

**Finding of No Significant Impact
Camas Creek Pocket Allotment
Environmental Assessment ID-120-2009-EA-3838**

I have reviewed the Council on Environmental Quality Regulations (CEQ) for significance (40 CFR 1508.27) and have determined the actions analyzed in ID-120-2009-EA-3838 would not constitute a major Federal action that would significantly affect the quality of the human environment; therefore, an Environmental Impact Statement is not required. This finding was made by considering both the context and intensity of the potential effects, as described in the Environmental Assessment (EA), using the following factors defining significance:

1) Impacts that may be both beneficial and adverse.

The proposed action will have beneficial impacts and minimal direct or indirect adverse impacts to soils and watersheds, upland vegetation, special status plants, wildlife (including special status species). The proposed action will maintain or slightly improve rangeland health over the long-term within the Camas Creek Pocket Allotment (Sections 3.1 through 3.5 of EA ID-120-2009-EA-3838). The allotment will continue to meet the Idaho Standards for Rangeland Health.

The proposed action will have no effects to heritage or cultural resources known to occur in the allotment (Section 3.7). The proposed action would slightly reduce the quality of recreational opportunities and have no effects to visual resources. Potential alterations in the grazing season of use may be slightly burdensome to the permittee, but the proposed action will have no economic impacts upon the current grazing permit value. The proposed action will have negligible impacts to the overall economy of Owyhee County, over the long-term. The proposed action would have no effects to low income or minority populations. Maintenance of existing projects, such as fences will limit grazing management impacts.

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

No effects to public health or safety were identified in the EA.

3) Unique characteristics of the geographic area, such as proximity to historic or cultural resources, park lands, prime farmland, wetlands, wild and scenic rivers, or ecologically critical areas.

The EA identifies no unique characteristics within the Camas Creek Pocket Allotment geographic area other than the Camas and Pole Creeks National Register Archaeological District, which is described in item 8 below.

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

The effects caused by livestock grazing, in general, have been studied and well documented. While some disagreement exists regarding the effects of specific grazing practices and environments, the grazing management proposed for the Camas Creek Pocket Allotment in EA # ID-120-2009-EA-3838 is neither exceptional nor controversial. Scoping didn't reveal any issues resulting from current grazing practices.

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

The effects of livestock grazing in this area are well documented. The effects of livestock grazing are variable, depending on many factors, but the overall scale of the grazing operation is often of primary importance. The grazing management proposed for Camas Creek Pocket Allotment is relatively small scale, and not so unique that it exposes the human environment to unacceptable levels of risk. The degree of risk is relatively low.

- 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 Bureau of Land Management (BLM) issues grazing permits as matter of routine operation. The grazing management proposed for the Camas Creek Pocket Allotment in EA # ID-120-2009-EA-3838 sets no precedent for future actions nor would it become the basis for BLM to issue any future decision. Any future decision making would proceed with full and proper consideration of the effects to the human environment, and would be unencumbered by any legacy of the grazing management proposed for the allotment in the EA.

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

The effects of the grazing management proposed for the Camas Creek Pocket Allotment, taken together with the effects of cumulative actions for the respective resources, are not significantly adverse. The EA identifies no other actions that would be connected with the proposed action.

- 8) *The degree to which the action may adversely affect districts, sites, highways, structures, or objects listed in or eligible for listing in the NRHP or may cause loss or destruction of significant scientific, cultural, or historical resources.*

Portions of the Camas Creek Pocket Allotment are located within the Camas and Pole Creeks National Register Archaeological District. The EA indicates that the proposed action would have no effect on known cultural or historic sites in the allotment.

- 9) *The degree to which the action may adversely affect an endangered or threatened species or its habitat that has determined to be critical under the Endangered Species Act of 1973.*

The Camas Creek Pocket Allotment supports no habitat for any threatened or endangered species with potential to occur in the region (Sections 3.3.1 and 3.5.5.1). The allotment supports suitable nesting habitat for greater sage-grouse, a candidate species for listing under the Act. Implementing the proposed action would not appreciably change the availability or condition of sage-grouse nesting habitat in the allotment, and it would continue to support suitable nesting habitat for greater sage-grouse (Section 3.5.3.1.).

- 10) *Whether the action threatens a violation of Federal, State, and local laws or requirements imposed for protection of the environment.*

The analysis in EA # ID-120-2009-EA-3838 shows that the proposed action is consistent with Federal, State, and local laws or requirements imposed for protection of the environment (Sections 1.10 and 3.1 through 3.9).

/s/ Arnold Pike
Bruneau Field Manager

June 10, 2011
Date

**Finding of No Significant Impact
Nahas FFR Allotment
Livestock Grazing Permit Renewal
Environmental Assessment ID-120-2009-EA-3838**

I have reviewed the Council on Environmental Quality Regulations (CEQ) for significance (40 CFR 1508.27) and have determined the actions analyzed in EA #ID-120-2009-EA-3838 would not constitute a major federal action that would significantly affect the quality of the human environment; therefore an Environmental Impact Statement is not required. This finding was made by considering both the context and intensity of the potential effects, as described in the above EA, using the following factors defining significance:

1) Impacts that may be both beneficial and adverse.

The Proposed Action will have beneficial impacts and minimal direct or indirect adverse impacts to soils and watersheds, upland vegetation, sensitive plant populations, to wetlands and to wildlife (including sensitive species) on public land, over the short and long term (Sections 3.1 through 3.5 of EA ID-120-2009-EA-3838). These resources have met applicable rangeland health Standards under the current and proposed livestock management. In the long-term the proposed action will maintain or slightly improve rangeland health overall within the Nahas FFR Allotment (Sections 3.1 through 3.5 of EA ID-120-2009-EA-3838).

