

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

**Environmental Assessment**

**# DOI-BLM-ID-I040-2012-018-EA**

**Goddard Crossing Permit EA**

**October 26, 2012**

## PURPOSE OF AND NEED FOR THE PROPOSED ACTION

Ross Goddard has applied for a crossing (trailing) permit to cross public lands administered by the Salmon Field Office. Ross Goddard submitted a crossing application on November 22, 2011.

The application requests permission to use the existing Cow Creek Road for approximately 2 miles, located in the Muleshoe Allotment, Cow Creek Pasture. Livestock crossing and the associated route facilitates cattle movement to and from 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/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 Ross Goddard. The term of the permit would be from 03/01/2012 to 02/28/2016 to coincide with his grazing permit. The livestock would be herded along the Cow Creek Road, which is depicted on map A (attached). As proposed, crossing would occur annually sometime between October 20 and November 30 with approximately 400 cattle.

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

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

Allotment	Approx. Crossing Event Length	Allotment Acreage	Total Acres Crossed*	% of Allotment (Crossing Acres / Total Allotment Acres *100)
Muleshoe	2 miles	25,817	36*	0.1%

\*Assuming a 150-foot wide trailing corridor.

**The Crossing Permit for Ross Goddard would appear as follows:**

### MANDATORY TERMS AND CONDITIONS:

Allotment Number	Allotment Name	Pasture	Livestock Number	Livestock Kind	Earliest Crossing	Latest Crossing	% PL	AUMs
00360	Muleshoe	Cow Creek	400	Cattle	10/20	11/30	100	13

### OTHER TERMS AND CONDITIONS:

- Crossing will occur along the route outlined on 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.

### **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 Tendoy, Idaho area of the Salmon FO, approximately 24 miles south of Salmon, Idaho. The allotment affected by the request is included in the Improve (I) category of selective management in the 1987 Lemhi Resource Management Plan (RMP). 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 was completed on the Muleshoe Allotment in June 1998. When the determination was signed, the existing grazing management practices and/or level of grazing on the Muleshoe Allotment were achieving or making significant progress

towards 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 6,600 feet. Slopes range from 0-40. 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 today. 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 or Areas of Critical Environmental Concern within the trailing route. The habitat within these allotments is not crucial migratory bird habitat, and no refuges are located within the allotment.

There is one active greater sage-grouse lek in the allotment, almost 5 miles to the north of the proposed crossing route. The southern portion of the crossing route falls within sage-grouse preliminary priority habitat, as mapped, due to the use for late brood rearing.

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 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.
Cultural Resources	No effects because none are known to be present along the trailing route
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

<b>Resources Considered</b>	<b>Determination of Effect</b>
	event. Impacts would be negligible because the pasture has adequate forage to accommodate the estimated 13 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 trailing route.
Soils	Impacts to the soil resource from the proposed action would be an increased potential for erosion of fine materials from the road surface and an increased potential for erosion and localized compaction from the shoulders of the road. These impacts would be transient 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 trailing route.

<b>Resources Considered</b>	<b>Determination of Effect</b>
Threatened/Endangered Fish; Sensitive Fish	<p>Livestock ford Cow Creek at a wet crossing immediately upstream of the BLM and PacfishInfishBiological Opinion (PIBO) Designated Monitoring Areas (DMAs), both of which are meeting all Resource Monitoring Objectives and have been on a strong upward trend since management was changed in 1993. All other stream crossings are on the road where the stream passes through a culvert. The portion of Cow Creek adjacent to the trailing route is heavily vegetated with woody species, with much of its length inaccessible to livestock. No impacts to the stream channel from trailing have been noted when cattle are removed from this portion of the allotment during the permitted season of use. Once on the County road, livestock do not have the potential to access Agency Creek due to the steep slopes off the road, the heavily vegetated nature of the stream, and fencing along much of the roadway where it crosses private lands.</p> <p>Cow Creek road provides the most reasonable access with the least potential for environmental impacts. Although some use of the riparian area adjacent to the road would be expected, most trailing will occur on the road. Given that the proposed action will take place when vegetation is typically dormant and the ground is usually frozen or covered in snow, impacts would be very minimal. The reach of Cow Creek that livestock would be trailed adjacent to is considered Designated Critical Habitat (DCH) for chinook; it is not occupied by any listed fish species, nor is considered DCH for any other listed fish species.</p>
Threatened/Endangered Animals; Sensitive Animals	<p>Identified trailing routes occur along established routes and trailing use occurs outside of important seasons of use (e.g. nesting). If species are present when trailing activities occur, at most they would be temporarily displaced for an hour or two. Trailing activities are not</p>

<b>Resources Considered</b>	<b>Determination of Effect</b>
	<p>expected to alter habitat for any threatened, endangered, or sensitive animals.</p> <p>A portion of the crossing route falls within sage-grouse preliminary priority habitat as mapped, however breeding, nesting and wintering habitat does not occur along the crossing corridor. Additionally because of the crossing timeframe, crossing could not impact breeding or nesting sage-grouse.</p>
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.

<b>Resources Considered</b>	<b>Determination of Effect</b>
Wetlands/Riparian Zones	<p>Livestock ford Cow Creek at a wet crossing immediately upstream of the BLM and PIBO DMAs, both of which are meeting all RMOs and have been on a strong upward trend since management was changed in 1993. All other stream crossings are on the road where the stream passes through a culvert. The portion of Cow Creek adjacent to the trailing route is heavily vegetated with woody species, with much of its length inaccessible to livestock. No impacts to the stream channel from trailing have been noted when cattle are removed from this portion of the allotment during the permitted season of use. Once on the County road, livestock do not have the potential to access Agency Creek due to the steep slopes off the road, the heavily vegetated nature of the stream, and fencing along much of the roadway where it crosses private lands.</p> <p>Cow Creek road provides the most reasonable access with the least potential for environmental impacts. Although some use of the riparian area adjacent to the road would be expected, most trailing will occur on the road. Given that the proposed action will take place when vegetation is typically dormant and the ground is usually frozen or covered in snow, impacts would be very minimal.</p>
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 400 head of livestock traveling on existing two-track roads. The size of the herd may vary, but will not exceed 400 cattle. 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 allotment 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 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 along the Cow Creek road within the Muleshoe allotment to and from privately owned lands.

## **Cumulative Impacts**

The geographic scope of the proposed crossing permit would be limited to those 36 (.1 %) acres of federal 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 25,817 acres within the Muleshoe allotment boundaries. 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.

## **Reasonably Foreseeable Future Actions**

The BLM currently does not have any range improvement projects planned within these allotments or within any neighboring allotments. No future changes to the grazing management in these allotments 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.

No significant individual or cumulative impacts are anticipated in the Muleshoe Allotment as a result of the proposed action which allows 400 head of cattle to trail through the allotment within the Cow Creek pasture.

## **CONSULTATION AND COORDINATION**

Ross Goddard – Muleshoe 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.



**Legend**

- STREAMS 100K
- Trailing Route
- ROAD
- - - PRIMITIVE ROAD
- - - TRAIL
- RANGE IMPROVEMENT POINT
- GRAZING ALLOTMENTS
- GRAZING PASTURES
- + FENCE



## Trailing Muleshoe



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

