

BLM Colorado Southwest District

Subcommittee for Analyzing Domestic Sheep Grazing in RMBS Habitat

1. **Grazing Fee Formula.** Charging fees for grazing private livestock on federal lands is statutorily authorized and has been the policy of the Forest Service (FS, Department of Agriculture) since 1906, and of the Bureau of Land Management (BLM, Department of the Interior) since 1936. Today, fees are charged for grazing on BLM and FS land basically under a fee formula established in the Public Rangelands Improvement Act of 1978 (PRIA) and continued administratively.

The fee charged by BLM and FS is based on the grazing on federal rangelands of a specified number of animals for one month, referred to as an “animal unit month” (AUM). BLM defines an AUM, for fee purposes as a month’s use and occupancy of the range by one animal unit, which includes one yearling, one cow and her calf, one horse, or five sheep or goats.¹

2. **Cost to the Government.** BLM and FS typically spend more managing their grazing programs than they collect in grazing fees. Estimates of the cost of livestock grazing to the taxpayer have varied considerably for a number of reasons, for example:
 - a. Some estimates might reflect the entirety of BLM and FS appropriations for rangeland management, whereas others might reflect the subset of these appropriations for administration of livestock grazing.
 - b. whether the estimates reflect any indirect costs to the federal government of livestock grazing, such as programs that might benefit livestock grazing or compensate for impacts of livestock grazing.
 - c. Whether estimates consider indirect costs to ranchers such as for maintenance of fences and water sources.
 - d. Whether or not the value of open space to wildlife and general ecosystem health or things as subjective as aesthetics or opportunities for solitude and unconfined recreation.
3. **Distribution of Collected Fees.** Fifty percent of grazing fees collected by each agency, or \$10.0 million—whichever is greater—go to a *range betterment fund* in the Treasury. Monies in the fund are subject to appropriations. BLM typically has requested and received an annual appropriation of \$10.0 million for the fund.

The agencies use the *range betterment fund* for range rehabilitation, protection, and improvement, including grass seeding and reseeding, fence construction, weed control, water development, and fish and wildlife habitat. Under law, one-half of the fund is to be used as directed by the Secretary of the Interior or of Agriculture, and the other half is authorized to be spent in the district, region, or forest that generated the fees, as the Secretary determines after consultation with user representatives.

¹ Therefore, sheep are charged at 1/5 or 20% of that charged for a cow-calf pair. Specifically, BLM regulations at 43 C.F.R. §4130.8-1 provide that in general, “[f]or the purposes of calculating the fee, an animal unit month is defined as a month’s use and occupancy of range by 1 cow, bull, steer, heifer, horse, burro, mule, 5 sheep, or 5 goats: (1) Over the age of 6 months at the time of entering the public lands or other lands administered by BLM; (2) Weaned regardless of age; or (3) Becoming 12 months of age during the authorized period of use.

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The remaining 50% of collected fees are allocated differently by agency. FS splits the remaining 50% between the U.S. Treasury (25%) and the states (25%) which are in turn required to pass the funds to the specified local governmental entities for use at the county level.

BLM Section 3 lands. For BLM, states receive 12.5% of monies collected from lands defined in Section 3 of the Taylor Grazing Act and 37.5% is deposited in the Treasury. Section 3 lands are those within grazing districts for which BLM issues grazing permits.

