

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
 BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT
 Vale District Office
 Jordan Resource Area

INTERDISCIPLINARY TEAM REVIEW RECORD

EA Number OR-030-02-022 **Date Submitted for Comment** October 3, 2002 **Complete Review**
Proposed Action Change Permit
Proposed Name Eiguren Permit Change
Project Leader Andy Bumgarner

DISCIPLINE/NAME	DATE REVIEWED	INITIALS	REVIEW COMMENTS
Range & Wild horses Bumgarner			
Vegetation Miles			
Botany & T&E Plants Findley			
Wildlife & T&E Animals Sadowski			
Fisheries Tait			
Soil/Water/Air Wenderoth			
Geology/Minerals			
Cultural Pritchard			
Lands & Realty Manezes			
Recreation/Wild & Scenic River Sterin			
Wilderness /WSA Chistensen			
Fire Management			
Engineering & Force Acct. Pritchard			
Noxious Weeds Silva			
P&E Coordinator Miles			Final Review & Filing
Project Leader Bumgarner			Final EA & FONSI/Decision Record
Area Manager Taylor			Final EA Review & FONSI/Decision

This page is to be filed with the
AD/CE/EA & FONSI/DECISION RECORD
EUGUREN PERMIT CHANGE
Environmental Assessment
EA # OR-030-02-022

BLM OFFICE: Vale District, Jordan Resource Area

PROPOSED ACTION: Change permit to reflect an extended season of use to allow a permittee to take livestock home for one month and then return later in the season to finish out his active preference.

LOCATION: West Cow Creek Allotment, Arock and Navaro V Pastures

APPLICANT: Fred Eiguren

CONFORMANCE WITH APPLICABLE LAND USE PLAN

This proposed action is subject to the following land use plans:

Preferred Land Use Alternative (MFP), 1983

Southern Rangeland Program Summary, 1984

These plans have been reviewed to determine if the proposed action conforms with the land use plans terms and conditions as required by 43 CFR 1610.5

REMARKS

This project is in conformance with the MFP and RPS and the following objectives: 1) to improve ecological condition through the development and implementation of economically feasible grazing systems and 2) to improve and maintain vegetation and soil conditions to benefit watershed, wildlife, and livestock.

NEED FOR PROPOSED ACTION

The primary need for the proposed action is to facilitate livestock management for the permittee in the Arock and Navaro V Pastures of the West Cow Creek Community Allotment. Currently, the authorized use in the Arock and Navaro V Pastures is during the early spring/summer period (4/1-9/22) with 500 cow/calf (C/C) pairs. The permittee has requested to take his cattle home 22 days early for one month and then return with dry cattle. There is a window of opportunity to improve vegetation health in these two pastures especially near and around existing water sources. This would be accomplished by turning out 250 pair for one week in the spring during the critical growing period, instead of 500 pair all at once. Also by providing periodic rest during a portion of the hot season, (the month of September) and returning at a cooler time of year with dry cows that will distribute well and utilize vegetation further from water sources.

DESCRIPTION OF PROPOSED ACTION AND ALTERNATIVES

A. Alternative I: Proposed Action

The proposed action is to change the permittee’s ten year grazing permit to authorize the following grazing

Date	Head Number	AUM’S
4/1 to 4/7	250 C/C	58
4/8 to 9/1	470 C/C	2272
10/1 to 11/6	450 Dry Cattle	548
	Total	2,878

This system will follow a two year deferred rotation grazing schedule (i.e. one year of early use followed by late use the following year) using the Navaro V and Arock Pastures. The Navaro V pasture is generally used for two months while the Arock pasture is grazed for four months.

The current authorized livestock use in the pastures is

Date	Head Number	AUMs
4-1 to 9-22	500 C/C	2,878

This system also follows a two year deferred rotation grazing schedule.

The attached map shows the location of the Navaro V and Arock pastures.

B. Alternative II

The permit would not be changed.

