



File Code: 1950/2200

Date: October 6, 2008

To Whom It May Concern:

The Roosevelt-Duchesne and Vernal Ranger Districts propose to reauthorize grazing on 10 allotments on the Ashley National Forest. Allotments from the two districts are being scoped together to enhance efficiency. The purpose and need for the proposed action is to provide forage for domestic livestock. Following public scoping, an environmental analysis for these grazing allotments will be prepared and made available for public review.

The allotments being reviewed are:

Allotment	District	Total Acres	Suitable Grazing Acres	Livestock Number-Class	Grazing Season
Farm Creek	D3	39,563	14,354	538	6/11-9/10
Dry Gulch	D3	53,360	23,545	881	6/25-9/30
Pole Creek	D3	8,738	3,163	150	7/6-8/22
Yellowstone	D3	17,450	3,693	65	6/16-9/25
Petty Mountain	D3	35,043			
Mule Creek On/Off	D3	330	330	15	6/11-6/25
Lake Fork	D3	68,705	13,883	114	6/25-9/3
Mosby Mountain	D2	21,968	5,199	402 – cow/calf	6/11-9/30
Whiterocks Canyon	D2	3,399	1,490	50 - cow/calf	6/16-9/15
West Whiterocks On/Off	D2	200			

D2 – Vernal District; D3 – Roosevelt-Duchesne District

As a part of reauthorizing livestock grazing, the proposed action would incorporate an adaptive management strategy. The strategy was developed by an interdisciplinary team of resource specialists and is a planning and monitoring process that identifies desired resource conditions and establishes benchmarks and management standards that would maintain or move toward desired condition on 205,061 acres. The benchmarks identified below will form a basis for monitoring - to compare the allotment conditions with the specified benchmark. These would be incorporated within existing livestock grazing permits and revised Allotment Management Plans and would compliment existing Forest-wide standards and guidelines currently found therein.

- Total ground cover equal to or greater than 85% of potential for all plant communities grazed by livestock.
- Plant communities dominated by native species and selected non-native species of moderate to high value for watershed protection (or erosion control). Dominance includes greater cover, greater frequency, and/or greater abundance of moderate and high value



plants than low value plants. Selected non-native species are those included in plantings in the past based on their erosion control and other desired values. This includes both woody and herbaceous species. Documentation associated with photography and other notes as well as measurements from studies are sources for determination of dominance.

- In goshawk habitat (forested lands, including transitory openings created by timber harvest or fire), limit understory grazing utilization to an average of 20% by weight, not to exceed 40% on any specific site. Average browse utilization would be limited to 40% by weight, and would not exceed 60%. This standard does not apply to non-forested habitat types (Goshawk Strategy).
- Manage livestock grazing in aspen stands to facilitate sprouting and sprout survival sufficient to perpetuate the long-term viability of aspen clones. Crown cover of aspen sprouts 40% or greater at 5-years post disturbance.
- Utilization of key forage species no greater than 50% of current year's growth except where long-term monitoring demonstrates a different standard is appropriate.
- Leave a 4" or greater stubble height of herbaceous species at the end of the grazing season between greenline and bank full of perennial stream systems.
- Stream bank stability is equal to or greater than 80% of potential.
- Implement grazing management practices that would not cause exceedences in state water quality standards.

The Roosevelt-Duchesne and Vernal Districts have determined that an Environmental Assessment (EA) will be sufficient to analyze the potential environmental effects of the proposed actions. At a minimum, the following alternatives will be described and analyzed.

- Continue grazing with an adaptive approach to livestock management
- No livestock grazing

The District Rangers as the responsible officials for the allotments will.

1. Decide whether to authorize continued livestock grazing on the allotment.
2. If livestock grazing is authorized, decide under what parameters livestock grazing will be implemented.
3. Decide whether the selected alternative may have significant effects and whether to prepare an Environmental Impact Statement.

In making the decision, the Forest Plan and other relevant direction, available scientific and other technical information, issues raised by resource specialists, public scoping input, and public comments on the proposed action, environmental effects, and other relevant information will be considered. We will decide whether or not to implement the proposed action or another alternative developed by the Forest Service in response to specific resource issues. We may choose on of the other alternatives or may select components from among the proposed action and alternatives.

The public is invited to offer substantive comment at this time. Substantive comments are those within the scope of, are specific to, and have a direct relationship to the proposed actions, and include supporting reasons that the Responsible Official should consider in reaching a decision. Comments received in response to this notice, including names and addresses of those who comment, will be considered part of the public record for this project. Send your written

comments to: John R. Kirkaldie, District Ranger, Roosevelt-Duchesne Ranger District, at 650 W. Highway 40, P.O. Box 127, Roosevelt, Utah 84066. Comments may also be hand delivered to the above address during regular business hours of 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., Monday-Friday, excluding federal holidays; or submitted electronically to comments-intermtn-ashley@fs.fed.us. It would be most useful for the Forest to receive your electronic comments in MS Word (*.doc) or rich text format (*.rtf). All comments should be received by November 14, 2008.

For further information concerning this proposal, please contact Allen Huber at the Roosevelt Ranger District, 650 W. Highway 40, P.O. Box 127 Roosevelt, Utah 84066, by phone at (435) 781-5226, or by e-mail at ahuber@fs.fed.us.

Sincerely,

JOHN R. KIRKALDIE
Roosevelt-Duchesne District Ranger
Responsible Official

NICHOLAS T. SCHMELTER
Responsible Official
Vernal District Ranger

Enclosures
Project Area Map