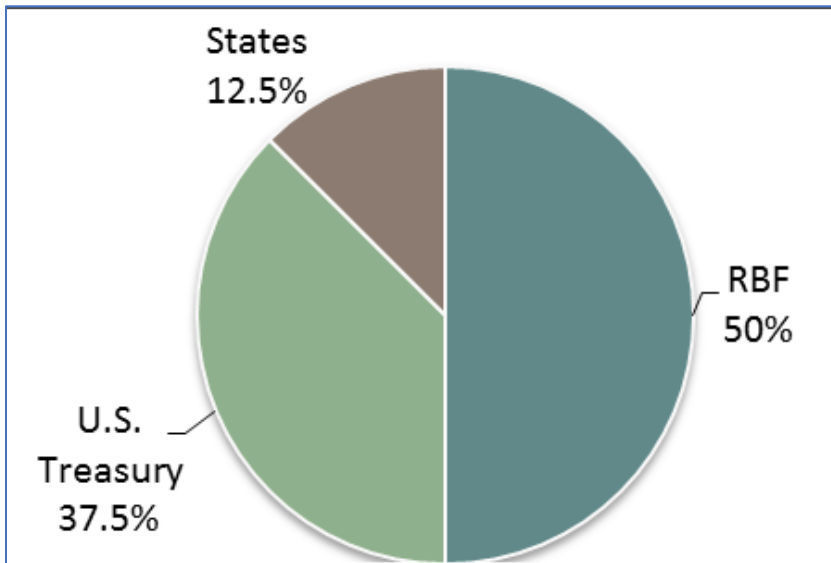


Figure 1. Distribution of BLM Grazing for Section 3 lands.

BLM Section 15 Lands. For BLM, states receive 50% of fees collected from BLM lands defined in Section 15 of the Taylor Grazing Act (i.e., lands outside the grazing districts for which BLM leases grazing allotments). (Note: All allotments under consideration within a Grazing District).

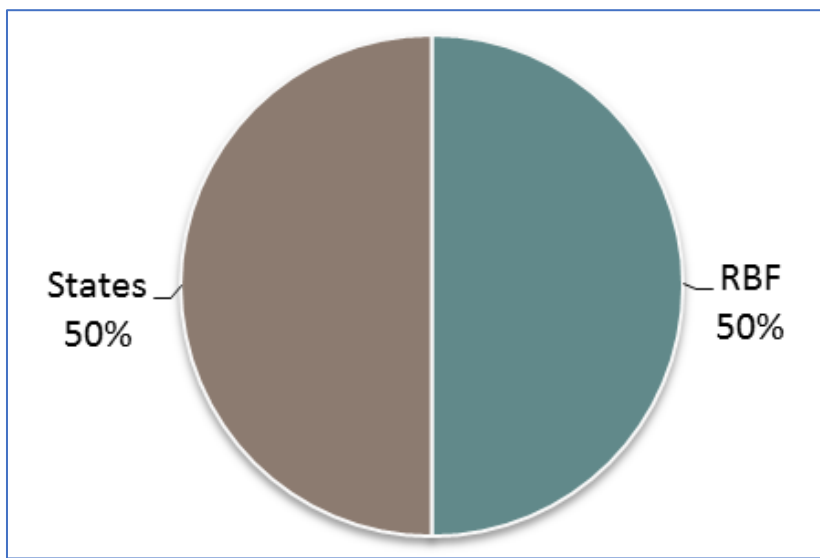


Figure 2. Distribution of BLM Grazing for Section 15 lands.

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Recent Actual Use

Table 1. American Lake 06504

Year	No. Head	Authorized AUMs	Actual AUMs	Percent Use
2022	850	550	279	51%
2021	900	550	36	7%
2020	950	550	306	56%
2019	900	550	89	16%
2018	875	550	248	45%
2017	875	550	161	29%
2016	850	550	364	38%
2015	615	550	60	11%
2014	950	550	44	8%
2013	1050	550	297	54%

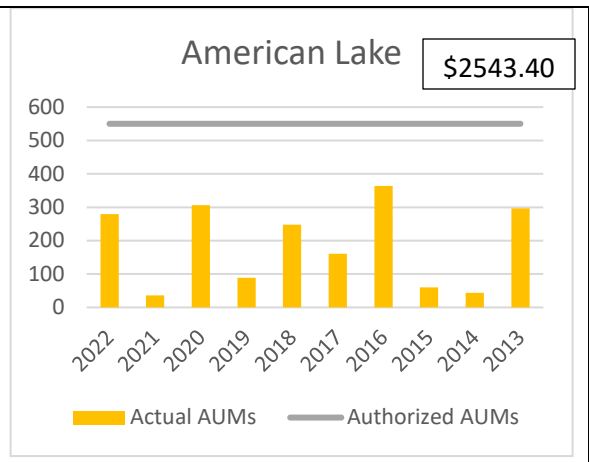


Table 2. Henson Creek 06509

Year	No. Head	Authorized AUMs	Actual AUMs	Percent Use
2022	850	400	123	31%
2021	900	400	83	21%
2020	950	400	81	20%
2019	900	400	130	33%
2018	875	400	132	33%
2017	875	400	213	53%
2016	850	400	140	35%
2015	612	400	229	57%
2014	950	400	75	19%
2013	1050	400	90	23%

