



for the greatest good



Meeting Notes

**BLUE MOUNTAINS
FOREST PLAN REVISION - 2015**
Malheur, Umatilla, and Wallowa-Whitman
National Forests

Public Meeting on Livestock Grazing and the Blue Mountains Forest Plan Revision

Hosted by the Umatilla and Malheur National Forests

Ukiah, Oregon | Nov. 10, 2015

These notes reflect the best efforts of the notetaker to capture the discussion of meeting participants, but in no way are these notes a word-for-word transcript as the notetaker may have unintentionally missed some statements or dialogue. Also, the notes do not attempt to correct or clarify any statements made by participants.

Participants (as they appear on the sign-in sheet): Jason Kehrberg, Justin Galbreath, Jim Officer, Rick Henslee, Travis Henslee, Dick Levy, Glen Krebs, Mitch Mund, Steve Currin, James Walton, Paul Walton, Ren Holliday, Pat Holliday, Jim Walton, Karen Coulter, Nancy Porter, Micah Wilson, Ken Brooks, Cici Brooks, Dave Price, Elaine Eisenbraun, Karl Jensen, Adam Green, Barbara Green, Patricia Maier, Jeff Blackwood (facilitator)

U.S. Forest Service (USFS) participants: Genevieve Masters, David Hatfield, Joani Bosworth, Dave Halemeier, Ian Reid, Maura Laverty, Nick Stiner, Brad Lathrop, Peter Fargo (notetaker)

Organizations represented: Permittees, Gander Ranch, Henslee Ranch, Cunningham Sheep Co., Tom Colvin Estate, Butter Creek Cattle Co., Walton Ranches, Holliday Land and Livestock, Blue Mountains Biodiversity Project, IZ Ranch, Brooks Ranch, Blue Mountain Alliance, North Fork John Day Watershed Council, Flying J Enterprises, CRC Cattle, USFS

Welcome from the facilitator, Jeff Blackwood

Welcome to the meeting. Thank you all for coming. Tonight we are discussing range management and the Blue Mountains Forest Plan Revision. We will honor everyone’s opinion here. It’s important that we have this dialogue with respect. We are all owners of these public lands and we bring diverse views. I’m sure there will be questions that need clarification, and we have some resource people who can help answer them.

Introductions: Who are you, where are you from, and what is your relationship to the National Forest (NF)?

- Director of the Blue Mtns. Biodiversity Project; looking for a good dialogue about changes regarding the Blue Mountains Forest Plan Revision.
- District Ranger on the Blue Mountain District of the Malheur NF

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- District Ranger here in Ukiah; here to listen and have a real honest/open dialogue; we are all here for different reasons, and I would like to hear what those are.
- From Monument
- From Pilot Rock
- Work on the Umatilla
- From Long Creek; Permittee
- From Long Creek; Permittee on Umatilla and Malheur NF
- Rancher; anxious to hear some good things tonight
- Have an allotment on the Malheur NF
- Permittee on the Malheur NF
- Member of Forest Access For All
- From Pilot Rock
- Permittee
- Permittee
- North Fork John Day Watershed Council
- Representing different groups; Backcountry Horsemen for OR and WA; Blue Mtn. Alliance
- Have several allotments on the Malheur NF
- Malheur NF Permittee
- Permittee on the Ochoco and Umatilla NF
- Have permits on Umatilla; want to see this work continue for my children
- USFS: Look forward to hearing your ideas and solutions
- Permittee on Umatilla
- Permittee on Umatilla

Opening Remarks

Genevieve Masters, Umatilla NF Supervisor

- I have worked on National Forests in Nevada and Arizona.
- I'm excited to be here and looking forward to getting to know you all.

Ian Reid, District Ranger, North Fork John Day District, Umatilla NF

- Thank you all for giving up your Tuesday night for this; obviously this is important to all of you.
- The Umatilla's Range program is one of the reasons that brought me to this area; I'm really passionate about it.

David Hatfield, Natural Resources Staff Officer, Umatilla NF

- In 2014, USFS released a draft Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) with a range of alternatives, including a Preferred Alternative and one that would stick with the 1990 Plans.
- We received enough feedback and concerns that we decided to re-engage on some key issues. That is why we're here tonight; to learn from each other and find possible solutions.
- Notes will be available to you and the public; will be used by the team building the Forest Plan; will use input to decide what adjustments may be needed to the alternatives in the draft EIS.
- The final EIS is scheduled to go out in 2017; after that will be an objection period where you can influence the nature of that decision if you provided formal comments on the draft EIS.

