

**U.S. Department of the Interior
Bureau of Land Management**

**Finding of No Significant Impact
DOI-BLM-NV-L000-2012-0001-EA
March 31, 2014**

Carter Cattle Company Term Grazing Permit Renewal

Location: Nye and White Pine County, Nevada

U.S. Department of the Interior
Bureau of Land Management
Ely District
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FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT (FONSI)
Environmental Assessment No. DOI-BLM-NV-L000-2012-0001-EA
Carter Cattle Company Term Grazing Permit Renewal

Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI):

I have reviewed the Final Environmental Assessment DOI-BLM-NV-L000-2012-0001-EA. After consideration of the environmental effects as analyzed in the EA, and incorporated herein, I have determined that the Proposed Action associated with fully processing the grazing permit renewal, subject to the management practices identified in the EA, will not significantly affect the quality of the human environment and that an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) is not required. Environmental Assessment DOI-BLM-NV-L000-2012-0001-EA has been reviewed through the interdisciplinary team process.

Rationale:

I have determined that the Proposed Action is in conformance with the Ely District Record of Decision and Approved Resource Management Plan (ROD/RMP) to manage the public lands administered by the Bureau of Land Management's Ely District Office (August 20, 2008). The Proposed Action would be effective in maintaining rangeland health and watershed condition on public lands in the Cattle Camp, North Cove, North Preston, Rock Knoll, Wells/Dee Gee and North Preston Allotments. Through sound livestock management practices and the terms and conditions of the grazing permit, Standards for Rangeland Health will continue to be achieved or make significant progress towards achievement.

This finding and conclusion of No Significant Impact is based on my consideration of the Council on Environmental Quality's (CEQ) criteria for significance (40 CFR 1508.27), both with regard to the context and the intensity of impacts described in the EA.

Context:

The Cattle Camp, North Cove, North Preston, Rock Knoll, Wells/Dee Gee and North Preston Allotments encompass approximately 127,000 acres of public land. The allotments are located within Nye and White Pine County, Nevada and are situated in the White River Central (160B), South Steptoe Valley (161), and Cave Valley (181) Watersheds. Nye and White Pine County is sparsely populated. Although the acreage involved is somewhat extensive, impacts from livestock grazing are dispersed, and compatible with the rural, agricultural setting throughout most of the area.

Intensity:

1) *Impacts that may be both beneficial and adverse.*

The EA has considered both beneficial and adverse impacts of the Proposed Action, Permittee Proposed with Holistic Management Alternative, Actual Use Alternative, and the No Grazing Alternative. Under the Proposed Action, none of the impacts considered in the EA approach the threshold of significance, i.e. exceeding air or drinking water quality standards, contributing to a decline in the population of a listed species, etc. In other words, none of the resource impacts are intensely adverse or beneficial.

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

The Proposed Action will not result in potentially substantial or adverse impacts to public health and 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.*

The Ely RMP EIS has evaluated the impacts of livestock grazing on natural resources and unique geographic characteristics found on public lands throughout the district, and decisions were made to eliminate grazing in areas where the impacts could cause unacceptable degradation to natural resources and unique geographic characteristics. The EA did not identify unacceptable degradation to natural resources or unique geographic characteristics within the use area of the Proposed Action.

4) *The degree to which the effects on the quality of the human environment are likely to be highly controversial.*

Whereas it may be controversial to continue to permit livestock grazing on public lands in spite of the effects, there is little controversy as to what those effects are. The Ely RMP EIS analyzed several alternatives with various effects to conflicting uses of natural resources and disclosed the effects. Decisions were made to continue livestock grazing in areas deemed appropriate.

5) *The degree to which the possible effects on the human environment are highly uncertain or involve unique or unknown risks.*

The effects of livestock grazing are well known and documented. Management practices and terms and conditions are employed to meet resource objectives and to maintain or make progress towards achievement of rangeland health standards. The Ely RMP EIS analyzed the effects of livestock grazing throughout the district and has eliminated grazing in areas where unique environmental risks could occur.

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

The Proposed Action will not establish a precedent for future actions with significant effects or represent a decision in principle about a future consideration. Renewing the grazing permit does not establish a precedent for other Rangeland Health Assessments and Decisions. Any future grazing permit renewals within the area or in surrounding areas will be analyzed and evaluated on their own merits, and changes will or will not be implemented, independent of the actions currently selected.

7) *Whether the action is related to other actions with individually insignificant but cumulatively significant impacts.*

The Proposed Action would not contribute to any significant cumulative impacts when considered in combination with past, present, and reasonably foreseeable future actions identified in the EA.

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 (NRHP) or may cause loss or destruction of significant scientific, cultural, or historical resources.

Cultural site #26NY11580 is eligible to the National Register of Historic Places. Site monitoring has determined that current livestock grazing practices are creating impacts to the site. The impacts include trails that have been created from repeated hoof action within the boundary of the cultural site.

The Proposed Action includes mitigation for the site which would be achieved by amending livestock management practices within the cultural site boundary. If monitoring shows continued or further degradation, it may be necessary to explore additional mitigation measures.

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 ESA of 1973.

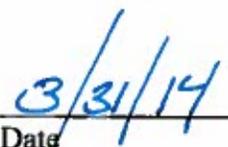
The BLM is required by the Endangered Species Act of 1973, as amended, to ensure that no action on the public lands jeopardizes a threatened, endangered, or proposed species. The proposed action complies with the Endangered Species Act, in that potential effects of this decision on listed species have been analyzed and documented in the EA. The action will not adversely affect any endangered or threatened species or its critical habitat.

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

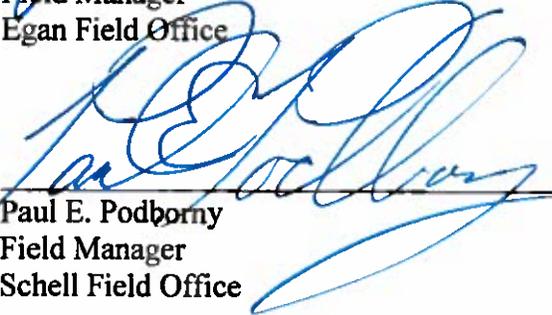
The Proposed Action will not violate or threaten to violate any Federal, State, or local law or requirement imposed for the protection of the environment.



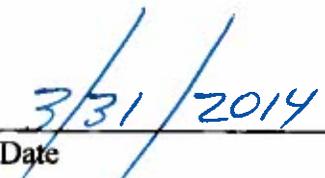
Jill A. Moore
Field Manager
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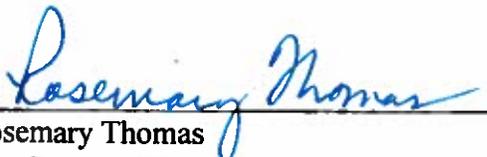
Date



Paul E. Podborny
Field Manager
Schell Field Office



Date



Rosemary Thomas
District Manager
Ely District Office



Date