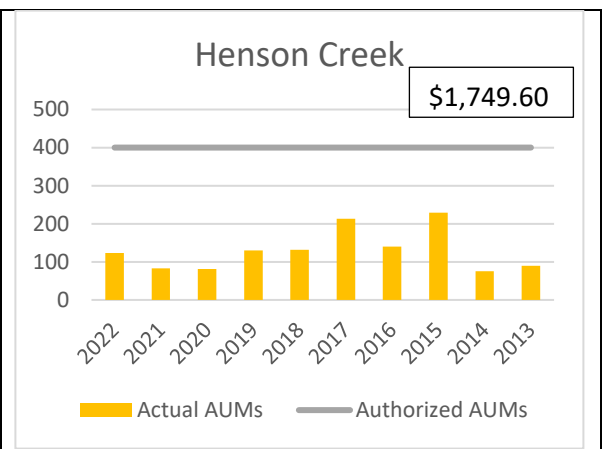
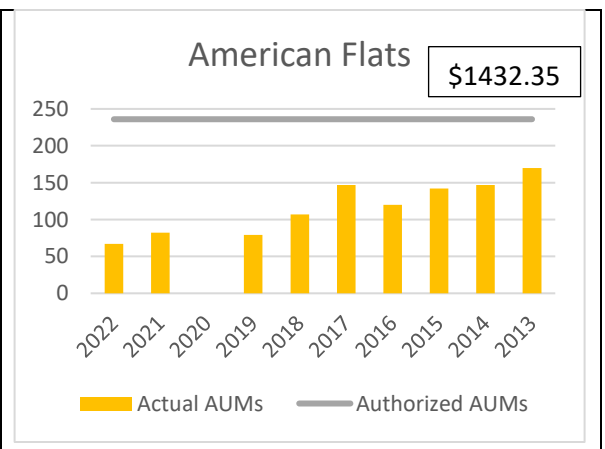


Table 3. American Flats 06507

Year	No. Head	Authorized AUMs	Actual AUMs	Percent Use
2022	849	236	67	28%
2021	689	236	82	35%
2020	--	236	--	--
2019	751	236	79	33%
2018	813	236	107	45%
2017	769	236	147	62%
2016	830	236	120	51%
2015	934	236	142	60%
2014	830	236	147	62%
2013	838	236	170	72%



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Sheep Grazing Economic statistics from EIS Analysis

1. Estimated Direct Economic output based on the value of sheep production supported by federal forage grazing in the nine allotments: \$650,000 to \$867,000 annually.
2. Estimated number of jobs (Including unpaid family workers) directly supported by sheep production associated with grazing on BLM-administered lands within the 9 allotments: 18 to 24 jobs annually.
3. Number of jobs from secondary impact on industries that sell goods and services to ranch operators (indirect) and local businesses where ranching households spend their money (induced): additional 8-10 jobs and between \$307,000 and \$409,000 in local wages and income annually.

Outdoor Recreation Economic statistics from EIS Analysis

1. In 2017 CPW received 17,739 applications for Rocky Mountain Bighorn hunting licenses More than 1,800 of these applicants had applied for 15 or more years unsuccessfully.
2. In previous year, 296 public draw licenses were issued to 269 residents and 27 non-residents. About 30 of the licenses were in the domestic sheep grazing analysis area, five of which were non-resident tags.
3. 2023 Non-Resident tags cost \$2544.04, while resident licenses cost \$346.86
4. CPW issues two statewide special licenses to the Rocky Mountain Bighorn Society each year in exchange for 75% of the proceeds. Previous winners choose to hunt the domestic sheep grazing analysis area due to the high-quality trophy potential. According to 2018 data, Rocky Mountain Bighorn Society auction tag has sold for an average of \$110,000 and the raffle tag has averaged \$97,000.
5. Hunting guides can run over \$10,000 for a 7-day hunt. Several guides are permitted in the Gunnison Field Office.
6. A comprehensive socioeconomic study of the value of Rocky Mountain Bighorn Sheep hunting was not prepared for the EIS.