

**U.S. Department of the Interior
Bureau of Land Management**

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July 2009**

**L&B Farm & Cattle Limited Partnership
Term Permit Renewal**

Location: Lincoln County, NV

U.S. Department of the Interior
Bureau of Land Management
Caliente Field Office
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1.0 Introduction: Need for Action

This document identifies issues, analyzes alternatives, and discloses the potential environmental impacts associated with the proposed grazing term permit renewal of L&B Farm & Cattle Limited Partnership (#2705077) on the Mahogany Peak Allotment (01040). The aforementioned allotment is approximately 50 miles northeast of Caliente, Nevada and is found entirely in Lincoln County (see Figure 1, Appendix 1).

The legal descriptions of the allotment is as follows

Mahogany Peak Allotment: T. 33-34S. R. 71E. sections: several.

1.1 Introduction of the Proposed Action.

The Bureau of Land Management (BLM) Caliente Field Office proposes to issue and fully process a term grazing permit for L&B Farm & Cattle Limited Partnership (#2705077) and authorize grazing on the Mahogany Peak Allotment. Changes to the existing permit are not recommended as necessary to achieve the Standards and Guidelines for Nevada's Mojave-Southern Great Basin Area as established by the Nevada Mojave-Southern Great Basin Resource Advisory Council (RAC), approved 2006. To comply with best management practices the season of use on this permit will be changed from 5/1 through 10/15. This is to insure that vegetation receives adequate rest during the critical growing season. (pg A.1-8 Ely RMP)

Monitoring data were reviewed and assessments of the rangeland health of the allotment were completed in 2009 during the term permit renewal process through a Standards Determination Document (see complete Standards Determination Document, Appendix II).

The following is a summary of the SDD by allotment for achievement of the standards.

Table 1. Standards Determination Summary

ALLOTMENT	STANDARD 1 Soils	STANDARD 2 Ecosystem Components	STANDARD 3 Habitat and Biota
Mahogany Peak (01040)	Not Achieving the Standard, but making significant progress towards achieving. Livestock are not a causal factor.	Not Applicable	Not Achieving the Standard, and not making significant progress toward standard. Livestock are not a causal factor.

1.2 Need for the Proposed Action.

The need for the proposal is to provide for legitimate multiple uses of the public lands by renewing the term grazing permit for L&B Farm & Cattle Limited Partnership with new terms and conditions for grazing use that conform to Guidelines and achieve Standards for Nevada's Mojave-Southern Great Basin Area. These terms and conditions will be in accordance with all applicable laws, regulations, and policies and in accordance with Title 43 CFR 4130.2(a) which states, "Grazing permits or leases authorize use on the public lands and other BLM-administered lands that are designated in land use plans as available for livestock grazing."

1.3 Objectives for the Proposed Action.

1.3.1. To renew the grazing term permit for L&B Farm & Cattle Limited Partnership and authorize grazing in accordance with applicable laws, regulations, and land use plans (LUP) on approximately 28,441 acres of public land.

1.3.2. To improve vegetative health and growth conditions on the Allotment and continue to make progress towards achieving the Standards and Guidelines for rangeland health as approved and published by Nevada's Mojave-Southern Great Basin RAC.

1.4 Relationship to Planning

The proposed action is in conformance with the Ely District Record of Decision and Approved Resource Management Plan signed August 20, 2008, which states, "Manage livestock grazing on public lands to provide for a level of livestock grazing consistent with multiple use, sustained yield, and watershed function and health." In addition, "To allow livestock grazing to occur in a manner and at levels consistent with multiple use, sustained yield, and the standards for rangeland health (p 85-86)."

Management Action LG-1 states, "Make approximately 11,246,900 acres and 545,267 animal unit months available for livestock grazing on a long-term basis."

Management Action LG-5 states, "Maintain the current grazing preference, season-of-use, and kind of livestock until the allotments that have not been evaluated for meeting or making progress toward meeting the standards or are in conformance with the policies are evaluated. Depending on the results of the standards assessment, maintain or modify grazing preference, seasons-of-use, kind of livestock and grazing management practices to achieve the standards for rangeland health. Changes, such as improved livestock management, new range improvement projects, and changes in the amount and kinds of forage permanently available for livestock use, can lead to changes in preference, authorized season-of-use, or kind of livestock. Ensure changes continue to meet the RMP goals and objectives, including the standards for rangeland health."

1.4.1 Relationship to Other Plans

The proposed action is consistent with the following Federal, State, and local plans to the maximum extent possible.

- State Protocol Agreement between the Bureau of Land Management, Nevada and the Nevada Historic Preservation Office (1999).
- Mojave-Southern Great Basin Resource Advisory Council (RAC) Standards and Guidelines (September, 2006).
- State Protocol Agreement between the Bureau of Land Management, Nevada and the Nevada Historic Preservation Office (1999).

1.4.2 Tiering

This document is tiered to the Ely Proposed Resource Management Plan/Final Environmental Impact Statement (November 2007).

1.6 Relevant Issues and Internal Scoping/Public Scoping.

The L&B Farm & Cattle Limited Partnership term permit renewal proposal was initiated on December 16, 2008, with a presentation to the internal resource specialist team. The proposal was posted on the Ely NEPA web page on January 21, 2009. During the internal scoping session no resource value issues were identified by the interdisciplinary resource specialist team. Noxious and invasive weeds and special status plants have been identified on this allotment. A letter notifying the permittee and interested public of the term permit renewal was sent on January 12, 2009.

2.0 Alternatives Including the Proposed Action

2.1 Proposed Action

The BLM proposes to issue and fully process a new term grazing permit for L&B Farm & Cattle Limited Partnership (#2705077) and authorize grazing on the Mahogany Peak Allotment (Figure 1, Appendix 1). Changes to the permit are recommended to comply with the best management practices put forth in the Ely Resource Management Plan (RMP) and Environmental Impact Statement (EIS). The current permit is shown in Table 1.

2.1.1 Current permit

Table 2. Current Term Permit for L&B Farm & Cattle Limited Partnership (#2702966).

Allotment Name and Number	Livestock Number/Kind	Grazing Period Begin End	% Public Land*	Type Use	AUMs**
Mahogany Peak (01040)	60 Cattle	03/01 - 02/28	100	Active	718
*% Public Land is the percent of public land for billing purposes. **AUMs may differ from Active Use due to a rounding difference with the number of livestock and the period of use.					
Allotment Summary (AUMs)					
Allotment	Active AUMs	Suspended AUMs	Permitted Use AUMs		
Mahogany Peak (01040)	718	2,141	2,859		

2.1.2 Proposed term permit

The renewal of the term grazing permit would be for a period of up to ten years from 2009 to 2019. Livestock number and kind, and permitted use will continue in accordance with the terms of the current permit. Period of use, however, will change from yearlong to 5/1/to 10/15.

In accordance with 43 CFR 4130.3-1 and 4130.3-2, the following terms and conditions shall be included in the new term permit for L&B Farm & Cattle Limited Partnership.

Table 3. New Term Permit for L&B Farm & Cattle Limited Partnership (#2702966).

Allotment Name and Number	Livestock Number/Kind	Grazing Period Begin End	% Public Land*	Type Use	AUMs **
Mahogany Peak (01040)	130 Cattle	5/1-10/15	100	Active	718
*% Public Land is the percent of public land for billing purposes. **AUMs may differ from Active Use due to a rounding difference with the number of livestock and the period of use.					
Allotment Summary (AUMs)					
Allotment	Active AUMs	Suspended AUMs	Permitted Use AUMs		
Mahogany Peak (01040)	718	2,141	2,859		

Stipulations common to all allotments:

1. Livestock numbers identified in the term grazing permit are a function of seasons of use and permitted use for the allotment. Deviations from those livestock numbers and seasons of use may be authorized on an annual basis where such deviations would not prevent attainment of the multiple-use objectives for the above allotment(s).
2. If base property is transferred during this ten year period with no changes to the terms and conditions the new term permit would be issued for the remaining term of this term permit.
3. Deviations from specified grazing use dates will be allowed when consistent with multiple-use objectives. Such deviations will require an application and written authorization from the authorized officer prior to grazing.
4. Pursuant to 43 CFR 10.4(G) the holder of this authorization must notify the authorized officer by telephone, with written confirmation, immediately upon discovery of human remains, funerary objects, sacred objects, or objects of cultural patrimony (as defined at 43 CFR 10.2). Further, pursuant to 43 CFR 10.4 (C) and (D), you must stop activities for 30 days or until notified to proceed by the authorized officer.
5. The authorized officer is requiring that an actual use report (form 4130-5) be submitted within 15 days after completing your annual grazing use.
6. The payment of your grazing fees is due on or before the date specified in the grazing bill. This date is generally the opening date of your allotment. If payment is not received within 15 days of the due date, you will be charged a late fee assessment of \$25.00 or 10 percent of the grazing bill, whichever is greater, not to exceed \$250.00. Payment with VISA, MasterCard or American Express is accepted. Failure to make payment within 30 days of the due date may result in trespass action.

7. If future monitoring data indicates that Standards and Guidelines for Grazing Administration are not being met due to livestock grazing, the permit will be reissued subject to revised terms and conditions.
8. The permittee must notify the authorized officer by telephone, with written confirmation, immediately upon discovery of any hazardous or solid wastes as defined in 40 CFR Part 261.
9. The permittee is responsible for all maintenance of assigned range improvements including wildlife escape ramps for both permanent and temporary water troughs.
10. Livestock will be moved to another authorized pasture or removed from the allotment before utilization objectives are met or no later than 5 days after meeting the utilization objectives. Any deviation in livestock movement will require authorization from the authorized officer.

2.1.3 Best Management Practices (BMPs)

BMPs applicable to the proposed action as described in the RMP (August 2008), Appendix A.

- Place salt and supplements at least 0.5 mile away from winterfat dominated sites. Base placement on site-specific assessment and characteristics such as riparian, topography, cultural, special status species, etc.
- Locate water haul sites at least 0.5 mile away from winterfat dominated sites. Base placement on site-specific assessment and characteristics such as riparian, topography, cultural, special status species, etc.

2.1.4 Salt and mineral supplements:

- Base placement of salt and mineral supplements on site-specific assessment.
- Normally place salt and mineral supplements at least 0.5 mile away from riparian areas, sensitive sites, populations of special status plant species, cultural resource sites.
- Place salt at least 0.5 mile from any water source including troughs.
- Place salt and mineral supplements at least 1 mile from sage grouse leks.
- Place water haul sites at least 0.5 mile away from riparian areas, cultural sites, and special status species locations.
- Limit water hauling to existing roads when possible.

2.1.5 Invasive, Non-Native Species and Noxious Weeds

A Weed Risk Assessment (See Appendix III) was completed on March 10, 2008. The stipulations listed in the Weed Risk Assessment will be followed when grazing occurs on the allotments.

