

**United States Department of the Interior
Bureau of Land Management**

**FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT
(FONSI)**

DOI-BLM-MT-C020-2015-0025-EA

**WOHLGENANT/SWOPE TRANSFER
Grazing Transfer**

Location: Custer County – T. 09 N., R. 47 E., Section 26, 28, 34

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**UNITED STATES
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT
MILES CITY FIELD OFFICE
FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT
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On the basis of the information contained in the EA (DOI-BLM-MT-C020-2016-0025-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 BLM 2015 Miles City Field Office Approved Resource Management Plan (ARMP), and the Standards for Rangeland Health and Guidelines for Livestock Grazing for Montana, North Dakota, and South Dakota Record of Decision approved in 1997.
- (2) The Proposed Action is in conformance with the Record of Decision for the ARMP.
- (3) The Proposed Action does not constitute a major federal action having a significant effect on the human environment.

Therefore, an environmental impact statement or a supplement to the existing environmental impact statement is not necessary and will not be prepared.

This finding is based on my consideration of the Council on Environmental Quality's (CEQ) criteria for significance (40 CFR '1508.27), both with regard to the context and to the intensity of the impacts described in the EA or as articulated in the letters of comment.

Context

The proposed action is to transfer a portion of grazing preference AUMs on the Wohlgenant Lease Allotment (#01264). The allotment would be split and two grazing permits would be issued; Authorization #2502225 (Table 2) and Authorization #2504686 (Table 3). The east pasture would remain the Wohlgenant Allotment (#01264) and the west pasture would become the Cow Creek Allotment (#03398). The term of the permits would run from March 01, 2016 through February 28, 2026. Changes would be made to the terms and conditions and are described below:

From:

Table 1. Mandatory Terms and Conditions for Authorization #2502225

Allotment Name and Number	Livestock Number	Kind	Grazing Begins	Grazing Ends	% Public Land	Type Use	AUMs
Wohlgenant Lease (01264)	160	C	04/16	11/15	16	Custodial	180

Total Active AUMs: 180

Terms and Conditions:

- Grazing is authorized on season and numbers

To:

Table 2. Mandatory Terms and Conditions for Authorization #2502225

Allotment Name and Number	Livestock Number	Kind	Grazing Begins	Grazing Ends	% Public Land	Type Use	AUMs
Wohlgenant Lease (01264)	9	C	03/01	02/28	100	C	110

Total Active AUMs: 110

Terms and Conditions:

- Grazing is authorized during the listed season for the recognized capacity of the public land. Livestock would not be on the public land continuously for the entire season. Grazing use is authorized with normal livestock operation. Grazing fees must be paid prior to turnout. Livestock numbers and season of use cannot exceed public land AUMs.
- Supplemental feed (includes salting) will not be placed within one quarter of a mile of stock watering facilities, riparian zones, hardwood draws or wetlands. Supplemental feed defined as feed that provides for improved livestock nutrition or rangeland management,

Table 3. Mandatory Terms and Conditions for Authorization #2504686

Allotment Name and Number	Livestock Number	Kind	Grazing Begins	Grazing Ends	% Public Land	Type Use	AUMs
Cow Creek 03398	6	C	03/01	02/28	100	C	70

Total Active AUMs: 70

Terms and Conditions:

- Grazing is authorized during the listed season for the recognized capacity of the public land. Livestock would not be on the public land continuously for the entire season. Grazing use is authorized with normal livestock operation. Grazing fees must be paid prior to turnout. Livestock numbers and season of use cannot exceed public land AUMs.
- Supplemental feed (includes salting) will not be placed within one quarter of a mile of stock watering facilities, riparian zones, hardwood draws or wetlands. Supplemental feed defined as feed that provides for improved livestock nutrition or rangeland management, but does not replace forage available from public lands.

Intensity

I have considered the potential intensity/severity of the impacts anticipated from the proposed action and all alternatives relative to each of the ten areas suggested for consideration by the CEQ.

1. Impacts that may be both beneficial and adverse. The analysis documented in EA DOI-BLM-MT-C020-2016-0025-EA did not identify any individual significant adverse short-term or long-term impacts. In the long-term, under the proposed grazing management practices, maintenance in the overall rangeland health within the Cow Creek (03398) and Wohlgenant Lease

(01264) Allotments will occur.

2. *The degree to which the proposed action affects public health and safety.* No significant effects to public health and safety were identified in the EA.

3. *Unique characteristics of the geographic area such as proximity of historic or cultural resources, park lands, prime farmlands, wetlands, wild and scenic rivers, or ecologically critical areas.* There are no known historic or cultural resource sites or paleontological localities that would be affected by the proposed action. A review of BLM and SHPO Cultural Resource Records databases indicates that seven cultural resource sites and no paleontological localities have been recorded on public lands within this allotment (. The proposed action meets the inventory exemption criteria found in BLM's Montana/Dakotas Cultural Resources Handbook H-8110-1, Appendix One, Range 1 and Instruction Memorandum No. 2009-011: Guidelines for Assessment and Mitigation of Potential Impacts to Paleontological Resources. Issuance of a grazing permit is an action that generally does not involve any direct surface disturbance and as a non-surface disturbing type of activity, has little or no potential or ability to significantly affect cultural properties or paleontological resources. As a result, no cultural resource or paleontological inventory is necessary prior to approving and authorizing this undertaking to proceed. Consequently, no cultural resource values considered eligible for the National Register of Historic Places or paleontological resources would be affected by this undertaking (see report number listed in the environmental assessment). There are no parks, prime farmlands, or wild and scenic rivers in the planning area.

4. *The degree to which the effects on the quality of the human environment are likely to be highly controversial.* The effects of the actions planned under the Proposed Action are similar to many other grazing permit actions implemented within the scope of the ARMP. No unique or appreciable scientific controversy has been identified regarding the effects of the Proposed Action.

5. *The degree to which the possible effects on the human environment are highly uncertain or involve unique or unknown risks.* The analysis has not shown that there would be any unique or unknown risks to the human environment not previously considered and analyzed in EISs to which this EA is tiered.

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 proposed action neither establishes a precedent nor represents a decision in principle about future actions. The proposed action is consistent with actions appropriate for the area as designated by the ARMP.

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 EISs which accompanied the ARMP.

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 proposed action will not adversely affect any district, site, highway, structure, or object listed or eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places or cause loss or destruction of significant scientific, cultural, or historic resources.

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 Endangered Species Act of 1973.

There are no threatened or endangered species or habitat in the area of the proposed action.

10. Whether the action threatens a violation of Federal, State, or local law or requirements imposed for the protection of the environment. The proposed action does not threaten to violate any Federal, State, or local law.

/s/ Shane Findlay, Acting

Eric D. Lepisto
Acting Field Manager
Miles City Field Office

12/3/2015

Date