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- Q: Is it possible at this point to change the Preferred Alternative? Right now it's Alternative E, but what if we want A? Yes, it is possible to share your views, which will be considered in the alternative selection.
- Q: I heard about road closures as an issue with the Forest Plan. What other issues caused the hold-up?
 - Recommended Wilderness; lands allocated to timber; recreation (motorized and non-motorized); Pace and Scale of Restoration is another topic.
 - The Forest Plan does not make a decision to open/close any roads; it also does not make decisions on permit numbers or season of use.

Input around the circle

- I think it's nice of the USFS to take the time to listen to our interests; also a great opportunity to get some good information. I am a land owner, but I don't run cattle; I represent the NF John Day Watershed Council. Suggestions: (1) USFS commit going forward to manage perimeter fencing; would like to see a cooperative approach to that. (2) Riparian pastures being used as holding pastures; need to determine whether those are the best places to be holding/collecting cattle. (3) Look at the objectives in the Forest Plan; USFS talks a lot about the triple bottom line; would be nice to see the Plan address social/economic issues in terms of grazing. Are we helping to create jobs/income/community through the grazing program? (4) Would like to see the USFS use third-party monitoring. USFS needs to monitor itself too; let somebody else evaluate the USFS.
- I have been to a lot of Forest Plan meetings; round one was this summer and now round two. The Forest Plan we're operating under today was approved in 1990, and that was a long and painful process. There was a lot of negative feedback; it was pretty much the same as what you're seeing now. Eventually that plan had to be driven into a hole and completed in 1990. That wasn't a bad plan; represented a pretty good balance. Problem: After the plan was signed, regulatory and policy changes (e.g., threatened & endangered species) occurred that were significant. I can't tell you anything you don't already know. Before the blood is dry on the plan, changes come, and you don't have anything to say about it. The negative feedback has been generated by what people see in the forest today compared to what was put in place in 1990. That is a problem. When the plan is signed, changes will continue to occur. When they personally affect you, think about how you can be involved. Today, there is only about 30-40% of the forest that we have an ability to manage at all. How can the USFS get more support? Reassure people they will have some involvement in future changes.
- I have a lot of comments; will start with the biggest one. Grant County had a record wildfire; the damage was devastating; I heard "graze it, log it, or watch it burn."
- Would like to see the grazing program continue; find it hard to believe that, with all the improvements we've made to grazing program, the USFS feels it needs to increase the regulations. On the Malheur, USFS data shows that we're doing a decent job. We're the #1 economic contributors in Grant Co., yet we have been under the microscope, and I'm surprised.
- I'm looking at the pictures on the pegboard on the wall -- not much grazing, not much timber, and a lot of fire. I think we need to change the emphasis.
- I just don't want to lose ground. I give a lot of praise to Brad Lathrop, and he is good to work with.
- I heard about erosion, but I would hate to think my cattle cause more problems than the off-road mudders do. My regulations get tighter, but we can't seem to stop the idiots who are really damaging the land. I know elk are part of the equation. Elk can undo the little gain I make. I want to leave my allotment to my daughters. Elk are drinking out of my troughs and eating, and our carrying capacity is diminishing. It's

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nothing we can control. The damage done is sometimes irreparable to our private pastures. We can't even hay enough to feed one horse. We have nowhere else to go.

