U.S. Department of the Interior
Bureau of Land Management

Proposed Decision

(DOI-BLM-NV-L030-2012-0030 EA)

November 21, 2012

Authorization
#2705099 on the
Crestline Allotment (#11023)

Lincoln County, Nevada

U.S. Department of the Interior
Bureau of Land Management
Caliente Field Office
Phone: (775) 726-8100
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BLM

United States Department of the Interior

BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT
Caliente Field Office
P.O. Box 237 (1400 South Front St.)
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In Reply Refer To:
4160 (NVL0300)

NOV 21 2012

CERTIFIED MAIL 7011 3500 0000 7782 9710 – RETURN RECEIPT REQUESTED

Marlin F. Gardner
P.O. Box 56
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PROPOSED DECISION
Authorization #2705099
on the Crestline Allotment (#11023)

Background Information

On November 20, 2012, the Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) for authorization #2705099 on the Crestline Allotment (#11023) was signed. The Final Environmental Assessment (DOI-BLM-NV-L030-2012-0030 EA), Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) and Standards Determination Documents are contained herein. This proposed decision is issued in accordance with 43 CFR § 4160.1.

The proposed action, associated with DOI-BLM-NV-L030-2012-0030 EA (EA), is to fully process and issue a new term grazing permits to the aforementioned on the Crestline Allotment which encompasses approximately 2,395 acres.

Permit #2705099 was previously issued for the period 02/24/2011 to 09/30/2020. The new grazing permit will reflect terms and conditions in accordance with the Final EA.

The Ely District Record of Decision and Approved Resource Management Plan (RMP) (August 2008) states as a goal (p. 85): "Manage livestock grazing on public lands to provide for a level of livestock grazing consistent with multiple use, sustained yield, and watershed function and health." It further states as an objective (p. 86): "To allow livestock grazing to occur in a manner and at levels consistent with multiple use, sustained yield, and the standards for rangeland health."

Fully processing and renewing the term grazing permits for authorizations #2705099 on the Crestline Allotment provides for a legitimate multiple use of public lands. The permit will

include terms and conditions, for grazing use, that conform to grazing Guidelines which will aid in continuing to achieve the Resource Advisory Council Standards for Nevada's Mojave-Southern Great Basin Area in accordance with all applicable laws, regulations, and policies; and in accordance with Title 43 CFR § 4130.2(a) which states in part: "Grazing permits or leases shall be issued to qualified applicants to authorize use on the public lands and other lands under the administration of the Bureau of Land management that are designated as available for livestock grazing through land use plans".

Consequently, this decision specifically identifies management actions and terms and conditions deemed appropriate to achieve management and resource condition objectives. The proposed actions that were developed under this proposed decision execute management actions that will aid in ensuring that continued achievement of the Standards for Rangeland Health and multiple use objectives occur.

Conclusions of the Standards Determination Document

Current monitoring data were reviewed and an evaluation of the rangeland health was completed during the permit renewal process. As a result, a Standards Determination document was prepared (Appendix II of EA). The results of the findings, regarding the achievement or non-achievement of the Mojave-Southern Great Basin Area Standards for Rangeland Health for the aforementioned allotment are summarized in Table 1, below

Table 1. Summary of Assessment of the Mojave-Southern Great Basin Area Standards for the Crestline Allotment.

Standard	Status
1. Soils	Achieved
2. Riparian and Wetland Sites Standard	Upland portion – Achieved Riparian Portion – Not Applicable
3. Habitat and Biota Standard	Achieved

The data indicate that grazing is in conformance with all applicable Guidelines. However, the new term permit will include terms and conditions directed toward the achievement of both, the Standards and Guidelines for Grazing Administration and other pertinent land use objectives for livestock use.

In addition, Best Management Practices (BMPs) will be included, as Terms and Conditions, in the term grazing permits. Utilization objectives for the allotment are a quantification of the land use plan objectives and will be included as a BMP.

Consultation and Coordination

On December 16, 2011, the annual Ely BLM annual Consultation, Cooperation and Coordination letter was mailed to individuals and organizations who have previously expressed an interest in

federal actions on the Ely District. The letter solicited public requests, regarding various program areas, to be a 2012 interested public.

On February 22, 2012, a letter was sent to local Native American tribes initiating the consultation compliance process in accordance with Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended. The letter solicited input for various permit renewals scheduled during 2012, including those on the Crestline Allotment. No tribe expressed any concerns or issues and as a result, there are no identified traditional religious or cultural concerns.

On May 30, 2012 the permittee was sent a letter informing them of the proposed term grazing permit renewal process scheduled during 2012. No comments were received.

On June 5, 2012, The BLM held an internal meeting between the Caliente Field Office and the Ely BLM District Office. BLM resource Specialists reviewed and scoped the term permit renewal proposal for the Crestline Allotment to identify any relevant issues. The BLM resource specialists identified no potential issues.

On July 5, 2012, the proposal to fully process the term permit for authorization number 2705099 was submitted for posting on the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) register webpage (ePlanning). A direct link to this webpage was posted on the Ely BLM Homepage. No comments were received.

A hard copy of the Crestline Allotment Preliminary EA was mailed to all interested publics who had expressed an interest in grazing permit renewals during the 2012 calendar year. The interested public mailing, as updated through the date of mailing, was used. A letter dated 7/18/2012, was received from Nevada Department of Wildlife. The comments received were addressed.

On July 5, 2012, the Preliminary EA was also posted on the NEPA Register webpage for a 15 day public review and comment period with the direct link to this webpage posted on the Ely BLM Homepage. No comments were received.

On July 5, 2012, the Preliminary EA was also submitted to the Nevada State Clearinghouse for a 15 day public review and comment period.

Relevant changes to the EA were made as appropriate.

LIVESTOCK MANAGEMENT DECISION

In accordance with 43 CFR §4130.3, §4130.3-1 and §4130.3-2, the term permits for authorization #2705099 on the Crestline Allotment will be changed to show 45% utilization on current year's growth for grasses and shrubs.

The renewal of the term grazing permit will be for a period of up to 10 years. This decision will be effective upon the decision becoming final or pending final determination on appeal. If the

grazing privileges are transferred during this ten year period - with no changes to the terms and conditions of the permit - the new term permit will be issued for the remainder of the 10 year period.

In addition, the following BMPs will be added to the term grazing permits, as Terms and Conditions, for authorization number 2705099. Utilization objectives for the allotment are a quantification of the land use plan objectives and will be included as a BMP.

Best Management Practices:

1. Allowable Use Levels on current year's growth of upland vegetation (grasses, forbs and shrubs) within the Crestline Allotment - during the authorized grazing use period (3/1 to 2/28) - will not exceed 45%.

In relation to grazing, there would be no additional terms and conditions needed for management practices to conform to guidelines to maintain achievement of the Standards for Rangeland Health.

Standard Operating Terms and Conditions:

In accordance with 43 CFR § 4130.3, § 4130.3-1 and § 4130.3-2, the following will also be included as terms and conditions in the term grazing permits for authorization number 2705099, on the Crestline Allotment.

1. Livestock numbers identified in the Term Grazing Permit are a function of seasons of use and permitted use. Deviations from those livestock numbers and seasons of use may be authorized on an annual basis where such deviations are consistent with multiple-use objectives. Such deviations will require an application and written authorization from the authorized officer prior to grazing use.

2. The authorized officer is requiring that an actual use report (Form 4130-5) be submitted within 15 days after completing your annual grazing use.

3. Grazing use will be in accordance with the Standards and Guidelines for Grazing Administration. The Standards and Guidelines have been developed by the respective Resource Advisory Council and approved by the Secretary of the Interior on February 12, 1997. Grazing use will also be in accordance with 43 CFR Subpart 4180 - Fundamentals of Rangeland Health and Standards and Guidelines for Grazing Administration.

4. If future monitoring data indicates that Standards and Guidelines for Grazing Administration are not being met, the permit will be reissued subject to revised terms and conditions.

5. The permittee must notify the authorized officer by telephone, with written confirmation, immediately upon discovery of any hazardous or solid wastes as defined in 40 CFR Part 261.

6. The permittee is responsible for all maintenance of assigned range improvements including wildlife escape ramps for both permanent and temporary water troughs.

7. When necessary, control or restrict the timing of livestock movement to minimize the transport of livestock-borne noxious weed seeds, roots, or rhizomes between weed-infested and weed-free areas.

8. Livestock will be moved to another authorized pasture (where applicable) or removed from the allotment before utilization objectives are met or no later than 5 days after meeting the utilization objectives. Any deviation in livestock movement will require authorization from the authorized officer.

9. The placement of mineral or salt supplements will be a minimum distance of 1/2 mile from known water sources, riparian areas, winterfat dominated sites, sensitive sites, populations of special status plant species, and cultural resource sites. Mineral and salt supplements will also be one mile from active sage-grouse leks. Placing supplemental feed (i.e. hay, grain, pellets, etc.) on public lands without authorization is prohibited.

Rationale

A Summary of the Assessment of the Mojave-Southern Great Basin Area Standards for the Crestline Allotment is displayed in Table 1, above (Table 1.2 of the Environmental Assessment). Monitoring data review and assessment findings indicate that all Standards, or their applicable portions thereof, are being achieved (Standards 1 and 3; and the upland portion of Standard 2). The data also indicates that grazing is in conformance with all applicable Guidelines.

It is anticipated and reasonable to expect, then, that Standards 1, 3 and the upland portion of Standard 2 would continue to be achieved.

The Proposed Action would also add other terms and conditions (BMPs) to the permit that would aid in achieving/maintaining the Mojave-Southern Great Basin Standards.

Land Use Plan Conformance

The proposed action is in conformance with the Ely District Record of Decision and Approved Resource Management Plan (RMP) dated August 20, 2008. The proposed action is specifically provided for in the following Management Decisions: "LG-1: Make approximately 11,246,900 acres and 545,267 animal unit months available for livestock grazing on a long-term basis. LG-5: Maintain the current preference, season-of-use, and kind of livestock until the allotments that have not been evaluated for meeting or making progress toward meeting the standards or are in conformance with the policies are evaluated. Depending on the results of the standards assessment, maintain or modify grazing preference, seasons-of-use, kind of livestock, and grazing management practices to achieve the standards for rangeland health. Changes, such as improved livestock management, new range improvement projects, and changes in the amount and kinds of forage permanently available for livestock use, can lead to changes in preference,

authorized season-of-use, or kind of livestock. Ensure changes continue to meet the RMP goals and objectives, including the standards for rangeland health."

AUTHORITY: The authority for this decision is contained in Title 43 of the Code of Federal Regulations (2004), which states in pertinent part(s):

§ 4130.2 (a) Grazing Permits and Leases

(a) States in part: "Grazing permits or leases shall be issued to qualified applicants to authorize use on the public lands and other lands administered by the Bureau of Land Management that are designated as available for livestock grazing through land use plans."

§ 4130.3: "Livestock grazing permits and leases shall contain terms and conditions determined by the authorized officer to be appropriate to achieve the management and resource condition objectives for the public lands and other lands administered by the Bureau of Land Management, and ensure conformance with the provisions of subpart 4180 of this part."

§ 4130.3-1 Mandatory terms and conditions.

(a) "The authorized officer shall specify the kind and number of livestock, the period(s) of use, the allotment(s) to be used, and the amount of use, in animal unit months, for every grazing permit or lease. The authorized livestock grazing use shall not exceed the livestock carrying capacity of the allotment.

(b) All permits and leases shall be made subject to cancellation, suspension, or modification for any violation of these regulations or of any term or condition of the permit or lease.

(c) Permits and leases shall incorporate terms and conditions that ensure conformance with subpart 4180 of this part."

§ 4130.3-2 Other Terms and Conditions

"The authorized officer may specify in grazing permits or leases other terms and conditions which will assist in achieving management objectives, provide for proper range management or assist in the orderly administration of the public rangelands."

§ 4160.1 Proposed Decisions

(a) "Proposed decisions shall be served on any affected applicant, permittee or lessee, and any agent and lien holder of record, who is affected by the proposed actions, terms or conditions, or modifications relating to

applications, permits and agreements (including range improvement permits) or leases, by certified mail or personal delivery. Copies of proposed decisions shall also be sent to the interested public.

(b) Proposed decisions shall state the reasons for the action and shall reference the pertinent terms, conditions and the provisions of applicable regulations. As appropriate, decisions shall state the alleged violations of specific terms and conditions and provisions of these regulations alleged to have been violated, and shall state the amount due under §§ 4130.8 and 4150.3 and the action to be taken under § 4170.1.

(c) The authorized officer may elect not to issue a proposed decision prior to a final decision where the authorized officer has made a determination in accordance with § 4110.3-3(b) or § 4150.2(d)."

§ 4180.1 Fundamentals of Rangeland Health and Standards and Guidelines for Grazing Administration.

"The authorized officer shall take appropriate action under subparts 4110, 4120, 4130, and 4160 of this part as soon as practicable but not later than the start of the next grazing year upon determining that existing grazing management needs to be modified to ensure that the following conditions exist.

(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 landform 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."

PROTEST AND APPEAL

Protest

In accordance with 43 CFR § 4160.2, any applicant, permittee, lessee or other interested public may protest the proposed decision under § 4160.1 of this title, in person or in writing within 15 days after receipt of such decision to:

Victoria Barr
Field Manager
Caliente Field Office
1400 S. Front Street
Box 237
Caliente, NV 89008

The protest, if filed, must clearly and concisely state the reason(s) why the protestant thinks the proposed decision is in error.

In accordance with 43 CFR § 4160.3 (a), in the absence of a protest, the proposed decision will become the final decision of the authorized officer without further notice unless otherwise provided in the proposed decision.

In accordance with 43 CFR § 4160.3 (b), should a timely protest be filed with the authorized officer, the authorized officer will reconsider the proposed decision and shall serve the final decision on the protestant and the interested public.

Appeal

In accordance with 43 CFR §§ 4.470 and 4160.4, any person who wishes to appeal or seek a stay of a BLM grazing decision must follow the requirements set forth in 4.470 through 4.480 of this title. The appeal or petition for stay must be filed with the BLM office that issued the decision within 30 days after its receipt or within 30 days after the proposed decision becomes final as provided in § 4160.3 (a).

The appeal and any petition for stay must be filed at the office of the authorized officer:

Victoria Barr
Field Manager
Caliente Field Office
1400 S. Front Street
Caliente, NV 89008

Within 15 days of filing the appeal and any petition for stay, the appellant also must serve a copy of the appeal and any petition for stay on any person named in the decision and listed at the end of the decision, and on the Office of the Solicitor, Regional Solicitor, Pacific Southwest Region,

U.S. Department of the Interior, 2800 Cottage Way, Room E-1712, Sacramento, California 95825-1890.

Pursuant to 43 CFR 4.471(c), a petition for stay, if filed, must show sufficient justification based on the following standards:

(1) The relative harm to the parties if the stay is granted or denied;
(2) The likelihood of the appellant's success on the merits;
(3) The likelihood of immediate and irreparable harm if the stay is not granted; and,
(4) Whether the public interest favors granting the stay.

43 CFR 4.471(d) provides that the appellant requesting a stay bears the burden of proof to demonstrate that a stay should be granted.

Any person named in the decision from which an appeal is taken (other than the appellant) who wishes to file a response to the petition for a stay may file with the Hearings Division in Salt Lake City, Utah, a motion to intervene in the appeal, together with the response, within 10 days after receiving the petition. Within 15 days after filing the motion to intervene and response, the person must serve copies on the appellant, the Office of the Solicitor and any other person named in the decision (43 CFR 4.472(b)).

At the conclusion of any document that a party must serve, the party or its representative must sign a written statement certifying that service has been or will be made in accordance with the applicable rules and specifying the date and manner of such service (43 CFR 4.422(c)(2)).

