

DON AND BETTY OPIE
GRAZING PERMIT
RENEWAL

ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT
OR-025-03-014

Bureau of Land Management
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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Chapter I. Introduction: Purpose of and Need for Action.....	1
Chapter II. Alternatives Including the Proposed Action	1
A. Description of the Proposed Action.....	1
B. No Grazing Alternative.....	2
Chapter III. Description of the Affected Environment.....	2
Chapter IV. Environmental Consequences.....	2
A. Proposed Action.....	2
1. Anticipated Impacts	2
2. Cumulative Impacts	3
Chapter V. Persons and Agencies Consulted.....	3
Chapter VI. Participating Staff	3

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION: PURPOSE OF AND NEED FOR ACTION

Grazing permittees who graze their livestock on Bureau of Land Management (BLM) land shall have grazing permits issued to them under the grazing regulations (43 CFR 4130.2(a)). Grazing permits shall be issued for a term of 10 years unless there is some reason which requires a term of less than 10 years under the grazing regulations (43 CFR 4130.2(d)). In this case, the Don and Betty Opie grazing permit will be issued for a period of 3 years, the term of the Base Property Lease.

The Three Rivers Resource Management Plan (RMP) of 1992, identified land that was available for livestock grazing. The land in the Virginia Valley Allotment, which is within the Don and Betty Opie grazing permit, meets the criteria set forth in the Three Rivers RMP under GM 1.4, Page 2-37. This action is also in conformance with applicable Tribal, State, and County Land Use Plans. (This analysis is tiered to the Three Rivers RMP and incorporates by reference, the information and analysis contained within the RMP.)

An analysis of the grazing systems used on the Virginia Valley Allotment (#5316) and Marshall Diamond Fenced Federal Range (FFR) (#5325) for compliance with the Standards for Rangeland Health and Guidelines for Livestock Grazing Management was completed in 1999 for the Virginia Valley Allotment and in 2002 for the Marshall Diamond FFR. Both allotments are meeting the standards and guidelines under current management practices.

CHAPTER II: ALTERNATIVES INCLUDING THE PROPOSED ACTION

A. Description of the Proposed Action

The proposed action is to issue to the current permittee (Don and Betty Opie), a 3-year term livestock grazing permit based on the length of the base property lease, with the same terms and conditions as the expiring permit. This would continue the existing grazing management and would be the same as a no action alternative. Therefore, both alternatives will be analyzed under the proposed action. There has been monitoring of the effects of the current livestock grazing system in place within the allotment for a number of years. These study sites have been read periodically for more than 21 years. Monitoring data collected was last formally analyzed in 1995. The data analyzed indicates that allotment objectives are currently being met.

B. No Grazing Alternative

The proposed action would continue current terms and conditions. Monitoring has shown that allotment resource objectives and Standards for Rangeland Health are being met. Therefore, while a "No Grazing Alternative" has been considered, for the above reasons this alternative will not be addressed further in this document.

CHAPTER III: DESCRIPTION OF THE AFFECTED ENVIRONMENT

The following elements of the human environment have been analyzed in the Three Rivers RMP/Environmental Impact Statement (EIS), are not present in the project area, or will not be affected by the proposed action or no action alternative: Prime or Unique Farmlands, Floodplains, Hazardous Materials, Special Management Areas (Research Natural Areas, Areas of Critical Environmental Concern, Wild and Scenic Rivers, Wilderness or Wilderness Study Areas), Air Quality, Water Quality, Cultural Heritage, American Indian Religious Concerns, Noxious Weeds, Paleontology, Special Status Fauna, and Special Status Flora.

Migratory Birds: Some migratory birds are known to use the project area for nesting, foraging, and resting as they pass through on their yearly migrations.

Environmental Justice: There are no economically disadvantaged or minority populations present within the project area.

Adverse Energy Impacts: No known adverse impacts would occur to energy development, production or distribution as a result of issuing a livestock grazing permit.

CHAPTER IV: ENVIRONMENTAL CONSEQUENCES

A. Proposed Action

1. Anticipated Impacts

Grazing use for Don and Betty Opie would be authorized under a new term grazing permit. The level and timing of use by livestock in the allotment would not change from what was authorized at the time the Three Rivers RMP was adopted.

Since the writing of the RMP/EIS, the following resources have been recognized and were not analyzed in the RMP/EIS:

- a. Migratory Birds: There would be no known effect on migratory birds by the issuing of a livestock grazing permit.

- b. Environmental Justice: There are no economically disadvantaged or minority populations which would be disproportionately affected by issuance of a livestock grazing permit.
- c. Adverse Energy Impacts: There are no known impacts which would occur to any energy-related resources as a result of issuing a livestock grazing permit.

2. Cumulative Impacts

There are no known cumulative impacts, either positive or negative, that would occur if a grazing permit is issued.

CHAPTER V: PERSONS AND AGENCIES CONSULTED

Don and Betty Opie

CHAPTER VI: PARTICIPATING STAFF

Bill Andersen, Acting Natural Resource Supervisor
Gary Foulkes, District Planning/Environmental Coordinator
Terri Geisler, District Geologist
James A. King, Range Management Specialist, Lead Preparer
Fred McDonald, Recreation Specialist
Glenn Patterson, District Range Management Specialist
Lesley Richman, Weed Specialist
Fred Taylor, Wildlife Biologist
Nora Taylor, District Botanist
Scott Thomas, District Archaeologist
Michael Weston, Fisheries Biologist