



# United States Department of the Interior

BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT  
Arizona Strip Field Office  
4001 E. Aviator Drive  
St. George, Utah 84790  
[www.az.blm.gov](http://www.az.blm.gov)



In Reply Refer To:  
LLAZA01000: 4160

One Cowboy Stand, LLC  
P.O. Box 918  
Colorado City, AZ 86021

July 8, 2025

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## **NOTICE OF FINAL DECISION**

*Tuckup Allotment Grazing Permit Renewal*  
*DOI-BLM-AZ-A010-2025-0003-EA*

### **INTRODUCTION**

A Notice of Proposed Decision (NOPD) and Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) were signed May 14, 2025, for the Tuckup Allotment Grazing Permit Renewal. The Bureau of Land Management (BLM) received two timely protests to the NOPD – one from WWP (postmarked June 7, 2025) and the other from Jeff Burgess (postmarked June 13, 2025).

The protest reasons are addressed below in the section titled “Response to Protest Statements of Reasons”. Addressing the protest reasons did not cause substantive changes to the analysis contained within the environmental assessment (EA).

After considering the protest reasons, this Notice of Final Decision (NOFD) is the final administrative step in the environmental review process for the Tuckup Allotment Grazing Permit Renewal. The final decision is to authorize the action as described in Alternative B (Issue New 10-Year Grazing Permit with Extended Grazing Season) of the EA and the “Final Decision” section below.

### **BACKGROUND**

The Taylor Grazing Act of 1934 and the Federal Land Policy and Management Act of 1976 provide for livestock grazing use of the public lands that have been classified as available for grazing. Grazing use must be consistent with good range management aimed at conservation and protection of the natural and cultural resources.

An assessment of this allotment was conducted in accordance with directions set forth by the Washington Office and Arizona State Office for implementation of the Arizona Standards for Rangeland Health and Guidelines for Grazing Administration. The purpose of the Arizona Standards and Guidelines is to ensure the health of public rangelands. These standards help the Bureau of Land Management (BLM), rangeland users, and interested members of the public achieve a common understanding of acceptable resource conditions and work together to implement that vision. Arizona’s Standards for Rangeland Health and

Guidelines for Grazing Administration were developed by the BLM State Standards and Guidelines Team and the Arizona Resource Advisory Council, a state level council appointed by the Secretary of the Interior. The Secretary of the Interior approved the Standards and Guidelines for Arizona in April 1997, and the BLM Arizona State Director mandated full implementation of the Standards and Guidelines in all Arizona land use plans.

The land health evaluation for the Tuweep Allotment (including the Little Tuweep and Tuckup Pastures which are what now comprise the Tuckup Allotment) was completed in 2004. That evaluation determined resource conditions on what is now the Tuckup Allotment were making significant progress toward meeting the applicable standards for rangeland health. It should be noted that Standard 2 (Riparian and Wetland areas) does not apply in the Tuckup Allotment, as stated in Appendix B of the EA. Based on analysis of allotment monitoring data (including data collected since the original land health evaluation was completed) and supporting documentation contained in the land health evaluation report and land health evaluation update, it has been determined that the allotment is currently meeting the applicable Arizona Rangeland Health Standards (see Appendix B of the EA).

The EA prepared for the proposed grazing permit renewal (DOI-BLM-AZ-A010-2025-0003-EA) constitutes the BLM's environmental review of the selected action in accordance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and other relevant federal and state laws and regulations.

#### **RESPONSE TO PROTEST STATEMENTS OF REASONS:**

The BLM has carefully considered each protest statement of reasons as to why the protestor felt the decision was in error, and has responded to each protest reason.

***Protest Reason WWP-01: The Land Health Evaluation (LHE) for this allotment is woefully outdated, from 2004, making it now over 20 years old. While this evaluation indicates the allotment is meeting land health standards, this information follows over a decade of grazing utilization that is measured at 34%, at most. EA at 18. Even though the BLM has "updated" the LHE with key area monitoring, this is not a full, nor accurate evaluation of the conditions throughout the allotment.***

**Response to Protest Reason WWP-01:** While it is true that the BLM has not prepared a "new" land health evaluation report for the Tuckup Allotment, the BLM has prepared an update to the 2004 evaluation. This update constitutes a re-evaluation of the 2004 assessment determination by considering and analyzing new monitoring data (collected most recently in 2020 or 2023, depending on the key area). As stated in the land health evaluation update (Appendix B of the EA), monitoring data collected since the 2004 land health evaluation report was completed is intended to supplement existing data found in the 2004 assessment. The key area has been read for composition, pace-frequency, trend and dry weight rank. Key species monitored for this allotment are bitterbrush (*Purshia tridentata*), fourwing saltbush (*Atriplex canescense*), winterfat (*Krascheninnikovia lanata*), sand dropseed (*Sporobolus cryptandrus*), black grama (*Bouteloua eriopoda*), galleta grass (*Hilaria jansii*), side-oats grama (*Bouteloua curtipendula*), blue grama (*Bouteloua gracilis*), bottlebrush squirreltail (*Sitanion hystrix*), western wheatgrass (*Agropyron smithii*), crested wheatgrass (*Agropyron cristatum*), and Russian wildrye (*Elymus cinereus*).

