

ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

EA Number: DOI-BLM-AZ-C030-2022-0008-EA

Bureau of Land Management, Lake Havasu Field Office
Proposed Action Title/Type: K Lazy B AUM Adjustment
Location of Proposed Action: K Lazy B Allotment, La Paz County, Arizona

CONFORMANCE WITH APPLICABLE LAND USE PLAN:

This proposed action is in conformance with the Yuma Field Office Resource Management Plan approved 2010.

GM-005: Livestock use and associated management practices are conducted in a manner consistent with other multiple-use needs and objectives to ensure that the health of rangeland resources is preserved or improved so that they are productive for all rangeland values. Where needed, improve public rangelands ecosystems to meet objectives.

PURPOSE AND NEED FOR PROPOSED ACTION:

The purpose of the Proposed Action is to adjust the Animal Unit Months (AUMs) associated with the K Lazy B grazing permit to correspond with a change in land ownership that caused a decrease in the public land acreage within the allotment available for livestock grazing. The need for the action is established by the BLM's responsibility to comply with the 43 Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) §4110.4-2 (a)(1) and (2). (a) Where there is a decrease in public land acreage available for livestock grazing within an allotment: (1) Grazing Permits or leases may be cancelled or modified as appropriate to reflect the changed area of use. (2) Permitted use may be cancelled in whole or in part. Cancellations determined by the authorized officer to be necessary to protect the public lands will be apportioned by the authorized officer based upon the level of available forage and the magnitude of the change in public land acreage available, or as agreed to among the authorized users and the authorized officer.

DESCRIPTION OF PROPOSED ACTION

The BLM, Lake Havasu Field Office (LHFO) proposes to adjust the number of permitted AUMs within the K Lazy B Allotment, consistent with 43 CFR §4110.4-2(a)(1) and (2), by reducing the total amount of permitted AUMs as a result of the loss of public lands available for grazing. Currently, the existing permit allows for 1,861 AUMs. The LHFO proposes to adjust the permit proportionally to the reduced available grazing lands. The lands transferred to private ownership, which are no longer part of the K Lazy B Allotment, consist of 5,935 acres. This amount is approximately 4.61% of the total 128,466 K Lazy B Allotment public land acres. By reducing the AUMs of the grazing permit by 4.61%, this would result in a new permitted level of 1,775 AUMs or 86 AUMs less than the current permit; more accurately, the AUMs would be adjusted to 1771 AUMs to round the reduced amount of livestock to 8 head. Using the method of reducing the permitted AUM's proportionally to the lost available lands is a reliable method that meets the current need for the area to allow continued livestock use of this area.

DESCRIPTION OF NO ACTION ALTERNATIVE

The No Action Alternative would allow for the same number of AUMs to remain permitted for the K Lazy B Allotment on less acres of public land.

ALTERNATIVES CONSIDERED BUT ELIMINATED FROM FURTHER ANALYSIS

One alternative considered adjusting the number of permitted AUMs based upon the amount of available forage found within the 5,935 acres removed from public lands. However, this alternative was eliminated from further

analysis.

The LHFO, does not have the appropriate amount of data to determine how much forage production was served within those 5,935 acres. It is possible that the AUMs could be greater or even less in the adjustment needed, however, with a lack of production data there is no accurate determination of the forage production. Information that the LHFO has on this area is that these lands consisted primarily of a creosote/white bursage flats community bisected by numerous shallow, braided washes or drainages/draws. Other species present consist of cacti species and other brush like species in smaller population sizes such as wolfberry (*Lycium andersonii*) and range ratany (*Krameria erecta*). Where water tends to draw, dense stands of catclaw and mesquite can be present. Moisture is received from precipitation without additional inputs from on-site surface flow. The precipitation zone is considered 7-10", however, the average rainfall each year can be much lower at times. The majority of available forage in this area comes from annuals after rainfall periods. Due to a lack of available data to support this approach, this alternative was not carried forward for further analysis.

AFFECTED ENVIRONMENT/ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS:

The BLM is required to consider many authorities when evaluating a federal action. The table below summarizes the resources and uses that have been reviewed by the BLM ID Team to determine whether or not they would be affected by the proposed project and rationale for whether the topic will be carried forward for detailed analysis. Those resources or uses determined not present or present but not affected by the Proposed Action need not be carried forward or discussed further. Resources or uses determined to be present and may be affected may be carried forward in the document if there are issues which necessitate a detailed analysis.

