



File Code: 1950/2310

Date: January 9, 2006

Dear Interested Party

REQUEST FOR REVIEW AND COMMENT

Enclosed is a copy of the Environmental Assessment (EA) for the Fridley Creek, Lewis Creek, Sunnybrook, and Dry Creek Allotments (FLSD Allotments) for your review and comment. This EA addresses the direct, indirect, and cumulative effects of proposed livestock grazing on these allotments, which are located approximately 15-25 miles southwest of Livingston, Montana on the northern portion of the Gallatin Range in the Miller Creek, Fridley Creek, Dry Creek, and Hyalite Creek watersheds. The allotments are located in Park County T5S & T6S, R7E & R8E.

The Livingston Ranger District, Gallatin National Forest, is proposing to reauthorize grazing permits on the Fridley Creek, Lewis Creek, Sunnybrook Allotments and issue a new permit on the Dry Creek Allotment, which is formerly part of the Fridley Creek and Lewis Creek Allotments. The proposal would continue grazing on suitable range within the allotments. Alternative 3 would incorporate Adaptive Management Strategies into the Allotment Management Plans. This analysis is being prepared to comply with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), Council of Environmental Quality (CEQ) regulations, and the Gallatin National Forest Land and Resource Management Plan (1987). The information and analysis in this document will be used to determine whether to prepare an environmental impact statement (EIS) or a finding of no significant impact (FONSI) (40 CFR 1508.9).

The EA analyzes the Proposed Action (Current Management) Alternative, the No Action (No Grazing) Alternative and an Adaptive Management Alternative. Five other alternatives were considered but not in detailed analysis.

Per the requirements of 36 CFR 215, we will be accepting comments on the FLSD Allotments EA until 30 days after publication of the legal notice in the Bozeman Daily Chronicle, Bozeman, Montana.

Based on field reconnaissance and the analysis presented in the EA, the Forest Service preferred alternative is Alternative 3, which incorporates Adaptive Management Strategies. With Alternative 3, the length of time and numbers of livestock allowed for grazing on the allotments would depend upon how well individual resource objectives are met. The grazing permit and allotment management plan would be revised to incorporate Forest Plan utilization standards for livestock grazing, Beaverhead-Deerlodge riparian guidelines, and Adaptive Management Strategies.



Monitoring would occur over time, with evaluations of the results being used by the Range Specialist and the Line Officer to make adjustments to management as needed. This will ensure adequate progress toward desired resource and properly functioning conditions.

Implementation would occur through the incorporation of the selected alternative into the allotment management plans (AMPs) specific to the individual allotments. Monitoring methods would be specified in the allotment management plans.

Comments on the FLSD Allotment EA are requested from you and other reviewers. The Forest Service will consider all public comments before making a decision. In submitting comments, please provide specific facts along with supporting reasons that you believe should be considered by the Responsible Official in reaching a decision. Comments may be submitted in writing, orally, or through electronic means. In order to retain your administrative appeal rights, you must provide substantive written, oral, or electronic comments during this 30-day comment period. This legal notice will be published in the newspaper of record and the comment period will start on the day following publication of the legal notice and ends 30 days following the date of publication. Your comments must be postmarked by the end of the 30-day comment period. Comments received in response to this solicitation, including names and addresses of those who comment, will be considered part of the public record on and will be available for public inspection.

A complete EA with maps is available for viewing and downloading on the Gallatin NF website at: <http://www.fs.fed.us/r1/gallatin>. To request a paper copy of the EA contact Barbara Ping by phone at (406) 522-2558, or by mail at Forest Ecology Group; 3710 Fallon Street, Suite C; Bozeman, MT 59718, or by email to Barbara Ping at bping@fs.fed.us.

Send written comments to:

Barbara Ping, ID Team Leader
FLSD Allotment EA
Forest Ecology Group, Bozeman Ranger District
3710 Fallon Street, Suite C; Bozeman, MT 59718
Business hours are Mon- Fri, 0800-1630

Written comments must be postmarked by the Postal Service, e-mailed, faxed, or otherwise submitted by 11:59 p.m. on the 30th calendar day following publication of the legal notice. Hand delivered comments must be time and date imprinted at the correct Responsible Official's office by the close of business on the 30th calendar day following publication of the legal notice.

Oral comments must be provided at the Responsible Official's office (Livingston Ranger District) during normal business hours via telephone or in person, or if during non-business hours, must be at an official agency function (such as a public meeting), which is designed to elicit public comment.

Electronic comments may be submitted to comments-northern-gallatin@fs.fed.us. Insert FLSD Allotments EA in the subject line. Acceptable formats are MS Word, Word Perfect, or RTF. For electronically mailed comments, the sender should normally receive an automated electronic

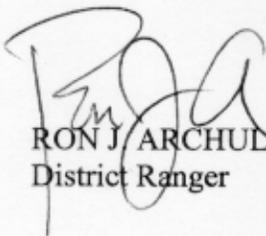
acknowledgement from the agency as confirmation of receipt. If the sender does not receive an automated acknowledgement of the receipt of comments, it is the sender's responsibility to ensure timely receipt by other means.

According to 36 CFR 215, for a person to appeal they must meet the following criteria prior to decision: 1) have submitted comments in response to an EA subject to review, or 2) have provided comment or otherwise expressed interest in a particular proposed action by the close of the comment period. If you have not previously shown interest in this project, you must show interest by the end of the 30-day comment period to ensure your ability to challenge any Forest Service decisions regarding this proposal.

Comments received in response to this solicitation, including names and addresses of those who comment, will be considered part of the public record on this proposed project and will be available for public inspection. Comments submitted anonymously will be accepted and considered; however, those who submit anonymous comments will not have standing to appeal the subsequent decision under 36 CFR Parts 215 or 217 (if applicable). Additionally, pursuant to 7 CFR 1.27(d), any person may request the agency to withhold a submission from the public record by showing how the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) permits such confidentiality. Persons requesting such confidentiality should be aware that, under FOIA, confidentiality may be granted in only very limited circumstances, such as to protect trade secrets. The Forest Service will inform the requester of the agency's decision regarding the request for confidentiality, and to whom the request may be resubmitted with or without name and address within 15 days.

If you have any questions regarding this project, please contact Barbara Ping at the above address or call her at (406) 522-2558.

Sincerely,



RON J ARCHULETA
District Ranger

Enclosure