sandberg’s bluegrass was noted. A mixture of black sagebrush range and salt desert shrub range was present.
3. At transect #5, the plant community was observed to be stable & resilient. Forbs & wildflowers were in bloom. A good forb component was present, especially *Stanleya pinnata*. Slight use of Orhy.
4. At transect #6, the same stable, resilient situation as in other parts of the allotment was observed. Black sagebrush was not increasing relative to other shrubs & perennial grasses. Cheatgrass was “patchy” in the area and producing about 10% of the annual plant community production.
5. At transect #8 in black sagebrush range, light use was observed from the transect area to south to the allotment boundary.
6. At Key Area NC-01 (transect #10), Indian ricegrass inside the utilization cage was of excellent cured and new vigor to 15” tall. New growth was to 5” tall.
7. At transect #11, Orhy was sparse in occurrence, winterfat was used slight to light, and native grasses were used moderate to heavy.
8. At transect #12 along the power line road, the salt desert shrub range was observed to be fairly resilient. Some halogeton (invasive species) was present.
9. At transect #14, in salt desert shrub range, a good perennial grass and winterfat component was noted.

A summary of 11 KFPM transects conducted in the North Chokecherry Allotment on May 7, 2002 for grazing use by herbivores up to that point in the 2002 grazing year beginning in November, 2001 indicated slight and light use of the key forage species winterfat, and slight or less use of the key forage species Indian ricegrass.

Professional observations noted on the KFPM transect forms for May, 2002 were similar to the observations noted above for 2004.

Livestock use has averaged 623 AUMs the five years the allotment was grazed from 1999 through 2005 (seven years). Complete voluntary non – use was taken on the allotment during 2000/2001 and 2002/2003, primarily due to drought conditions. Licensed use ranged from a high of 697 AUMs in 2005 to a low of 447 AUMs in 1999. Current active permitted use on the North Chokecherry Allotment is 770 AUMs. The grazing permittee has

cooperated with BLM to voluntarily remove the livestock from the allotment earlier than the May 15 off date more than once during the 1999 – 2005 timeframe.

Findings: *Monitoring data results describing current resource conditions for Key Areas and study sites in the North Chokecherry Allotment as they relate to the above Habitat Standard and habitat indicators are as follows:*

The ecological condition table on page 8 and Table 3 on page 9 indicate that a healthy composition and diversity of native shrubs, grasses, and forbs is present at each key area and throughout the allotment. The native vegetation is mixed with the invasive annual grass cheatgrass. The presence of cheatgrass in native ecological sites has become a common condition through many allotments and watersheds in the Ely District.

The canopy and ground cover at the two upland Key Grazing Areas in the North Chokecherry Allotment were found to be similar to the potential of the ecological site. This indicates a healthy vegetation cover and structure. Variation in the height and age class of native plants was noted. Normal year plant production averages 300 lbs. per acre for the Loamy 5 – 8” ecological site, and unfavorable year production averages about 200 lbs. per acre. Production at Key Areas NC-01 and NC-02 was less than the normal year average for the 2006 and 1999 growth years. These were below average precipitation years.

Professional observation indicates vegetation distribution (patchiness, corridors) to be appropriate in this area. The vegetation composition changes along the elevation gradient and plant communities are separated by rolling hills on the east benches of the Snake Range. There is a mosaic and a “mix” of plant communities and ecological sites, including sites dominated by shadscale, black sagebrush, greasewood, and winterfat. Pinyon and juniper trees and associated understory species are scattered through the upper elevations of the allotment. There are many travel corridors present for grazing animals in the washes and drainage bottoms between the hills. Escape cover is present for grazing animals in these areas. Little information is available on nutritional value of the available forage in the area, however it is assumed that the native plant diversity is adequate to sustain animal needs, even in the winter period.

Ecological Processes

Direct measures of the status of ecological processes are difficult or expensive to measure due to the complexity of the processes and their interrelationships. Therefore, biological and physical attributes are often used as indicators of the functional status of ecological processes and site integrity. Based on the positive vegetative attributes of the allotment as presented by monitoring data, the hydrologic cycle, nutrient cycle, and energy flow are being maintained. In addition to range monitoring data, qualitative observations and professional judgment indicate ecological processes are adequate for the vegetative communities.

