



United States Department of the Interior



BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT

Surprise Field Office  
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In Reply Refer To:  
4120/4130 (CA-370) P

May 31, 2001

Jewelle Estill  
PO Box 67  
Likely, CA 96116

Dear Jewelle:

Enclosed for information is Modification #1 to Environmental Assessment CA-370-01-03, Wall Canyon East Allotment, Livestock Grazing Authorization and Grazing Plan Revision. The referenced environmental assessment has been modified to address concerns regarding the Bureau's analysis of Social and Economic Values/Environmental Justice. Based on my review of the additional information, I have determined that an environmental impact statement is not required. My decision of April 4, 2001 remains unchanged.

I hope the enclosed modification helps to address the concerns expressed by you and others. Please let me know if you have any further questions or concerns.

Sincerely,

Susan T. Stokke  
Surprise Field Manager

Enclosure

cc: Jim Linebaugh  
Huel Morphis  
Steve Slusser  
Marla Bennett  
Mackey Hedges  
Modoc County Land Use Committee  
Modoc County Board of Supervisors  
Roy Leach  
Rose Strickland  
Shaaron Netherton  
Catherine Barcomb  
Dan Heinz



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## WALL CANYON EAST ALLOTMENT

*Environmental Assessment for Livestock  
Grazing Authorization and Grazing Plan Revision*

### Modification #1

EA: CA-370-01-03

### **Introduction**

Environmental Assessment CA-370-01-03 was issued on April 4, 2001. The Modoc County Land Use Committee and Estill Ranches, the livestock permittee, were critical of the Bureau's analysis of Social and Economic Values/Environmental Justice (EA-page 22 and 23). Although the Bureau's decision regarding the selected management alternative was supported, both parties felt that the social and economic impacts of the range of alternatives was substantially in error. Additionally, since the Environmental Assessment was issued, the "*Grazing Statistics Report and Economic Analysis for Federal Lands in Nevada*" was published by the Nevada Department of Agriculture. As a result of the feedback received and new economic information for public lands grazing in Nevada, EA: CA-370-01-03 is hereby modified.

### **Modification #1 to EA: CA-370-01-03**

The Social and Economic Values/Environmental Justice section of the environmental analysis in the referenced Environmental Assessment (pages 22 and 23) is replaced with the following:

### *Social and Economic Values/ Environmental Justice*

#### **Affected Environment**

The livestock operation on the Wall Canyon East Allotment serves as an integral part of the Soldier Meadows Ranch operation, near Gerlach, Nevada. For the purposes of this analysis, the social and economic impacts to the local community and within the region will be assessed. Due to its location,

personnel involved with the operation of this allotment generally reside outside of Surprise Valley. Therefore, potential impacts to the economy of Gerlach, Nevada, will be assessed. The effects to local employment opportunities for low-income or minority populations will also be assessed.

The US-Environmental Protection Agency has defined minority and low-income populations as follows: (1) minority individuals/populations classified by the Office of Management and Budget Directive No. 15 are Black/African American, Hispanic, Asian and Pacific Islander, Eskimo, Aleut and other non-white persons where the minority population of the affected area exceeds 50% or the minority population of the affected area is meaningfully greater than the minority population in the general population; (2) low income individuals are those who meet the Department of Health and Human Services poverty guidelines or the Department of Urban and Housing statutory definition for very low-income for the purposes of housing benefit programs.

Based on the above definition, low-income or minority groups who could potentially be affected by the Proposed Action or its alternatives are Native American and Hispanic populations living primarily in Humboldt and Washoe Counties, Nevada.

### **Environmental Consequences**

#### **1. Impacts of the Proposed Action.**

The Proposed Action requires intensive livestock herding to meet riparian and upland vegetation objectives. This would result in increased costs for the livestock operator as the employment of at least one, and possibly more, personnel would be needed at least part-time.

Under the current early use management, a part-time rider is already employed (from May/June-mid-July). However, under the Proposed Action, the length of time a rider would be needed is expected to extend from mid-July until mid-September (an additional 60 days). The additional cost of the Proposed Action relative to current (early use) management would be about: 60 days @ \$150/day or \$9000. This equates to an increase in costs of about \$2.80/AUM for the livestock operation. Low income or minority populations could potentially benefit to a limited degree from the increased employment opportunities stemming from proposed on-the-ground allotment management.

Little change to overall local/regional economies is anticipated as a result of the Proposed Action, as no change in the current authorized active use AUMs is proposed.

#### **2. Impacts of the Early Use Alternative**

Under this alternative, the direct economic value of an AUM to the local/regional economy is estimated at \$24.40/AUM (Grazing Statistics Report and Economic Analysis for Federal Lands in Nevada was published by the Nevada Department of Agriculture, March 26, 2001). The estimated annual economic contribution of the 3,215 AUMs of authorized use on the Wall Canyon East Allotment is about \$78,446.

The livestock operator's current costs for herding, range improvement maintenance, etc. would be expected to remain unchanged with continuation of the existing early use livestock management.

Little change in employment opportunities for low-income or minority populations would be expected over current.

3. Impacts of the No Grazing Alternative

The No Grazing Alternative would eliminate authorized livestock use for the Wall Canyon East Allotment. The expected direct impact to the local/regional economy as a result of no livestock grazing would be about \$78,446 annually.

Using the approach outlined in the Modoc County Elk Working Group's "Strategic Plan for Elk Management", the loss of grazing on the Wall Canyon East Allotment would be expected to result in roughly a 50% overall adjustment in the cow herd. This adjustment would be based on the need to provide feed for the livestock on private lands for 12 months rather 6 months per year (private land feed would be needed to support the cow herd during May-September). For the Wall Canyon East Allotment, the 600 head cow herd would be decreased by 50% to 300 head. As a result, gross income would be expected to decline from \$270,000 annually (600 head x 90% calf crop x \$500/calf) to \$135,000 annually (300 head x 90% calf crop x \$500/calf).

Potential employment opportunities for low-income or minority populations associated with on-the-ground allotment management would be reduced by about one job (Grazing Statistics Report and Economic Analysis for Federal Lands in Nevada was published by the Nevada Department of Agriculture, March 26, 2001 - page 47, which estimates that it takes about \$112,471 of increased or decreased range cattle sector output to change one job).

4. Cumulative Impacts

During the past twenty years, authorized use for public lands administered by the Surprise Field Office has declined by about 8%, or roughly 7,260 AUMs (about one-half the 16% total adjustment in AUMs experienced on public lands Nevada-wide). Much of this change is attributed to the need to adjust livestock numbers in order to ensure maintenance of healthy rangelands, or to reintroduce California bighorn sheep to their native habitat. At \$24.40/AUM, the direct economic loss to local/regional economies is estimated at \$177,144 annually. If the No Grazing Alternative were implemented for the Wall Canyon East Allotment, the total estimated direct impact to local/regional economies would be \$255,590. An additional indirect loss of \$24.00/AUM would also be expected, resulting in a potential cumulative loss to local/regional economies of \$53.40/AUM or \$559,365 annually.

**DECISION RECORD/FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT**

Based upon my review of the additional information provided above, I have determined that the potential environmental impacts of the Proposed Action and its alternatives would not result in any significant impacts to the quality of the human environment. Therefore, an environmental impact statement is not required.

My decision of April 4, 2001 remains unchanged.

Approved:

  
Susan T. Stokke, Surprise Field Manager

Date:

