



United States Department of the Interior

BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT

Boise District Office

3948 Development Avenue

Boise, Idaho 83705

<http://www.blm.gov/id/st/en/fo/bruneau.html>



In Reply Refer To: 4120

Dear Interested Public:

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 Bruneau Field Office (BFO). Trailing is the deliberate ambulatory movement of domestic livestock animals controlled by one or more herders, from one location to another across public land, or other land under Bureau of Land Management 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.

Based on scoping comments, laws, regulations, policy (e.g., greater sage-grouse requirements, etc.) and existing National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) documents, including but not limited to the Bruneau-Kuna Grazing Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) Final (1982) and Bruneau Management Framework Plan of 1983 (MFP), the BFO will prepare an Environmental Assessment (EA; DOI-BLM-ID-B020-2012-0003-EA) that addresses the applications to trail livestock.

BFO proposes to prepare an environmental assessment that analyzes three alternatives:

1. The Proposed Action as requested in the permittees' applications for crossing permits (Alternative A);
2. The No Action Alternative, under which no crossing permits would be issued for livestock trailing (Alternative B); and
3. An alternative that identifies routes from the permittees' applications and additional routes as available for livestock trailing subject to design criteria (Alternative C).

In response to scoping comments, additional alternatives to the Proposed Action of the EA may be prepared. Please submit scoping comments and any pertinent information about trailing no later than December 30, 2011. The target date for completing the EA is the end of January 2012.

For the EA, we have compiled the following preliminary information:

Purpose and Need for Action

Purpose: To determine if and under what conditions requests from qualified applicants for livestock trailing across BLM-administered lands would be permitted.

Need: BLM is required under the Federal Land Policy and Management Act and the Taylor Grazing Act to respond to applications for livestock trailing across BLM-administered lands.

Background

To date, BFO has received applications for crossing permits from 10 permittees (Table 1; Map 1). Applications are for trailing of cattle at different times throughout the year to facilitate seasons of grazing use on private, State, BLM, and National Forest lands. Trailing ranges in distance from less than 1 mile to approximately 35 miles and in duration from less than 1 hour to several days.

Crossing permits would specify the allotment(s) to be trailed across, the trailing period of use (dates), and the number and kind of livestock. In addition, crossing permits would have terms and conditions specific to the trailing event, including but not limited to the trail route, minimum distance of travel per day, and, if needed, over-night (bedding) locations. Individual crossing permits may include, but are not limited to, avoidance areas such as habitat for threatened, candidate, and other special status species; exclosures and temporarily closed pastures; recently burned areas; and vegetation projects.

Proposed Action – Alternative A

The BLM proposes to issue 3 year term crossing permits to qualified applicants authorizing the trailing of livestock across BLM-administered lands in the BFO. Livestock trailing would be authorized within 1/8 mile on either side of trailing routes depicted on Map 1. The total trailing corridor width would be 1/4 mile. Detailed maps of each individual operator’s proposed trailing are available through https://www.blm.gov/epl-front-office/eplanning/nepa/nepa_register.do¹. The dates and durations of trailing and the numbers and class of livestock identified for each trailing route are summarized in Table 1.

Table 1. Crossing Permit Application Information Grouped by Applicant

MAP NUMB.	ALLOTMENT NAMES	LIVESTOCK		TIME FRAME		DURATION	METHOD
		NUMB.	KIND	BEGIN	END		
John Anchustegui							
2	Battle Creek	250	Cattle	3-28	4-15	1 days	Horse
2	Battle Creek	250	Cattle	3-28	4-15	1 days	Horse
3	East Castle Creek Battle Creek	250	Cattle	9-15	11-15	2 days	Horse
3	East Castle Creek Battle Creek	250	Cattle	9-15	11-15	2 days	Horse
Joseph Black & Sons							
4	Northwest	1,100	Cattle	3-28	5-20	18 days	Horse
5	Battle Creek East Castle Creek West Castle Creek	1,100	Cattle	3-15	5-21	9 days	Horse

¹See detailed web access instructions at the bottom of Table 1. If you are unable to view the detailed maps on the website, you may request that hard copies of the maps be sent to you.

