UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT
HASSAYAMPA FIELD OFFICE
PHOENIX, ARIZONA

FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT
Desert Hills Complex Grazing Renewal
DOI-BLM-AZ-P010-2014-0046-EA

I, the undersigned authorized officer, considering the criteria provided by 40 CFR 1508.27 and the information contained in the Desert Hills Complex Grazing Renewal Environmental Assessment (DOI-BLM-AZ-P010-2014-0046-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 23,192 acres of federal land, 31,575 acres of state land and 2,781 acres of private land within the Desert Hills Complex located in Maricopa and Yavapai Counties, approximately 10 miles east of Wickenburg, Arizona. The BLM issued a Draft Rangeland Health Evaluation for Standards and Guidelines in 2013. All applicable standards and objectives for the Desert Hills Complex were determined to be met on the uplands. Standard 2 (Riparian) was met on 2 of 3 riparian areas within the complex. Standard 3 (Desired Future Condition) was met of 1 of 3 riparian areas within the complex.

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, water resources, and wildlife resources that may arise as a result of the proposed grazing lease renewal. 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 July 12, 2013 when BLM issued the Draft Rangeland Health Evaluation for Standards and Guidelines Assessments for the Desert Hills Complex. Two letters with substantive comments were received during the public scoping period that ended on August 2, 2013. The comments are summarized in Appendix B of the EA and issues raised by interested parties during the scoping period were incorporated into the EA and informed the range of alternatives. Based on the 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 lease includes 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.

Gila Topminnow, a listed species, are known to occur within the Desert Hills Complex. The habitat is excluded from livestock grazing. As discussed for special status species in the EA, the allotment does provide habitat for 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 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.

/S/	9/11/14
David R. Hawes Field Manager Hassayampa Field Office	Date