

Grand Staircase-Escalante National Monument

Bureau of Land Management
US Department of Interior

Livestock Grazing Plan Amendment EIS NEWSLETTER #2 - Scoping Results - July 2014

Dear Friends and Neighbors,

I want to thank everyone who participated in the Grand Staircase-Escalante National Monument (GSENM) Livestock Grazing Plan Amendment EIS scoping process and Socioeconomic Workshops. More than 100 people attended the public scoping meetings held in December 2013 in Kanab, Escalante, and Salt Lake City, and more than 500 individuals and groups submitted comments sharing their concerns and ideas regarding management of livestock grazing at GSENM. More than 80 people attended the Socioeconomic Workshops hosted in Escalante, Cannonville, and Kanab in January 2014. This newsletter reports on the information we received from you, the public, during these meetings and workshops, as well as from letters and emails you sent to us.

Based on information you provided, GSENM updated and expanded the planning issues and the planning criteria. We also heard from many of you that biological soil crusts are very important. We are discussing biological soil crusts with several experts and will host a Biological Soil Crusts Science Forum on August 6 at the Kanab City Library so you can hear what we hear.

We want to ensure that the alternatives include a range of options for comprehensive livestock management based on your comments. Alternatives will consider ways to sustain use of the land through improved land health while being guided by the overall direction given in the Proclamation. To aid in these goals, we are working closely with

our Cooperating Agencies to formulate preliminary alternatives based on input received during the scoping process, the updated planning criteria, and the updated planning issues. The preliminary alternatives will be released for public review this fall. Comments received during the preliminary alternative review will be used to finalize the alternatives that will be analyzed in the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (EIS). As we continue this planning effort, the success of the final plan amendment and its implementation is largely dependent on your continued involvement.

Thanks again for your participation in the public scoping phase of this planning effort. We look forward to your continued engagement in this important effort.

Sincerely,



Cynthia Staszak
Acting Monument Manager
Grand Staircase-Escalante

The Grand Staircase-Escalante National Monument is preparing an amendment to its 2000 Monument Management Plan (MMP). Amending the MMP will integrate livestock grazing and rangeland management with the management of other resources. The amendment will also integrate Glen Canyon National Recreation Area values and purposes into livestock management decisions for lands within the National Recreation Area where GSENM administers livestock grazing.

*This is the second in a series of newsletters to keep you informed about the planning process and to announce the availability of the **Scoping Report** and the **Socioeconomic Workshop Report**.*



The Planning Area and Decision Area

The planning area includes all public lands within GSENM and public lands for which GSENM has livestock grazing management responsibility. This includes BLM lands within GSENM and additional lands within portions of the Kanab Field Office and the Arizona Strip Field Office as well as lands managed by the National Park Service (NPS) in Glen Canyon. Small areas of additional state, municipal, and private lands also border or are contained within the planning area.

GSENM's decision area for this planning effort includes all BLM lands within the Monument and BLM lands for which the Monument has livestock grazing management

