

UNITED STATES  
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
Bureau of Land Management  
Colorado River District  
Kingman Field Office

**FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT**

Cerbat, Quail Springs, and Fort MacEwen  
Proposed Grazing Management Plan and Permit Renewal  
Environmental Assessment  
DOI-BLM-AZ-C010-2015-0029-EA

**INTRODUCTION**

The Kingman Field Office of the Colorado River District prepared the above titled Environmental Assessment (2015 CQFM EA) to analyze four alternatives for the Cerbat, Quail Springs, and Fort MacEwen (CQFM) Allotments. The 2015 CQFM EA is a revision to the following documents:

- 1) The Cerbat, Quail Springs, and Fort MacEwen Allotments Grazing Permit Renewal EA Released – 2013 (DOI-BLM-AZ-C010-2011-0017-EA) and
- 2) The Cerbat, Quail Springs, and Fort MacEwen Allotments Proposed Grazing Permit Renewal EA Released – 2014 (DOI-BLM-AZ-C010-2014-0036-EA).

The revision was completed as part of BLM’s commitment to involve the public (including the permittee, other agencies, the RAC, etc.) through additional scoping to insure that comments were adequately addressed and resolved.

Alternative #1 (Proposed Adaptive Management Alternative) of the 2015 CQFM EA was prepared by an externally selected subcommittee identified through a competitive application process by the BLM Arizona Resource Advisory Council (RAC). Alternatives #2 (Reduced Permitted Use Alternative), #3 (No Action Alternative—No Change to Current Terms and Conditions), and #4 (No Grazing Alternative) were developed by the BLM Kingman interdisciplinary resource team.

Land health standards were evaluated in the *Cerbat, Quail Springs, and Fort MacEwen Allotments Rangeland Health Evaluation* (USDI BLM 2010) (Rangeland Health Evaluation) according to the land use plan objectives for CQFM Allotment set forth in the *Kingman Resource Area Proposed Resource Management Plan (RMP)/Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS)* (USDI BLM 1995).

**Proposed Action**

The proposed action is to provide for economically viable livestock grazing opportunities on public lands where consistent with meeting BLM management and environmental objectives, including the *Arizona Standards for Rangeland Health and Guidelines for Grazing Administration* (Rangeland Health Standards—USDI BLM 1997).

Consideration of the Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ) criteria for significance (40 CFR 1508.27), both with regard to context and intensity of impacts, is described below:

## Context

The Proposed Action would occur on the CQFM Allotments and would have local impacts on affected interests, lands, and resources similar to and within the scope of those described and considered in the Kingman RMP/FEIS (USDI BLM 1995). There would be no substantial broad societal or regional impacts not previously considered in the Kingman RMP/FEIS. The actions described represent anticipated program adjustments complying with the Kingman RMP/Record of Decision, and implementing range management programs within the scope and context of this document.

### *Intensity*

The CEQ's ten considerations for evaluating intensity (severity of effect):

1. **Impacts that may be both beneficial and adverse.** The EA considered potential beneficial and adverse effects. The Alternative 1: The Proposed Adaptive Management Plan allows for flexibility within livestock management to reduce impacts. None of the effects are beyond the range of effects analyzed in the Kingman RMP/FEIS (USDI 1995), to which the EA is tiered.

Cultural Heritage: Class III cultural resource inventories for all of the proposed range improvements for cattleguards and exclosures were conducted in 2013. The associated report numbers are BLM-AZ-310-13-08 (conducted on March 25, 2013) and BLM-AZ-310-13-12. Both reports document that no historic properties or cultural resources were present; therefore, no effect is expected to historic properties. It is assumed that the range improvements would result in improving distribution across the allotments, which would diminish trampling affects allotment-wide. Grazing would not likely affect unknown cultural resources to a greater extent than historic grazing effects. While surface impacts can cause artifact breakage and vertical and horizontal displacement of artifacts, generalized grazing is not anticipated to result in greater impacts than those already evident at cultural sites.