2.1.6 Cultural Resources

According to the Ely District Approved Resource Management Plan, August 2008, (RMP) it is the goal of the Ely District to identify, preserve, and protect significant cultural resources and ensure that they are available for appropriate uses by present and future generations. They are to

protect and maintain these cultural resources on BLM-administered land in stable condition. To accomplish this they are to seek to reduce imminent threats and resolve potential conflicts from natural or human-caused deterioration or potential conflict with other resource uses by ensuring that all authorizations for land use and resource use will comply with the National Historic Preservation Act, Section 106. In accordance with this act, “any material remains of past human life or activities which are of archaeological interest” shall be assessed and secured “for the present and future benefits of the American People”. Therefore, all ground disturbing activities related to livestock grazing (such as fence construction, road construction, water developments, etc.) within the allotment(s) covered by this Term Permit will be subject to Section 106 review and, if needed, SHPO consultation as per BLM Nevada’s implementation of the Protocol for cultural resources.

Livestock grazing has been an historic use of federal lands, now managed by the Caliente Field Office, since the mid-19th century. The extent of effects from livestock grazing on archeological sites is difficult to determine, since extensive livestock grazing has occurred in this region for over 150 years. Though, it is likely that the majority of the livestock-related impacts on cultural resources occurred prior to the passage of the Taylor Grazing Act in 1934.

The BLM conducts field investigations and maintains files of archeological sites on public lands. Analyses of existing documentation indicates that concentrated livestock activities near water sources, along fences, and in areas where livestock seek shelter, could adversely affect cultural resources.

The cultural staff will identify cultural properties being impacted by grazing activities to be monitored in order to determine condition, impacts, deterioration, and use of these properties. Site monitoring is conducted by BLM archeologists, law enforcement rangers, and trained site stewards, to identify impacts and evaluate site conditions. As necessary, strategies are developed and implemented in order to reduce threats and resolve conflicts to the property.

2.1.7 Monitoring

The Ely District Approved Resource Management Plan (August 2008) identifies monitoring to include, “Monitoring to assess rangeland health standards will include records of actual livestock use, measurements of forage utilization, ecological site inventory data, cover data, soil mapping, and allotment evaluations or rangeland health assessments. Conditions and trends of resources affected by livestock management actions, will contribute to the selection of prescribed burn treatments or other types of treatments based on attainment of resource objectives. (p.88)”

2.2 No Action Alternative

The No Action Alternative represents the status quo – the permit would be renewed without changes to grazing management, modifications to the permit terms and conditions. BMPs would not be implemented and the season of use would not be modified.

2.3 Alternatives Considered but Eliminated from Further Analysis

The Ely Proposed Resource Management Plan/Final Environmental Impact (November, 2007) analyzes five alternatives of livestock grazing (p.4.16-1 to 4.16-15.), no further analysis is necessary in this document.

- The Proposed RMP
- Alternative A, The Continuation of Current Existing (No Action alternative)

- Alternative B, the maintenance and restoration of healthy ecological systems
- Alternative C, commodity production
- Alternative D, conservation alternative

No other alternatives are needed to address unresolved conflicts concerning alternative uses of available resources.

3.0 Description of the Affected Environment and Associated Environmental Consequences.

3.1 Allotment Information

The Mahogany Peak Allotment, (Figure I, Appendix II) is the permitted grazing allotment for L&B Farm & Cattle Limited Partnership (Operator No. 2705077). This allotment is located within the Eagle Wild Horse Herd Management Area (HMA). It does not contain any portions of a wilderness area or any known sage grouse leks.

3.1.1 Mahogany Peak Allotment

Mahogany Peak Allotment is situated at the northeastern end of the Caliente Field Office. (Figure 1) Mahogany Peak Allotment is in the Dry Lake and Escalante Watersheds. Mahogany Peak Allotment consists of 28,441 acres of public land. The allotment consists of native sagebrush range, crested wheatgrass (*Agropyron cristatum*) seedings, and pinyon-juniper woodlands.

3.2 Resources/Concerns Considered for Analysis

The following items have been evaluated for the potential for significant impacts to occur, either directly, indirectly or cumulatively, due to implementation of the proposed action. Consideration of some of these items is to ensure compliance with laws, statutes, or Executive Orders that impose certain requirements upon all Federal actions. Other items are relevant to the management of public lands in general, and to the Ely BLM in particular.

Table 4. Resources/Concerns Considered for Analysis

Resource/Concern Considered	Issue(s) Analyzed ? (Y/N)	Rationale for Dismissal from Analysis or Issue(s) Requiring Detailed Analysis
Air Quality	No	Air quality in the affected area is generally good except for occasional dust storms. The proposed action would contribute to ambient dust in the air due to trailing, but the impact would be temporary and would not approach a level that would exceed any air quality standards. Detailed analysis is not required.
Cultural Resources	No	According to the Ely District Approved Resource Management Plan, August 2008, (RMP) it is the goal of the Ely District to identify, preserve, and protect significant cultural resources and ensure that they are available for appropriate uses by present and future generations. They are to protect and maintain these

Resource/Concern Considered	Issue(s) Analyzed ? (Y/N)	Rationale for Dismissal from Analysis or Issue(s) Requiring Detailed Analysis
		<p>cultural resources on BLM-administered land in stable condition. To accomplish this they are to seek to reduce imminent threats and resolve potential conflicts from natural or human-caused deterioration or potential conflict with other resource uses by ensuring that all authorizations for land use and resource use will comply with the National Historic Preservation Act, Section 106. In accordance with this act, “any material remains of past human life or activities which are of archaeological interest” shall be assessed and secured “for the present and future benefits of the American People”. Therefore, all ground disturbing activities related to livestock grazing (such as fence construction, road construction, water developments, etc.) within the allotment(s) covered by this Term Permit will be subject to Section 106 review and, if needed, SHPO consultation as per BLM Nevada’s implementation of the Protocol for cultural resources.</p> <p>Livestock grazing has been an historic use of federal lands, now managed by the Caliente Field Office, since the mid-19th century. The extent of effects from livestock grazing on archeological sites is difficult to determine, since extensive livestock grazing has occurred in this region for over 150 years. Though, it is likely that the majority of the livestock-related impacts on cultural resources occurred prior to the passage of the Taylor Grazing Act in 1934.</p> <p>The BLM conducts field investigations and maintains files of archeological sites on public lands. Analyses of existing documentation indicates that concentrated livestock activities near water sources, along fences, and in areas where livestock seek shelter, could adversely affect cultural resources.</p> <p>The cultural staff will identify cultural properties being impacted by grazing activities to be monitored in order to determine condition, impacts, deterioration, and use of these properties. Site monitoring is conducted by BLM archeologists, law enforcement rangers, and trained site stewards, to identify impacts and evaluate site conditions. As necessary, strategies are developed and implemented</p>

Resource/Concern Considered	Issue(s) Analyzed ? (Y/N)	Rationale for Dismissal from Analysis or Issue(s) Requiring Detailed Analysis
		in order to reduce threats and resolve conflicts to the property.
Forest Health	No	Impacts to unique or sensitive forest ecosystems will be negligible. Steep slopes and dense pinyon juniper woodlands prevent livestock from accessing most forest land. No further analysis is necessary.
Rangeland Standards and Health	No	Impacts from livestock grazing on Rangeland Standards and Health are analyzed on pages 4.16-3 through 4.16-4 of the Ely Proposed Resource Management Plan/Environmental Impact Statement (November 2007). Beneficial impacts to rangeland standards and health are consistent with the need and objectives for the proposed action. No further analysis is needed.
Migratory Birds	No	Changes to season of use are part of the Proposed Action and are included to encourage progress toward the Mojave-Southern RAC standards. This would aid in achieving the future desired condition of habitat for several migratory bird species. No significant adverse direct or indirect impacts to migratory bird populations would occur as a result of the Proposed Action.
Native American Religious Concerns	No	No concerns were identified through coordination letters sent on November 19, 2008. Direct impacts and cumulative impacts would not occur because there were no identified concerns through coordination.
FWS Listed or proposed for listing Threatened or Endangered Species or critical habitat.*	No	Threatened or Endangered species are not present in the area (Mahogany Peak Allotment,) impacted by the proposed term permit renewal.
Wastes, Hazardous or Solid	No	Wastes, (hazardous or solid) will not require a further analysis because is not associated with the nature of the proposed action.
Water Quality, Drinking/Ground	No	Design features in the proposed action would not pose any impact to ground water in the proposed term permit renewal area. No surface water in the proposed action area is used for drinking water within the allotments.
Wilderness	No	No Wilderness occurs on Mahogany Peak Allotment.
Environmental Justice	No	No environmental justice issues are present at or near the project area.

Resource/Concern Considered	Issue(s) Analyzed ? (Y/N)	Rationale for Dismissal from Analysis or Issue(s) Requiring Detailed Analysis
Floodplains	No	No floodplains occur in the proposed project area.
Watershed Management	No	Impacts from livestock grazing on Watershed Management are analyzed on page 4.19-8 of the Ely Proposed Resource Management Plan/Final Environmental Impact Statement (November 2007).
Wetlands/Riparian Zones	No	There are no Wetlands in the proposed term permit renewal area. Impacts from livestock grazing on riparian areas are analyzed on page 4.5-9 of the Ely Proposed Resource management Plan/Final Environmental Impact Statement (November 2007). Design features in the proposed action are adequate to minimize impacts to riparian systems on the allotments.
Noxious and Invasive Weed Management	Yes	Any livestock grazing could cause impacts to noxious and invasive weeds, through introducing new weed infestations to the allotment or increasing the size of existing infestations. Potential effects of the proposed action are analyzed in this Environmental Assessment.
Special Status Animal Species, other than those listed or proposed by the FWS as Threatened or Endangered	No	Impacts from livestock grazing on Special Status Species are analyzed on page 4.7-28 through page 4.7-30 of the Ely Proposed Resource Management Plan/Final Environmental Impact Statement (November 2007). There are no documented occurrences of Special Status animal species within the allotment; however, several species likely occur. Potential effects on these species are documented within this Environmental Assessment.
Special Status Plant Species, other than those listed or proposed by the FWS as Threatened or Endangered	Yes	Long-calyx eggvetch (<i>Astragalus oophorus lonchocalyx</i>) and scarlet buckwheat (<i>Eriogonum phoeniceum</i>) have been documented within the allotment. Potential effects of the proposed action are analyzed in this Environmental Assessment.
Wild Horses	No	Impacts from livestock grazing on Wild Horses are analyzed on page 4.8-6 of the Proposed Resource Management Plan/Final Environmental Impact Statement (November 2007).
Fish and Wildlife	No	Impacts from livestock grazing on Fish and Wildlife are analyzed on pages 4.6-10 through 4.6-11 in the Ely Proposed Resource Management Plan/Final Environmental Impact Statement (November 2007).

