



# United States Department of the Interior

BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT

Grand Staircase-Escalante National Monument

669 South Highway 89A

Kanab, UT 84741

<http://www.ut.blm.gov/monument>



In Reply Refer To:  
4010 (UT-030)

April 17, 2012

Dear Interested Public,

In November 2011, the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) contacted the National Riparian Service Team (NRST) to assist the Grand Staircase-Escalante National Monument (GSENM) in bringing stakeholders together to help initiate a new livestock grazing planning effort for GSENM. The NRST team, listened to monument stakeholder concerns, and evaluated the potential for collaborative opportunities moving forward. The service team conducted a situation assessment during late February, 2012, which included a series of stakeholder discussions with Mike Lunn and Diane Seehawer. The purpose of the situation assessment was to provide the team with a complete understanding of the issues and the nature of any conflict. This information was then used to develop recommendations for additional on-site activities aimed at addressing the issues identified during the situation assessment.

Enclosed you will find your copy of the situation assessment report which, summarizes the information and insights gathered during the discussions with stakeholders, such as yourself. The report also provides recommendations for possible next steps. It is important to understand that this report is not a comprehensive statement of fact. The stakeholder discussions and subsequent report are not designed to ascertain the accuracy behind the individual statements but to identify and document the perceptions held by stakeholders. If you have questions or comments regarding the report, please contact Laura Van Riper, at 541-416-6702 or [laura\\_van\\_riper@blm.gov](mailto:laura_van_riper@blm.gov).

I want to thank those of you who participated in the situation assessment. Taking time out of your busy schedules is no small task. Additionally, I want to invite you to participate in follow-up community meetings, where members of the NRST will report to the BLM and the larger stakeholder community on the situation assessment findings, discuss several recommendations and gauge support for moving forward.

### Meeting Schedule

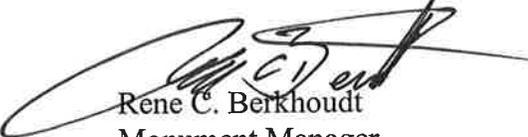
Cannonville/Tropic: Tuesday, May 15th, Bryce Valley High School, 6:00-8:30pm

Escalante: Wednesday, May 16th, Escalante High School, 6:00-8:30pm

Kanab: Thursday, May 17th, Kanab High School, 6:00-8:30pm

For more information, please contact Matt Betenson at 435-644-1205 or [mbetenso@blm.gov](mailto:mbetenso@blm.gov); your response will help us finalize plans. I appreciate your interest and cooperation in the management of the Grand Staircase-Escalante National Monument.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Rene C. Berkhoudt", written over a light blue circular stamp.

Rene C. Berkhoudt  
Monument Manager  
Grand Staircase-Escalante National Monument



*National Riparian Service Team*

3050 NE 3<sup>rd</sup> Street • Prineville, Oregon 97754 • (541) 416-6700 • FAX (541) 416-6798

April 5, 2012

In November, 2011, the National Riparian Service Team (NRST) received a request for services from the Grand Staircase-Escalante National Monument (GSENM). The request noted that a previous attempt to complete a Grazing Management Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) in support of grazing permit reauthorizations within the Monument had been unsuccessful after nearly 10 years of work. BLM determined that an entirely new Grazing Management EIS was needed. They have decided to enter into a process that would offer improved opportunities for partnerships and improved coordination with external interest groups, and ultimately result in a product that better reflects the National Landscape Conservation System (NLCS) mission. Specific objectives for the NRST included conducting a situation assessment and detailing potential ways that the GSENM might collaborate with stakeholders interested in livestock management on the GSENM, both within and outside of the NEPA process.

Working closely with Monument staff, an extensive and diverse list of interested/affected parties was identified and on-site and telephone discussions were conducted during the period 2/27 – 3/29 by NRST contractors Mike Lunn and Diane Seehawer. Approximately 65 local and statewide people participated in the discussions representing the broad spectrum of interests associated with the GSENM. Discussions normally ranged from about 45 minutes but some were more than two hours. The situation assessment has multiple purposes:

- To identify interested parties and people who will be important to issue resolution;
- to learn from them their perceptions and concerns about the existing situation;
- to learn their knowledge about planned future processes and willingness to participate in collaborative efforts;
- to begin to understand the many issues and concerns that may be ancillary to the primary purpose of the grazing plan;
- to document the findings in a very transparent way to insure that people feel listened to;
- to use the information to help develop some initial avenues for moving forward.

More broadly, the situation assessment process begins the important steps of developing relationships and trust with interested/affected parties. The discussions are largely a process of listening with respect, and for understanding without judgment, to whatever the participants discuss and their perceptions. The establishment of a safe environment for people to speak freely and to be listened to often helps move people to a different level of trust and possibility thinking.

Attached is the report summarizing the information and insights gathered during the discussions, and providing recommendations for possible next steps. It is important to know that this report is not a comprehensive statement of fact. The situation assessment process and subsequent report are not designed to ascertain the accuracy behind individual statements but rather to identify and document the perceptions held by stakeholders. Misconceptions or misunderstandings may exist as is typically the case in these situations; however, the intent is not to provide clarification at this point but rather to highlight the fact that various individuals perceive the situation differently and to identify what those perceptions are so that they may be effectively addressed. If you have any questions or comments regarding the report or recommendations, please contact me, Steve Smith at 541-416-6703 or [sjsmith@blm.gov](mailto:sjsmith@blm.gov). You may also contact Susan Holtzman at 503-808-2987 or [skholtzman@fs.fed.us](mailto:skholtzman@fs.fed.us).

Sincerely,

*Steve Smith*

Steve Smith, Team Leader  
National Riparian Service Team



*Grand Staircase-Escalante National Monument*  
**Situation Assessment Report**  
**Executive Summary**

**Prepared by the National Riparian Service Team**  
**March 2012**

The Grand Staircase-Escalante National Monument (GSENM) requested the assistance of the interagency National Riparian Service Team (NRST) to conduct a situation assessment in support of developing a process for preparing a Grazing Management EIS and a vegetation management strategy for the Monument. Working closely with Monument staff, an extensive and diverse list of interested/affected parties was identified and on-site and telephone discussions were conducted during the period 2/27 – 3/29 by NRST contractors Mike Lunn and Diane Seehawer. Approximately 65 local and statewide people participated in the discussions representing the broad spectrum of interests associated with the GSENM. Participants included BLM employees, permittees, environmental representatives, outfitter-guides, County government, previous GSENM employees and others. The purpose of these discussions was to learn from participants about their views of the situation relative to grazing management on the Monument, the levels of interest that might be present among them to be part of a collaborative approach to development of the Grazing Management EIS, and the possible approaches and barriers for moving forward.

Controversy has been part of the history of the GSENM, as designation was strongly opposed by State and local officials. In 1996, President Clinton designated the Monument by Proclamation with virtually no advance notice given to local officials. The fact that he made the announcement in Arizona further aggravated the situation. As directed by the Proclamation, a Monument Management Plan (MMP) was developed about four years following designation; however, it did not include direction for grazing management. This was followed by a decade long grazing management planning process initiated in an effort to reauthorize grazing on Monument allotments. In order to better integrate the proposed revisions to the grazing program within the original MMP, minor amendments were made to that as well. A draft EIS was eventually issued and 17,000 public comments were received, but after further review this effort was terminated by BLM due to technical inadequacies, issues of content scale, and ongoing conflict over appropriate Monument uses.

Discussions with the situation assessment participants revealed that many of the same problems that plagued the first grazing management planning effort still exist today. There are strongly differing philosophies within the BLM at the National, State and Monument levels about traditional uses such as grazing within the Monument. These differing philosophies are also present within the local community and among various regional and national interest groups. On the one hand, local ranchers and grazing interests feel severely threatened in terms of their economy, culture and customs as they face challenges to grazing on the Monument. On the other hand, environmental groups consider the GSENM, the largest and first National Monument managed by the BLM, as critical in charting a course of conservation and restoration of the nation's great places. A range of opinions were also expressed about the role and use of science associated with managing the Monument, and concerning the use of non-native versus native plant species in restoration projects. Beyond simple differences of opinion, there is also a power dynamic at play as evidenced by the long and well-known history of successfully

circumventing local BLM management decisions through appeals to higher levels of the agency or Department, or to members of Congress by local, regional and national dissatisfied constituents. Finally, it was apparent during the situation assessment that many participants were not aware of the BLM's intention to initiate a new planning effort to address grazing and some expressed mistrust. This highlights continuing communication and relationship difficulties between the BLM and stakeholders.

