United States Department of the Interior
BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT
Owyhee Field Office
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In Reply Refer To:
4160 (ID-130)

January 28, 2013

CERTIFIED MAIL - RETURN RECEIPT REQUESTED
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Teo and Sarah Maestrejuan
3053 Arritola Place Road
Jordan Valley, Oregon 97910

Notice of Field Manager's Proposed Decision

Dear Mr. and Mrs. Maestrejuan:

Thank you for your December 13, 2011, application for permit renewal on the Castlehead-Lambert allotment. Thank you also for working with the BLM during the permit renewal process. I appreciate your interest in grazing the allotment in a sustainable fashion and am confident that this proposed decision achieves that objective.

As you know, the BLM evaluated current grazing practices and current conditions in the Castlehead-Lambert allotment in 2011 and 2012. The BLM undertook this effort to ensure that any renewed grazing permits on the allotment comport with the BLM's legal and land management obligations. As part of the BLM's evaluation process, a Rangeland Health Assessment/Evaluation and a Determination were completed according to our established procedures. This proposed decision incorporates by reference the analysis contained in those documents.

The BLM also engaged in public scoping and met with members of the public interested in grazing issues in the Castlehead-Lambert allotment. A scoping package was sent to permittees and other known individuals, groups, and organizations recognized as the interested public for the Garat, Castlehead-Lambert, Swisher Springs, and Swisher FFR allotments (also known as the Owyhee Group or Group 1 allotments). The scoping package solicited comments to better identify issues associated with renewing livestock grazing permits on these allotments.

After evaluating conditions on the land and meeting with the public, it became clear that the Castlehead-Lambert allotment contains resource issues that require improvement. It was also clear that some of those issues could be addressed by adjusting the livestock grazing management practices.

With an eye toward addressing livestock impacts to public land resources, my office prepared and issued an environmental assessment[1] (EA) in which we considered a number of options and approaches to improving resource conditions. Specifically, the BLM considered and analyzed in detail your application for grazing permit renewal and four additional alternatives. We also considered other alternatives that we did not analyze in detail. Our overarching goal in developing alternatives was to consider options that were important to you as the permittee, and to consider options that, if selected, would ensure that the Castlehead-Lambert allotment's natural resources conform to the goals and objectives of the Owyhee Resource Management Plan (ORMP) and the Idaho Standards for Rangeland Health and Guidelines for Livestock Grazing Management (Idaho S&Gs). This proposed decision incorporates by reference the analysis contained in the EA.

We have now completed the most difficult part of the permit renewal process and I am now prepared to issue a proposed decision to renew your permit to graze livestock within the Castlehead-Lambert allotment. This proposed decision will:

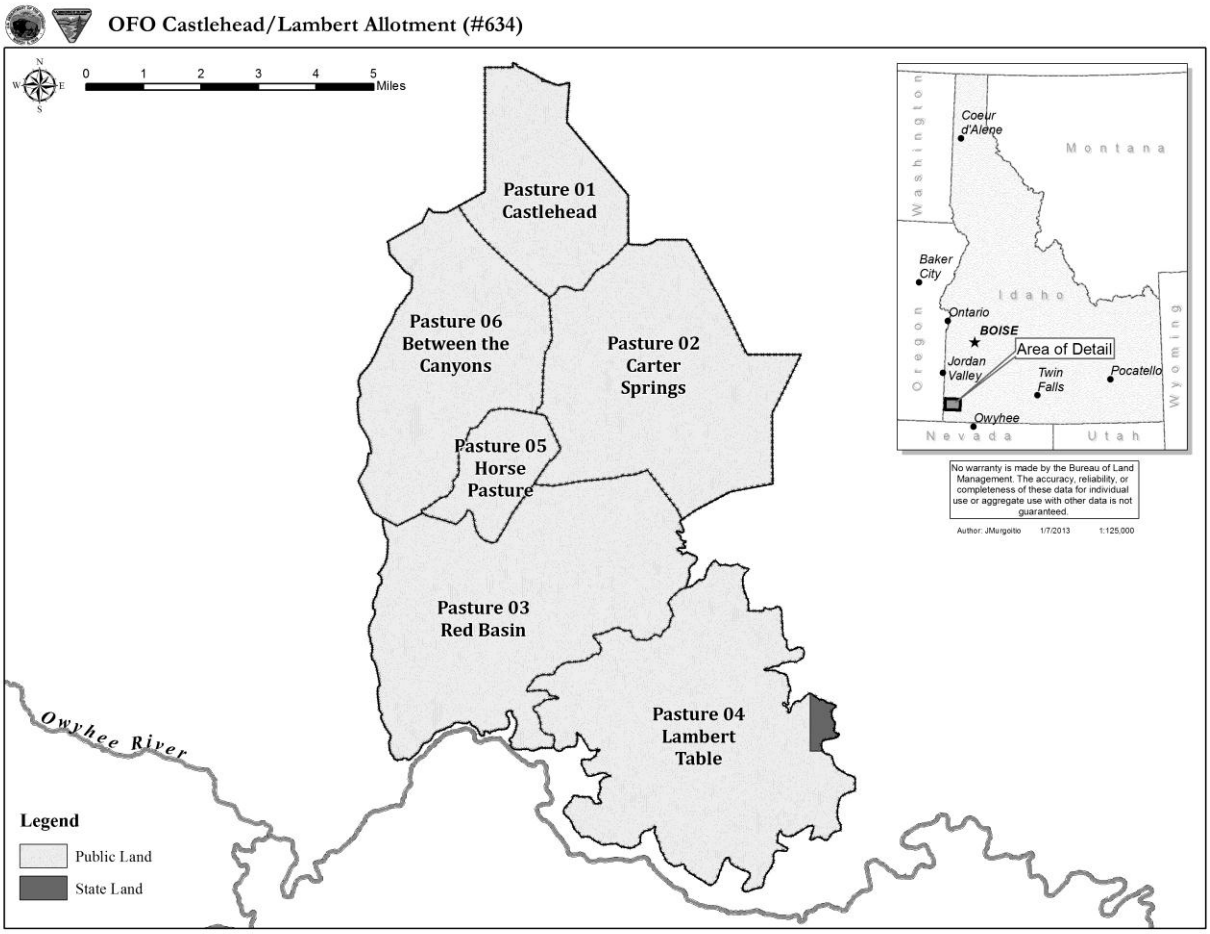
- Describe current conditions and issues on the allotment;
- Briefly discuss the alternative grazing management schemes that the BLM considered in the EA;
- Respond to the grazing permit renewal application for the Castlehead-Lambert allotment;
- Outline my proposed decision to select Alternative 4; and
- State the reasons why I made that selection.

Background

Allotment Setting

The Castlehead-Lambert allotment is located in Owyhee County, Idaho, approximately 30 miles southeast of Jordan Valley, Oregon and lies within the boundary of the Owyhee Field Office, which is in the Boise District. The allotment is bordered by Juniper Mountain on the north, the Owyhee River on the south, and Red Canyon on the west. The allotment includes 45,826 acres of public land, 217 acres of state land, and 3 acres of private land in six pastures (*see* map).

[1] EA number DOI-BLM-ID-B030-2012-0012-EA analyzed five alternatives for livestock grazing management practices to fully process permits within the Owyhee Group allotments (Group 1), including the Castlehead-Lambert allotment.



The allotment is situated within the Owyhee Uplands, a sagebrush steppe semi-arid landscape of shrubs and widely spaced bunchgrasses where native vegetation communities are variable. Limited precipitation with cold winters and dry summers constrain plants and animals. Where deeper soils exist (approximately 26 percent of the allotment), the native vegetation is primarily basin or mountain big sagebrush with an understory of native perennial bunchgrasses. In areas of shallow soils (approximately 61 percent of the allotment) there exists mostly low sagebrush with the same native perennial bunchgrass understory. The effective average annual precipitation for these vegetation communities is twelve inches for the drier sites and sixteen inches for the more moist sites. Precipitation occurs primarily during the winter.[2]

Current Grazing Authorization

You currently graze livestock within the Castlehead-Lambert allotment pursuant to a grazing permit issued by the BLM. The terms and conditions of that grazing permit are as follow:

[2] For more detailed discussion, please refer to the affected environment sections of EA number DOI-BLM-ID-B030-2012-0012-EA.