Resource/Concern Considered	Issue(s) Analyzed ? (Y/N)	Rationale for Dismissal from Analysis or Issue(s) Requiring Detailed Analysis
Soil Resources	No	Impacts from livestock grazing on Soil Resources were analyzed in the Ely Proposed Resource Management Plan/Final Environmental Impact Statement (November 2007) (page 4.4-4).
Special Designations other than Designated Wilderness	No	No Special Designations occur within the Mahogany Peak Allotment.
VRM	No	The proposed action is consistent with the VRM classification 3 and 4 for the area therefore no direct or cumulative impacts to visual resources would occur.
Grazing Uses	No	The proposed action to the Mahogany Peak Allotment management system will continue to meet the RMP goals and objectives, including progressing to meet the standards for rangeland health. The proposed action is consistent with the need for the action, no further analysis is necessary.
Land Uses	No	There would be no modifications to land use authorizations through the proposed action therefore no impacts would occur. No direct or cumulative impacts would occur to access and land use.
Recreation Uses	No	Design features identified in the proposed action would result in negligible impacts to recreational activities
Paleontological Resources	No	No paleontological resources are present in the proposed term permit renewal area.
Water Resources	No	Impacts from livestock grazing on Water Resources were analyzed in the Ely Proposed Resource Management Plan/Final Environmental Impact Statement (November 2007) (page 4.3-5).
Mineral Resources	No	There would be no modifications to mineral resources through the proposed action therefore no direct or cumulative impacts would occur to minerals.
Vegetative Resources	No	Impacts from livestock grazing on Vegetation (including Riparian) Resources were analyzed in the Ely Proposed Resource Management Plan/Environmental Impact Statement (November 2007) (page 4.5-9). Beneficial impacts to vegetative resources are consistent with the need and objectives for the proposed action. No further analysis is needed.

*Consultation required unless a “not present” or “no effect” finding is made

The resources/concerns that are not present in the proposed action allotments or are affected negligibly by the proposed action and do not require a detailed analysis include mineral resources, paleontological resources, recreation uses, land uses, visual resource management, special designation other than designated wilderness, floodplains, environmental justice, Native American Religious Concerns, FWS listed or proposed for listing threatened or endangered species or critical habitat, wastes (hazardous or solid), water quality (drinking/ground), wilderness, air quality, forest health, and migratory birds.

The resources that have impacts disclosed by livestock grazing in the Ely Proposed Resource Management Plan/Final Environmental Impact Statement (November 2007), include Water Resources (page 4.3-5). Soil Resources (page 4.4-4), Vegetation (including Riparian) Resources (page 4.5-9), Fish and Wildlife (pages 4.6-10 through 4.6-11), Special Status Species (page 4.7-28 through 4.7-30), Wild Horses (page 4.8-6), Cultural Resources (page 4.9-5), Rangeland Standards and Health (pages 4.16-3 through 4.16-4, and Watershed Management (page 4.19-8) , these resources do not require a further detailed analysis.

Special Status Plant Species

Affected Environment

Proposed Action - The Sensitive plant species long-calyx eggvetch and scarlet buckwheat have been documented on this allotment.

Records for long-calyx eggvetch are primarily historical, and little is known about the current status or ecology of the species within Nevada, including major threats, phenology, preferred habitats, population estimates, or population trend (Nevada Natural Heritage Program 2009a; data compiled 2001). Given that the long-calyx eggvetch is an *Astragalus*, a genus unpalatable to cattle, it is likely that renewing the grazing permit within Mahogany Peak Allotment would not affect that species if it is currently extant within the allotment.

Little is known about scarlet buckwheat, other than a habitat description of “White tuffaceous knolls, bluffs, and rocky flats, openings in pinyon and juniper woodland, with Great Basin Sage, antelope bitterbrush, rock goldenrod, etc.” (Nevada Natural Heritage Program 2009b; data compiled 2001). The life form of scarlet buckwheat is described as “small semi-woody long-lived perennial cushion” (Nevada Natural Heritage Program 2009b; data compiled 2001), which is not consistent with a description of a typical forage plant for cattle, indicating that it is not likely to be directly affected through livestock herbivory. Given the habitat description which includes rocky flats and pinyon juniper woodlands, both of which are not favored livestock foraging areas, and the caespitose growth form of scarlet buckwheat, cattle grazing is not likely to adversely affect the species.

No Action Alternative – The affected environment for the No Action Alternative is the same as the one described in the Proposed Action.

Noxious & Invasive Weeds

No field weed surveys were completed for this project. Instead the Ely District weed inventory data was consulted. The following species are found within the boundaries of the Mahogany Peak Allotment:

Tamarix spp. Salt cedar

The following species are found along roads and drainages leading to the allotment:

Centaurea stoebe Spotted knapweed
Cirsium vulgare Bull thistle
Linaria dalmatica Dalmatian toadflax
Onopordum acanthium Scotch thistle
Tamarix spp. Salt cedar

This allotment was last inventoried for noxious weeds in 2003. It should be noted that this allotment borders the BLM Cedar City Field Office and no weed inventory data for this area is currently available. While not officially documented the following non-native invasive weeds probably occur in or around the allotment: cheatgrass (*Bromus rubens*), halogeton (*Halogeton glomeratus*), horehound (*Marrubium vulgare*), and Russian thistle (*Salsola kali*).

Factor 1 assesses the likelihood of noxious/invasive weed species spreading to the project area.

None (0)	Noxious/invasive weed species are not located within or adjacent to the project area. Project activity is not likely to result in the establishment of noxious/invasive weed species in the project area.
Low (1-3)	Noxious/invasive weed species are present in the areas adjacent to but not within the project area. Project activities can be implemented and prevent the spread of noxious/invasive weeds into the project area.
Moderate (4-7)	Noxious/invasive weed species located immediately adjacent to or within the project area. Project activities are likely to result in some areas becoming infested with noxious/invasive weed species even when preventative management actions are followed. Control measures are essential to prevent the spread of noxious/invasive weeds within the project area.
High (8-10)	Heavy infestations of noxious/invasive weeds are located within or immediately adjacent to the project area. Project activities, even with preventative management actions, are likely to result in the establishment and spread of noxious/invasive weeds on disturbed sites throughout much of the project area.

For this project, the factor rates as Moderate (4) at the present time. The proposed action could increase the populations of the noxious and invasive weeds already within the allotment and could aid in the introduction of weeds from surrounding areas. Within the allotment, watering and salt block sites are of particular concern of new weed infestations due to the concentration of livestock around those sites and the amount of ground disturbance associated with that.

Factor 2 assesses the consequences of noxious/invasive weed establishment in the project area.

Low to Nonexistent (1-3)	None. No cumulative effects expected.
Moderate (4-7)	Possible adverse effects on site and possible expansion of infestation within the project area. Cumulative effects on native plant communities are likely but limited.
High (8-10)	Obvious adverse effects within the project area and probable expansion of noxious/invasive weed infestations to areas outside the project area. Adverse cumulative effects on native plant communities are probable.

This project rates as High (8) at the present time. If new weed infestations establish within the allotment this could have an adverse impact those native plant communities especially since most of this allotment is currently considered to be weed-free. Also, any increase of cheatgrass could alter the fire regime in the area.

The Risk Rating is obtained by multiplying Factor 1 by Factor 2.

None (0)	Proceed as planned.
Low (1-10)	Proceed as planned. Initiate control treatment on noxious/invasive weed populations that get established in the area.
Moderate (11-49)	Develop preventative management measures for the proposed project to reduce the risk of introduction of spread of noxious/invasive weeds into the area. Preventative management measures should include modifying the project to include seeding the area to occupy disturbed sites with desirable species. Monitor the area for at least 3 consecutive years and provide for control of newly established populations of noxious/invasive weeds and follow-up treatment for previously treated infestations.
High (50-100)	Project must be modified to reduce risk level through preventative management measures, including seeding with desirable species to occupy disturbed site and controlling existing infestations of noxious/invasive weeds prior to project activity. Project must provide at least 5 consecutive years of monitoring. Projects must also provide for control of newly established populations of noxious/invasive weeds and follow-up treatment for previously treated infestations.

For this project, the Risk Rating is Moderate (32). This indicates that the project can proceed as planned as long as the following measures are followed:

- Prior to entering public lands, the BLM will provide information regarding noxious weed management and identification to the permit holders affiliated with the project. The importance of preventing the spread of weeds to uninfested areas and importance of controlling existing populations of weeds will be explained.
- The range specialist for the allotments will include weed detection into project compliance inspection activities. If the spread of noxious weeds is noted, appropriated weed control

procedures will be determined in consultation with BLM personnel and will be in compliance with the appropriate BLM handbook sections and applicable laws and regulations.

- To eliminate the introduction of noxious weed seeds, roots, or rhizomes all interim and final seed mixes, hay, straw, hay/straw, or other organic products used for feed or bedding will be certified free of plant species listed on the Nevada noxious weed list or specifically identified by the BLM Ely District Office.
- Grazing will be conducted in compliance with the Ely District BLM noxious weed schedules. The scheduled procedures can significantly and effectively reduce noxious weed spread or introduction into the project area.
- Any newly established populations of noxious/invasive weeds discovered will be communicated to the Ely District Noxious and Invasive Weeds Coordinator for treatment.

3.2.1.3 No Action Alternative

Under the No Action Alternative changes to the season of use would not occur, it is possible that the spread of noxious weeds would occur at an increased rate due to the constant presence of livestock on the allotment.

4.0 Cumulative Impacts

According to page 36 of the 1994 BLM *Guidelines for Assessing and Documenting Cumulative Impacts*, the cumulative analysis should be focused on those issues and resource values where the incremental impact of the Proposed Action results in a meaningful change in the cumulative effect from other past, present and reasonably foreseeable future actions within the Cumulative Effects Study Area (CESA).

Additionally, the guidance provided in The National BLM NEPA Handbook H-1790-1 (2008), for analyzing cumulative effects issues states, “determine which of the issues identified for analysis may involve a cumulative effect with other past, present, or reasonably foreseeable future actions. If the proposed action and alternatives would have no direct or indirect effects on a resource, you do not need a cumulative effects analysis on that resource (p.57).”

No major issues were identified during scoping and no direct or indirect impacts to resources were identified, therefore no cumulative impacts are anticipated and a more detailed analysis is not warranted. The impact on range is identified with the proposed action meeting the need for the action, a detailed analysis of cumulative effects is not necessary.

5.0 Proposed Mitigation and Monitoring

5.1 Proposed Mitigation

Outlined design features incorporated into the proposed action are sufficient. No additional mitigation is proposed based on the analysis of environmental consequences.

