

**UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT**

Boise District
Four Rivers Field Office
3948 Development Avenue
Boise, ID 83705

**Scoping Information Package
Four Rivers Field Office**

**Livestock Crossing Permits for the Four Rivers Field Office and
Morley Nelson Snake River Birds of Prey National Conservation Area
Environmental Assessment
DOI-BLM-ID-B010-2012-0008-EA**

The purpose of this letter is to solicit scoping comments for applications requesting Crossing permits to trail livestock across BLM-administered lands managed by the Four Rivers Field Office (FRFO) and the Morley Nelson Snake River Birds of Prey National Conservation Area (NCA). Based on scoping comments; laws; regulations; policy (e.g., 2009 Slickspot Peppergrass Conservation Agreement, greater sage-grouse requirements); and existing National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) documents, including, but not limited to the 1983 Kuna Management Framework Plan, 1987 Jarbidge Resource Management Plan, 1988 Cascade Resource Management Plan, and 2008 Snake River Birds of Prey NCA Resource Management Plan, the FRFO will prepare an environmental assessment (EA) that addresses applications to trail livestock. If the EA process results in a Finding of No Significant Impact, an EIS would not be prepared. In response to scoping comments, additional alternatives to the Proposed Action will be prepared. Please submit scoping comments no later than December 30th, 2011. The target date for completion of the EA is by the end of January 2012.

Purpose and Need for Action

The BLM is required, under the Federal Land Policy and Management Act (FLPMA) and the Taylor Grazing Act to respond to requests for livestock Crossing permits on BLM-administered lands. In many instances, livestock producers must move their livestock to facilitate proper grazing management of BLM grazing allotments, as well as to facilitate movements of livestock to and from private, State, or other federally administered lands.

The purpose of the action is to respond to applications for Crossing permits by identifying areas and terms and conditions for authorizing livestock trailing across BLM-administered lands. Authorizing the livestock trailing, while considering the needs of other resources, would be in accordance with 43 CFR 4130 and 4160, and consistent with the provisions of the Taylor Grazing Act and the FLPMA.

Existing Condition

The FRFO is divided into 317 grazing allotments (294 in the FRFO and 23 in the NCA) on 1,352,000 acres of BLM-administered lands. Livestock grazing use occurs year-round and is administered according to management areas (MAs), which generally follow watershed boundaries. The southern and central portions of rangelands within the FRFO, generally range from lower elevations on the western portions, to higher elevations on the eastern side, and are grazed in the spring, summer, fall, and/or winter. This area includes the Sunnyside, Mountain Home, Bennett Mountain, Boise River, and Big Willow MAs. The western and northern portions are grazed in the spring, summer, and/or fall. This area includes the Snake River Breaks, Weiser River, Goodrich, Indian Valley, and Payette River MAs.

Trailing is defined as the deliberate ambulatory movement of domestic livestock animals controlled by one or more herders, from one location to another across BLM-administered land, or other land under BLM control, for proper and lawful purposes. Livestock crossing is trailing during a specified timeframe, along a defined route, either outside of or within a stock driveway or a designated trail, pursuant to a permit as described in 43 CFR 4130.6-3. Trailing of cattle, sheep, and horses occurs at different times throughout the year to facilitate the general seasons of grazing use. Timing of trailing events may vary annually based on factors such as forage production, drought, resource conditions, weather, wildfire, court decisions, and individual livestock operations. Trailing events across BLM-administered lands in the FRFO have ranged in distance from less than one mile to approximately 60 miles, and in duration from less than one hour to 10 days.

Grazing permittees or other livestock producers needing to trail livestock across BLM-administered lands must submit their applications prior to the proposed trailing. The resulting authorization is documented by a Crossing Permit that specifies the allotment(s) and/or BLM-administered lands to be trailed across, period of use (dates), and number and kind of livestock. In addition, the authorization describes terms and conditions specific to the trailing event, including but not limited to: trail route, minimum distance of travel per day, width of trailing area, and overnight areas. The authorization may also include avoidance areas such as, enclosures, erodible soils, temporarily closed pastures, special status species habitat, recently burned areas, vegetation projects, or perennial or intermittent streams.