The Proposed Action will also have minimal direct or indirect adverse impacts to visual quality, cultural resources, grazing management, the overall economy of Owyhee County and to the human environment, including low income or minority populations over the short and long term. The proposed action will have no economic impacts upon the current grazing permit value. Maintenance of existing projects will limit grazing management impacts. The EA identifies no effects to heritage or cultural resources from the proposed action (Sections 3.7 of EA ID-120-2009-EA-3838). Other resources will be slightly enhanced, such as recreational opportunities, naturalness within the Pole Creek WA and scenic values along the Backcountry Byway.

Wilderness values including size of the wilderness and its outstanding opportunities to experience solitude would be maintained. The proposed action will also have no impacts, naturalness nor opportunities for primitive and unconfined recreation on any public lands.

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

No major effects to public health and safety were identified in the EA.

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.

No significant effects on unique geographic characteristics of the area, cultural or historical resources, wetlands, wild and scenic rivers, or ecologically critical areas were identified in EA ID-120-2009-EA-3838. The grazing prescription would slightly enhance naturalness and primitive recreational opportunities in the Pole Creek Wilderness Area. No parklands, designated Wild and Scenic Rivers or prime farmlands are found in the project area. Cultural resources would not be significantly impacted (Section 3.7 of EA ID-120-2009-EA-3838). Maintenance of two existing wetlands is expected through the continuation of the grazing practices and maintenance of existing range improvement projects found in Alternative B (Section 3.4.3, EA ID-120-2009-EA-3838).

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

The analysis did not identify any effects on the quality of the human environment that are likely to be highly controversial. No public comments have been received that expressed any specific concerns about the effects of management actions and existing projects on various resource values on public lands in this allotment. Permittee input was, however, used to correct the pasture and allotment boundaries to reflect actual fence locations and property ownerships. The effects of continuing existing grazing practices within those boundaries with a modification to season of use have been analyzed and discussed in the EA (Sections 3.1 through 3.9 of EA ID-120-2009-EA-3838).

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

The analysis did not identify any effects on the human environment that are highly uncertain or involve unique or unknown risks. Livestock grazing has been a primary use in this area for at least 70 years (Taylor Grazing Act 1934). Grazing management and maintenance of similar project developments as those proposed by this decision have been completed in other parts of the Bruneau Field Office and southwestern Idaho. The effects of the proposed action on the human environment are not highly uncertain, and do not involve unique or unknown risks.

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 analysis showed how the Bruneau Management Framework Plan (Bruneau MFP, USDI 1983) would be implemented under the alternatives (Sections 1.2, 1.9, and 1.10 and 3.1 through 3.9, EA ID-120-2009-EA-3838) and actions continued and proposed are similar to those previously taken in the Bruneau Field Office and specifically within the Nahas FFR Allotment. The proposed action would not establish precedent for any future actions. The need for and impacts of each grazing permit renewal (including maintenance of existing range improvement projects) will continue to be analyzed on a site-specific basis. Implementation of this decision would not trigger other actions, nor is

it a necessary component of a larger action in the project area encompassed by this decision.

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

The analysis did not identify any known significant cumulative or secondary negative effects (Sections 3.1 through 3.8, EA ID-120-2009-EA-3838) within the respective analysis areas. Outside of Nahas FFR allotment, additional rangeland health assessments, determinations, and subsequent decisions have been implemented or are planned, resulting in changes in livestock management actions, stocking levels and seasons of use, construction of additional projects, and maintenance or modification of existing projects. However, those actions in combination with this decision are not expected to result in cumulatively significant negative impacts.

The proposed actions associated with this EA and with other grazing decisions within the respective analysis areas are expected to slightly improve recreational opportunities and wilderness values. In addition to implementation of grazing decisions, wildfire suppression, juniper control measures, ongoing noxious weed control programs, the closure and/or rehabilitation of some OHV routes and other ongoing control or mitigation measures also will continue in the Nahas FFR Allotment and in adjoining allotments, maintaining current favorable conditions or improving unfavorable ones.

8) *The degree to which the action may adversely affect properties listed in or eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places or may cause loss or destruction of significant scientific, cultural, or historical resources.*

The analysis showed that the alternatives would not result in adverse effects to cultural resources that are considered eligible for listing in the National Register of Historical Places (Section 3.7.3.2 of EA ID-120-2009-EA-3838).

9) *The degree to which the action may adversely affect an endangered or threatened species or its habitat that has determined to be critical under the Endangered Species Act of 1973.*

No endangered or threatened species are known in this allotment (Sections 3.3 and 3.5 of EA ID-120-2009-EA-3838). Impacts to BLM sensitive species and candidate species for federal listing as endangered or threatened are also discussed in Sections 3.3 and 3.5, and are neutral or beneficial. Habitat for spotted frogs, a candidate species would not be affected by continuing the existing grazing management. Elimination of negative impacts from lack of water storage in Circle Pond is expected through maintenance of the existing range improvement project and through monitoring of the Annual Indicator Criterion for Circle Pond found in the proposed action (Section 3.5.3.2, EA ID-120-2009-EA-3838).

10) Whether the action threatens a violation of Federal, State, and local laws or requirements imposed for protection of the environment.

The analysis in the EA shows that the proposed action is consistent with Federal, State, and local laws or requirements imposed for protection of the environment (Sections 1.10 and 3.1 through 3.9 of EA ID-120-2009-EA-3838).

/s/ Arnold Pike

6/10/11

/s/ Arnold Pike
Bruneau Field Manager

Date