

**Morgan Creek and Eddy Creek Grazing Allotments
Environmental Impact Statement
Scoping Document
September 29, 2003**

**Salmon-Challis National Forest
Challis and Salmon-Cobalt Ranger Districts**

The purpose of this scoping document is to give you an opportunity to review the proposed action and the preliminary issues and alternatives to the proposed action for the Morgan Creek and Eddy Creek Grazing Allotments Environmental Impact Statement (EIS).

Location

These allotments (project area) are located 4 to 28 miles north to northwest of Challis, Idaho. The Morgan Creek Cattle and Horse Allotment encompasses 133,412 acres of total grazing area comprised of two separate, but adjoining allotments that are cooperatively managed as part of combined, single management area (allotment). It includes 81,579 acres of National Forest System (NFS) lands administered by the Challis and Salmon-Cobalt Ranger Districts of the Salmon-Challis National Forest, and approximately 51,833 acres of public land administered by the Challis Resource Area of the Bureau of Land Management (BLM). In combination approximately 66,927 acres are classified as suitable range according to the Challis National Forest and Salmon National Forest Land and Resource Management Plans (LRMPs) and the BLM Challis Resource Area Resource Management Plan (RMP). The BLM Morgan Creek Allotment is being considered in the analysis of grazing for this EIS, but is not being included in Forest Service decisions involving management changes.

The Eddy Creek Cattle and Horse Allotment is located immediately adjacent to the west boundary of the Morgan Creek Allotment, and includes 33,750 acres of NFS administered lands on the Challis Ranger District, 6,850 acres of which are suitable as defined in the Challis National Forest LRMP (see map insert of project area).

The project area includes high and moderate relief mountains, foothills, fan remnants and floodplains. Elevation ranges from 4,800 feet at the mouth of Morgan Creek to 9,730 feet at Woods Peak. Precipitation varies from less than 10 inches per year in the lower elevations above the Salmon River to 25-35 inches per year in the highest terrain. Vegetation types range from sagebrush and grass in the lower elevations, to Douglas-fir and mountain mahogany in the mid elevations, to lodgepole pine, subalpine fir and whitebark pine in the higher elevations.

Background

In the late 1960's conflicts between livestock use on the Morgan Creek Allotment and a local bighorn sheep herd were perceived to exist by one wildlife researcher. Partially to resolve this issue a three pasture rest-rotation grazing system was developed and implemented in 1972 through cooperative efforts of the Forest Service, BLM, Idaho State agencies, permittees, consultants and others. This grazing system remains today as the basis for allotment management. In the early 1990's the Forest Service implemented

grazing utilization standards prescribed by Forest Plans (Challis National Forest LRMP, Salmon National Forest LRMP Amendment #2) through Annual Operating Plans (AOPs). A draft Environmental Assessment (EA) was prepared in 1992 for proposed updates to this Allotment Management Plan (AMP), but a decision was not rendered. In 1995 Forest Plan standards and guidelines were amended based on the Interim Strategy for Managing Anadromous Fish-producing Watersheds in Eastern Oregon and Washington, Idaho, and portions of California (PACFISH). Accordingly, modifications to grazing permits have been made to comply with its direction and to changes in other pertinent laws and regulations (Salmon National Forest LRMP Amendment #2). The allotment also became an example of successful collaborative management. The BLM Morgan Creek Allotment was evaluated for grazing impacts related to livestock permit issuance in 1999. The analysis for this EIS will incorporate BLM's evaluation, but will not re-examine their permit issuance decision. The following summarizes livestock numbers and season of use on the Morgan Creek Allotments (Table 1):

Table 1. Permitted livestock and season of use by land management agency on the Morgan Creek Allotments¹.

