



United States Department of the Interior

BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT

Idaho Falls District
Upper Snake Field Office
1405 Hollipark Drive
Idaho Falls, Idaho 83401-2100

In Reply Refer To:
4100

August 8, 2013

CERTIFIED - RETURN RECEIPT REQUESTED

David and Jim Hagenbarth
P.O. Box 1128
Dillon, MT 59725

NOTICE OF FIELD MANAGER'S PROPOSED DECISION

Dear Mr. Hagenbarth:

Introduction

You were previously notified that we would be initiating an analysis process to determine the environmental impacts of livestock grazing on the Camas Meadow Allotment. An environmental assessment (EA) pursuant to the National Environmental Policy Act has been completed to determine if authorization of grazing use would provide a reasonable balance among competing resource values. Grazing use in the Camas Meadow Allotment was analyzed in DOI-BLM-ID-I010-2013-0031-EA (copy attached). This grazing decision will renew your permit for ten years.

Background

The Camas Meadow Allotment was evaluated in 2012 to assess whether the allotment was meeting the Idaho Standards for Rangeland Health and Guidelines for Livestock Management (ISRH). A Rangeland Health Evaluation was issued for the area. Standards 1 (Watersheds) 4 (Native Plant Communities), and 8 (Threatened, Endangered, and Sensitive Species) were being met on the Camas Meadow Allotment.

Proposed Decision

I have determined that the permittee currently authorized in the allotment has a satisfactory record of performance and is in substantial compliance with the terms and conditions of their existing Federal grazing lease that is being renewed with this proposed decision.

After careful consideration, it is my Proposed Decision to implement Alternative B of the attached environmental assessment DOI-BLM-ID-I010-2013-0031-EA. A ten-year grazing permit will be issued from May 15, 2014 to May 14, 2024, with terms and conditions for Camas Meadow Allotment to David and Jim Hagenbarth (operator number 1103236), as described below.

While the grazing permit will be renewed for a term of ten years, should information collected subsequent to any renewal indicate that changes in management are needed to ensure the allotment is continuing to meet or make significant progress toward meeting Standards and conforming to Guidelines, the permit may be modified at any time during the ten-year period.

Authorized Use Change:

1. Change the Type Use on the permit from Custodial to Adaptive and the percent public land (%PL) from 51% to 54%. The %PL figure recognizes 176 AUMs available on 752 acres of unfenced Idaho State land and 541 AUMs available on 2,272 acres of private land in the Camas Meadow Allotment.
2. Change the Season of Use from 6/15-11/15 to 5/15-11/15. Annual use would be authorized for 452 cow/calf pair for 104 days within the 185 day season of use. The change in the season use would allow flexibility in annual livestock management relative to resource condition.
3. Include yearling cattle in the Class of Livestock authorized. In considering forage consumptions versus adult cattle or cow/calf pair, a conversion factor of 0.75/AUM (Valentine, 1990) would be used. Therefore, 452 cattle would equate to 603 yearlings, consuming 870 AUMs. However, under 43 CFR 4130.8-1, a full grazing fee shall be charged for each animal over 6 months of age. Thus, 603 yearlings for 104 days use at 54%PL would be charged for 1160 AUMs, though they would only remove forage equivalent to 870 AUMs.

Projects (Figure 3):

1. Realign ~0.75 miles of boundary fence between the McGarry Canyon Allotment the Camas Meadow Allotment. After the existing boundary fence was removed and realigned, there would be approximately 25 less acres in the McGarry Canyon Allotment.

Moving the existing fence that currently lies on the side of the ridge to the top of the ridge. This would aid in fence maintenance. A four wire fence would be constructed according to BLM wildlife fencing specifications. The four wire fence would consist of three strands of barbed wire and one strand of smooth wire. The wire spacing would be 16 inches, 24 inches, 30 inches, and 42 inches from the ground with smooth wire on bottom to facilitate antelope passage underneath. Spacing would be 16.5' between "T" posts. Gates would also be added at appropriate locations.