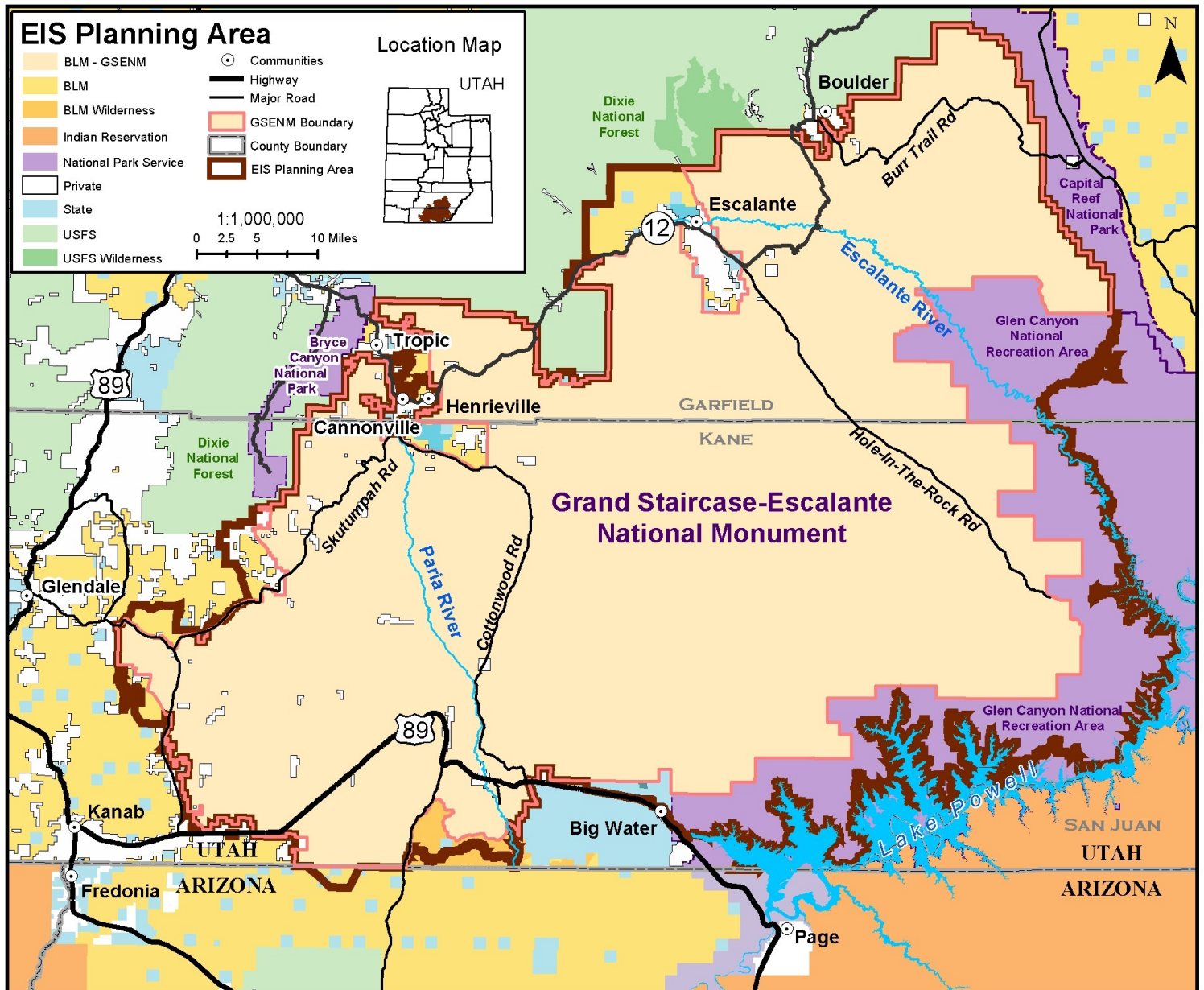
responsibility. The decision area for NPS includes lands within Glen Canyon for which GSENM has livestock grazing administration responsibility. The decision area does not include state, municipal, or private lands.

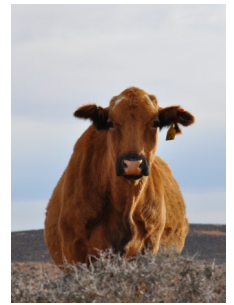
Cooperating Agencies

Five agencies accepted our invitation to participate as cooperating agencies in this planning effort:

- NPS-Glen Canyon National Recreation Area
- State of Utah
- Garfield County
- Kane County
- Natural Resource Conservation Service

These agencies are actively involved in the planning process.