Allotment	Livestock		Grazing Period		% PL	Type Use	AUMs[1]
	Number	Kind	Begin	End			
00634 Castlehead-Lambert	192	Cattle	4/15	9/30	100	Active	1,067
	46	Cattle	4/15	9/30	100	Active	256

Other terms and conditions:

1. All cattle 6 months of age or older must be ear tagged with assigned color and number on the Castlehead-Lambert allotment.
2. A minimum 4-inch stubble height will be left on herbaceous vegetation within the riparian area along 11.1 miles of Red Canyon Creek in allotment #0634 at the end of the growing season as identified in the fisheries objective of the Owyhee RMP EIS.
3. Turn-out is subject to the Boise District range readiness criteria.
4. Your certified actual use report is due within 15 days of completing your authorized annual grazing use.
5. Salt and/or supplements shall not be placed within one quarter (1/4)-mile of springs, streams, meadows, aspen stands, playas, or water developments.
6. Changes to the scheduled use require approval.
7. Trailing activities must be coordinated with the BLM prior to initiation. A trailing permit or similar authorization may be required prior to crossing public lands.
8. Livestock exclosures located within your grazing allotment are closed to all domestic grazing use.
9. Range improvements must be maintained in accordance with the cooperative agreement and range improvement permit in which you are a signature or assignee. All maintenance of range improvements within a wilderness study area requires prior consultation with the authorized officer.
10. All appropriate documentation regarding base property leases, lands offered for exchange-of-use, and livestock control agreements must be approved prior to turn out. Leases of land and/or livestock must be notarized prior to submission and be in compliance with Boise District Policy.
11. Failure to pay the grazing bill within 15 days of the due date specified shall result in a late fee assessment of $25.00 or 10 percent of the grazing bill, whichever is greater, not to exceed $250.00. Payment made later than 15 days after the due date shall include the appropriate late fee assessment. Failure to make payment within 30 days may be a violation of 43 CFR 4140.1(b)(1) and shall result in action by the authorized officer under 43 CFR 4150.1 and 4160.1.
12. Livestock grazing will be in accordance with your allotment grazing schematic(s). Changes in scheduled pasture use dates will require prior authorization.
13. Utilization may not exceed 50 percent of the current year's growth

06 Livestock also grazes livestock within the Castlehead-Lambert allotment pursuant to a grazing permit issued by the BLM. The terms and conditions of that grazing permit are as follows:

Allotment	Livestock		Grazing Period		% PL	Type Use	AUMs[1]
	Number	Kind	Begin	End			
00634 Castlehead-Lambert	334	Cattle	4/15	9/30	100	Active	1856
	10	Horse	4/8	9/30	100	Active	58

Other terms and conditions:

1. All cattle 6 months of age or older must be ear tagged with assigned color and number on the Castlehead-Lambert allotment.
2. A minimum 4-inch stubble height will be left on herbaceous vegetation within the riparian area along 11.1 miles of Red Canyon Creek in allotment #0634 at the end of the growing season as identified in the fisheries objective of the Owyhee RMP EIS.
3. Turn-out is subject to the Boise District range readiness criteria.
4. Your certified actual use report is due within 15 days of completing your authorized annual grazing use.
5. Salt and/or supplements shall not be placed within one quarter (1/4)-mile of springs, streams, meadows, aspen stands, playas, or water developments.
6. Changes to the scheduled use require approval.
7. Trailing activities must be coordinated with the BLM prior to initiation. A trailing permit or similar authorization may be required prior to crossing public lands.
8. Livestock exclosures located within your grazing allotment are closed to all domestic grazing use.
9. Range improvements must be maintained in accordance with the cooperative agreement and range improvement permit in which you are a signature or assignee. All maintenance of range improvements within a wilderness study area requires prior consultation with the authorized officer.
10. All appropriate documentation regarding base property leases, lands offered for exchange-of-use, and livestock control agreements must be approved prior to turn out. Leases of land and/or livestock must be notarized prior to submission and be in compliance with Boise District Policy.
11. Failure to pay the grazing bill within 15 days of the due date specified shall result in a late fee assessment of $25.00 or 10 percent of the grazing bill, whichever is greater, not to exceed $250.00. Payment made later than 15 days after the due date shall include the appropriate late fee assessment. Failure to make payment within 30 days may be a violation of 43 CFR 4140.1(b)(1) and shall result in action by the authorized officer under 43 CFR 4150.1 and 4160.1.
12. Livestock grazing will be in accordance with your allotment grazing schematic(s). Changes in scheduled pasture use dates will require prior authorization.
13. Utilization may not exceed 50 percent of the current year's growth.

As part of a settlement agreement, the following additional terms and conditions were added to the permits in March of 2000:

- Key herbaceous riparian vegetation, where stream bank stability is dependent upon it, will have a minimum stubble height of 4 inches on the stream bank, along the greenline, after the growing season;
- Key riparian browse vegetation will not be used more than 50 percent of the current annual twig growth that is within reach of the animals;
- Key herbaceous riparian vegetation on riparian areas, other than the stream banks, will not be grazed more than 50 percent during the growing season, or 60 percent during the dormant season; and
- Stream bank damage attributable to grazing livestock will be less than 10 percent on a stream segment.

As you know, the two current permits authorize annual use of 3,244 animal unit months (AUMs[3]) of forage and a season of use between April 15th and September 30th. However, based on actual use reports submitted over the 10-year period between 2002 and 2011, and with consideration for the years of reduced grazing authorization for 2 years following the 2007 Crutcher Fire, it is clear that in most years, the two permittees have used fewer AUMs than authorized. Specifically, actual use reported in 2010 and 2011 was approximately 3,020 AUMs[4]. Actual use reports show that grazing over the last ten years stayed within the scheduled season of use for the allotment.

Actual use is important when considering the renewal of a grazing permit because it was actual use and not authorized levels of use that resulted in current conditions on the allotment. In other words, the current condition of the allotment is not the result of 3,244 AUMs being removed every year (as authorized under the current permit), but rather is the result of the removal of approximately 3,020 AUMs per year over the last two years following the Crutcher Fire and fewer AUMs removed annually prior to the Crutcher Fire.

Resource Conditions

The BLM completed a land health assessment, evaluation, and a determination for the Castlehead-Lambert allotment in 2012. Those documents concluded that some of the resources on the Castlehead-Lambert allotment were not meeting the Idaho S&Gs. Specifically, the BLM determined that the allotment did not meet Standards 2 (Riparian Areas and Wetlands), 3 (Stream Channel/Floodplain), 4 (Native Plant Communities), 7 (Water Quality), and 8 (Threatened and Endangered Plants and Animals). In addition, the BLM's evaluation concluded that current resource conditions were not conforming to all of the objectives set out in the ORMP. Finally, the determination for the Castlehead-Lambert allotment determined that current livestock management practices were significant causal factors in not meeting Standards 2, 3, 7, and 8, and were inconsistent with the BLM's Guidelines for Grazing Management.[5]

Vegetation - uplands

The BLM's 2012 Rangeland Health Assessment and Evaluation for the Castlehead-Lambert allotment showed that the allotment is not meeting the ORMP management objective to improve

[3] Animal unit month (AUM) means the amount of forage necessary for the sustenance of one cow or its equivalent for a period of one month.
[4] Actual use reported in 2012 totaled 3,171 AUMs.
[5] For more detailed discussion, please refer to EA number DOI-BLM-ID-B030-2012-0012-EA Appendix I.

unsatisfactory and maintain satisfactory vegetation health/condition on a number of areas. The allotment is not meeting the ORMP vegetation management objective because plant communities in many areas have shifted from co-dominance of desirable deep-rooted perennial bunchgrasses (e.g., bluebunch wheatgrass, Idaho Fescue) and sagebrush, to greater dominance of less-desirable shallow-rooted bunchgrasses (e.g., Sandberg bluegrass and squirreltail). This shift is evident when comparing the reference site conditions in state-and-transition models to current vegetation composition on the allotment. In addition, juniper encroachment and dominance is present in many sites and its occurrence is more widespread than the limited inclusion in vegetation communities at reference conditions. Recent fire has reduced juniper encroachment and dominance in some portions of the allotment.