- Here to represent the needs of wildlife and the ecosystem. The Plan doesn't have legally-enforceable Guidelines in general. My concerns relate to water quality; fish; riparian areas. Concerned about cows in riparian areas; want to ensure adequate forage for wildlife; have not seen evidence of that. Glad to see USFS moving toward adaptive mgmt. Concerned about losing native fish and their historic range. The Columbia spotted frogs and red trout should be indicator species under this Forest Plan. We are losing water out of stream systems, and it's getting worse with climate change. About spring developments: Some springs need to be left alone. Fences need to be maintained around springs and aspen. I want to support Elaine's suggestion for 3rd party monitoring.
- Can solve riparian problems with more water development work; we really need to step up water developments. Also need to get archeological guys out of our face, so we can ensure good water; get cows away from streams and into the hills. The Canyon Creek Fire started on my allotment; it had all been treated under multiple programs. It just wasn't put out quickly enough, so we burned 200,000 acres this summer.
- Plan has a couple Standards, including a bank-alteration standard. That has an inherent measurement problem; it also doesn't take into account livestock impacts on that standard. Also 25% utilization in bull trout areas. Where did that come from?
- Would like to continue as a cattle operation in Grant County. Vegetation is too thick; cannot even crawl through it in some places.
- Would like to see grazing continue; it is our family's lifestyle.
- Would like to stay in business for the next generation.
- As the livestock numbers have started to decline, fuel loads have increased. Fires have been mentioned a lot tonight. What was acceptable of large fires 20-25 years ago is very different from what is acceptable nowadays. On the east side, we have taken fire out of the ecosystem. To get things restored, you have to replace fire with something else. Look at livestock as a tool to do the restoration work; could see dramatic improvements; take active management on the ranges themselves. Utilize cattle for what they are good at; get back to end goal of a restored forest. A lot of native species have expanded due to lack of fire and changed the balance.
- Monitoring: there must be some flexibility; there are so many factors out of our control.
- Appreciate the good working relationship we've had with the USFS; elk are one of the biggest issues when they come onto private ground.
- I feel uninformed as a Permittee; I would like to see an introduction to the changes in the draft Plan and hear the key points. (Briefing Paper distributed with key points and reference areas)
- *USFS, Maura Laverty, Range Program Manager, Forest Plan Revision Range Specialist*
 - This is an opportunity to let us know how this is going to affect you. I am the seventh person to work on the range part of the Forest Plan. I volunteered because it affects me too; it affects Brad; it affects you. If there are any showstoppers, I need to hear about them.
 - In Alt. C, there is a riparian Standard, but in the Preferred Alt., those numbers are Guidelines. The details will be worked out at the allotment level, not at the Forest Plan level.
 - We'll consider your input and whether there is a need to do more analysis, revise alternative, or even develop a new alternative.
- USFS, David Hatfield: Look at the Grazing parts of the draft Plan, but there are other parts (e.g., wildlife, Desired Conditions). Look at all parts of the Plan.

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- Q: What if you close roads into Allotments? A: The Forest Plan does not make those decisions; those are handled at the allotment level. The Travel Mgmt. Plan is not the Forest Plan; that is a separate document.
- Have allotments on Umatilla and Malheur NFs. We have a good relationship with the team here; see the same faces and build trust; those same faces are getting pretty well overworked right now. USFS needs to staff this program, so we can do the job right, prevent litigation, etc. The Umatilla grazing program is exemplary. These guys have it figured out and are doing a great job. You can see the difference and improvements; we can always work with USFS staff to make improvements, on their end or ours. It hasn't always been there on the other forest, but I think things are getting better on the Malheur too.
- We have made so much progress, but the Standards / Guidelines in this plan are more restrictive than ever. It's currently working on this Forest. The bank-alteration standard is a nightmare; it is a litigator's dream. Until you can come up with better science, that needs to be off the table.
- I'd like to see more flexibility in this plan, so we can use it. Want to interact with timber management, fisheries, etc. There are always things that need to change, so we need flexibility.
- We need people to come out and thin these allotments; we can't even ride a horse through. There were fires on both sides of us recently; it makes sense to graze that dry grass.
- How accelerated do we have to get with restoration? Look at how much riparian vegetation has grown. Most areas are on upward trends. Improvements around riparian zones are overwhelmed by changes in the uplands. Cows don't have anywhere else to go. One pasture (5,000 acres) is only useful for two weeks. Grazing seems to be continually regulated to address impacts that really aren't being addressed elsewhere. We have come a long way from historic levels during the 40s to the limited grazing done now.
- Grazing Standards using now; ESA listed species on allotment; not certain whether I'm exceeding my Standard or not. Sometimes we exceed browse Standards without having one cow in the pasture.
- Using a lightning-strike fire as a management tool puts my livestock and economic investment at risk.
- One note about reducing upland utilization; we need to look at the measurements on the ground; we need better data. We keep referencing a master's thesis from Montana. Does it work on the Malheur? I don't know.
- We have more hardwoods and grass in riparian areas, but there is a culvert downstream that doesn't allow fish up there. That doesn't make sense to me.
- High moisture/riparian areas are resilient; they can handle more grazing than currently allowed.
- I'm optimistic that we can solve problems; working with USFS staff, and they are doing their best to support us.
- Remember the economic benefits of cattle; spring developments are important. About the streambank alteration, the Malheur NF took on a 15% bank alteration Standard, but the margin of error on measurement is +/- 10%. Measuring bank alteration is very difficult and subjective. There is also a margin of error on measuring browse. It is better to have a Guideline than a Standard.
- Fires: What Oregon is facing is the same as other western states. Somehow we need to get political support for cleaning up the forest ground. If the USFS budget was set, so the majority of funding was to clean the forests up, we would see improvements across the board. We need to use what we know locally. For example, trees don't grow back as fast as on the west side, so we can't clear-cut here. Need USFS to be trustworthy, open, and honest. Last comment: I don't think we need any more wilderness.
- I agree with many of the comments that have been made. I would like to see the USFS move the elk back up there and off private land.