Table 1. Crossing Permit Application Information Grouped by Applicant

	ALLOTMENT NAMES	LIVESTOCK		TIME FRAME		DURATION	METHOD
		NUMB.	KIND	BEGIN	END		
6	Battle Creek East Castle Creek West Castle Creek	1,100	Cattle	11-1	12-20	12 days	Horse
David Lahtinen							
7	Northwest	204	Cattle	10-1	10-10	2 days	Horse and motorized
Chester Sellman							
7	Northwest	113	Cattle	10-1	10-10	2 days	Horse and motorized
John Urquidi							
7	Northwest	66	Cattle	10-1	10-20	2 days	Horse and motorized
Mary's Creek LLC							
8	Blackleg/Bull Creek Trap	265	Cattle	6-27	7-5	3 days	Horse
8	Blackleg/Bull Creek Trap	265	Cattle	10-20	11-1	3 days	Horse
9	Blackleg/Bull Creek Trap	265	Cattle	6-27	7-5	3 days	Horse
9	Blackleg/Bull Creek Trap	265	Cattle	10-20	11-1	3 days	Horse
JR Simplot Company dba Wickahoney Cattle Company							
10	Center China Creek	400	Cattle	5-1	5-20	2 days	Horse and motorized
10	Center China Creek	375	Cattle	5-10	5-20	2 days	Horse and motorized
10	China Creek	700	Cattle	10-25	11-10	1 day	Horse and motorized
10	Center	700	Cattle	11-20	12-10	1 day	Horse and motorized
11	Blackstone Highway Field	775	Cattle	6-1	6-15	1 day	Horse and motorized
11	Blackstone Highway Field	400	Cattle	10-15	10-27	1 day	Horse and motorized
11	Blackstone Highway Field	375	Cattle	10-25	11-5	1 day	Horse and motorized
12	Tindall Reservoir Field, Bull Creek West Bull Creek	775	Cattle	6-15	7-1	1 day	Horse and motorized
12	Tindall Reservoir Field, Bull Creek West Bull Creek	775	Cattle	10-20	10-25	2 days	Horse and motorized
Simplot Livestock Company							
13	Antelope Field	650	Cattle	6-7	6-21	1 day	Horse and motorized
Strickland YT Ranch							

Table 1. Crossing Permit Application Information Grouped by Applicant

MAP NUMB.	ALLOTMENT NAMES	LIVESTOCK		TIME FRAME		DURATION	METHOD
		NUMB.	KIND	BEGIN	END		
14	Trout Creek Highway Field	260	Cattle	7-13	7-17	2 days	Horse
14	Trout Creek Highway Field	184	Cattle	11-22	11-25	2 days	Horse
15	Louse Creek	260	Cattle	6-3	6-6	2 days	Horse
16	Louse Creek	184	Cattle	12-4	12-8	2 days	Horse
Tindall & Sons Ranches LLC							
17	Blackstone	400	Cattle	4-1	4-20	8 days	Horse
17	Sheep Creek SE	400	Cattle	1-1	1-10	1 day	Horse
17	Blackstone	150	Cattle	2-24	3-5	1 day	Horse
17 ^A	Sheep Creek SE	75	Cattle	2-1	2-10	1 day	Horse
17 ^A	Sheep Creek SE	75	Cattle	1-1	1-10	1 day	Horse
17 ^B	Sheep Creek SE	75	Cattle	1-1	1-10	1 day	Horse
17 ^B	Sheep Creek SE	75	Cattle	2-1	2-10	1 day	Horse
Gordon King							
18 ^C	West Castle Creek	150 - 600	Cattle	3-31	4-15	1 day	Horse
18 ^C	West Castle Creek	150 - 600	Cattle	4-1	4-15	1 day	Horse
18 ^C	West Castle Creek	150 - 600	Cattle	4-2	4-15	1 day	Horse
18 ^C	West Castle Creek	150 - 600	Cattle	4-3	4-15	1 day	Horse
18 ^C	West Castle Creek	150 - 600	Cattle	4-4	4-15	1 day	Horse
18 ^C	West Castle Creek	150 - 600	Cattle	4-5	4-15	1 day	Horse
^A Northward Route ^B Southward Route ^C While the groups would range from 150 to 600 cattle, a total of 1,100 cattle would be trailed along this route. Note: Maps 2 through 18 display the total number of cattle trailing along each route. To access Maps 2 through 18, go to the site https://www.blm.gov/epl-front-office/eplanning/nepa/nepa_register.do . Select State = Idaho, Office = ID-Bruneau FO, Document Type = EA, Fiscal Year = 2012, Program = All, then click Search. Once you arrive here, click on DOI-BLM-ID-B020-2012-003-EA. At this site you can access the Scoping Package and Maps. Keep these instructions as this will also be the route through which you can access any future information regarding this project, its analysis, and decision.							