The Idaho S&G Standard 4 (Native Plant Communities) is not being met within large portions of a number of ecological sites in the allotment where juniper encroachment and dominance is present and juniper occurrence is not a portion of the site potential. Current livestock management practices are not a significant contributing factor in the failure of the allotment to meet Standard 4.[6]

Watersheds

The BLM's 2012 analysis of the Castlehead-Lambert allotment concluded that Standard 1 (Watersheds) is met within the allotment, with overall soil and hydrologic integrity and their associated attributes maintained, although localized soil impacts are identified. Because overall watershed conditions are closely tied to the health of the biotic community, the current imbalance of vegetation composition identified for upland vegetation is a concern where juniper encroachment and dominance is not a portion of site potential.[7]

Water Resources and Riparian/Wetland Areas

The BLM's 2012 Rangeland Health Assessment and Evaluation for the Castlehead-Lambert allotment concluded that Standards 2 (Riparian Areas and Wetlands), 3 (Stream Channel/Floodplain), and 7 (Water Quality) are not being met. The majority of the riparian-wetland areas associated with both streams and springs/seeps occur within the four northern pastures (1, 2, 5, and 6). In not meeting Standards 2, 3, and 7, these riparian areas also failed to meet ORMP riparian management objectives. Many of the issues identified have been the result of the mid-summer season of livestock use, leading to a determination that current livestock management practices are a significant causal factor for failure to meet the standards.[8]

Wildlife/Wildlife Habitats and Special Status Animals

The BLM's 2012 Rangeland Health Assessment and Evaluation for the Castlehead-Lambert allotment concluded that the allotment is not meeting Standard 8 for special status wildlife species. The allotment is not meeting Standard 8 because upland habitats and riparian habitats (where present) are not providing the composition, structure, and function necessary for many obligate, dependent, and associated migratory birds and special status wildlife species.

[6] For more detailed discussion, please refer to EA number DOI-BLM-ID-B030-2012-0012-EA Section 3.4.1.1
[7] For more detailed discussion, please refer to EA number DOI-BLM-ID-B030-2012-0012-EA Section 3.4.2.1
[8] For more detailed discussion, please refer to EA number DOI-BLM-ID-B030-2012-0012-EA Section 3.4.4.1

Suitability of upland and riparian wildlife habitat is closely related to the health and vigor of vegetation community conditions discussed in Standard 4 (Native Plant Communities) and Standard 2 (Riparian Areas and Wetlands). Shrub steppe habitats dominated by several species of sagebrush and perennial bunchgrasses that would be expected to occur across the vast majority of the allotment based on ecological site descriptions have the potential to provide vital nesting and foraging habitat for many special status wildlife species. However, juniper encroachment into shrub steppe habitat has led to woodland habitats that are unsuitable for sagebrush-obligate and shrub-dependent special status wildlife species in portions of pastures 1, 2, 3, and 6. Recent fires have reduced juniper dominance in portions of these pastures, initiating the recovery of site-potential shrubs and bunchgrasses and their contribution to providing habitats for sagebrush-obligate and shrub-dependent species. Because of these fires, the recently burned portions of the allotment are making significant progress toward meeting Standard 8. Upland habitats within pasture 4-Lambert Table have not been affected by juniper encroachment or recent wildfires. Although potential large statured bunchgrasses are under-represented and short bunchgrasses are over-represented in vegetation composition of this pasture, adequate protective cover and suitable nesting and foraging habitat is provided for sagebrush-obligate and shrub-dependent species.

Overall, Standard 8 is not being met for wildlife in riparian/wetland habitats accessible to livestock grazing. The standard is not met due to lack of hydric vegetation and soil instability along stream-banks and in wet meadows. The intensity of herbaceous riparian vegetation use and stream-bank trampling by livestock have reduced nesting substrate, protective cover, and foraging areas for many riparian-dependent special status wildlife species.[9]

Guidelines for Livestock Grazing Management

In addition to a discussion of land health standards, the BLM's 2012 Determination for the Castlehead-Lambert allotment identified grazing management practices that did not conform to the BLM's Guidelines for Livestock Grazing Management for Idaho. Specifically, the determination concluded that grazing management did not conform to the following guidelines:

> *Guideline 4: Implement grazing management practices that provide periodic rest or deferment during critical growth stages to allow sufficient regrowth to achieve and maintain healthy, properly functioning conditions, including good plant vigor and adequate cover appropriate to site potential.*
>
> *Guideline 5: Maintain or promote grazing management practices that provide sufficient residual vegetation to improve, restore, or maintain healthy riparian-wetland functions and structure for energy dissipation, sediment capture, ground water recharge, streambank stability, and wildlife habitat appropriate to site potential.*
>
> *Guideline 6: The development of springs, seeps, or other projects affecting water and associated resources shall be designed to protect the ecological functions, wildlife habitat, and significant cultural and historical/archaeological/paleontological values associated with the water source.*

[9] For more detailed discussion, please refer to EA number DOI-BLM-ID-B030-2012-0012-EA Section 3.4.5.1

Guideline 7: Apply grazing management practices to maintain, promote, or progress toward appropriate stream channel and streambank morphology and function. Adverse impacts due to livestock grazing will be addressed.

Guideline 8: Apply grazing management practices that maintain or promote the interaction of the hydrologic cycle, nutrient cycle, and energy flow that will support the appropriate types and amounts of soil organisms, plants, and animals appropriate to soil type, climate, and landform.

Guideline 10: Implement grazing management practices and/or facilities that provide for complying with the Idaho Water Quality Standards.

Guideline 12: Apply grazing management practices and/or facilities that maintain or promote the physical and biological conditions necessary to sustain native plant populations and wildlife habitats in native plant communities.

Since the Castlehead-Lambert allotment is not meeting one or more of the Idaho S&Gs because of current livestock management practices, the BLM used these guidelines as a starting point for developing grazing schemes to bring the authorized actions within the allotment into compliance with resource objectives.

Issues

Based on the BLM's evaluation of the current grazing scheme, the current conditions on the Castlehead-Lambert allotment, public response to scoping, and the BLM's obligations to meet the Idaho S&Gs and move toward meeting the ORMP management objectives, the BLM identified the following resource issues applicable to the grazing permit renewal for the Castlehead-Lambert allotment:

Issue 1: Improve upland vegetation plant communities, and in particular, reverse the shift from desirable to undesirable native plant communities.

Issue 2: Limit juniper encroachment into shrub-steppe vegetation types.

Issue 3: Prevent introduction and spread of noxious and invasive annual species (e.g., cheatgrass).

Issue 4: Improve riparian vegetation and stream-bank stability associated with streams and springs/seeps.

Issue 5: Improve wildlife habitats, and habitats necessary to meet objectives for sagebrush steppe and riparian dependent species, including sage-grouse.

Analysis of Alternative Actions

Based on the current condition of the Castlehead-Lambert allotment and the issues identified above, the BLM considered a number of alternative livestock management schemes in the EA to ensure that any renewed grazing permit would result in improved conditions on the allotment. Specifically, the BLM analyzed five alternatives in detail, identified a number of actions common

to all alternatives, and considered but did not analyze in detail a number of other possible actions.[10] The BLM considered the following alternatives in detail:

- Alternative 1 – Current Situation: Alternative 1 considered continuation of current livestock management practices as they occurred over the past 10 years. The BLM defined the Current Situation alternative for the purposes of analysis in the EA as that grazing which occurred under the current permit and which led to current conditions on the allotment. In this way Alternative 1 is linked to the BLM's description of current conditions on the allotment as outlined in the Affected Environment sections of the EA.

- Alternative 2 – Permittee's Application for Permit Renewal: Alternative 2 analyzed the application for permit renewal received from the two permittees authorized to graze livestock in the Castlehead-Lambert allotment and includes the permit terms and conditions requested in that application. This alternative has a 2-year rotational grazing system for four of the six pastures and 4,278 authorized AUMs (an increase of 1,034 AUMs from the current permit, and an increase of 1,333 AUMs compared to Alternative 1). This alternative captured the permittee's belief that there are additional AUMs available for use on the allotment following recent wildfire. Additionally, consistent with the application received, Alternative 2 included flexibility in livestock move-dates to provide opportunity for grazing management to take advantage of climatic variation by moving animals in a manner that assures management objectives are met. Note: Although you requested that a section of boundary fence destroyed by fire be reconstructed and that approximately 0.72 miles of fence be constructed along a ridge to the east of the West Fork Red Canyon to change the allotment boundary between the Castlehead-Lambert and Red Basin allotments, those actions were considered but not analyzed in detail within the EA.