Tables B-1 through B-4 of EA Appendix B list all trend monitoring data collected in this allotment, beginning in 1981. These tables show the key species frequency, which is the ratio between the number of sample units that contain key species and the total number of sample units. Based on the summation of frequency data for all three components (key species, live vegetative cover, and litter), trend is up at all four key areas. Tables B-5 through B-8 of Appendix B list the most current (2020 or 2023) composition data, which is used to determine whether Desired Plant Community objectives are being achieved. As shown in these tables, all DPC objectives are being achieved or exceeded.

The purpose of a land health evaluation is to determine whether an allotment is meeting the applicable standards for rangeland health. The Tuckup Allotment land health evaluation update supplements the existing evaluation with new data to determine whether Standard 1 (Upland Sites) and Standard 3 (Desired Resource Conditions) are being met (Standard 2 – Riparian/Wetland Sites is not applicable to the Tuckup Allotment since no riparian or wetland sites are present on the allotment). The update is not meant to replace the original evaluation but rather to supplement it with new information to determine whether the allotment is still meeting land health standards.

***Protest Reason WWP-02: The Bureau is authorizing livestock grazing utilization at 50% despite ongoing and severe drought. This level of utilization is contrary to the best available science which indicates grazing in arid lands should not exceed 30-40%. Also, as noted above, the allotment is currently meeting land health standards after at least a decade of utilization measured at no more than 34%. Increasing utilization is extremely likely to degrade land health conditions within a newly designated National Monument (Baaj Nwayjo I'tah Kukeveni), as well as the existing National Monument (Grand Canyon-Parashant) in an area described by the EA as having low rainfall. Allowing livestock grazing to degrade conditions within the Monument is a violation of several laws.***

**Response to Protest Reason WWP-02:** The Arizona Strip Field Office Resource Management Plan (RMP) (Decision No. MA-GM-07) and Grand Canyon-Parashant National Monument RMP (Decision No. MA-GM-08) state that allowable use on key forage species is 50% on allotments with rotational grazing systems, such as the Tuckup Allotment. There is no data to suggest that there should be a reduction in allowable use (utilization) on the allotment – trend is up at all key areas, all DPC objectives are being met, and all applicable land health standards are being met. It is important to note that the BLM is not “increasing” utilization on the allotment – it has always been 50% of current year’s growth, and this would not change with implementation of the selected action. In addition, the Tuckup Allotment is in an area classified as “semi-arid,” not “arid.”<sup>1</sup>

***Protest Reason WWP-03: There is no information available to the public regarding the capacity or capability of these lands to support this level of livestock grazing. It is uncertain whether or not the allotment is capable of producing enough forage to support the level of livestock grazing that is authorized in this decision.***

**Response to Protest Reason WWP-03:** It is important to note that the BLM is not changing authorized AUMs for the allotment. Current active preference (AUMs) for the Tuckup Allotment is 1,075, which is the same as that in the selected action. There is no data to suggest that there should be a reduction in AUMs is warranted on the allotment – trend is up at all key areas, all DPC objectives are being met, and all applicable land health standards are being met.

***Protest Reason WWP-04: The BLM should have considered an alternative that would have provided for voluntary livestock grazing permit retirement.***

**Response to Protest Reason WWP-04:** The BLM did not consider an alternative to provide for voluntary grazing permit retirement because it is outside the scope of the current analysis. This alternative would not meet the purpose and need of the action, which is to provide for livestock grazing opportunities on public lands where consistent with meeting management objectives, including the Arizona Standards for Rangeland Health and Guidelines for Livestock Grazing Management, the Arizona Strip Field Office RMP,

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<sup>1</sup> Arid regions by definition receive less than 10 inches (25 centimeters) of rain per year, while semi-arid regions receive 10 to 20 inches (25 to 50 centimeters) of rain per year (NPS 2025).

and Grand Canyon-Parashant National Monument RMP<sup>2</sup>. In order for the BLM to change the classification of the allotment from available to unavailable for livestock grazing, an RMP amendment would be required. There is no data to support eliminating livestock grazing from the allotment – as previously described, monitoring data on the allotment shows that trend is up at all key areas, all DPC objectives are being met, and all applicable land health standards are being met. Should the BLM receive a request for voluntary livestock grazing permit retirement, it will be considered at that time.

***Protest Reason WWP-05: Though two of the 5 key species on the allotment disseminate seeds before the October 15th on-date for grazing, three of the species begin to disseminate seeds after the on-date and some key species on the allotment have seed dissemination as late as December 1st. The BLM should not allow livestock grazing to begin prior to November 15th to best protect Monument resources such as native plants and seed banks.***

**Response to Protest Reason WWP-05:** Under the selected action, season of use on the Tuckup Allotment will change from October 15-May 15 to August 14-May 15 and grazing will change from a two pasture system to a three pasture rotation. Use of the three pastures will be alternated on successive years so that each pasture receives different use from the previous grazing period – see Table 4.2 in the EA for details on the grazing rotation.

Under the new grazing system, each pasture will be grazed once every three years during seed dissemination for the three key grass species displayed in Table 3.9 of the EA, versus one of these key grass species – black grama – being grazed during seed dissemination every other year under the current grazing system. The current system defers grazing until after seed dissemination for the other two key grass species (sand dropseed and galleta). For key shrub species, each pasture will be grazed two of the three years during their seed dissemination, versus every other year under the current grazing system.

As described in Section 4.2.3 of the EA, plants live in ecosystems full of herbivores that range from small insects to large grazing animals. Losing leaves or stems to herbivores is a common event in the life of a rangeland plant. For rangeland plants to remain healthy and productive, enough vegetation must remain after grazing so that plants can photosynthesize and manufacture energy to produce more leaves, stems, and seeds. Plants also need to produce and store energy as starches and sugars in roots and crowns to successfully start the next season of growth. Only when too much of the plant is removed does the plant suffer in a way that yields lasting detrimental effects. Grazing impacts on vegetation are mitigated by timing of use, adjustment of stocking rates, limiting utilization rates, and conformance with the Arizona Standards for Rangeland Health and Guidelines for Grazing Management. Range plants evolved to withstand grazing and can withstand removal of a part of their current year’s growth and still achieve normal growth the following year. Most rangeland grasses and forbs can have 40-50% of their leaves and stems removed every year and still remain healthy and productive. Properly managed livestock grazing is designed to cause minimal impacts to rangeland resources. Part of “properly managed livestock grazing” is ensuring utilization levels (which is 50% for the Tuckup Allotment) are not exceeded – utilization for this allotment has been well below the allowed 50% at all key areas. Monitoring data on the allotment shows that trend is up at all key areas, all DPC objectives are being met, and all applicable land health standards are being met. The vegetation communities are healthy and functioning properly, and there is nothing to indicate that implementing the selected action will change that.

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<sup>2</sup> The Tuckup Allotment is partially within Baaj Nwaavjo I’tah Kukveni-Ancestral Footprints of the Grand Canyon National Monument, designated on August 8, 2023, by Presidential Proclamation 10606. An RMP for this new monument has not yet been developed. Until a new RMP is developed, the lands are managed under the Arizona Strip Field Office RMP unless there is a conflict with the Proclamation. This selected action does not violate the proclamation – the Proclamation specifically states that the Secretary of the Interior shall “provid[e] appropriate access for livestock grazing” within the monument.

***Protest Reason WWP-06: The NOPD and EA both state the season of use as August 15-May 15, but the FONSI states the season of use as September 15-May 15. It appears there is an error and this error must be corrected.***

**Response to Protest Reason WWP-06:** Thank you for pointing this out. The correct dates for season of use should be August 14-May 15. The introduction section of the FONSI has been corrected (all other parts of the FONSI had the correct dates).

***Protest Reason WWP-07: The BLM should have selected the No Grazing alternative (Alternative D) as this would best protect natural and cultural resources within the Monuments. If a grazing alternative is selected, utilization should not exceed 30%, again, to best protect natural and cultural resources and provide for wildlife forage in these two National Monuments.***

**Response to Protest Reason WWP-07:** The Arizona Strip Field Office and Grand Canyon-Parashant National Monument RMPs have identified the Tuckup Allotment as available to livestock grazing. While this does not guarantee any particular active preference to be authorized on an allotment, there is no data to suggest that there should be a reduction in AUMs on the Tuckup Allotment – trend is up at all key areas, all DPC objectives are being met, and all applicable land health standards are being met. In addition, as stated in Table 3.5 of the EA, a review of the cultural resources data managed by the BLM Arizona Strip District was undertaken to determine if significant cultural resources are known to be present within the Tuckup Allotment. None are known or suspected within the allotment. It is the professional opinion of the BLM archaeologist that adverse impacts to those resources, should they be present, are not expected. Livestock grazing has continued as an historic use of the public land in this allotment for over 100 years. The BLM will manage the allotment to ensure that livestock grazing will continue to be in compliance with Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act (36 CFR 800.3).