Sincerely,

Clent West (Acting)

Victoria Barr
Field Manager
Caliente Field Office

Enclosures

cc:

Doug D. Robison 1193 Compton St. Ely NV. 89301	CERTIFIED MAIL 7011 3500 0000 7782 9727
Kathy (Kathleen) Gregg 4621 Tennessee Drive Shingle Springs, CA 95682	CERTIFIED MAIL 7011 3500 0000 7782 9734
Brad Hardenbrook, Supervisory Habitat Biologist Nevada Dept. of Wildlife 4747 Vegas Drive Las Vegas, NV 89108	CERTIFIED MAIL 7011 3500 0000 7782 9741
Betsy Macfarlan, ENLC PO Box 150266 Ely NV 89315	CERTIFIED MAIL 7011 3500 0000 7782 9758
N-4 Grazing Board Box 461 Panaca, NV 89042	CERTIFIED MAIL 7011 3500 0000 7782 9765
Nevada Cattlemen's Association PO Box 310 Elko, NV 89803	CERTIFIED MAIL 7011 3500 0000 7782 9772
Steve Carter PO Box 27 Lund, NV 89317	CERTIFIED MAIL 7011 3500 0000 7782 9789
Tom Allen Starr Valley Route, Box 90 Deeth, NV 89823	CERTIFIED MAIL 7011 3500 0000 7782 9796
Katie Fite Western Watersheds Project P.O. Box 2863 Boise, Idaho 83701	CERTIFIED MAIL 7011 3500 0000 7782 9802

Sustainable Grazing Coalition c/o Richard A. Orr P.O. Box 145 Caliente, NV 89008-0145	CERTIFIED MAIL 7011 3500 0000 7782 9819
Sylvia Pierce P.O. Box 447 Alamo, NV. 89001	CERTIFIED MAIL 7011 3500 0000 7782 9826
Nevada State Clearinghouse	nevadaclearinghouse@lands.nv.gov (Electronic Copy)

FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT

Authorization #2705099
on the Crestline Allotment (#11023)

DOI-BLM-NV-L030-2012-0030 EA

I have reviewed Environmental Assessment (EA) (DOI-BLM-NV-L030-2012-0030 EA). After consideration of the environmental effects as described in the EA, and incorporated herein, I have determined that the proposed action associated with fully processing the term permit renewals identified in the EA will not significantly affect the quality of the human environment and that an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) is not required. Environmental Assessment DOI-BLM-NV-L030-2012-0030 EA has been reviewed through the interdisciplinary team process.

Rationale:

I have determined the proposed action is in conformance with the Ely District Record of Decision and Approved Resource Management Plan (RMP/ROD) to manage the public lands administered by the Bureau of Land Management's Ely District Office (August 20, 2008).

This proposed term permit renewal would be effective in improving/maintaining rangeland health and watershed condition on public lands within the Crestline Allotment. Through the introduction and implementation of the sound livestock management practices associated with the Proposed Action, progression will be made towards achievement of Standards and conformance to the Guidelines for Grazing Administration.

The finding and conclusion of no significant impact 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 the intensity of impacts described in the EA.

Context:

The Crestline Allotment is located in the Clover Valley and is approximately 2,395 acres in size. Elevations range from approximately 6,450 feet within the mountainous terrain to 5,900 feet in the lower portions of the allotment.

Neither the allotment nor any of its portions are located within a Wild Horse Herd Management Area (HMA), Wilderness or Wilderness Study Area.

There are no known riparian areas located within the allotment, on BLM managed lands.

Lincoln County is sparsely populated, with approximately 4,300 people living mostly within five towns. Although the acreage involved is extensive, impacts from livestock grazing are dispersed, and compatible with the rural, agricultural setting throughout most of the County.

Intensity:

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

The Environmental Assessment considered both, beneficial and adverse impacts of the proposed action. None of the impacts disclosed in the EA approach the threshold of significance (i.e., exceeding air or drinking water quality standards, contributing a decline in the population of a listed species, etc.). None of the resource impacts are intensely adverse or beneficial.

2) ***The degree to which the proposed action affects public health or safety.***

The Proposed Action will not result in potentially substantial or adverse impacts to 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.***

The Ely RMP EIS has evaluated the impacts of livestock grazing on natural resources and unique geographic characteristics found on public lands throughout the district, and decisions were made to eliminate grazing in areas where the impacts could cause unacceptable degradation to natural resources and unique geographic characteristics. No site specific concerns were identified in the EA.

There are no parks, wetlands, wild and scenic rivers or ecologically critical areas (ACECs) found within the allotment.

There are no prime and unique farmland is found in the allotment.

Historic and cultural resources identified in the proposed area were reviewed and analyzed. No effects to unique characteristics of the geographic area such as proximity to historic or cultural resources were identified.

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

Whereas, it may be controversial to continue to permit livestock grazing on public lands in spite of the effects, there is little controversy as to what they are. The Ely RMP EIS analyzed several alternatives with various effects to conflicting uses of natural resources and disclosed these effects. Decisions were made to continue livestock grazing in areas deemed appropriate.

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

The effects of livestock grazing are well known and documented. Management practices are employed to meet resource objectives and maintain or achieve rangeland health. The Ely RMP EIS analyzed the effects of livestock grazing throughout the district and has eliminated grazing in areas where unique environmental risks could occur.

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 will not establish a precedent for future actions with significant effects or represent a decision in principle about a future consideration. Renewing the grazing permits does not establish a precedent for other Rangeland Health Assessments and Decisions. Any future actions or projects - within either the proposed action area or surrounding areas - will be analyzed and evaluated as a separate action; and, independently of the current proposed action.

7) ***Whether the action is related to other actions with individually insignificant but cumulatively significant impacts.***

No significant cumulative impacts have been identified in the EA. Past, present, and reasonably foreseeable future actions in the cumulative impact assessment area would not result in cumulatively significant impacts. For any actions that may be propose in the future, further environmental analysis, including the assessment of cumulative impacts, will be required.

8) ***The degree to which the action may adversely affect districts, sites, highways, structures, or objects listed in or eligible for listing in the NRHP or may cause loss or destruction of significant scientific, cultural, or historical resources.***

A *Findings for Cultural Resources Needs Assessment* was completed on June 21, 2012. There are no known conflicts between current grazing practices and cultural resources within the allotment associated with this permit renewal. The proposed action will not cause the loss or destruction of significant scientific, cultural or historical resources. The Bureau of Land Management reserves the right to expeditiously mitigate or eliminate impacts to cultural resources discovered after this permit is issued.

All future range improvements, surface disturbing projects, and changes in grazing patterns that will concentrate grazing and may create impacts related to this permit will be subject to Section 106 review and, if needed, SHPO consultation as per the BLM Nevada's implementation of the Protocol for cultural 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 ESA of 1973.***

The BLM is required by the Endangered Species Act of 1973, as amended, to ensure that no action on the public lands jeopardizes a threatened, endangered, or proposed species.

Wildlife species (plant and animal) that occur in or near the project area are listed in Appendix III of the EA. There are no endangered or threatened species or habitat known to occur within the allotment boundary.

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 will not violate or threaten to violate any Federal, State, or local law or requirement imposed for the protection of the environment.

Clint Weitz (Acting) — 11-20-12

Victoria Barr
Field Manager
Caliente Field Office

Date

U. S. Department of the Interior
Bureau of Land Management

Final Environmental Assessment

DOI-BLM-NV-L030-2012-0030-EA

November 21, 2012

Grazing Permit Renewal
For the
Crestline Allotment
(11023)

Lincoln County, Nevada

U.S. Department of the Interior
Bureau of Land Management
Caliente Field Office
Phone: (775) 726-8100
Fax: (775) 726-8111

BLM

1.0 Introduction

This document identifies issues, analyzes alternatives, and discloses the potential environmental impacts associated with the proposed term grazing permit renewal for permit authorization #2705099 and authorize livestock grazing on the Crestline Allotment (11023). No other permittees hold grazing privileges are on the allotment. This Environmental Assessment (EA) fulfills the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) requirement for site-specific analysis of resource impacts. The Bureau of Land Management (BLM) considered both the proposed action and alternatives to the proposed action.

The BLM assessed the rangeland health during the permit issuance process. The BLM range staff conducted a review of the monitoring data. As a result of this review, the BLM is incorporating additional terms and conditions as found in 2.1.2.

The BLM range staff will continue to collect monitoring data for the Allotment including utilization (use pattern mapping and key area), ecological condition, trend and cover. If a future assessment results in a determination that changes are necessary for compliance with the Standards and Guidelines, the BLM will reissue the permit or lease subject to revised terms and conditions.

1.1 Background

The Crestline Allotment, a land based allotment is located within the Caliente Field Office in eastern Lincoln County, Nevada. The Crestline Allotment is approximately 18 miles southeast from the city of Panaca, Nevada. (Appendix I). Cattle are the type of livestock grazed on the allotment.

Current management practices are a reflection of Best Management Practices (BMPs) as coordinated between the permittee and the appropriate Bureau of Land Management (BLM) Range Management Specialist.

Allotment Location:

T.3 S., R. 70 E. portions of Sections 25, 26 35 and 36,
T.4 S., R. 70 E. portions of Sections 1, 2 and 11 Mount Diablo Base and Meridian.

Single-leaf pinyon and Utah juniper dominate this site. Black sagebrush and bitterbrush are the principal understory shrub species in the allotment. The most prevalent understory native grasses are blue-bunch wheatgrass, bottle-brush squirrel-tail, blue grama, needle-n-thread, and Indian ricegrass. An overstory canopy of zero to ten percent is assumed representative of tree canopy cover on this site in the pristine environment. Currently the allotment has closer to ten to 25 percent tree canopy cover. Wildfire is a natural disturbance that strongly influenced the structure and composition of the climax vegetation of this rangeland site.

Multiple land uses occur on private and public lands located in the Crestline Allotment and influence grazing operations as well as ecological processes. The Union Pacific rail line operates through the allotment from south to north restricting animal movement and dividing the allotment into east and west pastures. The Lincoln County Landfill is located in the northwest

corner of the allotment. Private land located in the southeast portion of the allotment is used for farming which includes a pivot irrigation system and some dry-land pasture. These private lands provide a majority of the forage and water in the area including public land grazing.

There is one active grazing permit that has 540 Animal Unit Months[1] (AUMs), and it is used for cattle grazing on the Crestline Allotment. Of the 540 AUMs, 485 are suspended leaving 55 active AUMs. The season of use is March 1 to February 28. Average actual use over the last five years has been about 70% of the active AUMs (39 used out of 55 active), all of which occurs on the east side due to water limitations.

The BLM range staff based the assessment on rangeland monitoring data that summarized within Appendix II of this document. Because of the assessment and monitoring data review, the BLM determined that the Standards and Guidelines for Rangeland Health are currently being achieved on the Crestline Allotment. A summary of this finding for the Crestline Allotment follows:

Table 1.2 Summary of Assessment of the Mojave-Southern Great Basin Area Standards for the Crestline Allotment.

Standard	Status
1. Soils	Achieved
2. Ecosystem Components Standard	Achieved
3. Habitat and Biota Standard	Achieved

1.2 Introduction of the Proposed Action

The BLM, Caliente Field Office proposes to renew grazing permit #2705099 and authorize livestock grazing on the Crestline Allotment

Standards and Guidelines for Grazing Administration were developed by the Mojave-Southern Great Basin Resource Advisory Council (RAC) and approved by the Secretary of the Interior on February 12, 1997. The Allowable Use Level (AUL) and Best Management Practices (BMP) would assist in achieving and maintaining these standards.

BLM range staff collected and analyzed monitoring data; and completed an assessment of the rangeland health for the Crestline Allotment in 2011-2012, through a Standards Determination Document (SDD) (Appendix II).

1.3 Need for the Proposed Action

The need for the proposal is to authorize grazing use on public lands in a manner which satisfies the Federal Land Policy and Management Act (FLPMA) while being consistent with multiple use, sustained yield and the Nevada's Mojave-Southern Great Basin Area Standards for Rangeland Health; to manage livestock in accordance with all applicable laws, regulations, and

policies; and to renew the term livestock grazing permit on the Crestline Allotment while introducing Best Management Practices, along with specific terms and conditions, directed toward the attainment and/or continued achievement of the Standards and Guidelines for Grazing Administration.

1.3.1 Objectives for the Proposed Action

- To renew the term grazing permit for authorization #2705099 and authorize livestock grazing on the Crestline Allotment (11023) in accordance with applicable laws, regulations, and land use plans (LUP) on 2,395 acres of public land.

- To improve and maintain vegetative health and growth conditions on the allotment while maintaining achievement of the Standards and Guidelines for rangeland health as approved and published by Mojave-Southern Great Basin RAC.

1.4 Relationship to Planning

The proposed action is in conformance with the Ely District Record of Decision and Approved Resource Management Plan (RMP) signed August 20, 2008, which states, "Manage livestock grazing on public lands to provide for a level of livestock grazing consistent with multiple use, sustained yield, and watershed function and health." In addition, "To allow livestock grazing to occur in a manner and at levels consistent with multiple use, sustained yield, and the standards for rangeland health (p. 85-86)."

Management Action LG-1 states, "Make approximately 11,246,900 acres and 545,267 animal unit months available for livestock grazing on a long-term basis."

Management Action LG-5 states, "Maintain the current grazing preference, season-of-use, and kind of livestock until the allotments that have not been evaluated for meeting or making progress toward meeting the standards or are in conformance with the policies are evaluated. Depending on the results of the standards assessment, maintain or modify grazing preference, seasons-of-use, and type of livestock and grazing management practices to achieve the standards for rangeland health. Changes, such as improved livestock management, new range improvement projects, and changes in the amount and kinds of forage permanently available for livestock use, can lead to changes in preference, authorized season-of-use, or kind of livestock. Ensure changes continue to meet the RMP goals and objectives, including the standards for rangeland health."

1.5 Relationship to Other Plans

The proposed action is also consistent with the *Lincoln County Public Lands Policy Plan* (2010) which states (p. 38):

"Policy 4-4: Grazing should utilize sound adaptive management practices consistent with the BLM Mojave-Southern Great Basin Resource Advisory Council's Standards and Guidelines for Grazing Administration. Lincoln County supports the periodic updating of the Nevada Rangeland Monitoring Handbook to help establish proper levels of grazing. Lincoln County

supports accountability between BLM and Lincoln County Commission to assure these management practices are carried out in a timely and professional manner.

Policy 4-5: Allotment management strategies should be developed that provide incentives to optimize stewardship by the permittee. Flexibility should be given to the permittee to reach condition standards for the range. Monitoring should utilize all science-based relevant studies, as described in the current Nevada Rangeland Monitoring Handbook. Changes to these standards should involve pre-planning collaborative consultation with the permittee and Lincoln County Commission."

1.6 Relationship to Acts, Executive Orders, Agreements and Guidance

The proposed action was analyzed within the scope of other relevant Acts, Executive Orders and associated regulations, Agreements and Guidance listed below and found to be in compliance:

- State Protocol Agreement between the Bureau of Land Management (BLM), Nevada and the Nevada State Historic Preservation Office (October 26, 2009)
- National Historic Preservation Act (Public Law 89-665; 16 U.S.C. 470 as amended through 2000)
- Mojave-Southern Great Basin Resource Advisory Council (RAC) Standards and Guidelines (12 February 1997)
- Lincoln County Public Land Use Plan (2010)
- Migratory Bird Treaty Act (1918 as amended) and Executive Order 13186 (see below)
- Executive Order 13186: Responsibilities of Federal Agencies to Protect Migratory Birds (2001)
- The National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (42 U.S.C. §§ 4321-4347, January 1, 1970, as amended 1975 and 1994)
- The Federal Land Policy and Management Act of 1976 (43 U.S.C. §§ 1701-1782, October 21, 1976, as amended 1978, 1984, 1986, 1988, 1990-1992, 1994 and 1996)

1.7 Tiering

This document is tiered to the Ely Proposed Resource Management Plan/Final Environmental Impact Statement (Ely PRMP/FEIS, Volumes I and II) (November 2007).

1.8 Relevant Issues and Internal Scoping/Public Scoping

On December 16, 2011, the Ely BLM mailed the annual CCC letter that notified interested parties of the livestock grazing term permit renewals scheduled for 2012.