5.2 Proposed Monitoring

Appropriate monitoring has been included as part of the Proposed Action. No additional monitoring is proposed as a result of the impact analysis

6.0 Consultation and Coordination

6.1 List of Preparers - BLM Caliente Field Office Resource Specialists

Chelsy Simerson	Rangeland Resources, Vegetation
Alan Kunze	Soil, Water, Air Wetlands and Riparian/Flood Plans
Joseph David	Planning and Environmental Coordinator
Lynn Wulf	Archaeologist
Bonnie Million	Noxious and Invasive, Non-native Species
Cameron Collins	Wildlife, Special Status Species, Migratory Birds
Chris Linehan	Recreation, Visual Resources
Ben Noyes	Wild Horse and Burro Resources
Melanie Peterson	Hazardous and Solid Waste and Safety
Elvis Wall	American Native Cultural Concerns
Chris Mayer	Supervisory Rangeland Management Specialist
Mark D'Aversa	Hydrologist

6.2 Persons, Groups or Agencies Consulted

The following persons, groups, and agencies were contacted during the preparation of this document.

•Permittees

- L&B Farm & Cattle Limited Partnership.
- Brad Bowler

•Nevada Department of Wildlife

- Steve Foree

•Tribal Consultation

• Tribal Coordination Letters were sent November 19, 2008. No concerns were identified through coordination.

Public Notice of Availability

On November 2, 2008 scoping letters were sent to interested persons and organizations on the Ely District Rangeland Management Interested Public List. A copy of the scoping Interested Public letter was posted on the BLM Ely District website at

http://www.blm.gov/nv/st/en/fo/ely_field_office.html.

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Appendix I Maps

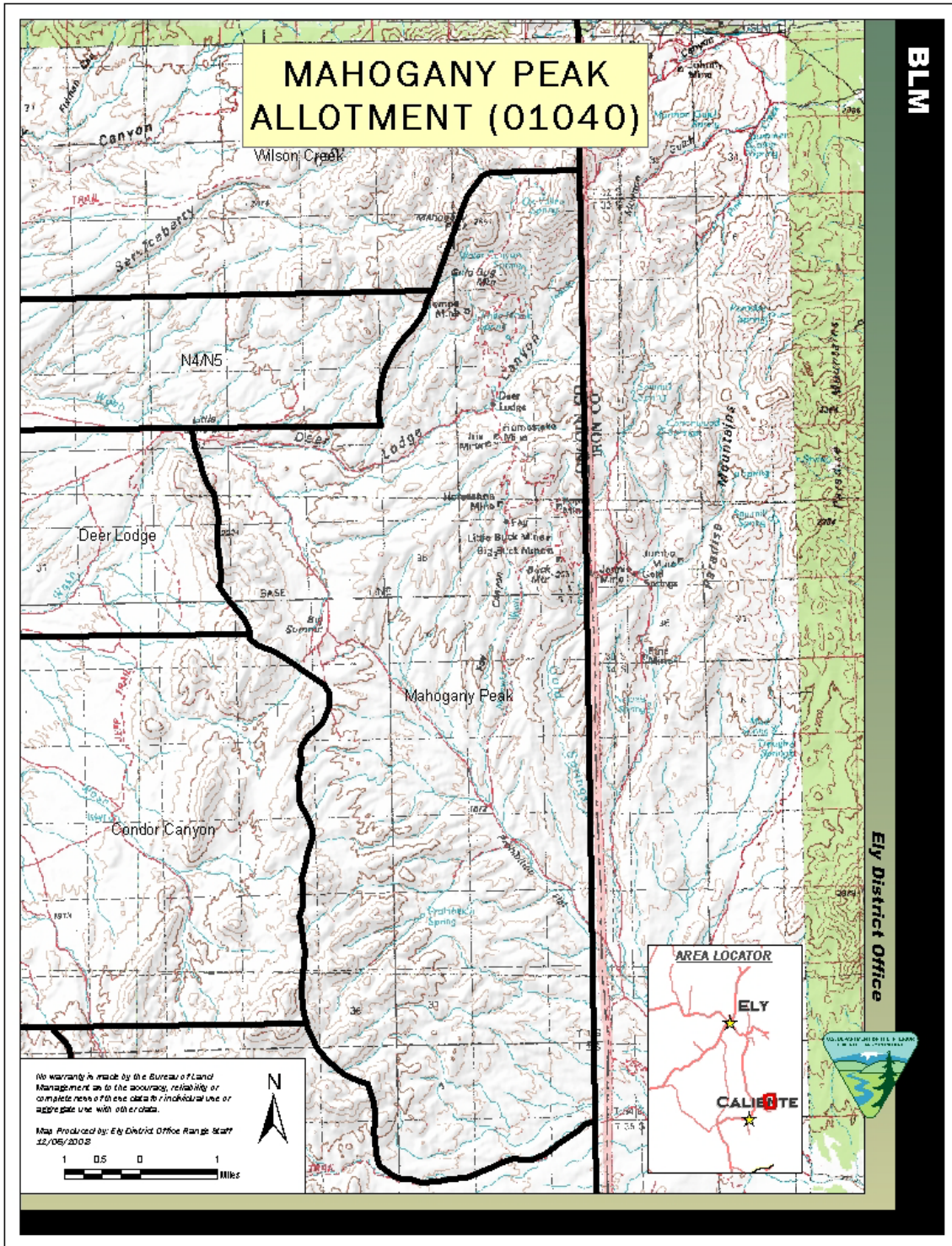


Figure 1. Over-view of Mahogany Peak Allotment.

**Appendix II
Standards and Determination Document**

**U.S. Department of the Interior
Bureau of Land Management**

STANDARDS AND DETERMINATION DOCUMENT
June, 2009

**L&B Farm & Cattle Limited Partnership (2705077)
Term Permit Renewal
Mahogany Peak (01040) Allotment**

Location: Caliente, Nevada

U.S. Department of the Interior
Bureau of Land Management
Ely District Office
Egan Field Office
Phone: (775) 289-1800
Fax: (775) 289-1910



STANDARDS AND DETERMINATION DOCUMENT
L&B Farm & Cattle Limited Partnership (2705077) Term Permit Renewal
Mahogany Peak (01040) Allotment

Standards and Guidelines Assessment

The Standards and Guidelines for Nevada's Mojave-Southern Great Basin Area were developed by the Mojave-Southern Great Basin Area Resource Advisory Council (RAC) and approved in 2006. Standards and guidelines are likened to objectives for healthy watersheds, healthy native plant communities, and healthy rangelands. Standards are expressions of physical and biological conditions required for sustaining rangelands for multiple uses. Guidelines point to management actions related to livestock grazing for achieving the standards.

This Standards and Determination Document evaluates and assesses livestock grazing management achievement of the Standards and conformance with the Guidelines for the Mahogany Peak Allotment in the Ely District Bureau of Land Management (BLM). This document does not evaluate or assess achievement of the Wild Horse and Burro or the Off Highway Vehicle Standards or conformance to their respective Guidelines.

The Standards were assessed for the Mahogany Peak Allotment by a BLM interdisciplinary team consisting of rangeland management specialists, wildlife biologist, weeds specialist, and watershed specialist. Documents and publications used in the assessment process include the Soil Survey of Lincoln County, Nevada, (USDA-NRCS 1997); Ecological Site Descriptions for Major Land Resource Area 29 (USDA-NRCS 2003); Interpreting Indicators of Rangeland Health (USDI-BLM et al. 2000); Sampling Vegetation Attributes (USDI-BLM et al. 1996); and the National Range and Pasture Handbook (USDA-NRCS 1997). A complete list of references is included at the end of this document. All are available for public review in the BLM Ely District Office. The interdisciplinary team used rangeland monitoring data, professional observations, and photographs to assess achievement of the Standards and conformance with the Guidelines.

The Mahogany Peak Allotment encompasses approximately 28,441 acres of public land. The allotment occurs entirely within Lincoln County, and is situated approximately 25 miles east of Pioche, Nevada. The eastern portion of this allotment borders Utah. The southern portion occurs in the Escalante desert watershed (010) and the northern portion occurs in the Dry Valley watershed (050). The Mahogany Peak Allotment is located within the Eagle Wild Horse Herd Management Area (HMA). There is one documented occurrence of scarlet buckwheat (*Eriogonum phoeniceum*) on public land within the allotment and another of long-calyx eggvetch (*Astragalus oophorus* var. *lonchocalyx*), both of which are designated Sensitive by Nevada State Office of BLM. Elk (*Cervus elaphus*), mule deer (*Odocoileus hemionus*), and pronghorn (*Antilocapra americana*) habitat is also found on the allotment. There are no known greater sage-grouse (*Centrocercus urophasianus*) leks within or adjacent to this allotment. No wilderness occurs within the allotment.

The current term permit is issued for the period 03/29/2003 to 03/28/2013 to the L & B Farm & Cattle Limited Partnership. This is a cattle allotment with a total grazing preference of 2,859 Animal Unit Months (AUMs). Of these, 718 AUMs are active and 2,141

AUMs are suspended nonuse. The current term permit authorizes approximately 60 head of cattle for a yearlong use period. Currently the L&B Farm & Cattle Limited Partnership graze Mahogany Peak Allotment from 6/15-9/15 or 7/1-10/1. The grazing system allows them to turn onto Mahogany Peak Allotment from 6/15-9/15 on one year and the next year they will turn on to the allotment from 7/1-10/1. They rotate the date that they turn on to this allotment with another allotment in Utah. The permit will be reduced from year-long use to 5/1-10/15. This will fit into the current grazing practices of the permit operator.

On the Mahogany Peak Allotment, four key areas have been established based on accessibility and general use by livestock, vegetation, and ecological range sites. Key area sites MP-1, MP-2 and MP-3 had monitoring data collected for cover data, and double weight sampling. Monitoring data collected at site MP-4 was line intercept cover. All key areas had data collected in 2008. Key area MP-1 is located on a PIMO/ARTRV/PSSPS-POFE Ecological Site (028AY076NV) with dominate plant species of single leaf pinyon (*Pinus monophylla*), mountain big sagebrush (*Artemisia tridentata ssp. vaseyana*), and bluebunch wheatgrass (*Pseudoroegneria spicata*). Key areas MP-2 and MP-4 are located on a Loamy soil (029XY029NV) with dominate plant species of big sagebrush (*Artemisia tridentata*) and needleandthread (*Hesperostipa comata*). Key area MP-3 is located on a Gravelly Loam (028AY066NV) with dominate plant species of antelope bitterbrush (*Purshia tridentata*) and bluebunch wheatgrass.

A summary of monitoring data is located in Appendix I.

PART 1. STANDARD CONFORMANCE REVIEW FOR COVE ALLOTMENT.

Standard 1. Soils

“Watershed soils and stream banks should have adequate stability to resist accelerated erosion, maintain soil productivity, and sustain the hydrologic cycle.”

Soil Indicators:

- Ground Cover (vegetation, litter, rock, bare ground).
- Surfaces (e.g., biological crust, pavement).
- Compaction/infiltration.

Riparian Soil Indicators:

- Stream bank stability.