Please see response to Protest Reason WWP-02 for a discussion on utilization.

***Protest Reason WWP-08: We encourage the BLM to ask itself the question – why, in light of severe drought, is livestock grazing authorized to continue? The BLM knows that the land health standards are a floor, not a ceiling, yet the BLM refuses to ensure the lands it manages are maintained above the bare minimum of these low, outdated standards. We encourage the BLM to change course.***

**Response to Protest Reason WWP-08:** The Arizona Strip Field Office and Grand Canyon-Parashant National Monument RMPs have identified the Tuckup Allotment as available to livestock grazing. While this does not guarantee the active preference to be authorized on the allotment, there is no data to suggest that there should be a reduction in AUMs on the allotment – trend is up at the key areas, all DPC objectives are being met, and all applicable land health standards are being met.

The BLM has the authority (per 43 CFR 4110.3-2 and 4110.3-3) to implement changes in active use in whole or in part on a temporary basis due to conditions such as drought, fire, flood, or insect infestation. Grazing permittees (including the Tuckup Allotment permittee) voluntarily reduce livestock numbers during drought periods. If not, and should monitoring indicate that desired conditions are not being achieved and current livestock grazing practices are causing non-attainment of resource objectives, livestock grazing management of the allotment would be modified in cooperation with the permittee. If the permittee disagrees with the BLM's assessment of the resource conditions or the necessary modifications, the BLM may still issue a Full Force and Effect Grazing Decision to protect resources.

Please see also response to Protest Reasons WWP-01 and WWP-07.

***Protest Reason JB-01: There is no mandatory land health evaluation (LHE) for the allotment included in the EA, which is normally the case. Your office responded that the Tuckup Allotment used to be part of the adjacent Tuweep Allotment, and in 2004 there had been an LHE completed for the Tuweep Allotment. The response further stated that the Tuweep LHE is not an appendix to this EA, but it has been uploaded to the BLM National NEPA Register site for this project. The Tuweep LHE, however, is not available on the BLM's National NEPA Register website, nor does it appear to be available anywhere else online.***

**Response to Protest Reason JB-01:** The land health evaluation for the Tuweep Allotment (which included what is now the Tuckup Allotment) has now been uploaded to the BLM National NEPA Register for the Tuckup Allotment Grazing Permit Renewal, under "Documents." We apologize for the delay in getting this document uploaded.

***Protest Reason JB-02: Recent actual forage utilization measured at the key areas averaged about 23% for the six years that were monitored starting 2014 through 2022. But elsewhere in the EA, Table B-10 shows that actual use across the entire allotment averaged 38% from 2018 to 2024. This implies that the allotment's key areas are in the wrong locations, because Table B-10 shows that utilization on the entire allotment exceeded the key area average of 23% every year, and in 2023 it was 65%!***

**Response to Protest Reason JB-02:** Forage utilization and actual use are not the same thing. Utilization is defined as "the proportion or degree of the current year's forage production that is consumed or destroyed by animals (including insects)" (BLM 1999). Maximum allowable utilization on the Tuckup Allotment, per the Arizona Strip Field Office and Grand Canyon-Parashant National Monument RMPs, is 50%. As shown in Table B-9 of the EA, average utilization on the allotment has been well below that.

Actual use is a record of the number of livestock that grazed on a specific allotment over a particular grazing season, along with the dates they were present. As shown in Table B-10 of the EA, actual use is presented in AUMs – a percent of the AUMs grazing on the allotment versus the permitted AUMs. A permittee may generally graze up to 100% of their permitted AUMs. Actual use on the Tuckup Allotment has been well below that.

***Protest Reason JB-03: Research has shown that annual forage utilization rates need to be conservative, no more than 35% in the arid Southwest, to enable improvements in the condition of range vegetation. But you are proposing, in Alternative A, to set the allowable annual forage utilization at 50% on the allotment. I understand that this is the maximum allowable annual forage utilization allowed by the 2008 Arizona Strip Field Office RMP, but there is no scientific justification for allowing that high level of use in arid lands. It will only lead to resource degradation in the long run, especially because the Southwest is steadily becoming hotter and drier. In other words, implementing a new management plan for this allotment that includes a 50% allowable forage utilization rate endangers the allotment's trend of improving vegetation conditions. The 50% allowable utilization in the RMP is just a maximum, not a mandatory amount.***

**Response to Protest Reason JB-03:** See response to Protest Reason WWP-02. Please also note that the 50% utilization is not a "mandatory amount" – if allowable use (AUMs) is reached before 50% utilization is reached, livestock are still required to be removed from the pasture or allotment.