Grazing Management/Rangelands: Alternative 1: The Proposed Adaptive Management Plan would implement range improvement projects to aid grazing management, which would be adjusted to conform to the *Arizona Standards for Rangeland Health and Guidelines for Grazing Administration* (Rangeland Health Standards—USDI BLM 1997) by periodically providing critical growing season rest and moving toward achieving all Standards. Reduced livestock numbers and grazing rotations that would be implemented would provide reduced grazing pressure and offer periodic growing season rest to key forage plant species on all pastures, allowing key forage species the opportunity to complete their life cycles.

The range improvements would help improve livestock distribution throughout the allotments, reduce erosion on uplands, and protect the riparian habitat. The pipeline construction and redevelopment of existing pipeline and wells would enhance livestock distribution away from areas of heavy historical use, promoting more uniform utilization patterns, thus reducing forage competition between all grazing animals. Providing additional water sources would facilitate livestock grazing rotations providing periodic growing season rest to key forage plant species.

Invasive and Non-native Species : The grazing management being proposed should promote vigorous, productive plant communities, which would better utilize the resources of the site, lessening opportunities for invasive and non-native species introduction and spread. Short-

term disturbances during construction of some of the range improvements would occur; however, follow-up monitoring and treatments could occur. Therefore, over the long term (5+ years) potential for persistent invasive and non-native species issues in the allotment would be less than the No Action Alternative.

Recreation/Visual Resources: Effects to recreation and visual resources would only be minimal as livestock numbers would be reduced and the permitted season would change year to year in response to adaptive management. The proposed grazing deferment may result in less conflict between livestock and hunters in those pastures being rested during hunting seasons. Temporary disturbances would occur during construction of the proposed projects; however, effects to recreation are expected to be undetectable for the allotments as a whole, given their short-term and localized nature. Overall, recreational opportunities, such as hunting, would likely be enhanced by improvements in wildlife habitat conditions.

Riparian Zones, Wetlands, and Water Quality: The re-development of an enclosure at Big Wash Spring would protect and improve the quality of the riparian habitat around the spring.

Socioeconomics: Developments would provide periodic rest to upland vegetation and improve cattle distribution resulting in improved rangeland conditions. The Proposed Action would increase economic opportunities for the livestock operation, help sustain livelihoods for the multiple families employed by the ranching operation, and foster more desirable social opportunities. The Proposed Action would allow the permittee to turn out saddle horses; thus saving him thousands of dollars in transportation and feed costs each year. The savings could be reinvested into the ranching operation.

Soils and Biological Soil Crusts: Biological soil crusts are rarely observed throughout the allotments. Although they are uncommon in coarse, rocky, and sandy soils common to the allotments, the proposed management practices would reduce erosion and loss of those that could exist due to enhanced grazing distribution. Soil cover is expected over the long term to become denser as plant species become more prominent throughout the allotments.

Special Status Species: The proposed grazing strategy is expected to provide improved habitat quality through seasonal deferment for species such as desert tortoise, bighorn sheep, and other wildlife. Deferred grazing during the growing season in some pastures would also reduce competition for forage and wildlife habitat.

Upland Vegetation: Periodic growing season rest from livestock grazing for key forage species across CQFM Allotments would allow for improved plant vigor and diversity, improved plant community composition, age class distribution and overall production within the allotments. The proposed water developments would improve livestock management across the allotments and protect the herbaceous riparian plant species at Big Wash Spring. Current carrying capacity for all demands (wildlife and livestock) would be sustained or improved as plant communities would remain in stable to upward trend in rangeland condition.

Wildlife: Grazing when most herbaceous plants are dormant would promote healthy rangeland conditions, and enhance productivity and sustainability of wildlife habitat. Competition between livestock and wildlife would be reduced in pastures being rested allowing wildlife exclusive use.

Fencing around Big Wash Spring would reduce trampling and grazing impacts, and allow more natural hydric vegetation to establish. However, fencing may alter movements or cause injury or even death for some wildlife.