Scoping Report

The *Scoping Report* is now available. Thanks to you, we had a great turnout. More than 100 people attended the three scoping meetings held in Kanab, Escalante, and Salt Lake City. BLM received 564 letters or comment forms. All comments were reviewed and analyzed to identify the issues that will be addressed in the Monument Management Plan Amendment. Our team identified more than 1,200 comments from your submittals. The results of the scoping process are documented in the *Livestock Grazing Plan Amendment Scoping Report*, which can be downloaded from the GSENM website at <http://blm.gov/pgld>. A hard copy is available for review at the GSENM Offices in Kanab (669 South Highway 89A) and Escalante (755 West Main).

Although our scoping process is completed, BLM will continue to accept and consider comments throughout the MMP-A/EIS process.



Socioeconomic Workshops Report

The *Socioeconomic Workshops Report* is available. More than 80 people attended the three workshops held in Kanab, Escalante, and Cannonville. The results of the workshops are documented in the *Livestock Grazing Plan Amendment Socioeconomic Workshops Report*. Based on your hard work, we developed five representative scenarios for use in the socioeconomic analysis. The report can be downloaded from the GSENM website at <http://blm.gov/pgld>. A hard copy is available for review at the GSENM Offices in Kanab and Escalante.

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



Planning Issues

BLM defines planning issues as disputes or controversies about existing and potential land and resource allocations, levels of resource use, production, and related management practices. Planning issues will provide the major focus for development of alternatives. During the scoping process, we requested information from you on seven preliminary planning issues.

The comments received were analyzed to update and expand the preliminary issues related to management of livestock in the planning area. These issues will assist in determining the alternatives developed and analyzed in the MMP-A/EIS.

The following planning issues will guide the development of the MMP-A/EIS. Planning issues may be updated or refined throughout the planning process.

1. Effects of livestock grazing management on GSENM proclamation-identified scientific and historic objects and values.
2. Effects of livestock grazing management on the resources and values for which Glen Canyon was established (e.g., public outdoor recreation use and enjoyment, scenic, scientific, and historic features).
3. Lands available for livestock grazing in the decision area.
4. Forage currently available on an area-wide basis for livestock grazing and available for future anticipated demands.
5. Guidelines and criteria for future allotment-specific adjustments, such as amount of forage available for livestock, season of use, or other grazing management practices.
6. Management of existing range improvement seedings and opportunities for future range improvements.
7. Effects of livestock grazing management on vegetation,

including riparian vegetation.

8. Effects of livestock grazing management on soils, including biological soil crusts.
9. Effects of climate change and drought on forage availability.
10. Effects of livestock grazing management on local custom and culture.
11. Effects of livestock grazing management on the area's economy.
12. Effects of livestock grazing management on recreation.

BLM must analyze a broad range of alternatives through the planning process. GSENM, along with our Cooperating Agencies, will develop alternatives to consider different scenarios for managing livestock and rangelands. During the scoping process, many commenters made suggestions on how to manage livestock. Two submissions included proposed alternatives.

Many scoping participants described livestock grazing as an important part of their livelihood as well as their culture and would like expanded grazing opportunities; it is likely that an alternative will be developed that maximizes or expands grazing opportunities. Other comments described the effects of livestock grazing and would like to see ungrazed areas; it is likely that alternatives will be developed that reduce or discontinue grazing in some areas.

Common Acronyms

BLM - Bureau of Land Management
NPS - National Park Service
GSENM - Grand Staircase-Escalante National Monument
Glen Canyon - Glen Canyon National Recreation Area
MMP - Monument Management Plan
MMP-A - Monument Management Plan Amendment
EIS - Environmental Impact Statement



Planning Criteria

Planning criteria establish constraints, guidelines, and standards for the planning process. We requested your input on the preliminary planning criteria and several commenters suggested. Based on your comments, and input from our cooperating agencies, BLM updated the planning criteria it will use when preparing the Draft EIS/MMP-A.