Agency	Livestock Kind	Numbers	Season of Use	AUMs*
NFS	Cattle	1225	6/1-10/31	4982
NFS	Horses	51	6/1-10/31	207
BLM	Cattle	1222	5/1-5/31	1227
			11/1-11/15	612
BLM	Horse	51	5/1-5/31	52
			11/1-12/31	104

¹ NFS and BLM allotments are separate, but managed in conjunction

*AUMs – Animal Unit Months

Grazing management on the Eddy Creek Allotment was formalized in a rest-rotation grazing system in a 1980 AMP combined with reductions in stocking level. Primarily horses have grazed one unit of the allotment under a 1984 AMP amendment. Endangered Species Act listings of anadromous fish species in the mid 1990's resulted in adoption of more restrictive grazing use standards to protect aquatic and riparian habitats. Improvements in rangeland health on the allotment have been noted since the implementation of the 1980 AMP. Cattle drift from the adjoining NFS Morgan Creek Allotment into grazing units of the Eddy Creek Allotment has been a frequent and persistent management complication. The following summarizes livestock numbers and season of use on the Eddy Creek Allotment (Table 2):

Table 2. Permitted livestock and season of use by land management agency on the Eddy Creek Allotment.

Agency	Livestock Kind	Numbers	Season of Use	AUMs*
NFS	Cattle	179	6/1-9/30	716
NFS	Horses	22	6/1-8/31	66

*AUMs – Animal Unit Months

During the past decade, adjustments to grazing practices, pasture unit organization, permitted livestock numbers, and variation in numbers of livestock actually grazed have been made on these allotments to improve grazing management, respond to changes in permittee operations, and adjust to drought conditions. However, direction for grazing management within these allotments is fragmented. It is not based on a comprehensive approach to management designed to achieve desired resource conditions and respond to emerging grazing management issues. Recently, site-specific issues relative to livestock

trailing practices, livestock drift between allotments, listing of bull trout and lynx as Threatened species, and conservation of sagebrush habitat for sage grouse warrant considerations in grazing management.

Purpose and Need

The purpose and need for this project is to establish a desired range condition and trend and implement measures to achieve desired resource conditions on 73,777 suitable acres of rangeland within the project area through the use of livestock grazing. In addition, grazing mitigation measures and adaptive management provisions are needed to mitigate adverse effects from grazing and provide range managers with future flexibility to implement and adjust management over time to achieve desired resource conditions.

In the fall of 2002, the Districts initiated a project to develop an updated AMP for the Morgan Creek Allotment in the project area. The Districts have developed desired resource conditions for habitats and plant communities that are key to management of livestock grazing. In addition, management opportunities have been identified that can achieve these conditions or move existing conditions toward desired states. These management opportunities include revised grazing use standards, changes in grazing use, grazing mitigation measures, and monitoring protocols that will improve rangeland condition and trend and move existing resource conditions toward desired states within the project area over time. To this end, District managers have preliminarily identified nine plant community types, which are considered key indicators of livestock management in the project area; these community types provide the focus for the desired conditions (DCs). Range condition and trend would be improved and management toward DCs progressed within the decade within these plant communities.

During the past five years, emerging issues relating to the protection of sensitive riparian areas during livestock trailing, livestock drift between allotments, listing of bull trout as a Threatened species, and conservation of sage grouse within big sagebrush habitat warrant consideration in livestock management plans. Adjustments in grazing use are needed to address these issues. Management actions prescribed for National Forest portions of the Morgan Creek Allotment need to be consistent with BLM's grazing permit renewal decision of 1999 for BLM administered lands within the project area.

Desired Conditions

Desired Conditions provide "end point" management objectives for grazing use. The conditions are described in quantitative and qualitative parameters and are designed to be "measurable", so that project monitoring can assess the effectiveness of management toward achieving these desired objectives over time. For this project, the desired conditions include parameters of key plant community types, and associated resource management objectives that frame grazing management direction into the future and provide a basis from which management can be assessed over time.

Riparian Management

Manage livestock grazing so as not to prevent the attainment and maintenance of healthy and properly functioning riparian and aquatic communities.

