

Here is the Grazing Permit Renewal example from Module 2, in its entirety. Remember, the non-italicized text is what would go in your NEPA document. The italicized text provides explanation.

*The proposed action is for the BLM to renew a 10-year grazing permit with modifications to limit grazing intensity in riparian areas and remove livestock grazing from riparian areas during the critical growth period of riparian vegetation.*

#### Issues Analyzed in Detail (Chapter 1 of your NEPA document)

The following issue was identified for detailed analysis based on the criteria in the BLM NEPA Handbook (Section 6.4):

##### **How would livestock grazing affect riparian vegetation condition along Stinky Creek?**

**Geographic scope** (*this could go in Chapter 1 or 3 of your NEPA document*)—Livestock grazing authorized by the BLM would only affect riparian vegetation within the Stinky Creek Allotment. As such, the geographic scope for the analysis of this issue is the riparian zone along Stinky Creek within the Stinky Creek Allotment.

**Temporal scope** (*this could go in Chapter 1 or 3 of your NEPA document*)—The proposed action would authorize livestock grazing for 10 years. Although there are theoretically some indirect effects of livestock grazing that could continue a year or more after grazing (such as long-term patterns of plant species composition), the measurable effects of livestock grazing on riparian vegetation would occur during the period of the 10-year grazing permit. Therefore, the temporal scope for analysis of this issue is 10 years.

#### Affected Environment (Chapter 3 of your NEPA document)

*Impact indicator: percentage of riparian area with inadequate regrowth of riparian vegetation*

This analysis is tiered to the RMP EIS, which analyzed the current condition of riparian vegetation within the Badwater Watershed, which includes Stinky Creek. That analysis concluded that riparian vegetation along unfenced creeks in the watershed is heavily utilized by livestock and wild horses, resulting in decreased recruitment of deciduous woody species and stabilizing riparian species (RMP EIS, Chapter 3, p. 19-21). That analysis is incorporated here by reference.

Riparian vegetation conditions along Stinky Creek have not changed since the RMP EIS in a way that would alter the analytical conclusions in the RMP EIS. The 2009 Stinky Creek Allotment Evaluation determined that Standard 2 (Watershed Function - Riparian/Wetland Areas) is not being achieved along Stinky Creek. Authorized livestock and wild horse grazing were identified as causal factors for these streams failing to achieve this Standard for Rangeland Health and Guidelines for Livestock Grazing Management. Monitoring data in the evaluation determined that adequate regrowth of riparian vegetation (defined as greater than 6" by mid-June) was not occurring on 50% of the riparian area within allotment (Allotment Evaluation, pp. 24-27). That evaluation is incorporated here by reference.

#### Cumulative Effects Analysis (Chapter 4 of your NEPA document)

**Past actions**—The effects of past actions on riparian vegetation condition within the Badwater Watershed were analyzed in the description of the affected environment in the RMP EIS (Chapter 3, pp. 15-18). The RMP EIS analysis described that past livestock grazing and wild horse grazing has heavily utilized riparian areas in the watershed, resulting in a downward trend in vegetation condition in riparian areas. That analysis is incorporated here by reference.

The 2009 Stinky Creek Allotment Evaluation determined that adequate regrowth of riparian vegetation (defined as greater than 6" by mid-June) would have been occurring on 80 – 100% of the riparian area within the allotment prior to livestock grazing (that is, adequate regrowth would not occur on 0 – 20% of the riparian area), and that adequate regrowth is currently occurring on 50% of the riparian area within the allotment (Allotment Evaluation, pp. 24-27). That evaluation is incorporated here by reference.

**Present actions**—Ongoing wild horse grazing within the allotment is affecting riparian vegetation. The 2009 Stinky Creek Allotment Evaluation determined that wild horse use of riparian vegetation is concentrated in the upper portions of Stinky Creek and is preventing adequate regrowth of riparian vegetation (defined as more than 6" by mid-June) on approximately 10% of the riparian area within the allotment (Allotment Evaluation, p. 27). That evaluation is incorporated here by reference.

