

United States Department of the Interior
Bureau of Land Management
Environmental Assessment
DOI-BLM-ID-I040-2012-017-EA
Dan French Crossing Permit EA
October 26, 2012

PURPOSE OF AND NEED FOR THE PROPOSED ACTION

Dan E. French has applied for a crossing (trailing) permit to cross public lands administered by the Salmon Field Office. Dan French submitted a crossing application on October 17, 2011.

The application requests permission to use a cross-country route that affects an approximately 3.5 miles, located in the Joe Moore Allotment. Livestock crossing and the associated route facilitates cattle movement to and from Forest Service and adjacent privately owned lands.

RELATIONSHIP TO STATUTES, REGULATIONS, AND OTHER PLANS

Authorized crossing of livestock across BLM administered lands would be in accordance with 43 CFR 4130 and 4160, and would be consistent with the provisions of the Taylor Grazing Act and the Federal Land Policy and Management Act. The BLM is required, under the Federal Land Policy and Management Act and the Taylor Grazing Act to respond to requests for livestock crossing across BLM administered lands. Crossing would be in accordance with the Lemhi Resource Management Plan of 1987, as amended.

DESCRIPTION OF ALTERNATIVES

PROPOSED ACTION – ISSUE LIVESTOCK CROSSING PERMIT

BLM is proposing to issue a crossing permit to Dan E. French. The term of the crossing permit would be 3/1/2012 to 2/28/2015 to coincide with the dates of his grazing permit. The livestock would be herded within a 3.5 mile by 150 foot corridor which is depicted on Map A (attached). As proposed, crossing would occur over a 4 day period between October 1 and October 31 with approximately 62 cattle on the Joe Moore Allotment. Trailing would follow two-track roads but with some use on overland routes.

The following table shows the number of acres in the allotment proposed to be crossed, and the percentage of the allotment that would be affected.

Table 1. Length of trailing route, allotment acreage, total acres affected, and percent of total allotment acres affected.

Allotment	Approx. Crossing Event Length	Allotment Acreage	Total Acres Crossed*	% of Allotment (Crossing Acres / Total Allotment Acres *100)
Joe Moore	3.5 miles	2,263	62*	3%

*Assuming a 150-foot wide trailing corridor.

The Crossing Permit for Dan E. French would appear as follows:

MANDATORY TERMS AND CONDITIONS:

Allotment Number	Allotment Name	Livestock Number	Livestock Kind	Earliest Crossing	Latest Crossing	% PL	AUMs
06118	Joe Moore	62	Cattle	10/01	10/31	100	2

OTHER TERMS AND CONDITIONS:

- Crossing will occur along the route outlined in the attached map.

- This permit applies to active trailing use only, no overnight stays are authorized
- Livestock crossing activity will be limited to established routes to the extent where practical and reasonable for livestock movement.

STANDARD TERMS AND CONDITIONS:

- Billing notices are issued which specify fees due. Billing notices, when paid, become part of the crossing permit. Fee payments are due on the date specified on the billing notice and **MUST** be paid in full prior to livestock crossing activities.
- This permit is issued solely for the purpose of moving livestock across public lands for proper and lawful purposes, as needed for the orderly administration of rangelands. This permit confers no priority for renewal, and cannot be transferred or assigned.

ALTERNATIVE 1 – NO ACTION

BLM would deny the application and would not issue a crossing permit. Crossing of livestock across BLM administered lands would not occur.

ALTERNATIVES CONSIDERED BUT NOT ANALYZED IN DETAIL

The BLM considered alternatives that modified crossing dates or modified the proposed route within the allotment; feasible alternate routes to private lands do not exist. However, because the applicant’s proposal would result in only negligible impacts to the environment as described in the Environmental Impacts section below, it was not necessary to consider modifications to the proposal. BLM has not identified any unresolved conflicts concerning alternative uses of available resources.

AFFECTED ENVIRONMENT

The Salmon Field Office is divided into 84 grazing allotments on 492,000 acres of BLM administered lands. Generally, the lower elevation rangeland in the field office is grazed in the spring, fall and winter. The higher elevations are grazed in the spring, summer, and fall. Livestock trailing occurs at different times throughout the year to facilitate these general seasons of grazing use. Furthermore, timing of trailing events may vary annually based on factors such as forage production, drought, resource conditions, weather, wildfire, and individual livestock operations. Trailing events across BLM administered lands within the Salmon Field Office range in distance from less than one mile to approximately ten miles, and in duration from less than one hour to one day per crossing event. There are no crossing permits that authorize overnight use on Salmon BLM-managed public lands.

