

Chapter 2. Alternatives, Including the Proposed Action..... 1

2.1 Introduction..... 1

    Development of Alternatives ..... 1

2.2 Alternatives Considered in Detail..... 1

    2.2.1 Design Features and Management Requirements Common to All Alternatives ..... 1

    2.2.2 Alternative A – Discontinue Grazing ..... 7

    2.2.3 Mitigation and Management Requirements Common to Grazing Alternatives, B and C  
..... 9

    2.2.4 Alternative B – Discontinue Grazing of Unit 4 ..... 10

    2.2.5 Alternative C – Proposed Action ..... 12

    Additional Mitigation and Management Requirements..... 12

2.3 Alternatives Considered, but Not Analyzed in Detail ..... 14

    Alternative D..... 14

    Alternative E..... 14

2.4 Comparison of Alternatives ..... 15

2.5 Identification of the Environmentally Preferred Alternative ..... 21

## **CHAPTER 2. ALTERNATIVES, INCLUDING THE PROPOSED ACTION**

### **2.1 Introduction**

---

This chapter describes and compares the alternatives considered by the Forest Service for the West Fork Blacks Fork Allotment. It includes a discussion of how alternatives were developed, an overview of mitigation measures, monitoring and other features common to each alternative, a description and map of each alternative considered in detail, and a comparison of these alternatives focusing on the significant issues. Alternative C, the Proposed Action is also identified as the Preferred Alternative. Chapter 2 is intended to present the alternatives in comparative form, sharply defining the issues and providing a clear basis for choice among options by the decision maker and the public (40 CFR 1502.14).

Some of the information used to compare alternatives at the end of Chapter 2 is summarized from Chapter 3, "Affected Environment and Environmental Consequences." Chapter 3 contains the description of current conditions and describes the potential environmental consequences of each of the alternatives. For a full understanding of the effects of the alternatives, readers should consult Chapter 3.

#### **Development of Alternatives**

The Interdisciplinary Team used information from public scoping, the significant issues identified in DEIS Chapter 1, and field-related resource information, to formulate a range of reasonable alternatives. Alternatives to the proposed action were developed to 1) meet the purpose and need described in Chapter 1, which includes meeting Standards and Guidelines of the Revised Forest Plan, and 2) consider a range of reasonable options for resolving significant issues.

### **2.2 Alternatives Considered in Detail**

---

Three alternatives, including a No Action (no authorization of grazing on the Allotment) and Proposed Action, were developed in response to issues raised during scoping. These are described below. In addition, there are management requirements and mitigation measures common to all Alternatives as follows.

#### **2.2.1 Design Features and Management Requirements Common to All Alternatives**

**1. As directed in the 2003 Revised Forest Plan (RFP 2003), Wasatch-Cache National Forest Forestwide Standards and Guidelines applicable to this project include:**

- (S7) Allow management activities to result in no less than 85% of potential ground cover for each vegetation cover type. (RFP 2003, pg. 4-37)

- (G4) At the end of an activity, allow no more than 15% of an activity area to have detrimental soil displacement, puddling, compaction and/or to be severely burned (RFP 2003, pg. 4-37).
- (G5) Do not allow activities that could result in water yield increases that would degrade water quality and impact beneficial uses (RFP 2003, pg. 4-37).
- (G9) Avoid soil disturbing activities (those that remove surface organic matter exposing mineral soil) on steep, erosive, and unstable slopes, and in riparian, wetlands, floodplains, wet meadows, and alpine areas (RFP 2003, pg. 4-38).
- (G7) Manage Class 1 Riparian Area Greenlines for 70% or more late-seral vegetation communities as described in Intermountain Region Integrated Riparian Evaluation Guide (USDA Forest Service, 1992). Manage Class 2 Riparian Area Greenlines for 60% or more late-seral vegetation communities. Manage Class 3 Riparian Area Greenlines for 40% or more late-seral vegetation communities. (RFP 2003, pg. 4-37). [*The West Fork Blacks Fork is identified as Class 1 Riparian (RFP 2003, pg. VII-6)*]
- (G11) Use Best Management Practices\* and Soil and Water Conservation Practices during project level assessment and implementation to ensure maintenance of soil productivity, minimization of sediment discharge into streams, lakes and wetlands to protect designated beneficial uses. (RFP 2003, pg. 4-38)
- (S24) As a tool to achieve desired conditions of the land, maximum forage utilization standards for vegetation types in satisfactory condition using traditional grazing systems (rest rotation, deferred rotation, season long) are as follows (RFP 2003, pg. 4-51):

