

Grand Staircase-Escalante National Monument

Bureau of Land Management
US Department of Interior

Livestock Grazing Plan Amendment EIS NEWSLETTER #4 - August 2015

Dear Friends and Neighbors,

I am pleased to provide in this newsletter some updates on our Livestock Grazing EIS process, products related to the planning effort, some clarification on grazing use levels, and also invite you to attend a restoration forum and field tour.

Since our last newsletter we have been working with our Cooperating Agencies to finalize the Analysis of Management Situation (AMS) and the Socioeconomic Baseline Study. The AMS describes current conditions and trends of resources, uses and activities in the planning area, and identifies management opportunities to respond to issues. The Socioeconomic Baseline Study provides an overview of the socioeconomic conditions which exist in the planning area and lays out the general concept of social and economic impact analysis that will be used in the planning process. A description of these documents and a link to them is included in this newsletter.

The topic of restoration is often discussed not only among BLM and our Cooperators, but also locally and statewide, as we look across landscapes and evaluate, establish, and maintain healthy landscapes. BLM and our Cooperators are hosting a two-day Vegetation Restoration Forum here in Kanab at the Kanab City Library on August 18 and 19, 2015. We are bringing together a panel of experts to discuss why and how we do vegetation restoration, the goals of our restoration projects, and

how we prioritize our efforts. I invite you to mark your calendars and join us for a lively and enlightening discussion and an opportunity to go out in the field to see some restoration projects.

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 fourth in a series of newsletters to keep you informed about the planning process and to announce the availability of the **Analysis of the Management Situation** and the **Socioeconomic Baseline Report**.*

Thank you for your interest in livestock grazing management on Grand Staircase-Escalante National Monument, Glen Canyon National Recreation Area, and other public lands within the planning area. We encourage and look forward to your continued involvement in this important planning process.

Sincerely,



Cynthia Staszak
Monument Manager
Grand Staircase-Escalante National Monument



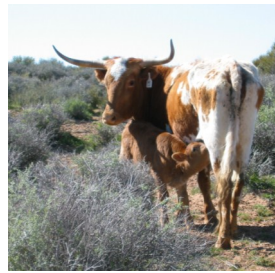
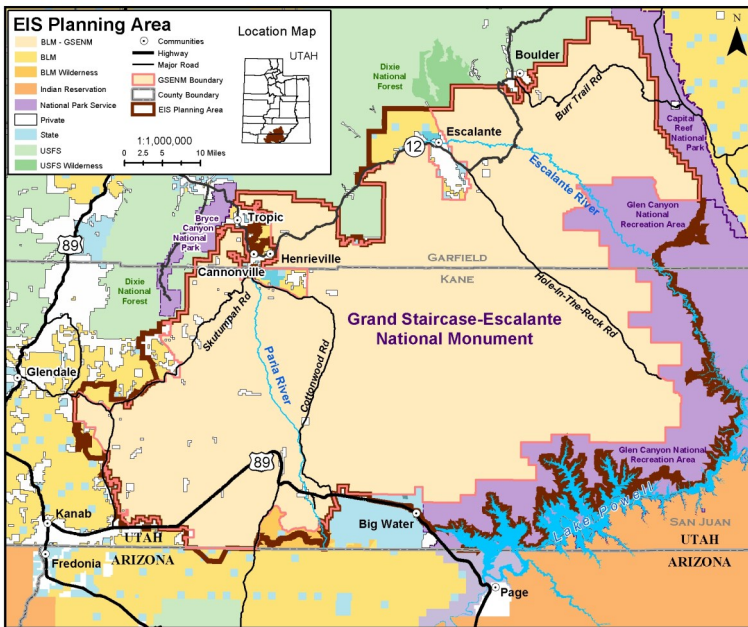
**NATIONAL
CONSERVATION
LANDS**

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.

The Planning Area

The planning area includes all public lands within Grand Staircase-Escalante National Monument (GSENM) and public lands for which GSENM has livestock grazing administration responsibility. This includes Bureau of Land Management (BLM) lands within the Monument 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 National Recreation Area (Glen Canyon). Small areas of additional state, municipal, and private lands also border or are contained within the planning area.