**Reasonably foreseeable actions**—Reasonably foreseeable reductions of wild horse numbers will increase future regrowth of riparian vegetation. Currently, grazing by wild horses is contributing to the downward trend in riparian vegetation along Stinky Creek. It is reasonably foreseeable that wild horse grazing along Stinky Creek will continue. However, the RMP EIS analyzed reasonably foreseeable gathers and removals of wild horses within the Badwater Herd Management Area to maintain population of wild horses at the Appropriate Management Level (RMP, Chapter 4, pp. 79-80). That analysis is incorporated here by reference.

Based on the analysis of past gathers within the Badwater Herd Management Area, maintaining the wild horse population at the Appropriate Management Level would eliminate overutilization of riparian vegetation by wild horses (Badwater Gather EA, p. 24). That analysis is incorporated here by reference.

As described for the present action, wild horse grazing is currently preventing adequate regrowth of riparian vegetation on approximately 10% of the riparian area within the allotment. The next gather in the Badwater Herd Management Area is tentatively scheduled for two years from now. Therefore, gathering of wild horses would allow adequate regrowth of riparian vegetation on 10% of the riparian area in three years.

**Direct and indirect effects of the proposed action and alternatives**—Under the No Action Alternative, livestock would continue to heavily utilize the riparian area along Stinky Creek, which would continue the downward trend in riparian vegetation condition. Within 10 years, an additional 20% of the riparian area within the allotment would have inadequate regrowth of riparian vegetation.

Alternative A would limit livestock grazing in riparian areas along Stinky Creek during the critical growth period of riparian vegetation, which would allow adequate regrowth of riparian vegetation on 30% of the riparian area.

Alternative B would remove livestock grazing from riparian areas along Stinky Creek, which would have the same effect on riparian vegetation as Alternative A.

**Combine the effects—**

*Impact indicator: Amount of riparian areas with inadequate regrowth*

*It might be helpful to have a graphic similar to Figure 6.3 in the BLM NEPA Handbook to depict this information.*

No Action

*Baseline = 0% to 20%*

*Past and present actions (livestock grazing and wild horse grazing) = 50%*

*Future actions (wild horse removals) = -10%*

*No action (no change in livestock grazing) = 20%*

*Cumulative effect = 60% of riparian areas with inadequate regrowth (50% - 10% + 20%)*

Action Alt A

*Baseline = 0% to 20%*

*Past and present actions (livestock grazing and wild horse grazing) = 50%*

*Future actions (wild horse removals) = -10%*

*Proposed action (limit riparian livestock grazing) = -30%*

*Cumulative effect = 10% of riparian areas with inadequate regrowth (50% - 10% - 30%)*

Action Alt B

*Baseline = 0% to 20%*

*Past and present actions (livestock grazing and wild horse grazing) = 50%*

*Future actions (wild horse removals) = -10%*

*Proposed action (eliminate riparian livestock grazing) = -30%*

*Cumulative effect = 10% of riparian areas with inadequate regrowth (50% - 10% - 30%)*

**Describe the relationship of the cumulative effects to any thresholds—**The cumulative effect of the No Action Alternative together with other present and reasonably foreseeable action would result in degradation of riparian vegetation condition from 50% of the area with inadequate regrowth at the current condition to 60% of the area with inadequate regrowth. This degradation would continue the downward trend of riparian condition and would not comply with Rangeland Health Standards and Guidelines.

The cumulative effect of either Alternative A or Alternative B together with other present and reasonably foreseeable action would result in improving riparian vegetation condition from 50% of the area with inadequate regrowth at the current condition to 10% of the area with inadequate regrowth. This improvement would constitute “significant progress” toward achieving the riparian rangeland health standard.

*(In this example, this analytical conclusion would provide the foundation for a finding of no significant impact with regards to this issue).*