- Alternative 3 –Performance-Based Alternative: Alternative 3 starts with the current grazing permit and adds new terms and conditions that constrain the intensity of grazing use in specific ways to improve specific resource conditions. The new terms and conditions are implemented to improve and maintain the health and vigor of upland perennial herbaceous species, maintain hydrologic function and soil/site stability, meet riparian management objectives, and provide suitable habitats for special status wildlife species, including sage-grouse. Alternative 3 does not change livestock numbers, scheduled beginning and end dates for use of the allotments, pasture rotations, pasture seasons of use, active use AUMs, or other terms and conditions from those in the current permit. Instead, the alternative allows the permittee to work within the established dates and livestock numbers that currently exist, as long as the permittee can ensure that specific targets are met.

- Alternative 4 –Season-Based Alternative: Alternative 4 addresses resource issues on the allotment by changing when livestock can graze within each pasture of the allotment. Specifically, Alternative 4 establishes new seasons of grazing use that limit adverse impacts from livestock grazing on specific identified resource values present within each pasture. The seasons of use developed by the BLM attempt to do the following: 1) provide more

[10] For more detailed discussion, please refer to EA number DOI-BLM-ID-B030-2012-0012-EA sections 2.

frequent year-long rest or deferment of livestock grazing use to a period outside the active growing season for native perennial bunchgrass species, 2) limit the frequency of disruption and livestock use within sage-grouse breeding habitats, and 3) limit mid-summer grazing use of riparian areas. Application of appropriate seasons of grazing use, resource-specific to each pasture, limits the timing and duration of available grazing in some pastures and results in the overall reduction in levels of authorized grazing use.

- Alternative 5 – No Grazing: Alternative 5 removes livestock grazing from the Castlehead-Lambert allotment for 10 years, equivalent to the term of a grazing permit. This alternative would allow resources to recover by removing livestock grazing use on the allotment.

The preliminary EA detailing the above alternatives was made available for public review and comment for a 45-day period ending October 23, 2012. In addition to timely comments received from you, a number of government entities and agencies, interest groups, and members of the public also provided comments. Comments received identified and clarified issues that are addressed in the completed EA, including the following:

Issue 6: Consider whether grazing on the Castlehead-Lambert allotment can be used to limit wildfire.

Issue 7: Consider impacts to regional socio-economic activity generated by livestock production.

Timely comments that were received are summarized and responses provided as an appendix to the completed EA available on the web at:

http://www.blm.gov/id/st/en/prog/nepa_register/owyhee_grazing_group/grazing_permit_renewal.html

Proposed Decision

After considering the current grazing practices, the current conditions of the natural resources, and the alternatives and analysis in the EA, as well as other information, it is my proposed decision to renew your grazing permit for 10 years with modified terms and conditions consistent with Alternative 4 (Season-Based alternative) in the EA. Implementation of Alternative 4 over the next 10 years will allow the Castlehead-Lambert allotment to make significant progress toward meeting the Idaho S&Gs while also moving toward achieving the resource objectives outlined in the ORMP.

The terms and conditions of the renewed grazing permit will be as follows:

Allotment	Livestock		Grazing Period[1]		% PL	Type Use	AUMs
	Number	Kind	Begin	End			
Teo & Sarah Maestrejuan							
00634 Castlehead-Lambert	154	Cattle	4/15	9/30	100	Active	856

1. Grazing use will be in accordance with the grazing schedule identified in the final decision of the Owyhee Field Office Manager dated *January 28, 2013*. Flexibility is provided to allow seven days to complete moves between pastures, so long as cattle grazing during the active growing season for native perennial bunchgrass species (May 1 to July 1) is limited to no more than 1 in each 2-year period, grazing within the Lambert Table pasture is deferred until after June 20 in 2 of each 3 years to provide breeding habitat for sage-grouse, and livestock grazing is excluded from pastures 1, 2, and 6 between July 1 and September 15 in all years to meet riparian management objectives. Cattle movement resulting from active trailing through these identified pastures with riparian resources is authorized between July 1 and September 15 in accordance with the grazing schedule. Grazing use of the Horse pasture is restricted to overnight holding of cattle in years when the next scheduled pasture does not require deferment of use for maintenance of upland vegetation vigor and up to 7 days of use when the next scheduled pasture does require deferment. Changes in scheduled pasture use dates will require prior authorization.
2. A minimum 4-inch stubble height will be left on herbaceous vegetation within the riparian area along 11.1 miles of Red Canyon Creek in allotment #0634 at the end of the growing season as identified in the fisheries objective of the Owyhee RMP EIS.
3. Turn-out is subject to the Boise District range readiness criteria.
4. Your certified actual use report is due within 15 days of completing your authorized annual grazing use.
5. Salt and/or supplements shall not be placed within one-quarter (1/4)-mile of springs, streams, meadows, aspen stands, playas, or water developments.
6. Trailing activities must be coordinated with the BLM prior to initiation. A trailing permit or similar authorization may be required prior to crossing public lands.
7. Livestock exclosures located within your grazing allotment are closed to all domestic grazing use.
8. Range improvements must be maintained in accordance with the cooperative agreement and range improvement permit in which you are a signatory or assignee. All maintenance of range improvements within designated Wilderness requires prior consultation with the authorized officer.
9. All appropriate documentation regarding base property leases, lands offered for exchange-of-use, and livestock control agreements must be approved prior to turn out. Leases of land and/or livestock must be notarized prior to submission and be in compliance with Boise District Policy.
10. Failure to pay the grazing bill within 15 days of the due date specified shall result in a late fee assessment of $25.00 or 10 percent of the grazing bill, whichever is greater, not to exceed $250.00. Payment made later than 15 days after the due date shall include the appropriate late fee assessment. Failure to make payment within 30 days may be a violation of 43 CFR § 4140.1(b)(1) and shall result in action by the authorized officer under 43 CFR § 4150.1 and § 4160.1.
11. Utilization may not exceed 50 percent of the current year's growth

As noted in term and condition # 1, the grazing schedule for the Castlehead-Lambert allotment (identified below) must be followed:

Pasture Number	Pasture Name	Year 1	Year 2
1	Castlehead	6/1 – 6/30	9/16 to 9/30
2	Carter	4/15 – 5/31	4/15 – 4/30
3	Red Basin	*7/1 – 9/15	*7/1 – 9/15
4***	Lambert Table	*7/1 – 7/31	*7/1 – 7/31
5	Horse	**Transition	**Transition
6	Between-the-Canyons	9/16 to 9/30	5/1 – 6/30

* Although dates of use overlap between two pastures, the integrity of pasture management units would be maintained with gates closed. Flexibility is provided to adjust the livestock move date into the pasture 4-Lambert Table (flexibility to begin grazing use prior to 7/1) and Red Basin pastures based on climatic conditions and livestock water availability, so long as scheduled deferment of upland range (no earlier than July 1) occurs at least once in each 2-year period (both pastures) and scheduled deferment of sage-grouse breeding habitat (no earlier than June 20) occurs at least once in each 3-year period (pasture 4-Lambert Table).

** Cattle use of the Horse Pasture is restricted to overnight holding of cattle in years when the next scheduled pasture does not require deferment of use for maintenance of upland vegetation vigor and up to seven days of use when the next scheduled pasture does require deferment. Domestic horse use, as identified in permits, would be limited to the Horse pasture.

*** The grazing schedule for pasture 4-Lambert Table recognizes the limited water available to support livestock use, especially as the grazing season progresses, and does not define a period when pasture 4-Lambert Table is the only pasture available for use. In years when livestock water is available, flexibility for grazing use is provided.

Notes on the Grazing Schedule

The grazing schedule ensures that those portions of the allotment that contain sage-grouse preliminary priority habitat with sagebrush overstory (specifically pasture 4-Lambert Table) will be grazed not more than once every 3 years during the sage-grouse breeding season (April 15 through June 15). In other words, if you graze pasture 4-Lambert Table between April 15 and June 16 in 2013, you may not graze this pasture again between April 15 and June 16 until 2016. Further, the grazing schedule ensures that no pastures will be grazed during the active growing seasons for native perennial bunchgrasses (May 1 to June 30) more than once in any 2 consecutive years.

Notes on the Terms and Conditions

The stocking rate for the Castlehead-Lambert allotment that results from the terms and conditions outlined above constrains the intensity of livestock use to 10 acres or more per AUM on any pasture. The 10 acres per AUM stocking rate is a conservative stocking rate, considering potential forage production and availability due to ecological site potential of vegetation communities within the allotment, as limited by inventoried condition, water availability, and topography[11].