The area subject to this proposal is located in the northern portion of the Salmon FO, approximately 12 miles south of Salmon, Idaho in the Lemhi Valley. The allotment affected by the request is included in the Improve (I) category of selective management in the 1987 Lemhi Resource Management Plan (RMP) (USDI-BLM, 1987). The RMP describes “Category I” allotments as: “Most of the public lands in the allotment are proposed for retention; range condition and trend are unsatisfactory; site potential for improvement is high; resource conflicts are high; opportunities exist for positive economic return from public investments; and present management appears to be unsatisfactory.” Draft RMP, Appendix B, p. B-1.

A Standards and Guidelines Determination for the Joe Moore Allotment was completed in September 2003. When the determination was signed, the existing grazing management

practices and/or level of grazing on the Joe Moore Allotment were achieving all applicable Idaho Standards for Rangeland Health and conformed to the Guidelines for Livestock Grazing Management. Achieving or making significant progress towards these standards is required of all uses of public lands as stated in 43 CFR 4180.1.

Within the allotment, elevation ranges from approximately 5,000 to 6,500 feet. Slopes range from 0-30 percent. The average annual precipitation in the area is 8-12 inches and most of the precipitation occurs during the fall, winter, and spring months. Winter precipitation is typically in the form of snow. The soils on this site are mostly deep to very deep and are well or somewhat excessively drained.

Bluebunch wheatgrass, Idaho fescue, and Wyoming big sagebrush are the dominant plant species present.

There are no wild or scenic river corridors, floodplains, wetland, or other ecologically significant or critical areas. There are no designated Wilderness areas within the Salmon Field Office boundary. There are no Wilderness Study Areas, Areas of Critical Environmental Concern, historic trails, or sites listed or eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places within the allotment. There is no known habitat or occurrences of any plant or animal species listed pursuant to the Endangered Species Act. There are no known Indian sacred sites within the allotment. There are no riparian areas located on the trailing route. The habitat within these allotments is not crucial migratory bird habitat, and no refuges are located within the allotment.

There are no known greater sage-grouse leks in the allotment; the nearest known leks are approximately 3-1/2 miles to the southeast and 2 miles to the northwest of the proposed crossing route. While there are no leks in the allotment or near the crossing route, greater sage-grouse likely use the area for breeding, nesting, brood rearing and wintering due to vegetation, elevation, topography and slope position. The crossing route falls almost entirely within sage-grouse preliminary priority habitat, as mapped, with the rest of the route in preliminary general habitat.

Primary recreational use consists of hunting and OHV travel. Non-motorized recreation consists of horseback riding and an occasional hiker or mountain bike rider.

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS

DIRECT AND INDIRECT EFFECTS

A wide range of resources were considered during the development of the EA. Table 2 displays the resources that were considered.

Table 2. Resources Considered in Developing the EA.

Resources Considered	Determination of Effect
Air Quality	Negligible amounts of dust would become airborne due to the movement of cattle.
Areas of Critical Environmental Concern	No effects because none are present along the trailing route.
Cultural Resources	Trailing activities are not expected to adversely affect cultural resources. No

