Slate Creek AMP
Meeting Notes
January 30, 2013

Notes Compiled and Typed by Spencer Allred (BLM)

In Attendance:
Mary Thoman (via phone line) – Slate Creek Permittee
Patrick Netherly (via phone line) – Consultant for Lincoln County Conservation District
Spencer Allred – BLM Rangeland Management Specialist
Jonathan Ratner (via phone line) – Western Watersheds Project
Kent Connelly – Lincoln County Commissioner
Paul Jenkins – Lincoln County Commissioner
Justin Williams – Wyoming Department of Agriculture
Demont Grandy – Lincoln Conservation District
Jonathan Teichert – Lincoln County Planning and Engineering
Tom Thrash – Private Land Owner (Harrower Ranch)
Blaine Thoman – Slate Creek Permittee (Harrower Ranch)
Truman Julian – Slate Creek Permittee (Julian Land & Livestock)
Laura Pearson – Slate Creek Permittee (Green River Livestock)
Bill Taliaferro – Slate Creek Permittee (Green River Livestock)
Arny Larson – Slate Creek Permittee (Larson Ranch)
Basia Trout – BLM Assistant Field Manager – Resources
Harry Hamilton – Slate Creek Permittee (Harrower Ranch)
Wallace Schulthess – Private Land Owner
Steve Walker – Slate Creek Permittee (Walker Ranch)
Levi Walker – Slate Creek Permittee (Walker Ranch)
Jeromy Caldwell – BLM KFO Field Manager

Minutes:
Spencer Allred opened the meeting by having everyone introduce themselves, including those on the conference line. He then gave a brief outline of where the project is at and where it will be going from here. He stated that the BLM has held a number of meetings seeking input from all interested parties into different aspects of the Slate Creek area. Topics covered thus far include: Management Concerns and Ideas, Water Development, and Monitoring.

Spencer further explained that these meetings have acted as a form of extended scoping for the Slate Creek AMP project. The BLM's purpose in holding these meetings was to allow everyone ample opportunity to provide input into the development of the Slate Creek AMP. The current meeting (January 30, 2013) was designed to be the culmination of the extended scoping process. Spencer explained that the purpose of this meeting was to discuss specific ideas for grazing management, along with the potential advantages and disadvantages of each strategy.

At this point, Spencer introduced three ideas for grazing management that had been suggested thus far. They were: One Herd Rotation, Designated Use Areas, and a combination of the other two options. Spencer then asked if anyone had other ideas for grazing management on the Slate Creek Allotment. No other ideas were presented.

Spencer then created a table to organize the group's thoughts on the advantages and disadvantages of each strategy. A replication of the table is given below:

Grazing Strategy	Advantages	Disadvantages
One Herd Rotation	• Rest • Distribution • Flexibility • Fences	• Climate • Water • Fencing • Comingling • Disease • Breed • Timing of Calving • Herding Costs • Labor Intensive
Separate Use Areas	• Fences • Independence • Less Conflict	• Climate • Water • Fences

Each of the topics listed in the table was discussed in detail. The major points of discussion for each topic are given below:

- One Herd Rotation
    - Advantages
        - Rest
            - Rest rotation and deferred rotation systems can benefit vegetation and other resource conditions on the allotment, by providing periods of rest.
        - Distribution
            - Concentration of livestock within a pasture for a shorter period of time can improve livestock distribution on the allotment. This may facilitate a more uniform utilization pattern throughout the allotment.
        - Flexibility
            - During times of drought, fire, or other such events, this system provides some flexibility for the livestock operators. Wally Schulthess shared that last year (2012) on the Cumberland Allotment, which utilizes a four pasture deferred rotation system, they were able to stay out for their entire permitted season, even though last year was a severe drought year. The 4 pasture system, along with their management plan gave them the flexibility to do that.
            - Spencer mentioned that if a wildfire or a prescribed burn were to occur on the allotment, a four pasture system could allow them to utilize some areas of the allotment while still allowing the burned area to recover.
        - Fences
            - Fences were seen as both an advantage and a disadvantage. Fences are expensive to construct and maintain. They can have an impact on the viewshed and the environment. The presence of multiple national historic trails within the allotment makes large scale fence construction even more challenging. However, fences can be a great tool for livestock management, and can help improve resource conditions. Many in the meeting felt that it was impossible to properly manage cattle without adequate

fencing. However, Jonathan Ratner sent an email to the BLM during the meeting that expressed his belief that herding can be successful in lieu of fencing if the permittees are given the proper incentives to put adequate effort into herding.