Determination:

- Achieving the Standard
- Not Achieving the Standard, but making significant progress towards achieving**
- Not Achieving the Standard, and not making significant progress toward standard

Causal Factors: N/A

- Livestock are a contributing factor to not achieving the standard.
- Livestock are not a contributing factor to not achieving the standard**
- Failure to meet the standard is related to other issues or conditions**

Guidelines Conformance:

X In conformance with the Guidelines

- Not in conformance with the Guidelines

Conclusion: *Standard Not Achieved*

This standard is not being met due to the encroachment of Pinyon-Juniper trees into the upland plant communities.

Site MP-1 is a woodland site that is categorized as an over-mature woodland. This area should have a tree canopy cover of 30%. However this area has an actual tree canopy cover of about 60% as indicated on Map 2 Tree canopy cover at the key area of MP-1, in Appendix II. The higher tree canopy cover of this area inhibits the growth of the understory grasses, forbs and shrubs on this site.

Site MP-2 is a native rangeland site that has a higher ground cover than the Ecological Site Description (ESD) indicated should be there. However, this site is meeting this portion of the standards because the vegetation making up the understory (shrubs, grasses and forbs) cover is composed of plant species, such as crested wheatgrass, that have the root capacity to hold the soil. The soil is more stable with a higher component of these types of plant species, because of the soils holding capacity of the plant species, the potential for soil erosion is decreased, and the potential for a healthy plant community is increased.

Site MP-3 is 51.9% of the ESD understory cover range (40%-60%). This site consists entirely of native species with no pinyon-juniper encroachment. Cryptogams are present with no erosion apparent.

At MP-4, vegetative cover was below that described in the ESD. Only three species were found within the transect. This area is an old crested wheatgrass seeding, and as a result has low species diversity. Other plants recorded in this area that were not found within the transect include juniper. The area has higher than expected litter cover at 42%.

Standard 2. Ecosystem Components

Watersheds should possess the necessary ecological components to achieve State water quality criteria, maintain ecological processes, and sustain appropriate uses.

Riparian and wetlands vegetation should have structural and species diversity characteristic of the stage of stream channel succession in order to provide forage and cover, capture sediment, and capture, retain, and safely release water (watershed function).

Upland Indicators:

- Canopy and ground cover, including litter, live vegetation, biological crust, and rock appropriate to potential of the ecological site.
- Ecological processes are adequate for the vegetative communities.

Riparian Indicators:

- Stream side riparian areas are functioning properly when adequate vegetation, large woody debris, or rock is present to dissipate stream energy associated with high water flows.
- Elements indicating proper functioning condition such as avoiding acceleration erosion, capturing sediment, and providing for groundwater recharge and release are determined by the following measurements as appropriate to the site characteristics:
 - Width/Depth ratio.
 - Channel roughness.
 - Sinuosity of stream channel.
 - Bank stability.
 - Vegetative cover (amount, spacing, life form).
 - Other covers (large woody debris, rock).
 - Natural springs, seeps and marsh areas are functioning properly when adequate vegetation is present to facilitate water retention, filtering, and release as indicated by plant species and cover appropriate to the site characteristics.

Water Quality Indicators:

- Chemical, physical and biological constituents do not exceed the State water quality Standards.

The above indicators shall be applied to the potential of the ecological site.

Determination:

- Achieving the Standard
- Not Achieving the Standard, but making significant progress towards achieving
- Not Achieving the Standard, and not making significant progress toward standard
- Not Applicable**

Causal Factors N/A

- Livestock are a contributing factor to not achieving the standard.
- Livestock are not a contributing factor to not achieving the standard
- Failure to meet the standard is related to other issues or conditions

Guidelines Conformance:

- In conformance with the Guidelines**
- Not in conformance with the Guidelines

Conclusion: *Standard Not Applicable*

The upland cover portion of this standard is addressed in Standard 1. There are no riparian/wetland sites on public land within this allotment that have not been developed thus, that portion of the standard does not apply.

Standard 3. Habitat and Biota:

Habitats and watersheds should sustain a level of biodiversity appropriate for the area and conducive to appropriate uses. Habitats of special status species should be able to sustain viable populations of those species.

As indicated by:

- Vegetation composition (relative abundance of species);
- Vegetation structure (life forms, cover, height, or age class);
- Vegetation distribution (patchiness, corridors);
- Vegetation productivity; and
- Vegetation nutritional value.

Determination:

- Achieving the Standard
- Not Achieving the Standard, but making significant progress towards achieving
- Not Achieving the Standard, and not making significant progress toward standard**

Causal Factors :

- Livestock are a contributing factor to not achieving the standard.
- Livestock are not a contributing factor to not achieving the standard.**
- Failure to meet the standard is related to other issues or conditions.**

Guidelines Conformance:

- In conformance with the Guidelines**
- Not in conformance with the Guidelines

Conclusion: *Standard Not Achieved*

This allotment has a dense community of Pinyon-Juniper woodland, roughly 78% of the allotment. The over-story is inhibiting the understory's ability to produce the typical grasses and forbs expected on this range site. Indian ricegrass is missing from the sites, and each of the sites has more shrubs than expected. The remaining 22% of the allotment is consistent with rangelands containing more grasses, forbs and shrub plant species.

The sensitive plant species long-calyx eggvetch and scarlet buckwheat have been documented on this allotment. Records for the sensitive plant long-calyx eggvetch are primarily historical, and little is known about the current status or ecology of the species within Nevada, including major threats, phenology, preferred habitats, population estimates, or population trend (Nevada Natural Heritage Program 2009; data compiled 2001). Likewise, little is known about the sensitive plant scarlet buckwheat, other than a habitat description of "White tuffaceous knolls, bluffs, and rocky flats, openings in pinyon and juniper woodland, with Great Basin Sage, antelope bitterbrush, rock goldenrod, etc." (Nevada Natural Heritage Program 2009; data compiled 2001). The life form of scarlet buckwheat is described as "small semi-woody long-lived perennial cushion" (Nevada Natural Heritage Program 2009; data compiled 2001), which is not consistent with a description of a typical forage plant for cattle, indicating that it is not likely to be directly

affected through livestock herbivory. Given the habitat description which includes rocky flats and pinyon juniper woodlands, both of which are not favored livestock foraging areas, and the caespitose growth form of scarlet buckwheat, cattle grazing is not likely to adversely affect the species. Given that the long-calyx eggvetch is an *Astragalus*, a genus unpalatable to cattle, it is likely that renewing the grazing permit within Mahogany Peak Allotment would not affect that species if it is currently extant within the allotment.

No known sage grouse leks or brooding grounds occur on the allotment.

MP-1

Current Vegetative Communities

This site is medium to dense Pinyon Juniper (PJ) woodland. Utilization is primarily by wildlife and wild horses. The duff and litter is accumulating at expected levels but beginning to affect the grasses, forbs and shrubs.

Historic Vegetative Communities

Over-Mature Woodland: This stage is dominated by single-leaf pinyon that have reached maximal heights for the site. Dominant and co-dominant trees average greater than five inches in diameter at one foot stump height. Upper crowns are typically irregularly flat-topped or rounded. Understory vegetation is strongly influenced by tree competition, over-story shading, duff accumulation, etc. Tree canopy cover is at a maximum for the site and is commonly more than 30 percent. (See Appendix II Map 2)

MP-2

Current Vegetative Communities

Similarity Index: 10% (early seral stage)

Plant community dynamics: This is a shrub dominated site, with antelope bitterbrush consisting of 75% of the plant community, and black sagebrush at 10%. Douglas rabbitbrush is a good indicator of over utilization and this site has less than one percent.

Historic Vegetative Communities

Plant community dynamics: Where management results in abusive livestock use, big sagebrush, rabbitbrush and annual brome grasses may dominate this site. As ecological condition deteriorates perennial grasses, antelope bitter brush and fourwing saltbrush decline. In the absence of periodic wildfire, singleleaf pinyon and Utah juniper readily invade this site where it occurs adjacent to these woodland areas. If juniper-pinyon canopies are allowed to close, they can eliminate understory vegetation.

MP-3

Current Vegetative Communities

Similarity Index: 38% (mid seral stage)

Plant community dynamics: This site is dominated by Wyoming sagebrush. The amount of forbs found on the site compares favorably with the expected amount of forbs. This site is missing much of the grass component, and may need some restoration to reduce the amount of sagebrush cover in the area.

Historic Vegetative Communities

Plant community dynamics:

As ecological condition deteriorates, antelope bitterbrush, bluebunch wheatgrass and Thurber's

needlegrass decrease, while mountain big sagebrush, rabbitbrush, snowberry, and bluegrass increase. Cheatgrass is likely to invade this site as further degradation occurs. Singleleaf pinyon will readily invade this site where it occurs adjacent to these woodlands.

PART 2. ARE LIVESTOCK A CONTRIBUTING FACTOR TO NOT MEETING THE STANDARDS?

Standard #1: Soils

The standard is not being met. Current livestock grazing management system conforms to the guidelines. This standard is not being met due to the amount of canopy cover provided by the pinyon-juniper trees on this allotment.

Standard #2: Ecosystem Components

The standard is not applicable.

Standard #3: Habitat and Biota

This standard is not being met. Current livestock grazing management conforms to the guidelines. The Pinyon-Juniper trees are encroaching on the uplands and reducing the diversity of species on this allotment.

PART 3. GUIDELINE CONFORMANCE REVIEW

Grazing is in conformance with all applicable Guidelines as provided in the Mojave Southern Great Basin Standards.

PART 4. MANAGEMENT PRACTICES TO CONFORM WITH GUIDELINES AND ACHIEVE STANDARDS

There will be a change to the current terms and conditions of the term grazing permit. The permit will be reduced from year-long use to 5/1-10/15. This will fit into the current grazing practices of the permit operator. Currently the L&B Farm & Cattle Limited Partnership graze Mahogany Peak Allotment from 6/15-9/15 or 7/1-10/1. The grazing system allows them to turn onto Mahogany Peak Allotment from 6/15-9/15 on one year and the next year they will turn on to the allotment from 7/1-10/1. They rotate the date that they turn on to this allotment with another allotment in Utah. The Mahogany Peak Allotment has water troughs throughout the allotment and cattle dispersion is not an issue with this permit.

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/s/ _____
Bonnie Million Date
Noxious and Invasive Weed Specialist

/s/ _____ 6/25/2009
Cameron Collins Date
Wildlife Biologist

I concur:

/s/ Chris Mayer 5/18/2009
Chris Mayer Date
Supervisory Rangeland Management Specialist
Egan Field Office

/s/ _____
Victoria Barr Date
Field Office Manager
Caliente Field Office

**APPENDIX AI
DATA SUMMARY**

Mahogany Peak Allotment

1. Key Areas and Ecological Sites

A key area is a relatively small portion of a pasture or allotment selected because of its location, use, or grazing value as a monitoring point for grazing use. It is assumed that key areas, if properly selected, will reflect the current grazing management over the pasture or allotment as a whole (NRCS 1997). Key areas represent range conditions, trends, seasonal degrees of use, and resource production and values. Table 1-1 depicts key areas and their location within the Mahogany Peak Allotment as well as the ecological site associated with the key area.

