



United States Department of the Interior
FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE

UTAH FIELD OFFICE
2369 WEST ORTON CIRCLE, SUITE 50
WEST VALLEY CITY, UTAH 84119

In Reply Refer To

FWS/R6

ES/UT

9-F-0151

6-UT-09-F-019

March 12, 2010

RECEIVED
VERNAL FIELD OFFICE
2010 MAR 23 PM 12 27
DEPT OF THE INTERIOR
BUREAU OF LAND MGMT

Memorandum

To: Field Manager, Vernal Field Office, Bureau of Land Management, Vernal, Utah

From: Utah Field Supervisor, Ecological Services, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, West Valley City, Utah

Subject: Amendment to the July 10, 2009 Vernal Grazing Permit Renewal Biological Opinion (File number 6-UT-09-F-019)

Based on the information provided in your letter dated February 11, 2010, this document amends the July 10, 2009, biological opinion (BO) (File number 6-UT-09-F-019) for your proposed Ten Year Grazing Permit Issuance Renewal for 30 allotments. Your letter increases the number of allotments under consideration for renewal to 54 in total. This amended biological opinion is based on information provided in the February 11, 2010, Programmatic BLM Vernal Field Office Livestock Grazing Permit Renewals biological assessment (BA) amendment, personal communications between our biologists, and other sources of information. A complete administrative record of this consultation is on file at this office.

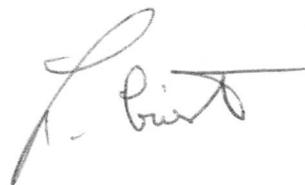
This amendment specifically addresses effects to the Mexican spotted owl (*Strix occidentalis lucida*) not considered during the initial consultation. This species occurs on 33 of the 54 allotments, a list of which is provided in your biological assessment on page 15. In addition, this amendment addresses effects to the Uinta Basin hookless cactus (*Sclerocactus wetlandicus*) within the Antelope Powers allotment; the species was not previously known to occur within this allotment.

We concur that the proposed action may affect, but is not likely to affect Mexican spotted owl. Our concurrence is based in part on the applicant committed environmental protection measures that will avoid or minimize negative effects to the species in the action area: see Section IV, Proposed Action Committed Mitigation in the BA (pp. 9-12).

We conclude that the effects to the Uinta Basin hookless cactus (*Sclerocactus wetlandicus*) on the Antelope Powers allotment are similar to the impacts described for the species on other allotments, as outlined in our original July 10, 2009, biological opinion. Although the project may adversely affect individual cacti, the effects to the species will not rise to the level where grazing activities will jeopardize the species. The applicant committed environmental protection measures designed to avoid or minimize negative effects in the action area (see Section IV, Proposed Action Committed Mitigation in the BA (pp. 9-12)) will be implemented within this allotment where cacti were recently found.

This concludes the amendment to our July 10, 2009, BO (File number 6-UT-09-F-019), for the Programmatic Vernal BLM Grazing Allotment Renewals. All other project descriptions, analyses, and conclusions of the July 10, 2009, BO remain relevant. A completed administrative record of this consultation is on file at our office.

We appreciate your continued interest in conserving endangered species, and your staff's ongoing efforts to develop and implement these conservation measures. If further assistance is needed or you have any questions, please contact Katherine Richardson at 801-975-3330, extension 125.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "K. Richardson", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.