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United States Department of the Interior
Bureau of Land Management

Arizona Strip Field Office
Grand Canyon-Parashant National Monument

Environmental Assessment

Big Spring Pipeline Allotment Grazing Permit Renewal

EA-AZ-130-2006-0024

I. INTRODUCTION

This Environmental Assessment (EA) analyzes the proposed grazing permit renewal for the Big Spring Pipeline allotment. The action culminates an evaluation conducted on the allotment under the Arizona BLM Standards for Rangeland Health and Guidelines for Grazing Management (S&Gs). In addition, this EA looks at the present allotment management, and determines if current grazing management practices would maintain desirable conditions and continue to allow improvement of public land resources, or if changes in grazing management for this allotment are necessary. This EA is intended to evaluate the findings of the Big Spring Pipeline assessment as it relates to vegetation conditions and resource values in the allotment. This is done in an effort to balance demands placed on the resources by various authorized uses within the allotment.

Analyses of existing allotment data indicate that three key areas are in static trend, while four are in downward trend. Species composition data suggest vegetation cover objectives are being met or partially met and are progressing toward Desired Plant Community objectives. The Interdisciplinary Assessment Team (IAT) determined during the assessment process, that resource conditions on the allotment are progressing toward meeting Standards for Rangeland Health.

Purpose and Need

The purpose and need of this action is to renew the grazing permit associated with the Big Spring Pipeline grazing allotment (#4870) for a period of ten years. The Big Spring Pipeline grazing allotment is located 60 miles south-southeast of St. George, Utah, in the northwest portion of Arizona on lands managed by Bureau of Land Management in the Grand Canyon-Parashant National Monument.

Conformance with Land Use Plan

This proposal is found to be in conformance with the Arizona Strip District Resource

Management Plan (RMP) dated January 1992, as amended April 1997. BLM is in the process of revising the RMP for the Arizona Strip District. During the planning process, lands in the northwestern portion of the allotment have been identified as having wilderness characteristics, and those characteristics are currently being considered for management that would maintain those characteristics. The proposed action may contribute to maintaining or enhancing a higher degree of naturalness by improving and promoting the health of native flora. Conversely, the potential construction of new rangeland developments over the life of the permit could diminish naturalness due to the presence of new structures and vehicle routes that access them. In the long-term, these effects would be negligible to minor. Therefore, the proposed action should not preclude future management consideration of these areas for maintaining wilderness characteristics. However, until a Record of Decision is signed for a new RMP, the area is managed in accordance with the 1992 RMP, as amended.

Grand Canyon Parashant National Monument

Big Spring Pipeline is within the Grand Canyon Parashant National Monument. Designation of the monument does not, in and of itself, require modification of the current grazing practices. The presidential proclamation states that "Laws, regulations, and policies followed by the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) in issuing and administering grazing leases on all lands under its jurisdiction shall continue to apply…". However, Interim Management Guidelines (IM 2002-008, October 11, 2001) have been established to guide management while current planning efforts are under way. These guidelines postpone the implementation of new range improvement projects (fences, pipelines, vegetative treatments) until a new Resource Management Plan (RMP) is completed. Under the Antiquities Act, BLM must protect objects identified in the presidential proclamations that establish national monuments. Therefore, if BLM determines, through the current planning process or otherwise, that any monument objects are harmed by current management, then management (including permit conditions) will be modified accordingly.

Relationships to Statutes, Regulations, or other Plans

This action is in conformance with Arizona's Standards and Guides, which were developed through a collaborative process involving the Arizona Resource Advisory Council and the Bureau of Land Management State Standards and Guidelines team. The Secretary of the Interior approved the Standards and Guidelines in April 1997. The Decision Record, signed by the BLM Arizona State Director (April 1997) provided for full implementation of the Standards and Guides in all Arizona BLM Land Use Plans

Grazing permit renewals are also provided for in 43 CFRs 4100 where the objectives of regulations are"....to promote healthy, sustainable rangeland ecosystems; to accelerate restoration and improvement of public rangelands to properly functioning conditions; to promote the orderly use,....; to establish efficient and effective administration of grazing of public rangelands;....", and as provided for in the Land Use Plans in accordance with multiple-use objectives, requirements and provisions of established laws, regulations and BLM policies incorporating Desired Plant Community (DPC) objectives using the Ecological Site Index approach.

Grazing management practices of the Big Spring Pipeline allotment are in conformance with Arizona Standards for Rangeland Health and Guidelines for Grazing Administration. These practices are intended to assist management in meeting the Standards for Rangeland Health.

Renewal of the Big Spring Pipeline permit conforms to the President's National Energy Policy and would not have adverse energy impacts. This action would not deny energy projects, withdraw lands, close roads or in any other way deny or limit access to mineral materials to support energy actions.

Issues raised relating to Standards for Rangeland Health

Identification of issues for the Big Spring Pipeline S&G evaluation and this assessment were accomplished by the Rangeland Resources Team (RRT), Interdisciplinary Assessment Team (IAT), and livestock permittee during scoping on October 22, 2003. A field trip to the allotment was also conducted on March 17, 2004. One specific issue brought forward for further analysis in this EA is as follows:

- An infestation of scotch thistle, approximately ¼ acres in size has been located at Cold Tank, south of Browns Knoll. This infestation has been treated over the past three years. Although the treatments have not yet eradicated the noxious weed, they have had an impact in reducing the size and plant numbers of the infestation.

Other issues recognized during this process but not analyzed further in this EA are listed below.

The IAT and Rangeland Resources Team (RRT) made a determination that current livestock grazing is not a significant contribution to theses issues and therefore are not carried forward in this EA. It may be correct to assume, that while historical livestock grazing circa 1910 may have had an affect on current vegetation diversity in Whitmore Canyon, current grazing practices are not preventing vegetation from progressing toward vegetation objectives. It was also determined by the RRT that historical and recent flood events in Whitmore Wash and the Lang's Run coupled with mature woodlands are the primary contributors to the erosion issues associated with both areas.

- Vegetative diversity and erosion in Whitmore Canyon; Historical heavy use by sheep and cattle had an impact on vegetation diversity. The lack of vegetation in the bottom of Whitmore Canyon reciprocated slightly higher erosion rates into Whitmore Wash. Another factor contributing to increased water flows in the canyon was the increase and maturity of woody species (pinyon and juniper) on the adjacent uplands. As the woody species have increased in density and matured in age, understory plant species such as grasses, forbs, and shrubs decreased.

