



United States
Department of
Agriculture

Forest
Service

Sawtooth National Forest
Sawtooth National Recreation
Area

HC 64, Box 8291
Ketchum, ID. 83340
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File Code: 1950-1

Date: October 7, 2003

Dear Interested Citizen:

Area Ranger Debora Cooper has made the decision for the Upper and Lower East Fork Cattle and Horse Allotments on the Sawtooth National Recreation Area (SNRA). Debora made this decision prior to her departure from the SNRA. As many of you know, Debora is in the process of transferring to her new job as District Ranger of Seward Ranger District in Alaska.

As Acting Area Ranger, I want to share the Record of Decision (ROD) and Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS) with you. Enclosed are copies of these documents.

The decision, issued on September 30, 2003, is to proceed with continuing livestock grazing on the Upper and Lower East Fork Allotments on the Sawtooth National recreation Area. The decision is based on the FEIS and the comments received from many of you on the proposal. The enclosed ROD documents the decision and provides the rationale for the management of the Upper and Lower East Fork Range Allotments.

Decision

The decision was to select components of Alternatives 1 and 2, updating the Upper and Lower East Fork Allotment Management Plans and authorizing livestock grazing in a manner that will meet Sawtooth Forest Plan standards and establishing additional direction for livestock management throughout the allotments. An adaptive management strategy, which would allow for flexibility during the implementation of the grazing strategy, will allow permittees to respond to changing conditions and unexpected results. Livestock numbers, grazing practices and seasons would be modified as necessary to meet standards, based on monitoring results of the previous season.

Changes from DEIS to FEIS

The Notice of Availability (NOA) for the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) appeared in the Federal Register on [April 7, 2003](#). The comment period on the DEIS, as published in the NOA, ended on May 30, 2003. A total of 212 responses were received during the comment period and an additional 12 comments were received after the comment period closed. The responses were analyzed using a content analysis process by the Interdisciplinary Team (IDT). Appendix E of the FEIS provides a summary of who commented, what the main comments were, and the Agency's response to those comments.

Based on the comments received, the significant issue statements have been updated. While no new significant issues were identified from public comment, additional information and concerns related to the existing issues were received. This new information has been incorporated into the issue descriptions.



Additionally, the DEIS was published under the direction of the 1987 Sawtooth Forest Land & Resource Management Plan (FLRMP) which, was in the process of being revised at the time of release of the DEIS. Since release of the DEIS, the Forest completed its revision effort with the publication of a Record of Decision revising the Sawtooth FLRMP in July, 2003. The revised FLRMP officially went in to effect September 8, 2003, therefore final direction from the revised FLRMP has been incorporated into the alternative descriptions and effects analysis for this FEIS.

Public Law 92-400 established the Sawtooth National Recreation Area with some unique and challenging mandates. It is in this context that I approach my decision of the East Fork Allotments:

“...administer the recreation area in accordance with the laws, rules and regulations applicable to the national forests in such manner as will best provide (1) protection and conservation of the salmon and other fisheries; (2) the conservation and development of scenic, natural, historic, pastoral, wildlife, and other values, contributing to and available for public recreation and enjoyment, including the preservation of sites associated with those typifying the economic and social history of the American West; and (3) the management, utilization, and disposal of natural resources on federally owned lands such as timber, grazing, and mineral resources insofar as their utilization will not substantially impair the purposes for which the recreation area is established.”

I know that the East Fork of the Salmon River is an important and special area to you, the local communities, and other interested citizens. I believe this decision will allow for updates to the allotment management plans and provide for permitted livestock grazing that meets or moves toward desired resource conditions as described in FLRMP standards. I believe that the modified alternative provides the best balance between the various social and resource needs within the East Fork project area at this time. The rationale for this decision is based on the need to restore the aquatic, terrestrial, and hydrologic resources, balancing the recreational conflicts to the degree possible, and providing for long-term sustainable livestock grazing. Other range improvements were also analyzed for disturbance to archeological considerations and ESA listed species considerations. This decision will strike a balance between the growing recreation uses and sustainable livestock grazing on the SNRA.

Appeals

This decision is subject to appeal pursuant to 36 CFR Part 215. The appeal must be postmarked or received by the Appeal Deciding Officer within 45 days of the publication of this notice in the Challis Messenger. The Appeals Deciding Officer is: Regional Forester, Intermountain Region, 324 25th Street, Ogden, UT 84401 (801) 625-5605. The office business hours for those submitting hand-delivered appeals are: 8:00 - 4:30 Monday through Friday, excluding holidays. Appeals must meet the content requirements of 36 CFR 215.14, as published in the Federal Register on November 4, 1993.

Pursuant to 36 CFR 251 Subpart C, applicants for special use authorization wishing to appeal must submit a written notice of appeal. The notice of appeal, including the reasons for appeal, must be postmarked or received by the Appeal Reviewing Officer within 45 days of this decision. The notice of appeal should be filed with: Forest Supervisor, Sawtooth National Forest, 2647 Kimberly Road East, Twin Falls, ID 83301-7976. A copy of the notice of appeal

must be filed simultaneously with: Area Ranger, Sawtooth National Recreation Area, HC 64, Box 8291, Ketchum, ID 83340. Appeals must meet the content requirements of 36 CFR 251.90.3.

Appellants with standing under both 36 CFR 251 and 36 CFR 215 may only appeal under one regulation and may not appeal under both.

Appeals, including attachments, must be filed within 45 days from the publication date of this notice in the Challis Messenger, the newspaper of record for the SNRA. The publication date in the Challis Messenger newspaper, is the exclusive means for calculating the time to file an appeal. Those wishing to appeal this decision should not rely upon dates or timeframe information provided by any other source. The appeal period is anticipated to be October 9 through November 24, 2003.

There are two additional points that I would like to make. One, we are actively investigating opportunities for replacement range to offset operational and economic impacts of the decision to the livestock permittee's operations associated with these two allotments. Secondly, a collaborative monitoring process will be developed to determine designated monitoring areas and the appropriate monitoring protocols for monitoring compliance with the decision criteria. The collaborative process will involve the broad communities of interest, and may include, but would not be limited to, permittees, regulatory agencies, other state and federal agencies and local interest groups.

More Information

Additional copies of the FEIS, either by Compact Disc or paper copy, are available for review:

- on the web at: www.fs.fed.us/r4/sawtooth
- at the Sawtooth National Recreation Area headquarters, 8 miles north of Ketchum on Highway 75;
- at the Stanley Ranger Station, 3 miles south of Stanley on Highway 75;
- can be requested from either of these two offices by phoning (208) 727-5000 for headquarters or (208) 774-3000 for the Stanley office.

If you have any additional questions, please contact Kameron Sam, SNRA Range Management Specialist at (208) 774-3000.

In closing, I want to thank you for making the time to provide us with your input on this important project and for your interest in your National Forest.

Sincerely,

TERENCE O. CLARK III
TERENCE O. CLARK III
Acting Area Ranger
Sawtooth National Recreation Area

Enclosures