On February 22, 2012, the BLM sent a letter to local Native American tribes requesting comments regarding the permit renewal process for the Crestline Allotment. No tribe expressed any concerns or issues and as a result, there are no identified traditional religious or cultural concerns.

On June 5, 2012, the BLM held an internal meeting in coordination between the Caliente Field Office and the Ely BLM District Office. BLM resource specialists reviewed and scoped the term permit renewal proposal for the Crestline Allotment to identify any relevant issues. The BLM resource specialists identified no potential issues.

On May 30, 2012, the BLM sent the permittee a letter informing them of the proposed term permit renewal process scheduled for their allotment during 2012. No comments were received.

A hard copy was also mailed to those interested publics who requested it, and who have expressed an interest in range management actions associated with the Crestline Allotment. The interested public mailing list, as updated through the date of mailing, was used. A letter, dated 7/18/12, was received from Nevada Department of Wildlife. The comments received were addressed.

2.0 Alternatives Including the Proposed Action

2.1 Proposed Action

The Bureau of Land Management, Caliente Field Office proposes to renew the term grazing for authorization # 2705099 and authorize livestock grazing on the Crestline Allotment (11023). The issuance of the term grazing permit would be for a period of ten years.

The Proposed Action is to maintain the Active Use of 60 AUMs from March 1 to February 28 grazing period in accordance with the current term permit. However, the BLM would base the authorization of 55 AUMs, during any given year, based on annual forage availability.

The Proposed Action would also add other terms and conditions to the permit that would aid in achieving and maintaining the Mojave-Southern Great Basin Standards. No other changes would be made to the permit.

2.1.1 Current Permit

The BLM issued the current term grazing permit, for the Crestline Allotment (11023) for the period February 24, 2011 to September 30, 2020 in accordance with public law 11-322, an extension of public law 111-242 Continuing Appropriations Act. Table 2.1.1 below, display the current term grazing permit information in tabular format.

Table 2.1.1, below, displays the mandatory terms and conditions for the current term grazing permits for authorization number 2705099 on the Crestline Allotment February 24, 2011 to September 30, 2020. The permits was previously issued for the period 3/01/03 – 2/28/13.

Table 2.1.1 Current Term Grazing Permits, Showing Mandatory Terms and Conditions, for Authorization Numbers 2705099 on the Crestline Allotment:

ALLOTMENT		Authorization	LIVESTOCK		GRAZING PERIOD		** %	AUMs		
Name	Number	Num.	* Number	Kind	Begin	End	Public Land	Active Use	Hist. Susp. Use	Permitted Use
Crestline	11023	#2705099	5	C	3/1	2/28	100	55	485	540

* These numbers are approximate
** This is for billing purposes only.

2.1.2 Proposed Term Permit

The new term permit would contain the same mandatory terms and conditions as the current term permit (Table 2.1.1). In addition, the new term permits would also include standard terms and conditions which would assist in maintaining the Standards and Guidelines for Grazing Administration in addition to other pertinent land use objectives for livestock use.

The following Terms and Conditions would be added to the Term Grazing Permit to assist in maintaining the standards:

1. Allowable Use Levels on current year's growth of upland vegetation (grasses, forbs and shrubs) within the Crestline Allotment - during the authorized grazing use period (March 1–February 28) - will not exceed 45%.

In relation to grazing, there would be no additional terms and conditions needed for management to conform to guidelines either to make progress toward or to maintain achievement of the Standards for Rangeland Health.

The renewal of the term grazing permit would be for a period of up to ten years. If the grazing privileges associated with this term permit were transferred during this ten-year period - with no changes to the terms and conditions of the permit - the new term permit would be issued for the remainder of the 10-year period.

2.1.3 Invasive, Non-Native Species and Noxious Weeds

The BLM completed a Weed Risk Assessment for this project (Appendix IV). The BLM will also monitor the term permit renewal area on a regular basis for noxious weeds or non-native invasive species. The BLM will follow the measures listed in the Weed Risk Assessment, when grazing occurs on the allotment, to minimize the spread of weeds.

2.1.4 Monitoring

The Ely District Approved Resource Management Plan (August 2008) identifies monitoring to include, "Monitoring to assess rangeland health standards will include records of actual livestock use, measurements of forage utilization, ecological site inventory data, cover data, soil mapping, and allotment evaluations or rangeland health assessments. Conditions and trends of resources affected by livestock grazing will be monitored to support periodic analysis/evaluation, site-specific adjustments of livestock management actions, and term permit renewals" (p. 88).

2.2 Description of Alternatives Analyzed in Detail

2.2.1 No Action Alternative

The No Action Alternative, for livestock grazing, permit renewals is defined as "continuing to graze under current terms and conditions" in IM-2000-022, Change 1 (re-authorized by IM-2010-063)

Therefore, the No Action Alternative would reflect the status quo. The BLM will issue the term permit without changes to grazing management, or modifications to the existing terms and conditions of the permit.

The renewal of the term grazing permit would be for a period of up to ten years. If grazing privileges were transferred during this ten-year period - with no changes to the terms and conditions of the permit - the BLM would issue the new term permit for the remainder of the ten-year period.

2.2.2 No Grazing Alternative

Under this alternative, the BLM would not issue a new term grazing permit, once the current term permit expired, resulting in no authorized livestock grazing on the allotment.

This alternative was also considered and analyzed in the Ely Proposed Resource Management Plan/Final Environmental Impact Statement (November 2007) which is addressed below.

2.3 Alternatives Considered but Eliminated from Further Analysis

The Ely Proposed Resource Management Plan and Final Environmental Impact Statement (PRMP/FEIS) (November 2007) (Volume II) analyzes the Environmental Impacts of livestock grazing for the Proposed RMP and four alternatives (p.4.16-1 to 4.16-15.), including a no-grazing alternative (Alternative D). It also analyzes Environmental impacts on vegetative

resources from livestock grazing under the Proposed RMP and the four alternatives (4.5-1 to 4.5-28), including the no-grazing alternative. However, the no-grazing alternative is additionally analyzed in this EA. The following is a list of the four Alternatives contained within the Ely Proposed Resource Management Plan/Final Environmental Impact Statement (PRMP/FEIS) (November 2007) (Volume II):

- Alternative A, The Continuation of Current Existing (No Action alternative)
- Alternative B, The Maintenance and Restoration of Healthy Ecological Systems
- Alternative C, Commodity Production
- Alternative D, Conservation Alternative (No-grazing Alternative)

3.0 Description of the Affected Environment and Associated Environmental Consequences

There are 2,395 acres in the Crestline Allotment, 1,633 acres of the current allotment area is available for disposal under the Lincoln County Conservation, Recreation and Development Act of 2004.

Water for the east side of the allotment is provided by overflow from irrigation on the private farmland located within the allotment which is fenced. Water is also available in the Lafe's Reservoir located in the southern end of the east side. However, water availability in the reservoir is dependent on the time of year and precipitation. The reservoir lies on the boundary of the Crestline Allotment and the Enterprise Allotment to the south. There is private land within the allotment used for the Lincoln County Landfill, which is fenced. The west side of the allotment is not currently grazed due to the lack of water. A reservoir is located on the southern end of the allotment. However, it currently does not hold water, presumably due to infiltration of the reservoir bottom. It is likely that the increased tree dominance in the area is altering hydrology and contributing to the unavailability of water.

According to the Fire Regime Condition Class (FRCC) the Crestline Allotment is highly departed from its historical structure (See FRCC map in Appendix I). About 96.6% of the allotment is a FRCC Class of 3, the most highly departed from ideal conditions, approximately 1.3% is in a FRCC Class of 2, highly departed from natural (historical) disturbance regime, and about 2.1% is in a FRCC Class of 1, which represents the natural (historical) disturbance regime. The condition of this area is typical of a late seral pinyon/juniper woodland where the co-dominance of shrubs and trees is transitioning to a strictly tree dominated site. At this point ecological processes begin to change with a decrease in the amount of precipitation that reaches the ground and conversely an increase in overland water flows and erosion during heavy precipitation events. Soil stability is reduced due to the reduction of shrub, forb, and grass species, which serve as palatable forage species for wildlife, horse, and livestock.

The BLM implemented a 700-acre juniper treatment project in 1958, but the effects of this treatment are no longer present and the community is once again at an advanced stage of pinyon/juniper development with little to no understory.

According to data from the Oregon Climate Service at Oregon State University, the Crestline allotment receives 10-15 inches of annual precipitation range. The closest precipitation data (Appendix I) collected at the nearby Crossroads and Enterprise rain can locations by the BLM

Caliente Field Office, indicates an average of 10.8-11.7 inches annually within the last 11 years (2000-2011).

3.1 Allotment Information

The Crestline Allotment (11023) encompasses 2,395 acres of public land acres. The allotment is situated in Clover Valley. The allotment is located entirely within Lincoln County, in the east central portion of the Caliente Field Office/Ely BLM District approximately 18 miles southeast of the city of Panaca, Nevada. The Crestline Allotment is characterized by rolling hills and benches covered predominantly by Pinyon/Juniper woodlands. Generally, the precipitation level is between 10 and12 inches on the allotment. Precipitation occurs primarily as winter snow or spring and fall thunderstorms and rains. Cattle are the type of livestock grazed on the allotment. Site-specific descriptions of portions of the affected environment are included, as needed, in the Environmental Consequences section of this EA to facilitate understanding of anticipated impacts.

Neither the allotment nor any of its portions are located within a Wild Horse Herd Management Area (HMA), Wilderness Area, Wilderness Study Area, sage grouse habitat, or within desert tortoise habitat. There are no known riparian areas located within the allotment on BLM managed lands. Elevations range from approximately 6,450 feet within the mountainous terrain to 5,900 feet in the lower portions of the allotment.

3.2 Resources Concerns Considered for Analysis - Proposed Action

The BLM evaluated the following items for the potential for significant impacts to occur, either directly, indirectly, or cumulatively, due to implementation of the proposed action.

Consideration of some of these items is to ensure compliance with laws, statutes or Executive Orders that impose certain requirements upon all Federal actions. Other items are relevant to the management of public lands in general and to the Ely BLM in particular.

Resource Concern Considered	Issue(s) Analyzed	Rationale for Dismissal from Analysis or Issue(s) Requiring Detailed Analysis
Air Quality	No	The State of Nevada classifies the air quality in Lincoln County as being "unclassifiable" since no monitoring has been conducted to determine the classification and National Ambient Air Quality Standards. The proposed action would not have a measurable effect on the air quality of Lincoln County. Any dust created would be expected to be ephemeral.
Cultural Resources	No	Impacts from livestock grazing on Cultural Resources are analyzed on page 4.9-5 of the Ely Proposed Resource Management Plan/Environmental Impact Statement (November 2007). The cultural staff will identify cultural properties impacted by grazing activities to be monitored in order to determine condition, impacts, deterioration, and use of these properties. BLM archeologists, law enforcement rangers, and trained site stewards, to identify impacts and evaluate site conditions, conduct site monitoring. As necessary, strategies are developed and implemented in order to reduce threats and resolve conflicts to the property.
Paleontological Resources	No	No currently identified paleontological resources are present in the project area.

Resource Concern Considered	Issue(s) Analyzed	Rationale for Dismissal from Analysis or Issue(s) Requiring Detailed Analysis
Native American Religious Concerns and other concerns	No	On February 22, 2012, the BLM sent a letter to local Native American tribes requesting comments regarding the permit renewal process for the Crestline Allotment. Direct impacts and cumulative impacts would not occur, because there were no identified concerns through coordination.
Noxious and Invasive Weed Management	No	Livestock grazing has the potential to spread noxious and invasive weeds. The BLM completed a Weed Risk Assessment for this project (Appendix IV). The design features of the proposed action in addition to the vigilant practices described in the Weed Risk Assessment will help prevent livestock grazing from spreading noxious and non-native, invasive weeds. No additional analysis is needed.
Vegetative Resources	Yes	Impacts from livestock grazing on Vegetation Resources were analyzed on page 4.5-9 in the Ely Proposed Resource Management Plan/Environmental Impact Statement (November 2007). Beneficial impacts to vegetative resources are consistent with the need and objectives for the proposed action. Analysis of the proposed action and alternatives is provided in the affected environment and environmental impacts sections. A list of plant species is provided in Appendix V.
Rangeland Standards and Health	Yes	Impacts from livestock grazing on Rangeland Standards and Health are analyzed on pages 4.16-3 through 4.16-4 of the Ely Proposed Resource Management Plan/Environmental Impact Statement (November 2007). Beneficial impacts to rangeland standards and health are consistent with the need and objectives for the proposed action. Analysis of the proposed action and alternatives is provided in the affected environment and environmental impacts sections.
Forest Health[1]	No	Cattle do not graze pinyon-juniper.
Wastes, Hazardous or Solid	No	No hazardous or solid wastes exist on the permit renewal area, nor would any be introduced by the proposed action or alternatives.
Wilderness	No	There are no Wilderness areas that are within the Crestline Allotment.
Lands with Wilderness Characteristics	No	Resource not present per the 1979 Intensive Wilderness Inventory.
Special Designations other than Designated Wilderness	No	No Special Designations occur within the project area.
Wetlands/Riparian Zones	No	There are no lentic or lotic riparian areas located within the Crestline Allotment on BLM managed lands.
Water Quality, Drinking/Ground	No	The proposed action would not affect water quality (surface or groundwater sources) or drinking water in the project area. No surface water in the project area is used as human drinking water sources and no impaired water bodies of the State on Nevada are present in the project area.
Water Resources (Water Rights)	No	The Proposed Action would not affect existing or pending water rights in the project analysis area.
Floodplains	No	The project analysis area is not included on FEMA flood maps. The resource does not exist in the proposed project area.
Migratory Birds	No	The migratory bird species that likely occur in or near the project area are listed in Appendix III. This list includes BLM Sensitive species. It is anticipated the establishment of Allowable Use Levels would aid in

Resource Concern Considered	Issue(s) Analyzed	Rationale for Dismissal from Analysis or Issue(s) Requiring Detailed Analysis
		maintaining/achievement of the Standards and Guidelines for rangeland health; thereby, maintaining or improving habitat conditions for all migratory birds of concern. There is always a possibility that cattle or horses could trample the nests, and/or developing young, of ground nesting birds during the spring nesting period. However, the potential for nest trampling is anticipated to be remote and upon occurrence, would be limited to an occasional individual or nest. If nests were lost due to trampling, birds would likely re-nest. Grazing would also reduce the height of existing vegetative structure and cover to some degree. However, with the established Allowable Use Levels it is anticipated that vegetative structure and cover would be negligibly affected. In view of the aforementioned, it is anticipated that the impacts to migratory bird populations, as a whole, would be negligible; thereby, having no adverse affect. Therefore, the BLM anticipates that the proposed action would not have a measurable effect on this resource.
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) Listed or proposed for listing Threatened or Endangered Species or critical habitat.*	No	There are no known Threatened or Endangered Species that are listed or are proposed for listing or critical habitat within the Crestline Allotment.
Special Status Plant Species, other than those listed or proposed by the UFWS as Threatened or Endangered	No	There are no BLM Special Status Plant Species known to occur within the Crestline Allotment.
Special Status Animal Species, other than those listed or proposed by the UFWS as Threatened or Endangered	No	There are no BLM Special Status Animal Species known to occur within the Crestline Allotment.
Fish and Wildlife	No	Impacts from livestock grazing on Fish and Wildlife are analyzed on pages 4.6-10 through 4.6-11 in the Ely Proposed Resource Management Plan/Final Environmental Impact Statement (November 2007). Wildlife species – including sensitive species – that likely occur in or near the project area are listed in Appendix III. Grazing would reduce the amount of available forage (grass and forbs); however, compliance with Ely Resource Management Plan standards for utilization percentages ensures that forage is present in the allotment after cattle are removed. Therefore, it is anticipated that the proposed action would have no measurable effect on this resource.
Wild Horses	No	Neither the allotment nor any of its portions are located within a Wild Horse Herd Management Area (HMA).