- Sheet and gully erosion in tributaries, head and lateral cutting in the upper reaches of Lang's Run, near Death Valley; The watershed issue at Lang's Run has been an element of on-going

discussion for several years. It has been identified for treatment in previous watershed plans. The lower end of Upper Lang's Run received treatment in the late 1980's and has been effective in slowing and in some cases eliminating gully and sheet erosion. To date, the upper end of this watershed has had no such treatment and continues to pose problems to the watershed as a whole. The Death Valley watershed treatment project is currently in the primary stages of implementation and is designed to treat five units within the Upper Lang's Run watershed.

Current Planning Process

The Arizona Strip Field Office is currently involved in a planning process that will result in three stand alone RMPs, one for each new National Monument and one for the Arizona Strip outside of the monuments. No grazing changes are currently anticipated for the Big Spring Pipeline allotment. However, there may be modifications as a result of the new RMPs. The 10- year grazing permit, in part, states "This permit is subject to (A) modification, suspension or cancellation as required by land plans and applicable law; (B) annual review and to modification of terms and conditions as appropriate; ...". BLM may use these permit conditions to implement any changes required under the new RMPs.

II. PROPOSED ACTION AND ALTERNATIVES

Proposed Action (Renewal of 10 Year Grazing Permit with current terms and conditions)

The Proposed Action is to renew the grazing permit on the Big Spring Pipeline allotment for a period of ten years with current terms and conditions. Under this alternative, BLM would:

- Cancel the existing annual permit (Table 2) and reissue term (ten year) grazing permit on the Big Spring Pipeline allotment as listed in Table 1. Livestock grazing would occur during the season of use, livestock numbers, and AUMs, identified in Table 1. There would be no change to the current active grazing preference on the allotment.

- Consider, through the NEPA process any new range improvements to assist in grazing practices and promote rangeland health.

Table 1 - Proposed Action Ten Year Term Permit Issuance

Allotment Name	Permittee	Permit Number	Livestock			Active AUMs	Public Land (acres)	% Public Land
			No.	Kind	Season of Use			
Big Spring Pipeline	NA	4870	211 20	Cattle Horses	10/01-09/30 10/01-09/30	2,336 220	52,821	92%

Table 2 – Annual Grazing Permits to be Cancelled								
Allotment Name	**Permittee**	**Permit Number**	**Livestock**			**Active AUMs**	**Public Land (acres)**	**% Public Land**
			No.	**Kind**	**Season of Use**			
Big Spring Pipeline	NA	4870	211 20	Cattle Horses	10/01-09/30 10/01-09/30	2,336 220	52,821	92%

Alternatives Considered But Rejected For Further Analysis

Alternatives are tiered to the Arizona Strip District RMP (January, 1992) and the Shivwits Grazing EIS (July, 1980) which was adopted into the RMP and are basically the same for this action. The Grazing EIS addressed five alternatives: Full Stocking with Management, Stocking Level by Condition Class, No Vegetation Manipulation, Elimination of Grazing on Public Lands, and Less Intensive Management of Livestock Grazing.

The following three alternatives were considered for this EA but rejected because they were analyzed in the RMP, to which this document is tiered.

- **Full Stocking with Management alterative** would allow stocking at the estimated livestock carrying capacity of each allotment but otherwise would provide the same management as the proposed action, which is intensive management of 40 allotments and less intensive management on 10 allotments.

- **Stocking Level by Condition Class alternative** would set the stocking level based on the average condition and apparent trend of the allotment.

- **No Grazing Alternative (Elimination of Livestock Grazing on Public Lands).** The decision to authorize livestock grazing in this area and specifically on the Big Spring Pipeline allotment is documented in the approved land use plan. The absence of new information or other land use plan decisions showing that continued livestock grazing would preclude BLM from meeting or making significant progress toward achieving land health standards renders the existing land use plan authorizing grazing valid. A no grazing alternative or not renewing a grazing permit would not conform to the land use plan. A plan amendment would be required before closing an allotment to livestock grazing.

The Grazing System Description for the Big Spring Pipeline Allotment

A grazing system was established on the Big Spring Pipeline allotment in 1994. This system was split into two units; a winter unit that is grazed from October 16 to April 15 and a summer unit which is grazed from April 16 to October 15. Within the winter unit are four pastures operating under a four pasture, deferred-rotation schedule. Included in the winter unit is, the Cold Spring, Airstrip, Lava, and Chaparral pastures. Each pasture is grazed approximately 45 days during the use period. Each pasture receives spring use (March 1 – April 15) once every

four years. Utilization levels in the winter pastures are set at 45% as to minimize grazing impacts in the bottom of Whitmore Canyon.

The summer unit is operated as a two pastures deferred-rotation system. Whitmore Point and Cole Spring pastures are grazed in the summer rotation. One of the pastures receives grazing from April 16 to July 15, the other July 16 to October 15. Scheduled use periods for each pasture are switched each year. This is done to negate a pasture being used at the same time each year and to allow rest and recovery during a portion of the growing season.

Beginning the summer of 1997, the grazing system was modified voluntarily by the permittee. Since the summer of 1997, the allotment has only been grazed from October through May. The deferred-rotation schedule has continued relative to all the pastures plus an additional large pasture (Pa's Pocket allotment). Livestock are moved off the allotment and taken to other BLM allotments and private pasture in Panquitch, Utah from June through September. This has allowed all pastures additional recovery time during the summer growing season. The permittee has, however, retained his operational flexibility to use the allotment during the summer months as scheduled in his AMP should his alternative summer pastures become unavailable. As such, BLM still recognizes the allotment's season of use as, a year-long even though livestock are off the allotment during the summer months.

Grazing Preference and Current Use on the Allotment

Big Spring Pipeline

Livestock Numbers	Season of Use	% Federal	Active AUMs
211 Cattle	10/01 to 09/30	92%	2,336
20 Horses	10/01 to 09/30	92%	220
		Total	2,556

Terms and Conditions of Grazing Permit

Grazing would be in accordance with the grazing preference, livestock numbers, and season of use specified on the grazing permit. Billing for grazing use would be based on the actual use report which is due on or before September 15 each year. Livestock may be moved 15 days before or after scheduled move dates.

Desired Plant Community (DPC)

This EA also incorporates by reference the "Implementation of Standards for Rangeland Health and Guidelines for Grazing Administration, Big Spring Pipeline Allotment S&G Assessment" (2002)[1]. The Big Spring Pipeline Allotment Assessment lists and evaluates achievement of the allotments DPC objectives summarized below. These objectives are expressed in species

[1]Big Spring Pipeline Allotment S&G Assessment, available at the Bureau of Land Management, Arizona Strip Field Office, 345 E. Riverside Drive, St. George, Utah 84790.

composition by weight and percent vegetation cover.