- Disadvantages
  - Climate
    - Certain pastures are only usable at certain times of the year, due either to snow load (early in the year) or lack of water (late in the year). This would make a rotation system on Slate Creek difficult.
  - Water
    - Availability of drinkable water was considered by most in the meeting to be the primary limiting factor on the Slate Creek Allotment.
    - Bill Taliaferro expressed concerns that everyone on the allotment was using water on his private land that he put money and effort into, without compensating him. He was also concerned that they over-utilize his private land near these water sources. Because of this, he has fenced some of his water locations out of the allotment, and he stated that he may fence off the rest of it, especially if drought conditions worsen.
    - Many expressed their frustration that they couldn't even go out and maintain existing reservoirs without a cultural clearance and approval from the BLM. Spencer explained that this issue had been discussed in previous meetings and that the BLM was in the process of completing all necessary paperwork in order to approve maintenance of existing reservoirs. Both Kent Connelly and Paul Jenkins expressed that they felt that slow turnaround times on approval of maintenance and construction of water developments in this area was unacceptable.
  - Fencing
    - See discussion under Advantages above.
  - Comingling/Disease/Breed/Timing of Calving
    - Some operators expressed concern over having all livestock combined into one herd. They were concerned that having all animals in 1 herd could lead to issues with disease, breed and timing of calving.
      - Contractible diseases can decimate a livestock operation. The primary concern is the potential spread of Trichomoniasis.
      - If different operators have different purebred operations, then comingling could be detrimental. For example, if one operator runs Black Angus on the allotment, and another runs Herefords, then the intermingling of these two herds could alter the viability of the purebred operation.
      - Some of the operators on the allotment calve at slightly different times. If all livestock were run in one herd, then it would be difficult to maintain these different calving times.

        - Herding Costs/Labor Intensive
            - With a multi pasture rotation system, more herding would be required than has been done on this allotment in the past. If this system were to be implemented without adequate fencing, then herding requirements would increase dramatically.
            - Wally Schulthess discussed how they handled herding on the Cumberland Allotment. They have an association set up that consists of all operators on the allotment. Everyone in the association is required to contribute to herding. If someone fails to be there on the days they are assigned, then the association charges them for the days they missed.
                - Demont Grandy expressed his belief that a grazing association could be very beneficial to the Slate Creek operators, and talked about some of the advantages of it.
- Separate Use Areas
    - Advantages
        - Fences
            - See discussion under Advantages for One Herd Rotation above.
        - Independence
            - Each operator would be able to manage their own area. They would be able to run whatever breed or class of livestock they'd like. They'd have some flexibility within their own operation. It was pointed out in the meeting, however, that the individual operator would also be individually accountable if resource conditions within their use area were not meeting standards.
        - Less Conflict
            - Once there was an agreement on where each operator would run, then conflicts between operators would be minimum. Conflicts in the past have arisen primarily in relation to who gets to utilize a certain area at a certain period of time. Designated use areas would eliminate this concern.
    - Disadvantages
        - Climate
            - Some use areas would only be viable at certain times of the year. Snow loads early in the year, and lack of water late in the year, would make certain areas unusable. During the meeting, there was a lot of conflict over who would get to utilize a given area.
        - Water
            - See discussion under Disadvantages for One Herd Rotation above. The lack of water makes separate use areas a difficult option to implement without new water development. However, this is a concern with either grazing strategy.
        - Fences
            - See discussion under Advantages for One Herd Rotation above.

Following the discussion of the advantages and disadvantages of each grazing management strategy, Spencer had everyone gather around a map of the allotment to get some specific ideas of how each grazing system could be implemented. During that conversation, very little was discussed about how to implement the One Herd Rotation strategy, primarily due to time

constraints, and the difficulty the group had in coming to an agreement on how to implement the Designated Use Area strategy.

During this discussion, many of the issues identified above were talked about again, and in more detail. Some of the discussion that occurred during this time is included in the notes given above, for organizational and convenience purposes.

Throughout the discussions, Justin Williams encouraged the group to focus on a plan that addressed resource and other issues on the allotment. He mentioned that if the plan didn't address the identified issues, then the group was wasting their time. He asked the livestock operators to more clearly identify their issues on the allotment.

The primary controversial discussion topic was water. Many had a hard time determining where they would operate without knowing if water would be developed there. Spencer encouraged them to plan as if water were available, and informed them that if water developments would be necessary to make a specific plan work, then the BLM would include that information in its analysis and decision making process.

In the end, Spencer did a rough sketch on the map describing how each operator would like to function under a Designated Use Area strategy. This involved most cattle coming from their respective ranches, and moving to a common "Cattle Use Area". Arny Larson would operate in the southwest of the allotment, primarily as he comes and goes from another allotment (Colletti). Sheep use would occur on the rest of the allotment.

The meeting ended after there was some agreement on how grazing would be managed under the Designated Use Area strategy.

However, on February 4, 2013, Steve Walker called the BLM and expressed his concern with the Designated Use Area strategy that had been established in the meeting. He felt that the cattle use area was too restrictive, and that the cattle operators were giving up too much of the allotment under this plan.