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Environmental Assessment

Long Prairie Allotment

Hood River Ranger District Mt. Hood National Forest

Hood River and Wasco Counties, Oregon

Legal Description: T1N, R10E, Sections 31, 35, 36; T1S, R10E,
Sections 1-3, 10-15, 22, 23; T1S, R11E, Sections 7, 8, 17, 18.

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SUMMARY

The Mt. Hood National Forest proposes to continue authorization of grazing on the Long Prairie Allotment. The project area is located in the North Fork Mill Creek and West Fork Neal Creek watersheds and is within the Hood River Ranger District, on the Mt. Hood National Forest, Oregon. The Rescission Act of 1995 requires the Forest Service to establish and adhere to a schedule for the completion of National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) analysis and decisions on all allotments within the National Forest System for which NEPA analysis is needed. There is also a need to achieve or maintain resource conditions in accordance with current law, policy, and Forest Plan direction.

The proposal includes authorizing 52 cow/calf pairs, with a normal grazing season of June 15 to September 30. The proposed action would convert the allotment to a two-pasture, deferred-rotation grazing scheme.

The proposed action intends to use an adaptive management approach where resource conditions would be identified and monitored on an appropriate basis. Grazing management could be adjusted through the timing, frequency, intensity, or duration of grazing and would be based on resource trends in key areas.

The proposed action is expected to improve desired resource conditions and avoid impacts to key management sites within the allotment. These sites include:

- Areas along West Fork Neal and North Fork Mill Creeks
- Long Prairie and Gibson Prairie Meadow Areas

To protect high use riparian areas, cattle would be released and gathered at the beginning and end of each grazing season at designated sites away from streams. A fence would be constructed on the northern side of North Fork Mill Creek to restrict cattle from the North Fork Mill Creek drainage. In addition, a new water guzzler and salt mineral blocks would be placed in the uplands away from riparian areas in order to keep cattle from congregating in or near streams.

The private land north of the allotment boundary would no longer be considered for inclusion in a grazing system with National Forest System lands, as in the past, and a fence would be constructed separating the allotment from private land.

In addition to the proposed action, the Forest Service also evaluated the following alternatives:

- No Grazing
- Current Management with Slight Modifications

Based on this analysis, the responsible official will decide whether or not to authorize grazing on the Long Prairie Allotment and if so, whether or not any specific standards and guidelines and/or mitigation measures would apply.

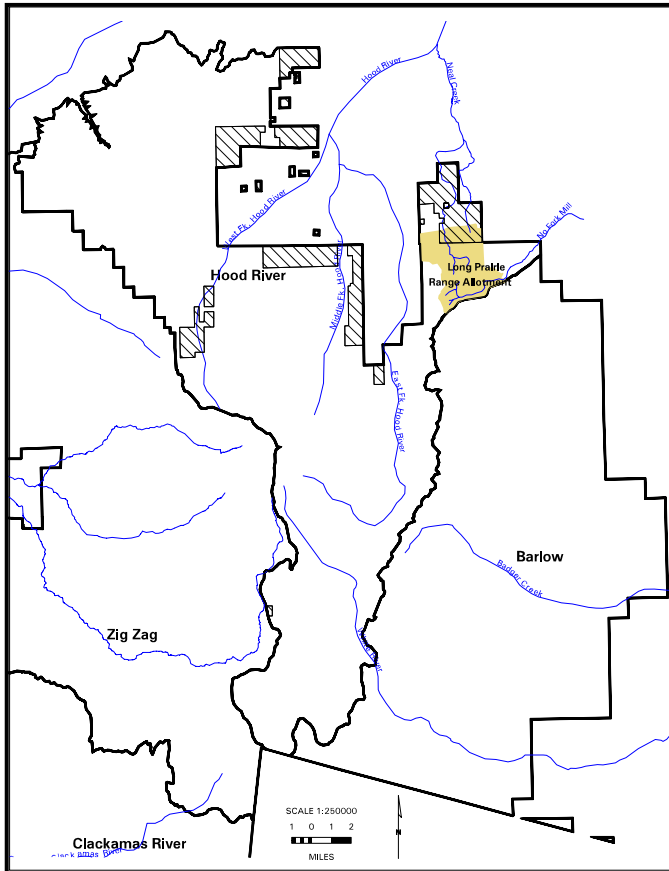


Figure 1-1. Vicinity Map
Location of the Mt. Hood National Forest in Oregon (left) and the Long Prairie Cattle Allotment in relation to the entire Mt. Hood National Forest (right). Private land is indicated with diagonal lines in the figure on the right.

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