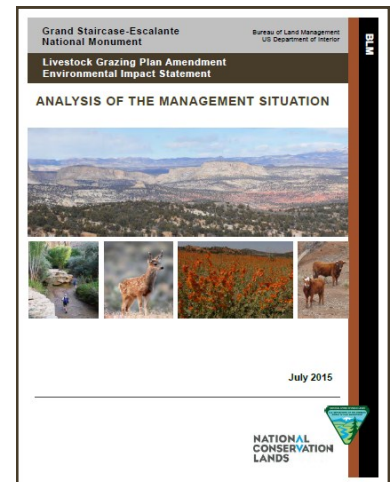
When the BLM talks about the number of cattle permitted to graze on public lands, it uses the term “Animal Unit Month” or AUM. An AUM is the amount of forage needed to sustain one cow and her calf (or one horse) for a month. The total of permitted AUMs on the Monument is 106,202. That number is roughly the same as it has

been since the early 1990s. The fluctuations that have happened in permitted use over the years have been from the addition of AUMs when BLM acquired the School and Institutional Trust Lands within the Monument and some reduction in AUMs when a 1999 amendment to an older management plan, under standard BLM planning processes, closed several allotments and pastures in GSENM and neighboring Glen Canyon, to protect riparian resources and reduce recreation conflicts along perennial streams.

In contrast to permitted use, actual use levels vary from year-to-year. Actual use is the number of cows put out on allotments each grazing season. The ranchers and BLM work together each year to make voluntary use adjustments to the number of cows put out based on monitoring results, weather and the resulting forage produced that season, and the variability in a rancher’s livestock operations. Actual use levels in the planning area have averaged just over 41,000 AUMs annually over the past 20 years.

Analysis of the Management Situation Available

The *Analysis of the Management Situation (AMS)* describes the current resource conditions and trends in resources, as well as uses and activities in the planning area. It presents current management direction from the Monument Management Plan (MMP) and older Management Framework Plans with respect to livestock grazing. The report also identifies opportunities for change in management.



This report can be downloaded from the GSENM website at <http://blm.gov/pgld>. A hard copy for review is available at the GSENM Offices in Kanab and Escalante during regular business hours (8:00 am – 4:30 pm), Monday through Friday, except holidays:

Kanab BLM Headquarters, 669 HWY 89A, Kanab, Utah 84741
 Escalante Interagency Visitor Center, 755 W. Main, Escalante, Utah, 84726

Cooperating Agencies

The BLM invited eligible federal agencies, state and local governments, and Native American tribes to participate as Cooperating Agencies. These agencies were invited to participate because they have jurisdiction by law or have special expertise.

Five agencies agreed to serve as Cooperating Agencies:

- NPS - Glen Canyon National Recreation Area
- State of Utah
- Garfield County
- Kane County
- Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS)

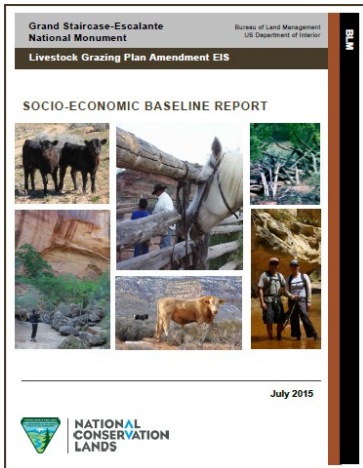
Livestock Grazing Use Levels

During the course of this planning effort we have fielded many questions about grazing use levels on the Monument. Although actual grazing use levels have varied considerably from year to year due to external factors, primarily rainfall and available forage, no reductions in permitted livestock grazing use have been made as a result of the Monument’s designation nearly 20 years ago.

