



United States Department of the Interior



BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT

Phoenix District

Hassayampa Field Office

21605 North 7th Avenue

Phoenix, Arizona 85027

www.blm.gov/az/

FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT Sky Arrow Complex Grazing Permit Renewal DOI-BLM-AZ-P010-2014-0038-EA

I, the undersigned authorized officer, considering the criteria provided by 40 CFR 1508.27 and the information contained in the Sky Arrow Complex Grazing Permit Renewal Environmental Assessment (DOI-BLM-AZ-P010-2014-0038-EA), and as explained further below, find that the proposed action and alternatives will not significantly affect the quality of the human environment. Therefore, an environmental impact statement does not need to be prepared.

Context:

The Proposed Action focuses on livestock grazing management on 24,134 acres of federal land, 11,178 acres of state land and 4,093 acres of private land within the Sky Arrow Complex and the Congress-Sky Arrow allotment, located in Maricopa and Yavapai Counties, northeast of, and adjacent to, Wickenburg, Arizona. The BLM issued a Draft Rangeland Health Evaluation for Standards and Guidelines on the Sky Arrow Complex in 2014. All applicable standards and objectives for the Sky Arrow Complex were determined to be met on the uplands. Standard 2 (Riparian) was not met on the two riparian areas within the complex. Standard 3 (Desired Future Condition) was not met on riparian areas within the complex. A supplemental Rangeland Health Evaluation was issued for the Standards and Guidelines on the Congress-Sky Arrow allotment in 2015. All applicable standards and objectives were determined to be met on the uplands. Standard 2 was not met on the riparian area within the allotment. Standard 3 was not met on the riparian area within the allotment.

Intensity:

1. Impacts that may be both beneficial and adverse.

The analysis identifies the beneficial and adverse impacts on upland vegetation, soil resources, invasive plant species, and wildlife resources that may arise as a result of the proposed grazing permit and lease renewals. Measures are incorporated to avoid or reduce adverse impacts from grazing, conserve habitat for wildlife species, and identify and protect cultural resources.

2. Degree of effect on public health and 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:

As stated in Chapter 3 of the EA, no known cultural or historic resources would be impacted by this action. Further, as described in Chapter 2, Proposed Action of the EA, discovery of human remains, funerary objects, sacred objects or objects of cultural patrimony will be reported to the authorized officer and all ongoing operations in the area will be halted until notified by the authorized officer that operations may resume. No park lands, prime or unique farmlands, or wild and scenic rivers exist within the complex. Wildlife habitat has 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 wildlife habitat standards and objectives throughout the allotments as defined by 43 CFR §4180.

4. Degree to which the possible 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 June 6th, 2014 when BLM issued the Draft Rangeland Health Evaluation for Standards and Guidelines Assessments for the Sky Arrow Complex. A supplemental Draft Rangeland Health Evaluation for the Congress-Sky Arrow allotment was issued February 23rd, 2015. No external scoping comments were received for either Draft Rangeland Health Evaluation. Based on the lack of response received during scoping, the project is not considered to be highly controversial.

5. Degree to which the possible effects on the quality of the human environment are highly uncertain or involve unique or unknown risk.

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. 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 and leases include terms and conditions to protect resources from significant adverse effects. This action does not make any commitments for BLM approval of 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 National Environmental Policy Act 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 have been identified. As a standard procedure, cumulative impacts would continue to be subject to further review as new projects are proposed.

8. Degree to which the action may adversely affect district, sites, highways, structures, or objects listed on the National Register of Historic Places or may cause loss or destruction of significant scientific, cultural, or historical resources.

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

9. Degree to which the action may adversely affect an endangered or threatened species or its critical habitat.

The yellow-billed cuckoo (*Coccyzus americanus occidentalis*), a listed threatened species, has been detected in the Box Canyon area along the Hassayampa River. Critical habitat is also proposed for this species in the Sky Arrow Complex along the Hassayampa River. BLM consulted with the US Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) on the effects of the proposed action on yellow-billed cuckoo and proposed critical habitat. The USFWS concurred with the BLM that the proposed action may effect, but is not likely to adversely affect, the yellow-billed cuckoo or proposed critical habitat. The proposed action is designed to improve habitat conditions for yellow-billed cuckoos through excluding livestock grazing in the riparian area from March 1 to November 1 of each year. Limiting livestock grazing to the winter season only is expected to increase recruitment of riparian trees and increase the overall cover of riparian vegetation. The adaptive management strategy outlined in the proposed action will monitor riparian condition and the riparian plant community. If standards are not met due to livestock use, the BLM will take additional actions such as reducing the season of use, or temporary or permanent closure of the riparian area to livestock grazing.

10. Whether the action threatens a violation of federal, state, or local environmental protection law.

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.



D. Remington Hawes
Field Manager
Hassayampa Field Office

7/29/15

Date