

Charter for the Cascade-Siskiyou National Monument Livestock Study Working Group

Background

The Cascade-Siskiyou National Monument (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 Bureau of Land Management (BLM) provided copies of the Draft Study of Livestock Impacts on the Objects of Biological Interest (Livestock Study) 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 grazing on the objects of biological interest." 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 to make an overall assessment of the monument allotments and an evaluation to determine whether or not the allotments are meeting the Oregon Standards for Rangeland Health. If the present grazing practices are "found incompatible with protecting the objects of biological interest", the BLM would consider modifying the leases to achieve compatibility or would "retire the grazing allotments pursuant to the processes of applicable law."

Within the CSNM, 11 ranchers hold grazing leases for 2,714 animal unit months (AUMs).

Purpose and Expectations

The purpose of the working group is to assist BLM with the following: 1) review the current Livestock Study; 2) help increase the public's understanding of the study through quality public participation; and 3) assist the Southwest Provincial Advisory Committee (PAC) in providing the BLM with recommendations regarding the study. The study continues to be controversial and is not well understood by the public. We believe this is needed to build trust and confidence in the grazing study and to prevent future conflicts from developing.

Membership

Membership will include between five to seven members from the Southwest Oregon PAC and one or two members from the Klamath PAC. The membership of the working group would represent a diversity of interests as provided in the PACs.

Number and Frequency of Meetings

The working group will meet four times from April through August of 2004. The working group's recommendations would be presented and discussed at the September Southwest Oregon PAC meeting with the PAC's recommendation provided to the Southwest Oregon Provincial Interagency Executive Committee (PEIC), of which the Medford BLM District Manager is a Designated Federal Official.

Duties

- a. Review the current Livestock Study.
- b. Review and consider the Oregon State University (OSU) scientific peer review of the Livestock Study, when available.
- c. Engage in a joint fact-finding public participation process to acquire input from the public, interest groups, and county commissioners (or representatives). Meetings would be open to the public with opportunities for the public to make presentations or provide input.
- d. Provide BLM with recommendations regarding the Livestock Study forwarded through the Southwest Oregon PEIC following careful consideration of the scientific review and public input.
- e. Recommendations should be completed in time for the September 21st 2004 Southwest Oregon PAC meeting.

BLM Support

- a. The BLM will assist in designing the working group process to meet the deadline.
- b. The BLM would be willing to provide a neutral outside facilitator (from the U.S. Institute for Environmental Conflict Resolution) to assist with planning the forum and facilitating the working group meetings.
- c. The BLM will provide background data and relevant information at each of the meetings, as needed.

Operating Costs

- a. The BLM will provide funding for other operational costs.
- b. The BLM will provide reimbursement of any required travel and per diem expenses as allowed under the Southwest Oregon PAC Charter.