AFFECTED ENVIRONMENT

Vegetation

Approximately eighty percent of Navaro V and Arock Pastures are dominated by crested wheatgrass (*Agropyron cristatum*). The other twenty percent of the vegetation consists of Wyoming sagebrush (*Artemisia tridentata ssp. wyomingensis*), bluebunch wheatgrass (*Pseudorogneria spicata*), Sandberg bluegrass (*Poa sandbergi*), and cheatgrass (*Bromus tectorum*)

Soils and Water Resources

The soils found in the area were surveyed and described in Oregon's Long Range Requirements for Water 1969, Appendix I-11, Owyhee Drainage Basin. The project area consists of seven soil mapping units from this fourth-order soil survey. The seven units incorporate six classification units (CU) that occur in various percentages within each unit and have slope groups (2-6) that range between 3-60+ percent.

Unit 56-76/2-3 CU 56 soils, 30 percent CU 76 soils, 3-12 percent slopes.

Unit 75-76-79/2-3 CU 75 soils, 30 percent CU 76 soils, and 20 percent 79 soils, 3-12 percent slopes.

Unit 76/2-3 CU 76 soils, 3-12 percent slopes.

Unit 76-56/2-35 CU 76 soils, 30 percent CU 56 soils, 3-12 percent slopes.

Unit 76-75L/2-3 CU 76 soils, 30 percent CU 75L soils, 3-12 percent slopes.

Unit 79-94/4 CU 79 soils, 30 percent CU 94 soils, 12-20 percent slopes.

Unit 96/5-6 CU 96 soils, 20- 60+ percent slopes.

Classification Unit 56

Soils are shallow, well drained soils with clayey subsoils and cemented pans. They occur on very extensive, gently sloping to moderately steep old fans on high terrace remnants. Soils occur at elevations from 3,000 to 6,000 feet. Average annual precipitation ranges from 8 to 11 inches, and mean annual air temperature centers around 47 degrees F. The soil profile by depth consist of gravelly loam, clay loam, to heavy clay loams over cemented gravelly pans 6-20 inches thick over stratified loamy sand and gravel

Classification Unit 75L

Soils are shallow, loamy, somewhat stony, well drained soils on gently undulating and sloping plateaus of basalt, rhyolite, or welded tuff. Soils occur at elevations from 4,000 to 6,000 feet. Average annual precipitation ranges from 8 to 11 inches, and mean annual air temperature centers around 45 degrees F. The soil profile by depth consist of stony silt loam, and stony heavy loam over basalt bedrock at 18+ inches.

Classification Unit 76

Soils are shallow, clayey, very stony, well drained soils over basalt, rhyolite, or welded tuff. They occur on gently undulating to rolling lava plateaus with some very steep faulted and dissected terrain. Soils occur at elevations from 3,500 to 6,500 feet. Average annual precipitation ranges from 8 to 11 inches, and mean annual air temperature centers around 47 degrees F. The soil profile by depth consist of very stony silt loam, stony silty clay, to stony and channery heavy silty clay loams over fractured bedrock at 18+ inches.

Classification Unit 79

Soils are deep, loamy, well drained soils developed from wind deposits on undulating to rolling uplands. Soils occur at elevations from 2,500 to 4,500 feet. Average annual precipitation ranges from 8 to 11 inches, and mean annual air temperature centers around 47 degrees F. The soil profile by depth consist of loam, over silt loam or loam to 48+ inches.

Classification Unit 94 (Raw sediments, low slopes)

This is a miscellaneous land unit consisting raw old lake sediments occurring on gently sloping to moderately steep slopes.

Classification Unit 96 (Steep Rock land)

This is a miscellaneous land unit consisting of rough, steeply sloping areas that are predominantly shallow, very stony soils interspersed with rock outcrop. Steep Rock land occurs mainly as canyons and escarpments along margins and dissected portions of lava plateaus.

