



United States Department of the Interior

BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT

Tucson Field Office
3201 East Universal Way
Tucson, AZ 85756
520-258-7200
www.blm.gov/az/



February 6, 2018

In Reply Refer To:
4160 (AZG020)
Allotment No. 6259

CERTIFIED MAIL No. 7017 0530 0000 0469 4439
RETURN RECEIPT REQUESTED

William H. Schock
4199 Highway 82
Elgin, AZ 85611

NOTICE OF PROPOSED DECISION

Dear Mr. Schock:

The Bureau of Land Management (BLM) is charged with evaluating public lands on an Allotment basis, in accordance with the current regulations, to determine if the rangelands are meeting the Arizona Standards for Rangeland Health. The information collected in the standards and guidelines evaluations will be used as a basis to evaluate the issuance or renewals of livestock grazing leases and authorizations of any other uses on the public lands, consistent with the land use plan documents.

On June 23, 2017, the Rangeland Health Evaluation (LHE) was sent to you, along with various interested parties, for a 30 day review and comment period. The Evaluation concluded that the existing resource conditions encountered on the Mount Bruce Allotment meet Arizona's Standards for Rangeland Health, and current management of the livestock is appropriate under Arizona's Guidelines for Grazing Administration. The Environmental Assessment (EA) and Rangeland Health Evaluation are available electronically: <https://go.usa.gov/xns2v>.

It is therefore, my proposed decision to offer you a new grazing lease for a period of ten years with the following terms and conditions:

Terms:

BLM managed public lands comprise 240 acres within the 780 acre Allotment. The BLM will be authorizing 84 Animal Unit Months (AUMs) on the Allotment annually from March 1 to February 28. 84 AUMs equates to 7 cows for one year.

Conditions:

1. Standard conditions (see Attachment A).
2. A use limit of 30-40% of current year's average annual production is in effect, to be measured on key forage species at permanent vegetation transects in accordance with the Las Cienegas Resource Management Plan (p. 55). The use limit will ensure the physiological needs of the plants and multiple use objectives are being met. (CFR 43 4130-3.2)
3. Livestock grazing on the Mount Bruce Allotment No. 6259 will be administered with a flexible rotation. Within the forage allocation (permitted use) the active authorized use may be varied seasonally by the operator upon approval by the BLM Authorized Officer.
4. If in connection with Allotment operations under this authorization, any human remains, funerary objects, sacred objects or objects of cultural patrimony as defined in the Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act (P.L. 101-601; 104 Stat. 3048; 25 U.S.C. 3001) are discovered, the lessee/permittee shall stop operations in the immediate area of the discovery, protect the remains and objects, and immediately notify the Authorized Officer of the discovery. The lessee/permittee shall continue to protect the immediate area of the discovery until notified by the Authorized Officer that operations may resume.

RATIONALE:

The public lands of the Mount Bruce Allotment are guided by the Las Cienegas Resource Management Plan (RMP). The Record of Decision for the Las Cienegas RMP was signed in July 2003.

The Secretary of the Interior approved Arizona's Standards for Rangeland Health (Standards) and Guidelines for Grazing Administration (Guidelines) in April 1997. The Decision Record, signed by the BLM State Director (April 1997) provides for full implementation of the Standards and Guidelines in Arizona BLM Land Use Plans.

The Mount Bruce Allotment monitoring data was collected in June 2009 and annually from 2011 to 2016. The Land Health Evaluations were completed in June 2009 and July 2013. In accordance with BLM policy and regulations, all applicable monitoring data was examined and evaluated in order to determine progress in meeting Arizona Standards for Rangeland Health and other land use plan objectives. In addition, the Mount Bruce Allotment was reviewed to determine if any new information, issues or concerns have been identified. An interdisciplinary team completed the analysis of the resource data and developed a formal evaluation which was previously sent for your review. The terms and conditions for the new 10 year lease will not be changed from what they are currently. These terms and conditions will ensure that the Allotment continues to meet those standards which were addressed.

The Code of Federal Regulations (43 CFR 4130.2(a)) require that, “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.” The authorized officer has determined that renewing this 10-year grazing lease is in conformance with the Phoenix RMP, which incorporated by reference all grazing decisions from the Eastern Arizona Grazing Environmental Impact Statement (EAG-EIS). A subsequent review of the EAG-EIS has determined that the requirements of NEPA have been adequately addressed in existing NEPA documentation.

AUTHORITY: The authority for this decision is contained in Title 43 of the Code of Federal Regulations including, but not limited to the following pertinent parts:

§ 4100.0-8 “The authorized officer shall manage livestock grazing on public lands under the principle of multiple use and sustained yield, and in accordance with applicable land use plans...Livestock grazing activities and management actions approved by the authorized officer shall be in conformance with the land use plan as defined at 43 CFR 1601.0-5(b)”.