The results of the situation assessment indicate that it is possible to conduct successful grazing management planning in a manner that meets the legal direction for the Monument, meets the challenge of conserving and enhancing the health of the land and waters, and meets the needs of the many people who live near, work on, or care about the Monument. Most people expressed their desire to be engaged in whatever process was undertaken even though many, both internally and externally, were skeptical about the benefits of collaboration. Success will require strong and focused leadership, as well as a commitment from individuals within the BLM (at the National, State and Monument levels), the Monument Advisory Committee (MAC), and others from key local, regional and national non-government organizations, to confront and resolve some of the major barriers and to develop common understanding and vision for how to move forward together.

To complete the situation assessment process, the NRST recommends that the local BLM sponsor several community meetings for the purpose of providing a forum to review and discuss the situation assessment process and the findings outlined within the situation assessment report. The NRST contractors would facilitate these sessions and with BLM leadership, receive direct feedback from participants after everyone has had the opportunity to read the report. The team also recommends that BLM employees from multiple levels of the agency, and members of the MAC, come together in a 3-day workshop for the purpose of confronting and addressing some of the key barriers to success identified during the situation assessment, and any other issues that arise during the community meetings. This forum would not only begin the process of developing a way forward in the grazing management planning effort, it would strengthen the ability of the BLM and the newly formed MAC to work together effectively. Insights gained from each recommended step will determine the subsequent course of action.

# Grand Staircase-Escalante National Monument Situation Assessment Report

Prepared by the National Riparian Service Team  
March 2012

## Introduction

In November 2011, the National Riparian Service Team (NRST)<sup>1</sup> received a request for services from the Grand Staircase-Escalante National Monument (GSENM). The request noted that a previous attempt to complete a Grazing Management EIS in support of grazing permit reauthorizations within the Monument had been unsuccessful after nearly 10 years of work. BLM determined that an entirely new Grazing Management EIS was needed. They have decided to enter into a process that would offer improved opportunities for partnerships and improved coordination with external interest groups, and ultimately result in a product that better reflects the National Landscape Conservation System (NLCS) mission. The desired outcomes for NRST assistance were two-fold; improve internal and external communication about livestock management on GSENM, and engage interested parties in preparation for involvement in the Monument's renewed grazing management planning effort. Upon receiving the request for assistance from the BLM, the NRST agreed to conduct a situation assessment in order to gain a more in-depth understanding of both the issues and opportunities within the area.

## Situation Assessment Purpose and Process

During the period of February 27 – March 7, the NRST contracted conflict resolution specialists Mike Lunn from Sustainable Solutions and Diane Seehawer from Four Cs Consulting to conduct the situation assessment. The assessment included a review of existing documents, communications with BLM staff, and a series of conversations with interested and affected members of the public and other agencies. Informal discussions were held with over 65 people to: 1) learn about the local situation, 2) meet involved parties and begin building relationships with them, 3) understand their perspectives of the situation regarding livestock grazing and vegetation management on the Monument, 4) hear about the other issues with which they are concerned, 5) gain their insights on whether or not there may be an opportunity for a productive collaborative approach, and 6) get their suggestions for subsequent activities, if any. Most of the discussions were held face-to-face; if people were unable to meet in person, discussions were held over the phone.

An initial list of potential stakeholders was developed by a GSENM representative and included a broad and diverse spectrum of people who have been, or are currently involved in management or issues surrounding the GSENM. Individuals on the list were sent a letter informing them of the planned activity, and letting them know they would be contacted by telephone to set up a specific time and

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<sup>1</sup> The National Riparian Service Team is a group of interagency (Bureau of Land Management and Forest Service) specialists who work throughout the western United States to facilitate cooperative riparian restoration and management. Their *Creeks and Communities* strategy focuses on problem solving and fostering the collaborative development of management strategies at the ground level, by the people most affected. Additional information about the Service Team can be found at [www.blm.gov/or/programs/nrst](http://www.blm.gov/or/programs/nrst).

location for discussions. A number of people were also added to the list and included in discussions as a result of other stakeholders suggesting that certain individuals, in their view, had important information or were involved in some way. Other people learned of the discussions and called to ask to be put on the list or accompanied others to the discussions. This is how the process is intended to work, as it is not possible up front to ascertain all the people who might desire to be engaged in discussions.

During the discussions, a model of “listening with respect” was used. After initial introductions, the discussion leaders listened to the perspectives and insights of the stakeholders. People were encouraged to speak from their own viewpoint and about the aspects they felt were important to the issue(s). Some general questions were asked by the NRST to guide the discussion and clarify points that were being made. The discussion was also designed to begin moving beyond the current situation to ideas for how the situation might be improved for all parties. In addition, stakeholders were provided opportunities to ask questions about the NRST, their approach, and why the NRST was involved. During the situation assessment process, discussion leaders do not usually take notes, except to jot down an occasional specific reference or contact information of other people who might want to be involved - this allows for better listening and in turn, people often speak more freely. This process was explained to people and they were also assured that no one would be quoted in the situation assessment report. They were also told that a list of people participating in the situation assessment would be included at the end of the report; however, they were assured that the report would be written in a way that maintains the confidentiality of the discussions.

The situation assessment report documents, in general terms, the issues and concerns that were identified during the assessment, and provides recommended next steps based on this information. The report is not meant to be a comprehensive statement of fact; rather, it represents the personal knowledge, opinions and biases of the people with whom the team spoke. In some cases, information conflicts among various people or with published documents. The stakeholder discussions and subsequent report are not designed to ascertain the accuracy behind individual statements, but rather to identify and document the perceptions held by stakeholders. The wide range of opinions and perceptions that exist will be the starting point for exploring the potential to develop understanding and shared visions. The NRST greatly appreciated the willingness of the people in the area, and beyond, to openly share their thoughts and ideas.

This situation assessment included speaking with and learning from a very large group of stakeholders - a group that represented very diverse backgrounds, perceptions and positions, as well as very different areas and levels of knowledge and expertise. Discussions centered on a complex mix of issues, encompassing natural resources, economic and political realities, and legal opportunities and barriers. By necessity, this report condenses, summarizes and perhaps simplifies a huge body of complicated and often conflicting information, and may, in some peoples’ view contain errors or omissions. Clearly, the report cannot capture the passion and beliefs that were heard during the discussions. Overall, it does portray at least some of the complexity, scale, and depth of concerns that were raised, and suggests some pathways that might lead to improved approaches to resolving some of the issues. In a number of instances, people provided reference documents and/or websites as further demonstration of their concerns, and those additional sources were reviewed, and in some cases, cited herein.

## **Participation and General Attitudes Regarding the Discussions**

Many people expressed strong interest in being part of the discussions led by the NRST. A few people came to the discussions openly hostile to the presence of the NRST as outsiders, and made it clear that the team was not welcome. Some of this hostility stemmed from the notion that the BLM was going to again “try to eliminate grazing” from the Monument, after a number of years of relative stability within the grazing community. Some of the people who were first angry or frustrated about the process changed during the discussions as they came to better understand the purpose and saw the list of people who were participating. Some were also concerned that the people selected to participate might not be representative of all the interests, or that one group or another might have much more representation and skew the results.

Part of the current mistrust stems from long-held opposition to the designation of the National Monument and in particular, how the designation by Presidential Proclamation was carried out. But this mistrust that some felt was not a problem for most of the participants as the NRST discussions went forward. Most people seemed grateful for the opportunity to both participate and also to learn about the process. Several permittees mentioned that they had been working with the BLM for many years, and this was the first time they felt they had truly been listened to. While essentially all the permittees raised some level of concern about the possibility of reduced, or even lost opportunities in the future for livestock grazing, most were totally respectful in their approach to the discussions and appreciative of the opportunity to be involved.