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- I agree; have always seen cattle as a tool; on any allotments, the number one key is distribution of cattle; will address so many concerns—riparian, stream bank, etc. There are so many things that are against distribution; we can develop springs in a pasture, but with invasive grasses overtaking ridgetops, cows cannot eat/digest it; they move lower; we need to address invasive grasses.
- Thinning; forest canopies are increasing more than 1% per year; pushing cattle into tighter spots; if we don't have enough grass for good distribution, we will be fighting a losing battle. Grasslands are shrinking on our allotments, so cattle don't have anywhere else to go, except to grasses in riparian zones.
- Would like to see USFS work more closely with ODFW. Who sets the management objective for the number of elk in the Ukiah unit? Nobody can give a straight answer. Elk keep growing and growing in numbers. Elk do not like humans; we have been hunting them for years in pickups and four-wheelers; elk seek safety on private land.
- There are a few things I'd like to comment on. Been around about 25 years; it is frustrating to come up with good ideas, because the local USFS staff don't have enough control. The last push was for water temperature; we got the temps down, but we never got the areas back. Now it's streambank alteration. I'd like to see less top-down management. We are all business people and have to manage resources wisely to make a living. We need to manage resources from the local level up, and I think you'll see a lot of good things happen.
- Would like to see a more positive, incentive-based approach. The Permittees are monitored enough; would like to see more monitoring of the USFS.
- Q: Hidden in the plan is a determination of "suitability." Can you shed some light on this in the Preferred Alternative? [USFS: The team assumed designation of suitable acres is accurate because AUMs were not being fully utilized in uplands, based on monitoring data. At these meetings, we are hearing that may not be the case.]
- Q: I can't see how a person would observe no change in the near term but a decrease over the long term. Can you explain? [USFS: It is likely the current condition vs. historic use. AUMs in the draft Plan now have changed based on endangered species management, changes in suitability due to Bighorn sheep occupied habitat, etc. over the past 25 years. We reflected those changes. If you think we're off base with the numbers, please let us know.]
- I think you are off base. I don't think you've taken into account other changes, including in-growth and invasive grasses. Those are very significant to grazing outputs.
- Concerned with forage utilization Standards. Increased restrictions and increased risk of fuel / wildfire buildup. Also streambank alteration Standards. Margins of error that Nick mentioned have not been rectified. Impacts by wildlife are difficult to measure or differentiate from cattle. In the past we didn't meet bank-alteration Standards because of wildlife; we need to be able to determine what is causing the bank alteration. There is some flexibility in a Guideline but less in a Standard; you would have to do a Plan Amendment to change a Standard.
- Wildfire is a big issue on our dry forest.
- Alternative D allows use of vacant allotments; that provides the most benefits to jobs and the highest level of forest restoration. Alt. D provides a highest level of motorized access and road maintenance. We cut wood for winter and need to be able to get into areas with dead trees. Alt. D addresses invasive species better than the Preferred Alternative. Alt. D has the highest level of timber harvest and treatments to prevent wildfire.

