



United States Department of the Interior

BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT

Carson City Field Office
5665 Morgan Mill Road
Carson City, NV 89701



In Reply Refer To:
NV032-4100

July 8, 2005

EMS TRANSMISSION 07/08/05

Dear Interested Party:

The Rock Springs Grazing Allotment is located approximately fifteen miles southeast of Fallon, Nevada. The allotment boundary along highway 50 is not fenced and on occasion livestock have left the grazing allotment. The Bureau of Land Management (BLM) and the livestock permittee are proposing to construct approximately three miles of barbwire fence to discourage livestock from leaving the allotment. Enclosed is a copy of the Rock Springs Fence Environmental Assessment (EA)(NV-030-05-013) and proposed Rock Springs Fence Decision Record/Finding of No Significant Impact.

Please review the enclosed documents. If you have any comments or concerns please send them to the authorized officer Daniel L. Jacquet at the Bureau of Land Management Carson City Field Office 5665 Morgan Mill Road Carson City, NV 89701, within 15 days. If you require have any questions, regarding the Rock Springs Fence Environmental Assessment or the Proposed Decisions please contact Katrina Leavitt at (775) 885-6130.

Signed By:
Daniel L. Jacquet
AFM, Renewable Resources

Authenticated By:
Katrina Leavitt
Rangeland Management Specialist

Enclosures:

- 1) Environmental Assessment Rock Springs Fence EA-NV-030-05-013
- 2) Proposed Rock Springs Fence Decision Record / Finding of No Significant Impact

Environmental Assessment
Rock Springs Fence
EA-NV-030-05-013
June 2, 2005

U.S. Department of Interior
Bureau of Land Management
Carson City Field Office
5665 Morgan Mill Road
Carson City, Nevada 89701

**Environmental Assessment
Rock Springs Fence
EA-NV-030-05-013**

I. INTRODUCTION/PURPOSE AND NEED

A. Introduction

The Rock Springs Grazing Allotment is located approximately fifteen miles southeast of Fallon, Nevada. The northern boundary of the allotment is located two miles south of Highway 50 at Salt Wells (Map 1).

The allotment boundary along highway 50 is not fenced. On occasion livestock have followed the roads along the northern boundary and left the allotment. It is anticipated that livestock drift will significantly increase in the near future as a result of increased gravel and geothermal mineral activity within the grazing allotment.

B. Purpose and Need

The proposal is to construct approximately three miles of barbwire fence near the northern boundary of the Rock Springs Grazing Allotment. The purpose of the fence is to discourage livestock from following the roads and drifting out of the allotment. This EA analyses the impacts associated with the proposed fence construction.

C. Land Use Plan Conformance Statement

The proposed action described in this document is in conformance with the Carson City Field Office-CRMP desired outcomes and standard operating procedures. For livestock grazing, these are found on pages LSG-1 & 8 and are as follows:

1. Improve overall range administration.
2. Construction of all fences will conform to the objectives and specifications in Bureau Manual 1737 to assure minimizing impacts on wildlife, wild horses, recreation, and visual resources.

II. PROPOSED ACTION AND ALTERNATIVES

A. Proposed Action

To discourage livestock from leaving the Rock Springs Grazing Allotment the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) and the permittee are proposing to construct approximately three miles of barbwire fence. The proposed fence would be constructed near the northern boundary of the grazing allotment(Map 2), and would consist of three strands of barbed wire and one smooth

bottom wire. The fence would comply with BLM wildlife fence standards (type B antelope). The wire spacing for the wildlife standard is 16", 22", 30" and 42" and 16 1/2' spacing between T-posts. A cattle guard would be placed where the proposed fence crosses the main road running south from Salt Wells (road on the East end of the fence). A wire gate would be placed next to the cattle guard to allow large vehicles and animals to bypass the cattle guard if necessary. A gate would also be placed where the proposed fence crosses the two track road which runs south east from Turupah Flat (road on the West end of the fence). The proposed fence construction would take place in the Fall of 2005. During construction a Field Office Project Inspector would inspect the fence to ensure compliance with BLM standards and a project marker would be placed along the fence.

B. No Action Alternative

The no action alternative is to not construct the proposed fence.

III. AFFECTED ENVIRONMENT

A. SCOPING AND ISSUE IDENTIFICATION

On December 1, 2004, a scoping letter was sent to the interested public to identify those individuals and organizations interested in specific actions on specific Allotments under the jurisdiction of the CCFO. The purpose of the scoping letter was to gather information and determine who would be further interested in participating in actions pertinent to specific Allotments.