Riparian Objectives

- **Riparian Vegetation Seral Status/Rating:** The riparian vegetation seral status objective is to maintain or trend toward a riparian vegetation seral status of at least late seral. On average, approximately 80 percent of the riparian areas should have this status at any one time.
- **Bank Stability:** The bank stability objective is to maintain or trend toward a stream bank stability of at least 80 percent. On average, streams should have a bank stability of 80 percent or higher at any one time.
- **Woody Species Regeneration:** Maintain healthy and diverse woody plant stands across the riparian landscape. While several woody plant species are important components of riparian communities, the emphasis will be on those species that are affected by livestock grazing. Within the Salmon-Challis National Forest this includes willow, aspen, and cottonwood. In the future, quantifiable objectives for woody species regeneration may be set when additional information becomes available.

Upland Management

Upland Objectives

- Adequate litter and vegetation cover will be present to keep soil movement within acceptable levels to meet regional guidelines.
- Desired native grass species (such as Idaho fescue and bluebunch wheatgrass) will dominate the herbaceous vegetation communities.
- Maintain sensitive plants species (Regional Forester's listing).
- Maintain a coordinated program for control of noxious and invasive weeds.
- Viable sagebrush plant communities will be found across the area where soils and site conditions support such communities. A variety of age classes and adequate stand size of sagebrush will be maintained to support sagebrush dependent species.

Key Plant Communities

- **Low sagebrush/bluebunch wheatgrass (*Artemisia arbuscula/Agropyron spicatum*)**
 - Live Sagebrush Canopy Cover:
 - 20 percent of the sagebrush area has 5 to 10 percent shrub canopy cover
 - 60 percent of the sagebrush area has 10 to 20 percent shrub canopy cover
 - 20 percent of the sagebrush area has greater than 20 percent shrub canopy cover
 - Dead Sagebrush Canopy Cover: no more than 25 percent of total shrub canopy

- Grass-Forb Canopy Cover: 15-45 percent
- Bare Ground: 10-30 percent
- **Low sagebrush/Idaho fescue** (*Artemisia arbuscula/Festuca idahoensis*)
 - Live Sagebrush Canopy Cover:
 - 20 percent of the sagebrush area has 5 to 10 percent shrub canopy cover
 - 60 percent of the sagebrush area has 10 to 20 percent shrub canopy cover
 - 20 percent of the sagebrush area has greater than 20 percent shrub canopy cover
 - Dead Sagebrush Canopy Cover: no more than 25 percent of total shrub canopy
 - Grass-Forb Canopy Cover: 15-45 percent
 - Bare Ground: 10-30 percent
- **Mountain big sagebrush/bluebunch wheatgrass** (*Artemisia tridentata var. vaseyana/pauciflora/Agropyron spicatum*)
 - Live Sagebrush Canopy Cover:
 - 15 percent of the sagebrush area has 5 to 15 percent shrub canopy cover
 - 60 percent of the sagebrush area has 15 to 25 percent shrub canopy cover
 - 25 percent of the sagebrush area has greater than 25 percent shrub canopy cover
 - Dead Sagebrush Canopy Cover: no more than 25 percent of total shrub canopy
 - Grass-Forb Canopy Cover: 15-45 percent
 - Bare Ground: 10-30 percent
- **Mountain big sagebrush/Idaho fescue** (*Artemisia tridentata var. vaseyana/pauciflora/Festuca idahoensis*)
 - Live Sagebrush Canopy Cover:
 - 10 percent of the sagebrush area has 5 to 10 percent shrub canopy cover
 - 50 percent of the sagebrush area has 10 to 20 percent shrub canopy cover
 - 40 percent of the sagebrush area has greater than 20 percent shrub canopy cover
 - Dead Sagebrush Canopy Cover: no more than 15 percent of total shrub canopy
 - Grass-Forb Canopy Cover: 15-55 percent
 - Bare Ground: 10-30 percent

