

**United States Department of the Interior
Bureau of Land Management**

Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI)

Jarbidge Field Office Livestock Trailing EA

Environmental Assessment DOI-BLM-ID-T010-2012-0004-EA

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I have reviewed the Council on Environmental Quality Regulations (CEQ) for significance (40 CFR 1508.27) and have determined the actions analyzed in Environmental Assessment (EA) No. DOI-BLM-ID-T010-2012-0004-EA (incorporated here by reference) will not have any significant impact, individually or cumulatively, on the quality of the human environment. Because the actions analyzed in the EA will not have any significant impact, an environmental impact statement is not required.

My finding was made after considering both the context and intensity of the effects, as described in the above EA.

Context: The disclosure of effects in the EA found the actions limited in context. Effects are local in nature and would not significantly affect regional or national resources. The EA was prepared with input from interested parties.

Intensity: There is no evidence that the severity of impacts is significant. I considered the following factors in determining significance:

1. The activities described in the proposed action and action alternatives of EA No. DOI-BLM-ID-T010-2012-0004-EA do not include any significant beneficial or adverse impacts (40 CFR 1508.27(b)(1)), as described below:

- a. There are no significant beneficial or adverse impacts of the proposed action or action alternatives to the applicants for crossing permits. Without authorization to trail, crossing applicants may have to use means other than trailing to get their livestock to or from BLM grazing allotments; as well as to and from private, state, or other federally administered lands for which they hold a valid grazing authorization, permit, or lease.
- b. There are no significant beneficial or adverse effects of the proposed action or action alternatives of EA No. DOI-BLM-ID-T010-2012-0004-EA on BLM special status species. For example:
 - i. Effects to redband trout will be localized and short-term in duration. Design features (EA, pages 6-8) will reduce potential impacts and there are no significant effects expected (EA, pages 74-84).
 - ii. Design features (EA, pages 6-8) specific to protecting sage-grouse and sagebrush habitats would decrease the potential for impacts to pygmy rabbits. Trailing routes will avoid occupied pygmy rabbit habitat to the extent possible. Design features will reduce potential impacts and there will be no measureable impact to pygmy rabbits (EA, pages 85-97).
 - iii. The trailing corridors of the proposed action and action alternatives do not include any occupied or proposed critical slickspot peppergrass habitat. Design features (EA, pages 6-8) will help reduce impacts to slickspots in potential habitat, and potential adverse impacts will be too small to be meaningfully measured (EA, pages 66-71).
 - iv. Effects on other special status plants will be negligible as no special status plants are documented to occur within the trailing corridors. If special status plants are found to occur within trailing corridors, design features (EA, pages 6-8) will be

used to avoid populations. Even then, the impacts will be too small to be meaningfully measured within the project area (EA, pages 66-71).

- v. Effects on other special status wildlife are anticipated to be negligible. The impacts are too small to be meaningfully measured within the project area and design features (EA, pages 6-8) will reduce any potential impacts (EA, pages 84-97).

2. The activities included in the proposed action and action alternatives will not significantly affect public health or safety (40 CFR 1508.27(b)(2)). The majority of livestock trailing will occur along and adjacent to roads. The public may occasionally encounter livestock on roads during trailing activities; however, these encounters will not significantly affect public health and safety because the number of encounters along roads is expected to be low and the duration of the encounters will be limited in time. Furthermore, livestock trailing has occurred throughout this area for several decades and is not a new or unusual event that the public will encounter.

3. The proposed action and action alternatives will not significantly affect any unique characteristics (40 CFR 1508.27(b)(3)) of the geographic area such as prime and unique farmlands, caves, wild and scenic rivers, designated wilderness areas, wilderness study areas, or areas of critical concern.

No prime and unique farmlands, caves, or wilderness study areas are found within the trailing corridors. Two trailing routes along existing roads are proposed through one wilderness area (Bruneau-Jarbidge Rivers Wilderness), one Wild and Scenic River (Bruneau River), one eligible Wild and Scenic River (East Fork Jarbidge River), and one ACEC (Bruneau-Jarbidge River ACEC). The routes under consideration have been used for many years and are located on existing roads. Additionally, these trailing events are short in duration. Therefore, impacts to Wilderness, Wild and Scenic River, Eligible Wild and Scenic River, and ACEC will be negligible and cannot be measured or meaningfully analyzed.

4. The activities described in the proposed action and action alternatives do not involve effects on the human environment that are likely to be highly controversial (40 CFR 1508.27(b)(4)). Livestock trailing is a routine activity and the effects of livestock trailing are well understood as described in Chapters 3 and 4 of the EA No. DOI-BLM-ID-T010-2012-0004-EA. In the development of the EA, the BLM solicited comments from affected permittees and interested publics. Comments in response to these scoping efforts did not reveal any controversy related to the size, nature, or effects of livestock trailing activities.