Arock and Navaro V Pastures

The Arock pasture consist of about 50 percent of 76-75L/2-3, 30 percent of Unit 56-76/2-3, and about 10 percent of 75L-76-79/2-3 and 79-94/4. The Navaro V pasture consists of about 45 percent 76-75L/2-3, 30 percent 76-56/2-3, 15 percent 76/2-3, and 10 percent 96/5-6. Additional soil inclusions can be found throughout the project area that contain varying degrees of surface textures and roughness and are variants of these units.

These two pastures lie within the 8-11 inch precipitation zone yet could receive wide variations from drought to wet years ranging from as low as 3 to as high as 12 inches.

No perennial or intermittent flowing water sources lie within the pastures. The nearest perennial water is the Bogus Creek located adjacent to the northern boundary of the Navaro V pasture and the Owyhee River to the West of this pasture which is isolated from livestock use by the steep rim above the river. All ephemeral and intermittent flowing channels within the pastures drain to the Owyhee River.

Noxious Weeds

Cheatgrass, an introduced annual, is present throughout the Arock and Navaro V Pastures. Halogeton, an introduced annual, is also present, mainly along roadsides.

Livestock

The West Cow Creek Community Allotment (#20902) is located North of Rome, Oregon. The allotment is comprised of twenty individual pastures for a total of 149,860 acres. There are six permittees who have a gentleman's agreement to run in individual pastures by themselves.

The topography of the Navaro V and Arock Pastures is flat with a few rolling hills. Elevation ranges around 3,800 feet to 4,000 feet. The Navaro V Pasture is 8,840 acres and the Arock Pasture is 16,194 acres. Fred Eiguren is the only permittee authorized to graze these two pastures. Mr. Eiguren is currently authorized to graze 500 CC from 4/1 to 9/22 for a total of 2,878 active AUM's.

Wildlife

Terrestrial wildlife species of management importance within the proposed action area are those typically associated with lower elevation Wyoming sagebrush steppe rangelands in Malheur County. They include pronghorn, mule deer, and several species of sagebrush associated land birds including greater sage-grouse. Due to influence of wildfires and the presence of crested wheatgrass seedings (that exhibit limited recolonization of sagebrush), both pastures fall within a larger landscape made up of the most highly fragmented sagebrush habitat found in Jordan Resource Area.

The only existing sage grouse inventories completed within and around the proposed action area are lek surveys. As of this year no strutting grounds have been identified within either of the grazing allotment pastures affected by the proposed action. According to BLM/ODFW records, strutting and nesting activity does occur at higher elevations nearby, but in locations several miles to the north and east in complex low sagebrush / big sagebrush rangelands. If there is any consistent use by sage grouse within the proposed action, area it is most likely taken during the winter within remaining stands of sagebrush.

Threatened or Endangered Species

There are no threatened or endangered plant or animal species in the proposed area.

Recreation and Visual Resources

Dispersed outdoor recreation in the proposed area consists primarily of hunting. Some dispersed sightseeing and day hiking may occur but on a very limited basis due to the lack of vegetation diversity. This area is in visual resource management class IV which has the objective to provide for management activities that require major modification of the landscape.

Cultural Resources

The majority of information available on the prehistory of the northern Great Basin comes from data gathered from excavations at rockshelters like Fort Rock Cave, Roaring Springs Cave, Catlow Cave, and Dirty Shame Rockshelter. At Dirty Shame Rockshelter, the earliest dates of occupation come from charcoal sources dated to 9500 B.P. The eruption of Mt. Mazama at 7050 years ago and resultant ash layer provides an excellent time marker for dating cultural habitation in the area. The postglacial warming and drying reached a peak between about 7000 and 4000 BP, and a moderate reversal of this trend established a climate roughly like that of the present after about 4000 BP. With climatic changes, came a shift in floral and faunal species and the appearance of species that characterize arid environments.

Overall, the prehistory of the northern Great Basin shows long continuity and adaptive change to distinctive ecosystems with a changing climate. The persistence of lithic and textile traditions and subsistence patterns during these chronological periods supports the theory of cultural continuity throughout the northern Great Basin. The subsistence pattern was based on a broad spectrum seasonal round that utilized over 50 floral species, big and small game hunting and fishing. Pre-European contact Native American hunters and gatherers living in southeast Oregon's high desert were extremely well adapted to their environment, and used it effectively and efficiently. The subsistence economy of the Northern Paiute was strongly oriented toward gathering and collecting because plant foods were more abundant and dependable than fowl, fish or mammals.

