

**FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT**  
**for the**  
**GRAZING LEASE RENEWAL**  
**of the**  
**WALKER BUTTE ALLOTMENT # 06041**  
**(Lower Sonoran Field Office, DOI-BLM-AZ-P020-2013-0015-EA)**

I have reviewed Environmental Assessment (EA) *DOI-BLM-AZ-P020-2013-0023-EA*. After consideration of the environmental effects of the alternatives described in the EA and supporting documentation, I have determined that the alternatives will not significantly affect the quality of the human environment, individually or cumulatively with other actions in the general area. No environmental effects meet the definition of significance in context or intensity as described in 40 CFR 1508.27. Therefore, preparation of an Environmental Impact Statement is not required as per section 102 (2) (c) of the National Environmental Policy Act. This finding and conclusion is based on my consideration of the Council on Environmental Quality's (CEQ's) criteria for significance (40 CFR 1508.27), both with regard to the context and the intensity of impacts described in the EA.

**Context:**

The Walker Butte Allotment (#06041) is a parcel of rangeland administered by the Bureau of Land Management, Lower Sonoran Field Office, and is located approximately 40 miles southeast of Phoenix, and seven miles northwest of the town of Florence. The allotment encompasses an area of approximately 1,330 acres, of which approximately 994 acres are administered by the BLM, and 312 acres are administered by the Arizona State Land Department. Until recently, most of the private lands in the area have been used for agriculture, pasture, mining, and industry. However, residential and commercial development is expanding into the area. Several new housing developments, shopping centers, and medical facilities now surround the allotment.

The Walker Butte Allotment Land Health Evaluation (LHE) (2014) was conducted to determine whether the Arizona Standards and Guidelines and BLM Phoenix District site-specific objectives were met. Based on the data compiled and analyzed for the LHE, the Walker Butte Allotment is meeting all applicable Standards and Guidelines of the Arizona Standards for Rangeland Health. All Desired Plant Community objectives are being achieved at all three key areas. Detailed analyses are located in the LHE and EA.

**Intensity:**

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

The EA analyzed both beneficial and adverse impacts of the proposed management actions for various resources including cultural resources and Native American concerns, soils, vegetation, wildlife, noxious weeds, minerals, recreation and travel management, lands and realty, and visual resources. Measures are incorporated into the Proposed Action Alternative to avoid or reduce adverse impacts to these resources.

None of the environmental impacts discussed in detail in the Environmental Effects section of the EA are considered significant.

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

Due to the infrequency of ephemeral turn-out and short duration and low intensity of livestock movement in the allotment during periods of use, the proposed action would not affect 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 prime farmlands, park lands, or wild and scenic rivers in the area of analysis. Measures are incorporated into the Proposed Action Alternative to avoid or reduce adverse impacts to historic and cultural resources and no new disturbance is proposed under Alternative 2 or the No Action/ No Grazing Alternative.

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

In 2008, a Proposed Decision for the Walker Butte Lease Renewal was protested by Western Watersheds Project (WWP). The issues brought up in WWP's protest, and by the grazing lease applicant and the Queen Creek Quarry operators during the development of the alternatives, were analyzed fully in the EA. Additionally, public input was requested during scoping and public review of the LHE issued in March 2014. No comments were received. Therefore, the proposed action is not expected to be controversial and is intended to meet resource objectives and the Arizona Standards for Rangeland Health.

The BLM has coordinated with the grazing lease applicant, interested publics, the Arizona State Land Department, and the operators of the Queen Creek Quarry.

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

There are no known effects of the proposed action identified in the EA that are considered uncertain or involve unique or unknown risks. The analysis is based on monitoring information, and all livestock authorizations are subject to applicable procedures to prevent undue environmental harm and risk.

**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 would not establish a precedent for future actions with significant effects or represent a decision about future consideration. Completion of the EA does not establish a precedent for other rangeland health evaluations and decisions. Any future projects within the area or in surrounding areas will be analyzed on their own merits, independent of the actions currently selected.

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

The past, present and reasonably foreseeable future actions have been considered in Section 4.10 of the EA. Past, present, and reasonably foreseeable future actions ongoing in the cumulative impact assessment area would not result in cumulatively significant impacts.

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

Implementation of the proposed action would have no significant adverse effect on districts, sites, highways, structures, or objects listed in or eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places due to the infrequency and short duration of ephemeral grazing use. The proposed action complies with the National Historic Preservation Act and would not cause loss or destruction of significant cultural or historical resources.

**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 (ESA), as amended, of 1973.***

No listed threatened or endangered species nor critical habitat for any listed species occur on the Walker Butte Allotment.

**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 would not violate or threaten to violate any federal, state, or local law or requirement imposed for the protection of the environment. Applicable laws and regulations were considered in the EA.

Continued monitoring of the resources will be ongoing and scheduled on a regular basis to assure conformance with the Arizona Standards for Rangeland Health and Phoenix District land use plans and policies. Future adjustment in the management of the resources will be considered should monitoring determine that the standards and objectives are not be achieved.



Edward J. Kender  
Field Manager  
Lower Sonoran Field Office

12/14/14  
Date