DPC at Key Area #4 – Whitmore Point Pasture (Shallow Loamy 10-14")

Maintain the perennial native grass composition between 20 to 40% through the year 2030 by:

- Maintaining Hija CBW at between 5 to 15%
- Increasing Sihy CBW to between 5 to 10%
- Increasing Orhy CBW to between 1 to 5%
- Increasing Boer CBW to between 1 to 5%

Decrease shrub/tree composition between 25 to 45% through 2030 by:

- Decreasing Artr CBW between 20 to 30%
- Maintaining Juos CBW at between 0 and 5%

Maintain forbs CBW at between 5 and 15% through 2030.
Maintain ground litter at between 15 and 30% through 2030.
Maintain basal cover at between 5 and 15% through 2030.

DPC at Key Area #5 - Airstrip Pasture (Unclassified 7-11")

Maintain the perennial native grass community between 50 and 70% through the year 2030 by:

- Maintaining Hija CBW at between 30 and 60%
- Maintaining Spcr CBW at between 5 and 15%
- Maintaining the Boer CBW at between 10 and 20%

Maintain forbs CBW to between 2-10%
Maintain Epne CBW at between 5-10%
Maintain shrub composition at between 30-50%
Maintain ground litter at between 10 and 30%
Maintain basal cover at between 2 and 10%

DPC at Key Area #6 - Cole Spring Pasture (Shallow Loamy 10-14")

Maintain the perennial native grass community between 11 and 40% through the year 2030 by:

- Increasing Bogr CBW to between 5 and 15%
- Maintaining Hija CBW at between 5 and 15%
- Increasing the Sihy CBW to between 1 and 10%

Decrease shrub/tree composition to between 25 and 45% through the year 2030 by:

- Decreasing Artr CBW to between 20 and 30%
- Decreasing Juso CBW to between 5 and 10%

Increase forbs CBW to between 5 and 15% through the year 2030
Maintain ground litter at between 15 and 30% through the year 2030
Maintain basal cover at between 5 and 15% through the year 2030

DPC at Key Area #7 – Lower Cold Spring Pasture, (Gypsum Fan 7-11")

Maintain the perennial native grass community at between 60 and 85% through the year 2030 by:

Maintaining Hija CBW at between 30 and 45%
Maintaining the Spcr CBW to between 30 and 40%

Maintain shrub/tree composition to between 15 and 25% through the year 2030:
Increase forbs CBW to between 1and 15% through the year 2030
Maintain ground litter at between 7 and 40% through the year 2030
Maintain basal cover at between 2 and 15% through the year 2030

DPC at Key Area #9 - Big Spring Pasture, (Clay Loam Upland Gravelly 13-17")

Increase the perennial native grass community between 1 and 10% through the year 2030 by:

Increasing Sihy CBW at between 1 and 5%

Decrease shrub/tree composition to between 50 and 70% through the year 2030
Maintain forbs CBW to between 15 and 30% through the year 2030
Maintain ground litter at between 18 and 25% through the year 2030
Maintain basal cover at between 9 and 20% through the year 2030

Key Area #10 - Lava Pasture, (Gypsum Fan 7-11")

Maintain the perennial native grass community between 50 and 85% through the year 2030 by:

Maintaining Boer CBW to between 55 and 70%
Maintaining Spcr CBW at between 5 and 15%
Maintaining Hija CBW to between 2 and 10%

Maintain shrub composition to between 10 and 20% through the year 2030
Increase forbs CBW to between 1 and 15% through the year 2030
Maintain ground litter at between 5 and 25% through the year 2030
Maintain basal cover at between 10 and 35% through the year 2030

Key Area #11 – Chaparral Pasture, (Unclassified 7-11")

Maintain the perennial native grass community between 45 and 75% through the year 2030 by:

Maintaining Hija CBW at between 2 and 10%
Maintaining Spcr CBW at between 2 and 10%
Maintaining the Boer CBW at between 5 and 15%

Maintain forbs CBW to between 2-10%
Maintain shrub composition at between 20 to 50%
Maintain ground litter at between 2 and 15%
Maintain basal cover at between 1 and 10%

Monitoring

The goals of monitoring would be to determine if the fundamentals or conditions of Rangeland Health are being met within the allotment area under 43 CFR 4180. These conditions of Rangeland Health are:

> (a) Watersheds are in, or are making significant progress toward, properly functioning physical condition, including their upland, riparian-wetland, and aquatic components; soil and plant conditions support infiltration, soil moisture storage, and the release of water that are in balance with climate and land form and maintain or improve water-quality, water quantity, and timing and duration of flow.
>
> (b) Ecological processes, including the hydrologic cycle, nutrient cycle, and energy flow, are maintained, or there is significant progress toward their attainment, in order to support healthy biotic populations and communities.
>
> (c) Water quality complies with State water quality standards and achieves, or is making significant progress toward achieving, established BLM management objectives such as meeting wildlife needs.
>
> (d) Habitats are, or are making significant progress toward being restored or maintained for Federal threatened and endangered species, Federal Proposed, Category 1 and 2 Federal candidate and other special status species.

To monitor rangeland health conditions, key areas as defined in the *Monitoring* "Planning for Monitoring", "TR 4400-1", (1984) would be used. The key area would be used as an indicator area to reflect the effect of on the ground management on the site they represent. Each key area would be established based on a Range Site/Ecological Site (developed by the Natural Resource Conservation Service, (NRCS)) with a specific Potential Natural Community (PNC) and specific physical site characteristics. Knowing the PNC of the area, and using the ecological site descriptions as a guide, DPC objectives can be developed. The DPC then becomes the objectives by which management actions would be measured.

Dry Weight Rank (DWR) method of data collection would be used to monitor species composition. In addition, Pace Frequency and Step-Point studies would be used at each key area to detect changes of individual species and vegetative cover, which indicates a trend and status of basal and foliar cover. Pace Frequency, Step-Point and DWR would be completed on each key area every 3-6 years. DWR and Pace Frequency study methods are described in *Sampling Vegetation Attributes*, "Interagency Technical Reference 1734-4" (1996).

Livestock use on forage plants would be determined by conducting grazing utilization studies using the Grazed-Class Method as described in the *Utilization Studies and Residual Measurements* "Interagency Technical Reference 1734-3" (1996). Utilization studies would be completed annually in each grazing unit by BLM prior to and/or after livestock have been

removed from the pasture. Study data would be compiled each year. Other information to be collected and compiled is precipitation, actual use, etc. All monitoring data would be used to evaluate current management and assist BLM in making management decisions that helps achieve vegetation objectives on the allotment.