Resource Concern Considered	Issue(s) Analyzed	Rationale for Dismissal from Analysis or Issue(s) Requiring Detailed Analysis
Soil Resources	No	Soils in the project analysis area are not prone to compaction or erosion problems; infiltration rates and soil permeability are high and soil textures are coarse throughout the area It is expected that the proposed action would not measurably affect soil resources.
Mineral Resources	No	There would be no modifications to mineral resources through the proposed action or alternatives; therefore, no direct or cumulative impacts would occur to minerals.
VRM	No	The proposed action is consistent with the VRM classification objectives for VRM classes 2, 3 and 4 within the allotment; therefore, no direct or cumulative impacts to visual resources would occur.
Recreation Uses	No	Design features identified in the proposed action would result in negligible impacts to recreational activities
Grazing Uses	Yes	Livestock grazing is analyzed in the EA.
Land Uses	No	There would be no modifications to land use authorizations through the proposed action, therefore no impacts would occur. No direct or cumulative impacts would occur to access and land use.
Environmental Justice	No	No environmental justice issues are present at or near the project area. No minority or low-income populations would be unduly affected by the proposed action or alternatives.
Areas of Critical Environmental Concern (ACEC)	No	Resource not present in allotment.
Farmlands (Prime or Unique)	No	No unique farmlands occur in the State of Nevada. If the proposed project analysis area contains soils classified as potential Prime Farmlands, the Proposed Action would not alter the physical or chemical soil characteristics that affect farmland status.

[1] Healthy Forests Restoration Act projects only

* Consultation required, unless a "not present" or "no effect" finding is made.

The resources listed within the above table, that are not present within the Crestline Allotment and, therefore, do not require a detailed analysis include: Paleontological Resources; Native American Religious Concerns; Wastes-Hazardous or Solid; Wilderness; Special Designations other than Designated Wilderness; Wetlands/Riparian Zones; Floodplains; USFWS Listed or proposed for listing Threatened or Endangered Species or critical habitat; Special Status Plant Species-other than those listed or proposed by the FWS as Threatened or Endangered; Special Status Animal Species, other than those listed or proposed by the UFWS as Threatened or Endangered; Fish and Wildlife; Wild Horses; Soil Resources; Mineral Resources; Land Uses and Environmental Justice and Areas of Critical Environmental Concern (ACEC).

According to the Ely District Approved Resource Management Plan, August 2008, it is the goal of the Ely District to identify, preserve, and protect significant cultural resources and ensure that they are available for appropriate uses by present and future generations. They are to protect and maintain these cultural resources on BLM-administered land in stable condition. To accomplish this they are to seek to reduce imminent threats and resolve potential conflicts from natural or human-caused deterioration or potential conflict with other resource uses by ensuring that all authorizations for land use and resource use will comply with the National Historic Preservation

Act, Section 106. In accordance with this act, "any material remains of past human life or activities which are of archaeological interest" shall be assessed and secured "for the present and future benefits of the American People". Therefore, all ground disturbing activities related to livestock grazing (such as fence construction, road construction, water developments, etc.) within the allotment(s) associated with these Term Permit(s) will be subject to Section 106 review and, if needed, SHPO consultation as per BLM Nevada's implementation of the Protocol for cultural resources. The BLM completed a Cultural Resources Inventory Needs Assessment on June 21, 2012; a copy of this assessment is in the project file at the Caliente Field Office of the BLM.

Livestock grazing has been an historic use of federal lands, now managed by the Caliente Field Office, since the mid-19th century. The extent of effects from livestock grazing on archeological sites is difficult to determine, since extensive livestock grazing has occurred in this region for over 150 years. However, it is likely that the majority of the livestock-related impacts on cultural resources occurred prior to the passage of the Taylor Grazing Act in 1934.

The BLM conducts field investigations and maintains files of archeological sites on public lands. Analyses of existing documentation indicates that concentrated livestock activities near water sources, along fences, and in areas where livestock seek shelter, could adversely affect cultural resources.

The following are the remaining resources, listed within the above table, which are also present within the Crestline Allotment and which were assigned a "No" under the "Issue(s) Analyzed" column, because they are negligibly affected by the proposed action. However, an analysis of grazing impacts on these resources may be found in the Ely Proposed Resource Management Plan/Final Environmental Impact Statement (November 2007), on the noted pages, and include: Air Quality; Cultural Resources (page 4.9-5); Water Resources (page 4.3-5); Watershed Management (page 4.19-8); Fish and Wildlife (pages 4.6-10 through 4.6-11); Soil Resources (page 4.4-4). Consequently, these resources do not require a further detailed analysis.

However, the following is a detailed analysis regarding Vegetative Resources, Rangeland Standards and Health, and Grazing Uses. These three resources were assigned a "Yes" under the "Issue(s) Analyzed" column in the above table; and have been identified by the BLM interdisciplinary team as resources within the affected environment that merit a detailed analysis. An analysis of grazing impacts on the former two resources may be found in the Ely Proposed Resource Management Plan/Final Environmental Impact Statement (November 2007), on the following noted pages: Vegetative Resources (page 4.5-9); Rangeland Standards and Health (pages 4.16-3 through 4.16-4).

3.3 Resources/Concerns Analyzed

The resources/concerns analyzed include Vegetative Resources, Rangeland Standards and Health, and Grazing Uses.

3.3.1 Vegetative Resources, Rangeland Standards and Health, and Grazing Uses

3.3.1.1 Affected Environment

Section 3.1, above, describes some basic information about the Crestline Allotment.

An assessment and evaluation of livestock grazing managements achievement of the standards and conformance to the guidelines (Standards Determination Document or SDD) was completed in conjunction with the permit renewal project (Appendix II).

The assessment indicates that Standard 1 is being achieved, the upland portion of Standard 2 is being achieved, while the riparian portion of this Standard 2 is not applicable and Standard 3 is being achieved. Therefore, changing the mandatory terms and conditions of the current term grazing permit was deemed unnecessary.

3.3.1.2 Environmental Consequences

Proposed Action

Under the Proposed Action, the season of use would remain the same. It is anticipated and reasonable to expect, then, that Standard 1, the upland portions of Standard 2, and Standard 3 would continue to be achieved.

The Proposed Action would also add other terms and conditions, regarding Allowable Use Levels, to the permit that would aid in achieving and maintaining the Mojave-Southern Great Basin Standards.

No Action Alternative

All of the mandatory terms and conditions of the current permit, as displayed under section 2.1.1, would remain unchanged. Therefore, the impacts of continued grazing would not be anticipated to change the attainment of standards in the Crestline Allotment.

No Grazing Alternative

For a short period of time following implementation, this may accomplish the same desired result as allowing periodic rest during the spring critical growing period for plants by allowing perennial forage plants rest during the vital phenological stages of their annual growing cycle. However, according to studies this benefit would be short-lived.

In fact, it is realized in the scientific community that, over time, grasses may become wolfy (too coarse to be palatable) from lack of grazing use (Ganskopp 2004, Anderson 1993). If this occurs, substantial forage can become wasted, because current year's growth is intermixed with older, cured materials that are nutritionally deficient and present a physical barrier to cattle grazing. Such plants would also lose vigor and become less palatable, thereby contributing to less productive rangelands for either wildlife or domestic livestock that depend on such a forage base.

Anderson (1993) elaborated on the consequences of choosing a No Grazing option. He states: "After a period of time, ungrazed herbaceous fibrous-rooted plant species become decadent or stagnant. Annual aboveground growth is markedly reduced in volume and height. Root systems likely respond the same. The result is reduction in essential features of vegetational cover, including the replacement of soil organic matter and surface residues, and optimum capture of precipitation." He also lists two other consequences: "(1) loss of quality herbaceous forage for wild herbivores, causing them to move to areas where regrowth following livestock grazing provides succulent forage (Anderson 1989), and (2) increased hazard from wildfires that can be devastating from a rangeland watershed standpoint."

Courtois et. al. (2004) found that 65 years of protection from grazing on 16 exclosures, at different locations across Nevada, resulted in relatively few differences between vegetation inside the exclosures and that exposed to moderate grazing outside the exclosures. Where differences occurred, total vegetation cover was greater inside the exclosures while density was greater outside the exclosures. Protection from grazing failed to prevent expansion of cheatgrass into the exclosures (Ely PRMP/FEIS pg. 4.5–27).

4.0 Cumulative Effects

4.1 Past Actions

Livestock grazing operations in the planning area developed during the mid to late-1800s. The Ely PRMP/FEIS summarizes livestock grazing history in the region on pages 3.16–1 to 3.16–3. Range improvements have occurred on all allotments to improve grazing management and include fencing, stockwater developments, and vegetation treatments. The Ely PRMP/FEIS summarizes wild horse history in the west, specifically on the Ely District, on pages 3.8–1 to 3.8–7. Wild horse use has occurred throughout the project area since the 1800s, this area is not a wild horse HMA.

There have been limited previous actions occurring in the project area. Historical mineral mining has been common in the area of the Crestline Allotment. There has been no historical oil or gas production and minimal oil exploration in the area. Based upon anecdotal observations by BLM resource staff, woodcutting and pinyon nut gathering, hunting, trapping, wildlife viewing, and other recreational activities including OHV use have been minimal on the Crestline Allotment. Small two-track roads associated with these activities are not extensive and have not altered the landscape. Wildfire within the Crestline Allotment is a naturally occurring event that is part of the ecological structure as described within the ecological site descriptions (see Appendix A). Wildlife use has not been intensive in the area and has not fundamentally altered the plant communities. Permittees in the area have observed an increase in elk over the last decade.

Livestock grazing has taken place in this area since the late 1800's. There are a number of rangeland improvements to help in the distribution of livestock and ensure that an effective rest rotation system is in place to ensure standards and guidelines are met and will continue to be met. A 700-acre juniper treatment project was implemented in 1958, but the effects of this treatment are no longer present and the community is once again at an advanced stage of

pinyon/juniper development with little to no understory.

Precipitation in southern Nevada is highly variable with frequent drought periods. Precipitation data collected at BLM rain gauges, for the years 2000-2011(11 years) is displayed in Table 1 in Appendix A. The variability of precipitation ranged from four inches in 2002 to 18 inches in 2004.

4.2 Present Actions

There is one permittee holding grazing privileges on the Crestline Allotment, authorization #2705099), with a season of use (March 1 to February 28).

Based upon observations by BLM resource specialists, current activities or projects occurring in the project area are very limited. There is no current mineral mining or oil and gas exploration. Woodcutting and pinyon nut gathering are minimal. Current livestock grazing and wildlife use are not intensive in the area. Neither the allotment nor any of its portions are located within a Wild Horse and Burro Heard Management Area (HMA), Wilderness, Wilderness Study Area or within desert tortoise habitat. There are no known riparian areas located within the allotment on BLM managed lands.

Widely dispersed incidental recreation occasionally occurs within the allotment in the form of hunting, trapping, four-wheeling (OHV) and wildlife viewing. Based upon observations by BLM resource specialists, there is only occasional use of the small two track roads in the area.

4.3 Reasonably Foreseeable Future Actions

Widely dispersed incidental recreation will continue into the future. Livestock grazing will continue under the existing grazing permit on the allotment. 1,633 acres of this allotment are available for disposal to enlarge the Lincoln County Landfill. The proportion of livestock forage associated with this reduced acreage will be reviewed associated with the land disposal process. Upon expiration, the permit will be considered for renewal through site-specific NEPA analysis.

4.4 Cumulative Effects Summary

4.4.1 Proposed Action

According to page 36 of the 1994 BLM publication *Guidelines for Assessing and Documenting Cumulative Impacts*, the cumulative analysis should be focused on those issues and resource values where the incremental impact of the Proposed Action results in a meaningful change in the cumulative effect from other past, present and reasonably foreseeable future actions within the Cumulative Effects Study Area (CESA). In addition, a comprehensive cumulative impacts analysis can be found in section 4.28 of the Ely RMP/FEIS.

The CESA for this project is defined as the Crestline Allotment.

Additionally, the guidance provided in The National BLM NEPA Handbook H-1790-1 (2008), for analyzing cumulative effects issues states, "determine which of the issues identified for

analysis may involve a cumulative effect with other past, present, or reasonably foreseeable future actions. If the proposed action and alternatives would have no direct or indirect effects on a resource, you do not need a cumulative effects analysis on that resource" (p.57).

A comprehensive cumulative impacts analysis can be found on pages 4.28-1 through 4.36-1 of the Ely Proposed Resource Management Plan/Final Environmental Impact Statement (November 2007).

The proposed action in conjunction with the past, present and reasonable foreseeable future actions would result in no noticeable overall changes to the affected environment. Grazing under the proposed permit renewal would aid in maintaining achievement of the Standards for Rangeland Health, with the understanding that adjustments to grazing management would occur when any of the Standards are not being achieved. Appropriate action would be taken as soon as practicable but not later than the start of the next grazing year upon determining that existing grazing management practices or levels of grazing use on public lands are significant factors in failing to achieve the standards and conform with the guidelines (43 CFR §4180.2 (c)).

No cumulative impacts of concern are anticipated as a result of the proposed action in combination with any other existing or planned activity.

4.4.2 No Action Alternative

The no action alternative has the same cumulative effect as the Proposed Action.

4.4.3 No Grazing Alternative

The No Grazing Alternative, in combination with interrelated projects, will have no known cumulative effects on rangeland health.

5.0 Proposed Mitigation and Monitoring

5.1 Proposed Mitigation

Outlined design features incorporated into the proposed action are sufficient. No additional mitigation is proposed based on the analysis of environmental consequences.

5.2 Proposed Monitoring

Appropriate monitoring has been included as part of the Proposed Action. No additional monitoring is proposed as a result of the impact analysis.

6.0 Consultation and Coordination

6.1 List of Preparers - BLM Resource Specialists

Andy Daniels	Wildlife Biologist/Project Lead
Chris Mayer	Supervisory Rangeland Management Specialist

Travis Young	NEPA Coordinator
Andrew Daniels	Wildlife, Special Status Species, Migratory Birds
Mark D'Aversa	Soil, Water, Wetlands and Riparian, Floodplains
Cameron Boyce	Noxious and Invasive, Non-native Species
Nick Pay	Cultural Resources
Elvis Wall	Native American Cultural Concerns
Melanie Peterson	Hazardous & Solid Waste/Safety
Lisa Domina	Recreation, Visual Resources
Samuel Styles	Wilderness

6.2 Persons, Groups or Agencies Consulted

This Final EA is being sent to the Interested Publics included on the annual Range Actions Interested Public Mailing List.

Public Notice of Availability

On December 16, 2011, the Ely BLM mailed the annual Consultation, Coordination and Cooperation (CCC) letter which notified interested parties of the livestock grazing term permit renewals scheduled for 2012.

On February 22, 2012, a letter was sent to local Native American tribes requesting comments regarding the permit renewal process for the Crestline Allotment. No tribe expressed any concerns or issues and as a result there are no identified traditional religious or cultural concerns.

On June 5, 2012, a BLM internal meeting was held in coordination between the Caliente Field Office the Ely BLM District Office. The term permit renewal proposal for the Crestline Allotment was presented and scoped by resource specialists to identify any relevant issues. No potential issues were identified.

On May 30, 2012, the BLM sent the permittee a letter informing them of the proposed term permit renewal process scheduled for their allotment during 2012. No comments were received.