- **Wyoming big sagebrush/bluebunch wheatgrass** (*Artemisia tridentata wyomingensis/Agropyron spicatum*)
 - Live Sagebrush Canopy Cover:
 - 15 percent of the sagebrush area has 5 to 15 percent shrub canopy cover
 - 60 percent of the sagebrush area has 15 to 25 percent shrub canopy cover
 - 25 percent of the sagebrush area has greater than 25 percent shrub canopy cover
 - Dead Sagebrush Canopy Cover: no more than 25 percent of total shrub canopy
 - Grass-Forb Canopy Cover: 15-45 percent
 - Bare Ground: 10-30 percent
- **Antelope bitterbrush/Idaho fescue** (*Purshia tridentata/Festuca idahoensis*) **and Antelope bitterbrush/bluebunch wheatgrass** (*Purshia tridentata/Agropyron spicatum*)
 - Maintain existing stands with small amounts of decadent shrubs. Avoid heavy use by livestock.

Aspen/Forb Communities

Livestock grazing in aspen/forb communities will be managed to maintain at least 80 percent of the aspen stands within the project area for long-term viability. Specifically, the goal is to obtain a net gain in height growth annually. The objective, depending on habitat type, (i.e. upland, riparian, or mixed conifer communities) is to have 1000 stems per acre in the younger age classes in at least 80 percent of the aspen stands.

In stable stands, the goal is to have regeneration that results in a multi-storied stand. The lower canopy (less than six feet tall) levels may only need 500 + stems per acre but would have a low percentage of grazing use.

Aspen/Forb Characteristics:

- Maintain aspen regeneration of at least 500 stems per acre of small trees greater than one inch stem diameter and greater than six feet tall; and at least 500 suckers per acre less than one inch stem diameter and less than six feet tall for a total of 1000 stems per acre.
- Aspen canopy cover equal to or greater than 40 percent
- Sagebrush cover less than 10 percent
- Bare ground less than 15 percent

Wildlife

Sage Grouse Objective

- The desired conditions for the upland communities were described under upland desired conditions. If these objectives are obtained and livestock grazing is managed accordingly, adequate and healthy upland habitat will be available for sage grouse. The desired conditions are needed to provide adequate, healthy habitat for sage grouse.

Social and Economics

Grazing fees for permitted livestock use on National Forest System lands are designated by Congress based on a standard formula incorporated in Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) and agency regulations for all Federal agencies. The Forest Service, like all federal agencies managing livestock grazing, has no discretion to alter these fees to improve or alter financial efficiency. Moreover, with the passage of the 1995 Rescission Act, Congress has directed the Forest Service to issue grazing permits on active allotments pending updated Allotment Management Plan (AMP) development. Based on this direction, Forest Service managers are constrained from using financial efficiency as a consideration in authorization of grazing, and issues to this regard are outside the scope of the decision framework for the decision maker.

In addition, economic impacts incurred by the permittee through implementation of alternatives documented in this analysis are speculative. The Forest Service has no legal authorization to the comprehensive financial details of a permittee's business or profit margins necessary to render such predictions. To this end, the agency is limited to disclosure of expected impacts from grazing authorization where alternative standards are not met, and prediction of anticipated resource benefits where these impacts can responsibly be estimated. Disclosures of grazing receipts generated from grazing permits are included in the analysis. Socioeconomic impacts of the grazing permit to local working circles are addressed as part of Forest Planning, and therefore, considered outside the scope of the analysis for site-specific projects.

Social and Economic Objective

- Authorize available livestock forage to qualified livestock operators. Establish such limits and make investments needed to protect or enhance the resources while allowing livestock grazing.

Heritage Resources

Heritage resource sites, including sites identified as Native American, determined to be eligible based on the National Historic Preservation Act, will be assessed and protected from grazing impacts.

Soils and Hydrologic Function

Soil quality, productivity, and hydrologic function would be maintained or restored where needed, within the Morgan Creek and Eddy Creek grazing allotments. Physical, chemical, and biological soil properties would be maintained to support desired vegetation conditions

and soil-hydrologic functions and processes. Soils would have adequate protective cover, levels of soil organic matter (litter), and coarse woody material to minimize erosion and facilitate nutrient cycling. Soil productivity would be maintained by complying with Regional Soil Quality Guidelines.