An ecological site is a distinctive kind of land with specific physical characteristics that differs from other kinds of land in its ability to produce a distinctive kind and amount of vegetation (NRCS 1997). Ecological Site Descriptions (ESD) are used for inventory, evaluation, and management of native vegetation communities. The ecological site of a key area is determined based on several factors including soils, topography, and native plant community.

Table A1. Mahogany Peak Key Areas

Key Area	Location (UTM)	Ecological Site	Dominate Species of HCPC	Soil Mapping Unit
MP-1	11S 4197380 753075	PIMO/ARTRV/PSSPS- POFE (028AY076NV)	Singleleaf pinyon, Mountain Sagebrush & Bluebunch Wheatgrass	1460 Itca- Cedaran-Rock association
MP-2	11S 4195878 755658	Loamy (029XY029NV)	Big Sagebrush, Needle and Thread grass, & Indian ricegrass	1201 Decan-Uana association
MP-3	11S 4205936 757625	Gravelly Loam (028AY066NV)	antelope bitterbrush, Mountain big sagebrush and Bluebunch Wheatgrass	1361 Hamtah-Tica- Rock outcrop association
MP-4	11S 4187220 0759777	Loamy (029XY029NV)	Big Sagebrush, Needle and Thread grass, & Indian ricegrass	1025 Aned-Newvil association

2. Licensed Livestock Use

Over the grazing seasons from 2004 to 2007, livestock permitted use on the Mahogany Peak Allotment was 720 AUMs in a cattle only operation. During this same time period, livestock actual use was 214 AUMs except for in year 2004 when the AUMs were as low as 104. Livestock use has varied dependent on available forage due to growing conditions. Table 2-1 summarizes the actual use data for this time period.

Table A2. Mahogany Peak Allotment Actual Use

Grazing Year	Number of Cattle	Use Period	Actual Use (AUMs)
2008	70	6/15-9/15	214
2007	70	7/1-10/1	214
2006	70	7/1-10/1	214
2005	70	7/1-10/1	214
2004	50	7/15-9/15	104

3. Utilization

Utilization is the estimation of the proportion of annual production consumed or destroyed by animals (Swanson 2006). The general utilization objective for all allotments in the Caliente Field Office of the Ely BLM District can be found in the Ely District Resources Management Plan and Final Environmental Impact Statement (RMP/FEIS – August, 2008). The Nevada Rangeland Monitoring Handbook gives guidelines to determine the proper use levels by plant category (grasses, forbs, and shrubs) and by grazing season (spring, summer, fall, winter, yearlong). Proper use levels for all allotments are also implied by the Standards and Guidelines for Rangeland Health and Grazing Administration (February 1997). A moderate use level (40-60%) is considered to be most desirable on the Mahogany Peak Allotment.

Utilization was not collected on this allotment in 2008. My personal observation while visiting the allotment showed very little use by cattle. No fresh tracks or cow pies were found. Horse tracks were numerous in the lower elevation portions of the allotment. This allotment is within the Eagle Wild Horse Herd Management Area (HMA). This HMA has an Allowable Management Level (AML) range of 100-210. The estimated population is about 505 horses.

This allotment has a dense community of Pinyon-Juniper woodland. The over-story is inhibiting the understory's ability to produce the typical grasses and forbs expected on this range site. Indian ricegrass is missing from the sites, and each of the sites has more shrubs than expected.

4. Line Intercept Cover Studies

Canopy cover is the percent of ground covered by a vertical projection of the outermost perimeter of the natural spread of foliage, including small openings (Swanson 2006). The Line Intercept Method is a commonly used method of determining the relative percent live foliar or canopy cover of a range site by plant class (tree, shrub, grass, forb, or annual). The method also estimates the percent live foliar cover by plant species. The results are then compared to the appropriate cover for each ecological site as indicated by the Rangeland Ecological Site Descriptions (ESD). Results are also compared to general known healthy rangelands.

Line intercept cover studies have been conducted at the four key areas on the Mahogany Peak Allotment.

Site MP-1 is a woodland site that is categorized as an over-mature woodland. This area should have a tree canopy cover of 30%. However this area has an actual tree canopy cover of about

60% as indicated on Map 2 Tree canopy cover at the key area of MP-1, in Appendix II. The higher tree canopy cover of this area inhibits the growth of the understory grasses, forbs and shrubs on this site.

Site MP-2 is a native rangeland site that has a higher ground cover than the Ecological Site Description (ESD) indicated should be there. However, this site is meeting this portion of the standards because the vegetation making up the understory (shrubs, grasses and forbs) cover is plant species, such as crested wheatgrass , that have the root capacity to hold the soil. The soil is more stable with a higher component of these types of plant species.

Site MP-3 is 51.9% of the ESD understory cover range(40%-60%). This site consists entirely of native species with no pinyon-juniper encroachment. Cryptogams are present with no erosion apparent.

At MP-4, vegetative cover was below that described in the ESD. Only three species were found in the transect. This area is an old crested wheatgrass seeding, and as a result has low species diversity. Other plants recorded in this area that were not found within the transect include juniper. The area has higher than expected litter cover at 42%.

Table 4-1 summarizes data collected at these key areas and the ecological site approximation for each site.

Table A3. Mahogany Peak Allotment Vegetation Cover

Key Area	Range Site	Existing Cover (%)	ESD Approx. Cover (%)
MP-1	PIMO/ARTRV/PSSPS-POFE (028AY076NV)	15.5% Understory Cover	20% Tree Canopy Cover
MP-2	Loamy (029XY029NV)	32.9% Understory Cover	15%-25% Understory Cover
MP-3	Gravelly Loam (028AY066NV)	51.9% Understory Cover	40%-60% Understory Cover
MP-4	Loamy (029XY029NV)	11% Understory Cover	15%-25% Understory Cover

5. Similarity Index of Ecological Site Inventory

A similarity index is the percentage of a specific vegetation state plant community that is presently on the site (NRCS 1997). Similarity index is usually computed in reference to the historic climax plant community (HCPC) and is an expression of how similar the existing plant community is to HCPC. Also note that HCPC is not always the most desirable plant community to manage for.

When the similarity index is computed, a seral stage can be derived. Seral stages are the developmental stages of an ecological succession (NRCS 1997). A similarity index of 0 to 25 percent represents an early seral plant community, 26 to 50 percent represents a mid-seral plant community, 51 to 75 percent represents a late seral plant community, and 76 to 100 percent represents a climax plant community.

Similarity index is calculated as a percent composition by air dry weight. The site is inventoried to determine the current percent composition by weight on an air dry basis. These numbers are then compared to the percent composition by weight on an air dry basis of the HCPC in the ESD for the site. To calculate the similarity index, current composition cannot exceed that of HCPC. This yields percent allowable. The sum of all allowable percentages equals the similarity index.

Table 5-1 summarizes data used to calculate similarity index for the Mahogany Peak Allotment.

Table A4. Total Annual Yield and Composition of Mahogany Peak Allotment Key Areas

Key Area: MP-1				
Date: 7/21/2008				
Woodland Site: PIMO/ARTRV/PSSPS-POFE (028AY076NV)				
Current Vegetative Communities				
Plant Common Name	Plant Symbol	Current % Composition by Weight (air dry)		
bottlebrush squirreltail	ELEL5	<1%		
bluebunch wheatgrass	PSSPS	<1%		
blue grama	BOGR	<1%		
Unknown grass	AAGG	<1%		
Total Grasses		2%		
Phlox	PHLOX	<1%		
Globemallow	SPHAE	<1%		
Unknown forb	AAFF	<1%		
buckwheat	ERIOG	<1%		
Lupin	LUPIN	3%		
Total Forbs		4%		
Douglas rabbitbrush	CHVI	<1%		
Wyoming big sagebrush	ARTRW	29%		
Antelope bitterbrush	PUTR	65%		
Total Shrubs		94%		
This site is medium to dense Pinyon Juniper (PJ) woodland. Utilization is primarily by wildlife and wild horses. The duff and litter is accumulating at expected levels but beginning to affect the grasses, forbs and shrubs.				
Historic Vegetative Communities				
Over-Mature Woodland: This stage is dominated by single-leaf pinyon that have reached maximal heights for the site. Dominant and co-dominant trees average greater than five inches in diameter at one foot stump height. Upper crowns are typically irregularly flat-topped or rounded. Understory vegetation is strongly influenced by tree competition, over-story shading, duff accumulation, etc. Tree canopy cover is at a maximum for the site and is commonly more than 30 percent. (See Appendix II Map 2)				
Key Area: MP-2				
Date: 7/21/2008				
Range Site: Loamy 029XY029NV				
Current Vegetative Communities				
Plant Common Name	Plant Symbol	Current % Composition by Weight (air dry)	HCPC % Composition by Weight (air dry)*	% Allowable

bottlebrush squirreltail	ELEL5	2%	2%-8%	2%
black sagebrush	ARNO	10%	0	0%
Douglas' rabbitbrush	CHVI	<1%	T	0%
blue grama	BOGR	12%	T	0%
	GROUNDSOL	<1%	0	0%
antelope bitterbrush	PUTR2	75%	2%-8%	8%
crested wheatgrass	AGCR	<1%	0	0%

Similarity Index: 10% (early seral stage)

Plant community dynamics: This is a shrub dominated site, with antelope bitterbrush consisting of 75% of the plant community, and black sagebrush at 10%.

Historic Vegetative Communities

Plant community dynamics: Where management results in abusive livestock use, big sagebrush, rabbitbrush and annual brome grasses may dominate this site. As ecological condition deteriorates perennial grasses, antelope bitter brush and fourwing saltbrush decline. In the absence of periodic wildfire, singleleaf pinyon and Utah juniper readily invade this site where it occurs adjacent to these woodland areas. If juniper-pinyon canopies are allowed to close, they can eliminate understory vegetation.

Key Area: MP-3

Date: 7/21/2008

Range Site: Gravelly Loam 028AY066NV

Current Vegetative Communities

Plant Common Name	Plant Symbol	Current % Composition by Weight (air dry)	HCPC % Composition by Weight (air dry)*	% Allowable
Snowberry	SYMPH	5%	T	0%
Milkvetch	ASTRA	1%	5%-15%	1%
Bluebunch wheatgrass	PSSPS	3%	15%-25%	3%
	GROUNDSSEL	11%	5%-15%	11%
Wyoming sagebrush	ARTRW	66%	5%-10%	10%
buckwheat	ERIOG	11%	5%-10%	10%
	STONE SEED	<1%	0	0%
Serviceberry	AMAR3	3%	5%-10%	3%

Similarity Index: 38% (mid seral stage)

Plant community dynamics: This site is dominated by Wyoming sagebrush. It also has a representative amount of forbs. This site is missing much of the grass component, and

may need some restoration to reduce the amount of sagebrush cover in the area.