In accordance with 36 CFR 800, a Class I file search was conducted to determine the nature and extent of the cultural resources located within the project area. Prehistoric sites have been documented in this area through previous cultural resource surveys. Sites are located around water sources and were used primarily during the late spring through summer seasons during hot weather. The sites are lithic scatter sites and campsites that show occupation of an area through the presence of flakes, tools and lithic procurement.

Other Mandatory Elements

The following mandatory elements are either not present or would not be affected by the proposed action or alternatives:

<u>Critical Elements</u>	Affected	
	<u>Yes</u>	<u>No</u>
ACES		X
Cultural Resources		X
Farmlands, Prime/Unique		X
Flood plain		X
Nat. Amer.Rel. Concerns		X
T & E Species		X
Wastes, Hazardous/Solid		X

Water Quality (Surface and Ground)	X
Wetlands/Riparian Zones	X
Wild and Scenic Rivers	X
Wilderness	X
Wildlife	X
Invasive, Non-native Species	X
Environmental Justice	X

ENVIRONMENTAL CONSEQUENCES

A. Alternative I: Proposed Action

Vegetation

Authorization of the proposed change in season of use would improve vegetation health especially near and around existing watering sources. This would be accomplished by turning out only 250 C/C for the first week during the critical growing time of the grazing season instead of 500 C/C, and by taking cows and calves off the range 22 days early during the hot season of use and shifting that use to later in the season when perennial grasses have become essentially dormant. Further improvement would be expected by bringing back 450 adult cattle instead of 470 adult cattle, during the cooler part of the year. These cattle would also be weaned of their calves (which were consuming about 8 to 10 pounds of forage at the time they were weaned). By doing this, cattle would spread out more evenly and range farther from water, not only because it is cooler but also because they do not have a calf to look after. This would result in a more uniform pattern of utilization in the pastures.

The best use of crested wheatgrass seedings is early in the spring and late in the fall. During these times, temperatures are cool and the grass is softer, more supple, and thus more palatable. Cattle distribute better and range farther from water during the spring and fall than they will during the hot summer months. Not having 450 seven month old calves on the range will dramatically decrease the number of animal unit months (AUMs) being consumed and thus lesson the impacts of grazing.

Soils and Water Resources

Soil and water resources from the proposed action would be expected to improve, especially near water sources, because the vegetation would be healthier and more vigorous. The plant density would also be expected to increase thus holding more soil together and allowing for less bare ground. The increased vigor and density of the plants would also provide more protection against erosion.

Noxious Weeds

Noxious weeds would be expected to stay in check or slightly decrease because there should be less bare ground near water sources which is where weeds normally would be expected to establish. Less grazing use during the spring and more even utilization as a result of less number of head and grazing during cooler times of the year should provide for healthier vegetation. This in turn also should help reduce the establishment of weeds.

Livestock Grazing

Approving this permit change would allow the operator to better manage his cattle herd within the two pastures and in conjunction with his private property. Improved livestock grazing would occur because a certain portion of the grazing would be delayed until later in the year when temperatures are cooler and cows do not have calves to look after. Dry cattle disperse well and range further from water when they do not have a calf to care for. The combination of cooler weather and dry cattle would result in good distribution of cattle which should improve over all health of the herd.

Wildlife

Due to the fact that a) no strutting grounds have been identified within either of the grazing allotment pastures affected by the proposed action and b) habitats within the affected pastures are most likely winter range for sage grouse, the proposed changes in grazing use would not result in adverse effects on sage grouse habitat. General wildlife habitat health in terms of herbaceous plant composition and structure for pronghorn, mule deer, and other land birds including greater sage-grouse would be improved because spring/summer grazing utilization levels would be reduced. In contrast to the current situation, more forage, cover, and structure associated with grasses and forbs should be available for the life history requirements of wildlife.

Threatened or Endangered Species

Threatened or endangered plant or wildlife species are not known to exist.

Recreation and Visual Resources

The proposed change in use would shift some of the cattle use into the rifle deer hunting season. Thus, some hunters may encounter cattle in areas where they had not seen them before during previous hunts. Otherwise, the proposed action would have little change in effect compared to the existing situation.

Cultural Resources

Under dry soil moisture conditions and on rocky soils, livestock trampling can cause additional or new edgewear damage to flakes. The proposed action would have little to no additional effect on cultural properties in the project area.

B. Alternative II- No Action

Under this alternative the permit would remain as is, therefore no new impacts would occur.

Vegetation

Crested wheatgrass at the far reaches of the two pastures would remain wolfy (i.e. grass plants that become rank and decadent and therefore unpalatable to herbivores) or unpalatable due to the inability of cattle to utilize those plants except early in the spring or late in the fall. Vegetation near water troughs would continue to receive heavier grazing use than under the proposed action.

Soils and Water Resources

There would be no new or different impacts to the soil and water resources from the proposed action except impacts to the soil near water troughs would be greater under this alternative than under the proposed action.

Noxious Weeds

No new or different impacts would occur to noxious weeds.

Livestock Grazing

Livestock grazing would continue with the current season of use.

Wildlife

No new or different impacts would occur to wildlife.

Threatened and Endangered Species

Same as proposed action.

Recreation and Visual Resources

Impacts to dispersed recreation activities and visual resources would remain the same as they are now.

Same as proposed action.

MITIGATION MEASURES AND RESIDUAL IMPACTS

No mitigation measures are recommended.

PERSONS CONSULTED

Fred Eiguren Livestock Permittee

BLM STAFF SPECIALISTS

Tom Miles, Supervisory Rangeland Management Specialist

Andy Bumgarner, Rangeland Management Specialist

Jon Sadowski, Wildlife Biologist/T & E Animals

Diane Pritchard, Archeologist

Jack Wenderoth, Soil/Air/Water

Tom Christensen, Recreation/Wilderness

Lynne Silva, Noxious Weeds

Jean Findley, Botany & T& E Plants

FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACTS

I have reviewed EA, OR-030-02-022 and determined that the proposed action with mitigating measures will not have any significant impacts on the human environment and that an EIS is not required. My rationale for this finding of no significant impacts is as follows: The request for a change in the time of use will enhance the Navaro V and Arock pastures by shifting spring use to the fall. The combination of late fall grazing and grazing with dry cattle (cows with out calves) will improve the grazing system of these pastures by reducing the impacts on the range directly adjacent to existing water sources. Dry cows and cool weather will allow better distribution of cattle and more even utilization of vegetation. Perennial grass health will also benefit by bringing less cattle in to graze during the critical plant growth periods in the spring and shifting that use to later in the season after the plant has gone through seed ripe and become dormant.

The best use of crested wheatgrass seedings is early in the spring and late in the fall. During these times, temperatures are cool and the grass is softer, more supple, and thus more palatable. Cattle distribute better and range farther from water during the spring and fall than they will during the hot summer months. Not having 450 seven month old calves on the range will dramatically decrease the number of animal unit months (AUMs) being consumed and thus lessen the impacts of grazing.

Allowing this permit change is a reasonable action that reduces impacts of grazing of the Navaro V and Arock Pastures. No impacts were identified that would significantly affect any aspect of the human environment. I have determined that the proposed project is in conformance with the land use plan.