2. **Degree to which the Proposed Action affects public health and safety.** No aspect of the Proposed Action or alternatives would have an effect on public health and 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.** Portions of the Lost Cabin, Squaw Pocket, and Twin Mills pastures (approximately 10,348 acres) are located in the Black Mountain Ecosystem Area Critical Environmental Concern (ACEC). Over the evaluation period, it was found that objectives for the Black Mountain Ecosystem Management Plan are being met, as well as Standards 1 and 3 at Key Area 11. This means the site is producing desirable forage, cover, and soil protection in the amounts that are typically found in these types of ecological sites. This suggests that habitat values such as forage quality and quantity are adequate to sustain bighorn sheep, mule deer, livestock, and burros. What this means for ACEC values, is that a “healthy” rangeland is more likely to provide the necessary food and cover to sustain species there. It is expected that these values would be sustained or improved under the Proposed Action and any of the alternatives. Water for all species would continue to be available in the ACEC.
4. **The degree to which effects on the quality of the human environment are likely to be highly controversial.** Controversy in this context means disagreement about the nature of the effects, not expressions of opposition to the Proposed Action or preference among the alternatives. No unique or appreciable scientific controversy has been identified regarding the effects of the Proposed Action or alternatives.
5. **Degree to which possible effects on the human environment are highly uncertain or involve unique or unknown risks.** The analysis has not shown there would be any unique or unknown risks to the human environment nor were any identified in the Kingman RMP/FEIS to which this proposal is tiered.
6. **Degree to which the action may establish a precedent for future actions with significant impacts or represents a decision in principle about a future consideration.** This project neither establishes a precedent nor represents a decision in principle about future actions. No long-term commitment of resources causing significant impacts was noted in the CQFM EA.
7. **Whether the action is related to other actions with individually insignificant but cumulatively significant impacts.** The environmental analysis did not reveal any cumulative effects beyond those already analyzed in the Kingman RMP/FEIS which encompasses the CQFM Allotments. The EA described the current state of the environment (Affected Environment by Resource, Chapter III) which analyzed the effects of past actions that included: burro gather(s); monitoring of vegetative and wildlife habitat improvement projects; invasive, non-native species control efforts; fire management activities to reduce the threat and impact of wildfire; recreational activities (wildlife viewing, hunting, camping, etc.); public forms of multiple-use (gaining access to/from private or public lands) across the allotments; maintenance forms of multiple-use (utility companies maintaining power lines on right-of-ways, lands/realty surveys, etc.); mineral exploration, extraction, and/or development; State/county services (weed eradication; invasive,

non-native species control efforts; highway maintenance, etc.); population growth; nuisance gathers of burros on private land; Colorado River District Permittee Range Improvement Requests; Solar Application Requests; and Mohave Wind Farm EIS.

8. **Degree to which the action may adversely affect districts, sites, highways, structures or objects listed in or eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places.** Except for the proposed site of well E1, the locations of all proposed range improvements were negative for cultural resources. E1's proposed location was dropped from the project design to avoid adverse impacts to potentially eligible cultural resources. The associated report number is BLM-AZ-310-15-18. The Proposed Action and other alternatives are not expected to have significant impact on historic properties listed on or eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places.
9. **The degree to which the action may adversely affect an endangered or threatened species or its habitat.** There are no known T&E species or their habitat affected by the Proposed Action or alternatives.
10. **Whether an action threatens a violation of Federal, State, or local law or requirements imposed for the protection of the environment.** The Proposed Action and alternatives do not threaten to violate any law. The Proposed Action is in compliance with the Kingman RMP/FEIS (USDI 1995), which provides direction for the protection of the environment on public lands.

On the basis of the information contained in the EA and all other information available to me, it is my determination that:

1. The implementation of the Proposed Action or alternatives will not have significant environmental impacts beyond those already addressed in the Kingman RMP/FEIS (USDI 1995);
2. The Proposed Action and alternatives are in conformance with the Kingman RMP/ROD;
3. There would be no adverse societal or regional impacts and no adverse impacts to affected interests; and
4. The environmental effects, together with proposed regulations, against the tests of significance found at 40 CFR 1508.27 do not constitute a major Federal action having a significant effect on the human environment. Therefore, an EIS is not necessary and will not be prepared.

/s/ Roxie Trost

6/30/2015

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Roxie Trost  
Colorado River District Manager

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Date