

**U.S. Department of the Interior Bureau of Land Management  
Lander Field Office  
April 30, 2009**

**Split Rock Holdings, LLC**

**Grazing Permit Renewal - No. 493729**

**for the**

**Diamond Springs Allotment No. 11509**

**Blackjack Ranch Allotment No. 11513**

**North Dobie Flat Allotment No. 11511**

**South Dobie Flat Allotment No. 01512**

**FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT (FONSI)  
ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT (EA) NO. WY 050-EA09-035**

## FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACTS FOR EA NO. WY050-EA09-035

### DECISION: Proposed Decision for the Issuance of Grazing Permit No. 493729 Renewal

#### FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACTS:

I have determined that the proposed project is in conformance with the Lander Field Office Resource Management Plan (1987). Based on a review of the EA and the accepted mitigation measures, I find that this action would not have a significant impact on the quality of the human environment and, therefore, conclude that an environmental impact statement is not required. I have reached this determination after considering the following identified impacts and mitigation measures:

#### Big Game

*Impacts:* The East Sage Hen Creek riparian protection fence would interfere with the movement of big game along and across the riparian area.

*Mitigation:* The East Sage Hen Creek riparian protection fence would be constructed primarily with a buck-and-pole standard to facilitate big game movement and reduce fence maintenance.

*Impacts:* Livestock grazing in late fall and early winter creates competition for forage with big game animals, such as prong-horn antelope, during a critical period of the year.

*Mitigation:* A modified-deferred rotation grazing system would be implemented that considers the needs of big game habitat, including the implementation of specific "rotation indicators" that requires the grazing permittee to rotate into the next pasture or off the allotment once these indicators are reached.

#### Sage-grouse

*Impacts:* The East Sage Hen Creek riparian protection fence would present a collision hazard for sage-grouse and a perch from which raptors may predate upon sage-grouse on the ground (primarily on a lek).

*Mitigation:* The East Sage Hen Creek riparian protection fence would be constructed primarily of wood poles and posts which would make it visible to sage-grouse flying close to the ground. The location of this fence is not close enough to any identified lek to cause a problem with perching raptors.

*Impacts:* Livestock grazing in late fall and early winter uses vegetation (forage) that is needed for sage-grouse nesting habitat in early spring.

*Mitigation:* A modified-deferred rotation grazing system and monitoring plan would be implemented that considers the needs of sage-grouse nesting habitat. The grazing system

includes the implementation of specific "rotation indicators" that requires the grazing permittee to rotate into the next pasture or off the allotment based on grazing use levels.

#### Vegetation/Soil Resources

*Impacts:* Past prolonged, hot-season grazing has impacted riparian/wetland areas through overutilization and trampling which has caused drying and changes in the plant community.

*Mitigations:* Prolonged hot-season grazing would be eliminated in favor of a six-pasture, deferred rotation grazing system that would reduce the number of days in each pasture. This approach will allow time for re-growth of vegetation before fall/winter which will improve forage resources for livestock, as well as, wildlife the following season. The Proposed Decision also includes the establishment of allowable forage use standards for livestock grazing. These standards will be implemented to protect and ensure riparian improvement over time.

*Impacts:* Past grazing management practices have reduced the amount of litter accumulation on upland range sites, thereby reducing the amount of litter that gets incorporated into the soil and is necessary for healthy soil conditions.

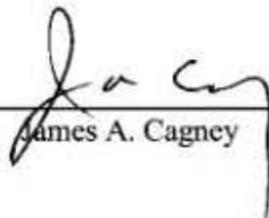
*Mitigations:* A six-pasture, modified-deferred rotation grazing system would be implemented to facilitate improved grazing management on the four Split Rock Allotments. The Proposed Decision includes the establishment of allowable forage use standards for livestock grazing that would increase litter accumulation and improve soil conditions over time.

#### Cultural Resources

*Impacts:* The East Sage Hen Creek riparian protection fence would impact cultural resource sites in the riparian area.

*Mitigations:* The East Sage Hen Creek riparian protection fence would be subject to cultural resource surveys to detect potential impacts before construction could begin. This mitigation would reduce the expected impacts to a level of significance that will allow the BLM to recommend a No Effect determination to the State Historic Preservation Officer.

Field Manager: \_\_\_\_\_

  
James A. Cagney

Date April 30, 2009