Socioeconomic Baseline Report Available

The *Socioeconomic Baseline Report* looks at how economic activity affects and is shaped by social processes in and around GSENM. The report provides a “slice in time” overview of the socioeconomic conditions

which exist as a backdrop for the planning effort, and it lays out the general concepts of social and economic impacts analysis which will be applied as part of the planning and decision-making process. In the report, you will find recent economic summaries and charts pertaining to the three counties surrounding GSENM: Kane and Garfield Counties in Utah and Coconino County in Arizona. The report can be downloaded from the GSENM



website at <http://blm.gov/pgld>. A hard copy for review is available at the GSENM Offices in Kanab and Escalante during regular business hours (8:00 am – 4:30 pm), Monday through Friday, except holidays:

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Vegetation Restoration Forum - You're Invited

What does “restoration” mean when talking about public lands? Why do restoration? How do you decide where and when to do restoration? How do you actually do restoration? These four seemingly simple questions are the focus of a two-day **Southern Utah Vegetation Restoration Forum** being held August 18 and 19, 2015 in Kanab, Utah. The public is invited and encouraged to attend this free event.

Restoration is returning disturbed areas to a natural array of native plant and animal associations. This may sound easy, but in practice, restoration to a pre-disturbance condition is often very difficult, if not impossible, to achieve. Restoration is more than just returning vegetation to a site; it is also the return of the entire ecosystem, including soil characteristics, water relations, associated wildlife and non-dominant plants. The **What, Why, When, Where** and **How** that may be achieved related to restoration efforts will be at the center of the discussion.

The forum has two parts: a panel discussion on restoration starting at 9 a.m. on Tuesday, August 18, at the Kanab City Library, 374 North Main Street; and a field trip to look at restoration sites

on Wednesday, August 19, leaving from the Kanab BLM Headquarters Building, 669 South Highway 89A at 8:45 a.m.

Participants in the Tuesday panel include:

- Hal Gordon, Economist, NRCS;
- Shane Green, Rangeland Management Specialist, NRCS;
- Mary O'Brien, Utah Forests Program Director, Grand Canyon Trust;
- Adrienne Pilmanis, Botanist, BLM;
- Karen Prentice, Healthy Lands Initiative Coordinator, BLM;
- Bruce Roundy, Plant and Wildlife Sciences Faculty, Brigham Young University; and
- Jason Vernon, Habitat Restoration Coordinator, Utah Division of Wildlife Resources.

The panel discussion will be recorded and available electronically shortly after the forum concludes.

Wednesday's field trip will take panel members and interested members of the public out to look at actual restoration sites – the Five Mile Sagebrush Restoration Project; restoration work along Skutumpah Road and Thompson Creek; and along the Coal Road to look at five years of restoration efforts. Participants should bring their own transportation – high-clearance, 4-wheel-drive vehicles are recommended; dress for hot weather and consider the need for a hat, sunglasses and sunscreen; and bring water and a brown bag lunch.

To register to attend the forum discussion, the field trip or both, go to: <http://restorationforum.eventbrite.com/> and register. A link to the registration site is also available on our website at: <http://blm.gov/pgld>.

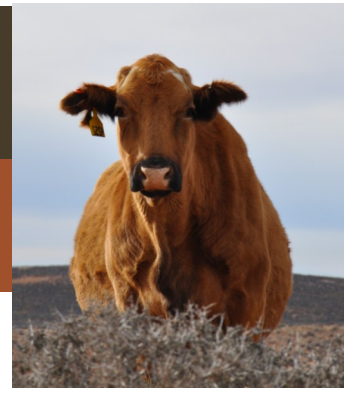


Common Acronyms

- AMS - Analysis of Management Situation
- BLM - Bureau of Land Management
- EIS - Environmental Impact Statement
- GSENM - Grand Staircase-Escalante National Monument
- Glen Canyon - Glen Canyon National Recreation Area
- MMP - Monument Management Plan
- MMP-A - Monument Management Plan Amendment
- NPS - National Park Service
- NRCS - Natural Resources Conservation Service

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What's Next?

BLM continues to work on the final alternatives that will be brought forward for detailed analysis in the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (EIS). Once those are determined, BLM will post the alternatives on the project website to inform the public and begin analysis of the impacts of the final alternatives.

Based on public comments received and an analysis of the alternatives' impacts, a preferred alternative will then 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 Summer 2016.

Mark Your Calendars

Southern Utah Vegetation Restoration Forum
August 18 - 19, 2015 - Kanab, Utah

Draft Monument Management Plan Amendment EIS Available for 90-Day Public Review and Comment
Summer 2016

Proposed Plan Amendment - Final EIS Available
Summer 2017

Records of Decision Issued and Plan Amendment Approved
Winter 2017



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

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