Water Quality

Water quality would be managed to meet clean water act requirements, EPA-approved state water quality standards, and contribute to the support of beneficial uses.

Recreation and Visuals

Dispersed Recreation sites - Manage for dispersed recreation and leave the area essentially undeveloped.

Visual Integrity - Modification, Partial Retention, and Retention are the visual management classifications for the analysis area.

Proposed Action

In order to meet the purpose and need for the project and achieve site-specific desired conditions, the Challis and Salmon-Cobalt Ranger Districts, Salmon-Challis National Forest are proposing to authorize continued livestock grazing use within the project area under updated management direction to achieve site-specific management objectives and move existing conditions toward desired conditions. The proposed management direction includes implementing the following grazing use standards, changes in livestock use, and mitigation measures. Based on the decision for this project, existing grazing permits will be modified to incorporate these standards.

Livestock grazing would be managed to achieve the desired conditions. A strategy will be followed that emphasizes achieving resource conditions as opposed to implementing a specific livestock management strategy. This approach is to allow rangeland managers to use any combination of livestock management techniques to achieve the objectives.

Since grazing management within an allotment will be focused at the unit scale, management planning will also focus at the unit scale. The proposed action emphasizes adaptive management to allow managers to customize range management planning to the specific circumstances of each unit. The range staff completes the planning associated with this adaptive management approach annually with input from permittees and other resource specialists as needed.

Riparian Areas

The specific grazing plan for each unit will be developed in the following manner. First, the order of use is determined.

Second, the resource characteristic on which management will focus is selected for the unit. This is done by evaluating riparian vegetation seral status, bank stability, and woody species regeneration within the unit and determining which one is the most sensitive to livestock grazing. This characteristic is selected as the resource characteristic upon which

livestock management within the unit will focus. If it is not clear which characteristic is the most sensitive more than one may be selected.

Third, the management indicator is selected. The management indicator is the management tool that determines the amount of resource use allowed by livestock and will be used to determine when livestock are moved from the unit. The resource characteristic and associated management indicator will be as follows:

- A. Riparian Vegetation Seral Status – The management indicator for this resource characteristic will be an end of growing season hydric greenline stubble height standard.
- B. Bank Stability – The management indicator for this resource characteristic will be an end of grazing season current year bank alteration standard.
- C. Woody Species Regeneration – The management indicator for this resource characteristic will be an end of grazing season woody browse standard measured on willow, aspen, or cottonwood under six feet in height.

Fourth, the end of growing season standard for the management indicator is selected. This is done by estimating how much use can occur on the management indicator while still maintaining or trending toward the objectives. The adaptive management approach associated with this plan requires grazing management plans to be customized to the specific circumstances of each unit or allotment. Subsequently, the plan relies on range managers to set the specific end of season standards for each unit. However, in the absence of unit specific end of season standards the standards identified in this plan will be used (see Table 3).

Table 3. End of season standards to be used in the absence of a pasture specific end of season standard.

Resource Characteristic	Management Indicator	Status of Resource Characteristic	End of Growing Season Standard
Seral Status	Stubble Height	Very Early/Early Seral Mid Seral Late Seral/PNC	8 inches 6 inches 4 inches
Bank Stability	Bank Alteration	<60% stability 60-79% stability >80% stability	5% annual bank alteration by cattle 10% annual bank alteration by cattle 15% annual bank alteration by cattle
Woody Regeneration	Woody Browse	Insufficient Recruitment	10% incidence of use on terminal leader growth on willow, aspen, or cottonwood less than 6' tall
		Sufficient Recruitment	30% incidence of use on terminal leader growth on willow, aspen, or cottonwood less than 6' tall

Fifth, the trigger for the management indicator is selected. This is done by estimating how much time will be needed to move livestock from the unit before the end of season standard is met.

Finally, any other actions needed to effectively manage the unit are identified.

As additional information becomes available, the resource characteristic on which management is focused, the management indicator, the end of season standard, and the trigger should be changed to reflect the specific circumstances in each pasture.