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- Indians used fire, but after our fires I don't know if they were good or bad. We make a lot of assumptions, but we have little basis. Accelerated restoration? Are we really restoring anything? Until we get rid of the overstock and the mess we've created through litigation, black is the color of the day.
- Seems that NFs are trying to work everything into the same box; would like to see our NFs go out and look at success stories. Look at our private land; we run more AUMs and it looks better. Wondering when the USFS will look over the fence and ask, "I wonder what those guys are doing over there?"
- I'm looking for common ground, and it's good to hear from ranchers what they see/need out there. Would like to see elk in public land. Want to see the bank-alteration standard improve; this needs to be measurable and enforceable. USFS needs to do a better job monitoring and documenting upward trends; disclose that information; what worked and what didn't.
- Wildfires; evidence showing that they are primarily driven by weather. Drought conditions (getting worse with climate change) and an ignition source. Fuel loading is not the primary factor. Concerned with USFS driving cover levels below what's needed by elk; need a variation.
- My family started our permit in 1913. We used to not have any elk in this country (back in the 1930s). We used to only have trail deer, and we would keep the meat in cans. Elk were re-introduced and stayed in the uplands, but more roads and hunters drove the elk out of the forest. Elk like short grass; cows will eat taller grass; if we don't graze the forest, the elk will keep moving to private lands.
- Bull trout are not in the streams like they used to be, so let us have some more cows up there.
- USFS needs to log more to get the roads fixed. Things change; it won't be like it was 100 years ago.
- Have to talk about the fire again. Lost about 5% of one allotment on Canyon Creek. Back in the day we had K.V. money; used timber sale proceeds to improve the resources. All the efforts on our allotment over years and years has burned up; that is the investment of the American people. We had groves of aspen; it all went poof, because we didn't put the fire out.
- The range program needs better funding; if you want it to be successful, you need to adequately fund it.
- The timber is too thick; there is no grass; if you get a fire, it's gone, you can't stop it.
- Riparian zones are an area of concern; see improvement over five years or so, then slows down and declines after 10 years. When you have exclusion on riparian areas over 20-25 years, it becomes decadent and unhealthy.
- I have a Q: West of town there are several areas that have aspen fenced in. When fenced in, some are dead. Others are not fenced in but thriving. Seems that exclusion doesn't always work.
- USFS should budget for thinning. Open the forests up and let gleaning take place, just like on a farm after the harvest. People should be allowed to go out and gather their wood. To me, we're missing the structure.
- Next to a lot of the private land, they have tried to open the forest, so animals can come off private land and into the forest. That is positive.
- Would like to see the USFS managed by local staff—not by a distant administration.
- Brad (Umatilla NF), how many allotments do you manage? [16.] Nick (Malheur NF), how many? [about 90.] These programs need more support.
- Why doesn't the Forest Plan have more legally enforceable Standards?
 - USFS, Maura Laverty: We think Standards are best set at the allotment level for the Range Programs; that is why we used more Guidelines. I can't speak for the other resource areas / programs.
 - USFS, David Hatfield: Standards and Guidelines; we have differentiated them in this new draft. It's about using the right tools for the right job. The monitoring section would benefit from more work.

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How do we monitor together on the things that are important on the ground? Monitoring at the Forest Plan level is a 30,000 foot perspective.

- USFS, Maura Laverty: There is a difference between a Standard and Guideline in the Forest Plan Revision. Standard has to meet the language of the Standard; the Guideline must meet the intent – achieve the same result
- Why is there a Blue Mountains Forest Plan Revision vs. single National Forests? [USFS: We are working together where there are similarities (about 80% similar), but there will be three separate Forest Plans and any differences will be reflected in each of the three Plans.]

Summary of what was heard

Maura Laverty, Range Program Manager, Forest Plan Revision Range Specialist

- Heard more tonight about the challenges of keeping cattle in the uplands.
- These grazing permits also represent a lifestyle, and you don't want to see that change. We need to beef up the social and economic analyses to reflect that.
- We have heard about the streambank alteration challenge at every meeting, and I'm glad we have consistent feedback on that.
- Keeping elk off private lands is a common challenge that we need to address.

Ian Reid, District Ranger, North Fork John Day District, Umatilla NF

- We have people here with a history of grazing on the NF over four generations, five generations; over a hundred years.
- Change is inevitable, but nobody here wants change to go on and lose their lifestyle, living, and the experience of the "Great West."
- I think we have a lot of common ground; ranchers are trying to do good things; trying not to damage the streams and take care of bull trout, etc.
- Heard a lot about trust; people have built relationships with their Range Conservationists over the years; heard loud and clear how valuable those relationships are.
- Interconnectedness; invasive plants have affected the distribution of livestock and also the weight/condition of your livestock.
- Our forest has more recreation load right now than at any other time of year. We are doing our best, and we are listening.
- Agriculture and cattle are important economic drivers in this area.