Table 1 Resources and Uses

RESOURCE/USE	PRESENT YES/NO	MAY BE AFFECTED YES/NO	RATIONALE	ANALYZED IN SECTION
Air Quality	Yes	No	Air Quality would not be impacted as there would be no effects from reduced AUMs as proposed in the Proposed Action.	
Areas of Critical Environmental Concern	No	No	There are no Areas of Critical Environmental Concern located within the K Lazy B Allotment.	
Cultural Resources	Yes	No	There would be no ground disturbance by the Proposed Action to affect Cultural Resources.	
Environmental Justice	No	No	Reducing AUMs in the K Lazy B allotment would not disproportionately affect low income or minority populations.	
Farmlands – Prime/Unique	No	No	There are no Prime or Unique Farmlands present within the K Lazy B Allotment.	
Fire Management	No	No	Though wildfire is always a concern, active or current fire management with the K Lazy B allotment is not present given the fuel type. Nor would the Proposed Action affect Fire Management in the case there is a need for such management in this allotment.	
Fish Habitat	No	No	There are no areas within the K Lazy B Allotment considered as Fish Habitat.	
Floodplains	Yes	No	The Proposed Action would not have any impacts on Floodplains. No ground disturbance is proposed that would alter or affect Floodplains.	
Forestry Resources and Woodland Products	No	No	There are no Forestry or Woodland resources present.	

RESOURCE/USE	PRESENT YES/NO	MAY BE AFFECTED YES/NO	RATIONALE	ANALYZED IN SECTION
Human Health and Safety	No	No	Human Health and Safety would not be affected by a reduction in AUMs.	
Integrated Vegetation Management	Yes	No	The Proposed Action would not affect the need to control or manage vegetation where present as a result of this grazing administrative change.	
Land Use Authorizations/Access	Yes	No	The Proposed Action would have no effect to other Land Use Authorizations or Access as a result of this grazing administrative change.	
Lands with Wilderness Characteristics	No	No	Lands with Wilderness Characteristic are not present.	
Livestock Grazing Management	Yes	Yes		See section below
Mineral Resources	Yes	No	The Proposed Action would have no effect to mineral resources as a result of this grazing administrative change.	
Native American Religious Concerns/ Traditional Values	Yes	No	No Native American Religious Concerns or Traditional Values would be affected as a result of this grazing administrative change.	
Paleontological Resources	No	No	Paleontological Resources are not present.	
Recreation	Yes	No	Recreational opportunities would not be affected as a result of this grazing administrative change.	
Socio-economics	Yes	Yes		See section below
Soil Resources	Yes	No	Soil Resources would not be affected by the Proposed Action as a result of this grazing administrative change.	
Threatened, Endangered, and Special Status Species	Yes	Yes		See section below
Travel and Transportation Management	Yes	No	No Travel and Transportation Management would be affected by the Proposed Action as a result of this grazing administrative change.	
Vegetation Resources (native and invasive)	Yes	Yes		See section below
Visual Resources	Yes	No	No Visual Resources would be affected by the Proposed Action as a result of a grazing administrative change.	
Wastes – Hazardous or Solid	No	No	No Wastes, Hazardous or Solid materials would be generated by the Proposed Action as a result of this grazing administrative change.	
Water Resources (including water rights)	Yes	No	No water resources would be affected by the Proposed Action as a result of this grazing administrative change.	
Water Quality (Surface/ Ground)	Yes	No	Any present springs and underground water would not be affected by the Proposed Action as a result of this grazing administrative change.	
Wetlands/ Riparian Zones	No	No	Wetlands/Riparian Zones are not present.	
Wild and Scenic Rivers	No	No	Wild and Scenic Rivers are not present.	
Wild Horses and Burros	No	No	There are no Herd Management Areas or Herd Areas within the K Lazy B Allotment.	

RESOURCE/USE	PRESENT YES/NO	MAY BE AFFECTED YES/NO	RATIONALE	ANALYZED IN SECTION
Wilderness	Yes	No	The Wilderness area would not be affected by the Proposed Action as a result of this grazing administrative change.	
Wildlife (including Migratory Birds)	Yes	Yes		See section below

REASONABLY FORSEEABLE FUTURE ACTIONS

The Yuma Field Office has received a Right-of-Way (ROW) proposal for a solar energy project within the K Lazy B allotment. To date, the Jove Solar ROW Project has been brought forth and are in the early stages of planning. The proposed area comprises of about 4,000 acres and the location of the project is proposed directly south of the lands conveyed to the County of La Paz. If approved and livestock are excluded from the ROW area, then the AUMs associated with the K Lazy B grazing permit would be adjusted to reflect the adjusted available public land acreages for livestock grazing.

Impacts from the Proposed Action

Livestock Grazing Management/Socio-economics:

As a result of the Proposed Action, the AUMs as described in the current grazing permit would be adjusted to reflect the adjusted available public land acreages. This would reduce the number of livestock permitted to graze on K Lazy B. The adjustment to 1771 AUMs (8 head less of livestock) would also result in a small economic loss to the permittee as there would be a less economic return from the current permitted head of 165 to the adjusted amount of 157 head of livestock.

Should the Jove Solar Project be approved, and livestock are excluded, the approximate loss of an additional 4,000 acres to livestock access would further decrease the AUMs to about 1715 AUMs for an additional loss of 5 head of livestock for a total of 152 permitted head of livestock.