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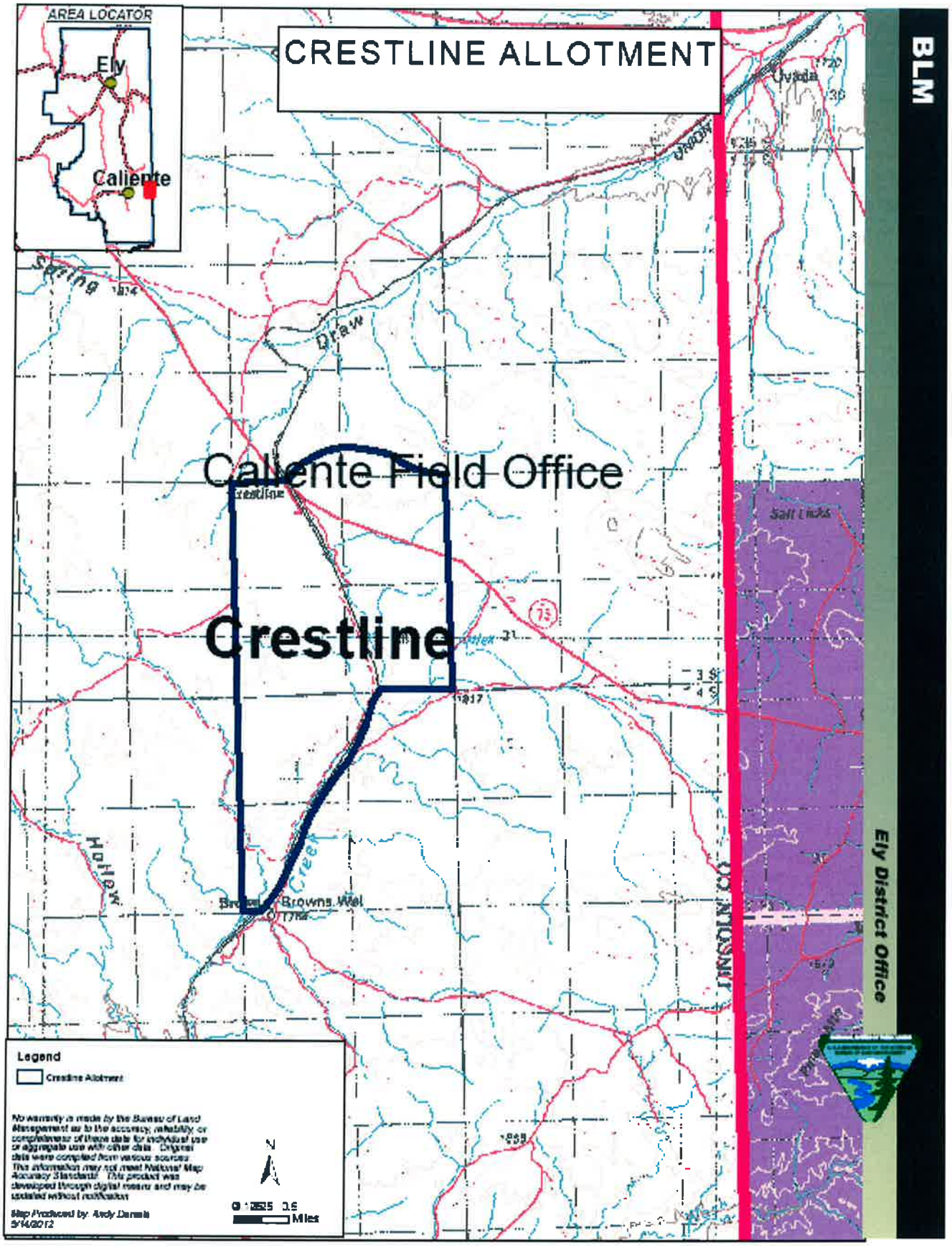
APPENDIX I

(EA)

MAPS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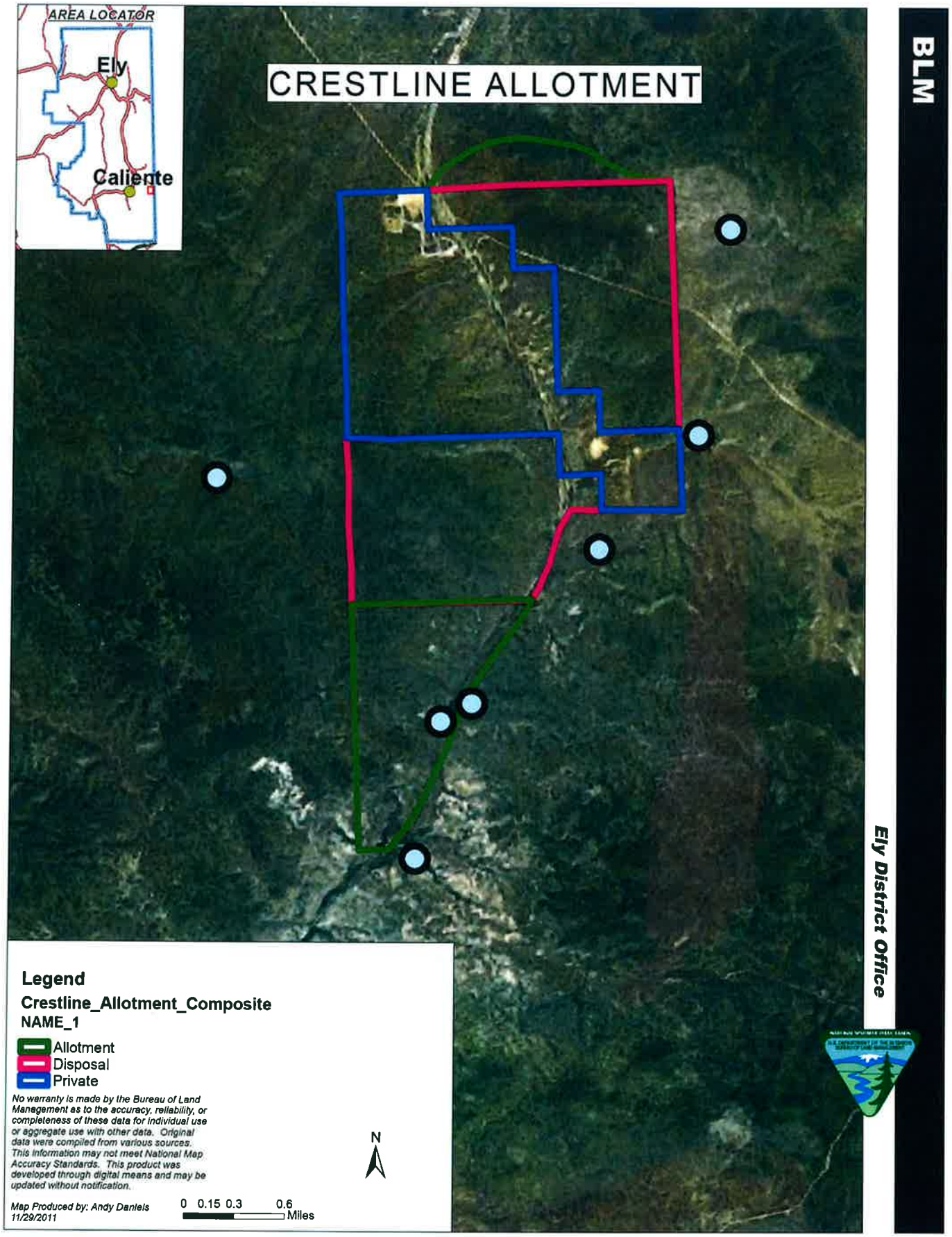
Ely District Office
Salt Licks
Browns Wel
Legend
Crestline Allotment
Miles

Map #1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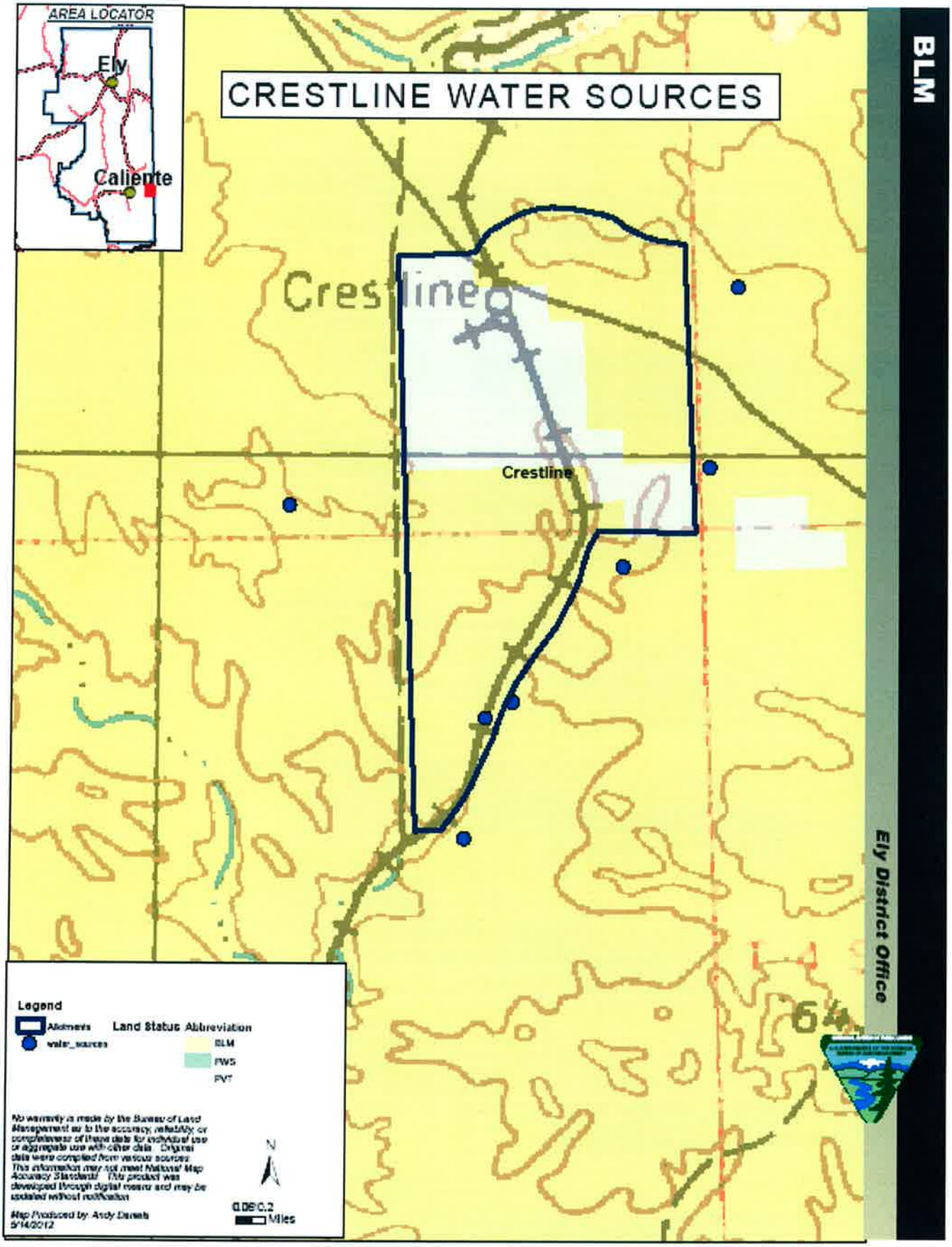
Map #2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BLM
Ely District Office
64
Legend
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Land Status Abbreviation
BLM
FWS
PVT
No warranty is made by the Bureau of Land Management as to the accuracy, reliability or completeness of these data for individual use or aggregate use with other data. Original data were compiled from various sources. This information may not meet National Map Accuracy Standards. This product was developed through digital means and may be updated without notification.
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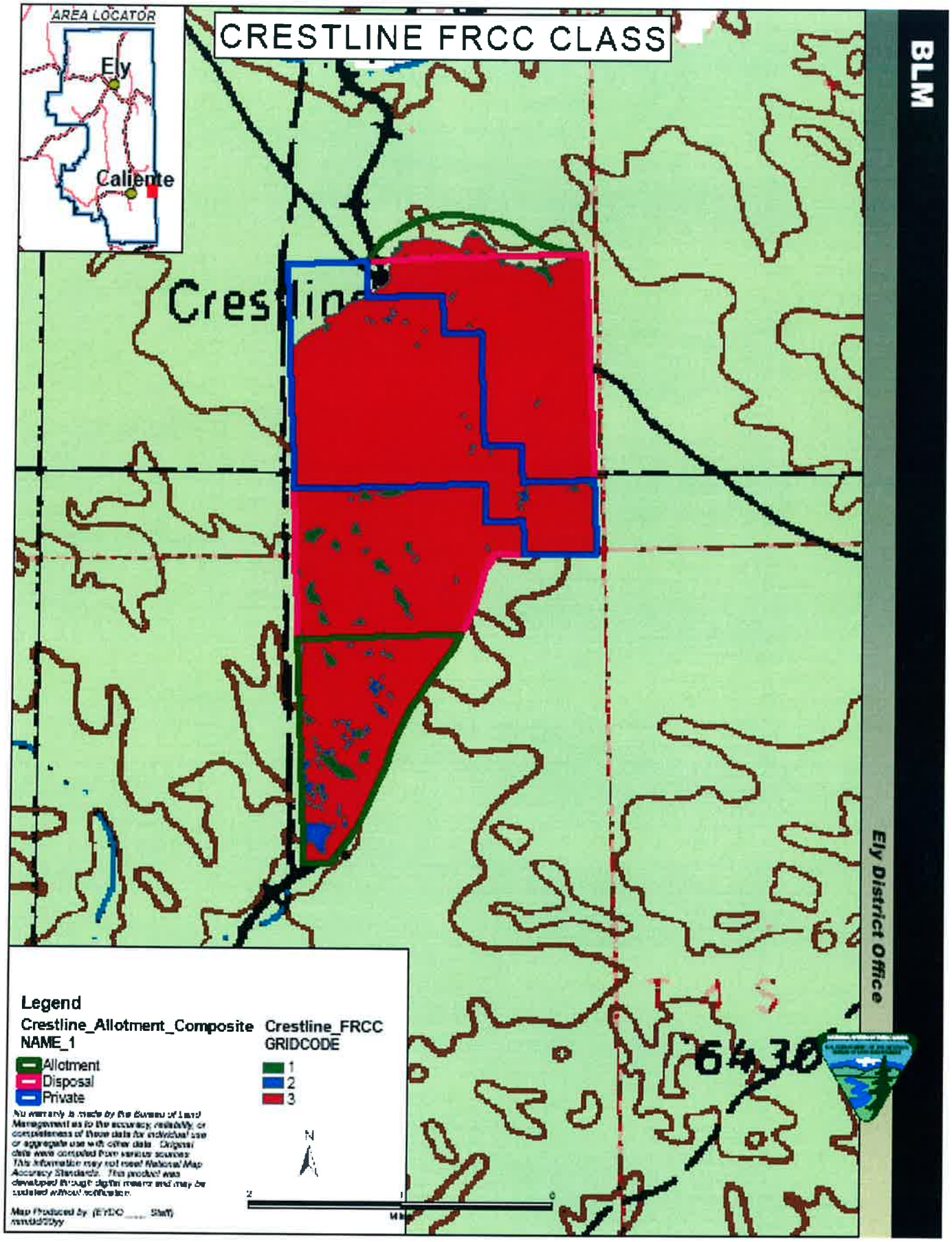
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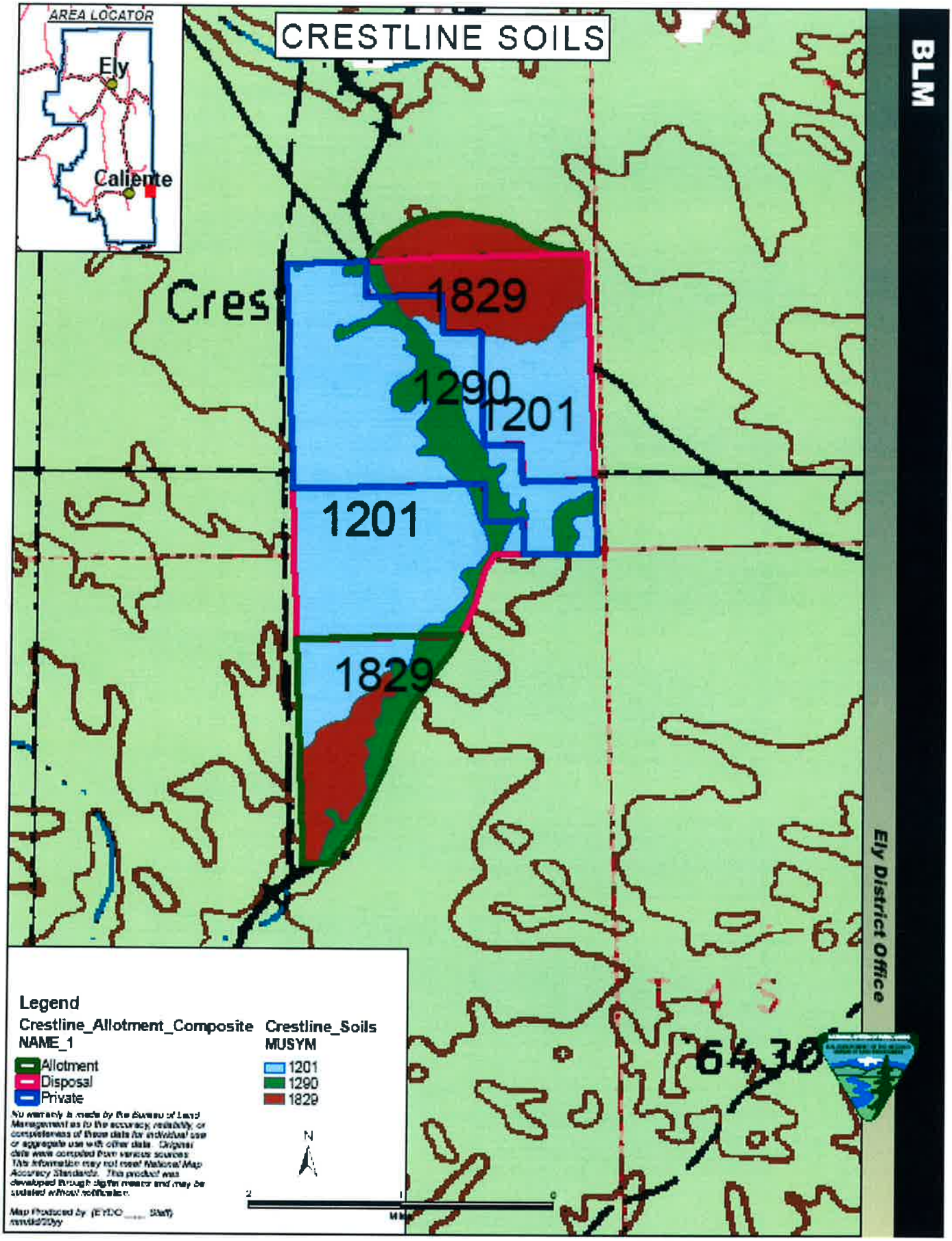
Map #4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Allotment
Disposal
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Crestline_Soils
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6430