5. Livestock trailing does not involve any effects that are highly uncertain or involve unique or unknown risks (40 CFR 1508.27(b)(5)). Livestock trailing has occurred throughout this area for several decades, and the effects are well understood. The EA (Chapter 3, Affected Environment and Chapter 4, Environmental Consequences) discloses the expected environmental effects on the human environment; no unique or unknown risks have been identified.

6. My decision to authorize livestock trailing does not establish a precedent for future actions with significant effects or represent a decision in principle about a future consideration (40 CFR 1508.27(b)(6)). No significant cumulative impacts were identified within the EA No. DOI-BLM-

ID-T010-2012-0004-EA. Implementation of any alternative considered in this EA will not trigger other actions, nor will it represent a decision in principle about future considerations.

7. The effects of livestock trailing will not be significant, individually or cumulatively, when considered with the effects of other actions (40 CFR 1508.27(b)(7)). The EA discloses that there are no other connected or cumulative actions that will cause significant cumulative impacts (Chapter 3, Affected Environment and Chapter 4, Environmental Consequences). The EA contains specific design features (EA, pages 6-8) that will be used to lessen the potential environmental effects of the proposed action or action alternatives. The cumulative effects analysis in the EA (Chapter 4, Environmental Consequences) does not reveal any known significant cumulative effects. Any impacts identified as a result of livestock trailing, when added to any impacts of other past, present, or reasonably foreseeable future actions will result in negligible to minor impacts to natural and cultural resources.

8. I have determined that the activities described in the proposed action or action alternatives will not adversely affect or cause loss or destruction of significant scientific, cultural, or historical resources, including those listed in or eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places (40 CFR 1508.27(b)(8)). Based on the trailing activities, including watering, bedding and overnighting, an Area of Potential Effects (APE) for cultural resources was identified. Past inventory efforts within the APE were reviewed to identify sites that may be affected by the trailing activities. Where needed, additional field inventories for cultural resources were completed. The EA (pages 117-120) discloses that trailing activities are expected to have minimal effects on archaeological, historic, and cultural properties. Consultation with the State Historic Preservation Office was initiated in December 2011, and will be completed in association with individual crossing permits before issuance of a decision.

9. The BLM completed formal Endangered Species Act (ESA) consultation with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) for livestock trailing on the Wilkins Island and Seventy-One Desert Allotments. The FWS supported the BLM's "likely to adversely affect" determination due to the potential for localized but unavoidable short-term impacts to bull trout and/or designated critical habitat during the spring and fall livestock crossings of the East Fork Jarbidge River and Bruneau River in Biological Opinion (FWS BO) FWS # 01EIFW00-2012-F-0092. However, FWS's BO concluded that livestock trailing was not likely to destroy or adversely modify designated critical habitat and would not jeopardize the survival or recovery of bull trout populations (FWS BO). Therefore, no significant adverse impacts to bull trout or their critical habitat would occur.

- a. The BLM completed formal ESA consultation with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) for livestock trailing on the Wilkins Island and Seventy-One Desert Allotments. Harassment or displacement of individual bull trout will be localized and short term in duration and will be minimized by design features (EA, pages 6-8). Impacts to bull trout habitat will be short-term in duration and habitat conditions are expected to return to baseline conditions. Project design features (EA, pages 6-8) will minimize impacts to bull trout habitat. No significant adverse impacts to bull trout or their habitat were identified in the EA No. DOI-BLM-ID-T010-2012-0004-EA or during consultation with the FWS.

- b. There are no significant beneficial or adverse impacts of the proposed action or action alternatives on candidate species for listing under the ESA.
- i. There may be minimal impacts to individual greater sage-grouse during the breeding and nesting periods; however, design features (EA, pages 6-8) will minimize those impacts. Livestock trailing outside the breeding and nesting periods are expected to have negligible impacts to sage-grouse, as trailing will mainly occur along roads (EA, pages 84-97).
 - ii. Only a single population of Columbia spotted frog, is known to occur within the project area on a portion of Rocky Creek Canyon. No trailing corridors occur within occupied habitat, and there will be no impacts to Columbia spotted frog (EA, page 22).

10. The trailing activities will not threaten any violation of Federal, State, or local law or requirements imposed for the protection of the environment (40 CFR 1508.27(b)(10)).

Chapter 1 of the EA (see Relationship to Statutes, Regulations, and Other Plans), describes how trailing activities conform to relevant laws, regulations, policies, and any relevant local permitting requirements.



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11/16/12

Date