Vegetation Resources, Threatened, Endangered, and Special Status Species, and Wildlife:

Under the proposed action, the current AUM level would be adjusted to match the reduced allotment acreage, thereby returning the amount of wildlife resources consumed by livestock to levels established prior to the removal of available grazing acreage within the allotment. The reduced stocking rate would return the amount of vegetation resources consumed by grazing activities on the allotment to the original levels set prior to the acreage removal maintaining resources available to T&E, and Special Status Species.

Should the Jove Solar Project be approved, and livestock are excluded, the AUM level would be adjusted to match the acres that are accessible to livestock. The reduced stocking rate would return the amount of vegetation resources consumed by grazing activities on the allotment to the original levels set prior to the acreage removal maintaining resources available to T&E, and Special Status Species.

Impacts from the No Action Alternative

Livestock Grazing Management/Socio-economics:

Under the No Action Alternative, there would be no changes to the number of permitted AUMs in the K Lazy B Allotment. No impacts would occur to the permittee other than reduced acreage (due to a change in land ownership) available to run the permitted livestock per the terms and conditions of the permit. No economic impacts by market returns of operating with less livestock would occur.

Should the No Action Alternative be approved, there is the possibility for adjustments to be made in the future as a result of the Jove Solar ROW Project, should it be approved and constructed.

Vegetation Resources, Threatened, Endangered, and Special Status Species, and Wildlife:

Under the No Action Alternative, current livestock stocking rates would remain the same under less available grazable lands and have impacts to vegetation resources by higher utilization rates causing less availability for vegetation to recover and reproduce, bring populations down, and in turn affect wildlife habitat and species including those that are T&E, and Special Status Species. Under the No Action alternative, there would be no reduction in AUM's and vegetation resources consumed by grazing activities would increase thereby decreasing vegetation resources available to Wildlife, T&E, and Special status species. The No Action Alternative would eliminate any reduction in utilization of public resources by livestock thus the quality of habitat for wildlife, T&E, and special status species would not be improved.

Should the No Action Alternative be approved, there is the possibility for adjustments to be made in the future as a result of the Jove Solar ROW Project, should it be approved and constructed.

PERSONS/AGENCIES CONSULTED AND PREPARERS:

Table 2 Persons, Groups, or Agencies Consulted

Agency/Group	Person(s) Contacted
Arizona Resource Advisory Council	Ms. Dolores A. Garcia
Arizona Cattle Growers Association	
Arizona Game and Fish Department	Ms. Karen Klima
Cloud Foundation	
Desert Tortoise Council	
Western Watersheds Project	
K Lazy B Ranch LLC.	Ms. Toni Brown
La Paz County	Ms. Megan Spielman
Chemehuevi Indian Tribe	Mr. Charles F. Wood
Chemehuevi Indian Tribe	Ms. June Leivas
Chemehuevi Indian Tribe	Ms. Bridget Sandate
Chemehuevi Indian Tribe	Ms. Anna Ochoa
Pueblo of Zuni	Mr. Val R. Panteah
Pueblo of Zuni	Mr. Kurt Dongoske
Salt River Pima-Maricopa Indian Community	Mr. Martin Harvier
Yavapai-Apache Nation	Mr. Jon Huey
Yavapai-Apache Nation	Mr. Chris Coder
Yavapai-Prescott Indian Tribe	Mr. Robert Ogo
Yavapai-Prescott Indian Tribe	Ms. Linda Ogo
Hopi Tribe	Mr. Timothy L. Nuvangyaoma
Hopi Tribe	Mr. Stewart Koyiyumptewa
Fort Yuma-Quechan Tribe	Mr. Jordan Joaquin
Fort Yuma-Quechan Tribe	Mr. Manfred Scott
Fort Yuma-Quechan Tribe	Ms. H. Jill McCormick
Fort Mojave Indian Tribe	Mr. Timothy Williams
Fort Mojave Indian Tribe	Ms. Linda Otero
Fort McDowell Yavapai Nation	Mrs. Bernadine Burnette
Fort McDowell Yavapai Nation	Mr. Mark Frank
Fort McDowell Yavapai Nation	Mr. Albert Nelson
Fort McDowell Yavapai Nation	Ms. Erika McCalvin
Colorado River Indian Tribes	Mr. Bryan Etsitty
Cocopah Indian Tribe	Ms. Sherry Cordova
Cocopah Indian Tribe	Mr. Justin Brundin

Agency/Group	Person(s) Contacted
Tribal Historic Preservation Office	

Table 3: BLM Resource Specialists

Name	Title
Eric Duarte	Rangeland Management Specialist
Ford Mauney	Wildlife Biologist
Angelica Rose	Planning and Environmental Coordinator
Adam Cochran	Assistant Field Manager
Jason West	Field Manager