Analysis of existing allotment data suggests DPC objectives are progressing toward being met. It was determined by the Interdisciplinary Assessment Team (IAT) during the assessment process, that resource conditions on the allotment are progress towards meeting Standards for Rangeland Health.

Allotment compliance would be conducted annually on the allotment. Compliance monitoring assures terms and conditions of the permit and any other subsequent requirements attached to range improvement permits are being met.

Based on analyses of the allotment's monitoring data and supporting documentation contained in the Big Spring Pipeline S&G Assessment Report (2002), resource conditions on the allotment are progress toward meeting the applicable standards for rangeland health.

III. AFFECTED ENVIRONMENT

The Big Spring Pipeline allotment lies approximately 65 miles south of St. George, Utah within the Grand Canyon-Parashant National Monument on the Arizona Strip. The allotment is within the boundaries of Townships. 32, 33, and 34 N., Ranges 8, 9, and 10 W., south-southeast of Bundyville. The north end of the allotment boundary begins 3-4 miles south of Bundyville and runs approximately 15 miles south towards the Colorado River. Included in the allotment are Whitmore Point, Whitmore Canyon, Kinney Point, Cold Spring Point, and Cold Spring Canyon.

Elevations range from 3,400 feet in Whitmore Canyon to 7,000 feet near Death Valley Lake. The topography of the allotment is rough. Flat ridge tops with steep slopes and canyon bottoms are characteristic of the allotment.

The affected environment is tiered to the Arizona Strip District RMP (January 31, 1992), Affected Environment pages III-1 to III-58, and pages 41 to 92 of he Shivwits Grazing EIS (July, 1980) which was adopted into the RMP and are essentially the same for this action. Chapter 2 of the Shivwits Grazing EIS describes the environmental components likely to be impacted by the proposed action. Environmental components discussed in the EIS that might affect or be affected by the proposal are: Climate, Vegetation, Threatened and Endangered Plant Species, Riparian Vegetation, Soils, Water Resources, Animals (wildlife), Cultural Resources, Visual Resources, and Land Uses including livestock grazing and recreation.

This EA also incorporates by reference the "Implementation of Standards for Rangeland Health and Guidelines for Grazing Administration, Big Spring Pipeline Allotment S&G Assessment"

(2002)[2]. This S&G Assessment describes the resources and issues applicable to the allotment area. See the Big Spring Pipeline Allotment S&G Assessment Appendix for other resource data and associated information.

The following resources and critical elements of the human environment are not present in the allotment and are therefore not affected by the proposed action or alternatives:

Resources
- Wild & Scenic Rivers
- Wetlands/Riparian Areas
- Areas of Critical Environmental Concern (ACECs)
- Wild Horses and Burros
- Minerals
- Hazardous Materials

Critical Elements of the human environment
- Air Quality
- Native American Religious Concerns
- Water Quality, Drinking or Ground

Climate

Average annual precipitation on the Big Spring Pipeline allotment falls into two zones. The higher elevations on the allotment are within a 10-14" precipitation zone (p.z.). The Side of Mountain rain gauge located in T35N, R9W, Sec. 6 is the reference gauge for annual precipitation data. This rain gauge is approximately ½ mile from the north boundary fence. Average precipitation is ~ 13.07" annually. Seasonal distribution is 20% (2.62") in the fall, 26% (3.42") in the winter, 21% (2.75") in spring, and 33% (4.28") during the summer.

The lower reaches of the allotment, such as Whitmore Canyon and Cold Spring Canyon are in a 7-11" precipitation zone. The Pa's Pocket rain gauge provides reference rain fall data for this zone. It is located on the southern allotment boundary in T33N, R9W, Sec. 26. Average precipitation is ~ 10.81" annually. Approximately 17% (1.88") is distributed in the fall, 32% (3.47") in the winter, 20% (2.16") in spring, and 31% (3.30") during the summer.

Vegetation

The principal vegetative subtypes[3] within the allotments are pinyon-juniper woodlands, sagebrush, ponderosa pine, and desert shrub land.

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[2] Big Spring Pipeline Allotment S&G Assessment, available at the Bureau of Land Management, Arizona Strip Field Office, 345 E. Riverside Drive, St. George, Utah 84790.

[3] Shivwits Grazing Environmental Impact Statement

- The pinyon-juniper subtype includes pinyon, juniper, sagebrush, cliffrose, turbinella oak, banana yucca, blue grama, squirrel tail and various annual/perennial forbs.
- Associated species in the sagebrush subtype are big sagebrush, ephedra, cliffrose, fourwing saltbush, snakeweed, blue grama, squirrel tail, galleta, and a mixture of forbs.
- The ponderosa pine woodland type consists of ponderosa pine, gambel's oak, pinyon pine, Utah juniper, locust, big sagebrush, blue grama, Arizona fescue, seeded wheatgrass, mutton grass and various forbs.
- The desert shrubland subtype is characterized by Mormon tea, banana yucca, snake weed, prickly pear and cholla cactus, galleta, sand dropseed and black grama.

Within these vegetative subtypes are three dominant ecological sites[4] that are part of the Major Land Resource Units, as defined by the NRCS. Two key areas are located in vegetation types that are currently unclassified.

Water Sources

Big Spring Pipeline allotment contains:

- 2 fenced reservoirs
- 6 unfenced reservoirs
- 2 developed springs
- 4 wildlife catchments
- 1 livestock catchment

Threatened and Endangered (T&E) Species

There is no suitable habitat for any listed threatened or endangered species on the allotment. However, the bald eagle (*Haliaeetus leucocephalus*), and the California condor (*Gymnogyps californianus*) may occasionally fly over the area. There are no riparian areas that would provide habitat for the southwestern willow flycatcher (*Empidonax trailii extimus*). An experimental non-essential population (as defined under section 10J of the Endangered Species Act) of California condors was established on the Vermillion Cliffs in 1996. These birds may eventually forage on carrion within the allotment but have not yet been observed doing so.

On March 24, 2006 BLM, US Fish and Wildlife Service, and AGFD convened to categorize Mexican Spotted Owl (MSO) habitat polygons across the Arizona Strip. These polygons were grouped into areas of high, medium, low and no likelihood of finding MSO. All BLM acres within the allotment were placed in the 'No' category. Lake Mead lands were not addressed.

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[4] An ecological site is a distinctive kind of land that differs from other kinds in its ability to produce a characteristic plant community. Each ecological site is a product of all environmental factors responsible for its development. Each site is capable of producing and supporting a plant community typified by an association of species that differs from other ecological sites in species kind, proportion and total production.