**Table 2-1. Percent utilization of key grass or grass like vegetation, by vegetation type, for rangelands in satisfactory condition.**

Vegetation Type	Condition	Percent Utilization Key Grass or Grass like
Upland and Aspen	Satisfactory	50
Crested Wheatgrass	Satisfactory	60
Riparian* Class I	Satisfactory	50
Riparian* Class II & III	Satisfactory	60

\*Riparian, away from greenline

- (S25) As a tool to achieve desired conditions of riparian areas, maximum forage utilization standards (stubble height) for low to mid elevation *greenline* species in Class I, II, and III riparian areas (see RFP 2003, Appendix VII) in satisfactory condition are as follows: (Key species being grazed include water sedge, Nebraska sedge, and and/or wooly sedge.) (RFP 2003, pg. 4-51)

**Table 2-2. Greenline stubble height at the end of the growing season, by riparian class, for rangeland in satisfactory condition.**

Riparian Class	Condition	Greenline Stubble Height at End of Growing Season
Riparian Class I	Satisfactory	No Less Than 5"
Riparian Class II	Satisfactory	No Less Than 4"
Riparian Class III	Satisfactory	No Less Than 3"

- (S26) For all rangelands, including big game winter range and riparian areas, permit no more than 50% of the current year's growth on woody vegetation to be browsed during one growth cycle (i.e., when use has reached 50% allow no additional livestock use). (RFP 2003, pg. 4-52)
- (G71) As a tool to achieve rehabilitation of upland, aspen, and riparian communities away from the greenline that are not meeting or moving toward objectives (i.e., in unsatisfactory condition), maximum allowed forage utilization will be 30 to 40 percent. (RFP 2003, pg. 4-52)
- (G72) Modify grazing practices that prevent attainment of desired future conditions for vegetation and/or aquatic resources. (RFP 2003, pg. 4-52)
- (G73) Delay livestock use in post-fire and post-harvest created forest openings until successful regeneration of the shrub and tree components occurs (aspen trees reach an average height of 6 feet). (RFP 2003, pg. 4-52)
- (G74) Stock driveways and trailing routes will be located outside of Riparian Habitat Conservation Areas unless terrain and/or vegetation are prohibitive. When driveways and trailing routes must pass through Riparian Habitat Conservation Areas, they will be located and livestock moved through them in such a way to minimize the extent and/or severity of potential damage caused by trailing. (RFP 2003, pg. 4-52)
- (G75) Annual operating instructions (and/or Allotment Management Plans) should be evaluated and additional site-specific objectives defined if needed for any or all of the following five parameters:
- stubble height on selected key species on the greenline,
  - stubble height on selected key species and/or the amount of bare ground within the riparian zone but away from the greenline,
  - riparian woody browse utilization (trees and shrubs),
  - stream bank trampling on key reaches, and
  - stubble height and/or incidence of use on key species in the uplands. (RFP 2003, pg. 4-52)

**The following Best Management Practices will be utilized (\*Utah Nonpoint Source Pollution Management Plan 2000):**

- (p.98) Grazing at an intensity that will maintain enough cover to protect the soil and maintain or improve the quantity and quality of desirable vegetation.

(p.99) Stabilizing soils on rangelands to reduce soil erosion, control surface runoff, and minimize groundwater contamination through vegetative management and structural practices.

(p.100) Managing the riparian zone to minimize damage to stream banks, ground water recharge areas, shoreline and surface water quality from animal waste, stomping and over-grazing.