Proposed Action

The BLM would issue Crossing permits to qualified applicants authorizing livestock trailing across BLM-administered lands. Livestock trailing would be authorized within 0.125 miles (approximately 660 ft) on either side (total width 0.25 miles) of the proposed trailing routes (Maps 1-5). The numbers, livestock class, dates, and duration identified for each trailing route (available as of December 7, 2011) are summarized in Table 1. Permittees would use non-motorized methods to actively move livestock throughout the day during trailing events. Livestock would be overnighed at designated locations, in an unconfined area or temporary or permanent corrals.

Table 1. Livestock Crossing Permit Applications for 2012, Four Rivers Field Office, Idaho.

Applicant Identification #	Trail ID (Line #)	# of Lvstck	Kind	Start	End	Duration (# of Days on BLM /herd)	AUMs /Trail	# of Allots Crossed
Peterson #BO01012001	1	1 band; 800 hd	S	5/1	5/28	5	26	2
	2	1 band; 800 hd	S	4/1	5/15	5	26	2
	3	1 band; 1,600 hd	S	10/1	12/30	4	42	7
Shirts #BO01012002	1	1-2 bands; 920 hd/band (1,840 total)	S	3/25	4/25	10	121	3
	2	2 bands; 1,700 hd/band (3,400 total)	S	4/15	6/15	12	268	4
	3	2-3 bands; 1,600-1,800 hd/band (5,100 total)	S	10/1	11/10	10	355	5
	4	2-3 bands; 1,600-1,800 hd/band (5,400 total)	S	10/1	1/1	8	284	3
	5	1 band; 1,700 hd	S	10/1	11/1	8	89	4
Shirts #BO01012003	1	1 bands; 1,800 hd	S	5/1	6/30	10	118	2
Shirts #BO01012004	1	2 bands; 1,800 hd/band (3,600 total)	S	10/20	12/1	10	237	2
W. Cada #BO01012005	1	1 herd; 200 hd	C	5/15	6/10	1	7	5
	2	1 herd; 200 hd	C	6/15	6/25	1	7	5
	3	1 herd; 200 hd	C	7/5	7/20	1	7	5
	4	1 herd; 100 hd	C	7/7	7/22	1	7	5
	5	1 herd; 100 hd	C	7/15	7/15	1	3	5
	6	1 herd; 100 hd	C	10/15	11/15	1	3	5
Soulen #BO01012006	1	7 bands; 1,000 -1500 hd/band (8,000 hd total)	S	6/3	6/20	4	210	6
	2	7 bands; 1,000 -1500 hd/band (8,000 total)	S	10/10	10/26	3	158	6

Applicant Identification #	Trail ID (Line #)	# of Lvstk	Kind	Start	End	Duration (# of Days on BLM /herd)	AUMs /Trail	# of Allots Crossed
Soulen #BO01012007	1	4 bands; 1,800-2,400 hd/band (9,000 total)	S	10/22	11/6	3	178	2
	2	4 bands; 1,800-2,400 hd/band (9,000 total)	S	12/14	12/18	2	118	2
	3	4 bands; 1,800-2,400 hd/band (9,000 total)	S	2/27	3/2	2	118	2
	4	4 bands; 1,800-2,400 hd/band (9,000 total)	S	3/1	3/10	3	178	2
Anchustegui #BO01012008	1	2 bands; 600- 1,400 hd/band (2,000 total)	S	3/29	3/31	3	39	4
	2	2 bands; 600- 1,400 hd/band (2,000 total)	S	5/10	6/7	8	105	5
	3	2 bands; 600- 1,400 hd/band (2,000 total)	S	9/15	10/30	9	118	7
	4	2 bands; 600- 1,400 hd/band (2,000 total)	S	10/30	11/15	2	26	3
	5	2 bands; 600- 1,400 hd/band (2,000 total)	S	1/10	1/25	2	26	2
Anchustegui #BO01012009	1	1herd; 150 hd	C	10/30	11/5	2	10	4
	2	1herd; 150 hd	C	5/1	7/2	2	10	5
Aldecoa & Son #BO01012010	1	1 herd; 500 hd	C	11/1	11/15	4	66	7
Double Anchor #BO01012011	1	3-4 herds; with up 200- 250 hd/herd (750 total)	C	4/10	5/31	1	25	8
	2	3-4 herds; 200-250 hd/herd (750 total)	C	11/15	11/30	1	25	7