BLM Sensitive and State Species of Concern

Ferruginous hawks (*Buteo regalis*) are known to forage over some habitat similar to that found on the allotment, though specific sightings have not been recorded for the area. Black-crowned night Heron (*Nysticorax nycticorax hoactli*) and snowy egrets (*Egretta thula brewsteri*) have occasionally been observed using stock tanks in the area, but have not been recorded on the allotment. A variety of sensitive bat species have been captured on neighboring allotments including Townsend's big-eared (*Corynorhinus townsendii*), spotted bats (*Euderma maculatum*), small-footed myotis (*Myotis ciliolabrum*), fringed myotis (*Myotis thysanodes*), and big free-tailed bats (*Nyctinomops macrotis*).

No other, federally listed T&E species are known to occur in the area covered by this EA.

Wildlife

Mule deer are the most important big game species in the Big Springs Pipeline Allotment. AGFD manages the wildlife populations by Game Management Unit (GMU). In this case, the boundary between GMU 13A and 13B cuts right through the allotment, so parts of both 13A and 13B are in the allotment. In the 1950s and 60s, both areas were managed as one and many more deer were present. The deer population declined about 1970.

Both GMUs are widely known for producing trophy buck mule deer, but only a low number of hunting permits are offered in each annually. In 13A, in 2004, AGFD surveyed 140 animals and determined a deer herd composition of 40 bucks per 100 does and 75 fawn per 100 does. The 13A deer population is believed stable. The 13B deer herd is also probably stable with 34 bucks per 100 deer and 57 fawns per 100 does, calculated from 102 deer surveyed.

Recent studies done by AGFD in connection with the Mt. Trumbull Ecosystem Restoration Project using 15 female mule deer outfitted with Global Positioning System (GPS) store-on-board collars have confirmed that mule deer which summer in the Mt. Trumbull area usually winter in the Whitmore Canyon area. In 2004, 12 of the 15 collared does moved into Whitmore Canyon.

Non-game wildlife found on the allotment is typical of the area, including a variety of small mammals, grassland birds, raptors, and reptiles.

Soil

The only soils monitoring data for this area is the Phase 1 Watershed Conservation and Development Inventory of 1971-1973 (See Field Office Files 7300). It was based upon a general soils map and thus ended up as broad interpretations and averages over large areas. Other more specific and detailed soils information is as follows:

Soil Map Unit Index (623)

08 Barx fine sandy loam, 1 to 5 percent slopes, (fan terraces), mixed; Loamy Upland, 9" to 13"

10 Berzatic fam-RO-Goblin complex, 35 to 70 percent slopes, (escarpments, cliffs), LS-gyp; Berzatic=Breaks, 7" to 11"; Goblin=Breaks (gypsiferous), 7" to 11"

14 Boquillas family-Showlow complex, 25 to 50 percent slopes, (basalt mesas), basalt, shale; Basalt Slopes, 13" to 17"

20 Dermala fam-Guy fam-Rock Outcrop complex, 10 to 40 percent slopes (mesa scarp) basalt; Basalt Slopes, 13" to 17"

45 Mellenthin-Rock outcrop-Torriorthents complex, 10 to 70 percent slopes (hills) Kiabab; Mellenthin=Shallow Loamy, 9" to 13"; Torriorthents=Breaks, 9" to 13"

46 Mellenthin-Strych Complex, 4 to 25 percent slopes, cool, (plateaus, mesas), limestone; Mellenthin=Shallow Loamy, 9" to 13"; Strych=Loamy Upland, 9" to 13"

48 Mellenthin-Tanbark complex, 5 to 50 percent slopes, cool (mesas, hills) Kiabab, Harrisburg; Mellenthin=Shallow Loamy, 9" to 13"; Tanbark=Gypsum Hills, 9" to 13"

51 Meriwhitica-Rock outcrop-Strych complex, 35 to 70 percent slopes, (cliffs, canyons) Callville & Redwall limestones; Meriwhitica=Breaks, 9" to 13"; Strych=Loamy

55 Moenkopie-Pennell-RO complex, 10 to 50 percent slopes, (plateau, mesa), limestone; Shallow Loamy, 7" to 11" ppt

58 Nutter-Gyppocket complex, 2 to 20 percent slopes, (fan terraces), gyp-alluvium; Gypsum Upland, 7" to 11" ppt

66 Robroost fine sandy loam, 1 to 3 percent slopes, (fan terrace), mixed sedimentary; Gypsum Fan, 7" to 11"

68 Sedillo very cobbly loam, 1 to 8 percent slopes, (fan terrace), mixed alluvium; Clay Loam Upland, 9" to 13" ppt

69 Showlow-Thunderbird complex, 2 to 25 percent slopes, (basalt mesas), basalt;Clay Loam Upland (gravelly) PJ-Woodland, 13" to 17"

71 Sponiker loam, 1 to 10 percent slopes, (fan terrace), mixed alluvium; Loamy Terrace (PIPO Woodland), 17" to 20" ppt

72 Springerville-Delenbaw complex, 3 to 25 percent slopes (mesa) basalt; Springerville and Delenbaw=Clay Loam Upland (gravelly) PJ-Woodland, 13" to 17"

75 Tanbark loam, 15 to 75 percent slopes, (hills, escarpments), Moenkopi; Gypsum Hills (calcareous), 9" to 13"

83 Twist very cobbly loam, 1 to 8 percent slopes, (fan terrace), mixed alluvium; Clay Loam Upland, 7" to 11" ppt

90 Wutoma-Lozinta complex, 15 to 50 percent slopes, (cinder cone), cinders; Cinder Hills (PIPO Gambel oak, PJ- Woodlands), 13" to 17" ppt

Soil Map Unit Index (625)

1 Badland, steep to very steep eroding gypy areas, (hills, scarps), Moenkopi; No Ecosite assigned, but consider a cryptogamic site.