Flexibility is provided within the schedule above for grazing use of pastures 3 and 4 after July 1, a period outside the active growing season for native perennial herbaceous species and outside the lekking, nesting, and early brood-rearing season for sage-grouse. Similarly, flexibility is provided to graze livestock in pasture 5 during moves between pastures while limiting the duration of use to protect resource values. Additional flexibility is provided to allow 7 days to complete moves

[11] For more detailed discussion, please refer to EA number DOI-BLM-ID-B030-2012-0012-EA Section 2.8.1.4

between pastures, as long as scheduled deferment of grazing use outside the lekking, nesting, and early brood-rearing season for sage-grouse (4/15 to 6/15) is implemented in 2 years of each 3-year period in pasture 4-Lambert Table, scheduled deferment of grazing use outside the upland vegetation active growing season (5/1 to 6/30) is implemented in 1 year of each 2-year cycle, and no grazing use of pastures 1, 2, or 6 and their associated riparian areas occurs between 7/1 and 9/15.

You will be offered a grazing permit for a term of 10 years with 856 active AUMs and 808 suspension AUMs. Adoption of Alternative 4 will result in a reduction in AUMs from your current permit; however, the affected 473 active use AUMs will not be transferred to suspension, in conformance with regulatory direction at 43 CFR § 4110.3-2. Your permitted use within the Castlehead-Lambert allotment will be as follows:

Permittee	Active Use	Suspension	Permitted Use
Teo & Sarah Maestrejuan	856 AUMs	808 AUMs	1,664 AUMs

Other Notes on the Proposed Decision

It is my proposed decision to not authorize additional projects at this time. Specifically, reconstruction of fence destroyed by fire, which was not repaired as part of the rehabilitation plan for that fire, is not authorized as a portion of this decision. Cooperative agreements for project maintenance specific to fences of concern should be reviewed. Additionally, this proposed decision does not authorize the construction of approximately 0.72 miles of fence-line along the ridge to the east of the West Fork Red Canyon in pasture 6, a new fence to redefine the boundary between the Castlehead-Lambert and Red Basin allotments. The grazing authorization defined by terms and conditions in this proposed decision is not dependent on additional project construction. The existing coordinated process to consider project construction remains unchanged for project-specific consideration outside the permit renewal process.

Project maintenance obligations identified in current range improvement permits and cooperative agreements for range improvements are unchanged by this proposed decision. Implementation of this proposed decision is contingent upon maintenance of projects in a functioning condition (i.e., boundary and internal fences are in such good and functioning condition as to assure their ability to accomplish the purposes for which they were constructed, barriers to livestock movement).

Rationale

Record of Performance

Pursuant to 43 CFR § 4110.1(b)(1), a grazing permit may not be renewed if the permittee seeking renewal has an unsatisfactory record of performance with respect to its last grazing permit. Accordingly, I have reviewed your record as a grazing permit holder for the Castlehead-Lambert allotment, and have determined that you have a satisfactory record of performance and are a qualified applicant for the purposes of a permit renewal.

Justification for the Proposed Decision

Based on my review of EA No. DOI-BLM-ID-B030-2012-0012-EA, the Rangeland Health Assessment/Evaluation, Determination, and other documents in the grazing files, it is my decision to select Alternative 4 as my proposed decision. I have made this selection for a variety of reasons,

but most importantly because of my understanding that implementation of this decision will best fulfill the BLM's obligation to manage the public lands under the Federal Land Policy and Management Act's multiple use and sustained yield mandate and will result in the Castlehead-Lambert allotment making significant progress towards meeting the resource objectives of the ORMP and the Idaho S&Gs.

Issues Addressed

Earlier in this decision, I outlined the major issues that drove the analysis and decision making process for the Castlehead-Lambert allotment. I want you to know that I considered the issues through the lens of each alternative before I made my decision. My selection of Alternative 4 was in large part because of my understanding that this selection best addresses those issues, given the BLM's legal and land management obligations.

Issue 1: Improve upland vegetation plant communities, and in particular, reverse the shift from desirable to undesirable native plant communities.

As mentioned above and explained in detail in the EA, the Castlehead-Lambert allotment has upland vegetation issues, including a loss of plant vigor and a shift in plant composition. Alternative 4 will address these issues in a number of ways. These issues are due less to recorded utilization levels, which have been generally light to moderate in recent years, and more to the infrequent year-long rest from grazing and repeated active growing season use experienced by the upland plant communities.

Alternative 4 implements deferment of grazing use to periods outside the active growing season (April 1 through June 30) in alternate years or more often, rather than to active growing season use in 2 years of each 3-year period or more frequently, as would occur under Alternatives 1 through 3. This reduced frequency of growing season use will allow native perennial species to complete the annual growth cycle in the absence of grazing impacts more often, which will allow recovery of plant health and vigor. With conservative or no grazing occurring during the critical growing season, Alternative 4 allows for enhanced nutrient cycling, hydrologic cycling, and energy flow and provides the opportunity for enhanced ecological function and progress toward ecological site potential and vegetation reference site communities.

Alternative 4 also decreases active grazing use by 35 percent when compared to active use authorized in the current permit, or by 19 percent when compared to average actual use reported by both permittees over the past 10 years, excluding years following recent fire when pastures were rested. Alternative 4 achieves its decrease in active use by reducing livestock numbers on the grazing permit. By reducing active growing season grazing use, AUMs, and livestock numbers, implementation of Alternative 4 will improve rangeland health and plant composition, ensure that native plant communities in the Castlehead-Lambert allotment progress toward the long-term objectives laid out in the ORMP, and safeguard against livestock management practices contributing toward not meeting Standard 4 of the Idaho S&Gs in the future.

Alternative 4 is also expected to positively affect soil stability, productivity, and hydrologic function over the short and long term. These improvements are the collateral effect of the BLM's intention with implementation of Alternative 4 to reverse the change in plant composition and improve native plant communities. Alternative 4 implements livestock management practices that maintain

or improve upland vegetation and watershed conditions consistent with management actions of the ORMP[12].

Issue 2: Limit juniper encroachment into shrub-steppe vegetation types.

Livestock grazing seasons of use and livestock numbers authorized in the Castlehead-Lambert allotment would not contribute to either improvement or continued failure to meet Standard 4 where it is not being met due to juniper encroachment into sagebrush steppe vegetation communities. Improper grazing practices implemented in the late 1800s and early 1900s and fire suppression altered natural fire regimes, which periodically reduced juniper encroachment into sagebrush steppe. Other than the indirect effect from removal of fine fuels that support the spread of wildfire, recent livestock grazing has had little influence on juniper encroachment. The intensity of livestock grazing necessary to reduce fine fuels to levels that alter fire behavior under extreme weather and fuel conditions that are common in the sagebrush steppe type is not consistent with maintaining the fundamentals of land health. Because juniper control projects were not considered in this EA and because juniper encroachment is indirectly related to current livestock management practices, the need to limit juniper encroachment into sagebrush steppe vegetation types is not addressed in this proposed decision to renew grazing permits.

Issue 3: Prevent introduction and spread of noxious and invasive annual species (e.g., cheatgrass).

Although any grazing has the potential to introduce and spread invasive weeds and non-native annual grasses, the reduction in livestock numbers and active use inherent in Alternative 4 will result in proportionally less soil surface disturbance and fewer animals that could carry seed to and from the allotment in fur, on hooves, and in their digestive system. As compared to Alternatives 1 through 3, the risk of invasive species spreading is lower under Alternative 4 as native perennial species health and vigor is improved and progress is made toward the ORMP vegetation management objective. Available sites for invasive species establishment will be reduced through competition with healthy native perennial species.

Although Alternative 5 would further reduce the potential for livestock to introduce and spread invasive and non-native annual species as compared to all alternatives that would continue to authorize grazing within the Castlehead-Lambert allotment, livestock remain only one of a large number of vectors for seed dispersal and soil surface disturbance. BLM's coordinated and ongoing weed control program would still be required in the absence of livestock grazing in the allotment.[13]

Issue 4: Improve riparian vegetation and stream-bank stability associated with streams and springs/seeps.

The grazing schedule of Alternative 4, which prohibits mid-summer grazing in the riparian pastures, will reduce the impacts on the riparian and water resources. Specifically, about 40 miles of intermittent streams and 14.75 acres of riparian-wetland areas associated with springs within pasture 2 would incur only those impacts associated with spring grazing. Within pastures 1 and 6, approximately 17.6 miles of perennial, 20 miles of intermittent, and 36.7 acres of spring/seep riparian area would incur only those impacts associated with spring and fall grazing during alternate

[12] For more detailed discussion, please refer to EA number DOI-BLM-ID-B030-2012-0012-EA Section 3.4.1.2 and 3.4.2.2.