Standard operating procedures direct the BLM to supply the State Clearinghouse with copies of this document for distribution amongst State Agencies. In addition, copies will be sent to the following entities:

- Permittee of Record
- Western Watersheds Project

Internal Scoping Also Identified the Following List of Groups to be Notified:

- Alvin Moyle Chair, Fallon Paiute-Shoshone Tribe
- Nevada Geothermal Specialists
- Hodges Transportation

Internal scoping amongst Bureau staff specialists is an ongoing process as is Native American consultation.

B. PROPOSED ACTION

1. General Setting

The Rock Springs Grazing Allotment is located approximately fifteen miles southeast of Fallon, Nevada. The proposed fence would be located near the northern boundary of the allotment which is approximately two miles south of Highway 50 at Salt Wells (Map 2). The average elevation is 4,000 feet above mean sea level and annual precipitation is 4-6 inches. The proposed project is located in a salt desert shrub plant community. Typical plant species include black greasewood, horsebrush, dalea, indian rice grass and inland salt grass. The proposed fence would start on the northeast end of the Bunejug Mountains and would run eastward ending out in the playa.

2. Critical Elements of the Human Environment

The following critical elements are not present or would not be affected by the Proposed Action: Air Quality, Areas of Critical Environmental Concern, Environmental Justice, Prime or Unique Farmlands, Floodplains, Hazardous Materials, Invasive, Nonnative Species, Migratory Birds, Native American Religious Concerns, Paleontology, Threatened or Endangered Animal Species; Threatened or Endangered Plant Species; Water Quality (Surface/Ground), Wetlands/Riparian, Wilderness, Wild and Scenic Rivers, Wild Horses & Burros.

For those critical elements that are present but were not brought forward for analysis, opting for either the proposed action or no action alternative would not affect these resources. Explanations as to why are as follows.

Cultural Resources

A Class I cultural resource literature review was conducted for the proposed project. Cultural resources, including prehistoric and historic sites are within the general area. Due to the environment, prehistoric resources likely to be observed include dune camp sites, lithic scatters, and isolates. Because of the nearby historic exploitative operations, including mining and salt extraction, industrial features, residential sites, and refuse scatters are likely.

A Class III pedestrian survey (CR3-2230) was conducted for the proposed project in which two chipped stone isolates were identified. Under the Nevada BLM Protocol, isolates are determined to be not significant. Therefore, the proposed action would not have an affect on cultural resources.

3. Resources Present and Brought Forward for Analysis

Livestock

Ninety eight cattle are permitted to graze in the Rock Springs allotment from 11/01 till 4/15 for a total of 535 Animal Unit Months.

Vegetation

The proposed project is located in a salt desert shrub plant community. Typical plant species include black greasewood, horsebrush, dalea, indian rice grass and inland salt grass.

Soils

The project area is comprised of clay soil types. Specific soil descriptions for lands within the project area can be found in the Fallon Soil Survey, published in 1975 by the Soil Conservation Service (SCS). The SCS is now the Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS).

Visual Resources

A visual resource management class has not been designated for the project area. The setting of the proposed project area is the Salt Wells alkali basin with the northeast end of the Bunejug Mountains in the background.

Minerals

Two gravel pits and a geothermal plant are located in the Rock Springs Allotment.

4. No Action Alternative

The description of the affected environment for these alternatives would be the same as that for the proposed action.

IV. ENVIRONMENTAL CONSEQUENCES

A. Proposed Action Environmental Impacts

Livestock

The construction of approximately three miles of fence would benefit the livestock operator by improving livestock management.

Vegetation

The construction of three miles of fence would require the temporary removal of five acres of salt desert shrub vegetation. The area along the fence line would be driven along during fence construction/maintenance and this would crush vegetation.

Soils

Depending upon the time of year and the type of soil, soil compaction can occur in areas where livestock congregate such as along fence lines. Under the proposed alternative soil compaction may occur in limited areas due to concentrations of cattle near the fence.

Visual Resources

The proposed fence would attract attention but would not dominate the view. The visual impacts from the construction of the fence would be low.

Minerals

The location of the proposed fence is approximately a quarter of a mile north of the grazing allotment boundary. The proposed fence location was selected to avoid two gravel pits. The northern boundary of the northern most gravel pit would be fenced but there would be no impacts to the mineral operation.

B. No Action Alternative

Livestock

Under the no action alternative livestock drift would continue and is expected to increase. Increased mineral extraction from the gravel pits and traffic to access the proposed geothermal plant would increase pressure on livestock.

Vegetation

Under the no action alternative the fence would not be constructed and five acres of salt desert shrub vegetation would not be removed.

Soils

Under the no action alternative the fence would not be constructed and soil compaction due to livestock congregation along the fence would not occur.

Visual Resources

Under the no action alternative the fence would not be constructed and there would be no impacts to visual resources due to the proposed project.

Minerals

Under the no action alternative the fence would not be constructed and there would be no impacts to mineral operations due to the proposed project.

