United States Department of the Interior
Bureau of Land Management

Finding of No Significant Impact
Environmental Assessment
DOI-BLM-UT-Y010-2016-0078-EA

September 2016

Monument Wash Allotment
Ten Year Grazing Permit Renewal

Location: Grand County, Utah
Grazing Authorization Number: 4306376

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INTRODUCTION:

The Bureau of Land Management (BLM) has conducted an environmental analysis (DOI-BLM-UT-Y010-2016-0078-EA) for a proposed action to renew the grazing permit for the Monument Wash Allotment in Grand County.

The allotment is located approximately 24 miles northeast of Moab, Utah. Environmental Analysis DOI-BLM-UT-Y010-2016-0078-EA, available at the Moab Field Office, is incorporated by reference for this Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI). A no action alternative and two alternatives (Proposed Action and Alternative B) were analyzed in the EA.

FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT:

Based upon a review of the EA and the supporting documents, I have determined that renewal of the Monument Wash Allotment permit will not significantly affect the quality of the human environment, individually or cumulatively with other actions in the general area. No environmental effects meet the definition of significance in context or intensity as defined in 40 CFR 1508.27, and do not exceed those effects described in the Moab RMP. Therefore, an environmental impact statement is not needed.

This finding is based on the context and intensity of the project as described:

Context: The project is a site-specific action directly involving approximately 70,462 acres of BLM administered land that by itself does not have international, national, regional, or state-wide importance.

Intensity: The following discussion is organized around the Ten Significance Criteria described in 40 CFR 1508.27 and incorporated into resources and issues considered (includes supplemental authorities Appendix 1 H-1790-1) and supplemental Instruction Memorandum, Acts, regulations and Executive Orders.

The following have been considered in evaluating intensity for this proposal:

1. **Impacts may be both beneficial and adverse**.

   Based on the analysis contained in the attached EA, none of the alternatives would have either significant beneficial or adverse impacts on the human environment. There are no areas of critical environmental concern (ACEC), wild and scenic rivers, wilderness/wilderness study areas (WSA), wastes (hazardous or solid), geology / mineral resources/energy production, or low income or minority populations located in the project area.

   No measureable impacts would occur to air quality/greenhouse gas emissions, flood plains, soils, water resources/quality (drinking/surface/ground), wetlands/riparian zones, recreation, BLM natural areas, socio-economics, areas with wilderness characteristics, cultural resource, Native American religious concerns, Utah BLM sensitive animal and plant species, invasive species/noxious weeds, threatened, endangered or candidate animal and plant species, woodland/forestry, fuels/fire management, land/access, paleontology, and visual resources.

The potential impacts to Livestock grazing, vegetation, wildlife (Migratory Birds, Sensitive Species, Fish and Wildlife Excluding USFW Designated Species), and soils, anticipated by the various alternatives have been analyzed in detail within Chapter 4 of the attached EA.

2. **The degree to which the selected alternative will affect public health or safety**.

   None of the alternatives analyzed in detail in the EA would have significant impacts on public health or safety as the project area is not located near any populated area, rural or urban. For this reason, there would also be no impacts to low income or minority populations. Further, there are no known hazardous waste sites in the project area. The proposed action and alternatives do not propose actions that would be a health or safety risk. Livestock grazing is a common occurrence on BLM administered land and has occurred for many years in this area which has not affected public health or safety. There would be no measureable impacts to air quality within and surrounding the analysis area.

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

   There are no ACEC, wild and scenic rivers, wilderness/WSA, wastes (hazardous or solid), or low income or minority populations located in the project area.

   Based on internal scoping, it was determined that no measureable impacts would occur to wetlands/riparian zones, recreation, BLM natural areas, areas with wilderness characteristics, Native American religious concerns, cultural resources, paleontology, or visual resources. The rationale is documented in the interdisciplinary checklist located in Appendix A of the EA.

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

   The potential impacts to Livestock grazing, vegetation, wildlife (Migratory Birds, Sensitive Species, Fish and Wildlife Excluding USFW Designated Species), and soils anticipated by the various alternatives have been analyzed in detail within Chapter 4 of the attached EA and found not to be significant.

   While grazing of public lands may be controversial, ecosystem function will be sustained providing for continued multiple use management of the area by adhering to the proper management practices outlined in the proposed action and Utah's Standards for Rangeland Health and Guidelines for Grazing Management being met.