[13] For more detailed discussion, please refer to EA number DOI-BLM-ID-B030-2012-0012-EA Section 3.4.1.2

years. Under this alternative, there will be progress toward meeting the Rangeland Health Standards associated with the water and riparian resources (Standards 2, 3, and 7) because mid-summer grazing in pastures where riparian resources are present would be curtailed and livestock numbers would be reduced. Standards 2, 3, and 7 would be met in the long term. Additionally, the ORMP objective to maintain or improve riparian-wetland areas to attain PFC for all lotic and lentic systems would be achieved. Similarly, the ORMP objective to meet or exceed State water quality standards would be attained.[14]

Issue 5: Improve wildlife habitats, and habitats necessary to meet objectives for sagebrush steppe and riparian dependent species, including sage-grouse.

Wildlife habitat in upland and riparian areas would improve throughout the allotment under Alternative 4, due to the focus in this alternative on improving the health and vigor of plant communities. Improvement will be accomplished primarily by limiting the frequency of livestock grazing use during the active growing season for upland native perennial species, eliminating mid-summer grazing of pastures with riparian resources, decreasing the stocking rate for the allotment as a whole, and reducing authorized AUMs.[15] Further reductions in already slight to low utilization levels will result in greater forage and cover for wildlife in the short term and healthier plant communities in the long-term.

Sage-grouse habitat in upland and riparian areas in all pastures, and especially upland habitats in pasture 4-Lambert Table, would improve. As stated in the EA, "A native vegetation community of healthy, productive, and diverse populations of native plants typically provides proper habitat composition, structure, and function for effective sage-grouse habitat conditions. As an indicator species for the sagebrush ecosystem, the conditions that specify healthy habitat for sage-grouse are indicative of the health of the system in general. Effective sage-grouse habitat is closely related to vegetation community conditions discussed in Standard 4 (Native Plant Communities)."[16]

Alternative 4 limits upland growing season use in all pastures and eliminates mid-summer use of riparian resources. Thus, this alternative will result in fewer disturbances to sage-grouse breeding activities in uplands and brood-rearing activities in riparian areas in comparison to Alternatives 1, 2, and 3. Deferment of grazing use in pasture 4-Lambert Table to a period before the lekking and nesting season for sage-grouse will eliminate potential direct effects of livestock use to sage-grouse and indirect effects resulting from removal of nesting concealment cover and early brood-rearing forage. This early-season use will also provide ample opportunity for understory grass growth during the middle and late parts of the nesting and early-brood rearing periods. At the same time, scheduled periodic or annual deferment of grazing use in all pastures to a period before or after the active growing season will favor improvements in the condition of shrub steppe vegetation community composition, structure, and overall health, enhancing habitats for sagebrush-obligate

[14] For more detailed discussion, please refer to EA number DOI-BLM-ID-B030-2012-0012-EA Section 3.4.4.3.4

[15] Such improvement is consistent with the BLM's Interim Management Policy to "maintain and/or improve GSG and its habitat" by incorporating management practices that provide for adequate residual plant cover and diversity in the understories of sagebrush plant communities and "promote the growth and persistence of native shrubs, grasses and forbs" and balance grazing between riparian and upland habitat to promote the production and availability of beneficial forbs to GSG in 'meadows, mesic habitats, and riparian pastures while maintaining upland conditions and functions". IM 2012-043.

[16] Please refer to EA number DOI-BLM-ID-B030-2012-0012-EA Section 3.5.5.1

and shrub-dependent wildlife species. Because sage-grouse use riparian areas during the brood-rearing period, the riparian improvement should further benefit sage-grouse on the allotment. The subsequent increase in cover and forage for wildlife in upland and riparian areas is expected to occur over the short term (3 to 5 years), with a reduction in the frequency of grazing use during the active growing season and during the term of the permit, with progress toward attainment of reference site shrub steppe vegetation.

My decision to select Alternative 4 will benefit sage-grouse and its habitat. I considered effects to sage-grouse for many reasons, but in large part because of the extent of PPH preliminary priority habitat (70 percent of the acreage) and PGH preliminary general habitat (8 percent of the acreage) in the allotment. There is also key sage-grouse habitat as mapped by the Idaho Department of Fish and Game. Though direct effects of grazing on sage-grouse nesting and brood-rearing habitats are not well understood by scientists, my decision should largely avoid the potential for those effects. Wildlife habitats are expected to recover and improve and significant progress toward meeting Standard 8 (Threatened and Endangered Plants and Animals) will occur under the proposed decision. Implementation of Alternative 4, with its attendant reduction of AUMs and change in season of use, will improve sage-grouse habitat in particular, and is consistent with objectives of the BLM special status species policy and the BLM's Interim Management IM (*see* IM-2010-043).

Although Alternative 5 would further reduce the potential impacts to special status species habitats with removal of livestock grazing from the allotment, proper livestock management practices that implement appropriate seasons, intensities, and duration of use have been identified as consistent with providing habitats for sagebrush-obligate and shrub-dependent special status species. Alternative 4 implements proper livestock management by establishing seasons and the duration of grazing use in pastures that provide seasonal habitats for sage-grouse and limits the intensity of impacts to upland and riparian resources.

In addition, my selection of Alternative 4 implements livestock management practices that will maintain or improve wildlife habitats consistent with the BLM's Idaho Rangeland Guidelines for Livestock Management 5, 8, and 12[17].

Issue 6: Consider whether grazing on the Castlehead-Lambert allotment can be used to limit wildfire.

During the NEPA process, some asked the BLM to consider using grazing on the Castlehead-Lambert allotment to help limit wildfire. The BLM has considered the issue and determined that it would be theoretically possible to use targeted grazing to create fuel breaks on the Castlehead-Lambert allotment with the hope that those fuel breaks would help control the spread of large wildfires in the area. However, the resource costs associated with this strategy are such that I have decided against it. Ultimately, implementation of Alternative 4 will not significantly alter the BLM's ability to fight wildfire in the area.

Although a number of sources identify the potential to use grazing to reduce fine fuels on a landscape scale, identified benefits are greatest with targeted grazing that strategically maintains

[17] For more detailed discussion, please refer to EA number DOI-BLM-ID-B030-2012-0012-EA Section 3.4.5.2.

fuel-breaks to aid fire suppression actions. Landscape-scale fuels reduction with livestock grazing has its greatest application in grass-dominated vegetation types and specifically within seedings of grazing-tolerant introduced grasses and annual grasses. Such conditions do not exist on the Castlehead-Lambert allotment at a pasture-wide scale. In addition, the levels of livestock grazing and the season of yearly use necessary to reduce fine fuels prior to the fire season are not conducive to sustaining native perennial herbaceous species. This is one of the main reasons a targeted grazing system to control fire is not viable on the Castlehead-Lambert allotment at this time and with existing infrastructure. The BLM's current permit renewal is focused on improving native plant communities on the Castlehead-Lambert allotment, and targeted grazing to create fuel breaks would not support that improvement.

Alternative 4 retains a level of grazing use that reduces the accumulation of fine fuels, and thus will lessen the spread of large wildfires when fire weather conditions are less than extreme. More importantly, it is designed to benefit and promote the health and vigor of native perennial species on the allotment, thereby limiting the dominance of annual species and so limiting the accumulation of continuous fine fuels and extreme fire behavior, while enhancing post-fire recovery[18].

Issue 7: Limit impacts to regional socioeconomic activity generated by livestock production.

During the NEPA and public comment process, some raised the concern that selection of certain alternatives considered in the EA could impact regional socioeconomic activity. I share this concern, and have taken these concerns into consideration in making my decision; however my primary obligation is to ensure that the new grazing permit protects resources in a manner consistent with the BLM's obligations under the Idaho S&Gs and the ORMP. As noted above, I have selected Alternative 4 in large part because that selection accomplishes those latter goals.

Consideration of Alternatives 1 and 2 disclosed that neither of those alternatives would allow the allotment to meet Idaho S&Gs or the ORMP resource objectives, and therefore I could not select them despite the lesser economic impacts that they may have had. While Alternative 3 was developed to improve resource conditions toward meeting objectives and did not reduce livestock numbers or AUMs initially, that alternative would have required a level of livestock management for you as the permittee and grazing administration for the BLM with monitoring requirements which would have been expensive and time-consuming. In addition, implementation of Alternative 3 could have introduced an unnecessary element of uncertainty into your livestock management operations, including the degree of flexibility available to modify livestock management practices and AUM numbers, while remaining within terms and conditions of the grazing permit. An additional aspect of livestock management under Alternative 3 is the potential need for you to reduce livestock numbers and AUMs used to meet performance-based terms and conditions. Such unknown impacts could include an overall reduction in the number of cattle that graze within the Castlehead-Lambert allotment and the economic impacts to the region similar to or greater than those of Alternative 4.