Map #5

APPENDIX II
(EA)

STANDARDS DETERMINATION DOCUMENT

STANDARDS DETERMINATION DOCUMENT

Permit Renewals for Authorization Number 2705099
on the
Crestline Allotment (#11023)

(DOI-BLM-NV-L030-2012-0030-EA)

Standards and Guidelines Assessment

The Mojave-Southern Great Basin Standards and Guidelines for grazing administration were developed by the Mojave-Southern Great Basin Resource Advisory Council (RAC) and approved by the Secretary of the Interior on February 12, 1997.

Standards of rangeland health are expressions of physical and biological conditions required for sustaining rangelands for multiple uses. Guidelines point to management actions related to livestock grazing for achieving the Standards. Guidelines are options that move rangeland conditions toward the multiple use Standards. Guidelines are based on science, best rangeland management practices and public input. Therefore, determination of rangeland health is based upon conformance with these standards. Thus Guidelines indicate the types of grazing methods and practices for achieving the Standards for multiple use, are developed for functional watersheds and implemented at the allotment level.

This Standards Determination document evaluates livestock grazing management and achievement of the Standards and Guidelines for the Crestline Allotment (#11023). It does not evaluate or assess the Standards or Guidelines for Wild Horses and Burros. Publications used in assessing and determining achievement of the Standards include: Ely Record of Decision and Approved Resource Management Plan (RMP) (August 2008); Sampling Vegetation Attributes; National Range and Pasture Handbook published by the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS); Nevada Rangeland Monitoring Handbook; Utilization Studies and Residual Measurements; and Major Land Resource Area (MLRA 29) Rangeland Ecological Site Descriptions. A complete list of references is included at the end of this document. These documents are available for public review at the Caliente Field Office during business hours.

One key area was established (KA-1), within the allotment, by an interdisciplinary team during the 2011 grazing year (3/1 – 2/28), (Appendix A, Map 2). The key area was chosen based not only on its representation of the major soil mapping unit, and associated plant community, occurring within the allotment; but, also with respect to the criteria for selecting key areas as explained in the 2006 Nevada Rangeland Monitoring Handbook. Cover data were obtained at KA-1, during said grazing year, using the Line Intercept Method. This method is described in Sampling Vegetation Attributes (USDI-BLM et. al., 1996).

Rangeland monitoring data and professional observations were used to assess achievement of the Standards and conformance with the Guidelines.

The Crestline Allotment

The Crestline allotment is a land based allotment consisting of approximately 2,415 acres of public land, and is located approximately 18 miles southeast of Panaca, Nevada in Lincoln County. Approximately 1,300 areas of private are located within the central portion of the allotment (Appendix A, Map 1).

There is one permittee on the allotment (#2705099). The following reflects the current term grazing permit:

ALLOTMENT			LIVESTOCK		GRAZING PERIOD			AUMs		
Name	Number	Authorization Num.	* Number	Kind	Begin	End	** % Public Land	Active Use	Hist. Susp. Use	Permitted Use
Crestline	11023	#2705099	5	C	3/1	2/28	90	55	485	540

* These numbers are approximate

** This is for billing purposes only.

A majority of the allotment is dominated by single-leaf pinyon (*Pinus monophylla*) and Utah juniper (*Juniperus osteosperma*). According to the recently completed Meadow Valley Wash soil survey by the NRCS, field observations indicate that the allotment is composed of pinyon/juniper invaded rangelands. Nevertheless, a shrub/forb/grass understory exists in a patchy network within the allotment. Pinyon-juniper understory varies from little to no vegetation with possible pavement under denser tree canopies to various types of shrubs, forbs and grasses under the less dense canopies.

In the central portion of the allotment, a 700 acre juniper treatment project was implemented in 1958, whereby the area was chained and subsequently seeded with crested wheatgrass (*Agropyron cristatum*) (Appendix A, Map #2). But the effects of this treatment are no longer present, and the plant community is becoming repopulated with pinyon/juniper trees with little to no understory as a result.

Multiple land uses occur on both private and public lands in the allotment, some of which influence grazing operations as well as ecological processes. The Union Pacific Railroad (UPRR) and associated fenced right-of-way traverses through the allotment in a general north/south direction. This impedes animal movement, and inadvertently divides the allotment into east and west pastures (Appendix A, Map 2). Private land, within the allotment, is used for farming. This includes a pivot irrigation system and some dry-land pasture.

The portion of the allotment west of the UPRR tracks is not currently grazed due to the lack of water. Consequently, grazing is limited to the portion of the allotment east of the UPRR. Water in this portion of the allotment is infrequently available in Lafes Reservoir, which lies near the shared boundary of the Crestline and Enterprise allotments, approximately .2 mile south of the southeast corner of the private lands.

A reservoir is also located near the southern tip of the allotment. However, it rarely contains water and any water it does receive is lost in a very short time, presumably due to the high permeability of the reservoir bottom. Therefore, it is an extremely unreliable water source.

The most reliable water source on the allotment occurs on the private farmland where it is provided by overflow from irrigation. Consequently, it is the source used most of the time. Therefore, most of the livestock grazing occurs on the private land, whereby the land owners are capable of providing a significant amount of both, forage and water.

Neither the allotment nor any of its portions are located within a Wild Horse Herd Management Area (HMA), Wilderness or Wilderness Study Area, or within desert tortoise habitat. There are no known riparian areas located within the allotment on public lands. Sage grouse is not known to occur on the allotment.

However, prior to the completion of the Ely District Resource Management Plan (RMP) in August 2008, the west portion of the allotment was contiguous to the Miller Flat HMA. Consequently, the portion of the allotment, west of the Union Pacific Railroad tracks, received significant horse use. However, with the completion of the RMP, the area once known as the Miller Flat HMA no longer receives such designation. Even so, the allotment will continue to receive wild horse use until such time that the wild horses can be removed as directed in the RMP (RMP, WH-5, p. 47).

The Crestline allotment falls within 10-15 inches of annual precipitation range. The precipitation data (Appendix B) collected at the Crossroads and Enterprise rain gage locations, show an average of 10.8 - 11.7 inches annually for the last 12 years (2000-2011). There are several months each year where precipitation data cannot be collected due to road conditions; otherwise, this value may be higher.

Table 1 in Appendix B displays annual livestock grazing use for authorization #2705099 on the Crestline Allotment - as AUMs Licensed Each Year; and, Total AUMs Licensed Each Year as a Percent of the Total Active Use - from March 1, 2000 through February 28, 2011 (12 years).

As the table indicates during the 12 year time span, the total AUMs licensed each year on allotment as a percent of the total active use, ranged from 67% in 2007 to 82% in 2008, with the permittee taking nonuse for 8 of the 12 years indicated. This indicates that the allotment has received very little use over the past 12 years.

As a result of the aforementioned, the public land within the allotment receives less overall grazing use, during the course of any given grazing year, than the private land. When the permittee does use the allotment, he generally grazes the public land located north of the private land within which KA-1 is located.

Part 1. Standard Conformance Review

STANDARD 1. SOILS:

"Watershed soils and stream banks should have adequate stability to resist accelerated erosion, maintain soil productivity, and sustain the hydrologic cycle."

Soil indicators:
- Ground cover (vegetation, litter, rock, bare ground);
- Surfaces (e.g., biological crusts, pavement); and
- Compaction/infiltration.

Riparian soil indicators:
- Stream bank stability.

All of the above indicators are appropriate to the potential of the ecological site.

Determination:

X **Achieving the Standard**

☐ Not achieving the Standard, but making significant progress towards meeting the Standard.

☐ Not achieving the Standard, not making significant progress towards meeting the Standard.

Causal Factors:

☐ Livestock are a contributing factor to not meeting the standard.

☐ Livestock are not a contributing factor to not meeting the standard.

☐ Failure to meet the standard is related to other issues or conditions.

Guidelines Conformance:

X **In conformance with the Guidelines**

☐ Not in conformance with the Guidelines

Soil Mapping Units and corresponding Rangeland Ecological Site Descriptions, as determined by the NRCS recently completed Meadow Valley Wash soil survey, were used to determine the ecological sites within the allotment. According to the survey, three predominant range sites are found within the allotment. The following describes the soil characteristics of these range sites:

KA-1

Range Site 029XY029NV (soil mapping unit 1201)

Loamy 10-12" P.Z. Wyoming Big Sagebrush (*Artemisia tridentata Wyomingensis*) / Needleandthread (*Hesperostipa comata*) - Indian Ricegrass (*Achnatherum hymenoides*).

This Range Site occupies a majority of the public lands within the allotment. The soils of this site are moderately deep to deep and moderately well to well drained. Surface soils are moderately fine to medium textured and normally more than 10 inches thick to the subsoil or

underlying material. The available water capacity is low to moderate and some soils are modified with high volumes of rock fragments through the soil profile. In some soils there will be a slight or moderate concentration of salts and sodium accumulation in the lower subsoil. Runoff is slow to moderate.

The following table shows a comparison summary of cover data, collected at KA-1, on the Crestline Allotment, to the potential natural community (PNC) cover value for the applicable range site.

Key Area	Range Site	Associated Vegetation Type	% Cover Collected at Key Area	% Cover at PNC In Applicable Rangeland Site Description
KA – 1	* 029XY029NV	ARTR2 / HECO26-ACHY (Loamy 10-12" P.Z.)	35%	15% – 25%

* Based upon Soil Mapping Units as provided by the Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS) along with ground reconnaissance.

Conclusion: *Standard 1 Achieved*

According to the site description, potential ground cover (basal and crown) should range between 15% – 25%. As the above table shows, the cover value derived from the line intercept method exceeds this range.

Professional field observations within the allotment, including the chaining/seeding, have substantiated that soils were stable, native plants were not pedestalled and there were no signs of soil compaction. This indicates that the allotment has sufficient vegetative cover to maintain stability and to resist accelerated erosion, maintain soil productivity and, thus, sustain the hydrologic cycle. It further indicates that there is minimal wind and/or water erosion of topsoil, and apparent appropriate infiltration of water from snowmelt and rainfall. In addition, the cobbly/gravelly/stony soil characteristics described above further contribute to soil protection.

STANDARD 2 ECOSYSTEM COMPONENTS:

"Watersheds should possess the necessary ecological components to achieve state water quality criteria, maintain ecological processes, and sustain appropriate uses."

"Riparian and wetlands vegetation should have structural and species diversity characteristic of the stage of stream channel succession in order to provide forage and cover, capture sediment, and capture, retain, and safely release water (watershed function)."

Upland indicators:

- Canopy and ground cover, including litter, live vegetation, biological crust, and rock appropriate to the potential of the ecological site.
- Ecological processes are adequate for the vegetative communities.

Riparian indicators:

- Stream side riparian areas are functioning properly when adequate vegetation, large woody debris, or rock is present to dissipate stream energy associated with high water flows.
- Elements indicating proper functioning condition such as avoiding acceleration erosion, capturing sediment, and providing for groundwater recharge and release are determined by the following measurements as appropriate to the site characteristics:

  - Width/Depth ratio;
  - Channel roughness;
  - Sinuosity of stream channel;
  - Bank stability;
  - Vegetative cover (amount, spacing, life form); and
  - Other cover (large woody debris, rock).

- Natural springs, seeps, and marsh areas are functioning properly when adequate vegetation is present to facilitate water retention, filtering, and release as indicated by plant species and cover appropriate to the site characteristics.

Water quality indicators:

- Chemical, physical and biological constituents do not exceed the state water quality standards.

The above indicators shall be applied to the potential of the ecological site.

Determination:

X **Achieving the Standard**

☐ Not achieving the Standard, but making significant progress towards meeting the Standard.

☐ Not achieving the Standard, not making significant progress towards meeting the Standard.

Causal Factors:

☐ Livestock are a contributing factor to not meeting the standard.

☐ Livestock are not a contributing factor to not meeting the standard.

☐ Failure to meet the standard is related to other issues or conditions.

Guidelines Conformance:

X **In conformance with the Guidelines**

☐ Not in conformance with the Guidelines

Conclusion: *Standard 2*

Upland Ecosystem Components – *Achieved*
Riparian Habitat Components – *Not Applicable*

Uplands

Data and field observations relating to soils, hydrologic processes, canopy and ground cover (including litter and rock) were discussed in Standard I which was achieved. Observed live vegetation species are discussed in Standard 3.

The regional topography of the allotment is composed of a drainage basin bordered by rising piedmont slopes and rock pediments on the north, east, and south borders of the allotment. The topography leads to the development of washes and flood plains drawing rain run-off in a westerly direction. The overall topography of the allotment aids in the deposition of soils encouraging healthy sagebrush, grass communities, and stable soils.

Vegetative and ground cover in the form of woody debris and rock effectively protects the soils in the Crestline allotment. A variety of vegetation exists within the allotment, and are listed in the table under Standard 3. Soil factors such as gravels and cobbles influence the water uptake rates throughout the soil profile, reducing the water capacity and aiding in draining. Understory vegetation also adds to the porosity of the soil surface and aids in drainage.

Biological crusts were observed in variable amounts throughout the allotment. These living organisms play a key role in the fixation of nitrogen while protecting the soils from erosion particularly where gravels do not occur on the surface. Very little cheatgrass was noted on the allotment.

Riparian

There are no known riparian areas found on public lands within the Crestline Allotment.