Implementation monitoring, implementation evaluation, and allotment planning will be completed annually to ensure that grazing plans are implemented correctly and to make any necessary revisions to the grazing management plan.

Effectiveness monitoring and effectiveness evaluations will be completed every five-year to ensure that grazing management is accomplishing the objectives.

Upland Areas

Livestock grazing would be managed to achieve the desired condition for upland areas. Unless otherwise specified in the Allotment Management Plan or Annual Operating Instructions for the permit, the following end of grazing season standards would be met. Height measurements include the highest (or tallest) naturally occurring part of the plant, which may include seed heads. Dominant and co-dominant herbaceous species in each community type will be included in stubble height monitoring.

- **Low sagebrush/bluebunch wheatgrass** (*Artemisia arbuscula/Agropyron spicatum*)
 - Average Shrub Height: 6 inches

- Average Residual Grass Height: an average of 3 inches on 10 percent of the management unit, an average of 4 inches on 70 percent of the management unit, and greater than or equal to 6 inches on 20 percent of the management unit
- **Low sagebrush/Idaho fescue** (*Artemisia arbuscula/Festuca idahoensis*)
 - Average Shrub Height: 8 inches
 - Average Residual Grass Height: an average of 1 inch on 10 percent of the management unit, an average of 3 inches on 30 percent of the management unit, and greater than or equal to 4 inches on 60 percent of the management unit
- **Mountain big sagebrush/bluebunch wheatgrass** (*Artemisia tridentata var. vaseyana/pauciflora/Agropyron spicatum*)
 - Average Shrub Height: 20 inches
 - Average Residual Grass Height: an average of 3 inches on 10 percent of the management unit, and average of 5 inches on 10 percent and greater than or equal to 7 inches on 80 percent of the management unit
- **Mountain big sagebrush/Idaho fescue** (*Artemisia tridentata var. vaseyana/pauciflora/Festuca idahoensis*)
 - Average Shrub Height: 20 inches
 - Average Residual Grass Height: an average of 3 inches on 20 percent of the management unit, an average of 5 inches on 60 percent of the management unit, and greater than or equal to 7 inches on 20 percent of the management unit
- **Wyoming big sagebrush/bluebunch wheatgrass** (*Artemisia tridentata wyomingensis/Agropyron spicatum*)
 - Average Shrub Height: 20 inches
 - Average Residual Grass Height: an average of 3 inches on 10 percent of the management unit, and average of 5 inches on 10 percent and greater than or equal to 7 inches on 80 percent of the management unit
- **Antelope bitterbrush/Idaho fescue** (*Purshia tridentata/Festuca idahoensis*)
 - Maintain existing stands with small amounts of decadent shrubs. Avoid heavy use by livestock.

- **Antelope bitterbrush/bluebunch wheatgrass** (*Purshia tridentata/Agropyron spicatum*)
 - Maintain existing stands with small amounts of decadent shrubs. Avoid heavy use by livestock.

Aspen/Forb Communities

Livestock grazing would be managed to achieve the desired condition for aspen/forb communities. Stands, which have conifer encroachment as the primary limiting factor, would be managed to eliminate the conifer component before grazing standards are applied. Unless otherwise specified in the annual operating instructions the following standard would be met:

- No more than 20 percent of current terminal leader growth would be removed on an annual basis.

Soil Productivity/Quality/Hydrologic Function

Livestock grazing would be managed to achieve the Desired Condition for Soil Resources. Regional Soil Quality Guidelines set the limits of disturbance or thresholds beyond which there will be long-term losses in inherent soil productivity or hydrologic function if the guidelines are exceeded. The management goal is to cause as little disturbance as possible, therefore, the guidelines represent the upper limits of allowable disturbance.

- Regional guidelines recommend that no more than 15 percent of an activity area should have detrimental soil conditions after the completion of livestock grazing. In other words, at least 85 percent of an activity area should be in a non-detrimentally disturbed condition.

