

SUMMARY

The Fishlake National Forest proposes to authorize continued livestock grazing use on 8 allotments on the Beaver Ranger District: North-Indian Creek, Circleville, South Beaver, Marysvale, Pine Creek/Sulphurdale, Cottonwood, Ten Mile, and Junction. These allotments cover approximately 178,000 acres (two-thirds) of the 260,000-acre District, within the Beaver Mountain Tushar Range. The allotments are located within portions of Millard, Piute, Garfield, Beaver, or Iron Counties along the eastern edge of the Basin and Range Province. Beaver, Junction, Circleville, and Marysvale, are cities/towns adjacent to the analysis area. These Allotments are scheduled for National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) analysis to comply with direction contained in the Rescission Act of 1995. The act requires the Forest Service to complete NEPA analyses on all allotments where needed to authorize permitted grazing activity.

This analysis is necessary to analyze the potential site-specific effects of grazing on particular allotments, to determine the need for updating and/or revising Allotment Management Plans (AMPs), to prescribe the design criteria that are necessary to continue livestock grazing while meeting or achieving site-specific resource management objectives, and to provide for a monitoring plan to be incorporated into the AMP. The purpose and need for this project is to continue to authorize livestock grazing in a manner that would meet or satisfactorily move Forest resources toward desired condition and meet Forest Plan objectives.

There is no known need for the proposed action to include any changes to the existing grazing management. Over the years, the grazing permit and annual operating instructions have incorporated numerous incremental changes in management direction to improve livestock management and protect resources. Because the grazing management on these allotments has been continuously revised to reflect needed changes, there are no known urgent problems necessitating specific management changes or additional range improvements. Proposed grazing authorizations for these allotments would incorporate existing grazing management direction included in current grazing permits and Annual Operating Instructions (AOI's), including: forage utilization criteria; grazing management practices, and design criteria. For all allotments, permitted livestock would graze each pasture until allowable use is reached. Then, livestock would be moved to the next pasture or off the National Forest, depending on the timing and season of use. If livestock graze all authorized pastures, reaching allowable use in each prior to the "off date", they would be moved off the National Forest early. However, if livestock graze through pastures and reach the end of the grazing season prior to reaching allowable use, they would be moved off the National Forest by the "off-date" unless special circumstances exist.

Scoping was used to identify any issues that are of NEPA "significance" which drive the formulation of additional alternatives. Although public comments expressed concern about the impacts of livestock grazing, none of the concerns were of such conflict that they could not be resolved through mitigation or appropriate management as prescribed

in the proposed action. Key areas of concern were identified as: 1) Riparian function, 2) Water Quality & Quantity, 3) Threatened, Endangered, Candidate, Proposed, and Sensitive Species (TECPS), and 4) Economic viability. The following three alternatives were developed in response to public scoping and resource issues: Alternative A –the proposed action (Preferred Alternative), Alternative B - no cattle grazing, and Alternative C – Sustainable Multiple Use-Grazing. The primary differences between the alternatives are the rate of expected improvement toward desired conditions and socio-economic effects to local communities.