***Protest Reason JB-04: The Tuckup Allotment is currently authorized for seasonal grazing, October through May, with up to 161 head of cattle, equating to 1,075 AUMs. Your proposed action would change it to yearlong grazing with up to 75 head, or 860 AUMs. The EA explains that this proposed 20% reduction in active AUMs would be necessary to ensure compliance with the RMP's 50% maximum utilization limit. But the proposed reduction in permitted AUMs is only a reduction on paper. Table B-***

*10 in the EA shows the recent actual use of the allotment has only averaged 38% of the authorized numbers, for an average actual use of only 413 AUMs. This means your proposal to authorize 860 active AUMs is more than twice the recent actual use of the allotment. In other words, it would facilitate a significant increase in real cattle on the allotment, during a continuing drought.*

**Response to Protest Reason JB-04:** Please note that while the Proposed Action (Alternative A) referred to in this protest reason was analyzed in the EA (since that was the action proposed by the grazing permittee), it was not the selected action described in the Notice of Proposed Decision. The BLM is not proposing to implement that alternative.

See also response to Protest Reason WWP-08.

*Protest Reason JB-05: I am protesting this decision because it doesn't comply with NEPA because it lacks the legally required range of alternatives. More specifically, it lacks the obvious alternative of maintaining the existing, and apparently working, October to May winter grazing system with the permitted AUMs set at near the allotment's recent actual use. This is not the no action alternative, Alternative C in the EA. Alternative C is just a paper alternative, it doesn't exist in the real world. An alternative based on the recent actual use would be a real alternative.*

**Response to Protest Reason JB-05:** The BLM analyzed a full range of reasonable alternatives. The alternatives presented and analyzed in the EA range from extending the season of use on the Tuckup Allotment to yearlong grazing (with a reduction in AUMs from the current permit), to reissuing a ten-year term grazing permit on the Tuckup Allotment with 0 authorized AUMs for active preference (no grazing), with two additional alternatives for seasonal grazing that fall within the range described above. It would not be reasonable for the BLM to analyze every possible variation on grazing season of use and authorized active AUMs. The BLM has met its legal requirement to analyze a range of reasonable alternatives.

## **FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT**

After consideration of the environmental effects described in the EA and supporting documentation, I have determined that the action is not a major Federal action and will not significantly affect the quality of the human environment, individually or cumulatively with other actions in the area. No effects identified in the EA meet the definition of significant in context or intensity, as described in the attached Finding of No Significant Impact.

## **FINAL DECISION**

After considering the environmental review contained within the above referenced EA, it is my final decision to authorize the action as described in Alternative B (Issue New 10-Year Grazing Permit with Extended Grazing Season) of the EA and summarized below. This decision is to cancel the existing term grazing permit for the Tuckup Allotment and issue a new ten-year term permit. The specific decision is outlined below.

### **A. Grazing Permit**

A new grazing permit will be issued for a period of 10 years for the Tuckup Allotment. There will be no change in the authorized grazing preference, expressed in animal unit months (AUMs). However, the season of use for the allotment will change from October 15–May 15 to August 14–May 15, and the number of cattle will change from 161 to 125. The new grazing permit will include the mandatory terms and conditions shown below in Table 1.

***Mandatory Terms and Conditions***

**Table 1 – Grazing to be Authorized on the Tuckup Allotment**

| <b>Allotment</b> | <b>Livestock Number and Kind</b> | <b>Season of Use</b> | <b>Percent Public Land</b> | <b>Active AUMs</b> | <b>Suspended AUMs</b> | <b>Total AUMs</b> |
|------------------|----------------------------------|----------------------|----------------------------|--------------------|-----------------------|-------------------|
| Tuckup           | 125 Cattle                       | 8/14 – 5/15          | 95%                        | 1,075              | 4                     | 1,079             |

***Other Terms and Conditions***

The Standard Terms and Conditions under 43 CFR 4130.3 are a part of the permit. In addition, the other terms and conditions of the permit, which are not mandatory terms and conditions and can be modified, are:

- The permittee must submit an actual use report (BLM Form 4130-5) within 15 days after the last day of authorized grazing.
- Use of nutritional livestock supplements is allowed, including protein, minerals and salt. However, any supplements used must be dispersed at a minimum of ¼ mile from any known water sources, riparian areas, populations of special status plant species, and cultural or any other sensitive sites. Any hay or other feed used in administering the livestock operation must be certified weed-free.
- A temporary range camp next to existing corrals may be authorized while the permittee works their livestock, fixes fence or performs maintenance of existing range improvements.
- The permittee will use the advanced billing system.
- Livestock will be confined to a single pasture at a time and moved to a new pasture once the average utilization of the current pasture reaches 50%.
- A grazing planning meeting or call will occur before cattle are turned out to discuss the plan of grazing for that year and to ensure that their billing is reflective of that plan.
- Use of the three pastures will be alternated on successive years.

**B. Monitoring**

This decision includes monitoring, as described in Section 2.2.3 of the EA.

**C. Miscellaneous**

The allotment will be managed for the following:

- Allowable use on key forage species on the allotment (which implements a rotational grazing system) will be no more than 50% utilization of current year’s production, removed through grazing or other loss. (Key species for Tuckup Allotment are listed in Section 3.4.3 of this EA and in the Response to Protest Reason WWP-01 above.)
- The BLM will assess resource conditions through field inspections and determine, in consultation with the permittee, whether management changes (e.g., changes in livestock numbers, adjustment of move date, or other changes or use within the parameters identified under the selected action) may be implemented prior to reaching maximum utilization. Move dates (i.e., removal of livestock from a pasture) may be adjusted if monitoring indicates maximum utilization has been reached, or due to unusual climatic conditions, fire, flood, drought, or other acts of nature. If maximum utilization is reached on key species/areas in the allotment before a scheduled move date, the use

of salt, herding, or other management options may be used to distribute livestock away from an area where maximum utilization has been reached, or livestock may be removed from the pasture (after consultation with the permittee), as deemed necessary by the BLM.

- Achieve the applicable Arizona Standards for Rangeland Health as listed in Section 2.2.1 of the EA.
- Achieve the DPC objectives listed in Section 2.2.2 of the EA.

## **RATIONALE FOR DECISION**

This decision has been made after considering impacts to resources, such as vegetation, wildlife, cultural resources, and soils, while providing opportunities for livestock grazing that meets management objectives, including the Arizona Standards for Rangeland Health and Guidelines for Livestock Grazing Management and the Arizona Strip Field Office RMP and Grand Canyon-Parashant National Monument RMP. Alternative B was chosen in its entirety. Impacts to livestock grazing, soils, vegetation, and wildlife were analyzed in detail in the EA. As described above, season of use for the allotment under Alternative B (the selected alternative) changes from October 1–May 15 to August 14–May 15, with the livestock numbers changing from 161 cow/calf pairs to 125, with the same number of active AUMs (1,075). This alternative will meet the purpose and need for action identified in Chapter 1 of this EA – to provide for livestock grazing opportunities on public lands where consistent with meeting management objectives, including the Arizona Standards for Rangeland Health and Guidelines for Livestock Grazing Management, the Arizona Strip Field Office RMP and the Grand Canyon-Parashant National Monument RMP, while responding to an application to fully process and renew the permit to graze livestock on public land – the extended season of use provides added stability for the permittee’s livestock operation from the current situation because the herd will remain on the allotment an additional two months.

Although this selected action does not include the request to change the season of use to yearlong (see discussion of Alternative A – Proposed Action below), it does extend the season of use, and results in a fully processed grazing permit. In addition, due to the longer grazing season, livestock numbers will be reduced from 161 to 125, with total AUMs remaining the same, and a deferred rest rotation grazing system will be implemented (the allotment will change from two pastures to three pastures to facilitate this grazing system). This proposed grazing system gives cool season plants the opportunity to complete growth and mature without grazing pressure on alternate years and gives warm season grasses rest every year since all cattle are removed from the allotment by May 15. This will result in foliage remaining on vegetation during the warmer season, allowing vegetation to complete growth for the season to produce seeds for future reproductive needs and store energy to get through the dormant season. The canopy formed by vegetation reduces impacts to the soil surface from rain and/or wind, thereby decreasing the breakdown of soil aggregates. In addition, under the new grazing system, each pasture will be grazed once every three years during seed dissemination for key grass species, versus one of these key grass species – black grama – being grazed during seed dissemination every other year under the current grazing system. For key shrub species, each pasture will be grazed two of the three years during their seed dissemination, versus every other year under the current grazing system.