A difference was noted in the discussions conducted in Escalante as compared to those in either Kanab or Cannonville - much stronger emotions and distrust were expressed in Escalante. In listening to people in the three areas, it became clear that the impacts of the Monument and other government actions have been felt more heavily in Escalante. Part of this is due to the presence of heavier tourist visitation and use due to more overall scenic and “special” canyon areas such as the Escalante River and others. Others noted a clear reduction in the economic uses of public lands and the resultant impacts on the local people. One participant provided a listing of 9 grazing allotments and corresponding reductions of more than 1000 head of livestock that have occurred over the past several decades, while others noted the sawmill closure.

## **Background**

The GSENM occupies about 1.7 million acres within Garfield and Kane Counties in the southeast corner of Utah. These counties are large in area but small in population, totaling about 6600 in Kane County and 5100 in Garfield. Demographic information from a recent census reveals the following attributes of the populace. They are largely Caucasian, with about 94% white; ethnic minorities total 6%, half of which is Hispanic. In Utah, 86% of the population is white. In Garfield County, people 65 and older make up 16% of the population and 19.5% in Kane County, whereas the Utah comparative number is about 9%. Average household income is substantially less than the State average; \$56,330 compared to \$44,745 in Garfield County and \$43,540 in Kane County.

The GSENM was designated by President Bill Clinton in 1996, and is now part of the National Landscape Conservation System (NLCS) created in June 2000 to conserve, protect, and restore the BLM’s nationally significant resources for future generations. The NLCS currently has nearly 900 units encompassing 27 million acres of conservation lands, trails, and waterways — each designated by Congressional Act or Presidential Proclamation. While there have been many specially designated areas within the public lands for decades, including Wilderness, Wild and Scenic Rivers and others, this was the first time that BLM decided to manage these special areas as a system, and not just individual areas. Inclusion within the NLCS system provides new emphasis to the BLM offices managing these areas. According to the newly developed 15-year strategy for the NLCS and associated press release (Sept 2011), “The BLM is committed to ensuring that these lands and their values are kept intact and their integrity maintained through the use of sound conservation principles and wise collaborative management.” The strategy is organized around the four themes summarized below.

Theme 1: Ensuring the Conservation, Protection, and Restoration of NLCS Values. This theme focuses on ensuring that BLM management of NLCS lands is guided by the purposes for which the lands were designated and on using science to further conservation, protection, and restoration of these landscapes, while providing opportunities for compatible public use and enjoyment.

Theme 2: Collaboratively Managing the NLCS as Part of the Larger Landscape. This theme focuses on building a better conservation model through collaborative management. The BLM recognizes that the special lands comprising the NLCS must be managed in the context of the surrounding landscape. To this end, the NLCS strategy is integrated and interdisciplinary. It incorporates ideas offered by the public and BLM employees, as well as state and local governments, partner groups, and other stakeholders.

Theme 3: Raising Awareness of the Value and Benefits of the BLM’s NLCS. This theme centers on the use of continued collaboration, public involvement, youth engagement and outreach to raise public awareness and understanding of the NLCS, cultivate relationships, promote community stewardship of BLM-managed public land, and provide for use and enjoyment of present and future generations.

Theme 4: Building upon BLM’s Commitment to Conservation. Promote a model of conservation excellence internally by improving internal communication and intra-agency coordination in a way that aligns and fully integrates the NLCS program within the BLM.

## **Major Themes from the Discussions**

### **Opposition to Monument Designation**

There had been a push by environmental groups for several years for protection of the Grand Staircase-Escalante area, but it was highly opposed in the State and local communities. Designating the Monument by Proclamation enabled President Clinton to bypass the Congress and State of Utah. Further, designation came as a surprise to many. The President chose to announce the designation in Arizona rather than in Utah. Some people said that even the BLM at the local levels were unaware that the Monument was to be designated by President Clinton until the day before it happened. One website (Destination 360) notes that the Governor of Utah was only given 24 hours’ notice as well, and states that “This was probably one of the most politically controversial proclamations in the history of national parks.”

Designation of the Monument in 1996 caused extreme anger and discord among many traditional users and communities in southern Utah. With more than 70% of the lands in Utah under Federal management, this was seen as an over-reach on the part of the government. The people of Utah had no say in the designation. While there were, and are, many people in Utah who do support the Monument, it was, and still is strongly opposed by many politicians and others especially in the rural areas of the State. Part of the resentment in southern Utah stemmed from the elimination of what were portrayed as potentially high value coal deposits, one of which was within just a few years of coming on line. At least 400 high paying jobs for the local economy were lost with that mine.

Today, when actions are taken by BLM to change land uses, many people still feel the anger flare anew. Many areas of National Forest and Public Land systems are developing Travel Management Plans that limit access for purposes of resource protection, and the plan for the GSENM is seen as just another restriction being thrust upon local operators. Some of the existing roads that are closed to most uses can still be used by permittees for their operations, but there is no maintenance on non-approved roads so they either become unusable or must be repaired at permittee expense. It is frustrating to many locals that more and more people are coming to view and learn about the Monument and that there are fewer roads and less access available to people; particularly elderly people with less ability to hike into the back country. There have also been a number of lawsuits between the Federal government and local and State entities about control of roads. The so-called HR 2477 roads pre-date BLM management, and have had investments by the County during the early days and continuing today, and thus are believed by locals to be outside the control of the Federal government.

The dispute between the Federal government and the States over management of land raises an often costly issue. Currently, Utah and Arizona are working towards legislation that would transfer control of Federal lands within those States to State government. According to a March 7, 2012 AP story, "Utah lawmakers are moving forward with a plan that sets a 2014 deadline for the Federal government to relinquish lands that aren't national parks, military installations or wilderness." In the same story, legislators say "the Federal oversight is crippling industries like ranching, timber and mining, and overregulation has led to overgrown forests and massive forest fires." These strongly held differences between Federal and State governments add to the already difficult environment for resolving grazing management issues within the Monument. However, in the 16 years since designation, attitudes have gradually shifted to at least a grudging recognition that the Monument is here to stay, and a feeling that people might as well learn to live with it.

### **Proclamation Language Addressing Grazing**

Strong disagreement exists both internally and externally about the section in the Monument Proclamation concerning grazing, where it states: "*Nothing in this proclamation shall be deemed to affect existing permits or leases for, or levels of, livestock grazing on Federal lands within the Monument; existing grazing uses shall continue to be governed by applicable laws and regulations other than this proclamation.*"

Since the paragraph follows the section that outlines the primary objects of protection, some people believe it has a reduced standing, and that in essence it is subservient to the other parts of the Proclamation. Other people look at it just the way it is written and note that since President Clinton's signature is at the bottom of the entire Proclamation, the statement on grazing has the same force and effect as any other section. Some people from the grazing community believe that the statement has already been ignored and nullified when the original Monument Management Plan was developed. On the other hand, some members of environmental organizations believe the BLM is using the statement to continue an unsustainable grazing program.

Several people pointed out that even with this stipulation, the BLM must still manage grazing according to the Federal Lands Policy and Management Act and other environmental laws and corresponding regulations; so grazing has to at least be in keeping with those. Others believe that the various directives that have been developed for the NLCS should play a strong role in future management; that NLCS lands are not to be managed similarly to other BLM lands but rather with a much stronger focus on conservation and restoration. The November 15, 2012, Executive Order by Secretary Salazar elevating the NLCS to a Directorate Level within the BLM offered both assurances and concerns to livestock and environmental groups. A letter dated December 12, 2011, from the Public Lands Council and a coalition of 22 national and state level livestock associations raised concerns that portions of the Order would invite more conflict and potential litigation from environmentalists over grazing on NLCS units.