Historic Vegetative Communities

Plant community dynamics:

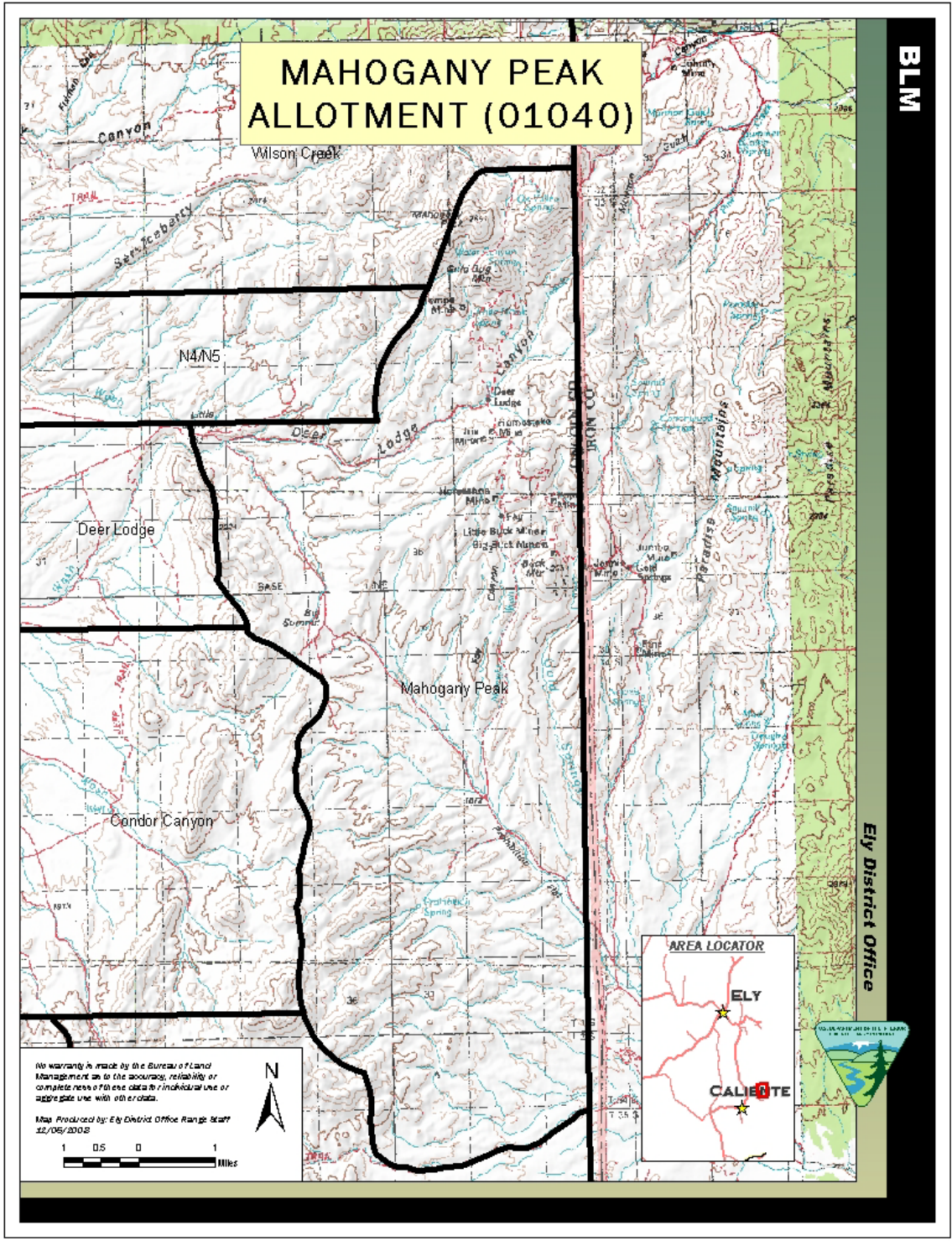
As ecological condition deteriorates, antelope bitterbrush, bluebunch wheatgrass and Thurber's needlegrass decrease, while mountain big sagebrush, rabbitbrush, snowberry, and bluegrass increase. Cheatgrass is likely to invade this site as further degradation occurs. Singleleaf pinyon will readily invade this site where it occurs adjacent to these woodlands.

Precipitation Data

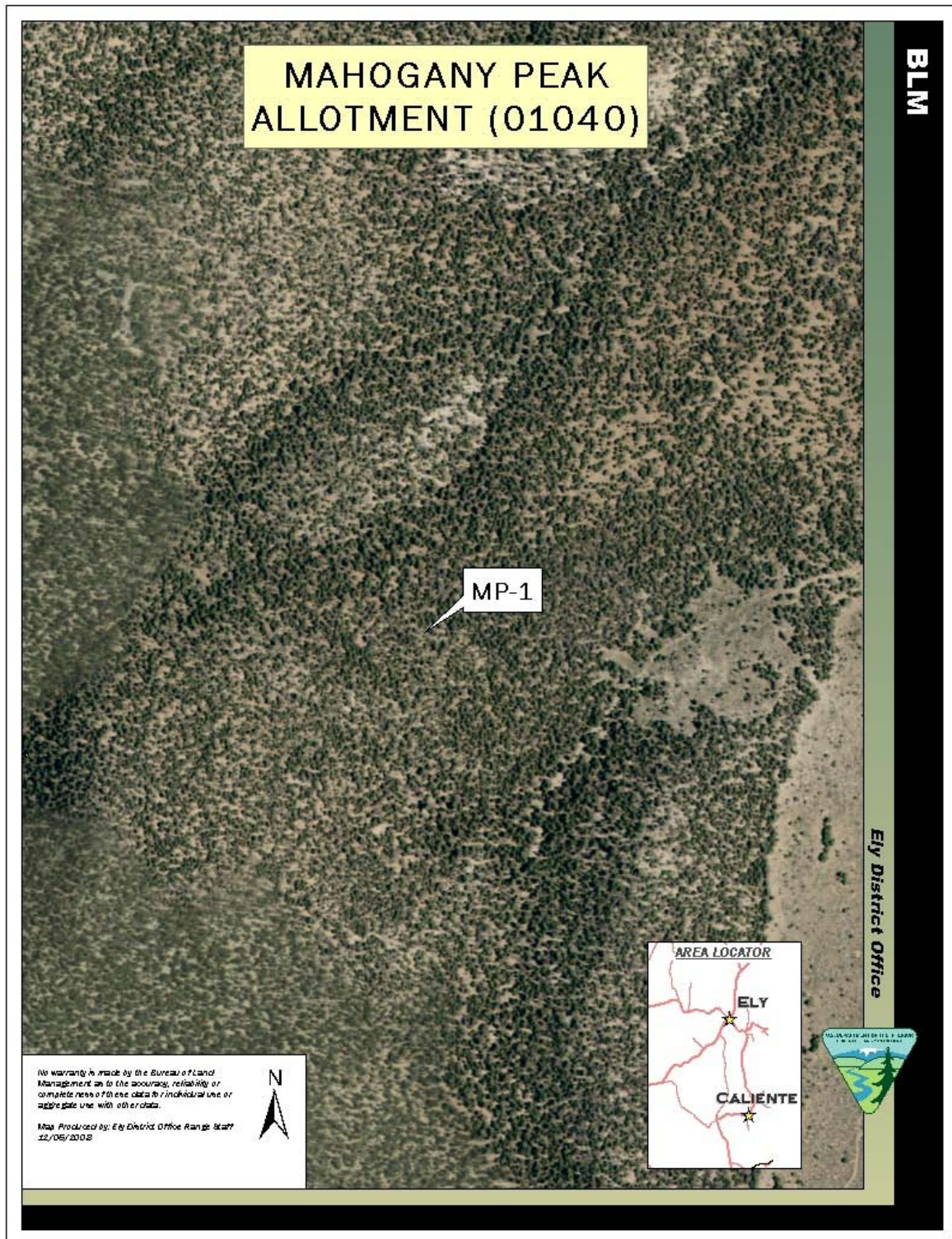
Annual precipitation data from Western Regional Climate Center in Caliente, Nevada.

Site	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008
Caliente	13.55	5.95	2.47	8.38	15.57	12.71	8.67	4.91	5.67

APPENDIX AII
MAPS



Map 1. Over view of Mahogany Peak Allotment.



Map 2. Tree Canopy cover at key area MP-1.

APPENDIX AIII
TERMS AND CONDITIONS
Mahogany Peak Allotment

Table A5. Current Permit for Mahogany Peak Allotment

Allotment Name and Number	Livestock Number/Kind	Grazing Period	% Public Land*	Type Use	AUMs**
Mahogany Peak #01040	60 Cattle	03/01 to 02/28	100	Active	718
*% Public Land is the percent of public land for billing purposes. **AUMs may differ from Active Permitted Use due to a rounding difference with the number of livestock and the period of use.					
Allotment AUMs Summary					
Allotment Name	ACTIVE AUMS	SUSPENDED AUMS	GRAZING PERMITTED USE		
Mahogany Peak	718	2,141	2,859		

Livestock Management Practices - Terms and Conditions

In accordance with 43 CFR §4130.3 and §4130.3-2 the following terms and conditions shall be included in the term grazing permit for Leon Bowler for the Mahogany Peak Allotment:

1. Maximum allowable use levels for the Mahogany Peak Allotment will be established as follows:
 - Perennial grasses: 50% current year's growth
This use level is necessary to allow desirable key herbaceous species to 1) develop above ground biomass for protection of soils, 2) to contribute to litter cover, and 3) develop roots to improve carbohydrate storage for vigor, reproduction, and improve/increase desirable perennial cover.
 - Perennial shrubs and half-shrubs: 50% use on current annual production.
This use level is necessary to allow desirable perennial key browse species to develop branchlets and woody stature able to withstand the pressure of grazing use. Use would be read in April or prior to the spring re-growth. Use during spring contributes to following season's use level.
2. Salt and/or mineral supplements for livestock will be located no closer than 1/2 mile from water sources. Use of nutritional supplements (not forage) is encouraged to improve the ability of cattle to utilize forage in the winter months and to improve livestock distribution across the allotment.
3. The permittee is required to perform normal maintenance on the range improvements that have been issued through cooperative agreements or Section 4 permits.

4. L&B Farm & Cattle Limited Partnership graze Mahogany Peak Allotment from 6/15-9/15 or 7/1-10/1. They will practice a rotation grazing system that allows them to turn onto Mahogany Peak Allotment from 6/15-9/15 on one year and the next year they will turn onto the allotment from 7/1-10/1.