Hoping to ameliorate any abrupt economic impacts from implementation of Alternative 4 to you as a permittee, I attempted to develop a way to implement Alternative 4 that would have a less-

[18] For more detailed discussion, please refer to EA number DOI-BLM-ID-B030-2012-0012-EA Section 2.6.

severe initial impact. However, given the BLM's regulatory requirement to make significant progress under a new permit following a determination that an allotment is not meeting Standards due to current livestock use, I determined that any mediated approach would have only minimal benefit and increased uncertainty for the permittee. In addition, actual use numbers reported over the 10-year period between 2002 and 2011, excluding during the few years following the 2007 fire, show that permittees have varied the number of AUMs used annually from 3,020 to 1,986, and thus are operating with a degree of flexibility. For these reasons, I have not incorporated any such measures into the proposed decision.

Additional Rationale

Consideration of other factors contributed to my decision to make Alternative 4 the foundation of future grazing. Alternatives 1 and 2 would not have led the allotment toward meeting or making progress towards meeting the Idaho S&Gs. As between Alternatives 3 and 4, one consideration was the intensity of grazing management practices required from the permittee under each alternative and the workload necessary for the BLM to administer grazing under each alternative; in fact this was a major consideration in my evaluation of Alternatives 3 and 4.

While Alternative 4 retains appropriate flexibility to adjust livestock use through the grazing season in response to weather conditions and livestock water availability in an arid environment, it does not require the intensity of livestock management that would be necessary to manage livestock impacts to vegetation and other resource values under full implementation of Alternative 3. Indeed, under Alternative 3, both the BLM and the permittee would have to intensively monitor riparian, upland, and other resources based on use patterns, and react in response to unacceptable intensities of livestock use accordingly.

While theoretically possible, that type of intensive monitoring and livestock management is extremely difficult. The intensive monitoring and strict compliance requirements led me to reject Alternative 3 as too labor-intensive and lacking in long-range certainty for the operator and the BLM. For these reasons, I determined that it was not in the best interests of the BLM or the permittee to select that alternative. Flexibility provided under Alternative 4 retains seasons, intensities, and duration of grazing use within parameters that will allow maintenance and improvement of native perennial vegetation health and vigor, riparian resources, and other resource values. Indeed, Alternative 4 achieves the same resource ends as Alternative 3, but does so by modifying seasons of use and numbers of livestock as opposed to requiring yearly intensive management and adjustment.

I did consider selecting Alternative 5 (No Grazing) for the Castlehead-Lambert allotment; however, based on all the information used in developing my decision, I believe that the BLM can meet resource objectives and still allow grazing on the allotment. In selecting Alternative 4 rather than Alternative 5, I especially considered BLM's ability to meet resource objectives using Alternative 4 and the impact of implementation of Alternative 5 on permittees and on regional economic activity. The allotment's resource issues are primarily related to the improper seasons and site-specific intensities of grazing use. The suspension of grazing for a 10-year period is not the management decision most appropriate at this time in light of these factors. Implementation of Alternative 4 will address the resource issues identified.

Climate change is another factor I considered in building my decision around Alternative 4. Climate change is a stressor that can reduce the long-term competitive advantage of native perennial plant species. Since livestock management practices can also stress perennial species in arid sagebrush steppe environments, I considered the issues together, albeit based on the limited information available on how they relate in actual range conditions. Although the factors that contribute to climate change are complex, long-term, and not fully understood, the opportunity to provide resistance and resilience within native perennial vegetation communities from livestock grazing-induced impacts are within the scope of this decision. Alternative 4's combined seasons, intensities, and durations of livestock use promote long-term plant health and vigor. Assuming that climate change affects the arid landscapes in the long-term, the native plant communities on the Castlehead-Lambert allotment will be better armed to survive such changes under Alternative 4 as compared with Alternatives 1 through3. The native plant health and vigor protected under Alternative 4 will provide resistance and resilience to additional stressors, including climate change.[19]

My decision to not authorize additional projects at this time, specifically the reconstruction of fence destroyed by past fires and the construction of approximately 0.72 miles of fence-line along the ridge to the east of the West Fork Red Canyon in pasture 6, is because the renewal of your grazing permit with terms and conditions of the permit as identified above is not dependent on these projects. Retention of the existing coordinated process to identify, analyze, and authorize as appropriate the restoration, improvement, or development of additional range projects outside the grazing permit renewal process provides for the appropriate analysis, authorization, and implementation of projects, while not encumbering the expedited permit renewal process.

Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI)

A finding of no significant impact (FONSI) was signed on January 28, 2013, and concluded that the proposed decision to implement Alternative 4 is not a major federal action that will have a significant effect on the quality of the human environment, individually or cumulatively with other actions in the general area. That finding was based on the context and intensity of impacts organized around the 10 significance criteria described at 40 CFR § 1508.27. Therefore, an environmental impact statement is not required. A copy of the FONSI for EA No. DOI-BLM-ID-B030-2012-0012-EA is available on the web at:

http://www.blm.gov/id/st/en/prog/nepa_register/owyhee_grazing_group/grazing_permit_renewal.html

Conclusion

In conclusion, it is my decision to select Alternative 4 over other alternatives because livestock management practices under this selection will best lead the allotment to meeting the ORMP objectives allotment-wide and the Idaho S&Gs in locations where standards were not met due to current livestock management practices. Alternatives 1 and 2 fail to implement livestock management practices that would meet the objectives and standards. Specifically, both alternatives fail to implement actions that would meet Standard 2 (Riparian Areas and Wetlands), Standard 3 (Stream Channel/Floodplain), and Standard 7 (Water Quality) in associated with springs/seeps and

[19] For more detailed discussion, please refer to EA number DOI-BLM-ID-B030-2012-0012-EA section 3.4.1.2

streams, including the east and west forks of Red Canyon, Red Canyon, Little Smith Creek, Beaver Creek, Carter Creek, Moonshine Spring Creek, and Castle Creek. In addition, both alternatives fail to implement actions that would meet Standard 8 (Threatened and Endangered Plants and Animals) for wildlife species in riparian habitats. Full implementation of Alternative 3 would likely require intensive livestock management to ensure compliance with performance-based terms and conditions and additional workload to complete monitoring and compliance inspections. The potential benefits under Alternative 3 are equally achieved under Alternative 4. Alternative 5 would improve conditions on the allotment and allow the allotment to meet or make significant progress toward meeting the Standards. However, it also could severely impact the economic activities of two livestock operations from Owyhee County and southwest Idaho, a region where livestock production and agriculture is a large portion of the economy. That latter point, in conjunction with current resource conditions and the improvement anticipated by implementation of Alternative 4s leads me to believe elimination of livestock grazing from the Castlehead-Lambert allotment is unnecessary at this point.

Authority

The authorities under which this decision is being issued include the Taylor Grazing Act of 1934 as amended and the Federal Land Policy and Management Act of 1976, as promulgated through Title 43 of the Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) Subpart 4100 Grazing Administration - Exclusive of Alaska. My decision is issued under the following specific regulations:

- 4100.0-8 Land use plans: The ORMP designates the Castlehead-Lambert allotment available for livestock grazing;
- 4130.2 Grazing permits or leases: Grazing permits may be issued to qualified applicants on lands designated as available for livestock grazing. Grazing permits shall be issued for a term of 10 years unless the authorized officer determines that a lesser term is in the best interest of sound management;
- 4130.3 Terms and conditions: Grazing permits must specify the term and conditions that are needed to achieve desired resource conditions, including both mandatory and other terms and conditions; and
- 4180 Fundamentals of Rangeland Health and Standards and Guidelines for Grazing Administration: This proposed decision will result in taking appropriate action to modifying existing grazing management in order to make significant progress toward achieving rangeland health.

Right of Protest and/or Appeal

Any applicant, permittee, lessee or other interested publics may protest the proposed decision under Sec. 43 CFR § 4160.1 and 4160.2, in person or in writing within 15 days after receipt of such decision to:

Loretta V. Chandler
Owyhee Field Office Manager
20 First Avenue West
Marsing, Idaho 83639

The protest, if filed should clearly and concisely state the reason(s) why the proposed decision is in error.