Although cheatgrass is present in the allotment, the ecological sites within this allotment are not transitioning to plant communities dominated by shrubs or by invasive, non-native plant species. A healthy herbaceous component is present, with a soil that has biological crusts in place. Although monitoring data indicates the shrub composition to be above the appropriate shrub composition for the range site (NC-01, 2006), the shrubs are not overly dominant. The plant communities remain in a stable state, resilient, and somewhat resistant to invasive species spread.

In coordination with the FWS and NDOW, it was determined that no threatened or endangered species or special status species or their habitats occur in the project area.

Ecological Condition

Ecological condition data for the North Chokecherry Allotment was gathered and reviewed for key areas on June 30, 2006 and June 22, 1999. The data is summarized below:

North Chokecherry Allotment– Ecological Condition Summary

Study Site	Ecological Site	Location	Dominant Vegetation	Percent Native Shrubs	Percent Native Grass	Percent Native Forbs	Trend	Similarity* Index	Production** Lbs./acre
NC-01 6/30/06	028AY012NV	N: 4297088 E: 752374	Shadscale Indian ricegrass Bud sagebrush	91.2%	8.8%	0.0%	Not apparent	61%	193
NC-02 6/30/06	028AY012NV	N: 4298958 E: 754061	Shadscale Indian ricegrass Bud sagebrush	48.8%	4.7%	46.5%	Not apparent	45%	170
NC-01 6/22/99	028AY012NV	N: 4297088 E: 752374	Shadscale Indian ricegrass Bud sagebrush	53.6%	37.3%	9.0%	Not apparent	56%	166

* The similarity index is a numerical value given to the resemblance between current vegetative composition & production and the ecological site potential composition & production. The closer the numerical value is towards 100, the more the current vegetative condition resembles site potential.

** Production in lbs. per acre is a measure of the production of all native species recorded at the Key Area within the ecological site. Normal year production for the Loamy 5-8" site is 300 lbs. per acre. Unfavorable year production is 200 lbs. per acre.

At NC-01 on 6/22/99 cheatgrass produced 112 lbs. per acre. Production for the site including cheatgrass was 278 lbs. per acre.

At NC-01 on 6/30/06 cheatgrass produced 5 lbs. per acre. Production for the site including cheatgrass was 198 lbs. per acre.

At NC-02 on 6/30/06 cheatgrass made up a trace of plant community production.

A combination of all of the range monitoring studies accomplished in the allotment over the last few years indicate a diversity of native upland vegetation is present in the allotment. The following table lists the native upland plant species that have been observed in the allotment:

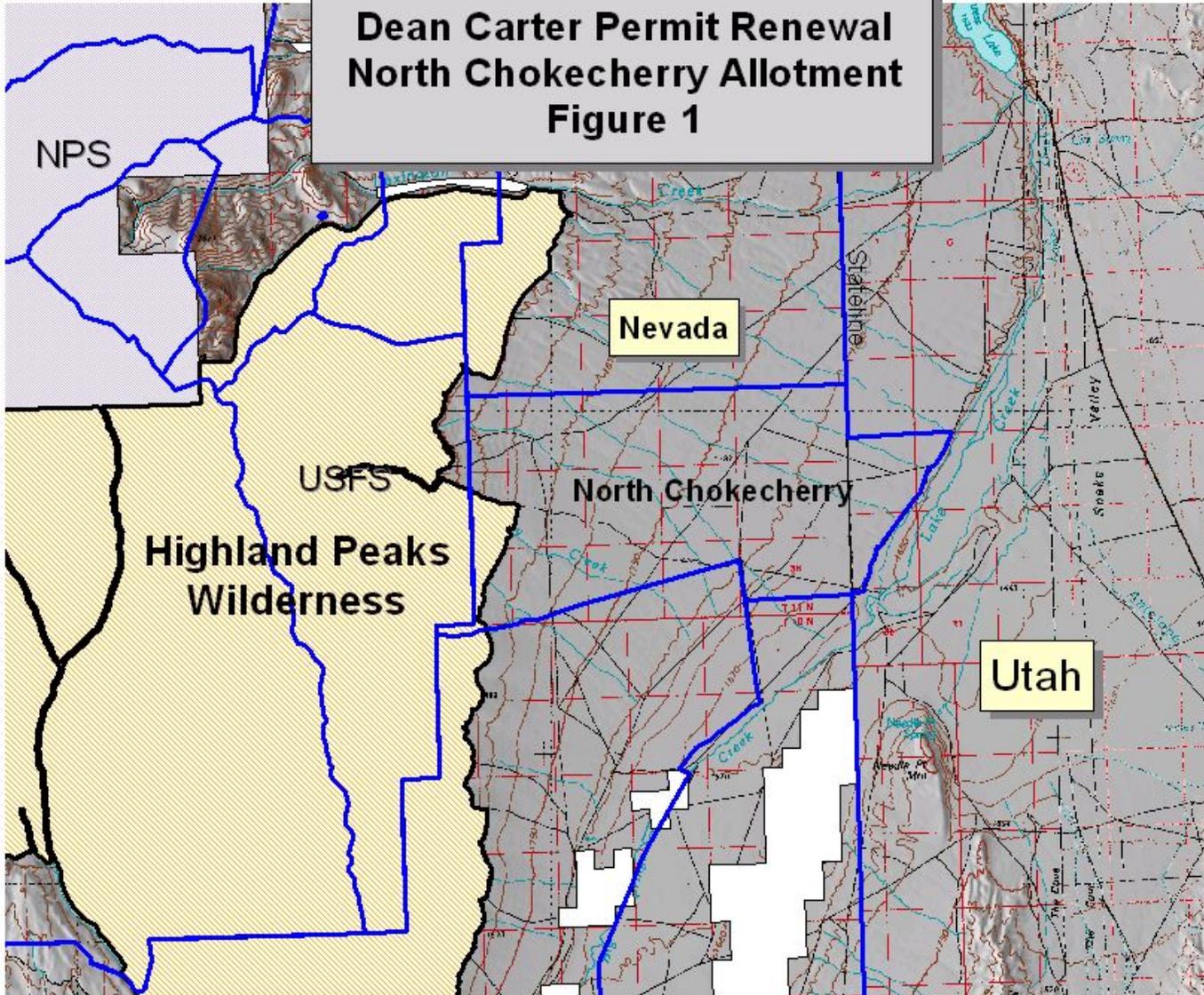
Table 3. Native Plant Species - Chokecherry Allotment – Grasses, Forbs, and Shrubs

Common Name	Symbol	Common Name	Symbol
Indian ricegrass	Orhy	Indian paintbrush	Casti2
Needleandthread	Heco26	Prince's plume	Stanl
Galleta grass	Hija		
Squirreltail grass	Sihy	Black sagebrush	Arno4
Bluegrass	Poa	Shadscale	Atco
Sand dropseed	Spcr	Winterfat	Eula5
Threeawn grass	Arist	Bud sagebrush	Arsp5
		Greasewood	Save4
Globemallow	Sphae	Mormon Tea	Epne
Penstemon	Penst	Douglas rabbitbrush	Chvi8
Eriogonum	Eriog	Fourwing saltbush	Atca2
Phlox	Phlox	Broom Snakeweed	Gusa2
Loco (milkvetch)	Astra	Horsebrush	Tetra3
Aster	Aster	Spiny hosage	Grsp

The following precipitation data by year is presented for the Ely Weather Station (Yelland Field) as summarized by the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration. The precipitation totals are for crop year precipitation, or that moisture (including snow) measured from September through June. This is effective moisture for plant growth. The average crop year precipitation for the Ely Station for the thirty year period 1977 – 2006 is 8.44 inches. Eight of the ten years listed below are below this average. This represents drought conditions.

Year	Crop Year Precipitation
1997	7.83
1998	10.00
1999	7.18
2000	6.70
2001	5.26
2002	4.42
2003	6.88
2004	5.45
2005	12.20
2006	8.32

Dean Carter Permit Renewal North Chokecherry Allotment Figure 1

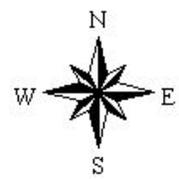


- II. Chokecherry Allotment
- BLM Wilderness
- Landstatus**
- BLM
- USFS
- NPS
- BIA
- FWS
- DOD
- PK
- HVT
- WTR
- PVT

NV -040 5/04/07



No Warranty is made by the Bureau of Land Management as to the accuracy, reliability, or completeness of the data for individual use or aggregate use with other data.