   The nature of these impacts is not highly controversial, nor is there substantial dispute within the scientific community regarding the nature of these effects. The public has been given an opportunity to review and comment on the analysis of effects. The BLM is not currently aware of any potential highly controversial effects.

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

The project is not unique or unusual. The BLM has experience implementing similar actions in similar areas. The environmental effects to the human environment are fully analyzed in the EA. There are no predicted effects on the human environment that are considered to be highly uncertain or 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.**

   None of the alternatives in the EA would establish a precedent for future BLM actions with significant effects, nor represents a decision in principle about a future consideration. The BLM has experience implementing similar actions in similar areas.

   The actions considered in the alternatives were considered by the interdisciplinary team within the context of past, present, and reasonably foreseeable future actions. Significant cumulative effects are not predicted. A complete analysis of the direct, indirect, and cumulative effects of the alternatives is described in Chapter 4 of the EA.

7. **Whether the action is related to other actions with individually insignificant but cumulatively significant impacts – which include connected actions regardless of land ownership.**

   The proposed action would allow for spring rest, which is expected to increase the vigor, density, diversity, quality, and quantity of forage, and protection of soils from water and wind erosion. The cumulative effect would be to continue to meet Utah's Standards for Rangeland Health, and promote a healthy vegetative community by better protecting soils from erosion.

   The proposed action would allow for greater spring vegetative growth and decreased spatial competition in at least 50% of the allotment each year, which may result in cumulative improvements of wildlife habitat therefore, the action alternatives would contribute minimal additional forage alterations or spatial disturbances to wildlife impacts and would slightly reduce the rate of cumulative impacts that are occurring under the current grazing system (No Action).

   Based on internal scoping, the interdisciplinary team determined that there were no connected actions associated with the proposed action. The interdisciplinary team evaluated the possible actions in context of past, present and reasonably foreseeable actions. Significant cumulative effects are not predicted.

8. **The degree to which the action may adversely affect districts, sites, highways, structures, or other 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 historical resources.**

   The project will not adversely affect districts, sites, highways, structures, or other objects listed in, or eligible for listing in, the National Register of Historic Places, nor will it cause loss or destruction of significant scientific, cultural, or historical resources. The Monument Wash Allotment was evaluated in the Cultural Resource Inventory Project.

Based on the results of the Class I and Class III inventories, no archaeological sites are adversely impacted by livestock grazing activities. Therefore a determination that "No Historic Properties are Adversely Affected" is appropriate and was submitted to the Utah State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) for concurrence. On May 12, 2015 SHPO concurred that no archaeological sites and no Historic Properties are Adversely Affected.

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, or the degree to which the action may adversely affect: 1) a proposed to be listed endangered or threatened species or its habitat, or 2) a species on BLM's sensitive species list.**

Mexican Spotted Owl

No suitable Mexican Spotted Owl (MSO) habitat is within this allotment. The 1997 Willey-Spotskey MSO habitat model depicts isolated pixels of breeding habitat, while the updated 1999 Willey-Spotskey MSO habitat model depicts no breeding habitat; therefore, there is no need to complete occupancy surveys.

South Western Willow Flycatcher (SWFL)

This allotment does not offer any suitable breeding or migratory habitat for SWFLs. All washes here are typically arid wash bottoms and drainages with little or no vegetation. Some areas have scattered thickets of tamarisk, but density and over story is not sufficient for SWFL occupancy.

Yellow Billed Cuckoo (YUBC)

This allotment does not offer any suitable breeding or migratory habitat for YBCUs. All washes here are typically arid wash bottoms and drainages with little or no vegetation. Some areas have scattered thickets of tamarisk, but cottonwood galleries or broadleaf over story is present.

10. **Whether the action threatens a violation of a federal, state, local, or tribal law, regulation or policy imposed for the protection of the environment, where non-federal requirements are consistent with federal requirements.**

The project does not violate any known federal, state, local or tribal law or requirement imposed for the protection of the environment. State, local, and tribal interests were given the opportunity to participate in the environmental analysis process and no concerns or issues were brought forward by any state, local, or tribal interests. Consultations with Native Americans was done on April, 21, 2016. In addition, the project is consistent with applicable land management plans, policies, and programs.

Christina Price 09/13/2016

Christina Price
Acting Moab Field Manager

Date