In accordance with 43 CFR § 4160.3(a), in the absence of a protest, the proposed decision will become the final decision of the authorized officer without further notice unless otherwise provided in the proposed decision.

In accordance with 43 CFR § 4160.3(b), upon a timely filing of a protest, after a review of protest received and other information pertinent to the case, the authorized officer shall issue a final decision.

Any applicant, permittee, lessee or other person whose interest is adversely affected by the final decision may file an appeal in writing for the purpose of a hearing before an administrative law judge in accordance with 43 CFR § 4160.3(c), 4160.4, 4.21, and 4.470. The appeal must be filed within 30 days following receipt of the final decision or within 30 days after the date the proposed decision becomes final. The appeal may be accompanied by a petition for a stay of the decision in accordance with 43 CFR § 4.471 pending final determination on appeal. The appeal and petition for a stay must be filed in the office of the authorized officer, as noted above. In accordance with 43 CFR § 4.401, the BLM does not accept fax or email filing of a notice of appeal and petition for stay. Any notice of appeal and/or petition for stay must be sent or delivered to the office of the authorized officer by mail or personal delivery.

Within 15 days of filing the appeal, or the appeal and petition for stay, with the BLM officer named above, the appellant must also serve copies on other person named in the copies sent to section of this decision in accordance with 43 CFR 4.421 and on the Office of the Regional Solicitor located at the address below in accordance with 43 CFR § 4.470(a) and 4.471(b).

Boise Field Solicitors Office
University Plaza
960 Broadway Ave., Suite 400
Boise Idaho, 83706

The appeal shall state the reasons, clearly and concisely, why the appellant thinks the final decision is in error and otherwise complies with the provisions of 43 CFR § 4.470.

Should you wish to file a petition for a stay, see 43 CFR § 4.471 (a) and (b). In accordance with 43 CFR § 4.471(c), a petition for a stay must show sufficient justification based on the following standards:

(1) The relative harm to the parties if the stay is granted or denied.
(2) The likelihood of the appellant's success on the merits.
(3) The likelihood of immediate and irreparable harm if the stay is not granted, and
(4) Whether the public interest favors granting the stay.

As noted above, the petition for stay must be filed in the office of the authorized officer and served in accordance with 43 CFR § 4.471.

Any person named in the decision that receives a copy of a petition for a stay and/or an appeal, see 43 CFR § 4.472(b) for procedures to follow if you wish to respond.

If you have any questions, please contact me at 208-896-5913.

Sincerely,

Loretta V. Chandler
Field Manager
Owyhee Field Office

Copies sent to:

06 Livestock, Dennis Stanford, PO Box 167, Jordan Valley, OR 97910	7008 1140 0004 6331 6026
Audubon Society Golden Eagle, PO Box 8261, Boise, ID 83707	7008 1140 0004 6331 7818
Barringer, John, 6016 Pierce Park, Boise, ID 83703	7008 1140 0004 6331 7825
Boise District Grazing Board, Stan Boyd, PO Box 2596, Boise, ID 83701	7008 1140 0004 6331 7832
Bruneau Cattle Co., Eric Davis, 3900 E Idaho St., Bruneau, ID 83604	7008 1140 0004 6331 7849
Bureau of Land Management, Elko Field Office, 3900 E Idaho St., Elko, NV, 89801	7008 1140 0004 6331 7863
Foundation for N. American Sheep, Herb Meyr, 570 E 16th N., Mountain Home, ID 83647	7008 1140 0004 6331 7887
Gibson, Chad, 16770 Agate Ln., Wilder, ID 83676	7008 1140 0004 6331 7894
Goller, Brian., 2722 E. Starcrest, Boise, ID 83712	7008 1140 0004 6331 7900
Heughins, Russ, 10370 W Landmark Ct., Boise, ID 83704	7008 1140 0004 6331 7917
ID Conservation League, John Robison, PO Box 844, Boise, ID 83701	7008 1140 0004 6331 7924
ID Dept. of Agriculture, Ron Kay, PO Box 7249, Boise, ID 83707	7008 1140 0004 6331 7931
ID Dept. of Parks & Recreation, Director, PO Box 83720, Boise, ID 83720	7008 1140 0004 6331 7948
ID Fish & Game, 3101 S Powerline Rd., Nampa, ID 83686	7008 1140 0004 6331 7955
ID Native Plant Society, President, PO Box 9451, Boise, ID 83707	7008 1140 0004 6331 7962
ID Outfitters & Guides Assoc., Grant Simonds, PO Box 95, Boise, ID 83701	7008 1140 0004 6331 7979
ID Rivers United, PO Box 633, Boise, ID 83701	7008 1140 0004 6331 7986
ID Sporting Congress, Ron Mitchell, PO Box 1136, Boise, ID 83701	7008 1140 0004 6331 7993
ID Wildlife Federation, PO Box 6426, Boise, ID 83707	7008 1140 0004 6331 8006
ID Dept. of Lands, PO Box 83720, Boise, ID 83720	7008 1140 0004 6331 8013
ID Dept. Environmental Quality, 1445 N Orchard, Boise, ID 83706	7008 1140 0004 6331 8020
Jaca, Elias, 21275 Upper Reynolds Creek Rd., Murphy, ID 83650	7008 1140 0004 6331 8037
Juniper Mtn. Grazing Assoc., Michael Stanford, 3581 Cliffs Rd., Jordan Valley, OR 97910	7008 1140 0004 6331 8044
Kershner, Vernon, PO Box 38, Jordan Valley, OR 97910	7008 1140 0004 6331 8051
LU Ranching, Tim Lowry, PO Box 132, Jordan Valley, OR 97910	7008 1140 0004 6331 8068
Lyons, Charles, 11408 Hwy 20, Mountain Home, ID 83647	7008 1140 0004 6331 8075
Maestrejuan, Teo & Sara, 26613 Pleasant Valley Rd., Jordan Valley, OR 97910	7008 1140 0004 6331 8082

Moore Smith Buxton & Turcke, Paul Turcke, 950 W. Bannock, Ste 520. Boise, ID 83702	7008 1140 0004 6331 8099
National Wildlife Federation, Rich Day, 240 N Higgins #2, Missoula, MT 59802	7008 1140 0004 6331 8105
Nelson, Brett, 9127 W Preece St., Boise, ID 83704	7008 1140 0004 6331 8112
OR Natural Desert Assoc., Brent Fenty, 50 SW Bond St #4, Bend OR 99702	7008 1140 0004 6331 8129
Oregon Natural Resources Council, 5825 N Greeley, Portland, OR 97217	7008 1140 0004 6331 8136
Owyhee Cattlemen's Assoc. PO Box 400, Marsing, ID 83639	7008 1140 0004 6331 8143
Owyhee County Commissioners, PO Box 128, Murphy, ID 83650	7008 1140 0004 6331 8174
Owyhee County Natural Resources Committee, Jim Desmond, PO Box 38, Murphy, ID 83650	7008 1140 0004 6331 8181
Pascoe, Ramona, PO Box 126, Jordan Valley, OR 97910	7008 1140 0004 6331 8204
Petan Co. of Nevada - YP Ranch, John Jackson, HC 32 Box 450, Tuscarora, NV 89834	7008 1140 0004 6331 8211
Resource Advisory Council, Gene Gray, 2393 Watts Lane, Payette, ID 83661	7008 1140 0004 6331 8228
Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation, Dave Torell, 6199 N Bellecreek Ave, Boise, ID 83713	7008 1140 0004 6331 8242
Shoshone-Bannock Tribes, Nathan Small, PO Box 306, Ft. Hall, ID 83203	7008 1140 0004 6331 8266
Sierra Club, PO Box 552, Boise, ID 83701	7008 1140 0004 6331 8273
The Wilderness Society, 950 W Bannock St., Ste 605, Boise, ID 83702	7008 1140 0004 6331 8297
Vonderheide, Richard, 6036 W Outlook Ave, Boise, ID 83703	7008 1140 0004 6331 8303
Western Range Services, PO Box 1330, Elko, NV 89801	7008 1140 0004 6331 8327
Western Watershed Projects, PO Box 1770, Hailey, ID 83333	7008 1140 0004 6331 8334
Western Watershed Projects- Fite, Katie, PO Box 2863, Boise, ID 83701	7008 1140 0004 6331 8341