Additional Stipulations Common to All Grazing Allotments:

1. Livestock numbers identified in the Term Grazing Permit are a function of seasons of use and permitted use. Deviations from those livestock numbers and seasons of use may be authorized on an annual basis where such deviations would not prevent attainment of the multiple-use objectives for the allotment.
2. Deviations from specified grazing use dates will be allowed when consistent with multiple-use objectives. Such deviations will require an application and written authorization from the authorized officer prior to grazing use.
3. The authorized officer is requiring that an actual use report (form 4130-5) be submitted within 15 days after completing your annual grazing use.
4. The payment of your grazing fees is due on or before the date specified in the grazing bill. This date is generally the opening date of your allotment. If payment is not received within 15 days of the due date, you will be charged a late fee assessment of \$25 or 10 percent of the grazing bill, whichever is greater, not to exceed \$250. Payment with Visa, MasterCard or American Express is accepted. Failure to make payment within 30 days of the due date may result in trespass action.
5. Pursuant to 43 CFR 10.4 (G) the holder of this authorization must notify the authorized officer by telephone, with written confirmation, immediately upon discovery of human remains, funerary objects, sacred objects, or objects of cultural patrimony (as defined at 43 CFR 10.2). Further, pursuant to 43 CFR 10.4 (C) and (D), you must stop activities in the immediate vicinity of the discovery and protect it from your activities for 30 days or until notified to proceed by the authorized officer.
6. Grazing use in Lincoln County will be in accordance with the Mojave-Southern (MOSO) Great Basin Area Standards and Guidelines for Grazing Administration. The Standards and Guidelines have been developed by the MOSO Resource Advisory Council and approved by the Secretary of the Interior on September 2006. Grazing use will also be in accordance with 43 CFR Subpart 4180 - Fundamentals of Rangeland Health and Standards and Guidelines for Grazing Administration.
7. If future monitoring data indicates that Standards and Guidelines for Grazing Administration are not being met due to livestock grazing, the permit will be reissued subject to revised terms and conditions.
8. The permittee is responsible for all maintenance of assigned range improvements including wildlife escape ramps for both permanent and temporary water troughs.

9. The permittee must notify the authorized officer by telephone, with written confirmation, immediately upon discovery of any hazardous or solid wastes as defined in 40 CFR Part 261.
10. Livestock will be moved to another authorized pasture or removed from the allotment before utilization objectives are met or no later than 5 days after meeting the utilization objectives. Any deviation in livestock movement will require authorization from the authorized officer.

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probably occur in or around the allotment: cheatgrass (*Bromus rubens*), halogeton (*Halogeton glomeratus*), horehound (*Marrubium vulgare*), and Russian thistle (*Salsola kali*).

Factor 1 assesses the likelihood of noxious/invasive weed species spreading to the project area.

None (0)	Noxious/invasive weed species are not located within or adjacent to the project area. Project activity is not likely to result in the establishment of noxious/invasive weed species in the project area.
Low (1-3)	Noxious/invasive weed species are present in the areas adjacent to but not within the project area. Project activities can be implemented and prevent the spread of noxious/invasive weeds into the project area.
Moderate (4-7)	Noxious/invasive weed species located immediately adjacent to or within the project area. Project activities are likely to result in some areas becoming infested with noxious/invasive weed species even when preventative management actions are followed. Control measures are essential to prevent the spread of noxious/invasive weeds within the project area.
High (8-10)	Heavy infestations of noxious/invasive weeds are located within or immediately adjacent to the project area. Project activities, even with preventative management actions, are likely to result in the establishment and spread of noxious/invasive weeds on disturbed sites throughout much of the project area.

For this project, the factor rates as Moderate (4) at the present time. The proposed action could increase the populations of the noxious and invasive weeds already within the allotment and could aid in the introduction of weeds from surrounding areas. Within the allotment, watering and salt block sites are of particular concern of new weed infestations due to the concentration of livestock around those sites and the amount of ground disturbance associated with that.

Factor 2 assesses the consequences of noxious/invasive weed establishment in the project area.

Low to Nonexistent (1-3)	None. No cumulative effects expected.
Moderate (4-7)	Possible adverse effects on site and possible expansion of infestation within the project area. Cumulative effects on native plant communities are likely but limited.
High (8-10)	Obvious adverse effects within the project area and probable expansion of noxious/invasive weed infestations to areas outside the project area. Adverse cumulative effects on native plant communities are probable.

This project rates as High (8) at the present time. If new weed infestations establish within the allotment this could have an adverse impact those native plant communities especially since most of this allotment is currently considered to be weed-free. Also, any increase of cheatgrass could alter the fire regime in the area.

The Risk Rating is obtained by multiplying Factor 1 by Factor 2.

None (0)	Proceed as planned.
Low (1-10)	Proceed as planned. Initiate control treatment on noxious/invasive weed populations that get established in the area.
Moderate (11-49)	Develop preventative management measures for the proposed project to reduce the risk of introduction of spread of noxious/invasive weeds into the area. Preventative management measures should include modifying the project to include seeding the area to occupy disturbed sites with desirable species. Monitor the area for at least 3 consecutive years and provide for control of newly established populations of noxious/invasive weeds and follow-up treatment for previously treated infestations.
High (50-100)	Project must be modified to reduce risk level through preventative management measures, including seeding with desirable species to occupy disturbed site and controlling existing infestations of noxious/invasive weeds prior to project activity. Project must provide at least 5 consecutive years of monitoring. Projects must also provide for control of newly established populations of noxious/invasive weeds and follow-up treatment for previously treated infestations.

For this project, the Risk Rating is Moderate (32). This indicates that the project can proceed as planned as long as the following measures are followed:

- Prior to entering public lands, the BLM will provide information regarding noxious weed management and identification to the permit holders affiliated with the project. The importance of preventing the spread of weeds to uninfested areas and importance of controlling existing populations of weeds will be explained.
- The range specialist for the allotments will include weed detection into project compliance inspection activities. If the spread of noxious weeds is noted, appropriated weed control procedures will be determined in consultation with BLM personnel and will be in compliance with the appropriate BLM handbook sections and applicable laws and regulations.
- To eliminate the introduction of noxious weed seeds, roots, or rhizomes all interim and final seed mixes, hay, straw, hay/straw, or other organic products used for feed or bedding will be certified free of plant species listed on the Nevada noxious weed list or specifically identified by the BLM Ely District Office.
- Grazing will be conducted in compliance with the Ely District BLM noxious weed schedules. The scheduled procedures can significantly and effectively reduce noxious weed spread or introduction into the project area.
- Any newly established populations of noxious/invasive weeds discovered will be communicated to the Ely District Noxious and Invasive Weeds Coordinator for treatment.

Reviewed by: /s/Bonnie Million
 Bonnie Million
 Ely District Noxious & Invasive Weeds
 Coordinator

12/15/2008
 Date

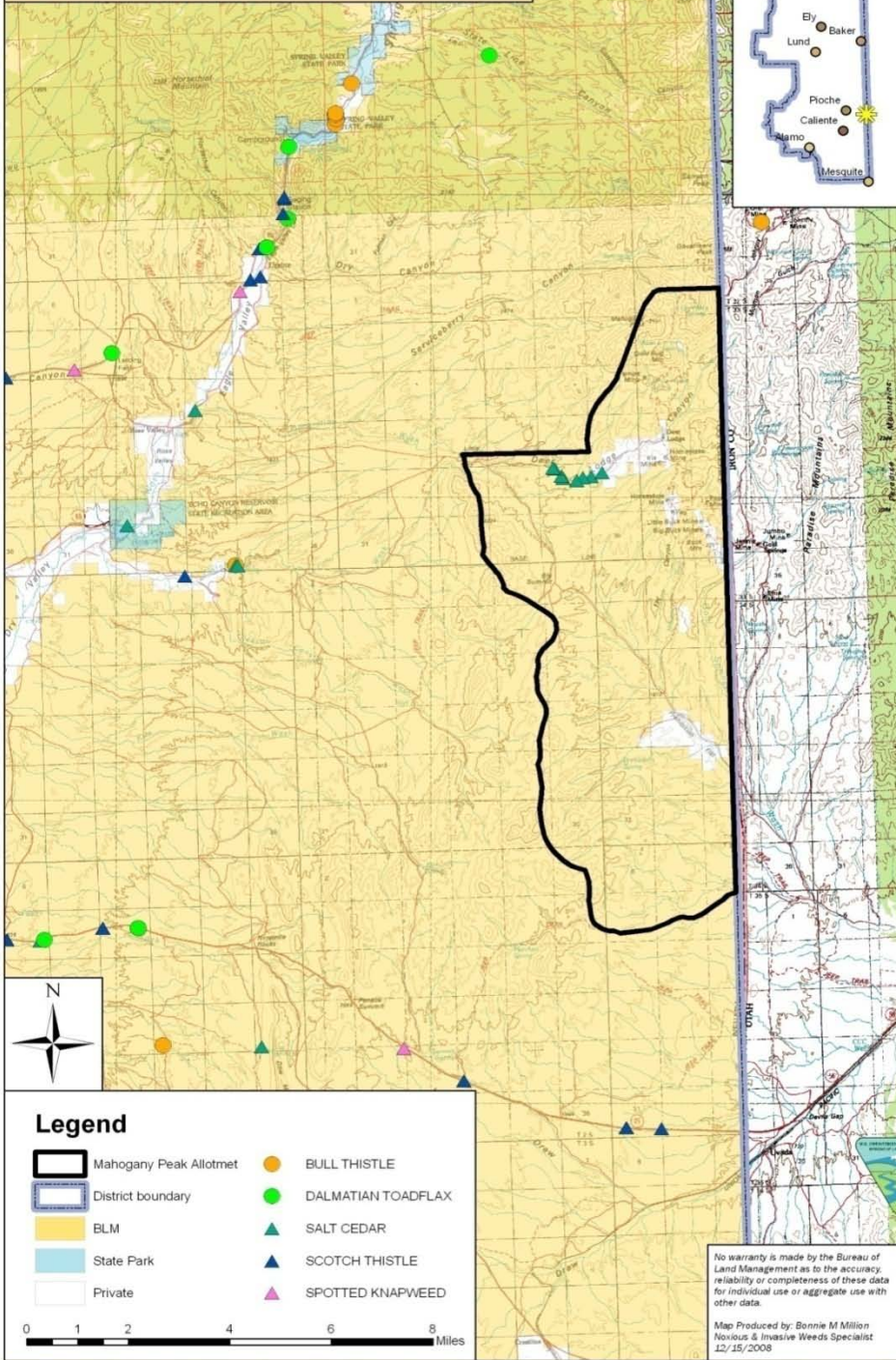
Mahogany Peak Term Permit Renewal

Documented Noxious & Invasive Weed Infestations

Location within the Ely District boundary



BLM



Ely District Office

Legend

- Mahogany Peak Allotment
- District boundary
- BLM
- State Park
- Private
- BULL THISTLE
- DALMATIAN TOADFLAX
- SALT CEDAR
- SCOTCH THISTLE
- SPOTTED KNAPWEED



No warranty is made by the Bureau of Land Management as to the accuracy, reliability or completeness of these data for individual use or aggregate use with other data.

Map Produced by: Bonnie M Million
Noxious & Invasive Weeds Specialist
12/15/2008

Appendix IV
Monitoring Photos













