

CHAPTER 2. ALTERNATIVES

Introduction

This chapter describes and compares the alternatives considered for the Upper & Lower East Fork Cattle & Horse Allotment Management Plans (AMPs). It includes a description of each alternative considered. This section also presents the alternatives in comparative form, sharply defining the differences between each alternative. Some of the information used to compare the alternatives is based upon the design of the alternative and some of the information is based upon the environmental, social and economic effects of implementing each.

Throughout this EIS, there are references to permitted use, authorized use, actual use, and allowable use.

- Permitted use refers to the numbers of cow/calf pairs and the grazing season dates that are shown on the face of a term grazing permit.
- Authorized use refers to the number of cow/calf pairs and the grazing season dates authorized in the Annual Operating Instructions (AOI) and may vary from year to year as circumstances dictate.
- Actual use refers to the number of livestock (Head Months) that have grazed on average during the last three years. Actual use on both Upper and Lower East Fork Allotments has averaged roughly half of the permitted use.
- Allowable use is based on monitoring actual use numbers in the field, then estimating grazing levels that would have fully met all applicable terms, conditions and Forest Plan requirements.

Changes to this Chapter between Draft and Final EIS include updating alternative descriptions to include direction from the Revised Sawtooth FLRMP (July 2003) and addition of desired conditions for vegetation.

Alternatives Considered in Detail

The Forest Service developed three alternatives, including the No Action (no change) and two action alternatives, in response to issues. It is recognized that a wide array of options exist for refining livestock grazing on the Upper and Lower East Fork allotments. The purpose and need for this project helped define alternatives that could realistically be expected to meet FLRMP standards and guidelines. Maps displaying the features and differences in each alternative are included.

Elements Common to All Alternatives

The ongoing SNRA noxious weed strategy would continue for each allotment. The strategy provides a systematic approach to noxious weed treatment using chemical, biological, and mechanical means of weed control for the project area. Early detection and treatment are the most cost-effective way to prevent spread of noxious weeds.

The Upper and Lower East Fork Allotments are outside the Pastoral Envelope identified in the revised Sawtooth National Forest Land and Resource Management Plan, Appendix I, page I-29.

To prevent or minimize conflicts between livestock and recreationists, the following allotment management objectives will be followed:

1. Grazing will be limited where there is high recreation value or where recreation use is high or concentrated.
2. Livestock grazing around shorelines of all high mountain lakes where conflicts with recreation activities and/or lakeshore damage is occurring will be prohibited.
3. Frog and Little Redfish Lake areas will be closed to permitted livestock grazing during the managed recreation season.
4. Annual Operating Instructions will be designed to eliminate or minimize areas of potential conflict.

Since 1992, when Snake River chinook salmon were first listed as threatened, an adaptive management strategy was applied to respond to changing conditions imposed by the listing of threatened chinook salmon. Components of this strategy included proper use standards, season of use restrictions and area restrictions. Considerations for subsequent listings of other fish and wildlife species have also been provided for in the adaptive management strategy. In order to meet the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) informal consultation requirements for existing Biological Assessments (BAs) for lynx, the following measures were applied and would continue to be applied:

Lynx (ESA-threatened) Conservation Strategy Standards would be followed:

1. Do not allow livestock use in openings created by fire or timber harvest that would delay success regeneration of the shrub and tree components. Delay livestock use in post-fire and post-harvest created openings until successful regeneration of the shrub and tree components occurs.
2. Manage grazing in aspen stands to ensure sprouting survival sufficient to perpetuate the long-term viability of clones.
3. Within elevational ranges that encompass forested lynx habitat, shrub-steppe habitats should be considered as integral to the lynx habitat matrix and should be managed to maintain or achieve mid-seral or higher conditions.
4. Within lynx habitat, manage livestock grazing in riparian areas and willow carrs to maintain or achieve mid-seral or higher conditions to provide cover and forage for prey species.

Vegetation Desired Conditions

- Vegetation management actions in riparian areas will be designed to maintain or restore the presence of key native species (both herbaceous and woody) in a variety of age classes that are adequately reproducing and maintaining good vigor. Cover of these key species shall be 90 percent or greater of their estimated potential. Soil productivity shall not be significantly reduced as evidenced by no more than 15 percent of an activity area in a detrimentally disturbed condition.
- Mesic riparian communities will have key native species (both herbaceous and woody) in a variety of age classes that are adequately reproducing and maintaining good vigor. Cover of key native species is 70 percent or greater of inherent potential. No active head-cutting is occurring.
- Aspen stands will have sufficient regeneration to sustain the stand over time with adequate native species composition and cover in the understory (based on the community type from Mueggler 1988) that are adequately reproducing and maintaining good vigor.
- Sagebrush areas will have a diverse array of canopy coverage of sagebrush (see 2003 Sawtooth FLRMP Appendix A-15 and A-16) with adequate cover and diversity of native grasses and forbs present in the under story ($\geq 15\%$ canopy cover of grasses and $\geq 10\%$ of forbs in sage grouse nesting habitat).
- Whitebark pine will be the major seral species within the High Elevation Subalpine Potential Vegetation Group (PVG) with subalpine fir and englemann spruce as codominates (Appendix A-22), and a understory comprised of a variety of perennial plant species, a solid litter layer, and few bare spots that are neither large or permanent.
- Desired condition for TEPCS plant species is to have the amount, distribution, and ecological conditions present to maintain or reach viable populations of these species. Habitat conditions contribute to the survival and/or recovery of such populations with impacts minimized or eradicated. Human activities are at levels that maintain key life stages and promote pollinator success and survival.
- Desired condition for alpine habitats would be to have an abundance of perennial vegetation communities (i.e. cushion plants, grasses and sedges forming sod-like mats) distributed throughout the alpine region (Sawtooth FLRMP Appendix A-28). Soils have not been compacted by livestock trampling and species composition has not altered substantially to include a dominance of non-native or annual plant species.
- Non-native plants and noxious weed infestations are primarily restricted to locations along major travel ways. Existing non-native plant and noxious weed populations are not expanding in size. Efforts to contain and treat known infestations are occurring. Native plants are dominant on disturbed or recently restored sites.
- Recreation in the Upper and Lower East Fork Allotments will continue to have a range of quality dispersed recreation opportunities available in Roaded Natural, Semi-Primitive Motorized, and Semi-Primitive Non-Motorized settings.