In discussions with several BLM employees it was noted that the internal and external disagreements about how this section is interpreted caused major disagreements and problems in the earlier Grazing Management EIS planning effort and in some range rehabilitation and restoration projects. After listening to several differing opinions and beliefs about the interpretation and impact of that section of the Proclamation, it seems logical that a clear, common understanding of the direction would be critical in development of the upcoming planning documents, although it may be that the only way of resolving the meaning is through litigation by one side or the other.

There is no single direction statement for grazing in NLCS units. Generally, each Monument or Area established through legislation or proclamation has specific direction relative to grazing. The GSENM grazing direction from the proclamation can be compared to a sampling of other NLCS unit direction:

- The Black Rock- High Rock NCA, legislatively established in Nevada, states: *"(7) Public lands in the conservation area have been used for domestic livestock grazing for over a century, with resultant benefits to community stability and contributions to the local and State economies. It has not been demonstrated that continuation of this use would be incompatible with appropriate protection and sound management of the resource values of these lands; therefore, it is expected that such grazing will continue in accordance with the management plan for the conservation area and other applicable laws and regulations."*
- The Upper Missouri River Breaks National Monument proclamation states: *"Laws, regulations, and policies followed by the Bureau of Land Management in issuing and administering grazing permits or leases on all lands under its jurisdiction shall continue to apply with regard to the lands in the monument."*

- The Cascade – Siskiyou National Monument has much more detailed instruction to managers: *“The Secretary of the Interior shall study the impacts of livestock grazing on the objects of biological interest in the monument with specific attention to sustaining the natural ecosystem dynamics. Existing authorized permits or leases may continue with appropriate terms and conditions under existing laws and regulations. Should grazing be found incompatible with protecting the objects of biological interest, the Secretary shall retire the grazing allotments pursuant to the processes of applicable law. Should grazing permits or leases be relinquished by existing holders, the Secretary shall not reallocate the forage available under such permits or for livestock grazing purposes unless the Secretary specifically finds, pending the outcome of the study, that such reallocation will advance the purposes of the proclamation.”*

### **Monument Planning, Management, and Leadership**

Planning for the Monument proceeded fairly rapidly after establishment and was completed within 3-4 years. The Monument Management Plan purposely did not consider livestock grazing use, which was likely to be the most complex and controversial part of the work. According to a number of discussion participants, the original agency team had a largely Park Service view of managing the new Monument; the first manager and a number of key staff came from the Park Service. Some people believed the Monument Management Plan was exemplary, and should serve as a model for other NLCS units. Other people believed it was just an attempt to marginalize opportunities for grazing while optimizing other uses. Some of this latter group believed that the direction was stifling to livestock grazing opportunities in a way that would preclude the subsequent Grazing Management EIS from having a suitable range of actions and alternatives, which nullified the part of the Proclamation that spoke to continued grazing.

The original Grazing Management EIS began around the year 2000. Staff said that money was just “dumped” on the Monument in the early days, and was available for them to conduct intensive and extensive surveys and studies across the Monument using dedicated crews, helicopter access, etc., to gather information relative to BLM Land Health Standards across a huge, and relatively inaccessible, landscape. When the information was all pulled together during the planning effort, 21 of the 82 grazing allotments were found to not meet standards; most of the problems were related to the condition of riparian areas. This finding has become a part of the conflict over grazing and also the distrust by some people about the credibility of BLM information. Some people charge the BLM with manipulating data and standards to avoid having more than 21 allotments that did not meet standards. Since the original assessment, some note that considerable work has been done on some of the “problem” allotments that were identified. Structural and non-structural range improvements along with other management changes were undertaken and were effective over the next 6-8 years in yielding improved conditions on all but 8 or 9 allotments. While some state that re-assessments demonstrated clear changes and upward trend, strong differences of opinion persist.

The Grazing Management EIS process floundered under what was described as changing management philosophies, dissension within the interdisciplinary team and lack of a common vision between what was described as the “multiple use” part of BLM and the newly created NLCS direction. Part of the problem stemmed from a recognition that it might be necessary to amend portions of the Monument Management Plan to clarify contradicting sections, and/or to enable livestock management as stated in the Proclamation paragraph relative to grazing. Once the draft Livestock Management EIS was issued and 17,000 comments received, it was noted that the original Notice of Intent did not reveal any plans to

amend the Monument Management Plan. To go back and fix that problem likely would have required a supplemental EIS to the Monument Management Plan and a rehash of the many issues and conflicts that had arisen during that first planning process, and so the effort was terminated.

It seemed clear from discussions that included a number of current and past BLM employees that little has changed in regards to the major issues that prevented a successful completion of the previous Grazing Management EIS. There is still a prevalence of differing philosophies and guidance within the staff and interdisciplinary team and there is little common vision and understanding of the roles and degree of appropriate engagement among the levels of the BLM and between the NLCS and resource units. The feeling was expressed that management doesn't care for or respect specialists who are fully capable of doing their job; their input is often overridden by political input from outside groups or higher levels within the agency. Others noted that the current manager has brought some relative stability to the work environment, but question if it can continue once the new planning effort begins. Conflict resolution skills that would enable interdisciplinary team members to work through issues with the guidance of management were said to be lacking in the earlier effort and likely remain lacking. Many of the BLM people and members of the public as well, noted that as soon as one side or the other began not "getting their way" they would go outside the process to shop for political or administrative assistance that would meet their own needs. They indicated that this is a behavior that has been evident in other decisions made in the Monument and many fear it would sabotage efforts at collaboration.

### **Awareness of a the New Planning Process for the Grazing Management EIS**

One complicating factor with the discussions conducted by the NRST was that few people, particularly permittees, were aware of the upcoming planning efforts for grazing and vegetation management. People were surprised at learning of those plans, and suspicious as to why it hadn't previously been more openly discussed, and wondered from where the pressure is coming to do the plan when other plans have yet to be used. Activities such as development of a Grazing Management EIS that are planned but not announced tend to feed into the already suspicious nature of many of the local people. The need for BLM, and the NRST, to communicate with stakeholders soon after the situation assessment process is complete and frequently as the planning effort moves forward.

Also, there remains some uncertainty within the BLM as to the structure and approach of the planning work, and what information will form the basis for making decisions. When participants discussed the renewed grazing management planning effort, it was clear that people want much more information than is currently available. The NRST had only a limited knowledge of the process based on brief discussions with management. Basically, it was explained that the entire Monument of 1.7 million acres and 82 grazing allotments will be considered in a single broad-scale EIS. Decisions will be made about what areas are suitable for livestock grazing and what areas are not capable of supporting sustainable grazing and should be withdrawn. On the area of the Monument found to be suitable for grazing, planning will proceed on an allotment-by-allotment basis. Some noted during the discussions that since a broad-scale suitability determination approach had already been tried and did not work well, it might be better to direct resources toward developing solutions for the already known problem areas. However, according to BLM resource specialists, considerable documented condition and trend information now exists on which to base the determinations of suitability.

Concurrently, a vegetation management strategy is planned for development. This strategy is considered to be something less than a final action statement and thus there is no plan to develop a NEPA document. It will examine different types of approaches and projects along with their suitability within the Monument, but make no decisions. Future projects could draw from information created in the strategy as they go through the project level NEPA process.

### **NEPA Viewed as a Barrier to Good Management**

According to many people, BLM has a very poor record of being able to actually complete complex plans and/or to implement those plans that have been done. The initial Grazing Management EIS process dragged on until recently, when it was finally abandoned. A variety of reasons were cited for this, including changes in Monument managers who each brought their own differing philosophies and inherent biases for or against grazing. This inevitably led to problems with relationships, procedures, and other issues. Unfortunately, this plan is not the only one that has taken a very long time period with no success. A minerals plan on a nearby unit has been in process for 8 years or more and remains incomplete. Numerous examples of plans were cited that had been completed since 1980 with no changes on the ground.

Challenges to adequacy of documents by environmental organizations has heavily impacted work of the BLM as they respond to requests under the Freedom of Information Act, protests, litigation, and other inquiries. Many agency people have become disheartened in their ability to successfully plan for and manage the public lands given the amount of time spent on these administrative activities. They believe they have the knowledge and experience to manage the land well, but that the procedural hurdles involved in complying with NEPA has become a major barrier to accomplishing good management.

