United States Department of the Interior
Bureau of Land Management
Boise District
Four Rivers Field Office
3948 Development Ave
Boise, ID 83705

Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI)
Four Rivers Field Office - Sheep Trailing
Environmental Assessment No. DOI-BLM-ID-B010-2014-0029-EA

I have reviewed the Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ) regulations for significance (40 CFR 1508.27) and have determined the actions analyzed in Environmental Assessment (EA) No. DOI-BLM-ID-B010-2014-0029-EA will not have any significant impact, individually or cumulatively, on the quality of the human environment. Because the actions analyzed in the EA will not have any significant impact, an environmental impact statement is not required.

My finding was made after considering both the context and intensity of the effects, as described in the above EA, which this document incorporates by reference. I considered the following factors in determining significance:

Context:
The active herding of sheep from one grazing area to another has been a preferred method of managing sheep on rangelands historically. The routes proposed in the EA are generally the same as or near routes used in the past. The stipulations added to the permit as design features in Alternative C also require the operator to avoid sensitive areas and to schedule trailing events to reduce effects to resources.

Intensity:
1. The activities described in Alternative C of DOI-BLM-ID-B010-2014-0029-EA do not include any significant beneficial or adverse impacts (40 CFR 1508.27(b)(1)), as described below:

a. Implementing Alternative C would not significantly affect the applicant (EA Section 3.1.2 and Table 2). There would be several costs and minor conflicts to the applicant/livestock operator associated with sheep trailing.

b. Implementing Alternative C would not significantly affect species listed as endangered or threatened under the Endangered Species Act (ESA), candidate species for listing under ESA, or BLM special status species.

1) There are no endangered or threatened species in the project area.
2) There would be no significant adverse impacts to Packard's milkvetch or its habitat (EA Section 3.3.2.4). Trailing would avoid known Element Occurrences (EOs) and minor trampling impacts would only occur in 124 acres of pollinator habitat.
3) There would be no significant adverse impacts to sage-grouse during the critical breeding, nesting, early and late brood-rearing seasons, because trailing events through Proposed Priority Habitat (PPH) and lekking habitat would only occur during the fall (late-October to early-November; EA Section 3.5.2.4). Any flushing of the birds from cover due to trailing in the fall would cause negligible to minor adverse impacts over the short-term and long-term.
4) There would be no significant adverse impacts to southern Idaho ground squirrels (SIDGS) during spring trailing events because trailing would occur in late March and would only last 3-4 days limiting forage competition between the SIDGS and domestic sheep (EA Section 3.5.2.4). The impact to SIDGS burrows due to spring and fall trailing (i.e., burrow collapse) is expected to be minor.

2. The activities included in the proposed action would not significantly affect public health or safety (40 CFR 1508.27(b)(2)).

A majority of the sheep trailing would occur along and adjacent to roads. The public may occasionally encounter sheep on roads during trailing activities; however, these encounters would not significantly affect public health and safety because the number of encounters along roads is expected to be low and the duration of the encounters would be limited in time (EA Section 3.6.2). Sheep trailing has occurred throughout this area for several decades and is not a new or unusual event that the public would encounter.

3. The proposed activities would not significantly affect any unique characteristics (40 CFR 1508.27(b)(3)) of the geographic area such as prime and unique farmlands, caves, wild and scenic rivers, designated wilderness areas, wilderness study areas, or areas of critical concern.

No prime and unique farmlands, caves, wilderness study areas, or areas of critical concern are found in the trailing corridors.

4. The activities described in the proposed action would not involve effects on the human environment that are likely to be highly controversial (40 CFR 1508.27(b)(4)).

Sheep trailing is a routine activity and its effects are well understood (EA Section 3.0). Public input was requested from affected permittees and Idaho Department of Lands (IDL). Comments in response to these scoping efforts did not reveal any controversy related to the size, nature, or effects of sheep trailing activities.

5. Sheep trailing would not involve any effects that are highly uncertain or involve unique or unknown risks (40 CFR 1508.27(b)(5)).

No unique or unknown risks were identified for any of the resources analyzed (EA Section 3.0).

6. My decision to authorize sheep trailing would not establish a precedent for future actions with significant effects or represent a decision in principle about a future consideration (40 CFR 1508.27(b)(6)).

Implementing Alternative C would not trigger other actions, nor would it represent a decision in principle about future considerations.

7. The effects of sheep trailing would not be significant, individually or cumulatively, when considered with the effects of other actions (40 CFR 1508.27(b)(7)).

No significant cumulative impacts were identified within the EA (sections 3.1.3, 3.2.3, 3.3.3, 3.4.3, 3.5.3, 3.6.3, and 3.7.3). Any adverse impacts identified as a result of sheep trailing, when added to any adverse impacts of other past, present, or reasonably foreseeable future actions, would result in negligible to minor impacts to natural and cultural resources.

8. I have determined that the activities described in Alternative C would not adversely affect or cause loss or destruction of scientific, cultural, or historical resources, including those listed in or eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places (40 CFR 1508.27(b)(8)).

Based on the proposed trailing activities, an Area of Potential Effects (APE) was identified. Past inventory efforts within the APE were reviewed to identify sites that may be affected by the trailing activities. The EA (Section 3.7.2) discloses that trailing activities would have negligible to moderate effects on two sites. Neither of these two sites are eligible to be listed on the National Register of Historic Places. Impacts to Goodale's Cutoff Trail would be limited to Fall trailing events, and considered negligible because the trailing corridor crosses the historic trail only once and trailing events would be very short in duration (less than a day).

9. The proposed activities would not likely adversely affect any endangered or threatened species or its habitat that has been determined to be critical under the Endangered Species Act (40 CFR 1508.27(b)(9)).

As disclosed in the EA (Sections 3.3 and 3.5), there are no endangered or threatened species or critical habitat in the project area.

10. The proposed trailing activities would not threaten any violation of Federal, State, or local law or requirements imposed for the protection of the environment (40 CFR 1508.27(b)(10)).

The EA (Section 1.5) describes how trailing activities conform to relevant laws, regulations, policies, and any relevant local permitting requirements.

/s/ Tate Fischer_____ _October 8, 2014_____
Tate Fischer Date
Field Manager
Four Rivers Field Office