1. The BLM will limit the scope of the MMP-A to making land use planning decisions specific to livestock grazing.
2. The BLM will address lands managed by the BLM and the NPS in the MMP-A.
3. The BLM and NPS will administer grazing within Glen Canyon in a manner that protects Glen Canyon values and purposes pursuant to Public Law 92-593 and in accordance with the 1916 NPS Organic Act.
4. Land use planning decisions must be consistent with the objects, values, and purposes in the presidential proclamation for GSENM and the enabling legislation for Glen Canyon, as applicable.
5. The approved MMP-A will comply with the Federal Land Policy and Management Act (FLPMA), National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), National Historic Preservation Act, and Council on Environmental Quality regulations at 40 CFR 1500-1508.
6. The approved MMP-A will comply with 43 CFR 1600, the BLM H-1601-1, Land Use Planning Handbook (2005), the 2008 BLM H-1790-1 NEPA Handbook, and other applicable BLM policies and guidance.
7. Land use planning decisions for Glen Canyon will comply with applicable NPS Management Policies, Director's Orders, and Reference Manuals.
8. Utah BLM Standards for Rangeland Health and Guidelines for Livestock Grazing Management (BLM 1997) will be used. The BLM will apply existing applicable Land Health Standards to all alternatives.

9. The BLM will apply the goals, objectives, and recommendations for grazing practices and management actions identified in the 1999 Grazing Management Plan for Glen Canyon National Recreation Area to all alternatives for NPS-managed lands to ensure protection of park resources and values as defined by the NPS.

10. The BLM will use an accepted input-output quantitative model such as Impact Analysis for Planning (IMPLAN), Regional Input Output Modeling System (RIMS II), Jobs and Economic Development Impact (JEDI), and/or the Economic Profile System-Human Dimensions Toolkit (EPS-HDT) for socioeconomic analysis.

11. The BLM and NPS will review and use as appropriate current scientific information, research, technologies, and results of inventory, monitoring, and coordination to inform management strategies. The use of scientific and scholarly information will be consistent with Department of Interior Manual 305 DM 3.

12. The BLM and NPS will coordinate and communicate with federal, state, local, and tribal governments to ensure that the BLM and NPS consider provisions of pertinent plans, seek to resolve inconsistencies between federal, state, local, and tribal plans. The BLM and NPS will also provide ample opportunities for federal, state, local, and tribal governments to comment on the development of amendments.

13. The BLM will base the MMP-A on the principles of adaptive management.

The BLM received 81 comments relating to economics. Half of these comments expressed that livestock grazing is a vital economic contributor to the region. Other comments noted that the BLM should prioritize tourism which is a main contributor to the local economy.



Biological Soil Crusts Science Forum

Many of you identified biological soil crusts as a key factor in managing livestock in the planning area. Many comments stressed the importance of maintaining and restoring biological soil crusts. GSENM has been discussing biological soil crusts with several experts. To allow you to hear what we hear, BLM is hosting a science forum.

This public science forum will bring together a panel of experts on biological soil crusts to explore:

- what is currently known about biological soil crust on the Monument and on adjacent lands managed by Glen Canyon National Recreation Area,
- the role of biological soil crusts as part of regional ecosystems,
- management practices that will assist the Monument and Glen Canyon in meeting objectives for biological soil crusts, and
- the potential for using biological soil crust condition as an indicator of land health.

The panel experts are scientists actively working with biological soil crusts and crust-related issues. They are familiar with the nature of crusts within the planning area, and represent a mix of government scientists and independent and/or academic researchers. They are able to share research findings in ways that are accessible to the general public and have an interest in the scientific evaluation of management approaches to rangeland. Our panel will include:

- Dr. Matthew Bowker, Assistant Professor, Northern Arizona University School of Forestry
- Dr. Janis Boettinger, Professor, Utah State University, College of Agriculture and Applied Sciences
- Dr. Jayne Belnap, Research Ecologist, United States Geological Survey, Canyonlands Research Station
- Dr. Fee Busby, Professor, Utah State University, Quinney College of Natural Resources

Our forum will be held in Kanab, Utah, at the Kanab City Library, from 9 am to 4 pm, on Wednesday, August 6.

