



# NEWS RELEASE

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## **BLM Receives \$119,402 from Auction of Grazing Units on McGregor Range - Receipts Will be Used to Manage the Land and Fund Range Improvements -**

The Bureau of Land Management's Las Cruces District auctioned off 10 grazing units today (about 271,000 acres) on the McGregor Range, an area of withdrawn public lands on the Fort Bliss Military Reservation south of Alamogordo and east of the White Sands Missile Range.

The units, ranging in size from 4,000 to more than 20,000 acres, were offered for nine months beginning in October, to provide a rest period during the summer growing season.

Each unit was competitively bid with minimum bids of \$5.00 per AUM (animal unit month). This year the low bid was \$5.00 per AUM; the high bid on one unit was \$14.50 per AUM. The average of all ten bids was \$10.15 per AUM. A total of 1,285 grown cattle or 2,186 yearlings were authorized for the 10 units.

The McGregor Range, an area of Chihuahuan Desert grasslands encompassing the western portion of Otero Mesa, is co-managed by the Bureau of Land Management and the Department of the Army. No units were leased over the past three years due to extreme drought.

During the drought McGregor Range Manager James Christensen and his two-person staff maintained range improvements, kept water available for wildlife and constructed six new corrals. The efforts paid dividends in getting ready for range conditions to improve, which happened this year. The McGregor Range received over 10 inches of rain this growing season; about 70 percent of the 271,000 acres that are leased for grazing are in top range condition. The remaining 337,000 acres are not grazed by domestic livestock due to priority military use.

"We're being very conservative in our stocking rates this year," said Christensen. "While we had excellent forage production this year, we want to make sure we have sufficient water for the livestock."

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BLM Assistant Field Manager Jim McCormick said, “we’re very pleased that the McGregor Range will be able to contribute pasture for the base herds of New Mexico.”

The Bureau of Land Management is responsible for balanced management of federal public lands and resources; land uses are considered in a combination that will best serve the needs of the American people. Management is based upon the principles of multiple use and sustained yield, a combination of uses that takes into account the long-term needs of future generations for renewable and nonrenewable resources. These resources include recreation, livestock grazing, timber, minerals, watershed, fish and wildlife, wilderness, plus natural, scenic, scientific, and cultural values.

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