Applicant Identification #	Trail ID (Line #)	# of Lvstkg	Kind	Start	End	Duration (# of Days on BLM /herd)	AUMs /Trail	# of Allots Crossed
Lord #BO01012012	1	1 herd; 300 hd	C	4/10	4/25	1	10	3
Pearce #BO01012013	1	1 herd; 125 hd	H	11/1	11/30	3	12	9
Chandler #BO01012014	1	1-6 herds; 50-75hd /herd (418 total)	C	4/1	5/1	1	14	1
	2	1-6 herds; 50-75hd /herd (418 total)	C	11/1	11/15	1	14	3
	3	1-6 herds; 50-75hd /herd (418 total)	C	11/15	12/31	1	14	7
N. Law #BO01012015	1	1 herd; 150-200 hd	C	5/10	5/31	3	20	5
	2	1 herd; 150-200 hd	C	10/10	10/31	3	20	4
AL Little #BO01012016	1	1herd; 350 hd	C	8/1	8/15	1	12	3
	2	1herd; 350 hd	C	10/1	10/16	1	12	3
Owen #BO01012017	1	1-5 herds; 80-100 hd/herd (500 total)	C	4/15	8/1	1	16	8
	2	3-4 herds; 200 hd/herd (500 total)	C	5/15	5/26	1	16	8
	3	3-4 herds; 200 hd/herd (500 total)	C	5/26	8/1	2	33	8
	4	6-12 herds; 40-45 hd/herd (500 total)	C	12/1	2/1	1	16	8
	5	1 herd; 500 hd	C	12/26	2/28	1	16	8
McGrew Ranch #BO01012018	1	Up to 500 hd/herd	C	5/10	5/30	1	16	UNK ²
	2	Up to 440 hd/herd	C	10/31	11/30	2	29	UNK ²
	3	Up to 100 hd/herd	C	1/1	2/15	1	3	UNK ²
	4	Up to 150 hd/herd	C	1/1	1/25	2	10	UNK ²
	5.1	Up to 100 hd/herd	C	12/15	2/15	1	3	UNK ²
	5.2	Up to 100 hd/herd	C	3/15	5/25	1	3	UNK ²

Applicant Identification #	Trail ID (Line #)	# of Lvstk	Kind	Start	End	Duration (# of Days on BLM /herd)	AUMs /Trail	# of Allots Crossed
	6	Up to 50 hd/herd	C	5/5	5/25	1	2	UNK ²
Owen #BO01012019	1	1 herd; 300 hd	C	11/1	12/15	1	10	1
	2	1 herd; 300 hd	C	12/26	2/28	1	10	1
TFI #BO01012020		Forthcoming						UNK ²
Nicholson #BO01012021		Forthcoming						UNK ²
Casa Del Norte #BO01012022		Forthcoming						UNK ²

¹ Total herd/band numbers represent maximum numbers requested per trailing event.

² Application sent out and/or expected, not received or completed as of the date of this mailing, actual route and/or terms and conditions to be determined. These applications are not indicated on Maps 1-5.

Preliminary Issues

The FRFO Interdisciplinary Team has identified the following issues through internal scoping:

- Soils – Potential to increase soil erosion in areas recently burned by wildfire and soil compaction when soils are saturated.
- Native Plant Community Health – Potential effects of trailing and grazing to native plant community conditions.
- Noxious Weeds and Invasive Plants – Potential spread of noxious weeds and invasive plants.
- Special Status Plants – Potential impacts to special status plants such as slickspot peppergrass could affect the plants and their habitat.
- Vegetation Treatments – Potential impacts to recent vegetation treatments.
- Sage-grouse – Potential impacts to sage-grouse include disturbance during breeding; reduction of nesting cover or trampling of nests; damage to sensitive habitats such as brood rearing that could result in reduced annual productivity.
- Migratory Birds – Potential impacts to migratory birds during nesting periods.
- Bighorn Sheep – Potential impacts including disease transmission from direct contact between domestic sheep and bighorn sheep.
- Big Game – Potential impacts during fawning/calving and wintering periods.
- Cultural Resources – Potential impacts to archaeological sites.
- Water Quality – livestock activity around springs and riparian areas could affect water quality.
- Wild Horses – Potential displacement of wild horses within the Herd Management Areas.

Preliminary Alternative Development

In addition to the Proposed Action, the following alternatives will be analyzed.

No Action

Crossing permits would not be issued to authorize livestock trailing across BLM-administered lands within the FRFO.

BLM Alternative

The BLM would issue Crossing permits to qualified applicants authorizing livestock trailing across BLM-administered lands based on the following design criteria to minimize adverse resource impacts. In addition, the terms and conditions (e.g., trailing routes, use periods, and methods) of the routes described in the proposed action would be modified where necessary to meet the following design criteria.

- **Wildlife**
 - From March 1 to May 15, trailing routes would be at least 0.5 miles from occupied sage-grouse leks, where possible. If this is not feasible, trailing events would be timed to occur between 9:00 am and 6:00 pm.
 - From March 1 to May 15, overnight areas would be located at least one mile from occupied sage-grouse leks.
 - From April 1 to June 15, temporary water troughs would not be placed in sagebrush habitat, to avoid impacts to nesting sage-grouse. If this is not feasible, previously disturbed sites would be used such as areas around stock ponds or troughs, established seedings, or shrub-free sites.
 - From April 1 to June 15, overnight areas would not be located in sagebrush habitat. If this is not feasible, previously disturbed sites would be used such as areas around stock ponds or troughs or in past seedings, or other grassland sites.
 - From April 1 to June 15, trailing routes would avoid sagebrush habitats, to the extent practical, to minimize potential impacts to nesting sage-grouse.
 - From June 1 to November 30, sage-grouse leks may be used for overnight areas or temporary water sites to maintain shorter vegetation for the lek.
 - Trailing routes would be designed to avoid occupied pygmy rabbit habitat.
 - From February 1 to July 31, trailing routes would be at least 0.5 miles from canyon rims to avoid impacts to nesting golden eagles.
 - From March 1 to July 31, trailing routes would avoid known ferruginous hawk nests.
 - Domestic sheep or goat trailing would be not be allowed in known bighorn sheep population areas (core habitat) and designed to minimize contact with bighorn sheep in other areas.
 - From April 15 to June 15, trailing routes would avoid bighorn sheep lambing areas.
 - From May 1 to June 30, trailing routes would avoid big game calving and fawning areas.