C. Mitigation Measures

There are no additional mitigating measures.

D. Residual Impacts

There are none to address with there being no additional mitigating measures.

E. Cumulative Impacts

All resource values have been evaluated for cumulative impacts for past, present, or reasonably foreseeable future actions. It has been determined that cumulative impacts would be negligible as a result of the proposed action.

F. Monitoring

No additional monitoring is proposed.

V. CONSULTATION AND COORDINATION

A. List of Preparers:

Katrina Leavitt	Rangeland Ecologist
Russell Suminski	Lead Rangeland Management Specialist
Gary Bowyer	Archaeologist
James deLaureal	Soil Scientist
Terry Knight	Lead Recreation Planner
Walt Devaurs	Lead Wildlife Biologist
Terri Knutson	Environmental Coordinator
Carla James	Lead Mineral Specialist
Jo Ann Hufnagle	Lead Realty Specialist
Richard Depoli	Range Project Planner

B. Persons, Groups and/or Agencies Consulted

Permittee of Record
Western Watersheds Project
Alvin Moyle Chair, Fallon Paiute-Shoshone Tribe
Nevada Geothermal Specialists
Hodges Transportation

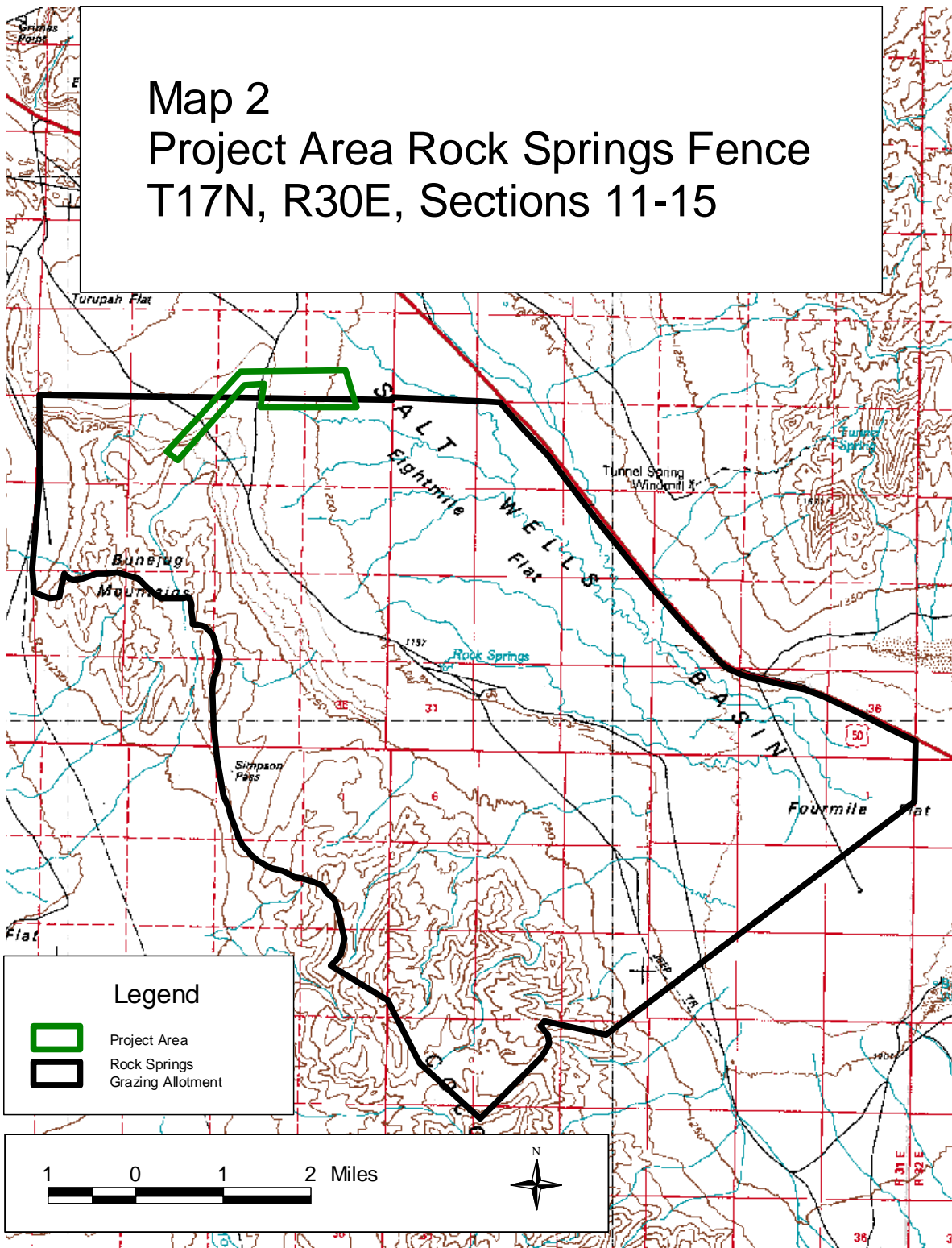
VII. APPENDICES AND/OR ATTACHMENTS

Map 1 - General Location
Map 2 - Project Area for the Proposed Fence

Map 2

Project Area Rock Springs Fence

T17N, R30E, Sections 11-15



**FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT
AND
DECISION RECORD
EA-NV-030-05-013**

1. Finding of No Significant Impacts

I have reviewed this environmental assessment including the explanation and resolution of any potential significant environmental impacts. Based on the analysis of Environmental Assessment EA-NV-030-05-013, I have determined that the proposed action will not have a significant effect on the human environment, and therefore, an environmental impact statement will not be prepared. I have determined that the proposed action is in conformance with the approved land use plan(s). It is my decision to implement the proposed action.

2. Decision

It is my decision to authorize the Proposed Action as described in the attached Environmental Assessment. Implementation of the Proposed Action will authorize (1) the construction of approximately three miles of barbed wire fence, and the associated gates, and cattle guard. In accordance with 43 CFR §4120.3, the proposed range improvements are authorized.

3. Rationale

The proposed fence is needed and will not degrade the environment. The Proposed Decision is also in conformance with the 2001 Consolidated Resource Management Plan.

4. Stipulations and Monitoring

No additional stipulations and monitoring are necessary.

5. Protest & Appeal

PROTEST

In accordance with 43 CFR 4160.2, any applicant, permittee, lessee or other interested public may protest the proposed decision under 4160.1 of this title, in person or in writing to the authorized officer Daniel L. Jacquet at the Bureau of Land Management Carson City Field Office 5665 Morgan Mill Road Carson City, NV 89701, within 15 days after receipt of such decision. The protest, if filed, must clearly and concisely state the reason(s) why the protestant thinks the proposed decision is in error.