Additionally, relatively rapid turnover of managers impacts decision-making. There have been five Monument managers since 1996, each with very different philosophies according to discussion participants. Since major NEPA analyses frequently require 3-5 years or more, it is likely that at least one new manager will become part of any given NEPA process. In the absence of clear direction and transition management, a new manager may take a project in a completely different direction than an earlier manager; this is confusing and frustrating to stakeholders and affected interests who expect relative consistency and certainty.

### **The Importance of Science and Science-based Decisions**

The GSENM and other NLCS units emphasize science in management, and this came up in a number of discussions internally and externally. There was a little confusion in terms of what that actually meant to people. For some people, it sounded like nearly every project undertaken had to have some science component akin to research. Other people talked in terms of having a solid foundation of existing science on which to base decisions, and there were others who looked at it as a combination of these. Regardless, science discussions have a high profile in this BLM office and are taken seriously. The need for using science was most frequently discussed in terms of using native vs. introduced species in restoration work and in planning for grazing management. However, examples also came up relative to such actions as stewardship contracts for removal of pinon and juniper and use of the wood products. Some people complained that the scientists only wanted to look at things that might be interesting but were insignificant compared to science that could better meet people's needs. One person noted that

balanced science “should include people, not just micro-critters.” Several also complained that spending so much money on science was not something the Federal government could do given the national recession and growing national deficit.

While some people professed to support strong science and its use in management, they also made it clear that disciplines such as range management or animal science were not on a par with other disciplines, and added that certain institutions in Utah lacked science credibility. Some people believed that science was sometimes used as a barrier to getting things done, particularly in respect to livestock management. Examples were given where simple things such as piping water away from a spring or creek to a trough couldn't be done because it lacked a science component.

BLM range management staff felt strongly that they have done a good job in using science-based protocols in their assessments and monitoring, and feel they will be able to go into the upcoming planning effort with good information on which to base the future choices. The importance of this kind of information was strongly stressed by a number of people, and one particularly good tool is the use of repeat photography over time that often clearly shows site and/or landscape changes. Also stressed was the importance of understanding what science information is important to management, such as trend over time, rather than just collecting information haphazardly. One individual stressed the importance of having stakeholder buy-in to science if it is to be viewed as credible and also stressed the importance of doing appropriate monitoring to provide the needed information for management.

### **Public Land Grazing - a Values Argument**

For several decades there has been a growing challenge to grazing on public lands with slogans such as “No Moo in 92” and “Cattle Free in 93” that became a rallying cry for eliminating public land grazing altogether. Some environmental groups have been highly successful in challenging grazing management plans across the west. These groups strongly believe that either there should be no livestock grazing on public lands, or at least the grazing needs to be ecologically and economically sustainable; much of the current grazing is neither according to some of the groups and individuals. The protests, appeals and litigation brought by these groups has raised the costs of BLM and Forest Service planning, and greatly increased the frustrations of agency employees due to what they see as the onerous processes of litigation, Freedom of Information Act requests, and other time-consuming actions. But the environmental groups point to their often successful efforts with protests, appeals and litigation as evidence that the system is broken, and that the agencies are not properly managing lands that belong to all Americans. Given the high stakes in the GSENM, it is almost inevitable that lines will be drawn and environmental interests from across the nation will work towards reducing or eliminating livestock grazing. Many of the environmental interests do not believe that serious scientific evidence exists that can show grazing is sustainable and compatible with Monument values, or at least across major portions of the area.

Ranchers, on the other hand, often strongly defend their practices and lifestyles. Many of the ranchers in the area of the GSENM are 3<sup>rd</sup>, 4<sup>th</sup> or even 5<sup>th</sup> generation working on the same landscapes. They have a permit that they believe gives them the “right” to graze, and they annually pay fees to exercise that right. They believe that the evidence that grazing is in fact sustainable is shown by their ability to manage the land for all these generations, and that the land is improving. It is well documented that in the late 1800's and early in the 20<sup>th</sup> century, range and forest lands were seriously overgrazed. Hundreds of

thousands of cattle, sheep and horses basically grazed across the landscape with no management other than what was needed for growth and marketing. Establishment of the Forest Service in 1905, and the BLM in 1936 had a major focus of reducing impacts from unregulated grazing and helping to restore the health of the lands and water. Both agencies also were guided by a philosophy that sustainable communities could only exist with sustainable management of the important resources of range, watershed and timber. Ranchers today, with few exceptions, strongly believe that their grazing practices are working successfully to improve and/or maintain the health of the land. Often they state that “they have to take care of the land, or the land won’t take care of them.” In a state like Utah, where approximately 70% of the area is managed by Federal agencies there would be little opportunity for ranching without access to the Federal lands.

In addition to citing ecological concerns, a number of environmental groups challenge public land grazing on an economic basis. They believe that the annual grazing fee is ridiculously low and constitutes a subsidy to ranchers that is both bad economic policy and damaging to resources. For a number of years the fee has been \$1.35 per animal unit month (one cow/calf pair for one month). A portion of the receipts comes back to the State/County for their use, and a portion is invested by the agency in range improvements. Grazing lease rates on privately owned land are often 10 times higher than the federal land grazing fee which is calculated on a congressionally directed structure that is outside the ability of the Federal agencies to change.

Another economic aspect of public land grazing often challenged by environmental groups was discussed and concerns their stance that the Federal government should not be obligated to pay for improvements such as fences, water developments, or seedings, simply to benefit the livestock producer, when it might be possible for the permittee to do improved management to accomplish the same end. This was noted about the costs of riparian fencing where the government sometimes pays to fence riparian areas to eliminate or better manage livestock impacts to streamside areas. Other tools, including riding, different herding techniques, supplements, etc. might achieve good results with less taxpayer expense. Grazing opponents often point to the low number of ranch operations that are “truly economically profitable” as evidence that public land grazing should be reduced or eliminated. They believe that so-called “hobby ranchers” are just indulging themselves at the expense of Federal dollars and resources.

Some environmental groups also believe that certain grazing administration and permitting processes are fraudulent. They cited situations where, as an example, a permittee was annually authorized to graze 200 cow/calf pair for a period of 6 months. The permittee was billed and paid for the full amount but a lesser number of livestock were put on the range and grazed. This was seen as fraudulent, and the person believed it would cause the BLM to analyze the effects of 200 cows rather than 100 cows in the plan. Also, it was noted that the Farm Credit Administration provided loans to ranchers using grazing permits as a form of collateral; if an allotment would only support 100 cows, then the 200 number should not be used as the basis for the loan determination.

Some people expressed the belief that one way to consider resolution of public lands grazing issues is for a permittee, as a willing seller, to transfer his/her permit to a willing conservation group buyer and then to retire grazing on the covered permit area. Examples of success with this process exist in a few places in the western United States, but the process is fraught with administrative and legal issues. Presence of endangered or threatened species of fish or wildlife often is the catalyst for reaching such an agreement, as are classified areas such as Wilderness or Wild and Scenic Rivers; however, it likely is not

a plausible tool for large landscapes such as the total GSENM. Conservation groups have typically used donated funds or grant money to “purchase” the permits, but express strong desire that the Federal government make taxpayer funds available for the purpose. It was also mentioned that these arrangements don’t always work out as planned. For example, a local conservation group went through the process of obtaining a permit by buying base property with the intent of retiring the grazing permit, but the Federal agency explained that if the conservation group didn’t stock the allotment then the permit would be transferred to a different ranch, so they became ranchers. This history and extensive references to existing law and policy is detailed in the scholarly article entitled ‘Managing the Monument: Cows and Conservation in Grand Staircase-Escalante National Monument’ by Raymond B. Wrabley, Jr., published in Journal of Land, Resources & Environmental Law [Vol. 29 No. 2].