The selected grazing system will allow periodic rest for vegetation to replenish root reserves before they are grazed again, and limit utilization to no more than 50% of current year’s growth. As described in Section 4.2.3 of the EA, plants live in ecosystems full of herbivores that range from small insects to large grazing animals. Losing leaves or stems to herbivores is a common event in the life of a rangeland plant. For rangeland plants to remain healthy and productive, enough vegetation must remain after grazing so that plants can photosynthesize and manufacture energy to produce more leaves, stems, and seeds. Grazing impacts on vegetation are mitigated by timing of use, adjustment of stocking rates, limiting utilization rates, and conformance with the Arizona Standards for Rangeland Health and Guidelines for Grazing

Management. Range plants evolved to withstand grazing and can withstand removal of a part of their current year's growth and still achieve normal growth the following year. Because of all these factors, it is expected that soil conditions and plant vigor in the allotment will be maintained, and the allotment will continue to meet all applicable land health standards.

Alternative A (Proposed Action) was not chosen because livestock grazing would occur on the Tuckup Allotment year-round. Active AUMs would be reduced by 20% (from 1,075 to 860) for the new 10-year term permit; this level of reduced use would result in less direct impacts to soil resources including less trampling and compaction, particularly around developed water resources. However, the grazing system proposed in this alternative does not allow for flexibility in the grazing rotation to help protect vegetative resources. Due to grazing year-round on a three-pasture rotation, the same pasture would be grazed during the same season in consecutive years. This would likely be detrimental to vegetative resources, particularly in the pastures that are grazed during the spring and summer, due to the plant community shifting toward a warm season grass and shrub community. Should vegetative resources be affected, the canopy formed by vegetation to reduce impacts to the soil surface from rain and/or wind, which decreases the breakdown of soil aggregates, would also be affected. This could affect the allotment continuing to meet land health standards.

Alternative C was not chosen because the new ten-year term grazing permit would be issued with the same season of use as the current permit, which would continue grazing during the summer growing season every other year. While this management regime has been in place for many years, and the allotment is currently meeting all applicable land health standards, it would not be as beneficial to resources as Alternative B because the three pasture grazing system proposed in that alternative would allow one pasture complete rest from warm and cool season grazing each year, and allow a two year rest from either cool or warm season grazing, meaning cool season and warm season plants would be grazed only one time every three years, compared to every other year under Alternative C.

Alternative D (no active preference) would eliminate all livestock grazing on the allotment for the ten-year term of the new permit. While vegetation would have the most rest and recovery as compared to the other alternatives, this alternative was not chosen because it would not meet the purpose and need for action identified in Chapter 1 of this EA – to provide for livestock grazing opportunities on public lands where consistent with meeting management objectives, including the Arizona Standards for Rangeland Health and Guidelines for Livestock Grazing Management, the Arizona Strip Field Office RMP and the Grand Canyon-Parashant National Monument RMP, and respond to applications to fully process and renew permits to graze livestock on public land. The Tuckup Allotment currently meets all applicable standards for rangeland health – current monitoring data does not suggest that removing livestock from the allotment is needed to meet rangeland health standards.

The EA constitutes the BLM's compliance with the requirements of NEPA. The EA went through an interdisciplinary review process – the interdisciplinary assessment team was composed of various resource specialists including rangeland management specialist, wildlife biologist, and soil scientist. As documented in the EA analysis of the allotment's monitoring data and supporting documentation in the land health evaluation report and land health evaluation update (see EA Appendix B), the team determined that the Tuckup Allotment is ecologically stable and functional based on the vegetation communities and soil conditions throughout the allotment. Based on this information, the team is recommending that the Tuckup Allotment meets all applicable standards for rangeland health. The NEPA analysis determined that implementing the action will allow the allotment to maintain its ecological condition and continue meeting land use plan objectives. The NEPA analysis also indicates that the action is in conformance with the applicable RMPs and that none of the impacts from the action are significant (see attached Finding of No Significant Impact).

Based upon this information and analysis, I have determined that changes in kind of livestock and active grazing preference are not necessary.

## **AUTHORITY**

The authority for this decision is found in a number of statutory and regulatory authorities contained in the Taylor Grazing Act, as amended; the Federal Land Policy and Management Act of 1976, as amended; and throughout Title 43 of the Code of Federal Regulations (CFR), Part 4100 (Grazing Administration-exclusive of Alaska). The following sections of Part 4100 are noted below, although other subparts of Part 4100 are used to authorize grazing activities, with this listing not meant to be exhaustive.

§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.”

§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, ... .”