Water Quality

- Livestock grazing would be managed to achieve state water quality standards and support designated beneficial uses.

Grazing within Dispersed Recreation Areas

- Visual Quality - New permanent structures in a retention area would be cleared first by the Forest Landscape Architect. Also, any existing range structures found to be in a Retention area, would be analyzed, mitigated; or considered for phase out or relocation to more suitable areas over time.

Existing and Future Range Improvements

Specific standards have been developed for structural range improvements that adequately protect wildlife and aquatic habitats.

Based on the results of project monitoring to evaluate the effect of grazing management standards and mitigation measures to achieve Desired Conditions, District managers may

determine that adjustments in proposed grazing standards and additional implementation of range improvements are warranted. For this reason, resource impacts relative to implementation of range improvements, specifically: water developments and fencing would be addressed in the effects analysis of this EIS. The analysis would document anticipated resource impacts associated with implementation of these two categories of improvements within the key plant communities identified in the Desired Condition section of the EIS. If needed, the Districts will evaluate the site-specific effects of implementing these improvements within the project area against the EIS. Where the impacts are consistent with the EIS, the Districts will document the assessment associated with implementation in the project record and implement the improvements. In cases where the anticipated resource impacts are found to be outside the scope of the EIS, the Districts will issue a separate decision to implement the improvements supported by appropriate analysis needed to support the decision.

Public Involvement to Date

Morgan Creek Cattle and Horse Allotment, February 1991 – Summary of comments in response to a March 1989 scoping notice came from individuals, organizations, and other government agencies. Comments received were reviewed for this project.

Preliminary Resource Concerns

Concerns that have been identified through past scoping, from both the public and internal sources include:

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- Riparian and aquatic habitat; fisheries
- Terrestrial plants and animals
- Management Indicator Species
- Threatened, Endangered and Sensitive Species, including bull trout and lynx
- Soil productivity and water quality
- Effects to other Forest users
- Economics
- Effects on vegetation structure and composition
- Tribal Treaty Rights
- Heritage Resources

Preliminary Alternatives

For each allotment, a minimum of two alternatives to the proposed action will be analyzed. One of these alternatives discontinues livestock use of the allotment; the second would continue current management. Further alternatives may be developed if an additional management solution is identified that achieves the desired condition, or if scoping results in the identification of significant issues not already identified.

- Alternative 1 – Continue Current Management (No Action) - Grazing would continue on the two allotments as currently permitted.
- Alternative 2 – (Proposed Action) - Modifications would be made to the no action based on this analysis.
- Alternative 3 – No Grazing - Use of the allotments by domestic livestock is discontinued.

Decision Framework

Based on the environmental analysis, the Forest Supervisor will decide whether or not to continue livestock grazing on these two grazing allotment's suitable rangelands in accordance with the standards proposed in the proposed action or as modified by additional mitigation measures and monitoring requirements.

Public Input Needed

Comments are specifically requested on the proposed action effects, preliminary resource concerns, and alternatives. Any suggestions that you have for additional actions to move the habitats and plants communities toward the desired conditions would be welcome. Comments made on this proposal are most helpful if they are received by October 27, 2003 and pertain directly to the project area. However, comments are welcome throughout the planning process. Issues identified outside of the scope of the proposal will not be addressed at this level of planning.

The key contact for this proposal is Ken Rodgers, Project Team Leader. He can be contacted at the Challis Ranger District Office, Salmon-Challis National Forest, H/C 63, Box 1669, Challis, Idaho 83226, by phone at (208) 879-4154, or by email at comments-intermtn-salmon-challis@fs.fed.us. Please state that your comments are for the Morgan Creek and Eddy Creek grazing allotments EIS project scoping.

An open house will also be held on October 8, 2003 at 6:00PM at the Challis Ranger District Office, Highway 93 North, Challis, Idaho. Comments can also be given during this meeting.

Comments received in response to this request for public comment will be available for public inspection and can be released in their entirety if requested pursuant to the Freedom of Information Act.