2. Chemically treat in a mosaic pattern the 130 acre project area of public land above Wilson Springs. The project is aimed at reducing the mountain big sagebrush and shiny leaf ceanothus density by 50 to 60 percent above the spring. The shrub density in the watershed above the spring has increased over the years in turn, according to the permittee, decreasing the spring output. The project will be implemented outside of (May 20 – September 15) the Migratory Bird nesting season, greater sage-grouse late brood-rearing season, and during a time that will be the least detrimental to herbaceous vegetative production to reduce detrimental impacts to these resources.
3. Salting would not occur within the project area of the proposed chemical treatment.
4. Prior to any ground-disturbing activities, a Class III inventory of the proposed range improvements would be conducted in areas that have not been previously surveyed for cultural resources, and any adverse effects to historic properties would be avoided or mitigated through consultation with the Idaho SHPO and affected tribes.

Grazing Plan:

1. Split the allotment into two grazing units. The Camas Unit would include the East Spring Creek, West Spring Creek, and Well Field Pastures, which include the vast majority of public lands within the allotment. The Dip Vat unit would include the Dip Vat, Horse-1, Horse-1, and Rodeo Pastures. Implement a pasture deferred grazing rotation in the Camas Unit.
2. Alternative B Grazing Plan – Camas Unit

<u>Year</u>	<u>East Spring Creek ~40 Days Use</u>	<u>West Spring Creek ~29 Days Use</u>	<u>Well Field ~35 Days Use</u>
2013	Third Pasture	Second Pasture	First Pasture
2014	Second Pasture	First Pasture	Third Pasture
2015	First Pasture	Third Pasture	Second Pasture

*Rotation repeated after 2016

3. The annual bill schedule for the Camas Meadow Allotment would be as follows:

Yearling Annual Bill Schedule

<u>Allotment Name</u>	<u>Grazing Unit</u>	<u>Lvstk#</u>	<u>Lvstk Kind</u>	<u>Begin</u>	<u>End</u>	<u>%PL</u>	<u>Type of Use</u>	<u>AUMs**</u>
Camas Meadow	Camas	603*	Yearling	5/15	8/26	54%	Active	1,113
Camas Meadow	Dip Vat	603	Yearling	5/15	8/26	100%	Custodial	47

If permittee request to run Cow/Calf Pairs instead of yearlings the Annual Bill Schedule would be as follows:

<u>Allotment Name</u>	<u>Grazing Unit</u>	<u>Lvstk#</u>	<u>Lvstk Kind</u>	<u>Begin</u>	<u>End</u>	<u>%PL</u>	<u>Type of Use</u>	<u>AUMs</u>
Camas Meadow	Camas	452	Cattle	5/15	8/26	54%	Active	835
Camas Meadow	Dip Vat	452	Cattle	5/15	8/26	100%	Custodial	35

Alternative B Mandatory Terms and Conditions:

Camas Meadow #15012

<u>Allotment Name</u>	<u>Lvstk#</u>	<u>Lvstk Kind</u>	<u>Begin</u>	<u>End</u>	<u>%PL</u>	<u>Type of Use</u>	<u>AUMs</u>
Camas Meadow	603	Yearlings	5/15	11/15	54%	Adaptive	1,160

Other Terms and Conditions:

The following other Terms and Conditions would be followed under the grazing use authorized under Alternative B, in accordance with 43 CFR 4130.3-2, to assist in achieving management objectives for the allotment.

1. Range improvements must be maintained to BLM standards by the turnout dates for each allotment. All livestock water troughs must have a functional wildlife escape ramp and be appropriately floated. Installation and maintenance of wildlife escape ramps and maintenance of range improvements are the responsibility of the permittees.
2. Distribution of livestock salt and mineral supplements will be at least ¼ mile from the nearest water source, unless prior approval is given by an authorized officer.
3. In connection with allotment operations under this authorization, if any human remains, cultural, archaeological, historical, paleontological, or scientific objects and sites are discovered, the permittee shall stop operations in the immediate area of the discovery, protect such resources, and immediately notify the BLM Authorized Officer (AO) of the discovery. The immediate area of the discovery must be protected until the operator is notified to resume operations by the AO.
4. If sage grouse fence strikes are documented in the future on existing pasture and allotment fences, the fences will be modified to minimize sage grouse strikes.

