

## **Finding of No Significant Impact Oakley East Allotments Permit Renewal**

I have carefully reviewed the actions that are analyzed within the 3 Alternatives in the Oakley East Allotments Permit Renewal EA (DOI-BLM-ID-T020-2010-0001-EA) which is incorporated by reference here in its entirety. This EA discloses the environmental impacts that would result from renewing livestock grazing permits in the Oakley East Allotments: Bedke-Churchill, Churchill-Mathews, Mill Creek, Callahan, Two Knobs, Goose Creek Fairchild and Fairchild Canyon.

Based on the analysis of the anticipated impacts resulting from the implementation of the Proposed Action for all the allotments, and considering the significance criteria in 40 CFR 1508.27, as well as the Rangeland Health Assessments/Evaluation Report (which I am also incorporating here by reference), I have determined that the action will not constitute a major Federal action that would significantly affect the quality of the human environment. Therefore, an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) is not required. I base my finding on the following:

- (a) Context. This requirement means that the significance of an action must be analyzed in several contexts such as society as a whole (human, national), the affected region, the affected interests, and the locality. Significance varies with the setting of the proposed action. For instance, in the case of a site-specific action, significance would usually depend upon the effects in the locale rather than in the world as a whole. Both short and long-term effects are relevant (40 CFR 1508.27):**

The disclosure of effects in the EA found the actions limited in context. The project area is limited in size and activities are limited in their potential to affect the human environment. Effects are local in nature and are not expected to significantly affect regional or national resources.

- (b) Intensity. This requirement refers to the severity of the impact. Responsible officials must bear in mind that more than one agency may make decisions about partial aspects of a major action. The following are considered in evaluating intensity (40 CFR 1508.27).**

1. *Impacts that may be both beneficial and/or adverse.*

Impacts associated with the livestock grazing permit renewal are identified and discussed in the Environmental Consequences section of the EA. The proposed action will not have any significant beneficial or adverse impacts as described in the EA.

2. *The degree to which the proposed action affects health or safety.*

The proposed activities will not significantly affect public health or safety from any actions associated with the Proposed Action. The purpose of the proposed action is to allow the continuation of ongoing livestock grazing while ensuring resource conditions and use is in conformance with the Idaho Standards and Guidelines for Rangeland Health. Similar actions have not significantly affected public health or safety.

3. *Unique characteristics of the geographic area such as proximity to historic or cultural resources, park lands, prime farmlands, wetlands, wild and scenic rivers, or ecologically critical areas.*

There are no known unique historic, park lands, prime farmlands, wetlands, wild and scenic rivers, or ecologically critical areas in the allotment. A Class III cultural resource inventory has been completed and it was determined that there are no historic or cultural resources in the project area.

4. *The degree to which the effects are likely to be highly controversial.*

The analysis did not identify any effects that are highly controversial.

5. *The degree to which the effects are highly uncertain or involve unique or unknown risks.*

The possible effects on the human environment are not highly uncertain nor do they involve unique or uncertain risks. The technical analyses conducted for the determination of the impacts to the resources are supportable with use of accepted techniques, reliable data, and professional judgment. The Proposed Action is on-going in nature and all of the expected effects (with the exception of changes to season of use) are the same as those which have already occurred. Therefore, I conclude that there are no highly uncertain, unique, or unknown risks.

6. *The degree to which the action may establish a precedent for future actions with significant effects or represent a decision in principle about a future consideration.*

This EA is specific to the Oakley East Allotments. It is not expected to set precedent for future actions with significant effects or represent a decision in principle about a future management consideration in or outside of these allotments.

7. *Whether the action is related to other actions with individually insignificant but cumulatively significant impacts. Significance exists if it is reasonable to anticipate a cumulatively significant impact on the environment. Significance cannot be avoided by terming an action temporary or by breaking it down into small component parts.*

The EA did not identify any significant effects nor any other actions with individually insignificant but cumulatively significant impacts. There are no other actions connected with the action. Outside this project area, additional Standards and Guidelines Assessments, Determinations, and subsequent permit renewal decisions will be made, potentially resulting in changes in livestock management actions, stocking levels, and season of use. However, those actions in combination with this decision are expected to have beneficial cumulative effects.

8. *The degree to which the action may adversely affect districts, sites, highways, structures, or objects listed in or eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places or may cause loss or destruction of significant, cultural, or historical resources.*

Previous cultural resource inventories within these allotments have produced no historic properties. As part of this permit renewal, an intensive Class III inventory was conducted in areas thought to contain higher concentrations of cultural resources and within areas of livestock concentration. No cultural resources were encountered. As such, there will be no effect to historic properties associated with the issuance of the grazing permit renewal.

9. *The degree to which the action may adversely affect an endangered or threatened species or its habitat that has been determined to be critical under the Endangered Species Act of 1973.*

There are no threatened or endangered species or its habitat within the project area or which may be affected. The EA discloses that the proposed action would not adversely affect any species listed as threatened or endangered. The greater sage-grouse is a candidate species for ESA and the EA described the effects of the proposed action on sage-grouse. The effects to sage-grouse disclosed in the EA were not considered to be significant.

10. *Whether the action threatens a violation of Federal, State, or local law or requirements imposed for the protection of the environment.*

The proposed action does not violate or threaten to violate any Federal, State or local laws or requirements imposed for the protection of the environment.

Based upon the review of the test for significance and the environmental analyses conducted, I have determined that the actions analyzed in the EA are not major federal actions and that their implementation will not significantly affect the quality of the human environment. Accordingly, I have determined that the preparation of an Environmental Impact Statement is not necessary for this proposal.

/s/ Michael Courtney

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Date