

**ACTION:** Notice of intent to prepare an environmental impact statement.

**SUMMARY:** The Department of Agriculture, Forest Service, will prepare an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) to analyze the effects of domestic livestock grazing in the upper Green River area. The analysis contained in the EIS will be used by the Responsible Official to decide whether or not, and how, livestock grazing would be authorized on the grazing allotments within the project area. The project area is located in western Wyoming; approximately 30 miles northwest of Pinedale, Wyoming near the Green River Lakes. The majority of the project area lies within Sublette County, with small portions that extend into Teton and Fremont counties. The entire 162,800 acre project area lies within the boundaries of the Pinedale Ranger District. The project area is comprised on the following six grazing allotments: Badger Creek, Beaver-Twin Creeks, Noble Pastures, Roaring Fork, Upper Green River, and Wagon Creek.

**DATES:** Comments concerning the scope of the analysis must be received by August 25, 2003. The draft environmental impact statement is expected in September of 2003 and the final environmental impact statement is expected in January of 2004.

**ADDRESSES:** Send written comments to Craig Turlock, District Ranger, Pinedale Ranger District, Box 220, Pinedale, Wyoming 82941. For further information, mail correspondence to [mailroom\\_r4\\_bridger\\_teton@fs.fed.us](mailto:mailroom_r4_bridger_teton@fs.fed.us) and on the subject line, put only "Upper Green Grazing Allotments".

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:** Craig Turlock, District Ranger, Pinedale Ranger District, (see **ADDRESSES** above).

**SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:**

**Purpose and Need for Action**

The purpose of this analysis is to determine if livestock grazing is appropriate within the analysis area. If livestock grazing is appropriate, there may be a need to update and/or refine desired rangeland conditions and develop new management prescriptions to meet them. Integral to this is a need to confirm or attain compliance and consistency of this analysis and its resultant decision with legal mandates, including the National Environmental Policy Act of 1976 (NEPA), as well as policy direction, including the Bridger-Teton National Forest Land and Resource Management Plan (Forest Plan). To date the Forest Service has identified three alternatives.

**Alternative B: Proposed Action**

The Forest Service proposes to authorize grazing use within the project area under updated grazing management direction, in order to move existing rangeland resource conditions toward the desired conditions that will be developed by an interdisciplinary team. The updated direction would be incorporated in respective allotment management plans (AMP's) to guide grazing management within the project area. New Allotment Management Plans (AMP's) would be developed for the Badger Creek, Beaver-Twin Creeks, Noble Pastures, and Wagon Creek allotments, and the existing AMP's for the Roaring Fork and Upper Green River allotments would be updated as a result of this action. Grazing management strategies would be developed or revised in accordance with the Code of Federal Regulations (CFR), 36 CFR 222.1(b)(2), which describes allotment management planning provisions. Current grazing management strategies would be maintained where resource objectives are being achieved, and new management strategies would be implemented in areas where resource objectives have not been met. Rotational grazing systems would be initiated in the Badger Creek, Beaver-Twin Creeks, and Roaring Fork allotments and modified, as needed, in the remaining allotments to ensure desired conditions are reached.

**Possible Alternatives**

*Alternative A—Grazing as Currently Permitted (No Action Alternative)*

Although allotment management plans (AMP's) would be prepared for each of the six allotments, the grazing management practices specified for the allotments with existing AMP's would not be changed. The Upper Green River and Roaring Fork allotments would continue to operate under the guidelines specified in AMP's that are over 25 years old, and season-long grazing would persist in the Badger Creek and Beaver-Twin Creeks allotments. In addition, no new utilization standards would be initiated to move existing resource conditions in the project area toward the desired future conditions (DFC's) specified in the Forest Plan.

*Alternative C—No Grazing by Domestic Livestock (No Grazing Alternative)*

Alternative C would eliminate livestock grazing in the project area. This alternative was developed to demonstrate the effects that eliminating domestic cattle grazing would have on the environment and to more clearly illustrate the potential effects of

implementing either Alternative A or Alternative B. Under this alternative, domestic livestock grazing in all six allotments of the project area would be phased out over several years as existing Term Grazing Permits expire.

**Responsible Official**

Craig Turlock, District Ranger, Pinedale Ranger District, PO Box 220, Pinedale, Wyoming 82941.

**Nature of Decision To Be Made**

The decision, which is based on this analysis, will be to decide if livestock will be allowed to graze on the allotment complex, either through the implementation of the proposed action, or an alternative to the proposed action. The decision would include any mitigation measures needed in addition to those prescribed in the Forest Plan.

**Scoping Process**

The following methods were used to invite the public to participate in this project: A scoping letter was mailed to those listed on the Bridger-Teton National Forest's general mailing list 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. The letter described the proposed action, the purpose and need for the project, the process that would be followed for completing the environmental analysis, and the scope of the decision to be made. Additionally, the letter solicited public participation in the process, specifically the submission of comments, concerns, and recommendations regarding management of the six allotments in the project area.

Term grazing permit holders, or their representatives, were contacted shortly after the project was initiated to solicit their input concerning management of the six allotments within the project area.

The Forest Service is seeking information, comments, and assistance from individuals, organizations, tribal governments, and federal, state, and local agencies interested in or affected by this project. Comments submitted on the 2000 scoping effort and any new comments will be used to prepare the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS). Public participation will be solicited by notifying in person and/or by mail known interested and affected publics. News releases will be used to give the public general notice. Public participation activities would include requests for written comments. Scoping includes: (1) Identifying potential