s/ Tom Miles, Acting for

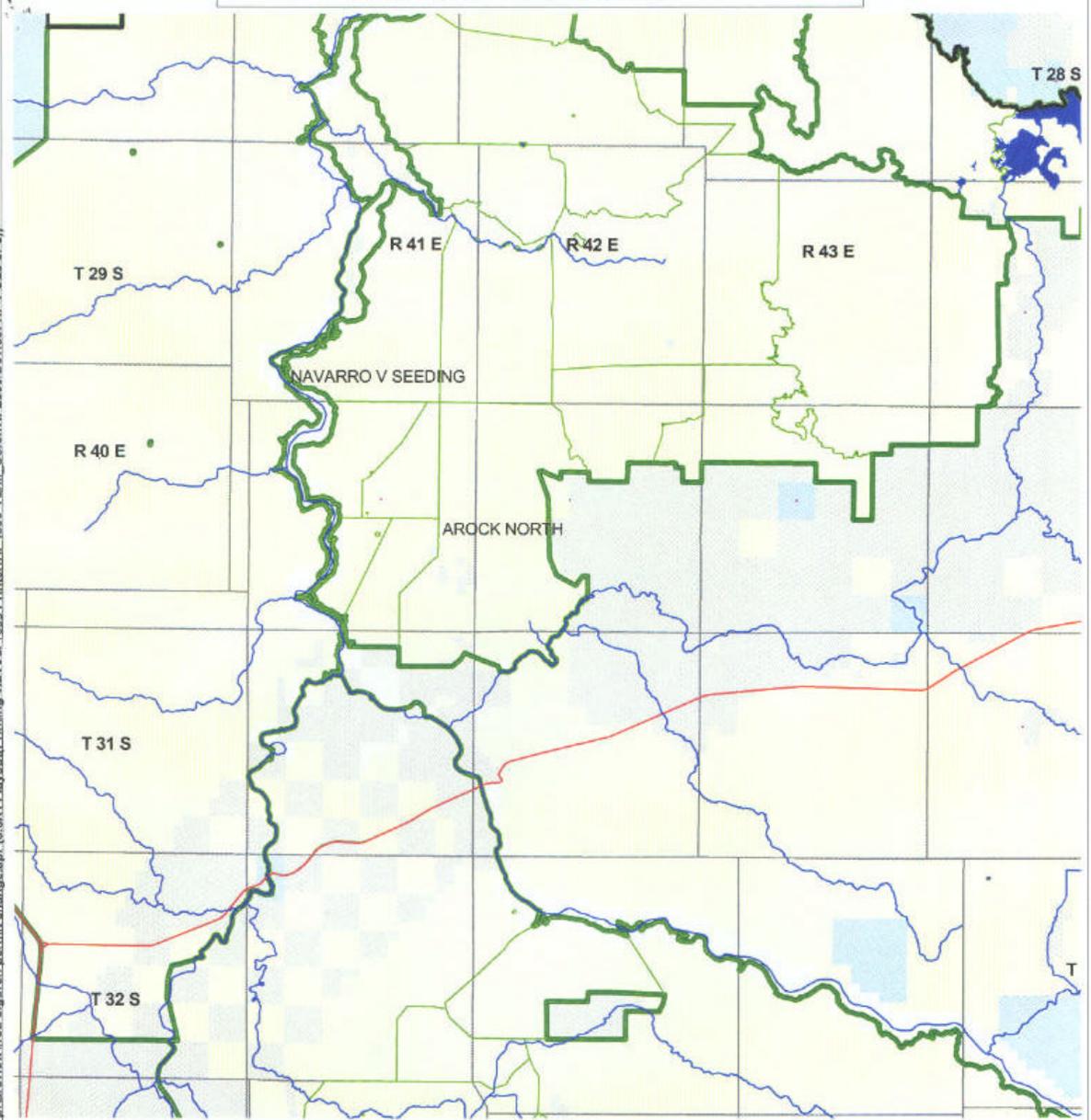
October 3, 2002

Jerry L. Taylor
Field Manager, Jordan Resource Area

Date

Fred Eiguren Permit Change

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- Vale District Boundary
- Named Streams
- State and US Highways
- Pastures_00
- Allotments
- Surface Water
- Twtnsh_labels
- Township (MRA/JRA)
- Ownership MRA/JRA
- Bureau of Land Management
- other
- State of Oregon
- private



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