Rationale

This decision is based on the findings of the interdisciplinary team on the evaluations, EA # DOI-BLM-ID-I010-2013-0031-EA, and monitoring studies. Implementation of the annual grazing authorization terms and conditions and the grazing management guidelines will help ensure that rangeland Standards 1, 4, and 8 continue to be met on Camas Meadow Allotment. This decision is in conformance with the Medicine Lodge Resource Management Plan.

The assessment indicates that Alternative B would continue to meet Standards 1, 4, and 8. Under Alternative B, the permittees would be authorized to graze 104 days within a 185 day season of use. Lengthening the season of use would allow for management flexibility in the Camas Meadow Allotment. This would allow the permittee the ability to adjust grazing in light of range and pasture readiness annually upon request and approval of the BLM. A grazing rotation would be implemented in the Camas Meadow grazing unit under Alternative B. Under the proposed grazing rotation, each of the three pastures would receive growing season deferment every third year. Livestock use in any one pasture would not exceed forty days. The grazing deferment in the three pastures would provide preferred plants or areas the opportunity to maintain or gain vigor and provide an opportunity to store carbohydrates and set seed after grazing. The prescribed grazing rotation would ensure that the native plant communities in the Camas Meadow Allotment would continue to meet standards for rangeland health.

In addition to the grazing rotation, the permittee would be authorized to run either cow/calf pairs or yearling cattle. The Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) 4100.0-5 defines an Animal Unit Month (AUM) as the amount of forage necessary for the sustenance of one cow or its equivalent for a period of one month. For billing purposes, the BLM would charge the permittee for a full AUM for each animal over six months of age (43 CFR 4130.8-1). The animal unit equivalent is defined as a numerical figure expressing the quantitative forage demand of a particular kind and class of animal relative to that of an animal unit (Valentine, 1990). The option to change class of livestock in allotment from cattle to yearlings would be calculated using a conversion factor of 0.75 yearlings/AUM (Valentine, 1990). This means that one yearling consumes about three-quarters of the forage that a cow would consume in a month. However, because of the billing procedure described above, the equivalent of 870 AUMs in forage consumed by cows would be 1,160 AUMs when yearling cattle are authorized.

Moving the fences would result in approximately 3 acres of ground disturbance that would be vulnerable to new weed infestations. The potential increase of invasive/noxious weeds would be minimal because the proposed location of the fences would not be cleared or bladed before construction. Potential impacts to migratory birds and sensitive species from the fence realignment would consist of disturbance or displacement during the removal/installation phase. The decrease in shrub density in the proposed shrub treatment area could potentially increase the chance of invasive/noxious weeds establishment in the area. As a result of reducing the competition for moisture and sunlight of the existing shrubs, weed species that currently occupy the site could potentially increase. The likelihood of invasive/noxious weeds increasing on this

site is very low due to the healthy condition of the current plant community. However, all of the project areas would be monitored closely for new occurrences of noxious weeds.

Under Alternative B, an aerial herbicide treatment project will be implemented to a 130 acre parcel above Wilson Spring in the West Spring Creek Pasture. The treatment will be aimed at reducing mountain big sagebrush and shiny-leaf ceanothus by approximately 50-60% within the proposed project area, in an attempt to reduce competition and maximize the production of the spring. The shrub density in the watershed above the spring has increased over the years in turn, according to the permittee, decreasing the spring output. During the allotment field visit, shrub densities in the pasture were measured at forty-four percent. Replacement of shrub species by shallower rooted herbaceous species affects the soil water regime, and has increased spring flow following treatment (Sturges, 1993). This herbicide treatment project will be implemented in a pattern to create a mosaic of openings within the mountain big sagebrush/shiny leaf ceanothus community. Aerial herbicide treatments have the potential to impact migratory birds by initially reducing forb production and diversity, specifically the year following treatment (Scifres et al. 1977). The herbicide treatment may also impact migratory birds, specifically sagebrush obligates, by reducing the amount of sagebrush available for cover and nesting habitat. However, an ample amount of sagebrush would be left within the treatment area, and directly adjacent to, to provide adequate nesting habitat for these species. This project will only be implemented on a 130 acre project area within the 3,984 acre allotment. Any detrimental impacts associated with this proposed project, should they occur, would be confined to this relatively small parcel.