Genevieve Masters, Umatilla NF Supervisor

- I heard passion; also some frustration, even some anger
- Yes, your comments matter; you do have a seat at the table, and we need to hear from you; thank you for staying involved.
- We are talking about social and economic impacts; you want to pass on your heritage.
- A lot of people are for fish and water quality, although you have had it up to here with increased regulation; there is no sense of reward in terms of numbers/season of use when you have done years of positive work.
- Fuel loading impacts your forage and distributions.
- Also the elk are a challenge.

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- Many of you would like more flexibility; I am encouraged by the relationships on this District.
- I heard that people think bank alteration standards stink.

Final round: How do you feel about this meeting?

- Thank you.
- Comfortable meeting; a lot of comments I hope will be addressed going forward.
- Great job facilitating.
- Expectations were met; hard to say the progress of the meeting.
- Very good meeting; hope it helped everyone out.
- Hope we were heard.
- Hope this pile of paper has room for our input.
- Great meeting; long drive home to look forward to.
- Like the format of this meeting; not many environmentalists out here, so it is nice to be able to speak with the whole group.
- Thanks everyone; I learned a lot tonight; huge collective knowledge.
- We stuck to the agenda and had a more successful meeting.
- Appreciate that everyone had a chance to speak and double-check.
- Thank you to everyone for showing up; heard frustration but a lot of opportunities.
- Appreciate the opportunity to provide input; spent a lot of time providing written comments; hope they were not reduced but given equal weight with this new round of input.
- Thank you everyone; please drive home safely.

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Livestock Grazing & Grazing Vegetation: Frequently Asked Questions

How many acres will be available for grazing?

Appendix G has the acreages broken down by Allotment name and Alternative. Appendix G starts on page 427 in Volume 3 of the DEIS. The total acres suitable for livestock grazing on the Malheur National Forest are 1,197,000 for cattle and 101,000 for sheep. The total acres suitable for livestock grazing on the Umatilla National Forest are 284,000 for cattle and 42,000 for sheep. The total acres suitable for livestock grazing on the Wallowa-Whitman National Forest are 408,000 for cattle and 25,000 for sheep.

How are Sage grouse addressed with regard to grazing management in the Proposed Revised Forest Plan?

There is a relatively small amount of sage-grouse habitat on the Blue Mountains Forests. Sagebrush steppe habitat was estimated to occur on approximately six percent of the landscape within the Malheur National Forest; however, not all of this is considered sage-grouse habitat. Habitat mapping completed by Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife (ODFW) indicates that only 41,600 acres is considered greater sage-grouse habitat, and of this, 30,000 has been mapped as core habitat, and the remainder as low density habitat. Sagebrush steppe habitat was estimated to occur on less than one percent of the landscape for the Wallowa-Whitman National Forest, but according to ODFW a little more than 3,000 acres within the Wallowa-Whitman National Forest would be considered sage-grouse habitat, most of which is mapped as core habitat. The greater sage-grouse is not expected to occur within the Umatilla National Forest.

The Preferred Alternative retains the Alternative B (Proposed Action) modified management direction with the following addition: In greater sage-grouse habitat, fence construction within one mile of known leks (protected activity centers) and seasonal high use areas should not be authorized or allowed. Fence construction on the crest of low hills should not be authorized or allowed unless the fence is marked with anti-strike markers.

Grazing utilization within occupied greater sage-grouse habitats should not exceed 40 percent at any time during the grazing season and will be determined specifically for each greater sage-grouse habitat, i.e., grazing utilization measured as an average of the entire pasture or grazing unit will not be used to determine compliance with this guideline.

During greater sage-grouse breeding season, livestock turnout and trailing should avoid high concentrations on known greater sage-grouse leks (protected activity centers).

Where did the riparian utilization standards come from?

The new Utilizations Guidelines were proposed in response to the need for accelerated restoration for aquatic habitat and species. The Guidelines are meant to balance the Preferred Alternative with aquatic and riparian resource concerns.

Why does the Proposed Revised Forest Plan reduce the riparian allowable forage utilization for livestock within riparian management areas? What will happen if my allotment has a higher utilization level authorized in riparian management areas than the Revised Forest Plan does?

