



File Code: 1950/2210

Date: April 3, 2007

Dear Interested Public and Partners:

Proposed Action

The Doublehead Ranger District, Modoc National Forest is proposing to authorize livestock grazing on a previously vacant sheep allotment, this is the Crumes Sheep and Goat (S&G) Grazing Allotment, and to keep the Glass Mountain Sheep and Goat (S&G) Grazing Allotment vacant. The proposed numbers, acres, and season of use for the Crumes allotment is found below in Table 1. The Crumes Allotment will be grazed with sheep in place of the Tucker Allotment. The Tucker Allotment has had dual livestock use, but it is felt that sheep grazing and sage grouse are not compatible.

Table 1.

Allotment	Livestock			Period of Use		Head Months (HM)*	
	Permitted Numbers*		Kind	Class	From		To
	Cows	Sheep					
Glass Mtn	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	0
Crumes		2000	Sheep	Ewe/lamb	April 16	June 1	3133

*Permitted Numbers are represented by cow/calf pairs (cc). A Head Month is the number of cow/calf pairs times the season of use, considering only one head for each cow/calf pair. A head month is defined as one month's use and occupancy of the rangeland by one weaned or adult cow over six months of age (with or without calf), bull, steer, heifer, burro, mule, bison, ewe (with or without lambs), ram, or goat (Forest Service Handbook 2209.13).

An Environmental Assessment (EA) will be prepared with public input. The EA will disclose the environmental consequences of implementing the proposed action or alternatives to that action. The decision will be stated in a separate decision document.

The terms of Section 504(a) of the 1995 Rescissions Act, Public Law 104-19, as amended, requires updated environmental analyses of all allotments across the Modoc National Forest by December 31, 2008. The Rescissions Act addresses grazing on National Forest System lands, specifically allotment analysis, grazing permit issuance and compliance with NEPA. The act included a schedule for completion of NEPA analysis. These allotments are included in the Modoc NF schedule as modified under the terms of the 2004 Omnibus Bill.

It is Forest Service policy to contribute to the economic and social well being of people by providing opportunities for economic diversity and by promoting stability for communities that depend on range resources for their livelihood (Forest Service Manual [FSM] 2202.1). The Modoc National Forest has determined that lands within these allotments are suitable for



producing forage for grazing. The Forest must also meet multiple-use objectives, ensuring that healthy rangeland conditions are achieved, as directed under the Modoc National Forest Land and Resource Management Plan (LRMP, 1991) as amended by the Sierra Nevada Forest Plan Amendment (SNFPA 2004).

There is a need to determine the overall condition of the Crumes allotment, before it is known whether we are maintaining or moving towards existing rangeland conditions within the project area as described in the LRMP and to develop Allotment Management Plans (AMPs), prior to issuing a Term Grazing Permit in compliance with FSH 2209.13, Chapter 90.

The Modoc Forest Plan provides the following direction:

1. Manage the Forest for improved rangeland condition with permitted grazing and forage capacity in balance (Forest Plan, pg 4-1). Maintain or enhance satisfactory ecological condition (Forest Plan 4-18).
2. Contribute to the community economy and provide for sustained outputs of forage products (Forest Plan, pg 4-2).
3. Provide diverse and productive habitat for a variety of wildlife and fish species (Forest Plan 4-2).
4. Maintain soil productivity by applying guidelines to areas where management prescriptions are applied: land for timber production, range allotments, and other areas where healthy or productive vegetation is desired. (Forest Plan 4-21).
5. Manage allotments to protect soil, water, and streamside dependent resources (Forest Plan 4-19).
6. Protect habitat for sensitive plants (Forest Plan 4-3).
7. Protect cultural resources largely by directing activities or use away from sensitive areas, by maintaining confidentiality, and by informing Forest users of cultural resource protection requirements (Forest Plan 4-14).

The attached maps show the locations of the two (2) grazing allotments included in this proposed action. The two allotments are located on the Doublehead Ranger District. The decision to be made, based on public and Interdisciplinary Team input is whether or not to authorize grazing and under what conditions. This decision will be made the summer of 2007.

Background

Livestock grazing has been a traditional historic use in the area since 1873. The Modoc National Forest was created in 1903 and the Doublehead District was added on October 1, 1920. Prior to 1900, livestock numbers or season of use were unmanaged, but some reduction in livestock numbers had begun. Historic accounts indicate that 75,000 to 80,000 cattle and horses ran between Mt. Dome and Goose Lake, and as far south as Quaking Aspen near Mud Lake until 1920. After 1900, bands of sheep were brought into the area from Oregon and the Sacramento Valley to winter and remained through the spring for lambing. It has been estimated that up to 100,000 sheep came in between 1917 and 1920, using the area between Mt. Dome and Doublehead Mountain. In the 1950s and 1960s, livestock numbers were greatly reduced and management of grazing permits was established. There has been a steady decline in livestock numbers since the 1950s. There is only one individual with a sheep grazing permit on the District.

Decision Framework

Based on the environmental analysis document, the District Ranger will decide whether or not to authorize continued livestock grazing in the project area and under what terms and conditions in order to meet, or move toward meeting Forest Plan objectives. The decision will be based on the analysis conducted through the environmental assessment. The decision will be implemented through issuance of individual term grazing permits for each of the three allotments. Term permits include Part 1 - location, Part 2 - terms and conditions, and Part 3 - site specific management direction.

Public Involvement

This project has been included in the Schedule of Proposed Actions for the Modoc National Forest in October 2006, January 2007, and again in March 2007. Legal Notice will inform readers of the local newspaper of this proposed project. An EA will be prepared for comment. The scoping period will end 30 days from the date of this letter. Individuals who respond to this scoping notice will automatically receive notice of the availability of the EA (or a copy of the EA). Scoping comments should be as specific as possible in order for the Forest Service to identify and consider each issue or concern.

How to Get Involved

Your input and participation are encouraged. Please provide comments/issues on the proposed action. An issue is a point of discussion, debate, or dispute related to the environmental effects that will occur as a result of implementing the proposed action. Your scoping comments will be used if received by May 3, 2007. You can mail, fax, electronic in-box, or hand deliver your comments with your name and address to:

Modoc National Forest, Doublehead Ranger District, Attn: Range Department

P.O. Box 369, Tulelake, CA 96134

Fax: 530-667-8609

Electronic in-box: comments-pacificsouthwest-modoc-doublehead@fs.fed.us

If you would like more information on this project, please contact Kathy Sevy, Rangeland Management Specialist at 530-667-2246.

Sincerely,

/s/Laurence Crabtree

LAURENCE CRABTREE
District Ranger

Enclosure(s)