### **Customs, Culture, and Human History**

The rich human history within the GSENM is one of the key values of protection. Much of this is related to the Mormon settlement that occurred in the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century as they moved into a landscape that was not particularly well-suited to agriculture. There was often not enough water, not much flat land to farm, and in many years, extremes of climate limited production. Their communities became sustainable because they learned how to raise livestock on the thousands of acres of open lands. It was not easy, and the land was overgrazed and damaged. As in other areas of natural resource exploitation, there seemed to be so much available and deemed as there for use by people. Looking back in time through the lenses of what is understood today, the practices were clearly damaging to the land, but the people there in that time and place, had very different understandings and needs.

Today it is clearly understood by the ranching families that participated in the discussions that the health of the land is critical to their being able to span generational changes while continuing to graze. Several ranching families also came to the discussions, and both young and old talked about the importance of ranching, grazing, and the public lands as part of what defines who they are and how they want to live their lives. The culture associated with grazing is extremely strong and decidedly different than in many other areas of the western United States. In most areas of the west, true “family operations” have been largely lost to corporations or at least much larger family-owned business operations. Some corporations are actually family operations but incorporated to gain favorable treatment under business and tax regulations. In the area of GSENM, an extremely high percentage of permits and allotments are still operated by succeeding generations of the same families who originally settled the land - based on the demographics of the discussion participants, an estimated 75 percent or more.

In the participant discussions, many ranchers talked openly about the economics of their operation, and the relationship to the customs and culture of their area and lifestyles. They validated that a large majority of ranching families cannot make a living ranching, but the supplemental income they derive is extremely important to their overall economic well-being. It provides the extra money to save for college, to maybe buy a new pick-up, or whatever else they might not be able to afford otherwise. While public land ranching is important economically to families and communities, it also helps to define the culture and customs of the people who live there. Many ranchers spoke about how they learned about ranching by going with their fathers or grandfathers to work with the cows, ride horses or to build fences. It is still common practice for the family elders and younger family members to ride together creating a bond of learning from each other that overcomes the gap between generations. They also learn responsibility as young people because there is always work to be done, and each person has

to carry part of the load. In their youth, many derived income from participating in the ranch operations that helped them understand the value of hard work.

A sense of community is closely tied to grazing practices as sometimes neighbors have to get together to do projects, and just the knowledge that people are largely going through the same things helps strengthen bonds. To a person, each rancher that discussed it emphasized the importance of being able to pass this heritage on to their children and grandchildren. Participants who came to the discussions included those who had jobs as prison workers, propane delivery people, school teachers, school administrators, local government, and others, but they first considered themselves ranchers. A high percentage of the permittees have college degrees, estimated by some participants as high as 90%, most in range science, animal science, or other agricultural disciplines.

### **Fear of Losing the Ability to Graze Livestock on the Monument**

Permittees have watched over the years as numbers of livestock and seasons of use have been reduced. A few permittees talked about the improvements they have seen in the condition of the ranges they manage and their belief that additional numbers should be granted to take advantage of increased forage. However, most permittees have adjusted to the levels permitted, and have devised adaptive strategies that allow them to be successful even in the face of the natural cycles of drought and wet periods. Often this means stocking most years at a level less than the maximum permitted, a strategy they believe is good for their business and also good for the land. Permittees also noted that it wouldn't be necessary to totally close allotments in order for them to lose their ability to graze. The phrase "death by a thousand cuts" came to mind as people talked about the incremental changes and revisions that affected their operations. They fear that the continued pressure by livestock opponents will ultimately make grazing on public land untenable.

### **Economic Challenges and Federal Government Excesses**

The national recession and more localized impacts have brought serious challenges to the local economy and local government. A sawmill in Escalante was shut down due to changes in Federal timber management practices. This facility provided substantial employment and was a serious blow to many. It was noted by a number of people that the community is suffering from loss of economic opportunity. While tourism has increased since designation of the Monument, it supports a low-wage and seasonal economies as opposed to the economies supported by sawmill jobs. Some people also noted that even with tourism, BLM actions sometimes seem to reduce rather than increase opportunities. In discussing this, people cited closed roads and trails, group limits, and other limitations. Families have had to move out of the area in search of employment, and the school system has fallen on to very hard times according to several educators. Further losses due to potential grazing reductions quickly brings strong emotions to the surface for a number of people; while only a few permittees earn their primary income from grazing, the additional income from grazing often make major differences in the welfare of numerous families.

At the same time, the Federal government has invested heavily into new infrastructure including major offices in Kanab and Escalante, and a number of Visitor Centers; numerous people complained that this represents excessive government spending while the communities were going broke. There were complaints that the new office just completed in Kanab was constructed using mostly outside labor and contractors, while local workers had little chance of competing for anything but minor portions of the work. In addition, a number of the facilities sat mostly empty and unused for a large part of the year given that visitation is primarily seasonal. Some also complained about the levels of staffing with people who made substantially more wages on average than the local populace, and the size and cost of the transportation fleet being maintained by the BLM.

Finally, some noted that they would like to see more economic activity generated by the Monument within the local community. For instance, some individuals in Escalante would like to have a working Museum where scientists could come and do their research right there on the Monument where they are finding artifacts and dinosaur remains. Currently, important and high- public interest items, like dinosaurs and others, are being taken to other locations and are never returned to the Monument. It is believed that having the specialists working locally and allowing the public to see the work being done in place would be a better way of highlighting the Monument resources rather than separating the paleontological and historical artifacts from the area. It isn't the same to see the tangibles of the Monument in a distant museum with no relation to the place, and this would bring development and improved economy to the area rather than having all of those resources being extracted to other locations.

### **Native Species in Restoration and Rehabilitation**

The use of native species in restoration and/or rehabilitation was discussed by a number of people in regards to both range forage production, efforts following wildfires, and in trying to improve habitats for species such as sage grouse. The team heard that there is often a mix of introduced and native species used, and that there tends to be more experience and success with some of the introduced species. Given the strong differences of opinion heard about this issue internally and externally, the vegetation management strategy will be highly controversial.

For a long time, prior to the Monument, crested wheatgrass was the predominant seeded species as it establishes well and provides good livestock forage in winter and spring. However, it also tends to develop as a monoculture with little benefit for wildlife. A big part of the controversy seems to be focused on whether the rehabilitation is actually for the purpose of improving forage conditions for livestock grazing or for other objectives as well. Species such as forage kochia provide for livestock forage and also tend to protect sites. Kochia is an aggressive species, relatively easy to establish, and has characteristics that allow it to compete well with, or even reduce invasion by cheatgrass on sagebrush sites, but some people said that kochia spreads beyond the areas where it was planted and that is not desirable in a landscape being managed primarily for native species.

Many seeding projects require some level of site disturbance or elimination of competing vegetation such as pinon and juniper, for establishment. In the past, chaining was the principle way of removing the standing woody growth; a very large and heavy chain is dragged between tractors uprooting the hard stem plants. This apparently works better in burned sites where the small trees are dead; the chaining result then is primarily to provide an improved seed bed. In

living stands, the trees sometimes tip over but remain connected at the roots. Another tool used is a tractor-mounted grinder is used to shred or chip standing small trees and brush to reduce competition with the desired seeded species. Many seedings were established 30-50 years ago, and have lost much of their original forage value. Some of these can be maintained (reseeded) where NEPA coverage exists, but some lack the required documentation and the BLM cannot do anything without updated environmental analysis that would of necessity include taking a hard look at the species of plants to be used. Discussions about seedings seem to be shaped by people's view of the BLM, and not trusting the agency. Ranchers often see failure to renew the seedings as another incremental push to eliminate grazing, environmental groups often claim that the only purpose of seeding is to increase forage production and to hang onto unsustainable grazing.

The Monument Management Plan emphasizes the use of native species but provision exists for use of non-native plants. Some people thought the most important factor was to make sure that whatever was planted was essential to protect basic health and function of the hydrology and soils. Others stated a belief that in some areas the clay, if allowed to rest long enough, forms a hard protective layer that keeps the soil from blowing away in the wind and washing away in heavy rain events. It was noted that with wildfire, undesirable changes are highly likely if rehabilitation does not occur. On the lower elevation blackbrush and creosote bush stands, red brome will potentially dominate sites. On sagebrush sites following fire, cheatgrass often becomes dominant if the site isn't treated. Both of these plants tend to modify site characteristics such that over time, the sites are permanently changed and no longer capable of supporting desirable native plants. Fire frequency is increased with these highly flammable species, favoring further establishment of red brome and cheatgrass. Millions of acres across the western United States have already been converted from native species to these invaders.