STANDARD 3 HABITAT AND BIOTA:

"Habitats and watersheds should sustain a level of biodiversity appropriate for the area and conducive to appropriate uses. Habitats of special status species should be able to sustain viable populations of those species."

Habitat indicators:

- Vegetation composition (relative abundance of species);
- Vegetation structure (life forms, cover, height, and age classes);
- Vegetation distribution (patchiness, corridors);
- Vegetation productivity; and
- Vegetation nutritional value.

Wildlife indicators:

- Escape terrain;
- Relative abundance;
- Composition;
- Distribution;
- Nutritional value; and
- Edge-patch snags.

The above indicators shall be applied to the potential of the ecological site.

Determination:
X Achieving the Standard
□ Not Achieving the Standard, but making significant progress towards achieving
□ Not Achieving the Standard, and not making significant progress toward standard

Causal Factors
□ Livestock are a contributing factor to not achieving the standard.
□ Livestock are not a contributing factor to not achieving the standard
□ Failure to meet the standard is related to other issues or conditions

Guidelines Conformance:
X **In conformance with the Guidelines**
□ Not in conformance with the Guidelines

Although the data in the following table are not comprehensive and additional species not listed here may be present, general field observations revealed that two different species of trees exist within the allotment. Observations also showed that, at least, seven perennial species of native shrubs; ten perennial species of grasses; and, a variety of perennial and annual forb species exist within the allotment.

The following displays these observations:

Trees	Shrubs	Forbs	Grasses
pinyon (*Pinus monophylla*)	Wyoming big sagebrush (*Artemisia tridentata wyomingensis*)	Globemallow (*Sphaeralcea ambigua*)	needleandthread (*Hesperostipa comata*)
juniper (*Juniperus osteosperma*)	big sagebrush (*Artemisia tridentata*)	Nevada buckwheat (*Eriogonum deflexum*)	bottlebrush squirreltail (*Elymus elymoides*)
	black sagebrush (*Artemisia nova*)	Palmer penstemon (*Penstemon palmeri*)	bluebunch wheatgrass (*Pseudoroegneria spicata*)
	little sagebrush (*Artemisia arbuscula*)	single stem buckwheat (*Eriogonum acaule*)	western wheatgrass (*Pascopyrum smithii*)
	antelope bitterbrush (*Purshia tridentada*)	gilia (*gilia spp.*)	Indian ricegrass (*Achnatherum hymenoides*)
	cliffrose (*Purshia stansburiana*)	broom snakeweed (*Gutierrezia sarothrae*)	blue grama (*Bouteloua gracilis*)

	Nevada ephedra (*Ephedra nevadensis*)	mountain phlox (*Phlox austromontana*)	purple threeawn (*Aristida purpurea*)
		Utah penstemon (*Penstemon utahensis*)	crested wheatgrass (*Agropyron cristatum*)
		Penstemon (*Penstemon spp.*)	Thurber's needlegrass (*Achnatherum thurberianum*)
			muttongrass (*Poa fendleriana*)

Conclusion: *Standard 3 Achieved*

Habitat indicators for the Standard refer to vegetative composition, structure, distribution, productivity, and nutritional value. Vegetative conditions on the Crestline allotment based on the present canopy and understory, particularly in the sagebrush communities, suitably reflect these attributes.

Field observations revealed a diversity of various vegetation types that are distributed in a patchy nature across the landscape within the allotment. Observations also indicate that species composition, for each occurring range site, is appropriate throughout the allotment. This indicates productive and functional plant communities with suitable structure and distribution.

A fairly diverse herbaceous understory and interspatial vegetative components, over a majority of the allotment, indicate a productive and functional understory while serving to provide a variable forage base to support a diverse biota. Antelope bitterbrush, Nevada ephedra and the grasses listed in the above table are known to be nutritious, palatable plant species for livestock and/or wildlife.

The allotment provides habitat and appears to be used as a travel corridor for mule deer and elk. Evidence of mule deer and elk use and occupation was seen throughout the allotment and in the neighboring areas. The sagebrush areas not only provide year round forage and cover, but the trees and topography provide important yearlong escape cover and thermal protection for a variety of wildlife species, including big game.

The advent of cheatgrass, as a major ecological problem in the western states, has prompted BLM to become aware and improve management of it in the sagebrush ecosystem. However, field observations indicate very little cheatgrass within the allotment.

Generally speaking, the habitats within the allotment, of the species mentioned, are appropriate and suitable based on the vegetative structure, composition, distribution, and productivity, given the site potential. Other features such as escape terrain, thermal cover, perching and nesting habitat, from both short and tall statured woody species, are all desirable. The allotment offers habitat for small mammals, and assorted numerous songbirds and raptors. Lizards and snakes comprise the reptilian population and are abundant based on the number of burrows observed.

Based on the existing conditions, as described, the standard for Habitat and Biota is determined to be achieved on the allotment.

PART 2. ARE LIVESTOCK A CONTRIBUTING FACTOR TO NOT MEETING THE STANDARDS?

All applicable Standards are being achieved.

PART 3. GUIDELINE CONFORMANCE REVIEW AND SUMMARY

Based on a review of the monitoring data, grazing is in conformance with all applicable Guidelines as provided in the Mojave-Southern Great Basin Standards and Guidelines.

It should be noted that permittees proactively adjust grazing based on available forage and water availability. Although currently achieving Standards, range improvement projects including water improvements to distribute grazing within the allotment may be considered, on a case by case basis, to help with maintaining the achievement of these standards.

PART 4. MANAGEMENT PRACTICES TO CONFORM WITH GUIDELINES AND ACHIEVE STANDARDS

Maintain the full Active Use and Season of Use as stated in the current term permit. However, the authorization of the current total Active AUMs, during any given year, would be based on annual forage availability; and the terms and conditions and Best Management Practices included in the new term permit.

Grazing management on the Crestline allotment already conforms to the Guidelines. All three of the Standards have been achieved on the allotment.

Incorporate the following Term and Condition (Best Management Practice) into the Term Grazing Permit:

1. Allowable Use Levels on current year's growth of upland vegetation (grasses, forbs and shrubs) within the Crestline Allotment, during the authorized grazing use period, will not exceed 45%.

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Specialists:

Alicia Styles – Wildlife Biologist — Date: 9/26/12

Clinton Wertz – Soil, Water & Air Quality, Floodplains & Riparian — Date: 9-28-12

Cameron Boyce – Noxious and Invasive Weeds — Date: 9/26/12

Prepared by:

Daniel Condie – Rangeland Management Specialist — Date: 9-28-12

Reviewed by:

Chris Mayer – Supervisory Rangeland Management Specialist — Date

I concur:

Victoria Barr – Caliente Field Manager — Date: 9/28/12

Specialists:

Alicia Styles – Wildlife Biologist _____ Date

Clinton Wertz – Soil, Water & Air Quality, Floodplains & Riparian _____ Date

Cameron Boyce – Noxious and Invasive Weeds _____ Date

Prepared by:

Daniel Condie – Rangeland Management Specialist _____ Date

Reviewed by:

Chris Mayer – Supervisory Rangeland Management Specialist 9/28/2012 Date

I concur:

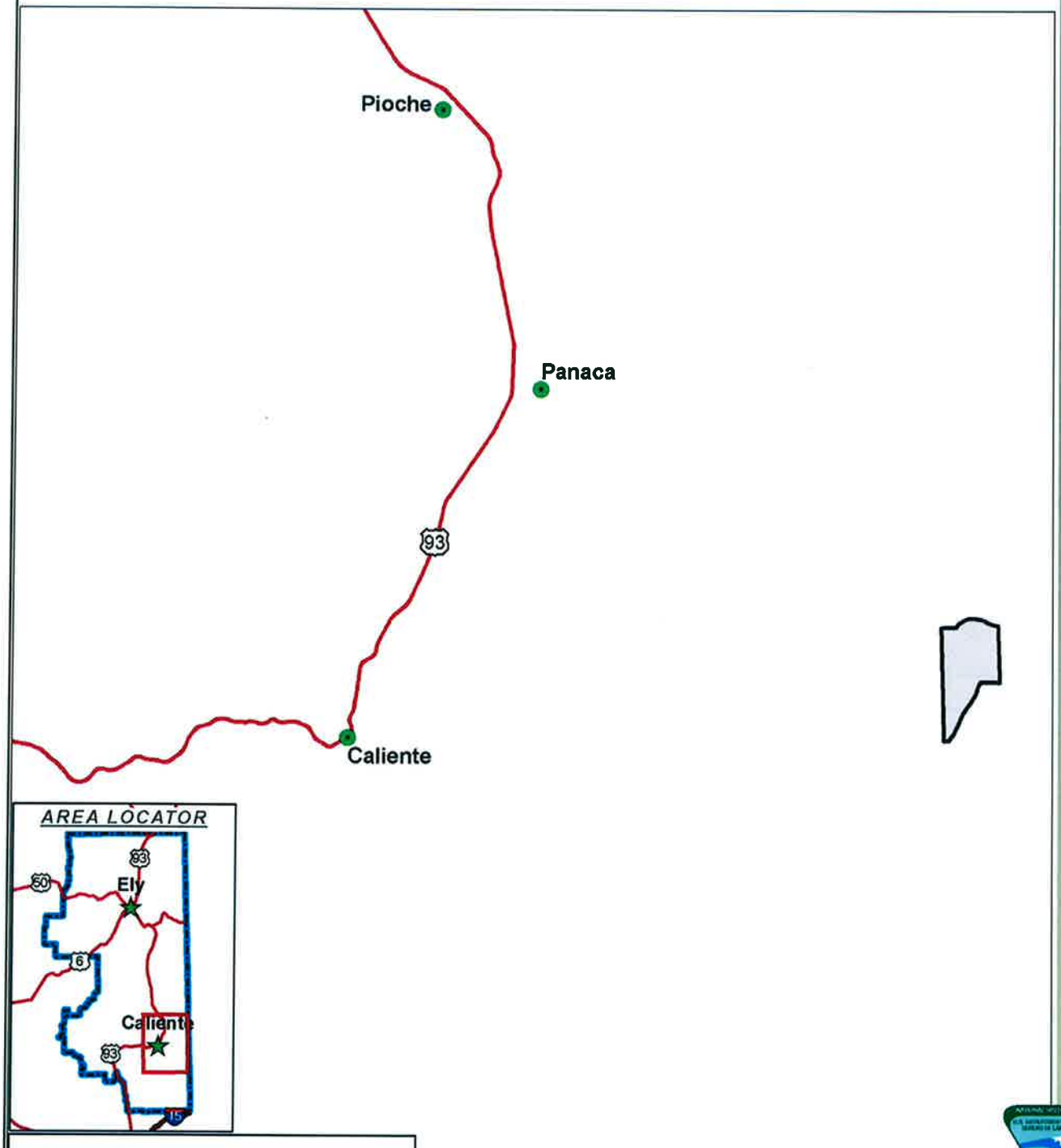
Victoria Barr – Caliente Field Manager _____ Date

APPENDIX A
(Standards Determination Document)

MAPS

MAP #1

Location of the Crestline Allotment (#11023)
with Respect to the Surrounding Towns.



No warranty is made by the Bureau of Land Management as to the accuracy, reliability or completeness of these data for individual use or aggregate use with other data.

Map Produced by: Domenic A. Bolognani on 10/2/2012

N

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Miles

LEGEND

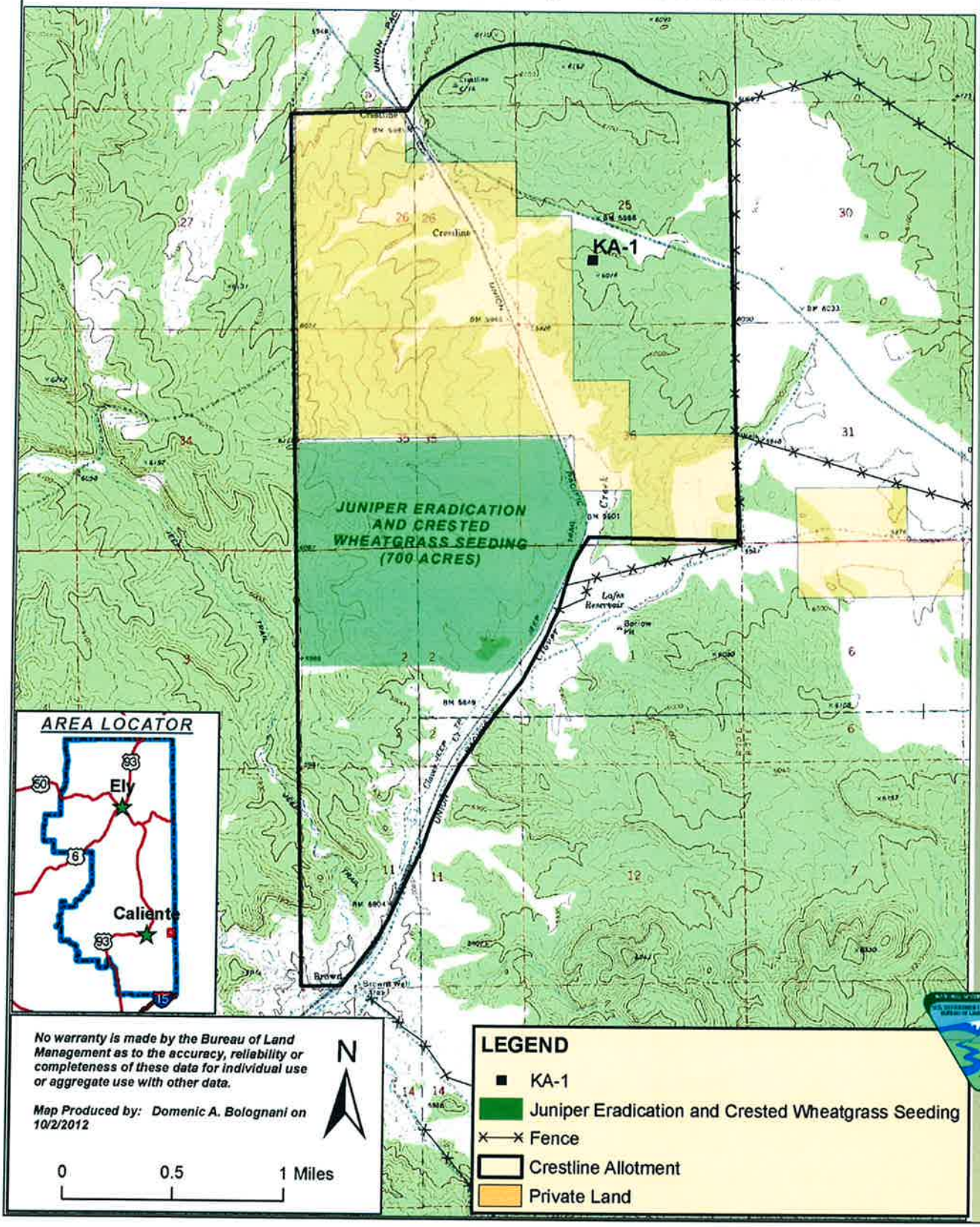
- Cities & Towns
- Crestline Allotment

BLM

Ely District Office

MAP #2

Map of the Crestline Allotment (#11023) Showing the Key Area; Existing Fencing; Private Land within the Allotment; the Union Pacific Railroad; and the Juniper Eradication/Crested Wheatgrass Seeding Completed in 1978.



BLM

Ely District Office

APPENDIX B

(Standards Determination Document)

Precipitation Data

Precipitation Data

The Crossroads rain gage is located approximately four and one-half miles south of the Crestline allotment and is similar in topography and elevation to the allotment. The Enterprise rain gage is located six and one-half miles southwest of the Crestline allotment and is also similar in topography and elevation.

Precipitation data for the past 12 years (2000-2011) was used in determining average precipitation values at the rain gage locations. The data showed an average precipitation amount of 10.86 inches and 11.73 inches at the Crossroads and Enterprise rain gages, respectively. It should be noted that 2002 was a drought year.