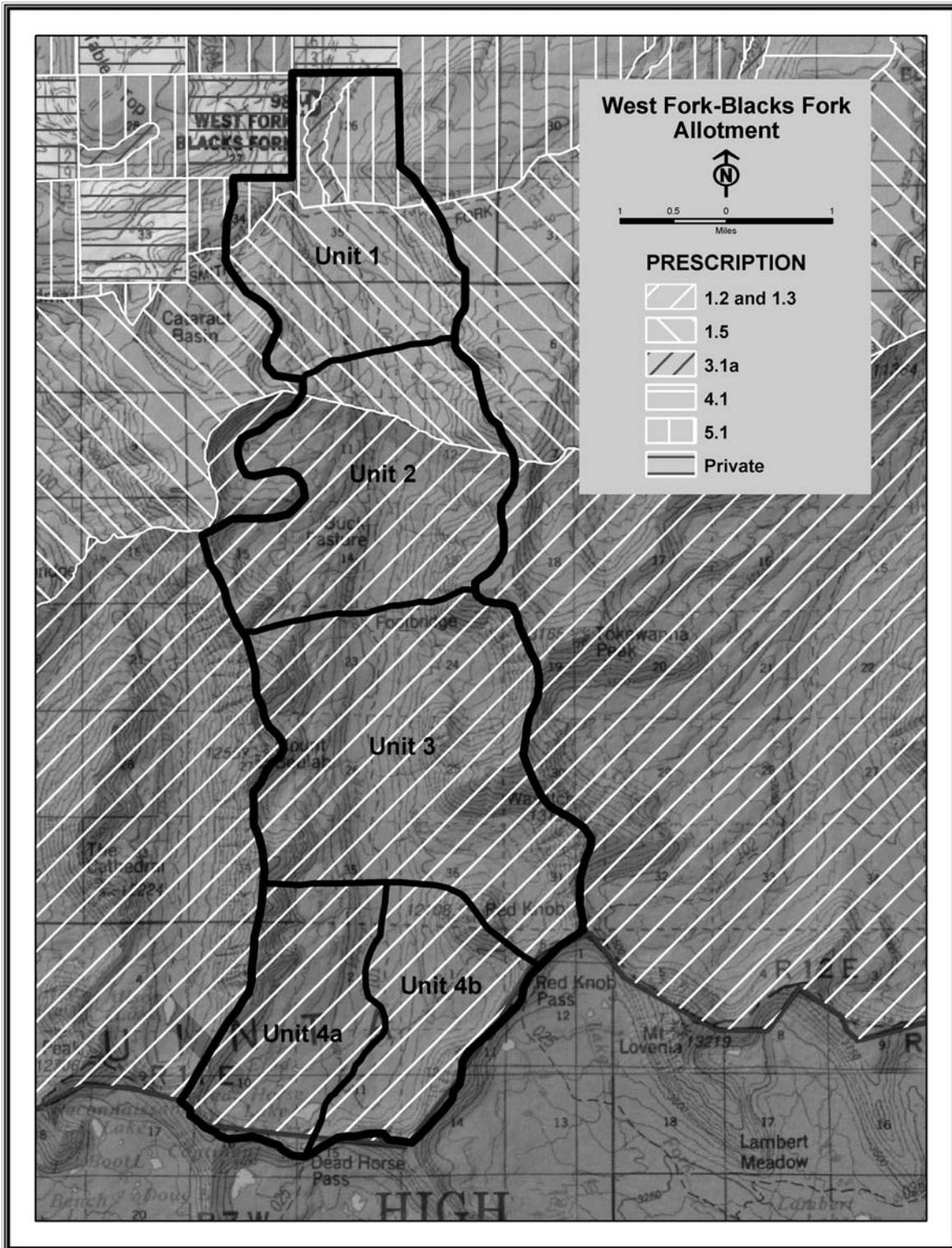
**Applicable Management Prescription Categories include: (Also see RFP Map, Eastern Uintas – Prescriptions).**

**Category 5.0** - Multiple Resource Uses With Forested Vegetation Management Needs and Opportunities.

- Mapped **5.1** Emphasis on maintaining or restoring forested ecosystem integrity while meeting multiple resource objectives. (RFP 2003, pg. 4-74, 4-75)

**Category 1.0** - Wilderness.

- Mapped **1.2** Opportunity Class II and **1.5** Recommended Wilderness (RFP 2003, pg. 4-64, 4-65).



**High Uintas Wilderness Standards and Guidelines (RFP 2003, Appendix VI, pg. VI-2 to VI-3):**

- MA-01-013 (G) Maintain natural vegetative composition and diversity.
- MA-01-017 (S) Alpine vegetation types - 85% of potential ground cover. Aspen vegetation types - 85% of potential ground cover. Riparian vegetation types - 85% of potential ground cover.
- MA-01-022 (G) Grazing of livestock established prior to September 1984 shall be permitted to continue, subject to regulations. Manage allotments to protect the wilderness resources. (FSM 2323.22)
- MA-01-023 (G) As wilderness AMPS are revised, include wilderness resource objectives.
- MA-01-024 (G) Design new range improvements to be rustic in appearance and construct only where needed to protect the wilderness resource. (FSM 2323.26a)
- MA-01-025 (S) Existing range improvements are maintained to protect wilderness resource values or are removed.
- MA-01-026 (G) Sheep salt and bed grounds are temporary and are located away from springs, streams, and lakes. Locate shepherd camps on hardened sites where there is little or no conflict with recreation uses.
- MA-01-027 (G) Issue no new sheep and cattle grazing permits in areas currently unobligated.
- MA-01-028 (G) Coordinate management of livestock and recreation use to protect the wilderness character of the area.
- MA-01-029 (G) Regulate grazing use on and adjacent to heavily used recreation areas to prevent deterioration of the wilderness resource and minimize user conflicts.

**Protection Standards for Eligible Wild and Scenic River Segments:**

The West Fork Blacks Fork Source to Trailhead Segment is classified as Eligible Wild within Wilderness and Eligible Scenic below Wilderness.

**Applicable Standards for Wild:**

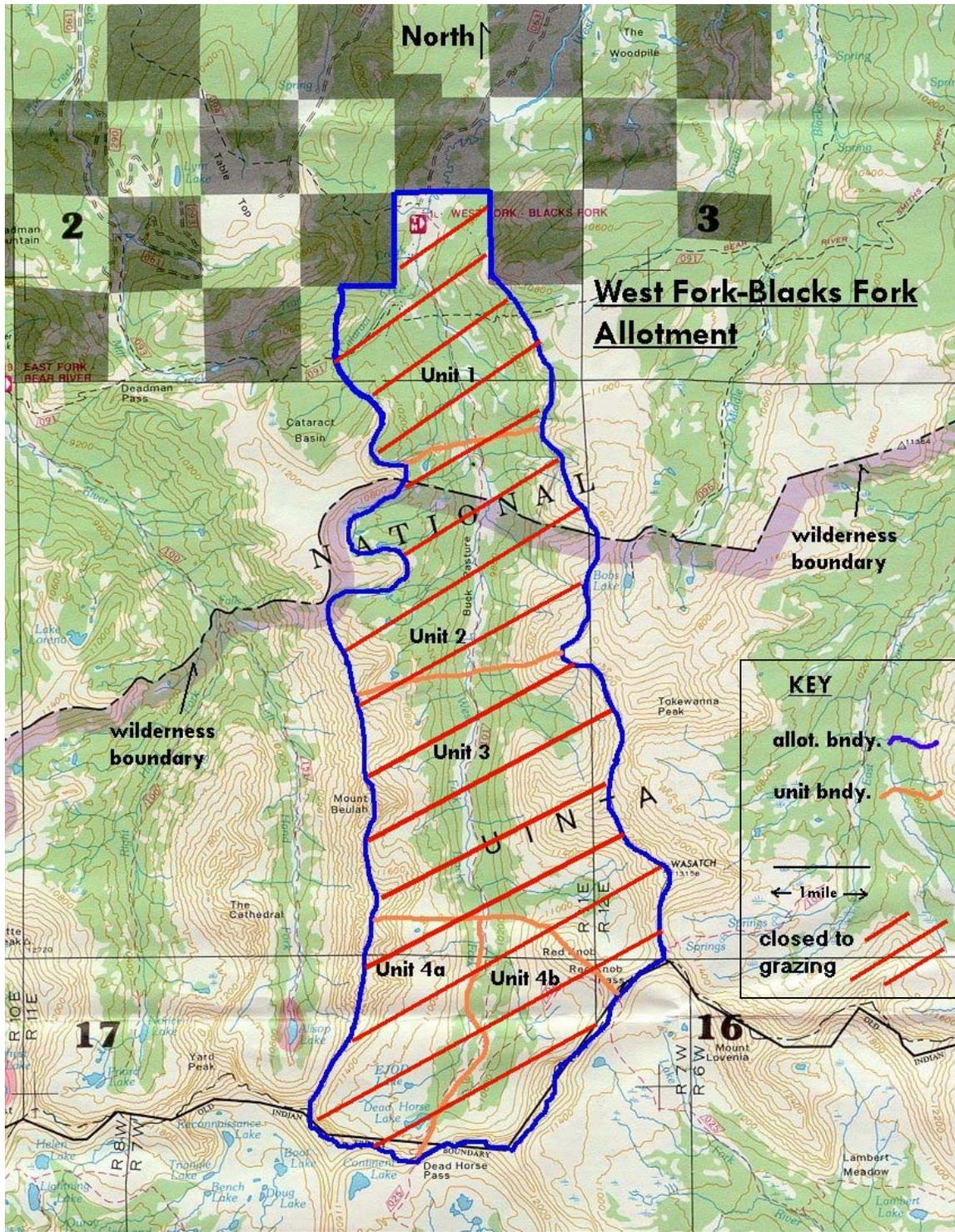
Agriculture: Agricultural use is restricted to a limited amount of domestic livestock grazing and hay production to the extent currently practiced. Row crops are prohibited.