The forum is open to the public; you are invited and encouraged to participate as we learn more about biological soil crusts.

The BLM's National Training Center will be supporting a webinar and livestream broadcast for the forum to ensure that people who are unable to travel to Kanab will be able to attend the forum remotely. The forum will also be recorded and available for viewing at a later date.

A team of facilitators will be on site during the forum to assist with organizing questions and opportunities to interact with the panel members.

Our professional facilitators will design a program to allow ample time for panel members to field questions from both the live audience and the remote audience.

As the date gets closer, GSENM will send news releases to the local media and update the project website. Look for additional details on how you can participate in the webinar and livestream broadcast on the project website: <http://blm.gov/pgld>.





What's Next?

The comments and ideas you shared during scoping provide the basis for the next step in the planning process. This next step is the development of preliminary alternatives for how livestock will be managed by GSENM. Evaluating a set of alternatives enables us to compare and contrast the advantages and disadvantages of one course of action over another and provides a sound approach to decision making, as required by the National Environmental Policy Act.

Once preliminary alternatives have been developed, GSENM will host public meetings to introduce and discuss the alternatives. The meetings will be announced in news releases, on GSENM's website, and in a newsletter mailed to everyone on the project mailing list. At this time, we anticipate that the meetings will take place late in October 2014. We will want your comments on the preliminary alternatives before we begin analyzing the effects.

Based on public comments received and an analysis of the alternatives' impacts, a preferred alternative will be selected. The analysis of the alternatives, including the preferred one, will be included in the Draft MMP-A/EIS. When the Draft MMP-A/EIS is published, GSENM will announce its availability for public review and comment. After announcing the Draft MMP-A/EIS is ready for review, GSENM will host public meetings to answer your questions, discuss the contents of the Draft MMP-A/EIS, and accept comments. You will have at least 90 days to provide comments. The Draft MMP-A/EIS is slated to be published in 2015.



For more information, please visit the GSENM Livestock Grazing Plan Amendment Webpage:

<http://blm.gov/pgld>

If you have questions about the planning effort or would like more information, please contact us via telephone, email, fax, or mail.

Call: Katherine Farrell at (435) 644-1257

Email: BLM_UT_GS_EIS@blm.gov

Fax: (435) 644-1250

Mail: Bureau of Land Management
Grand Staircase-Escalante National Monument
669 South Highway 89-A
Kanab, UT 84741

GSENM Livestock Grazing Plan Amendment Mailing List

GSENM is maintaining a mailing list specifically for this Livestock Grazing Plan Amendment process. If you wish to be added, to change your address, or to add an email address, please let us know. If you provide an email address, we will send updates and newsletters via email to conserve paper. If you wish to be removed from the mailing list, please let us know. Unless we hear from you, your name and address will be retained on the mailing list and you will receive information on the MMP-A/EIS at key points in the planning process.

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Mark Your Calendars

Biological Soil Crusts Science Forum

August 6, 2014 - Kanab City Library, Kanab, Utah

Preliminary Alternatives Available for Public Review and Comment

October 2014

Draft Monument Management Plan Amendment EIS Available for 90-Day Public Review and Comment

Summer 2015

Proposed Plan Amendment - Final EIS Available

Spring 2016

Records of Decision Issued and Plan Amendment Approved

Fall 2016



During the scoping process, BLM received 564 comment letters, faxes, and emails. Of that number 64 submissions (11 percent) were from Garfield and Kane Counties. Of the remaining submissions, 146 (26 percent) were from commenters in other Utah counties; 294 (52 percent) were from other states; and 60 (11 percent) did not indicate a geographic origin .

NATIONAL
CONSERVATION
LANDS



For more information, visit
the BLM's project website:
<http://blm.gov/pgld>

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Livestock Grazing Plan Amendment/EIS
Newsletter #2

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