Resources Considered	Determination of Effect
	recorded cultural resources are present within the areas of potential effect of the proposed trailing routes. The route would be monitored as a component of Section 106 compliance Consultation with the State Historic Preservation Office
Environmental Justice (EO 12898)	The proposed crossing event would not have a disproportionately high and adverse effect on low income or minority populations.
Farm Lands (prime or unique)	No effects because none are present along the trailing route.
Floodplains	No effects because none are present along the trailing route.
Vegetation	Some vegetation would be likely to be consumed or trampled during the crossing event. Impacts would be negligible because the pasture has adequate forage to accommodate the estimated 2 AUMs that could be consumed or trampled during the crossing events.
Noxious Weeds and Invasive Plants	Due to the local origin of the livestock and confinement to established routes, it is unlikely that the proposed crossing event would introduce or spread noxious weeds or invasive plants that are not already present along the crossing route.
Migratory Bird Treaty Act Species	The proposed trailing activities would only last for a few hours. Any migratory birds that are present when trailing activities occur, could easily avoid the activity. If affected at all, the migratory birds would be temporarily displaced for only an hour or two.
Native American Religious Concerns	No effects because none are known to exist along the trailing route.
Soils	Impacts to the soil resource from the proposed action would be an increased potential for erosion and localized compaction. These impacts would be temporary due to the limited time the cattle would be on the route.
Threatened/Endangered Plants; Sensitive Plants	No effects because none are known to exist along the trailing route
Threatened/Endangered Fish; Sensitive Fish	No effects because none are known to exist along the trailing route

Resources Considered	Determination of Effect
Threatened/Endangered Animals; Sensitive Animals	Identified trailing routes occur along established routes and trailing use occurs outside of important seasons of use (e.g. nesting or winter). If species are present when trailing activities occur, at most they would be temporarily displaced for an hour or two. Trailing activities are not expected to alter habitat for any threatened, endangered, or sensitive animals. The crossing route falls within sage-grouse preliminary priority habitat as mapped. Because of the crossing timeframe, crossing could not impact breeding or nesting sage-grouse.
Wastes: Hazardous or Solid	No effects because none are present along the trailing route.
Water Quality: Surface and Ground	No effects because none are present along the trailing route.
Wetlands/Riparian Zones	No effects because none are present along the trailing route.
Wilderness and Wilderness Study Areas	No effects because none are present along the trailing route.
Wild and Scenic Rivers: eligible, suitable or designated	No effects because none are present along the trailing route.
Tribal Treaty Rights	The proposed crossing event would not affect treaty rights.

The proposal involves up to 62 head of livestock traveling on two-track roads or overland routes. The size of the herd may vary, but will not exceed 62 pairs. The livestock would originate from neighboring private lands, and would not require water or feeding. The permittee has managed his livestock grazing permits in accordance with all applicable standards.

The livestock to be trailed would be the same kind as permitted in the allotments crossed. Therefore, it is unlikely there would be effects that are different in kind or scope than normal grazing activities, except that the intensity of all these impacts would be very minimal due to the extremely brief duration of the crossing activity and the nature of the area to be crossed by the livestock. Further, this livestock crossing event would not have the potential to affect the allotments' ability to meet Idaho Standards of Rangeland Health in the future because there is adequate forage to accommodate livestock and wildlife, and no other resources are affected by the crossing activity.

There are no uncertain or potentially significant environmental effects that might be caused by the proposed crossing event, nor are there unique or unknown environmental risks that need to be accounted for in the analysis.

DIRECT AND INDIRECT EFFECTS OF THE NO ACTION ALTERNATIVE

The permittee would not be able to move cattle across the Joe Moore Allotment to and from USFS and privately owned lands.

REASONABLY FORESEEABLE FUTURE ACTIONS

The BLM currently does not have any range improvement projects planned within this allotment or within any neighboring allotments. No future changes to the grazing management in this allotment are anticipated. When considered with past, present, and reasonably foreseeable future actions, there are no known incremental effects of the Proposed Action or No Action Alternative.

CUMULATIVE IMPACTS

The geographic scope of the proposed crossing permit would be limited to the 3.5 mile by 150 foot corridor, comprising approximately 62 acres (3%) of BLM-managed lands within the livestock crossing route.

The bounds for cumulative impacts to soils, vegetation; including BLM Sensitive Species, wetland and riparian areas, rangeland health standards, noxious weeds, wildlife; including threatened and BLM sensitive species and livestock grazing would be limited to those 2,263 acres within the Joe Moore Allotment. Since the potential direct and indirect impacts of the proposed action would be negligible, the possibility of cumulative impacts from this action of permitting livestock to cross the allotment would be negligible as well.

No significant individual or cumulative impacts are anticipated in the Joe Moore Allotment as a result of the proposed action which allows 62 head of cattle to trail through the allotment.