- From November 15 to April 30, trailing routes would be identified to minimize disturbance of wintering big game.
- Areas used for staging vehicles, horse trailers, fence panels, etc. would avoid sagebrush areas. If this is not feasible, previously disturbed sites would be used such as areas around stock ponds or troughs, established seedings, or shrub-free sites.
- Slickspot Peppergrass - (*Lepidium papilliferum*)
 - Appropriate conservation recommendations identified by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) in any biological opinion prepared for proposed trailing activities would be incorporated into the authorization(s).
 - Trailing activities would not be authorized within occupied slickspot peppergrass habitat when soils are saturated (BLM-FWS Conservation Agreement, 2009, p. 9).
 - Trailing, overnighing, or watering would not be authorized within 0.5 miles of occupied element occurrences (EOs, BLM-FWS Conservation Agreement, 2009, pp. 12-13).
 - New watering sites would not be authorized within one mile of occupied EOs.
 - Trailing through Proposed Critical Habitat would be authorized consistent with maintaining the Primary Constituent Elements through timing, duration, and range readiness limitations.
 - Timing, duration, and range readiness limitations would be considered where practicable when authorizing trailing in potential or identified slickspot peppergrass habitat.
- Special Status Plants
 - Trailing would be avoided where it has the potential to affect occupied special status plant habitat.
- Vegetation
 - Trailing routes would avoid areas recently burned by wildfire, where possible.
 - Trailing routes would avoid recent vegetation treatments (emergency stabilization and rehabilitation, fuels reduction, or restoration treatments), to the extent possible.
 - Trailing routes would be located, or timed, to minimize the potential spread of noxious weeds.
- Riparian
 - Bedding or overnight areas would be at least 0.25 miles from riparian areas.
 - Temporary water facilities would be placed at least 0.25 miles from riparian areas.
 - Trailing across riparian areas and live streams would be restricted to pre-determined locations.
- Cultural

- Trailing would be routed at least 0.25 miles from canyon rims and live streams to minimize impacts to cultural resources. Canyon and stream crossings would be restricted to pre-determined locations.
- Trailing would be routed to avoid playas.
- Trailing would not follow Scenic and Historic trails when practical. Trailing would be routed at least 200ft away from Scenic and Historic trails when routes are parallel.
- Recreation
 - Trailing would not be allowed in developed recreation sites.
 - Trailing would not follow existing recreation trails when practical.
- Soils
 - Trailing would not be authorized when soils are saturated to minimize impacts to soils.
 - Trailing routes would occur on roadways/designated travel routes, when practical.
- Wild and Scenic Rivers
 - Trailing within suitable Wild and Scenic river corridors would be avoided.
- Travel Management and Off Highway Vehicles
 - Motorized vehicles would remain on existing vehicle routes. Cross country use of motorized vehicles would not be authorized.

Decision to be Made

The BLM will decide whether or not to approve individual Crossing permits to authorize livestock trailing across BLM-administered lands in the FRFO as described in the requests, with associated terms and conditions, as deemed necessary by the Authorized Officer.

Scoping Comments

Written scoping comments must be submitted to Terry Humphrey, Four Rivers Field Manager, 3948 Development Avenue, Boise, ID 83705, by December 30, 2011. Business hours for submitting hand-delivered comments are 8:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Monday through Friday, excluding federal holidays. Electronic comments must be submitted in one of the following formats: email message, plain text (.txt), rich text (.rtf), Word (.doc), or portable document format (.pdf) to matthew_mccoy@blm.gov. E-mails submitted to addresses other than the one listed, in other formats than those listed, or containing viruses will be rejected. To be most helpful, comments sent electronically should include the title of this project "FRFO Livestock Crossing Permits EA" in the subject line. Please identify whether you are submitting comments as an individual or as the designated spokesperson on behalf of an organization. Issues that are outside the scope of the proposal will not be addressed in the FRFO Livestock Crossing Permits EA.

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

Attachments

Map 1. Proposed Livestock Trailing Routes – Overview, Four Rivers Field Office, Idaho BLM

Map 2. Proposed Livestock Trailing Routes (northwest portion), Four Rivers Field Office, Idaho BLM

Map 3. Proposed Livestock Trailing Routes (north-central portion), Four Rivers Field Office, Idaho BLM

Map 4. Proposed Livestock Trailing Routes (southwest portion), Four Rivers Field Office, Idaho BLM

Map 5. Proposed Livestock Trailing Routes (southeast portion), Four Rivers Field Office, Idaho BLM