- In Recommended Wilderness, opportunities will continue to be provided for users to experience essentially unmodified natural ecosystems with appropriate restrictions on visitor activities.

Alternative 1 (No Change) - Grazing as currently authorized

This alternative reflects no change in authorized numbers, season, or allotment boundaries. The authorized stocking rates and seasons are consistent with grazing levels in recent years. The intent of this alternative is to meet FLRMP standards.

The Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ) regulations (40 CFR 1502.14d) requires that a "no action" alternative be analyzed in every EIS. According to the CEQ Guidelines, the No Action alternative can either be "no change from current management direction" or no action taken on the proposed activity. In this case, the "no change from current management" interpretation is being used.

UPPER EAST FORK ALLOTMENT (58,000 acres)

The allotment boundaries for the Upper East Fork allotment have been in place since 1979. Pastures within the allotment have varied, but currently consist of the Grouse/Albert, East Fork, West Pass, Bowery, Long Tom and Narrow Canyon pastures. One permittee holds a term grazing permit for 254 cow-calf pairs from June 18 to October 15 (1,016 Head Months). This permit was first issued to the current permittee on 10/23/79.

Cattle are trucked to a corral at Sheep Creek (BLM land) and trailed up the East Fork Road for three miles to the Grouse/Albert pasture west and north of the Bowery Guard Station. When use in riparian areas reaches a 4-inch stubble height, cattle are divided into the East Fork and West Pass pastures. After streamside use on West Pass Creek reaches a 4-inch stubble height, or use on the East Fork Salmon River reaches a 6-inch stubble height, or by August 1, whichever occurs first, cattle are moved to the Bowery and Narrow Canyon Pastures. Cattle are removed from the allotment when a 4-inch streamside stubble height is reached in Bowery Creek and Long Tom Creek, or at the end of the grazing season, whichever occurs first. This system of grazing management would be continued under this alternative.

The existing 6 water developments and 3.9 miles of fencing would remain.

Allowable use standards, based on Sawtooth FLRMP standards and US Fish & Wildlife Service (FWS) consultation requirements, which also serve as "triggers" to move livestock:

- Forage utilization for riparian areas will not exceed 30 percent use of most palatable forage species, or must retain a minimum 6-inch stubble height of hydric greenline species, which ever occurs first, when riparian goals and objectives are not being met. (03109, III-140)

- Forage utilization for upland vegetative cover types will not exceed 40 percent for early season or season long pastures and 50 percent for vegetative slow growth, after seed ripe conditions, or late season pastures. (RAST01, III-44)
- Soil productivity shall not be significantly reduced as evidenced by no more than 15 percent of an activity area in a detrimentally disturbed condition. (SWST02, III-21)
- The following stream access restrictions are based on initiation of spawning for ESA listed fish species:
 - Main East Fork, South Fork East Fork and West Fork East Fork – Off August 1 for chinook salmon.
 - Bowery Creek – Off August 15 for bull trout
 - West Pass Creek – On July 15 for steelhead, off August 15 for bull trout.

Allowable use standards are measured in Designated Monitoring Areas (DMA) as indicated on AOI maps. Once proper use is achieved, livestock must be moved into the next pasture or off the allotment. Pastures that have met standards are restricted from further livestock entry. If livestock cannot be controlled to prevent re-entry into previously grazed pastures, then all livestock in the adjacent pasture must be moved into the next pasture or removed from the allotment.

In 1999, the Forest Service completed formal consultation with the US Fish & Wildlife Service on livestock grazing in the Bowery Pasture. Terms and conditions were issued in a Biological Opinion, which have been incorporated into the livestock grazing permit and this alternative.

While the permitted HMs is 1,016, the authorized HMs will be 553, based on the 7-year allowable use average. With resource (fish) restrictions in place, maximum of 500 HMs is all that can be attained at the current stocking rate. Grazing strategies, actual numbers and season length for individual pastures will be determined in the AOIs to meet the targeted HMs in Table II-1 below, compliance with the FLRMP standards described above will be the ultimate determinant.

Table II-1. Alt. 1 - Upper East Fork Stocking Rate

Allotment/Pasture	Capacity Acres	% Total	HMs/Pasture
Upper East Fork	3,451	1.00	553
East Fork	1,029	0.30	165
West Pass	144	0.04	23
Fisher	517	0.15	83
Grouse/Albert	614	0.18	98
Bowery	1,147	0.33	184

LOWER EAST FORK ALLOTMENT (73,000 acres)

The current boundaries on the Lower East Fork allotment have been in place since 1985. There are three pastures within the allotment: the French Creek, Big Lake Creek, and

Boulder Creek pastures. Each pasture is also divided into units, which are and would continue to be grazed as outlined in Annual Operating Instructions each year.

Four permittees hold grazing permits for 564 cow-calf pairs (1,994 HMs) which would be grazed from June 11 and June 23 to September 30 in a three-pasture rest-rotation system initiated by the 1981 AMP. Four permittees use two pastures separately and one in common as follows.

One permittee grazes 32 cow/calf pairs in the French Creek Pasture each year from 6/11 to 9/30 for a total of 119 HMs. Two permittees run a total of 278 pair in the French Creek and Big Lake pastures from 6/23 to 9/30 for a total of 926 HMs. One permittee runs 254 pair in Boulder and Big Lake Creek pastures from 6/11 to 9/30 for a total of 948 HMs. Each pasture is rested one year out of three, except the French Creek Pasture, which is used by at least 32 pair each year. These numbers and season would be continued under this alternative.

Table II-2.