It was also learned that the Agricultural Research Service is working on a project to look world- wide for species that might help maintain the long-term productivity and health of land on arid sites. Some species being considered are truly exotic; others are being developed from selective breeding of native species. Indian ricegrass, the State grass of Utah, now has a cultivar developed that is much easier to establish than the native variety. The determination of what is native and what is not is perhaps not as clear as some would like.

### **Glen Canyon National Recreation Area**

Glen Canyon National Recreation Areas (NRA) surrounds Glen Canyon Reservoir in Arizona, and is 1.2 million acres in size. It was designated in 1972, and is managed by the National Park Service (NPS). Unlike most Park Service units, however, it has an active grazing management program, and some of the permittees who graze on the Monument also graze within the NRA. Permit administration is done by BLM personnel from GSENM, but standards and practices are the responsibility of the NPS. In the past this has caused some interagency problems, but according to most people currently involved, relationships between the two agencies have been improving over the past 3-4 years. For the permittees, the NRA is a very different environment as practices such as seedings and other improvements are not permitted there. One permittee who had previously grazed within the NRA felt it was just impractical and frustrating to hold a permit there and transferred his.

## **Monument Advisory Committee**

The Monument Advisory Committee (MAC) has been newly re-chartered and met for the first time in November, 2011; a second meeting is scheduled for April. Four members of the MAC participated in the discussions with the NRST and each is committed to serving in the role, but because they are fairly new some uncertainty was expressed about how they might have the opportunity to be of service.

*According to a September 13, 2011 BLM news release, “The Monument Advisory Committee, or MAC, was established under authority of the Federal Advisory Committee Act (FACA) of 1972 and the Monument Management Plan signed November 1999, with the stated purpose to ‘...advise Monument managers on science issues and the achievement of Management Plan objectives...The committee is comprised of 15 members, seven of which are scientists from the fields of archaeology, paleontology, geology, botany, wildlife biology, social science and systems ecology. The other members include one local elected official from both Kane and Garfield Counties, one representative each from State and Tribal governments, one from the environmental community, one educator, one from the outfitter and guide community operating within the Monument, and one from the ranching community holding permits on the Monument. As a committee, its members will provide insight into community and stakeholders concerns to Monument leadership.”*

## **Loss of True Local Autonomy and Authority in Decision-making**

One of the key findings from the discussions was that few people believe that the local BLM leaders have the upper-level support to be able to make decisions in such a charged environment as will exist during the planning effort. All the interested and affected interests have learned that when they don't get the answers they want locally, they “go up the ladder.” Usually the livestock interests go to local and State governments first for support, then to the State Office of BLM, and then to Congressional delegations. Environmental groups usually go to the BLM headquarters or Department level to key people who they feel will support them. These channels likely shift depending on whether a Democratic or Republican administration is in place. Local BLM people readily acknowledged the difficulty this poses for them in matters such as sustaining trespass actions against operators, or other permit actions, and in the types of choices they make in various environmental documents. There is little reason for managers to aggressively pursue entry into controversial decision-making venues when it is likely that they will be overturned by higher authorities who have not been part of the process. Transparency and credibility of Federal decision-making are casualties of this approach to management. People asked why they would invest time and effort into a process that will simply be overturned based on favorable political connections of one group or another. Even in terms of this report, one person expressed skepticism about NRST's ability to write an objective report, even though the team may intend to, noting that if the NLCS is funding the situation assessment they will want it to say something that furthers their causes and interests. Another person stated that he believed that the local people and local government would strongly prefer to solve issues at the level of the Monument, but often feel a sense of desperation that they are either not listened to at all, or that national groups are more likely to get their way. This desperation causes them to seek solutions elsewhere.

In terms of development of collaborative processes for communities and interests to work together in search of choices that best fit the needs of all people, it is essential that the BLM leadership that is supporting the collaboration is also able to be seen as truly representing the agency. When people enter into collaborative processes, one of the usual keys to success is that the people engaged in the process

are the same people who will be conducting the analysis and making the hard choices; not simply representing other higher level officials who aren't in the arena, working with people and participating in the processes. Several people questioned the value of collaboration in the face of current practices of going over the heads of local BLM and even State Office managers.

### **Issues Relative to Collaboration**

Most people expressed their desire to be engaged in whatever process was undertaken even though many, both internally and externally, were skeptical about the benefits of collaboration. There was a strong feeling expressed that many of the groups would go into processes with their minds already made up, and seek to impose their will on the other groups through a variety of power moves inside and outside the process. Some in the BLM thought it was important in the NLCS lands particularly that people should come together from all points of view to co-create a vision for the future, and to jointly develop direction. But it was also recognized that this was not the norm in how the BLM currently operates with people in confronting and resolving issues. Other people believed that the BLM should just “do its job” and not try to hide behind some collaborative approach or committee. Those people saw the process being needlessly drawn out, and allowing the BLM to just keep kicking the can down the road rather than make the necessary choices. Concerns were also raised about further pitting locals against outsiders. Some said that the livestock supporters had access to channels and money far beyond that of environmental interests. Others thought it was the other way around. A number of people felt that some people would try collaboration as a way of having access to the process and information, but then if things started not going their way they would then go around local working groups or managers to higher level administrative or political offices to get their way.

As previously noted, the NLCS strongly supports the ideal of collaborative approaches to management, but serious questions were raised internally and externally as to how realistic that might be given the highly volatile and contentious issues that will be confronted in development of the Grazing Management EIS and vegetation management strategy. Several people described the GSENM, this first and largest of the National Monuments, as “the flagship” of the system, and explained that it is absolutely essential to “get it right” in addressing grazing. However, in talking about this notion of “flagship” one individual noted that the Titanic was also a “flagship.” A major question by some was whether or not various levels within BLM and/or the Administration could actually perform as part of a team to support the approach outlined by NLCS, or whether higher levels might continue to “interfere” with management at the Monument level. One person discussed his own involvement in a failed collaboration, noting “It shows how even the best facilitator is not enough when the true power is held outside the collaboration.” Numerous examples were cited by both internal and external people about how Monument decisions are overturned or modified at higher levels with little or no involvement of local management.

Within BLM there seems to be an unresolved struggle about NLCS management, and how it fits with the more traditional multiple use mission of the agency, and there is a sense of uncertainty about how that should play out moving into the future. Some BLM employees stated that they believed that NLCS was trying to make the BLM like the Park Service. Due to how the NLCS came about and its relatively recent emergence as a major BLM component, some growing pains are inevitable. Internally, there are key differences within personnel who have spent most of their careers in the more traditional side of

BLM and those who do not have this same background. Without a concerted effort at reconciling the various perspectives that exist because of this, it will potentially pose a serious barrier to success as grazing management planning moves forward on the Monument.

## **NRST Recommendations for Next Steps**

The process of analyzing and making decisions on livestock grazing within the GSENM will be a highly controversial process that potentially can rekindle all the animosity and angst among the local people and the State of Utah that existed when the Monument was designated in 1996. Because it was the first of a number of Monuments, the largest at 1.7 million acres, and believed to have been described in a way that purposely eliminated the opportunity to utilize important coal and other resources, many local people and governments have not moved past the loss they felt then. While there has been some lessening of hostility, it could rapidly be revived. Conversely, national environmental interest groups will see the upcoming planning effort as an opportunity to either totally remove livestock grazing or at least to make serious reductions in the number of livestock grazed and areas open for grazing. Without a carefully considered and rational approach that fully involves and engages interested and affected parties, the process is likely to be long and dragged out, and unsuccessful in the end. It will also be expensive all around; it is estimated conservatively that if the EIS could be completed in a relatively short time frame, 30 – 36 months, it would cost \$1.5 - \$3 million just for BLM. That doesn't include all the protests, FOIA requests, interest group expenditures, and possible litigation that would follow. While it is possible to complete an EIS in that timeframe, given the situation it must be viewed as optimistic.