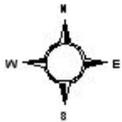
State of Nevada



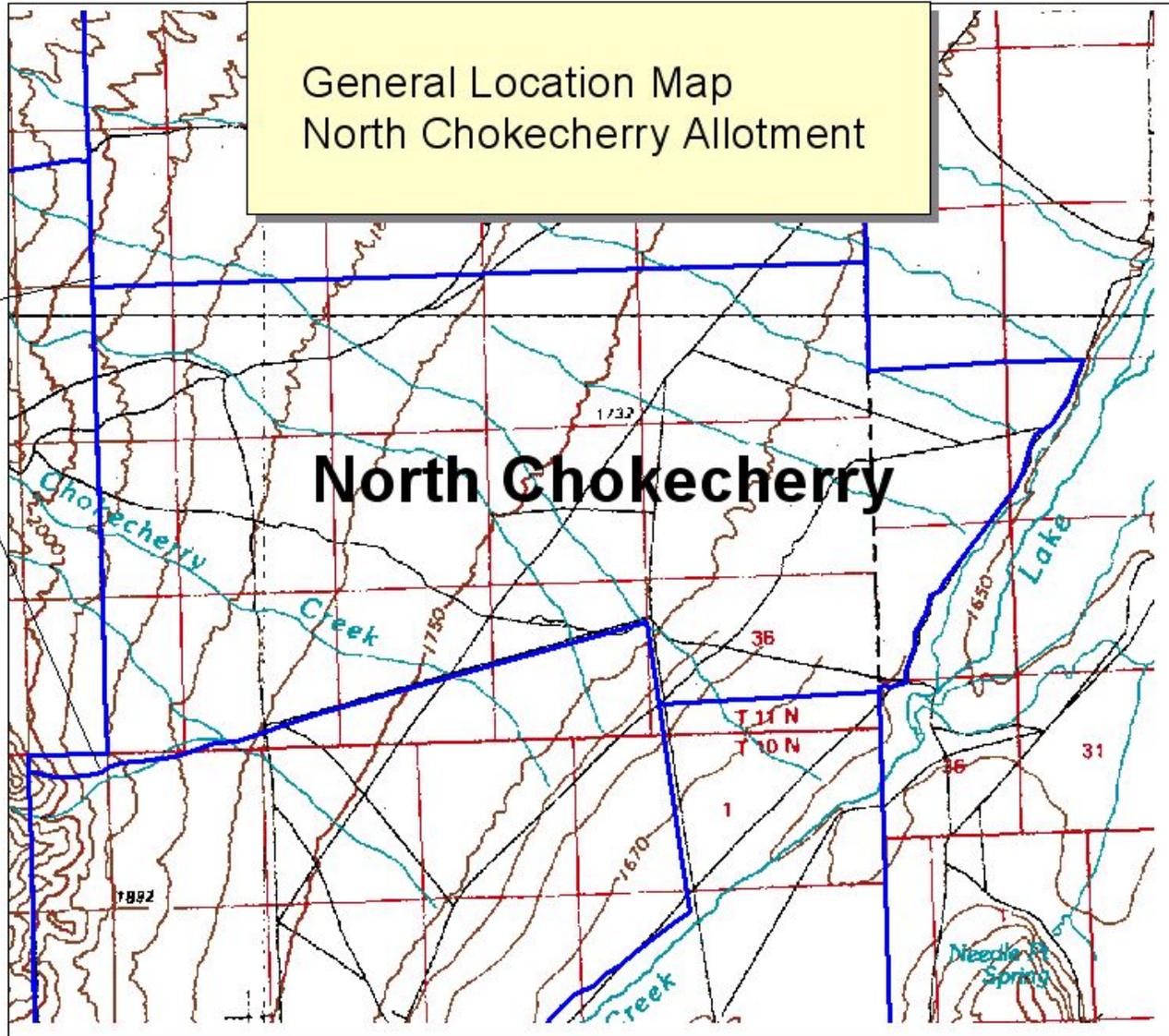
 N. Chokecherry Allotment



THE BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT IS AN EQUAL OPPORTUNITY AGENCY. IT IS THE POLICY OF BLM TO EMPLOY AND PROMOTE THE EMPLOYMENT OF MINORITY GROUPS AND WOMEN. BLM IS AN AFFIRMATIVE ACTION EMPLOYER. BLM IS AN EQUAL OPPORTUNITY AGENCY. IT IS THE POLICY OF BLM TO EMPLOY AND PROMOTE THE EMPLOYMENT OF MINORITY GROUPS AND WOMEN. BLM IS AN AFFIRMATIVE ACTION EMPLOYER.



General Location Map North Chokecherry Allotment



2 0 2 4 Miles

**Appendix II
Grazing Permit Terms and Conditions**

Terms and Conditions of Authorized Use - Dean Carter Permit

Allotment Number Name	Livestock Number/Kind	Grazing Period		% Public Land	Type Use	AUMs
		Begin	End			
20134 North Chokecherry	110 Cattle	10/15	05/15	100	Active	774

The allotment summary is as follows:

Allotment	Active	Voluntary		Total
		Non-use		
20134 North Chokecherry	770	0		770

Terms and Conditions:

In accordance with 43 CFR 4130.3-2, the following terms and conditions will be included in the grazing permit for Dean Carter on the North Chokecherry Allotment:

Stipulations Common To All Allotments:

1. Livestock numbers identified in the term grazing permit are a function of seasons of use and permitted use for each allotment. Deviations from those livestock numbers and seasons of use may be authorized on an annual basis where such deviations would not prevent attainment of the Multiple-Use Objectives for the allotment.
2. Deviations from specified grazing use dates will be allowed when consistent with Multiple-Use Objectives. Such deviations will require an application and written authorization from the authorized officer prior to grazing use.