Preliminary Resource Concerns

Through internal scoping, the BFO Interdisciplinary Team has identified the following as potential issues; these are only examples of potential issues, not necessarily an all-inclusive list:

Species listed as a candidate for listing under the ESA – Issuing crossing permits during sage-grouse breeding and nesting periods could result in disturbance to displaying and nesting birds.

Special status plants – Issuing crossing permits could reduce viability of special status plants if the routes cross occupied habitat.

Native plant community health – Issuing crossing permits could damage native plants.

Repeated localized trailing may alter the native plant community to a less desirable state.

Special Status Wildlife – Issuing crossing permits could result in damage to special status wildlife nests or natal burrows.

Migratory Birds – Issuing crossing permits during migratory bird nesting periods could result in damage to bird nests or burrows.

Big Game – Issuing crossing permits during big game fawning/calving/lambing and wintering periods could result in disturbance and reduced individual fitness.

Special Status Fish – Issuing crossing permits could affect habitat for special status fish.

Soils – Issuing crossing permits across areas of highly erosive soils could increase the potential for erosion. Livestock trailing on saturated soils could degrade soil surface structure leading to soil compaction if repeated in localized areas.

Vegetation Treatments – Issuing crossing permits could prevent vegetation treatments from achieving the intended objectives.

Noxious Weeds and Invasive Plants – Issuing crossing permits could increase the potential for noxious weeds and invasive plants to spread.

Cultural Resources – Issuing crossing permits through archaeological sites could adversely affect those sites.

Wilderness and Wild & Scenic Rivers – Issuing crossing permits through Wilderness or Wild & Scenic Rivers could result in impacts to wilderness character or the river's Outstandingly Remarkable Values.

Preliminary Alternative Development

No Action – Alternative B

Crossing permits would not be issued for trailing of livestock across BLM-administered lands in the BFO.

Alternative C

The BLM would issue 3 year term crossing permits to qualified applicants authorizing the trailing of livestock across BLM-administered lands in the BFO. In Alternative C, livestock trailing would be authorized within one-quarter mile wide corridors along trailing routes requested in permittees' applications (Table 1; Map 1) to the extent the request is consistent with the design criteria listed below; modifications of permittees' requests may be made to be consistent with the design criteria. Livestock trailing would also be authorized on additional routes that are consistent with the design criteria listed below.

Preliminary design criteria to minimize impacts from the trailing of livestock include, but are not limited to:

Wildlife

No domestic sheep or goat trailing would be permitted within the BFO.

From March 1 to May 15, livestock trailing would be routed at least 1 mile from occupied sage-grouse leks; if this is not possible, trailing events would be timed to occur between 9:00 am and 6:00 pm.

From March 1 to May 15, over-night areas would be located at least 1 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 possible, previously disturbed sites would be used, such as areas around stock ponds or troughs, past seedings, or other grassland sites.

From April 1 to June 15, cattle over-night areas would not be located in sagebrush habitat; if this is not possible, previously disturbed sites would be used, such as areas around stock ponds or troughs, past seedings, or other grassland sites.

From April 1 to June 15, livestock trailing routes would avoid sagebrush habitats to the extent practical to minimize potential impacts to nesting sage-grouse.

Summer through fall (June 1 through November 30), sage-grouse leks may be used for livestock over-night areas or temporary water sites to maintain shorter vegetation for the lek.