In accordance with 43 CFR 4160.3 (a), in the absence of a protest, the proposed decision will become the final decision of the authorized officer without further notice.

In accordance with 43 CFR 4160.3 (b), should a timely protest be filed with the authorized officer, the authorized officer will reconsider the proposed decision and shall serve the final decision on the protestant and the interested public.

APPEAL

In accordance with 43 CFR 4.470, 4160.3(c), and 4160.4, any person whose interest is adversely affected by a final decision of the authorized officer may appeal the decision for the purpose of a hearing before an administrative law judge. The appeal must be filed within 30 days after the date the proposed decision becomes final or 30 days after receipt of the final decision. In accordance with 43 CFR 4.470, the appeal shall state clearly and concisely the reason(s) why the appellant thinks the final decision of the authorized officer is wrong.

Pursuant to 43 CFR 4.471 and 4160.3(c), an appellant also may petition for a stay of the final decision pending appeal by filing a petition for stay along with the appeal within 30 days after the date the proposed decision becomes final or 30 days after receipt of the final decision.

The appeal and any petition for stay must be filed at the office of the authorized officer Daniel L. Jacquet at the Bureau of Land Management Carson City Field Office 5665 Morgan Mill Road Carson City, NV 89701. Within 15 days of filing the appeal and any petition for stay, the appellant also must serve a copy of the appeal and any petition for stay on any person named in the decision and listed at the end of the decision, and on the Office of the Solicitor, Regional Solicitor, Pacific Southwest Region, U.S. Department of the Interior, 2800 Cottage Way, Room E-1712, Sacramento, California 95825-1890.

Pursuant to 43 CFR 4.471(c), a petition for stay, if filed, must show sufficient justification based on the following standards:

- (1) The relative harm to the parties if the stay is granted or denied;
- (2) The likelihood of the appellant's success on the merits;
- (3) The likelihood of immediate and irreparable harm if the stay is not granted; and,
- (4) Whether the public interest favors granting the stay.

43 CFR 4.471(d) provides that the appellant requesting a stay bears the burden of proof to demonstrate that a stay should be granted.

Any person named in the decision from which an appeal is taken (other than the appellant) who wishes to file a response to the petition for a stay may file with the Hearings Division in Salt Lake City, Utah, a motion to intervene in the appeal, together with the response, within 10 days after receiving the petition. Within 15 days after filing the motion to intervene and response, the person must serve copies on the appellant, the Office of the Solicitor and any other person named in the decision (43 CFR 4.472(b)).

At the conclusion of any document that a party must serve, the party or its representative must sign a written statement certifying that service has been or will be made in accordance with the applicable rules and specifying the date and manner of such service (43 CFR 4.422(c)(2)).

Daniel L. Jacquet
Assistant Manager, Renewable Resources
Carson City Field Office

Date