

Livestock Grazing Plan Amendment EIS



PROJECT OVERVIEW

GSENM is beginning the process of amending the Grand Staircase-Escalante National Monument Management Plan (MMP) that became effective in February 2000. The MMP provides both a set of decisions outlining management direction and creates a framework for future planning and decision making. The MMP, however, deferred decisions related to livestock grazing and did not identify lands available or not available for that use.

PURPOSE AND NEED

Livestock grazing in the planning area continues to be authorized and managed according to land use decisions set by four regional management framework plans signed in 1981 and a few subsequent plan amendments completed in 1999. Much has changed at the local, regional, and national levels since land use plan-level decisions for livestock grazing were established. New information has become available, new policies have been established, and existing policies have been revised. These changes include:

- Establishment of GSENM
- Acquisition of thousands of acres of land within the GSENM boundary
- Issuance of new policy and guidance for National Conservation Lands

- Establishment of the Utah BLM Standards for Rangeland Health and Guidelines for Livestock Grazing Management
- Prioritization of science as a basis for land management
- The spread of invasive species
- Substantial and continuing increases in visitation to GSENM and the surrounding public lands.

This MMP amendment (MMP-A) is needed to integrate livestock grazing and rangeland management into the existing MMP. This MMP-A is also needed to provide for the comprehensive management of livestock grazing, including to ensure the protection of the objects and values included in Presidential Proclamation 6920, which established GSENM. Finally, this MMP-A is needed to implement new or revised policy and consider new information or changed circumstances.

The purpose of this MMP-A is to identify all lands within GSENM as available or not available for livestock grazing. The BLM will also identify guidelines and criteria for future allotment-specific adjustments in the amount of forage available for livestock, season of use, or other grazing management practices. Finally, the purpose of this MMP-A is to provide flexibility to adapt to new and emerging issues and opportunities based on new information and monitoring.

The BLM is an agency in the US Department of the Interior that manages approximately a quarter billion acres – more than any other Federal agency. This land, known as the National System of Public Lands, is primarily located in 12 Western states, including Alaska. Approximately 27 million acres of BLM administered lands make up the collection of National Conservation Lands, also known as the National Landscape Conservation System. These include BLM National Monuments, National Conservation Areas, Wilderness Areas, Wilderness Study Areas, and National Scenic and Historic Trails. The mission of the National Conservation Lands is to conserve, protect, and restore these nationally significant landscapes that are recognized for their outstanding cultural, ecological, and scientific values.

**NATIONAL
CONSERVATION
LANDS**



PROJECT OVERVIEW *(continued)*

PLANNING AREA

The planning area encompasses 2,316,200 acres in Garfield and Kane Counties, Utah, and Coconino County, Arizona. The planning area includes all public lands within GSENM and public lands for which GSENM has livestock grazing management responsibility. This includes lands within portions of the BLM's Kanab and Arizona Strip Field Offices, as well as lands administered by the National Park Service (NPS) in Glen Canyon National Recreation Area (GCNRA). The planning area is bordered on the west by Bryce Canyon National Park and Kanab Field Office, on the north by Dixie National Forest, on the east by Capitol Reef National Park and GCNRA, and on the south by the Arizona Strip Field Office, Kanab Field Office, Utah State and Institutional Trust Lands, and GCNRA. Small areas of state, municipal, and private lands are contained within the planning area.

DECISIONS TO BE MADE

The Utah BLM State Director will decide whether to amend the MMP and integrate planning decisions for livestock grazing and rangeland management into the existing MMP. The underlying goal for completing the environmental review process is to enable sustained use of the land through improved land health and science-based grazing management.

In the decision, the State Director will determine which lands are and are not available for livestock grazing and identify an area-wide amount of forage available for livestock grazing. In making this decision, the State Director will consider:

- Other uses of the land
- Terrain characteristics
- Soil, vegetation, and watershed characteristics
- The presence of undesirable vegetation, such as invasive weed infestations
- The presence of other resources that may require special management or protection, such as special status species or special recreation management areas

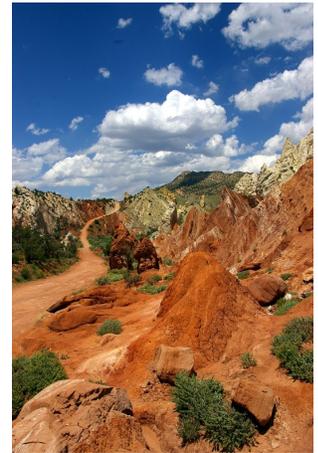
The NPS is cooperating in the preparation of the environmental analysis and will be issuing a separate decision for lands within GCNRA. The NPS decision will be consistent with the GCNRA-enabling legislation and will integrate GCNRA values and purposes into livestock management decisions for lands within the recreation area where GSENM administers livestock grazing.

DECISION AREA

The BLM's decision area for this planning effort includes all BLM-administered lands for which GSENM has livestock

grazing management responsibility, including some lands within the Kanab and Arizona Strip Field Offices. The decision area for the NPS includes lands within GCNRA for which GSENM has livestock grazing management responsibility. The decision area does not include state, municipal, or private lands.

Within the decision area, 79 allotments are available and managed for livestock grazing, and 16 areas are unavailable for livestock grazing. There are 91 permittees authorized to graze cattle and horses on the available allotments. Of the 95 allotments in the decision area, 19 allotments totaling more than 300,000 acres are within GCNRA. GSENM administers these allotments per enabling legislation for GCNRA and by means of a Memorandum of Understanding between the BLM and the NPS.



For more information, please visit the GSENM Livestock Grazing Plan Amendment Webpage: <http://blm.gov/pgld>

**Please submit your comments by
January 13, 2013.**

You can email, fax, or mail your comments.

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