Trailing routes would be evaluated to avoid areas known to be occupied by pygmy rabbits.

From February 1 to July 31, livestock trailing would be routed at least 0.5 miles from canyon rims to avoid impacts to nesting golden eagles.

From March 1 to July 31, livestock trailing routes would avoid isolated junipers to minimize disturbing nesting ferruginous hawks.

From May 1 to June 30, livestock trailing routes would avoid big game calving and fawning areas.

From April 15 to June 15, livestock trailing routes would avoid bighorn sheep lambing areas.

From November 15 to April 30, livestock trailing routes would be located to minimize disturbance of wintering big game.

Areas used for staging vehicles, horse trailers, fence panels, etc. would avoid sagebrush habitats; if this is not possible, previously disturbed sites would be used, such as areas around stock ponds or troughs, past seedings, or other grassland sites.

Fish

Bedding areas, temporary watering areas, and over-night areas would be at least 0.25 miles from streams or springs.

Livestock trailing across streams would be avoided; if this is not possible, livestock trailing across streams would be limited to pre-determined locations defined by the BLM.

Special Status Plants

Livestock trailing routes would avoid occupied habitat for special status plant species.

Livestock trailing would occur on roads as much as possible to alleviate damage to special status plant habitat.

Vegetation

Livestock trailing routes would avoid areas recently burned by wildfire where possible.

Livestock trailing routes would avoid recent vegetation treatments (Emergency Stabilization and Rehabilitation, fuels reduction, or restoration treatments) to the extent possible.

Livestock trailing routes would be located or timed to minimize the potential spread of noxious weeds.

Riparian

Bedding or over-night 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. Livestock trailing across riparian areas and live streams would be avoided; if this is not possible, livestock trailing across riparian areas and live streams would be restricted to pre-determined locations defined by the BLM.

Cultural

Livestock trailing would be routed at least 0.25 miles from canyon rims and 100 meters from perennial streams to minimize impacts to cultural resources. Canyon and stream crossings would be avoided; if this is not possible, stream crossings would be restricted to pre-determined locations.

Livestock trailing would be routed at least 100 meters from playa shorelines.

Livestock trailing routes and associated activities would be located to avoid adverse effects to all eligible sites and sites of undetermined eligibility.

Soils

Livestock trailing would not be authorized during times when soils are saturated to minimize impacts to soils.

Livestock trailing routes would occur on roadways/designated routes of travel when practical.

Livestock trailing routes would avoid areas of highly erosive soils.

Wilderness

Some trailing within wilderness could continue to occur to accommodate livestock use.

Wild and Scenic Rivers

Livestock trailing within 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

BFO will decide if there is a need to prepare an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS); if no EIS is needed, a Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) will be prepared. As the result of the analysis in the EA, BFO will decide whether or not to approve crossing permits for trailing of livestock across BLM-administered lands in the BFO as described in the requests, with associated terms and conditions as deemed necessary by the authorized officer. The decision record for the EA will be described in the proposed decisions; in the absence of protests, the proposed decision will be the final decision as specified in 43 CFR 4160. If there are protests, then final decisions will be issued in accordance with 43 CFR 4160.3(b).

Scoping Comments

Written scoping comments must be submitted to Arnold Pike, Bruneau Field Manager, 3948 Development Avenue, Boise, ID 83705, by December 30, 2011. The office business hours for

submitting hand-delivered comments are 8:00 am to 4:30 pm Monday through Friday, excluding Federal holidays. Electronic scoping comments must be submitted in a format such as an email message, plain text (.txt), rich text format (.rtf), Word (.doc), or portable document format (.pdf) to blm_id_bruneauoffice@blm.gov. E-mails submitted to e-mail 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 “Bruneau Field Office Livestock Trailing 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 Bruneau Field Office Livestock Trailing 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.

If you have any questions, please contact me at 384-3331.