Year	French Creek Pasture	Big Lake Creek Pasture	Boulder Creek Pasture
1	310 pair	254 pair	Rest
2	32 pair	278 pair	254 pair
3	310 pair	Rest	254 pair

The existing 48 water developments and 7.8 miles of fencing would remain.

Allowable use standards, based on the revised FLRMP and USFS consultation requirements, which also serve as “triggers” to move livestock, are as follows:

- Forage utilization for riparian areas will not exceed 30 percent use of most palatable forage species, or must retain a minimum 6-inch stubble height of hydric greenline species which ever occurs first, when riparian goals and objectives are not being met. (03109, III-140)
- Forage utilization for upland vegetative cover types will not exceed 40 percent for early season or season long pastures and 50 percent for vegetative slow growth, after seed ripe conditions, or late season pastures.(RAST01, III-44)
- A maximum of 30% use on woody species, such as willows and aspen.
- A maximum of 10% streambank alteration due to current trampling
- Soil productivity shall not be significantly reduced as evidenced by no more than 15 percent of an activity area in a detrimentally disturbed condition. (SWST02, p. III-21)
- The following stream access restrictions are based on initiation of spawning for ESA listed fish species:
 - Sullivan, French, Holman, Mill and Big Lake Creeks – No restrictions
 - Silver Rule Creek, Wickiup Creek – Off August 15 for bull trout.

- Big Boulder Creek – On July 15 above the tributary in section 8 for steelhead off August 15 for bull trout below falls in section 15.
- Little Boulder Creek – On July 15 above the tributary in section 20 for steelhead, off August 15 for bull trout.
- Germania Creek – Off August 1 below falls for chinook salmon, off 8/15 above falls for bull trout

Allowable use standards are measured in Designated Monitoring Areas (DMA) as indicated on AOI maps. Once proper use is achieved, livestock must be moved into the next pasture or off the allotment. Pastures that have met standards are restricted from further livestock entry. If livestock cannot be controlled to prevent re-entry into previously grazed pastures, then all livestock in the adjacent pasture must be moved into the next pasture or removed from the allotment.

While the permitted HMs is 1,994 the authorized HMs will be 964, based on the 6-year allowable use average. Grazing strategies, actual numbers and season length for individual pastures will be determined in the AOIs to meet the targeted HMs in Table II-1 below, compliance with the FLRMP standards described above will be ultimate determinant.

Table II-3. Alt. 1 - Lower East Fork Stocking Rate

Allotment/Pasture	Capacity Acres	% Total	HMs/Pasture
Lower East Fork	15,076	1.00	962
French Creek	5,821	0.39	371
Big Lake	4,060	0.27	260
Boulder Creek	5,195	0.34	331

Alternative 1

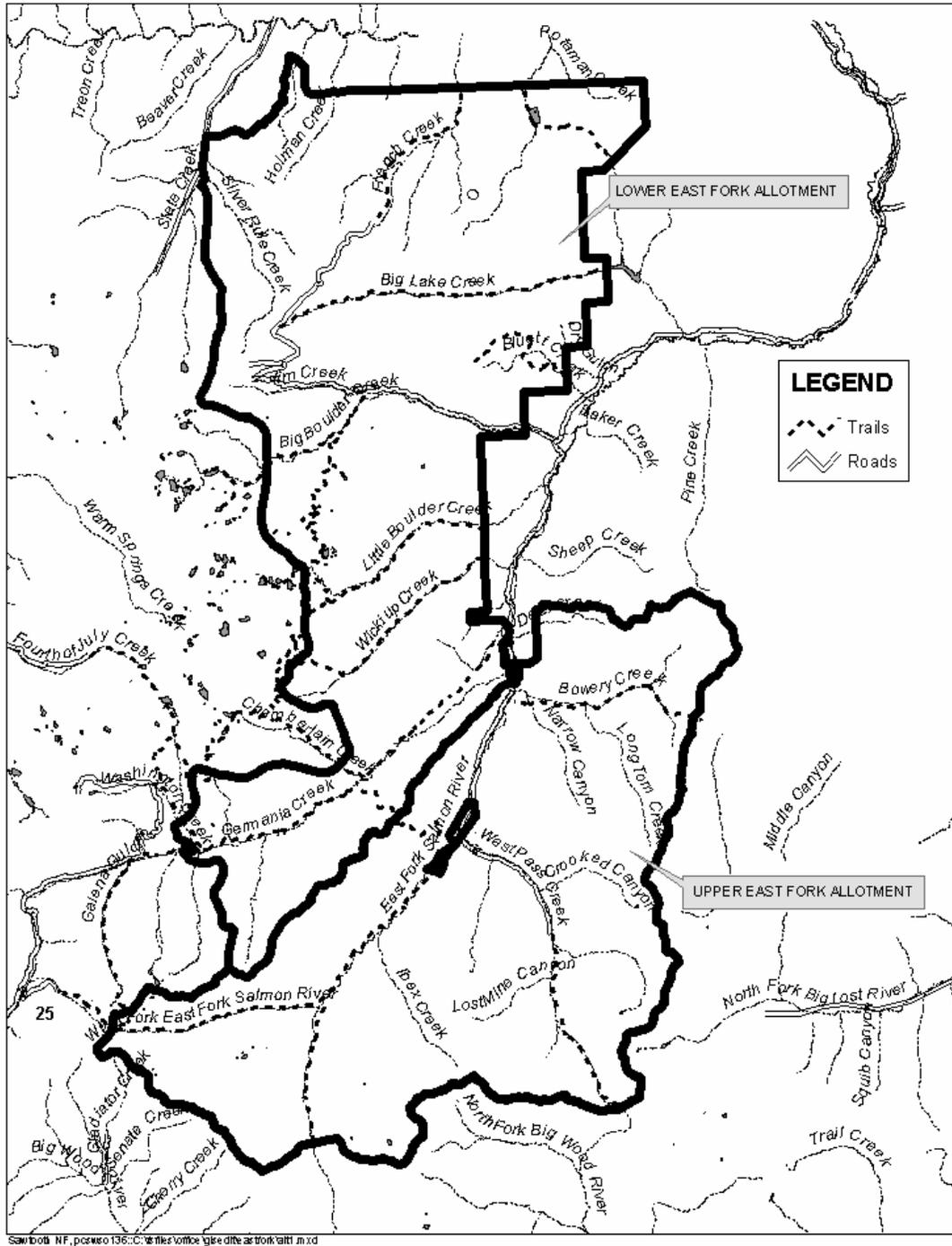


Figure II-1. Alternative 1 – Allotment Boundaries.

