

## **FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT**

### **Bilk Creek Allotment Grazing Permit Renewal Environmental Assessment DOI-BLM-NV-W010-2011-0007-EA**

I have reviewed the Bilk Creek Allotment Grazing Permit Renewal Environmental Assessment (EA) DOI-BLM-NV-W010-2011-0007-EA, dated May 2013. After consideration of the environmental effects analyzed in the EA, I have determined that the proposed action including terms and conditions analyzed in the EA will not significantly affect the quality of the human environment. Therefore, an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) is not required to be prepared per Section 102(2)(C) of the National Environmental Policy Act.

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

#### **Context:**

The Bilk Creek Allotment is located 12 miles southeast of Denio, Nevada and lies entirely in the Bilk Creek Mountain Range. The allotment ranges in elevation from 4,600 to over 7,800 feet. The lower elevations are dominated by Wyoming big sagebrush and as elevations increase, dominant vegetation changes to low sagebrush, big sagebrush and mountain big sagebrush mixed with bitterbrush, snowberry, mountain mahogany and aspen. The main perennial upland grasses include: bottlebrush squirreltail, Indian ricegrass, basin wildrye, Thurber's needlegrass, bluegrasses, bluebunch wheatgrass and Idaho fescue. Bilk Creek flows in a general north to south direction through the allotment. Total size of the allotment is approximately 44,775 acres.

#### **Intensity:**

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

The EA has considered both beneficial and adverse impacts of the livestock management alternatives. Meeting the allotment specific objectives and Standards for Rangeland Health (SRH) would improve the quality of the human environment as described in the EA.

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

The overall implementation of the proposed action would not affect public health or safety.

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

Based on the environmental analysis of the proposed action, there would be no significant impacts to historic or cultural resources, prime farmlands, wetlands, wild and scenic rivers, and ecologically critical areas. There is habitat for the Greater Sage Grouse. See #9 for discussion. Prime farmlands, park lands and wild and scenic rivers are not present within the allotment.

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

Although grazing as a whole may be controversial to certain interest groups, the BLM has no indication that this action would be controversial to the general public with regards to impacts stemming from the implementation of this proposed action.

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

There are no known effects that would result from implementation of the proposed action, as analyzed in the EA, that would be considered uncertain or involve unique or unknown risks.

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

Implementation of the proposed action does not establish a precedent for future actions with significant effects and does not represent a decision in principle about a future consideration. Any future actions proposed regarding the Bilk Creek Allotment would be subject to National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) compliance.

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

Based on review of the cumulative analysis for the proposed action, no significant cumulative impacts are expected.

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

The proposed action would reduce adverse effects to significant scientific, cultural or historical resources. The proposed action would reduce adverse effects to any district, site, structure, or object listed in or eligible for listing in the NRHP.

9) *The degree to which the action may adversely affect an endangered or threatened species or its habitat that has been determined to be critical under the ESA of 1973.*

The EA has identified one candidate species (Greater sage grouse) in the Bilk Creek Allotment. It is expected that the proposed grazing system will meet the allotment objectives, ultimately resulting in improved/sustained ecological condition. The expected ecological condition should be beneficial to sage grouse.

The BLM requested a species list on July 28, 2011, and received the official list for the project area on August 9, 2011 from the USFWS.

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

Implementation of the proposed action would not violate or threaten to violate any Federal, State, or local law or requirement imposed for the protection of the environment. The permittee is responsible for complying with applicable state, federal, or local laws and regulations and obtaining any necessary permits.

\_\_\_\_|s\ Vern Graham\_\_\_\_\_  
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\_\_\_\_5/16/2013\_\_\_\_\_  
**Date**