Alternative E, the preferred alternative, proposes to increase the pace and scale of restoration. Decreasing the amount of utilization in riparian management areas would help to move them toward the desired condition. Once the Revised Forest Plan is in place, the term grazing permits for each allotment will be modified to replace the 1990 Forest Plan language with the Revised Forest Plan language. However, site-specific environmental analysis and consultation for threatened and endangered species will need to be completed on all of the allotments as each allotment management plan is revised, which will determine the appropriate level of utilization for your specific allotment.

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What is a *Silene spaldingii*? There is a standard in the Proposed Revised Forest Plan that livestock grazing isn't allowed where that plant exists. Why is grazing a hazard for it?

Silene spaldingii is a listed threatened plant species under the Endangered Species Act. Spalding's Catchfly is the common name. The reason for the standard is that trampling from livestock grazing affects its growth and ability to reproduce. It is listed because there are very few plants. With that standard, we want to manage the timing of grazing; it's not a desirable plant for cow forage. We work with local Permittees to help them identify the plant and they have been able to work around it.

Why wasn't a range of alternatives analyzed for grazing (no grazing alternative and an unlimited grazing alternative)?

The National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) requires the agency to analyze a reasonable range of alternatives. The EIS for the Blue Mountains Forest Plans analyzed an alternative with significantly reduced grazing (Alternative C), and an alternative with grazing above current levels (Alternative D). Furthermore, Alternatives G and J (Minimum Management Alternative and No Grazing Alternative respectively) which would have eliminated grazing, were considered but eliminated from detailed study.

In addition, Forest Service Managers are responsible for ensuring compliance with the following laws, regulations, and policies which require multiple use management:

Organic Administration Act of 1897: Gives regulatory authority to the President to establish National Forests. Authorizes the Secretary of Agriculture to promulgate rules and regulations for the use and occupancy of National Forests.

Taylor Grazing Act of 1934: Intended to "stop injury to the public grazing lands [excluding Alaska] by preventing overgrazing and soil deterioration; to provide for their orderly use, improvement, and development; [and] to stabilize the livestock industry dependent upon the public range".

Granger-Thye Act of 1950: Provides for the issuance of term grazing permits for up to 10 years. It also provides for the use of grazing receipts for range improvement work.

Multiple-Use Sustained-Yield Act of 1960: Provides that national forests are established and administered for several purposes, including livestock grazing. This act also authorizes the Secretary of Agriculture to develop the surface renewable resources of national forests for multiple uses and sustained yield of the services and products to be obtained from these lands, without impairment of the productivity of the land.

Wilderness Act of 1964: Provides that livestock grazing, and the activities and facilities needed to support it, are allowed to continue in wilderness areas when such grazing was established before designation.

Forest and Rangeland Renewable Resource Planning Act of 1974: Directs the Secretary of Agriculture to develop a process for the revision of national forest land and resource management plans, including the identification of the suitability of lands for resource management.

Federal Land Policy and Management Act of 1976: States that public lands will be managed in a manner that will provide food and habitat for fish, wildlife, and domestic animals.

National Forest Management Act of 1976: Reorganized, expanded and otherwise amended the Forest and Rangeland Renewable Resources Planning Act of 1974, which called for the management of renewable resources on National Forest Lands. The NFMA requires the Secretary of Agriculture to assess forest lands, develop a management plan for each unit of the National Forest System. It is the primary statute governing the administration of National Forests.

MEETING NOTES

(continued)

Public Rangelands Improvement Act of 1978: Establishes and reaffirms the national policy and commitment to inventory and identify current public rangeland conditions and trends; manage, maintain and improve the condition of public rangelands so that they become as productive as feasible for all rangeland values in accordance with management objectives and the land use planning process; charge a fee for public grazing use which is equitable; continue the policy of protecting wild free-roaming horses and burros from capture, branding, harassment, or death, while at the same time facilitating the removal and disposal of excess wild free-roaming horses and burros which pose a threat to themselves and their habitat and to other rangeland values.

Rescission Act of 1995: Directs the Forest Service to complete site-specific NEPA analyses and decisions on allotments on a scheduled basis.
36 CFR 222

Forest Service Manual 2200: This manual summarized laws and regulations governing rangeland management and forest planning.