§ 4160.3(b): “Upon the timely filing of a protest, the authorized officer shall reconsider her/his proposed decision in light of the protestant's statement of reasons for protest and in light of other information pertinent

to the case. At the conclusion to her/his review of the protest, the authorized officer shall serve her/his final decision on the protestant or her/his agent, or both, and the interested public.”

§ 4160.4(a): “Any person whose interest is adversely affected who wishes to appeal or seek a stay of a final BLM grazing decision must follow the requirements set forth in § 4.472 of this title. The appeal and any petition for stay must be filed with the BLM office that issued the decision within 30 days after its receipt) ...”

## **RIGHT OF APPEAL**

Any applicant, permittee, lessee, or other person whose interest is adversely affected by the final decision may file a notice of appeal in writing for the purpose of a hearing before an administrative law judge in accordance with 43 CFR 4160.3(c), 4160.4, and 4.470. The notice of appeal must be filed within 30 days following receipt of the final decision. The notice of appeal may be accompanied by a petition for a stay of the decision in accordance with 43 CFR 4.471 pending final determination on appeal. The notice of appeal and petition for a stay must be filed in the office of the authorized officer, as noted above.

The BLM cannot accept electronic filing of appeal documents by any other means, including compact disc, thumb drive, or similar media due to Federal Information Systems Security Awareness policies. As defined in 43 CFR 4.22(a), “A document is filed in the office where the filing is required only when the document is received in that office during its regular business hours and by a person authorized to receive it. A document received after the office’s regular business hours is considered filed on the next business day.”

Within 15 days of filing the appeal, the appellant must provide the BLM with proof of service to the other persons named in this decision (Attachment 1 – List of all Persons or Groups Receiving this NOPD) in accordance with 43 CFR 4.470(a). A copy of the appeal must also be served on the Office of the Solicitor located at the address below in accordance with 43 CFR 4.413(a).

Sandra Day O’Connor  
U.S. Courthouse, Suite 404  
401 West Washington Street, SPC-44  
Phoenix, Arizona 85003-2151

In accordance with 43 CFR 4.413(b), failure to serve a notice of appeal will subject the appeal to summary dismissal as provided in 43 CFR 4.402. Appellants are responsible for determining whether the Office of the Solicitor or other persons named in the decision will accept service of a notice of appeal and/or petition for stay electronically via email.

The appeal shall state the reasons, clearly and concisely, why the appellant thinks the final decision is in error and otherwise complies with the provisions of 43 CFR 4.470.

Should you wish to file a petition for a stay, see 43 CFR 4.471 (a) and (b). In accordance with 43 CFR 4.471(c), a petition for a stay 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.

As noted above, the petition for stay must be filed in the office of the authorized officer and served in accordance with 43 CFR 4.471. Any person named in the decision that receives a copy of a petition for a stay and/or an appeal, is directed to 43 CFR 4.472(b) for procedures to follow if you wish to respond.

 Digitally signed by  
Lorraine M Christian  
Date: 2025.07.08  
09:40:04 -06'00'

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Lorraine M. Christian  
Field Manager  
Arizona Strip Field Office

**Attachment:**

Appendix A - List of all Persons or Groups Receiving this NOPD

**Enclosure:**

Finding of No Significant Impact for Environmental Assessment

**References Cited:**

USDI – Bureau of Land Management. 1999. Utilization Studies and Residual Measurements – Interagency Technical Reference 1734-3.

USDI – National Park Service. *Arid and Semi-arid Region Landforms*. Available at: [https://www.nps.gov/subjects/geology/arid-landforms.htm#:~:text=Photo%2FDale%20Pate-Introduction,centimeters\)%20of%20rain%20per%20year](https://www.nps.gov/subjects/geology/arid-landforms.htm#:~:text=Photo%2FDale%20Pate-Introduction,centimeters)%20of%20rain%20per%20year). Accessed June 17, 2025.

## **Appendix A - List of all Persons or Groups Receiving this NOFD**

Cyndi Tuell  
Western Watersheds Project  
738 N 5th Ave., Suite 206  
Tucson, AZ 85705

Edward Keable  
Superintendent  
Grand Canyon National Park  
P.O. Box 129  
Grand Canyon, AZ 86023

Chris Bugbee  
Center for Biological Diversity  
378 North Main Ave.  
Tucson, AZ 85701

Cerissa Hoglander  
Grand Canyon Trust  
2601 N. Fort Valley Rd  
Flagstaff, AZ 86001

Todd Seliga  
Grand Canyon National Park  
406 N. Pipe Spring Rd.  
Fredonia, AZ 86022

Jeff Burgess  
7650 S. McClintock Dr, #103-248  
Tempe, AZ 85284