Alternative 2 (Proposed Action)

The proposed action is to authorize grazing within a modified allotment boundary and stocking rate that would reflect allowable use (meet FLRMP standards) throughout the allotment. An adaptive management strategy, which would allow for flexibility during the implementation of the grazing strategy, would allow permittees to respond to changing conditions and unexpected results. Permitted numbers and seasons would be modified as necessary to meet standards, based on monitoring results of the previous season. Following are the specific actions for the allotments.

FOR BOTH ALLOTMENTS (65,000 acres).

Livestock grazing is eliminated from elevations of 9,000 feet and higher in some areas to meet the FLRMP objectives 0344, 0354 and 0359 (Management Area 3, pages III-136-140) for protection and restoration of sensitive plants species and mountain goat habitat.

Allowable use standards, based on the revised FLRMP and USFS consultation requirements, which also serve as “triggers” to move livestock, are as follows:

- Forage utilization for riparian areas will not exceed 30 percent use of most palatable forage species, or must retain a minimum 6-inch stubble height of hydric greenline species, whichever occurs first, when riparian goals and objectives are not being met. (03109 Errata, III-140)
- Forage utilization for upland vegetative cover types will not exceed 40 percent for early season or season long pastures and 50 percent for vegetative slow growth, after seed ripe conditions, or late season pastures. (RAST01, III-44)
- Maximum bluebunch wheatgrass utilization will not exceed 30 percent in Big Lake Creek Corral Creek and Bluett Creek.
- A maximum of 30% use on woody species, such as willows and aspen.
- A maximum of 10% streambank alteration due to current trampling.
- Soil productivity shall not be significantly reduced as evidenced by no more than 15 percent of an activity area in a detrimentally disturbed condition. (SWST02, III-21)

Allowable use standards would be measured in Designated Monitoring Areas (DMA) as indicated on Annual Operating Instruction maps. Once allowable use is achieved, livestock must be moved into the next pasture or off the allotment. Pastures that have met standards are restricted from further livestock entry. If livestock cannot be controlled to prevent re-entry into previously grazed pastures, then all livestock in the adjacent pasture must be moved into the next pasture or removed from the allotment.

Meet the following revised Sawtooth Forest Plan direction of:

- Manage, operate, and maintain a year-round recreation program that offers a broad range of developed and dispersed recreation opportunities and experiences in a range of settings as reflected by the Recreation Opportunity Spectrum (REGO01);
- Maintain or restore soil, water, aquatic, and recreation resources in the Bowery, Big Lake, Sullivan, French Creek, Little Boulder, Big Boulder, Big Lake Creeks, and

Upper East Fork drainages through improved management and adjustments to livestock grazing capacities as necessary (03106);

Consultation requirements as a result of Endangered Species Act consultation with the United States Fish & Wildlife Service, and NOAA Fisheries would be implemented.

UPPER EAST FORK ALLOTMENT (35,000 acres)

- Redefine the allotment boundaries to improve resource issues and improve livestock management, by eliminating the Upper Bowery Creek pasture (11,700 acres) and the South and West Fork drainages of the East Fork of the Salmon River (12,000 acres). Bowery Cut-off Trail Basin (170 acres) will be added to better improve livestock management
- The following stream access restrictions are based on initiation of spawning for ESA listed fish species:
 - Main East Fork – Off August 1 for chinook salmon.
 - West Pass Creek – On July 15 for steelhead, off August 15 for bull trout.
 - Bowery Creek – Off August 15 for bull trout
- The permitted HMs would be 349, which represents the reduction of capacity acres within the permitted area. This reflects a 66% reduction of the currently permitted 1016 HMs

Table II-4. Alt. 2 - Upper East Fork Stocking Rate

Allotment/Pasture	Capacity Acres	% Total	HMs/Pasture
Upper East Fork	2,166	1.00	349
East Fork	829	0.38	134
West Pass	144	0.07	23
Fisher	579	0.27	93
Grouse/Albert	614	0.28	99
Bowery	0		0

- Five of the existing six water developments would remain. One one water trough in Upper Bowery Creek would be removed.
- Of the existing 2.5 miles of fencing, 0.9 miles in Upper Bowery Creek would be removed. Two new 0.25 mile drift fences would be constructed to prevent cattle drift:
 - 1.) West Fork Drift Fence with gate and cattleguard located ½ mile up the West Fork (Trail #112)
 - 2.) South Fork Drift Fence located approximately ½ mile up the South Fork (Trail #113) to prevent cattle drift.

- Approximately 0.5 mile of rustic fence would be installed at the East Fork dispersed recreation site, enclosing approximately 20 acres to minimize livestock / recreation conflicts.

LOWER EAST FORK ALLOTMENT (30,000 acres)

- The allotment boundary would be redefined to improve recreation and resource issues by eliminating the Boulder Creek pasture (16,700 acres), Sullivan and Potaman Creek drainages (5,100 acres) from the French Creek pasture; Removing Upper Silver Creek and Upper Railroad Ridge (1,100 acres) from the Big Lake pasture; Adding Bluett Creek subunit (1,900 acres) in Big Lake pasture.
- The following stream access restrictions are based on initiation of spawning for ESA listed fish species:
 - French, Holman, Mill and Big Lake Creeks – No restrictions
 - Silver Rule Creek – off August 15 for bull trout.
- The permitted HMs would be 590, which represents the reduction of capacity acres within the permitted area. This reflects a 70% reduction of the currently permitted 1994 HMs.