§4110.3 The authorized officer shall periodically review the permitted use specified in a grazing permit or grazing lease and shall make changes in the permitted use as needed to manage, maintain or improve rangeland productivity, to assist in restoring ecosystems to properly functioning condition, to conform with land use plans or activity plans, or to comply with the provisions of subpart 4180 of this part. These changes must be supported by monitoring, field observations, ecological site inventory or other data acceptable to the authorized officer.

§4110.3-2(b) When monitoring or field observations show grazing use or patterns of use are not consistent with the provisions of subpart 4180, or grazing use is otherwise causing an unacceptable level or pattern of utilization or, when use exceeds the livestock carrying capacity as determined through monitoring, ecological site inventory or other acceptable methods, the authorized officer shall reduce permitted grazing use or otherwise modify management practices.

§4110.3-3(a) After consultation, cooperation, and coordination with the affected permittee or lessee, the State having lands or managing resources within the area, and the interested public, reductions of permitted use shall be implemented through a documented agreement or by decision of the authorized officer. Decisions implementing §§4110.3-2 shall be issued as proposed decisions pursuant to 4160.1 of this part, except as provided in paragraph (b) of this section.

§4130.2(b) The authorized officer shall consult, cooperate and coordinate with affected permittees or lessees, the State having lands or responsible for managing resources within the area, and the interested public prior to the issuance or renewal of grazing permits and leases.

§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 to ensure conformance with the provisions of subpart 4180 of this part.

§4130.3-1(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.”

§4130.3-1(c) Permits and leases shall incorporate terms and conditions that ensure conformance with subpart 4180 of this part.

§4130.3-2 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. These may include but are not limited to: ... (d) A requirement that permittees or lessees operating under a grazing permit or lease submit within 15 days after completing their annual grazing use, or as otherwise specified in the permit or lease, the actual use made; ... (f) Provisions for livestock grazing temporarily to be delayed, discontinued or modified to allow for the reproduction, establishment, or restoration of vigor of plants ... of for the protection of other rangeland resources and values consistent with objectives of applicable land use plans,”

§4130.3-3 Following consultation, cooperation and coordination with the affected lessees or permittees, the State having lands or responsible for managing resources within the area, and the interested public, the authorized officer may modify terms and conditions of the permit or lease when the active grazing use or related management practices are not meeting the land use plan, Allotment management plan or other activity plan, or management objectives, or is not in conformance with the provisions of subpart 4180 of this part. To the extent practical, the authorized officer shall provide to affected permittees or lessees, States having lands or responsibility for managing resources within the affected area, and the interested public an opportunity to review, comment and give input during the preparation of reports that evaluate monitoring and other data that are used as a basis for making decisions to increase or decrease grazing use, or to change the terms and conditions of a permit or lease.

§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 to the authorized officer within 15 days after receipt of such decision.”

§4180.2(c) The authorized officer shall take appropriate action as soon as practicable but not later than the start of the next grazing year upon determining that existing grazing practices or levels of grazing use on public lands are significant factors in failing to achieve the standards and conform to the guidelines that are made effective under this section. Appropriate action means implementing actions pursuant to 4110, 4120, 4130, and 4160 that will result in significant progress toward fulfillment of the standards and significant progress toward conformance with guidelines.

RIGHT OF PROTEST AND/OR APPEAL

Any applicant, permittee, lessee, or other interested public may protest this proposed decision within 15 days following its receipt in accordance with 43 CFR 4160.2. The protest may be submitted in person or in writing to the Tucson Field Office Manager; Jayme Lopez, Bureau of Land Management, Tucson Field Office, 3201 East Universal Way, Tucson, AZ 85756.

In the absence of a protest, this proposed decision shall constitute my final decision without further notice unless otherwise provided for in the proposed decision, in accordance with 43 CFR 4160.3(a). Should a timely protest be filed I will consider the points of the protest and other pertinent information and issue my final decision to all persons named in this decision in accordance with 43 CFR 4160.3(b).

Any applicant, permittee, lessee, or other person whose interest is adversely affected by the final BLM grazing decision may file an appeal for the purpose of a hearing before an administrative law judge in accordance with 43 CFR 4160.3(c), 4160.4, 4.21, and 4.470. The appeal must be filed within 30 days following receipt of the final decision or 30 days after the date the proposed decision becomes final. The appeal should state the reasons, clearly and concisely, why the appellant thinks the final BLM grazing decision is in error. A petition for a stay of the decision pending final determination of the appeal by the administrative law judge may also be submitted during this same 30 day time period. The appeal, or the appeal and petition for stay, must be in writing and delivered in person, via the United States Postal Service mail system, or other common carrier, to the Tucson Field Office as noted above. The BLM does not accept appeals by facsimile or email.

Should you wish to file a petition for a stay in accordance with 43 CFR Section 4.471(c), the appellant shall 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.

If you have any questions, please contact Kristen Duarte, Rangeland Management Specialist, at (520) 258-7215.

Sincerely,

/s/ Jayme M. Lopez_____

Jayme M. Lopez
Tucson Field Office Manager