59 Showlow very cobbly clay loam, 1 to 15 percent slopes, (hills, fan terraces), basalt, pyroclastics; Clay Loam Upland (PJ-Woodland), 14" to 18" ppt

61 Sponiker gravelly loam, 1 to 15 percent slopes, (hills, fan terraces), basalt, pyroclastics; Loamy Upland (PIPO-Woodland), 18" to 30@ ppt

66 Whiskey silt loam, 1 to 4 percent slopes, (stream terraces) mixed alluvium; Loamy Upland, 14" to 18" ppt

67 Wukoki-Lomaki complex, 15 to 50 percent slopes, (cinder cones), scoriaceous basalt, pyroclastics; Cinder Hills, 10" to 14" ppt

68 Wutoma-Lozinta complex, 1 to 15 percent, slopes, (fan terraces), scoriaceous basalt, pyroclastics; Cinder Upland (PJ-Woodland), 14" to 18" ppt

69 Wutoma-Lozinta complex, 15 to 50 percent slopes, (cinder cones), scoriaceous basalt, pyroclastics; Cinder Hills (PJ-Woodland), 14" to 18" ppt

The watershed area within the allotment was classified as Category IV in the 1992 RMP. This category includes watershed units that are less resistant to erosion, but would be responsive to treatment. Most of the Big Spring Pipeline allotment is currently in fair to good erosion condition or demonstrates fair to good resistance to erosion. Hells Hollow Wash in the bottom of Whitmore Canyon is revegetating and old gullies are healing into smaller, vegetated drainages. However, the allotment should remain a category IV until treatments have reduced the erosion to an acceptable level.

Lithology

The Big Springs Pipeline Allotment consists of basalt capped Moenkopi mudstones and limestone at the upper end and sandstone and limestone canyons at the lower end. Gypsum hills and ridges with associated alluvial fans and floodplains are also characteristic of the lower end of Whitmore Canyon.

Cultural/Historical

Prehistoric and Historical sites exist throughout the allotment.

Visual Resources

Most of the allotment is classified by the 1992 RMP as Visual Resource Management Class (VRM) Class I and II; Class I within the Mt. Logan Wilderness and Class II for the remaining non-wilderness portion of the allotment. The objective for VRM Class I areas is "to preserve the existing character of the landscape." This class "provides for natural ecological changes; however, it does not preclude very limited management activity." The level of change of the characteristic landscape "should be very low and must not attract attention." The objective for VRM Class II is "to retain the existing character of the landscape. The level of change to the characteristic landscape should be low".

Livestock Grazing

The Big Spring Pipeline Allotment (#4870) is comprised of 36,790 acres of federal BLM land,

13,680 acres of federal Lake Mead National Recreation Area land, 1,280 acres of state land, and 280 acres of private land. The total number of active AUMs on the allotment is 2,556. The current season of use is 03/01 to 02/28.

Recreation Resources

The allotment lies within the existing Mt. Trumbull Special Recreation Management Area (SRMA). Within the SRMA, recreation setting attributes include geology, scenic view sheds, remoteness and solitude. General recreation activities include: recreational OHV use, driving for pleasure, horseback riding, hiking, hunting, rock collecting, photography, bird watching and nature study. Visitors enjoy a variety of experiences as they engage in these activities. A number of personal, community, and economic benefits are possible as a result.

Recreation activities occur primarily in a "semi-primitive, motorized" recreation setting, which is characterized by predominantly natural or natural-appearing environment of moderate to large size where the concentration of users is low, but there is often evidence of other users. The area is managed in a manner that minimum on-site controls and restrictions may be present, but are subtle. Motorized use is permitted (on existing routes).

Much of the eastern half of the allotment lies within "primitive" setting within the Mt. Logan Wilderness. Area is characterized by essentially unmodified natural environment of fairly large size. Interaction between users is very low and evidence of other users is minimal. The area is managed to be essentially free from evidence of human-induced restrictions and controls. Motorized use within the area is not permitted. The area is managed in such a way that minimum on-site controls and restrictions may be present, but are subtle. Motorized use is not permitted, as no public routes exist within this setting.

The western edge of the allotment lies within a "roaded natural" setting. "Roaded Natural" settings are characterized by a predominantly naturally appearing environment with moderate evidences of the sights and sounds of man. Such evidences usually harmonize with the natural environment. Resource modification and utilization practices are evident, but harmonize with the natural environment. Interaction between users may be low to moderate, but with evidence of other users prevalent. Conventional motorized use is provided for in construction standards and design of facilities, including roads.

The northwestern portion of the allotment lies within a "semi-primitive, non-motorized" recreation setting. This setting is characterized by predominantly natural or natural appearing environment of moderate to large size. Interaction between users is low, but there is often evidence of other users.

Wilderness

Most of the Mt. Logan Wilderness is within the boundary of the Big Spring allotment. This area of recent volcanic origin contains Mt. Logan and portions of the Uinkaret Mountains. It includes

basalt flows and ledges, ponderosa pine forests, pinyon-juniper woodlands and a large, colorful, naturally eroded amphitheater known as Hell Hole. Wilderness management objectives focus on protecting wilderness character, which includes naturalness, as well as outstanding opportunities for solitude and primitive and unconfined types of recreation.

Noxious Weeds

A small patch of scotch thistle less than ¼ acre has been identified at the Cold Tank area within the Big Spring Pipeline allotment boundary. There have been concerted efforts over the past five years to treat this infestation. At present, less than ¼ acre of thistle has been discovered at this location. This area is monitored annually and treated when weeds are detected. The infestation has not expanded beyond its located site.

Socio/Economic

Economic revenue generated from the Arizona Strip is mainly ranching with a few gypsum/selenite mines and uranium operations. Nearby communities are supported by tourism (including outdoor recreation), construction and light industry. The social aspect involves remote, unpopulated settings with moderate to high opportunities for solitude.

IV. ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS

Only impacts that may result from implementing the proposed action or alternatives are described in this EA. If an ecological component is not discussed, it should be assumed that the resource specialists have considered effects to the component and found the proposed action or alternatives would have minimal or no effects.
General effects from projects similar to the proposed action alternative are also described in the documents to which this plan is tiered.

This document incorporates by reference the Big Spring Pipeline Allotment S&G Assessment (2004), which provides a complete discussion, analysis and summaries of the range resources and associated issues. Also, see the Big Spring Pipeline S&G Assessment Appendix for specific resource data and other associated information.

Climate

Implementing the Proposed Action would have no effect on the climate. The proposed action would allow affected resources to respond to the climate with improvement to these resources, as mentioned below in the vegetation section.

Drought

In response to drought conditions, BLM may modify the terms and conditions of a grazing permit (ie. number of cattle, turn out dates, removal dates, etc.) temporarily or on a more long-

term basis. Most modifications are accomplished on a cooperative basis with the livestock permittee. However, if a permittee disagrees with BLM's assessment of the resource conditions or the necessary modifications, BLM may nevertheless issue a Full Force and Effect Grazing Decision to protect resources.

Vegetation

Grazing impacts on vegetation under the Proposed Action are mitigated by timing of use, duration of grazing, adjusting of stocking rates, and conformance with Standards and Guidelines for Grazing Management. The Proposed Action would have an established grazing rotation designed to allow each pasture a different season of rest during growing cycles, let cool and warm season grasses and browse to elongate their apical buds, build vigor and achieve seed ripe.