Table II-5. Alt. 2 - Lower East Fork Stocking Rate

Allotment/Pasture	Capacity Acres	% Total	HMs/Pasture
Lower East Fork	9,254	1.00	590
French Creek	4,171	0.45	266
Big Lake	5083	0.55	324
Boulder Creek	0		0

- Forty-five of the forty-eight water developments would remain. Three water troughs in Boulder Creek would be removed due to this pasture being closed.
- Of the existing 7.7 miles of fencing, 2.8 miles would be removed in the closed area. A one-mile drift fence would be constructed in Big Lake Creek to prevent cattle drift. A cattleguard and gate each will be installed on Trails #675/ Road #670 – French Creek Trail/ Road, and #678 – Big Lake Creek Trail to prevent livestock from drift.

Alternative 2

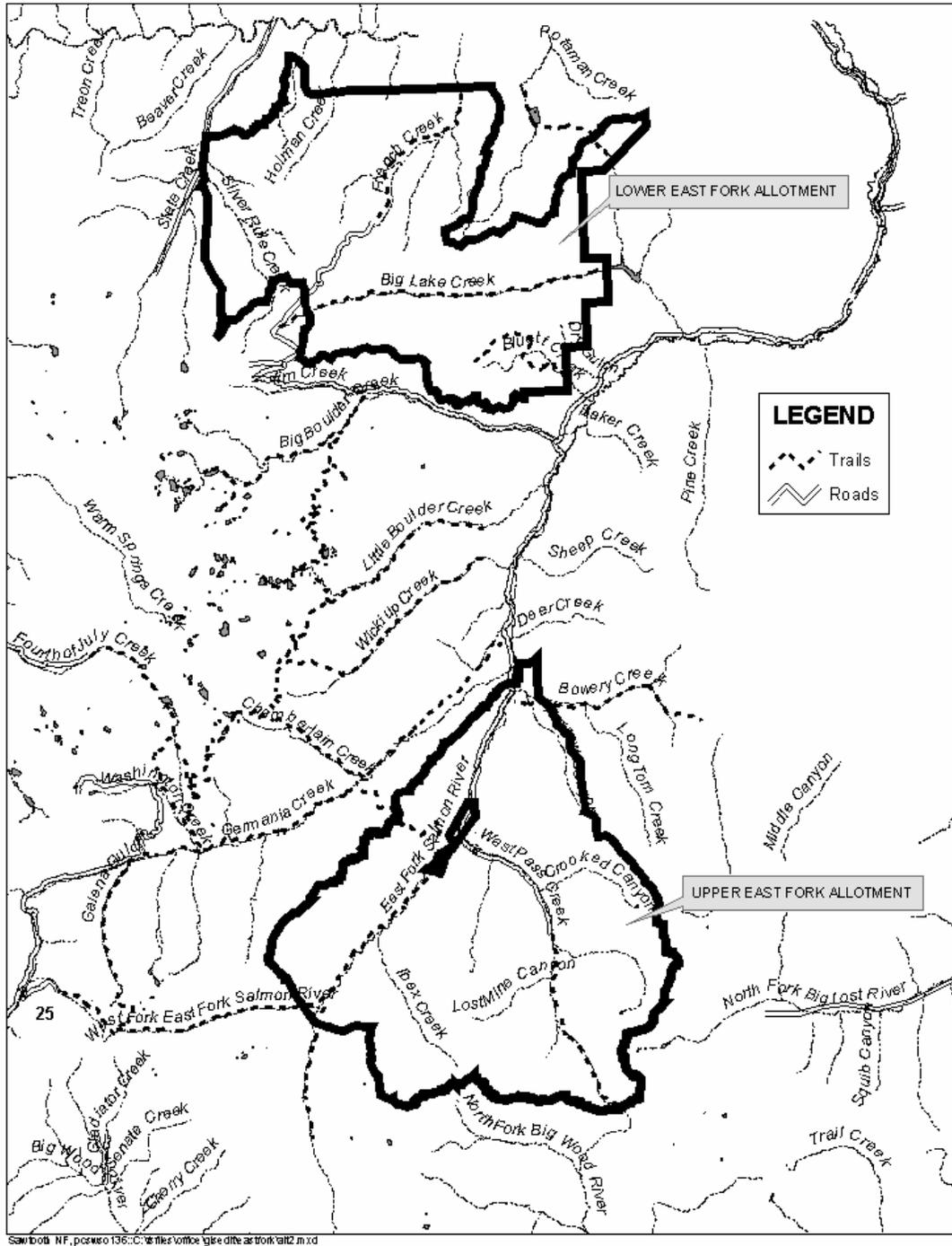


Figure II-2. Alternative 2 – Allotment Boundaries.

Alternative 3 - Discontinue Grazing of Domestic Livestock

This alternative would eliminate permitted livestock grazing from both the Upper and Lower East Fork allotments in their entirety. This alternative was developed to respond to the issues and concerns of those who believe that livestock grazing on the National Forest Lands conflicts with other resources to the degree that total elimination of the livestock is needed to adequately resolve conflicts.

After four years, the entire allotment would be closed to livestock grazing and existing fences and water troughs would be removed as budget permits. Underground pipelines would be closed off, but left in the ground, undisturbed. Impoundment ponds would remain. The administrative and horse pasture fences around the Bowery Guard station would remain. This closure would be phased in over a four-year period to give the permittee time to find alternative summer range or make adjustments in ranching operations. The year the decision is made would establish the actual use numbers. Reductions each year after would be from the actual use numbers. Grazing within this period would be phased out as follows:

Table II-6. Alt. 3 – Grazing Phase Out Schedule

Year	Upper & Lower East Fork Allotments
Baseline	Year Decision is Signed (Year 1)
2	20% reduction from year 1 actual use numbers
3	40% reduction from year 1 actual use numbers
4	60% reduction from year 1 actual use numbers
5	No Permitted Grazing

The allotment would be closed to livestock grazing on the fourth year after the Record of Decision is signed.