Based on the findings of the situation assessment, the NRST recommends two next steps designed to help create an environment that fosters the success of a collaborative endeavor on the Monument. It is important to note, however, that these recommendations may be altered or new steps added based on the outcome of each previous step in the process. The recommendations are simply a suggested pathway for moving forward, but the process is designed to adapt as needed based on changing conditions.

First, given the high degree of mistrust and desire to create a process that actively engages interested parties in all stages, the NRST recommends a series of meetings to tie back in with the local BLM and community as a follow-up to the situation assessment.

- 1. Community Meetings to Review the Situation Assessment Report** – The team recommends that the local BLM sponsor several community meetings for the purpose of providing a forum to review and discuss the situation assessment process and the findings outlined within the situation assessment report. To meet participant needs, BLM leadership would schedule three separate 2-3 hours evening meetings to be held in Kanab, Escalante and Cannonville. The NRST contractors would facilitate these sessions and with BLM leadership, receive direct feedback from participants. The primary reason to provide these forums is for the BLM, and the NRST, to listen and learn from the people in the room about their issues and concerns, and begin to explore possible next steps that the BLM can take to address and resolve them. A follow-up report summarizing these meetings would also be prepared and distributed to participants.

On one hand, a collaborative approach is perhaps the only way to successfully work through the process. On the other hand, concerns regarding the loss of autonomy and authority in BLM decision-making at the local level seriously undermine the potential for local collaboration. At this time, bringing together a collaborative group of internal and external people to address the Grazing Management EIS would have little chance of success due to the many barriers and unresolved issues that face the BLM and partners. However, a constructive second step would be to bring some key individuals together to begin exploring ways to move forward with a community-based collaborative process.

2. **BLM and Monument Advisory Committee (MAC) Workshop** – The team also recommends that a 3-day workshop of BLM employees from multiple levels of the agency, and members of the MAC, come together for the purpose of confronting and addressing some of the key barriers to success identified within the situation assessment process and report and any other issues that arise during the community meetings. This forum would not only begin the process of developing a way forward in the grazing management planning effort, it would strengthen the ability of the BLM and the newly formed MAC to work together effectively. The overall objectives of this workshop are to:

Recommended attendance includes:

- ***Monument management leadership*** – This would include the Monument Manager, Associate and lead staff. This isn't simply a range/vegetation issue. This is an over-arching leadership issue, and will require the best efforts and leadership of each person at this level.
- ***Core and extended interdisciplinary team members*** – Strong interdisciplinary staff work is critical to success. Clear understanding of roles is essential, as is the ability to have a defined process of working through professional and philosophical disagreements that can lead to frustration, lack of respect and failed work products. Also, the interdisciplinary team that will be at the heart of the work must have assurance of strong organizational support and coordination as they tackle the tough issues.
- ***Leaders from the administrative and natural resource areas at the BLM State Office*** – For an undertaking of the size, scope and national importance of this effort, it must be considered a “team sport” from the ground all the way to the National Office. The State Office will have key roles of policy and guidance, and serve as a liaison between the local and National Office.
- ***Leaders from NLCS and natural resource areas at the BLM National Office*** – This will provide a major opportunity for NLCS leadership to demonstrate through actions the meaning of the directions they have provided in terms of locally responsive plan development and collaboration. It will also provide an opportunity for NLCS to better integrate with the more traditional parts of the agency and to better understand the issues related to on-the-ground NLCS management.
- ***Members of the Monument Advisory Committee*** – The MAC membership applied for and were selected to provide key insights and advice important for the Monument to be managed in a way that meets all the direction in the Proclamation. They represent, at to a great degree, all the important issues and elements of management. This workshop will provide the MAC with a tremendous opportunity to perform at a very high level in service to their various constituent groups and the American public.

## **Discussion Participants**

1. **Michele Straube**, Escalante River Watershed Project Facilitator
2. **Jim Matson**, Kane County Commissioner, Kane County RAC
3. **Dell Lefevre**, Garfield County Commissioner, Permittee
4. **Dirk Clayson**, Kane County Commissioner, MAC Member
5. **Dr. Jim Bowns**, Southern Utah University Professor, MAC Member
6. **Kevin Heaton**, Utah State University Extension; MAC Member: State of Utah
7. **Victor Iverson**, Advisor to Senator Mike Lee
8. **Dr. Walt Fertig**, Professional Botanist
9. **Todd Phillips**, Permittee
10. **Steve Westhoff**, Permittee, MAC Member: Livestock Grazing
11. **Lonnie Pollock**, Permittee
12. **Klancy Ott**, Permittee
13. **Ralph Chynoweth**, Permittee
14. **Layne Lefevre**, Permittee
15. **Liz Thomas**, Field Attorney, Southern Utah Wilderness Alliance
16. **Harold Hamblin**, Permittee
17. **Rosemary Sucec**, Cultural Resources Chief, Glen Canyon NRA
18. **Danny Button**, Permittee
19. **Grant Johnston**, Special Recreation Permit Holder; Escalante Business Owner
20. **Charlie Heaton**, Permittee
21. **Phil Hanceford**, The Wilderness Society, MAC Member: Environmental
22. **Mary O'Brien**, Grand Canyon Trust - Utah Forest Program Manager
23. **Craig (Sage) Sorenson**, Boulder Community Alliance
24. **Jim Catlin**, Wild Utah Project
25. **Lane Little**, Permittee
26. **Juan Palma**, BLM Utah State Director
27. **Ronnie Egan**, Great Old Broads for Wilderness
28. **Jonathan B. Ratner**, Western Watersheds Project, Director, Wyoming Office
29. **Karla Johnson**, Kane County Clerk, Ranching Family
30. **Dr. Bruce Roundy**, Range Ecology Professor, Brigham Young University
31. **Allan Bate**, GSENM Range Management Specialist, Forestry Program Lead
32. **Darryl Spencer**, Permittee
33. **John Spence**, Biological Resources Chief, Glen Canyon NRA
34. **Gary Allen**, Permittee
35. **Dr. Kim Anderson**, GSENM Ecologist, Vegetation Group Lead
36. **Karl Allen**, Permittee
37. **Richard Madril**, GSENM Assistant Monument Manager for Resources
38. **Rick Pierson**, Permittee
39. **Rene Berkhoudt**, GSENM Monument Manager
40. **Jim Ott**, Permittee
41. **Brent Owens**, Permittee

42. **Larry Litchardt**, BLM Utah State Range Program Lead
43. **Vance Pollock**, Permittee
44. **Shilo Richards**, Permittee
45. **Dallas Clark**, Permittee
46. **Laura Welp**, Western Watersheds Project, Kanab
47. **Allen Huber**, Ecologist, Ashley National Forest,
48. **Brad Cowan**, Permittee
49. **Thomas Richards**, Permittee
50. **Carl Shakespear**, Permittee
51. **Franz Shakespear**, Permittee
52. **Whit Bunting**, Lead Rangeland Management Specialist BLM Arizona Strip District
53. **Que Johnson**, Permittee
54. **Derrick Pollock**, Permittee
55. **Calvin Johnson**, Permittee
56. **JS Butler**, Permittee
57. **Sam Spencer**, Permittee
58. **Allysia Angus**, GSENM Land Use Planner/Landscape Architect
59. **Amber Hughes**, GSENM Botanist
60. **Harry Barber**, BLM Kanab Field Office Manager
61. **James Holland**, Hydrologist, BLM Kanab Field Office
62. **Sean Stewart**, GSENM Lead Rangeland Management Specialist
63. **Joel Tuhy**, The Nature Conservancy Conservation Science Director
64. **Mayor Jerry Taylor**, Mayor of Escalante, Utah
65. **Dr. John Carter**, Environmental Contractor
66. **Bill Hopkin**, Utah Grazing Improvement Program
67. **Bob Stager**, Range Consultant