United States Department of the Interior

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In Reply Refer To:
4130 (NVE03000)

FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT
Gulley Allotment Grazing Permit Renewal Decision
DOI-BLM-NV-E030-2015-0024-EA

Based on the environmental assessment (EA) for the Grazing Permit Renewal Decision for the Gulley Allotment (DOI-BLM-NV-E030-2015-0024-EA), I have determined that the alternatives, as described and analyzed in the EA, will not significantly affect the quality of the human environment. Therefore, preparation of an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) is not required prior to my issuance of the decision.

This finding is based on my consideration of the Council on Environmental Quality's (CEQ) criteria for significance (40 CFR 1508.27) with regard to the context and the intensity of impacts as discussed in the EA and summarized below.

Context:
The alternatives focus on livestock grazing management on 11,195 acres of public land intermixed with 1,967 acres of private land within the Gulley Grazing Allotment located in the northern end of O'Neil Basin in northern Elko County. The BLM issued a Standards and Guidelines for Rangeland Health Assessment in May 2014.

Intensity:
1) *Impacts that may be both beneficial and adverse*.
The analysis identifies both beneficial and adverse impacts to wetlands, riparian zones and aquatic and avian species of concern that may arise as a result of the proposed grazing permit renewal and range improvement projects. Measures are incorporated to avoid or reduce adverse impacts from grazing, conserve habitat for sensitive species, and identify and protect cultural resources.

2) *The degree to which the proposed action affects public health or safety.*
The alternatives 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.*
The proposed grazing permit incorporates procedures for the protection and management of historic and cultural resources and other unique areas in the Gulley Allotment. No park lands, special recreation management areas, prime or unique farmlands, or wild and scenic rivers exist within the allotments. Wildlife habitat and wetlands, including springs, have 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 significant progress towards and/or attainment of the riparian and wildlife habitat standards and objectives throughout the allotment as defined by 43 CFR §4180.

4) *The degree to which the 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 significant progress towards achievement 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.

BLM received one timely comment letter during the public review period of the Standards Determination Document. BLM has addressed the received comments in the analysis contained within the EA, and BLM considers the effects to not be highly controversial.

5) *The degree to which the possible effects on the human environment are highly uncertain or involve unique or unknown risks.*
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) *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 ten-year grazing permit includes terms and conditions to protect resources from significant adverse effects. This action does not make any commitments for BLM approval for any future actions beyond those outlined in the proposed action. All future proposed livestock management actions not described in the alternatives would continue to be subject to further consideration in accordance with BLM grazing and NEPA 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 are identified. As a standard procedure, cumulative impacts would continue to be subject to further review as new projects are proposed, and on a site-specific basis.

8) *The 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 or may cause loss or destruction of significant scientific, cultural, or historic resources.*
The alternatives incorporate Project Procedures to identify and protect significant cultural resources from adverse effects. In addition there is a monitoring plan to re-visit known historic properties within the Gulley Allotment to monitor for grazing impacts. Monitoring would occur based upon the need and frequency determined by the BLM, and in the event of excessive grazing pressure/impacts identified through trampling, erosion or other impact resulting in an adverse effect, the BLM will develop avoidance or mitigation measures in consultation with the Nevada SHPO. This may include, but is not limited to, the development of exclosure fences or

the mitigation of affected historic properties through archaeological excavations. This would be considered under a separate NEPA action and is not part of the current document's analysis.

9) *The degree to which the action may adversely affect an endangered or threatened species or its habitat that has been determined to be critical under the ESA of 1973.*
As discussed for special status species in the EA, the allotment does provide habitat for one candidate species (Greater Sage-Grouse) and several BLM-sensitive species of concern. The alternatives include 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 law or requirements imposed for the protection of the environment.*
The alternatives have 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/ Melanie A. Peterson	**9/16/2015**
Melanie A. Peterson, Manager **Wells Field Office**	**Date**