

# Summary

The Pinedale Ranger District of the Bridger-Teton National Forest proposes to authorize grazing use within the project area, under updated grazing management direction. Updated direction includes implementing grazing practices such as site-specific grazing use limits, rotational grazing systems, and range improvements. The area affected by the Proposed Action includes a group of six grazing allotments comprising approximately 169,000 acres of National Forest System Lands at the headwaters of both the Green River drainage of the Colorado River System and the Gros Ventre River drainage of the Snake/Columbia River Basin System in Sublette, Teton, and Fremont counties in western Wyoming. This action is needed in order to fulfill requirements of environmental law and policy, as well as Forest Plan direction. Implementation of updated grazing management direction would help achieve desired conditions, consistent with Forest Plan Goals and Objectives.

The Pinedale Ranger District completed the Upper Green Landscape Assessment (LSA) in 1999. One of the purposes of the LSA was to develop management direction and projects that would address concerns identified in the assessment area. Updating or developing Allotment Management Plans to address resource concerns was one of the project recommendations in the LSA. Resource concerns were identified by subject matter experts and public participation.

Public participation in the LSA included public meetings, newspaper articles and notices, and mailings to persons who were known to be affected or indicated their interest. Public participation in this specific Rangeland Project was invited via a public scoping letter mailed to those listed on the Bridger-Teton National Forest's general mailing list. This was initiated on February 10, 2000. The mailing list included private landowners, term grazing permit holders, special interest groups, interested members of the public, and local, state, and federal agencies. In addition, a notice of intent to prepare an EIS was published in the Federal Register.

We identified the following areas of concern, based on public comment : (1) threatened, endangered, and sensitive species (2) riparian and aquatic conditions (3) social and economic impacts and (4) rangeland function. These concerns are re-stated within the EIS as the significant issues that drove the development of alternatives to the proposed action.

One alternative to the Proposed Action being considered is to authorize livestock grazing without any updated management actions (Alternative A). The other alternative is not to authorize any domestic livestock grazing (Alternative C). If livestock grazing was no longer authorized, grazing would be discontinued after existing grazing permits expired. Fences, water developments and other livestock control facilities would eventually be removed. If livestock grazing was authorized without management changes (Alternative A); existing grazing systems, proper use levels, and range improvements would remain in place and

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new ones would not be developed as a result of this analysis. Management practices designed to improve degraded areas would not be implemented.

Major conclusions:

- Forest Plan Standards, Guidelines, and Prescriptions will be achieved by implementing the proposed action.
- Updated grazing management direction would move existing conditions toward the desired condition (where they are not already meeting the desired condition).
- The Proposed Action and its strategy of adaptive management would allow for livestock grazing while improving overall watershed and vegetation conditions.

Based upon the effects of the alternatives, the responsible official will decide if grazing will be authorized. If livestock grazing is authorized, the responsible official would decide whether or not to update grazing management direction.