CONSULTATION AND COORDINATION

Dan French – Joe Moore Allotment Permittee

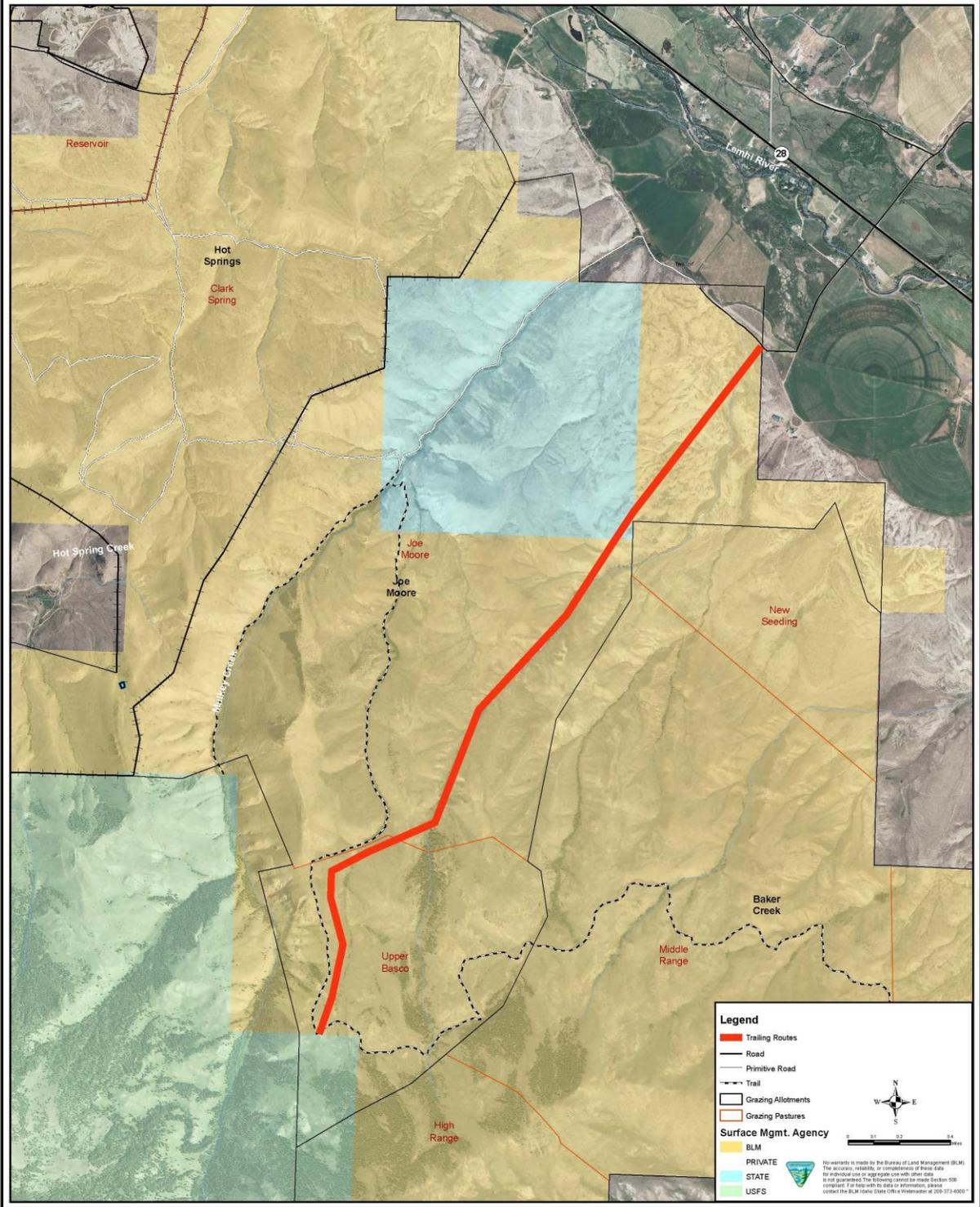
Lowell Cerise – Joe Moore Allotment Permittee

Lemhi County Cattle and Horse Growers Association

Western Watersheds Project – Interested Public

This crossing proposal was included in a Scoping Package for the Salmon Livestock Trailing EA that was posted to the Salmon Field Office website on December 23, 2011. No comments were received on this specific crossing event.

Joe Moore Allotment, Trailing Map



Map A