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MAR 03 2004

Mr. Scott Conroy  
Chairman, Southwest Oregon Provincial Advisory Committee  
USDA Forest Service  
Rogue River and Siskiyou National Forests  
333 W. 8<sup>th</sup> Street, P.O. Box 520  
Medford, OR 97501

Dear Mr. Conroy:

On behalf of the Medford District Bureau of Land Management (BLM), I respectfully request that a working group comprised of Southwest Oregon Provincial Advisory Committee (PAC) members be established to review the Study of Livestock Impacts on the Objects of Biological Interest within the Cascade-Siskiyou National Monument (Livestock Study). The purpose of the forum would be to increase the public understanding of the Livestock Study and to provide the BLM with recommendations regarding the studies. I believe this is necessary at this time because the Livestock Study continues to be a topic of high interest with many of our publics and utilizing a chartered advisory committee process would help the BLM in finalizing our livestock study plan for the next several years.

For your information, I have asked the Klamath PAC Chairperson if she would like to provide one or two representatives to the working group since a portion of the monument is within the Klamath Province.

#### Background

- The CSNM Presidential Proclamation directed the Secretary of the Interior to "... study the impacts of livestock grazing on the objects of biological interest in the monument with specific attention to sustaining the natural ecosystem dynamics." In May 2001, the BLM provided copies of the Draft Study of Livestock Impacts on the Objects of Biological Interest to a group of approximately 25 scientific peer reviewers. The BLM made the draft study available for public review, and then extended the comment period for several additional months. Based on the comments received and additional discussions with the potentially affected livestock operators, the BLM has modified the studies.
- Since then, the BLM has been engaged in a multitude of studies, monitoring projects, and literature review designed to determine "the impacts of livestock on the objects of biological interest in the monument." Some of these studies are historic, and where relevant, the data is being analyzed with more modern techniques. These studies and monitoring projects are intended to provide data to determine if grazing is "incompatible with protecting the objects of biological interest." The data will also be used for the required Rangeland Health Evaluations for the monument grazing leases. If the present grazing systems are deemed incompatible with

“protecting the objects of biological interest”, the BLM would consider whether the leases can be modified to achieve compatibility or to “retire the grazing allotments pursuant to the process of applicable law.”

- Within the CSNM, 11 ranchers hold grazing leases for 2,760 AUMs (animal unit months).

### The Working Group Project

I would like the working group to include between five to seven members from the Southwest Oregon PAC and one or two members from the Klamath PAC. The group should meet four or five times from April through August to complete the following tasks:

- Review the current Livestock Study.
- Review and consider the Oregon State University (OSU) scientific peer review of the Livestock Study. This OSU scientific peer review is currently in the planning stages and would hopefully be available early in the working group process.
- Acquire input from the public, interest groups, and county commissioners (or representatives).
- Provide BLM with recommendations regarding the Livestock Study forwarded through the Provincial Interagency Executive Committee (PEIC) following careful consideration of the scientific review and public input.
- The recommendations should be completed in time for the late-September PAC and PEIC meetings.

I would expect the meetings to be open to the public with opportunities for the public to make presentations and provide input. The BLM would be present and available to provide information at each of the meetings.

The BLM is interested in being involved in designing the working group process and would provide a charter and all meeting support. The BLM would provide a neutral outside consultant to act as a facilitator during the meetings to help the working group meet the schedule. The BLM can present the concept and the charter at the March 17<sup>th</sup> Southwest Oregon PAC meeting.

Thank you for considering this request. If you have any concerns or need more information please contact Howard Hunter at (541) 618-2245.

Sincerely,

MARY L. SMELCER

**ACTING**

Timothy B. Reuwsaat  
District Manager