Alternative 3

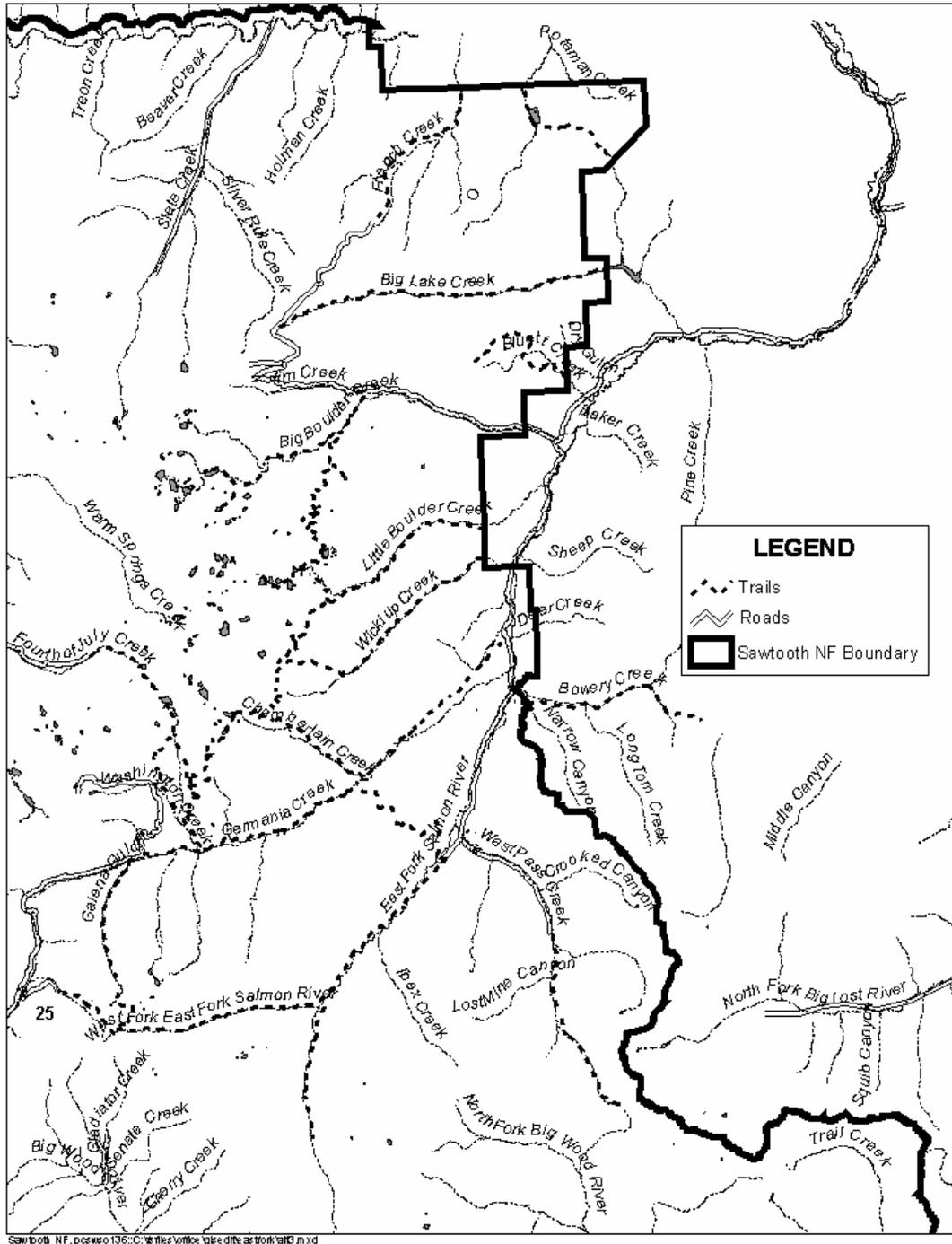


Figure II-3. Alternative 3 – Allotment Boundaries

Monitoring Common to Alt. 1 and Alt. 2

Monitoring of the East Fork allotments would determine the success in achieving annual use objectives, as well as verifying progression towards, and attainment of, desired conditions. In addition, the monitoring would provide feedback regarding assumptions and predictions made in this Environmental Impact Statement. Annual livestock use would be monitored through allotment administration and as prescribed in the multi-agency Implementation Monitoring Program. Progression towards various desired conditions would also be assessed through specific effectiveness monitoring objectives.

Implementation/compliance monitoring – This is used to determine if the goals, objectives, standards and guidelines, and practices of the FLRMP and terms of the grazing permit are implemented in accordance with their requirements.

Effectiveness monitoring – This is used to determine if the annual FLRMP use standards and guidelines, and practices, as designed and implemented are effective in accomplishing the desired result.

Appendix D provides a detailed description of the proposed monitoring.

Alternatives Considered but Eliminated from Detailed Study

Federal agencies are required by NEPA to rigorously explore and objectively evaluate all reasonable alternatives and to briefly discuss the reasons for eliminating any alternatives that were not developed in detail (40 CFR 1502.14). Public comments received in response to the Proposed Action provided suggestions for alternative methods for achieving the purpose and need. Some of these alternatives are outside the scope of the Purpose & Need, duplicative of the alternatives considered in detail, or determined to be components that would cause unnecessary environmental harm. Below are two additional alternatives considered but dismissed from detailed consideration for reasons summarized below

Upper East Fork Allotment – Rest system with added East Pass pasture.

The same permitted numbers would apply as in Alternative 1, but the season would be shortened to September 30. A new pasture consisting of the East Pass Creek drainage upstream of the sheep bridge would be added to the allotment.