In the short term, the implementation of the aerial shrub treatment and the realignment of the fence would increase the social and economic impact to the permittee. In the long term, the impact would greatly diminish because of the decrease in additional costs to annually maintain boundary fences impacted by wildlife and snow. The annual grazing fee to run yearling cattle would also be an increased economic impact to the permittee throughout the ten year grazing permit.

Authority

The authority under which this decision is made is found within the following 43 CFR citations:

- 4110.2-2 - Specifying permitted use
- 4110.3 - Changes in permitted use
- 4130.2 - Grazing permits or leases
- 4130.3 - Terms and conditions
- 4130.3-1 - Mandatory terms and conditions
- 4130.3-2 - Other terms and conditions
- 4130.3-3 - Modification of permits or leases
- 4180 - Fundamentals of Rangeland Health and S&G for Grazing Administration

Appeal Procedures

Any applicant, permittee, lessee or other interested publics may protest a proposed decision under Sec. 43 CFR 4160.1 and 4160.2, in person or in writing to me at the address shown above within 15 days after receipt of such decision. The protest, if filed, should clearly and concisely state the reason(s) as to why the proposed decision is in error.

In accordance with 43 CFR 4160.3 (a), in the absence of a protest, the proposed decision will become the final decision of the authorized officer without further notice unless otherwise provided in the proposed decision.

In accordance with 43 CFR 4160.3 (b) upon a timely filing of a protest, after a review of protests received and other information pertinent to the case, the authorized officer shall issue a final decision.

Any applicant, permittee, lessee or other person whose interest is adversely affected by the final decision may file an appeal in accordance with 43 CFR 4.470 and 4160.4. The appeal must be filed within 30 days following receipt of the final decision, or within 30 days after the date the proposed decision becomes final. The appeal may be accompanied by a petition for a stay of the decision in accordance with 43 CFR 4.471 pending final determination on appeal. The appeal and petition for a stay must be filed in the office of the authorized officer, as noted above. The person/party must also serve a copy of the appeal on the office of the Solicitor, Boise Field Solicitors Office, University Plaza, 960 Broadway Avenue, Suite 400, Boise, ID 83706 and person(s) named [43 CFR 4.421(h)] in the Copies sent to: section of this decision.

The appeal shall state the reasons, clearly and concisely, why the appellant thinks the final decision is in error and otherwise complies with the provisions of 43 CFR 4.470.

Should you wish to file a petition for a stay, see 43 CFR 4.471 (a) and (b). In accordance with 43 CFR 4.471(c), a petition for a stay must show sufficient justification based on the following standards:

- (1) The relative harm to the parties if the stay is granted or denied.
- (2) The likelihood of the appellant's success on the merits.
- (3) The likelihood of immediate and irreparable harm if the stay is not granted, and
- (4) Whether the public interest favors granting the stay.

As noted above, the petition for stay must be filed in the office of the authorized officer and serviced in accordance with 43 CFR 4.471. Any person named in the decision that receives a copy of a petition for a stay and/or an appeal see 43 CFR 4.472(b) for procedures to follow if you wish to respond.

If you have any questions, feel free to contact either Scott Minnie at 524-7553 or myself at 524-7555.

Sincerely,

/s/ Jeremy Casterson

Jeremy Casterson
Field Manager
Upper Snake Field Office

Enclosure: Environmental Assessment No. DOI-BLM-ID-I010-2013-0031-EA
Copies sent to:

Idaho Department of Agriculture, 2270 Old Penitentiary Road, Boise, ID 83707

Idaho Department of Fish and Game, 427 Commerce Circle, Idaho Falls, ID 83401

Idaho Department of Lands, 3563 Ririe Highway, Idaho Falls, ID 83401

Northwest Band of the Shoshoni Nation, 427 North Main Street, Suite 101, Pocatello, ID 83204

Chairman, Land Use, Shoshone-Bannock Tribes, P.O. Box 306, Pocatello, ID 83203

Chairman, Tribal Business, Shoshone-Bannock Tribes, P.O. Box 306, Pocatello, ID 83203

Western Watersheds Project, 126 Main, Suite B2, Hailey, ID 83333

US Fish and Wildlife Service, Eastern Idaho Field Office, 4425 Burley Drive, Suite A
Chubbuck, ID 83202