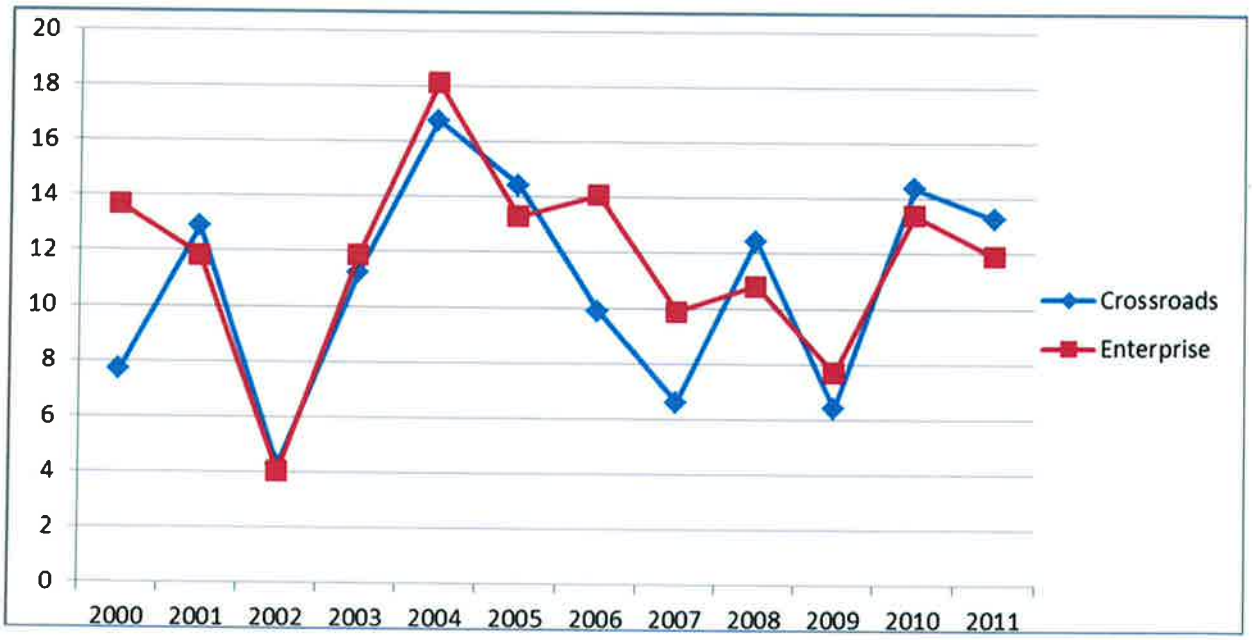


Table 1. Annual Livestock Grazing Use for authorization #2705099 on the Crestline Allotment - as AUMs Licensed Each Year; and, Total AUMs Licensed Each Year as a Percent of the Total Active Use - from March 1, 2000 through February 28, 2011 (12 years).

Current Term Grazing Permit Information - - - - - - - - - - - - - - Season of Use/Active Use	Grazing Year (3/1 – 2/28)	Total AUMs Licensed Each Year	AUMs Licensed Each Year as % of Total Active Use
Crestline Allotment Season of Use = Yearlong (3/1 – 2/28) Total Active Use = 55 AUMs	2000	Nonuse	----
	2001	Nonuse	----
	2002	Nonuse	----
	2003	Nonuse	----
	2004	Nonuse	----
	2005	Nonuse	----
	2006	Nonuse	----
	2007	37	67%
	2008	45	82%
	2009	42	76%

	2010	34	62%
	2011	Nonuse	----
			Average = 71.75%

APPENDIX III

(EA)

Wildlife Species List

Wildlife & Plants for Crestline TPR 11/4/09

Highlighted species are BLM Sensitive Species in Nevada.

Wildlife and plant species from Ely RMP, NV Natural Heritage Data, and NDOW Diversity Data:

Mule deer (*Odocoileus hemionus*) general habitat
Elk (*Cervus elaphus*) general habitat
Pronghorn (*Antelocapra americana*) general habitat

The project would occur within NDOW Hunt Units 242. The project is the Crestline grazing allotment.

The following data reflect survey blocks and/or incidental sightings of bird species in or near the project area from the Atlas of the Breeding Birds of Nevada (Floyd et al. 2007) and NDOW Diversity Data. These data represent birds that were confirmed, probably, or possibly breeding within or near the project area. These data are not comprehensive, and additional species not listed here may be present. No survey blocks or incidental sightings occur within the project area. Survey blocks with similar vegetation as this area contained the following bird species:

Turkey Vulture (*Cathartes aura*)
Ash-throated Flycatcher (*Myiarchus cinerascens*)
American Kestrel (*Falco sparverius*)
Mourning Dove (*Zenaida maacroura*)
Common Nighthawk (*Chordeiles minor*)
Say's Phoebe (*Sayornis saya*)
Pinyon Jay (*Gymnorhinus cyanocephalus*)
Mountain Bluebird (*Sialia currucoides*)
Northern Mockingbird (*Mimus polyglottos*)
Lazuli Bunting (*Passerina cyanea*)
Black-throated Sparrow (*Amphispiza bilineata*)
Western Meadowlark (*Sturnella neglecta*)
Western Kingbird (*Tyrannus verticalis*)
Western Scrub-jay (*Aphelocoma californica*)
Bushtit (*Psaltriparus minimus*)
Rock Wren (*Salpinctes obsoletus*)
Lark Sparrow (*Chondestes grammacus*)
Spotted Towhee (*Pipilo maculatus*)
Brewer's Sparrow (*Spizella breweri*)
Gray Vireo (*Vireo vicinior*)
Brown-headed Cowbird (*Molothrus ater*)
Chipping Sparrow (*Spizella passerina*)
Common Raven (*Corvus corax*)
Gray Flycatcher (*Empidonax wrightii*)
Northern Flicker (*Colaptes auratus*)
House Wren (*Troglodytes aedon*)
House Finch (*Carpodacus mexicanus*)

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APPENDIX IV

(EA)

Weed Risk Assessment

RISK ASSESSMENT FOR NOXIOUS & INVASIVE WEEDS

Term Grazing Permit Renewal for Authorization #2705099 on the Crestline Allotment (#11023)

Lincoln County, Nevada

On January 6, 2012, a Noxious & Invasive Weed Risk Assessment was completed for the term grazing permit renewal for the Crestline allotment in Lincoln County, NV.

The proposal is to fully process the renewal of the grazing permit for Authorization #2705099 on the Crestline Allotment (#11023). The allotment is located 18 miles southeast of Panaca, Nevada. The Crestline Allotment encompasses 2,415 acres of BLM managed lands.

The Proposed Action is to maintain the current Active Use with any grazing authorization being based on annual forage availability. The following Best Management Practices would be added to the Term Grazing Permit:

1. Allowable Use Levels on current year's growth of upland vegetation (grasses, forbs and shrubs) within the Crestline Allotment - during the authorized grazing use period - would not exceed 45%.

The following reflects the current term grazing permit for Mr. Gardner:

ALLOTMENT		Authorization Num.	LIVESTOCK		GRAZING PERIOD		** % Public Land	AUMs		
Name	Number		* Number	Kind	Begin	End		Active Use	Hist. Susp. Use	Permitted Use
Crestline	11023	#2705099	5	C	3/1	2/28	100	55	485	540

* These numbers are approximate
** This is for billing purposes only.

The issuance of the term permit would be for a period of up to 10 years.

No field weed surveys were completed for this project. Instead, the Ely District 2009 weed inventory data was consulted (Map 1). The following species are found within the boundaries of the Crestline allotment either along the Crestline road or the Union Pacific Railroad right-of-way:

Lepidium draba Hoary cress

The following species are found proximal to the Crestline Allotment:

Cirsium vulgare Bull thistle
Onopordum acanthium Scotch thistle

It should be noted that the Crestline allotment boundary is near the boundary with Utah and no weed inventory data for Utah is available. While not officially documented, the following non-native invasive weeds probably occur in or around the allotment, cheatgrass (*Bromus tectorum*), horehound (*Marrubium vulgare*), and Russian thistle (*Salsola kali*).

Factor 1 assesses the likelihood of noxious/invasive weed species spreading to the project area.

None (0)	Noxious/invasive weed species are not located within or adjacent to the project area. Project activity is not likely to result in the establishment of noxious/invasive weed species in the project area.
Low (1-3)	Noxious/invasive weed species are present in the areas adjacent to but not within the project area. Project activities can be implemented and prevent the spread of noxious/invasive weeds into the project area.
Moderate (4-7)	Noxious/invasive weed species located immediately adjacent to or within the project area. Project activities are likely to result in some areas becoming infested with noxious/invasive weed species even when preventative management actions are followed. Control measures are essential to prevent the spread of noxious/invasive weeds within the project area.
High (8-10)	Heavy infestations of noxious/invasive weeds are located within or immediately adjacent to the project area. Project activities, even with preventative management actions, are likely to result in the establishment and spread of noxious/invasive weeds on disturbed sites throughout much of the project area.

For this project, the factor rates as Moderate (4) at the present time. The proposed action could increase the populations of the noxious and invasive weeds already within the allotment and could aid in the introduction of weeds from surrounding areas. Within the allotment, watering and salt block sites are of particular concern of new weed infestations due to the concentration of livestock around those sites and the amount of ground disturbance associated with that. However, the proposed action would also increase the human presence in the area and the likelihood of weed detection.

Factor 2 assesses the consequences of noxious/invasive weed establishment in the project area.

Low to Nonexistent (1-3)	None. No cumulative effects expected.
Moderate (4-7)	Possible adverse effects on site and possible expansion of infestation within the project area. Cumulative effects on native plant communities are likely but limited.
High (8-10)	Obvious adverse effects within the project area and probable expansion of noxious/invasive weed

	infestations to areas outside the project area. Adverse cumulative effects on native plant communities are probable.

This project rates as High (8) at the present time. If new weed infestations establish within the allotment this could have an adverse impact those native plant communities since the allotment is currently considered to be mostly weed-free. Also, any increase of cheatgrass could alter the fire regime in the area.

The Risk Rating is obtained by multiplying Factor 1 by Factor 2.

None (0)	Proceed as planned.
Low (1-10)	Proceed as planned. Initiate control treatment on noxious/invasive weed populations that get established in the area.
Moderate (11-49)	Develop preventative management measures for the proposed project to reduce the risk of introduction of spread of noxious/invasive weeds into the area. Preventative management measures should include modifying the project to include seeding the area to occupy disturbed sites with desirable species. Monitor the area for at least 3 consecutive years and provide for control of newly established populations of noxious/invasive weeds and follow-up treatment for previously treated infestations.
High (50-100)	Project must be modified to reduce risk level through preventative management measures, including seeding with desirable species to occupy disturbed site and controlling existing infestations of noxious/invasive weeds prior to project activity. Project must provide at least 5 consecutive years of monitoring. Projects must also provide for control of newly established populations of noxious/invasive weeds and follow-up treatment for previously treated infestations.

For this project, the Risk Rating is Moderate (32). This indicates that the project can proceed as planned as long as the following measures are followed:

- Prior to entering public lands, the BLM will provide information regarding noxious weed management and identification to the permit holders affiliated with the project. The importance of preventing the spread of weeds to uninfested areas and importance of controlling existing populations of weeds will be explained.
- The range specialist for the allotment will include weed detection into project compliance inspection activities. If the spread of noxious weeds is noted, appropriated weed control procedures will be determined in consultation with BLM personnel and will be in compliance with the appropriate BLM handbook sections and applicable laws and regulations.
- To eliminate the introduction of noxious weed seeds, roots, or rhizomes all interim and final seed mixes, hay, straw, hay/straw, or other organic products used for feed or

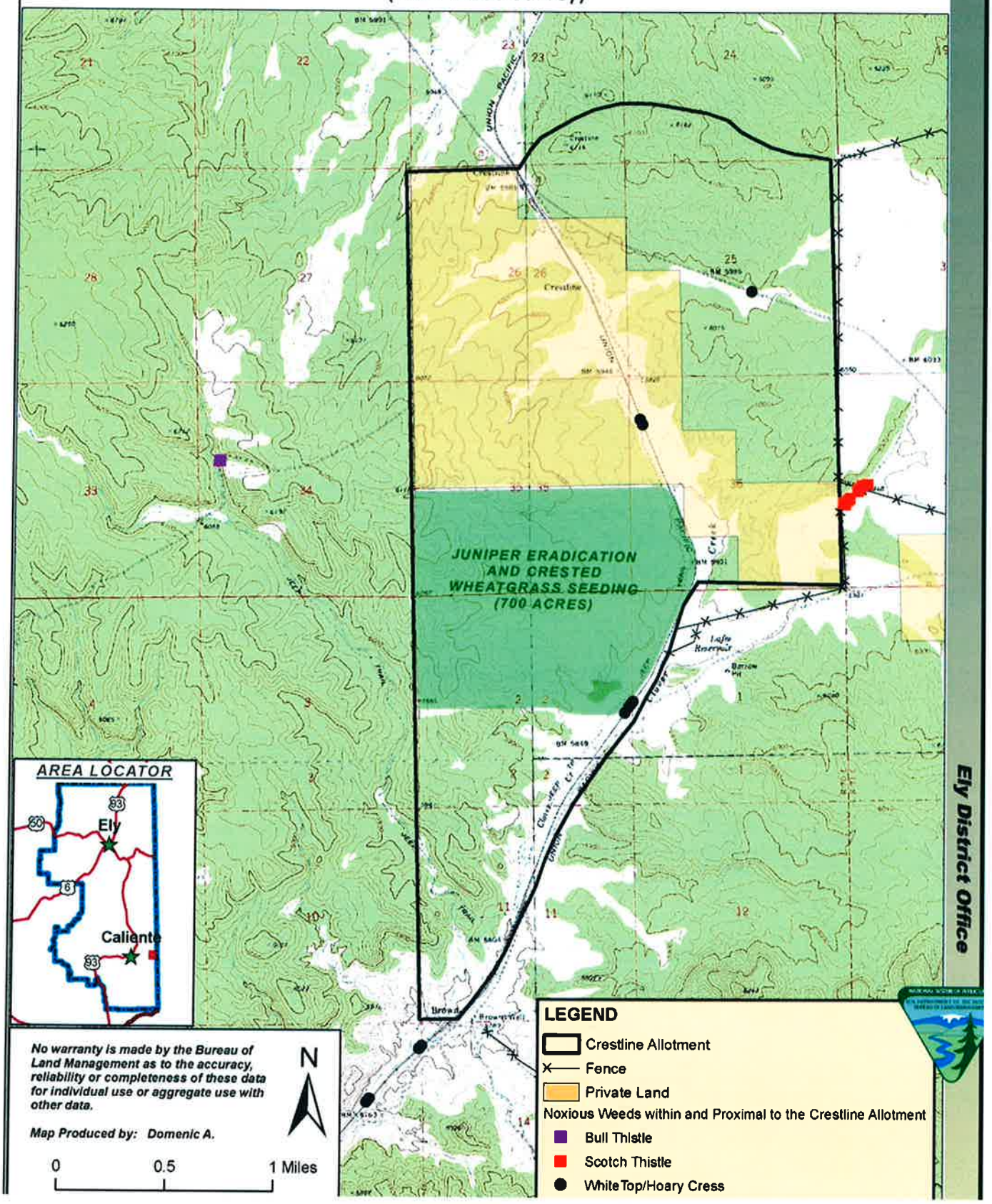
bedding will be certified free of plant species listed on the Nevada noxious weed list or specifically identified by the BLM Ely Field Office.

- Grazing will be conducted in compliance with the Ely District BLM noxious weed schedules. The scheduled procedures can significantly and effectively reduce noxious weed spread or introduction into the project area.
- Any newly established populations of noxious/invasive weeds discovered will be communicated to the Ely District Noxious and Invasive Weeds Coordinator for treatment.

Reviewed by: _____ 9/28/12

Cameron Boyce
Natural Resource Specialist

Date

MAP #1

Noxious Weeds Found within and Proximal to the Crestline Allotment (#11023) (2009 Weed Survey)