This area is currently a vacant sheep allotment administered by the Challis National Forest. It has 730 acres of capable cattle range. The allotment would be divided into 4 pastures: East Fork/West Pass, Fisher Creek, Bowery Creek, and East Pass. A rest-rotation grazing system would be initiated in which one of the 4 pastures is rested every year as follows:

Table II-7. Alt. 4 Rest-Rotation Schedule

DATES OF USE	YEAR 1	YEAR 2	YEAR 3	YEAR 4
06/18-07/29	East Fork/West Pass Creek	Fisher Creek	East Fork/West Pass Creek	East Fork/West Pass Creek
07-30-09/09	Fisher Creek	Bowery Creek	Bowery Creek	Fisher Creek
09/10-09/30	Bowery Creek	East Pass Creek	East Pass Creek	East Pass Creek
Rested Pasture	East Pass Creek	East Fork/West Pass Creek	Fisher Creek	Bowery Creek

During the first few years of use, pasture area and grazing period per pasture could require some adjustment to meet proper use standards, based on implementation monitoring. This could result in a shortening of the general grazing season to mid or late September, depending on forage growth conditions and livestock use patterns.

This alternative is not receiving detailed analysis for the following reasons:

- It is similar to the existing current grazing scheme, which is being analyzed as Alternative 1.
- Current requirements for the restriction of livestock access to spawning reaches for threatened bull trout after August 15 preclude the viability of this alternative.
- This alternative does not address the issue of overstocking and chronic overuse of certain riparian areas.
- East Pass currently provides undisturbed bull trout habitat.
- This alternative would require use of Bowery Creek, an area proposed for rest, to both access and leave the East Pass area.

Upper East Fork Allotment - Grazing area reduced for maximum control and minimum conflicts.

The permitted grazing area would be reduced to two fenced pastures on lands most capable and suitable for supporting cattle with minimal risks of impacts to other resources. One pasture of 313 acres would be established adjacent to the Luezing private land parcel and another 291 acre pasture would be established on the west side of the Upper East Fork between Bowery Guard Station and Ibex Creek.

Estimated grazing capacities of the two pastures, weighted for slope would be 52 and 44 HMs, respectively. Grazing season would be June 18 to September 15 for 27 cow/calf pairs or 52 yearlings season-long, or the seasons could be shortened for greater numbers for equivalent HMs, depending on the permittee's management strategy.

This would represent a 90% reduction in HMs from the current operation. During the initial years, pasture area and grazing period per pasture may require some adjustment to meet proper use standards, based on implementation monitoring. Approximately 3.5 miles of three-strand barbed wire let-down fencing would be constructed to contain the cattle.

This alternative is not receiving detailed analysis because the small number of HMs provided is not cost-effective compared with the required amount of new fence construction and the administrative workload involved.

Comparison of Alternatives Table

This table provides a summary of the effects of implementing each alternative. Information in the table is focused on activities and effects where different levels of effects or outputs can be distinguished quantitatively or qualitatively among alternatives.

LIVESTOCK MANAGEMENT AND DISTRIBUTION

Element	Alternative 1 Current Grazing	Alternative 2 Proposed Action	Alternative 3 Discontinue Grazing
Total allotment acreage	Upper – 58,000 acres Lower – 73,000 acres	Upper – 35,000 acres Lower – 30,000 acres	Upper – 0 acres Lower – 0 acres
Total capacity acres	Upper – 3,450 acres Lower – 15,000 acres	Upper – 2,170 acres Lower – 9,250 acres	Upper – 0 acres Lower – 0 acres
Total Head Months (HMs)	Upper – 553 HMs Lower – 962 HMs	Upper – 349 HMs Lower – 590 HMs	Upper – 0 HMs Lower – 0 HMs
Herd Management	Intense management required. Continue to be a difficult proposition in expansive and steep terrain. Large area to ride and extensive fence maintenance.	Intense management required. Improved due to reduced area and less fence to maintain. Terrains still an issue, as is livestock straying into unauthorized areas.	Effects essentially same as Alt. 1 for first four years, then none needed.
Improvements	Existing improvements will remain unchanged.	A total of 4 water troughs and 3.7 miles of fencing will be removed. 1.5 miles of new fence constructed with 3 cattleguard/gates installed.	Structural improvements would be removed as time and budget permitted.
Allotment Description	Boundaries in both allotments remain the same	Upper – Bowery Creek Pasture and the West and South Forks of the East Fork will be removed. Lower – Most of the Boulder Creek pasture and portions of the Big Lake and French Creek pastures will be removed.	Allotments would be eliminated after 4 years.

RECREATION & AESTHETICS

Element	Alternative 1 Current Grazing	Alternative 2 Proposed Action	Alternative 3 Discontinue Grazing
Recreation Concentrated Use Areas (CUAs) within allotments affected by grazing	Fifteen Recreation Concentrated Use Areas open to livestock.	Seven CUAs open to livestock.	No CUAs open to livestock.
CUAs outside allotments likely affected by cows	Ten CUAs outside allotments affected	No CUAs affected	No CUAs affected
Miles of trail open to grazing	80.8 miles open	28.8 miles open	0 miles open
Solitary dispersed sites open to grazing	41 sites open	Nine sites open	0 sites open
Impacts to meadows and lakeshores	Continue at current level	Reduced considerably	Eliminated
Visual Quality Objectives	Not attained	Mostly attained	Attained
Recreation Opportunity Spectrum	Attained	Attained	Attained