Forest Service Handbook 2209.13: Grazing Permit Administration Handbook

Allotment Management Plans: Developed through site-specific environmental analysis, an allotment management plan uses Forest Plan direction and current issues to determine desired conditions, areas suitable for grazing, and a broad strategy on how to meet desired conditions. They describe site-specific grazing strategies, stocking, structural and nonstructural range improvement needs, and coordination with other resources. The output, or animal unit months (AUMs), is a result of the allotment management plan requirements, range improvements, and the ability of the permit holder to manage forage and livestock.

Non-Use for Resource Protection Agreements: These agreements may be entered into to provide long term non-use needed to address recovery of rangeland resource conditions, provide forage on a temporary basis to allow resource recovery on other area grazing units, provide temporary resolution of conflicts created by bighorn sheep or wolf predation on livestock, or provide supplemental forage in times of drought to assist area livestock operators and lessen the resource impacts of grazing.

Where can I find information on Livestock Grazing and Grazing Vegetation in the EIS?

Standards & Guidelines

Plant Species (Federally listed & species at risk) (Appendix A pg 120)

Species Diversity Riparian Habitat (Appendix A pg 119)

Range Management & Domestic Livestock Grazing (Appendix A pg 125) includes:

- Grazing After Wildland Fire (Appendix A pg 125)
- Grazing Near BHS (Appendix A pg 126-127)
- Grazing within Occupied Sage Grouse Habitat (Appendix A pg 125 & 126)
- Upland Forage Utilization (Appendix A pg 125)
- Upland Shrub Utilization (Appendix A pg 126)

MA 4B (Riparian Management Areas) - Appendix A pages 91 & 140-141

Livestock Grazing and Grazing Land Vegetation – Volume 1, Chapter 3, pages 126-159

How are bighorn sheep addressed in the plan with regard to grazing?

There are several Standards and Guidelines outlined in the Plan that are intended to prohibit disease transmission between domestic animals and bighorn sheep. They are:

MEETING NOTES

(continued)

RNG-9 **Standard** S-2 Domestic sheep or goat grazing shall not be authorized or allowed on lands where effective separation from bighorn sheep cannot be reasonably maintained.

RNG-10 **Standard** S-3 The use of domestic goats or sheep for manipulation of vegetation (i.e., noxious weed control, fuels reduction) shall not be authorized or allowed within or adjacent to source habitat for bighorn sheep.

RNG-11 **Standard** S-4 The use of recreational pack goats shall not be authorized or allowed within or adjacent to source habitat for bighorn sheep.

RNG-12 **Standard** An effective monitoring program shall be in place to detect presence of bighorn sheep in identified high-risk areas when authorized domestic sheep or goats are present on adjacent or nearby allotments.

RNG-13 **Guideline** Trailing of domestic sheep or goats should not be authorized or allowed within 7 miles of bighorn sheep home ranges.

RNG-14 **Standard** When effective monitoring has not been conducted for bighorn sheep presence, domestic sheep or goat grazing shall not be authorized.

RNG-15 **Standard** Permitted domestic sheep and goats shall be counted onto and off of the allotment by the Permittee. A reasonable effort to account for the disposition of any missing sheep must be made by the Permittee.

RNG-16 **Standard** When permitted sheep are found to be missing, the Forest Service shall be notified within 24 hours.

RNG-17 **Standard** Authorized domestic sheep or goats shall be individually marked in a manner that allows immediate identification of ownership at a distance during the grazing season at all times while on NFS lands.

RNG-18 **Standard** Implement emergency actions when bighorn sheep presence is detected within 7 miles of active domestic sheep or goat grazing or trailing. Actions to be taken shall ensure separation between bighorn sheep and domestic sheep or goats.

RNG-19 **Guideline** To maintain separation, when bighorn sheep are found within 7 miles of an active domestic sheep and goat allotment, implementation of emergency actions for domestic sheep and goat grazing could include: Reroute (move) domestic sheep or goats to a new routing path that will take them away from the likely bighorn movement; this may involve rerouting within the permitted allotment, movement to a different allotment, or, if the situation cannot otherwise be resolved, moving the permitted sheep off of the national forest until the situation can be resolved Inform the appropriate state agency of the bighorn sheep location

Contact Information:

- Maura Laverty, Range Program Manager: 541-523-1286
- Peter Fargo, Public Affairs Officer: 541-523-1231
- Website: fs.usda.gov/goto/BlueMountainsPlanRevision

Would you like to be on the Mailing List? Email bluemtnplanrevision@fs.fed.us or call 541-523-1231