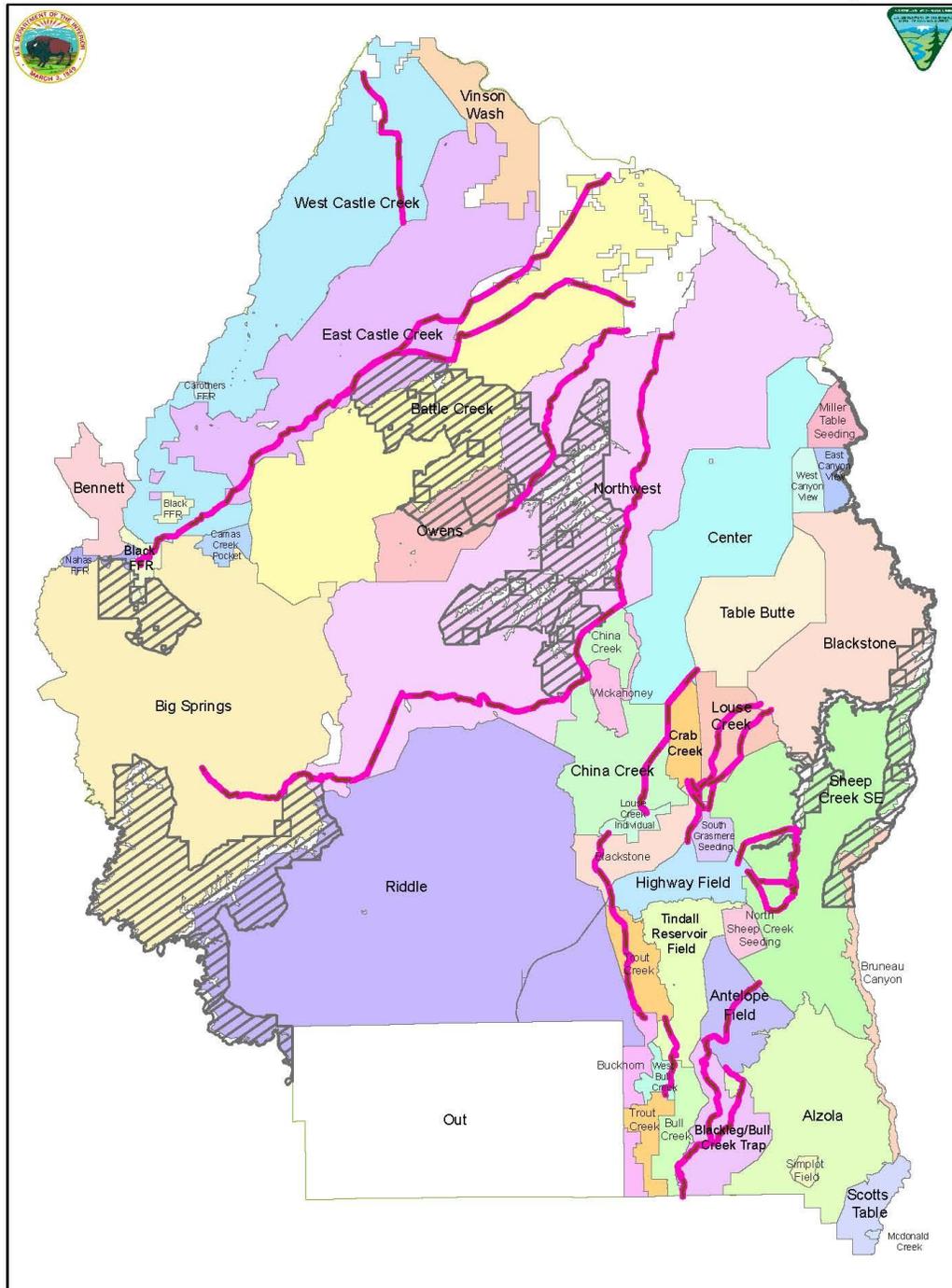
Sincerely,

Arnold L. Pike
Field Manager
Bruneau Field Office

Enclosure:
Map 1. Bruneau Field Office Proposed Trailing Routes Overview

Map 1

Bruneau Field Office Allotments - Trailing



No warranty is made by the Bureau of Land Management. The accuracy, reliability, or completeness of these data for individual use or aggregate use with other data is not guaranteed.

