



# United States Department of the Interior



## BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT

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In Reply Refer To:  
4130 (NVE0200)

**United States Department of the Interior  
Bureau of Land Management  
Elko, Nevada**

**FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT  
Cotant Seeding and Mexican Field Allotments Grazing Permit Renewal Decision  
DOI-BLM-NV-E020-2013-0025-EA**

Based on the environmental assessment (EA) for the Grazing Permit Renewal Decision for the Cotant Seeding and Mexican Field Allotments (DOI-BLM-NV-E020-2013-0025-EA), I have determined that the Proposed Action, as described and analyzed in the EA, will not significantly affect the quality of the human environment. Therefore, preparation of an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) is not required prior to my issuance of the decision.

This finding is based on my consideration of the Council on Environmental Quality's (CEQ) criteria for significance (40 CFR 1508.27) with regard to the context and the intensity of impacts as discussed in the EA and summarized below.

Context:

The Proposed Action focuses on livestock grazing management on approximately 6,200 acres of public land intermixed with approximately 880 acres of private land within the Cotant Seeding and Mexican Field Allotments located 30 and 38 miles north of Elko in Elko County. The BLM issued a Draft Standards and Guidelines for Rangeland Health Assessment in September 2011. In the Cotant Seeding Allotment Standards 1, 2 and 4 were determined to be met and Standard 3 was determined to be partially met. Livestock grazing was determined to **not** be a causal factor in non-attainment of Standard 3 in the Cotant Seeding Allotment. All Standards in the Mexican Field Allotment were determined to be met.

Intensity:

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

The analysis identifies any beneficial or adverse impacts on vegetation, livestock grazing, invasive, non-native species, soils, riparian areas and wetlands, aquatic wildlife, wildlife, special status species, threatened or endangered species, migratory birds, cultural resources, water quality, fire management, lands with wilderness characteristics, Native American concerns, and recreation of concern that may arise as a result of the proposed grazing permit renewal. Measures are incorporated to avoid or reduce adverse impacts from grazing, conserve habitat for the sensitive species, and identify and protect cultural resources.

This analysis of monitoring data included with the September 2011 Draft Standards and Guidelines Assessment and the EA conclude that all standards and guideline have been met, or partially met and that livestock grazing is in conformance.

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

The proposed action will have no effect on 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.*

If historic or cultural resources are subsequently identified the BLM would address grazing management concerns through the annual meeting with the permittee. No park lands, special recreation management areas, prime or unique farmlands or wild and scenic rivers exist within the allotments. Wildlife habitat and wetlands, including springs, have been monitored and analyzed for effects of grazing against established management objectives. The analysis concluded that implementing the proposed action is expected to provide for maintenance of the riparian and wildlife habitat standards and objectives throughout the allotments as defined by 43 CFR §4180.

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

The analysis contained within the EA concludes that the proposed action will result in maintenance of multiple use objectives and the Standards and Guidelines for Rangeland Health. Ecological conditions on the allotment have shown consistent maintenance or improvement, and conditions are expected to continue to improve under the proposed action.

The BLM conducted both internal and external scoping for the EA. External scoping began on September 28, 2011 when BLM issued the updated Draft Standards and Guidelines Assessments for the Cotant Seeding and Mexican Field Allotments. Alternatives were developed as a result of internal and external scoping. No additional data, comments and/or alternatives were received during the comments period that ended on October 31, 2011. The livestock permittee did meet with the BLM on November 21, 2011 to discuss grazing management in the future on the Cotant Seeding and Mexican Field Allotments. Concerns raised by the permittee during that meeting were incorporated into the EA.

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

Possible effects are neither highly uncertain nor do they include unique or unknown risks. The analysis is based on monitoring information, and all livestock grazing 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 ten-year grazing permit includes terms and conditions to protect resources from significant adverse effects. This action does not make any commitments for BLM approval for any future actions beyond those outlined in the proposed action. All future proposed livestock management

actions not described in the proposed action would continue to be subject to further consideration in accordance with BLM grazing and NEPA regulations and policies.

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

All resources are evaluated for cumulative impacts in the EA, and no significant impacts are identified. As a standard procedure, cumulative impacts would continue to be subject to further review as new projects are proposed, and on a site-specific basis.

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 scientific, cultural, or historic resources.*

The proposed action as described incorporates terms and conditions and requirements to identify and protect cultural resources from adverse effects.

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.*

No listed species are known to occur within the Cotant Seeding and Mexican Field Allotments. As discussed for special status species in the EA, the allotment does provide habitat for one candidate species (Greater Sage-Grouse) and several BLM-sensitive species of concern. The proposed action includes measures to prevent adverse impacts to these species and to conserve their habitats and is not expected to result in the listing of any species of concern.

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 has been developed and reviewed in coordination with applicable agencies to ensure its consistency with plans and requirements of other Federal, State and local agencies.

/s/ R. Adams  
**Richard E. Adams**  
**Field Manager**  
**Tuscarora Field Office**

8/5/2013  
**Date**