3. Pursuant to 43 CFR 10.4 (G) the holder of this authorization must notify the authorized officer by telephone, with written confirmation, immediately upon discovery of human remains, funerary objects, sacred objects, or objects of cultural patrimony (as defined at 43 CFR 10.2). Further, pursuant to 43 CFR 10.4 (C) and (D), you must stop activities in the immediate vicinity of the discovery and protect it from your activities for 30 days or until notified to proceed by the authorized officer.
4. The authorized officer is requiring that an actual use report (Form 4130-5) be submitted within 15 days after completing your annual grazing use.
5. The payment of your grazing fees is due on or before the date specified in the grazing bill. This date is generally the opening date of your allotment. If payment is not received within 15 days of the due date, you will be charged a late fee assessment of \$25 or 10 percent of the grazing bill, whichever is

greater, not to exceed \$250. Payment with Visa, MasterCard or American Express is accepted. Failure to make payment within 30 days of the due date may result in trespass action.

6. Grazing use will be in accordance with the Northeastern Great Basin Area Standards and Guidelines for grazing administration as developed by the Northeastern Great Basin Resource Advisory Council and approved by the Secretary of the Interior on February 12, 1997. Grazing use will also be in accordance with 43 CFR Sub-part 4180 - Fundamentals of Rangeland Health and Standards and Guidelines for Grazing Administration.

7. If future monitoring data indicates that Standards and Guidelines for Grazing Administration are not being met, the permit will be reissued subject to revised terms and conditions.

Additional Terms and Conditions:

1. An allowable use level will be established as 45% of the current year's growth by weight for the key native species Indian ricegrass and whitesage in the North Chokecherry Allotment. Utilization will be measured at established key grazing areas or other sites representative of the dominant vegetation in the allotment.
2. Temporary water haul locations will be determined by the authorized officer and will be rotated each year the allotment is grazed.
3. Salt blocks and nutritional supplements will be located at least ¼ mile away from temporary water haul locations. Supplement locations should be moved every year.
4. BLM and Dean Carter will work together on an annual basis to identify livestock management practices to be implemented for each year in the North Chokecherry Allotment. Annual grazing may be modified from the terms and conditions listed above in consideration of climatic conditions or other conditions such as drought, forage availability, wildfire locations, and/or other factors, as long as vegetative objectives are met. Grazing use will be in accordance with Standards and Guidelines for Rangeland Health. Grazing management practices should (a) maintain sufficient residual vegetation and litter, (b) promote attainment or maintenance of proper functioning condition, and (c) meet desired plant physiological and reproductive requirements.
5. The permittee is required to perform normal maintenance on the range improvements that have been or will be issued through approved cooperative agreements or section 4 permits.
6. During the ten year period of this term permit renewal, the BLM and Dean Carter will monitor the North Chokecherry Allotment for resource conditions in order to determine the effectiveness of the term permit renewal in achieving or making progress towards achieving the Standards for Rangeland Health. Dean Carter will be encouraged to participate in the monitoring. Rangeland monitoring may be conducted both prior to and following annual use. Monitoring conducted prior to annual use will determine areas of forage availability and cattle stocking levels. Monitoring conducted following grazing use will determine utilization levels and use patterns. Specific rangeland monitoring studies could include cover studies, ecological condition studies, key forage plant method utilization transects, use pattern mapping, frequency trend, observed apparent trend, professional observation, and photographs.
7. No motorized access is permitted within the designated Highland Ridge Wilderness without approval of the field manager. Motorized access may be permitted for emergency situations, or where practical alternatives for reasonable grazing management needs are not available and such motorized use would not have a significant adverse impact on the natural environment.

**Appendix III
Noxious Weed Risk Assessment
Dean Carter Term Permit Renewal**

On June 30, 2006 a Noxious Weed Risk Assessment was completed for a proposed grazing term permit renewal, located on public lands in White Pine County, Nevada and Millard County, Utah, within the Ely Field Office Area and Fillmore Field Office Area Bureau of Land Management. The proposed term permit renewal occurs in north Hamblin Valley within the North Chokecherry Grazing Allotment. The permit renewal covers approximately 8,700 acres of public land. The legal location of the term permit renewal area is as follows:

- T. 11N., R. 70E., all or portions of Sections 20 -36 (White Pine County, Nevada)
- T. 23S., R. 20W., portions of Sections 24, 25 (Millard County, Utah)
- T. 23S., R. 19W., a portion of Section 19 (Millard County, Utah)

The two main vegetation types within the North Chokecherry Allotment are salt desert shrub and black sagebrush ecological sites. The dominant vegetation consists of black sagebrush, Indian ricegrass, needleandthread grass, shadscale saltbrush, galleta grass, and winterfat.

A tour and field inspection for noxious weeds and invasive species was conducted on June 30, 2006. Photographs of the term permit renewal area were taken during the field inspection. The field inspection included that portion of the allotment located in Utah.

Factor 1 assesses the likelihood of noxious weed species spreading to the project area.

None (0)	Noxious weed species are not located within or adjacent to the project area. Project activity is not likely to result in the establishment of noxious weed species in the project area.
Low (1-3)	Noxious weed species are present in the areas adjacent to but not within the project area. Project activities can be implemented and prevent the spread of noxious weeds into the project area.
Moderate (4-7)	Noxious weed species located immediately adjacent to or within the project area. Project activities are likely to result in some areas becoming infested with noxious weed species even when preventative management actions are followed. Control measures are essential to prevent the spread of noxious weeds within the project area.
High (7-10)	Heavy infestations of noxious weeds are located within or immediately adjacent to the project area. Project activities, even with preventative management actions, are likely to result in the establishment and spread of noxious weeds on disturbed sites throughout much of the project area.

For this project, the factor rates as moderate (4) at the present time. No noxious weed species are located within the project area, as verified by field inspection and the Ely Field Office Weeds Inventory. The Ely Weeds Inventory (Weedpoints_012607) indicates that there is one small population of salt cedar (Tamarix spp.) approximately 1.5 miles to the south of the North Chokecherry Allotment. Noxious weeds may be present on private ground in the Burbank Meadows to the east of the allotment. The invasive non-native annual grass cheatgrass (Bromus tectorum) is present in the allotment. The invasive species halogeton (Halogeton glomeratus) is also present in the allotment and along access roads. The invasive species Russian thistle (Salsola kali) also occurs in small scattered populations in the allotment.