The allotments' major vegetation component consists mainly of pinyon-juniper woodlands with an associated understory of sagebrush, cliffrose, desert holly, blue grama, squirrel tail, sand dropseed, and a variety of forbs.

Vegetation issues identified on the Big Spring Pipeline allotment were the presence of noxious weeds. For a complete analysis and discussion of this issue refer to the Big Spring Pipeline Allotment S&G Assessment.

Monitoring data (1984 to 2003) of the Big Spring Pipeline allotment indicates that four key areas are in a downward trend of frequency and three are in static trend. Utilization has been well below allowable levels. These data reflect and suggest that current management coupled with precipitation would allow objectives for the vegetation components to be met on the allotment. These vegetation components constitute the ecological sites upon which DPC objectives are based. Key areas are established on ecological sites and monitored to determine the species composition, the frequency of plant species, and the vegetative ground cover.

Key Area #4, Whitmore Point Pasture – Shallow Loamy 10-14" pz

- Key Species index decreased in frequency from 63 to 42
- Live Vegetation Cover is 12%
- Based on frequency data trend is down

Key Area #5, Airstrip Pasture – No site guide has been written 7-11"pz

- Key Species index decreased in frequency from 57 to 24
- Live Vegetation Cover is 3%
- Based on frequency data trend is static

Key Area #6, Upper Cole Pasture – Shallow Loamy 10-14"

- Key Species index decreased in frequency from 49 to 8
- Live Vegetation Cover is 17%
- Based on frequency data trend is down

Key Area #7, Lower Cole Pasture – Gypsum Fan 7-11"pz

- Key Species index decreased in frequency from 95 to 66
- Live Vegetation Cover is 2%
- Based on frequency data trend is static

Key Area #9, Big Sprig Pasture – Clay Loam Upland (Gravelly) 10-14"pz

- Key Species index increased in frequency from 0 to 4
- Live Vegetation Cover is 9%
- Based on frequency data trend is static

Key Area #10, Lava Pasture – No site guide has been written 7-11"pz

- Key Species index increased in frequency from 116 to 26
- Live Vegetation Cover is 3%
- Based on frequency data trend is down

Key Area #11, Chaparral Pasture – No site guide has been written 7-11"pz

- Key Species index increased in frequency from 101 to 32
- Live Vegetation Cover is 1%
- Based on frequency data trend is down

Utilization data from 1990-2003 has been compiled for this evaluation. The Key Species Grazed Class method was used to collect the data. Utilization is read at or around the designated key area for each pasture.

During the evaluation period, average utilization across all pastures for cool season grasses was 35 percent, ranging between 15 percent and 50 percent. For warm season grasses the average utilization was 41 percent, ranging from 23 percent to 66 percent. The browse averaged 38 percent and ranged from 25 percent to 52 percent. Overall key species utilization across all pastures averaged 38 percent. Since the Allotment Management Plan has been implemented in 1991, key species utilization has been 40 percent or below.

Threatened and Endangered (T&E) Species

The Proposed Action would not impact any listed threatened or endangered species nor would the Proposed Action have an impact on an occasional fly over by the bald eagle or California condor.

BLM Sensitive Species

The Proposed Action would have no substantial impact on BLM sensitive and state species of concern. These species include the avian species, Ferruginous hawk, Black-crowned Night Heron, and snowy egret and sensitive bat species such as Townsend's big eared, spotted bats,

small-footed myotis, fringed myotis and big free-tailed bats.

Wildlife

The Proposed Action would have no substantial impacts on big game (mule deer) or the other non-game wildlife found on the allotment. Mule deer (Odocoileus hemionus) occur in limited numbers on the allotment. However, the area contains some critical mule deer summer range. Summer habitat is identified as areas above 6,000 feet elevation, and usually in ponderosa pine ecotypes. The allotment also contains a great deal of mule deer winter range. In years of harsh winter weather, some deer from the Mt. Trumbull and Logan areas move into the lower pinyon-juniper/shrub habitats in the allotment. The area is included within Game Management Units (GMU) 13A and 13B.

Migratory Birds

Executive Order 13186 requires BLM and other federal agencies to work with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to improve protection for migratory birds. Implementation of the Proposed Action is not likely to adversely affect any species of migratory bird known or suspected to occur on the allotment. No take of any such species is anticipated.

Soil

Attributes making up the soil resource should remain stable or improve thru implementation of the Proposed Action and the enforcement of the Arizona Standards and Guides process for permitted livestock grazing within the Big Spring Pipeline grazing allotment. Grazing rotations associated with the Proposed Action allow for seasonal plant rest resulting in increased vigor and allowing ground litter and cover to increase, thus protecting the soil. Utilization levels are within that allowable levels and current trends are expected to remain static or track up.

Cultural Resources

There would be no substantial impact to cultural or historical sites as a result of renewing this grazing permit under the Proposed Action. Cultural resources project file AZ BLM 100-2002-08 contains documentation of compliance with Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act. Great efforts are made to avoid these sites during allotment project implementation. Further, archaeological inventories are completed prior to all project initiation.

Visual Resources

The long-term success of improving land health could contribute to enhancing visual resource conditions by increasing the variety of visual forms, lines, colors and textures where past land use practices may have virtually eliminated any such variety. Conversely, the proposed action could potentially create slight to minor visual contrast from the construction of rangeland developments. Also such developments could add weak to moderate horizontal structural lines

to the landscape. Conducting a Visual Resource Contrast Rating evaluation as part of rangeland development design would likely enable projects to be mitigated to meet VRM Class I and II objectives.

Livestock Grazing

Under the Proposed Action, the forage preference would remain active and livestock grazing would continue.

Possible Future Range Improvement Projects

There is one range improvement project described below being proposed during the ten-year life of the renewed grazing permit. This EA does not analyze the impacts of this project in detail. The project is inside of the National Monument and parts of the Mt. Logan Wilderness area. An appropriate NEPA analysis would occur prior to any action being taken.

1. Replace approximately 12 miles of existing 2" to 1 ¼" pipeline from Big Spring to the Bar 10 lodge and other trough locations at Calf Flat, Whitmore Canyon and below Bull Point. This proposed project would satisfy the recommendation from the Rangeland Resources Team, to relocate waters in the bottom of Whitmore Canyon to the upland slopes of the canyon. It would also implement actions established during the S&G process to achieve DPC objectives meet the standards for rangeland health. Environmental Assessment EA-130-2006-0026 addresses this action and is available upon request.