PLANT DIVERSITY

Element	Alternative 1 Current Grazing	Alternative 2 Proposed Action	Alternative 3 Discontinue Grazing
Alpine diversity and integrity/	Continued degradation through livestock use both through authorized and unauthorized use, diversity will continue to decline, species conversion possible	Alpine areas closed to grazing (<9,000) feet, alpine communities recover rapidly due to the removal of livestock impacts, long-term increase in diversity	Continued degradation through livestock use for the first 3 years until grazing is eliminated, impacts reduced over time due to staggered reduction in stocking, alpine communities recover slowly, long-term increase in diversity
Slender Moonwort	Continued potential for unauthorized trampling in population, potential habitat impacted	Unauthorized livestock use greatly reduced due to removal of access corridor to population, potential habitat impacted	No unauthorized use will occur in population, potential habitat will not be impacted by livestock use
Ute's Ladies-tresses' orchid potential habitat currently not moving towards Forest Plan vegetation management objectives	Less than 2 miles of potential habitat, potential habitat would continue to be degraded	Less than 2 miles of potential habitat, elevational closures would not benefit potential habitat	0 miles, long-term benefit for potential habitat
White Cloud milkvetch population viability and susceptibility	4 populations experience moderate to locally heavy impacts, 9 populations susceptible to livestock impacts, continued risk to long-term viability	1 population experiences moderate to locally heavy impacts, 3 populations susceptible to livestock impacts but risks reduced due to 9,000' elevation closure to grazing, increased benefits for long-term viability	4 populations experience moderate to locally heavy impacts, for the first 3 years until grazing is eliminated, all 9 populations susceptible to livestock use, risks diminish with staggered reduction in stocking, long-term benefits for recovery

Silvery/Jones' Primrose population viability and susceptibility	Continued moderate to locally heavy impacts within populations, loss of viability and fecundity will continue	Continued moderate to locally heavy impacts within populations, loss of viability and fecundity will continue, maintenance of exclosure may benefit 1 population	Continued moderate to locally heavy impacts within populations for the first 3 years until grazing is eliminated,, long-term increase of viability and fecundity, livestock impacts removed over time
Whitebark Pine population viability/sustainability	Continued degradation through livestock use both through authorized and unauthorized use, population integrity will continue to decline, seedling recruitment will be low	Alpine areas closed to grazing (<9,000) feet, alpine communities recovery probable due to removal of livestock impacts, long-term increase in viability, increased seedling viability and establishment	Continued degradation through livestock use for the first 3 years until grazing is eliminated,, impacts reduced over time due to staggered reduction in stocking, Whitebark pine stands recover slowly, long-term increase in viability
Non-native plants; introduction and spread	Disturbance from livestock grazing will continue, livestock may serve as vectors to remote locations, detection and treatment levels may be high and successful	Disturbance from livestock grazing greatly reduced, livestock role as vectors confined to smaller proportion of the area, detection and treatment levels may be lower due to less range monitoring in the watershed	Disturbance from livestock continues during phase-out period, livestock role as vectors diminishes over time, detection and treatment levels may be lower , infestations may be larger and more difficult to contain in remote regions, less range monitoring
Sensitive and Proposed	Continued degradation possible due to livestock use both through authorized and unauthorized use, diversity will continue to decline, species conversion possible	Areas closed to grazing (<9,000) feet, sensitive and proposed species recover rapidly due to no livestock impacts, long-term increase in diversity	Continued degradation through livestock use for the first 3 years until grazing is eliminated,, impacts reduced over time due to staggered reduction in stocking, long-term increase in diversity

FISHERIES & HYDROLOGY

Element	Alternative 1 Current Grazing	Alternative 2 Proposed Action	Alternative 3 Discontinue Grazing
streamside riparian areas formerly not moving towards Forest Plan vegetation management objectives that would be located within the allotments	58 miles	36 miles	0 miles
designated critical habitat for chinook and steelhead that would be located within the allotments	30 miles	17 miles	0 miles
proposed critical habitat for bull trout that would be located within the allotments	73 miles	29 miles	0 miles
streams generally accessible to cattle	245 miles	130 miles	0 miles
rate of stream channel and aquatic habitat recovery	static in most areas	slow in areas where grazing continues, at natural rate where grazing is discontinued.	slow, but accelerating, during 3 year phase out of grazing, at natural rate thereafter

WILDLIFE

Element	Alternative 1 Current Grazing	Alternative 2 Proposed Action	Alternative 3 Discontinue Grazing
Estimate of riparian areas generally accessible to cattle	2,920 acres accessible	1,470 acres accessible	0 acres accessible after 4 th year.
Estimate of aspen forest generally accessible to cattle	730 acres accessible	510 acres accessible	0 acres accessible after 4 th year.
Likelihood of gray wolf mortality from predator control	Low to Moderate	Low to Moderate	Low to Moderate
Canada lynx LCAS consistency	Not consistent with two conservation measures for livestock grazing	Consistent with LCAS	Consistent with LCAS
Columbia spotted frog key habitat	Frog Lake and Little Frog Lake area within allotment	Frog Lake and Little Frog Lake area outside of allotment	Frog Lake and Little Frog Lake area outside of allotment
Greater sage-grouse brood-rearing habitat - estimated amount of acres accessible to cattle; and condition	2,600 acres; of riparian acres 58% not moving toward Forest Plan vegetation management objectives and would continue in this trend	1,700 acres; 38% of riparian currently not moving toward FLRMP objectives would trend towards objectives over time	0 acres; brood-rearing habitat within former allotments would begin to move toward Forest Plan vegetation management objectives
Bighorn sheep winter range forage competition potential	High	Low	Nonexistent after the 4 th year.
Migratory Birds - consistency with E.O. 13186	Not consistent with E.O. 13186	Consistent with E.O. 13186	Consistent with E.O. 13186
Pollinator Diversity	Continue degradation through livestock, plant diversity may continue to decline, species conversion, pollinator abundance and diversity may continue to decline	Outside new boundary upland vegetation and pollinator diversity may recover, livestock impacts will continue in permitted area, long-term pollinator diversity and abundance will improve	Continued degradation through livestock use, impacts reduced over time due to staggered reduction in stocking, long-term recovery of upland vegetation, and pollinator abundance and diversity

SOCIAL & ECONOMIC

Element	Alternative 1 Current Grazing	Alternative 2 Proposed Action	Alternative 3 Discontinue Grazing
Annual Earnings ¹	\$165,000	\$151,000	\$125,000

¹ Created by SNRA range allotments in Challis