The term permit renewal could result in the establishment of noxious weeds in the term permit renewal area. The proposed term permit renewal could also result in the spread and establishment of halogeton, cheatgrass, mustard, or halogeton.

Factor 2 assesses the consequences of noxious weed establishment in the project area.

Low to Nonexistent (1-3)	None. No cumulative effects expected.
Moderate (4-7)	Possible adverse effects on site and possible expansion of infestation within the project area. Cumulative effects on native plant communities are likely but limited.
High (7-10)	Obvious adverse effects within the project area and probable expansion of noxious weed infestations to areas outside the project area. Adverse cumulative effects on native plant communities are probable.

For this term permit renewal, the factor rates as low (3) at the present time. This means that there are no expected cumulative effects to native plant communities. There is minor possibility of noxious weeds being carried in to the area by normal size pickup trucks or by equipment used for water hauling. Minor adverse effects of noxious weeds becoming established are possible.

The Risk Rating is obtained by multiplying Factor 1 by Factor 2.

None (0)	Proceed as planned.
Low (1-10)	Proceed as planned. Initiate control treatment on noxious weed populations that get established in the area.
Moderate (11-49)	Develop preventative management measures for the proposed project to reduce the risk of introduction of spread of noxious weeds into the area. Preventative management measures should include modifying the project to include seeding the area to occupy disturbed sites with desirable species. Monitor the area for at least 3 consecutive years and provide for control of newly established populations of noxious weeds and follow-up treatment for previously treated infestations.
High (50-100)	Project must be modified to reduce risk level through preventative management measures, including seeding with desirable species to occupy disturbed site and controlling existing infestations of noxious weeds prior to project activity. Project must provide at least 5 consecutive years of monitoring. Projects must also provide for control of newly established populations of noxious weeds and follow-up treatment for previously treated infestations.

For this term permit renewal, the Risk Rating is moderate (12) at the present time. Preventive management measures for noxious weeds should be developed to prevent spread of noxious species into the term permit renewal area. These measures (mitigation) are as follows:

1. Trucks and other heavy equipment used in water hauling activity will be washed prior to entering the project area.
2. Dean Carter and BLM will watch for and report or eradicate any small noxious weed patches in the project area.
3. The range specialist for the North Chokecherry Allotment will include weed detection into normal rangeland monitoring activities.
4. The term permit renewal area will be monitored for noxious weeds for at least three consecutive years following renewal of the permit.

The term permit renewal can proceed as planned. Control treatments would be initiated on noxious weed populations that establish in the area.

Reviewed by: _____ Date: _____

Appendix IV - List of References

REFERENCES TO ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT AND STANDARDS DETERMINATION DOCUMENT

- USDA- NRCS. 2005. Soil Survey of White Pine County, Nevada, East Part. CD Disk.
- USDA-NRCS. 2003. MLRA 28A Great Salt Lake Area Ecological Site Descriptions . Published Journal.
- USDI-BLM. 2000. Interpreting Indicators of Rangeland Health. Version 3. Technical Reference 1734-6. BLM/WO/ST-00/001+1734. National Science and Technology Center Information and Communications Group, Denver, Colorado.
- USDA – SCS, USDA Forest Service, DOI BLM, UNR Reno, USDA ARS and Range Consultants. 1984. Nevada Rangeland Monitoring Handbook.
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- Dietz, Harland H. Grass: The Stockman's Crop How to harvest more of it. 1989. Sunshine Unlimited, Inc.
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- Federal Land Policy and Management Act (FLPMA) 1976. Public Law 94-190.
- National Environmental Policy Act of 1969. Public Law 91 – 190.
- USDI-BLM. Code of Federal Regulations.
- Wilderness Act of 1964. Public Law 88 – 557.
- BLM Manual 8560 - Management of Designated Wilderness Areas.
- BLM Manual 8561 - Wilderness Management Plans.
- Grazing Guidelines (House report no. 101 – 405 Appendix B).
- Migratory Bird treaty Act of 1918.
- Executive Order 13186 (1/11/2001). Concerning migratory birds.
- University of Idaho. Targeted Grazing, a Handbook. 2007.
- USDI BLM. April 2000. The Great Basin: Healing the Land