Recreation Resources

Future construction of rangeland developments in the allotment could slightly impact physical recreation settings and recreation opportunities in the short term due to the presence of new structures and access routes in semi-primitive non-motorized and primitive settings. Future construction of new fence developments could have a slight to minor impact to recreation settings and recreation activity and experience opportunities in the short-term due to fencing as an impediment to access, as well as the increase in evidence of human use created by the placement of the fencing. The potential for most visitors to attain personal and other benefits from recreation use in the area would not be compromised by the proposed action.

Cumulative Impacts

Cumulative Impacts are tiered to the Arizona Strip RMP (1992), Environmental Consequences pages IV-36 to IV-38, and to chapter 3 of the Shivwits Grazing EIS (1980) which was adopted into the RMP. Unavoidable Adverse Impacts, Relationship between Local Short-term Uses of Man's Environment, Maintenance and Enhancement of Long-term Productivity, and the Irreversible and Irretrievable Commitments of Resources were discussed.

Cumulative impacts occur when additional management facilities are added to those already present. Grazing plans set specific objectives in the plan area and include rangeland improvements that are designed to maintain or improve wildlife habitat, watershed, and overall resource conditions, thus improving ecosystem health.

Past, present, and reasonably foreseeable actions within the analysis area would continue to influence range resources, naturalness, aesthetics, watershed conditions and trends. The impact of land treatments targeting woody species, voluntary livestock reductions during dry periods and implementation of a grazing system have improved range conditions. The net result has been greater species diversity, improved plant vigor, and increased ground cover from grasses and forbs. No cumulative impacts are predicted to the range resource as a result of the Proposed Action.

Residual Impacts

Residual Impacts are tiered to the Arizona Strip RMP (1992), Irreversible and Irretrievable Commitments of Resources page 172 of the Shivwits Grazing EIS (1980) which was adopted into the RMP. Though the Proposed Action does not propose any new fences, it does allow for the existence of present fence lines, which do create some restrictions of free passage, but do not prevent or prohibit passage of mule deer. Nor are other forms of wildlife using the area restricted by existing fences.

There are no residual impacts as a result of the Proposed Action to the vegetative resource. Future maintenance of existing vegetation treatments and range improvements would not likely affect additional acres beyond that done previously. Residual impacts from maintenance activities would be improved watershed conditions, wildlife habitat, and rangeland resources over time.

Monitoring

The monitoring addressed in the proposed action (pages 9-10) is sufficient to identify changes in vegetation as a result of livestock grazing activities. In addition to those methods described, there are efforts in place to inventory for noxious weed establishment, as well as monitor treated areas for treatment effectiveness. BLM weed specialist (LD Walker) has the lead on monitoring and treating noxious weeds on the Arizona Strip. He has provided training in identification and treatment as well as ways to reduce the spread of weeds to BLM employees and permittees.

Annual compliance checks would be included in monitoring conducted on the allotment. Compliance monitoring would assure terms and conditions of the permit are being met. Compliance checks would also monitor any special conditions or mitigation included in Cooperative Agreements, Section 4 Permits, or other grazing regulations.

Mitigation

When noxious weeds are located, various methods are used for their control depending on the size of the infestation and growth stage of the plants. The methods include but are not limited to:

Physical or mechanical
Biological
Chemical or Cultural

If vegetative monitoring indicates current livestock grazing practices are causing non-attainment of resource objectives, BLM would modify the terms and conditions of a grazing permit (i.e. number of cattle, turn out dates, removal dates, etc.) temporarily or on a more long-term basis. Most modifications are accomplished on a cooperative basis with the livestock permittee. However, if a permittee disagrees with BLM's assessment of the resource conditions or the necessary modifications, BLM may nevertheless issue a Full Force and Effect Grazing Decision to protect resources.

V. CONSULTATION AND COORDINATION

This EA was prepared by the Bureau of Land Management, Arizona Strip District Office, 345 E. Riverside Drive, St. George, UT 84790. Phone (435) 688-3200. Public involvement for the Big Spring Pipeline S&G evaluation began on October 22, 2003. An assessment field trip to the allotment was not conducted on March 17, 2004. The Interdisciplinary Assessment Team (IAT) was assisted by the Rangeland Resources Team (RRT) appointed by the Arizona Resource Advisory Council. A draft evaluation was sent out for public review and comment to Individuals, Groups and Agencies. BLM received no comments on the evaluation.

Interdisciplinary Assessment Team (IAT)

Linda Price.....Project Coordinator
Whit Bunting....Range/Grazing
John Herron.....Archaeologist
Robert Smith....Soils, Watershed
Larry Gearhart.....Wilderness/Recreation
Mike Small.....Wildlife Biologist
Robert Price.....Field Supervisor,
Arizona Game and Fish Department

Internal Reviewers:

Gloria Benson, Native American Coordinator
Tom Folks and Michelle Bailey, Recreation
Laurie Ford, Lands/Realty/Minerals
Michael Herder, Wildlife
Scott Franklin, Wildlife
John Herron, Cultural
Lee Hughes, T/E Plants
Ray Klein, GCPNM Supervisory Ranger
Linda Price, S&G Coordinator
Bob Sandberg, Range
Richard Spotts, Environmental Coordinator

Ron Wadsworth, Supervisory Law Enforcement
Dennis Curtis, GCPNM Manger

Reviewed by Arizona Strip District Office Planning and Environmental Coordinator (P&EC)

[signature]	OCT. 30, 2006
Richard Spotts, P&EC	**Date**

FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT

The Environmental Assessment AZ-130-2006-0024, hereby incorporated by reference, analyzed a livestock grazing permit renewal action conducted under the Arizona BLM Standards for Rangeland Health and Guidelines for Grazing Management (S&Gs) where an intensive allotment evaluation was conducted with public and other agency involvement throughout the process. Analysis of existing study data indicates that overall Ecological Condition trends are static or up and pace frequency trends are improving on the allotment. The resource conditions on the allotment are progressing toward meeting Standards for Rangeland Health. Issues were analyzed and it was determined that current management is not a factor in preventing attainment of Standards.

The Environmental Assessment reaffirmed the allotment's current grazing practices, and determines that the present grazing management program would continue to allow improvement to the health of public land resources, such as soil, water, vegetation, wildlife habitat, and wildlife and other resource values.

Based on the analysis of Environmental Assessment AZ-130-2006-0024, I have determined that the renewal of the Big Spring Pipeline Livestock Grazing Permit with current terms and conditions will not have a significant effect on the human environment. Therefore, an environmental impact statement will not be prepared.

Dennis Curtis — 10/30/06

Manager,
Grand Canyon-Parashant National Monument

Date