**Applicable Standards for Scenic:**

Agriculture: A wider range of agricultural uses is permitted to the extent currently practiced. Row crops are not considered as an intrusion of the "largely primitive" nature of scenic corridors as long as there is not a substantial adverse effect on the natural-like appearance of the river area.

### **2.2.2 Alternative A – Discontinue Grazing**

Alternative A responds to concerns about the effects of grazing on vegetation, soil, native wildlife and fish habitats, recreation, and wilderness values by discontinuing livestock grazing within the Allotment area with the exception of the sheep trailing to allotments in the Ashley National Forest. It provides for a comparison of the effects of authorizing grazing on all or part of the Allotment under the other alternatives with the effects of not authorizing grazing. With Alternative A, permitted grazing would be terminated on the West Fork Blacks Fork Allotment and sheep permitted on Ashley National Forest allotments would continue to trail through the Allotment on a variable schedule in conjunction with trailing in the East Fork Blacks Fork and Little East Fork Blacks Fork. The Forest Service Handbook (FSH 2209.13, Ch. 10, 16.1) directs that a Term Grazing Permit cannot be cancelled without a two-year notification so there would be a two-year timeframe with potential continued grazing before full implementation of a no grazing decision. Also, the Responsible Official has discretion to implement a no grazing decision phased over a longer but specified time frame. Other ongoing activities would continue to occur within the Allotment area both during and after the two-year or phased in period, including: trailing of sheep to Ashley National Forest in some years, recreational use, road and trail maintenance, and vegetation management activities as allowed by Revised Forest Plan Management Prescriptions.



Map 2-2. Alternative A.

### 2.2.3 Mitigation and Management Requirements Common to Grazing Alternatives, B and C

#### 1. Develop a new allotment management plan and modify the grazing permit to incorporate its direction.

#### 2. Sheep Herding Practices:

- a.) No bed grounds will be used more than one night.
- b.) Sheep will be open herded, and dogs would be used to a minimum to prevent heavy trampling and heavy grazing.
- c.) Sheep will not be shaded or salted on or near water.
- d.) Permanent salt grounds will not be allowed; salting areas will be randomly rotated each year.
- e.) Sheep trailing along the stream banks will be minimized.
- f.) Sheep will be bedded as far as possible from live water sources as the topography will allow. Sheep will not be bedded on live water.

#### 3. Herder Camps

Herder camps will be kept and left in a clean and sanitary condition at all times. All garbage from old and new camps will be packed out. Garbage will not be allowed to accumulate at the camps. Garbage will be packed out on the return trip from supply trips. Holding pens, corrals, hitching rails, or mangers used for riding stock will be removed or cleaned up when the camp is moved or relocated. Temporary conveniences (lashed tables, beds, etc.) will be dismantled.

Herders will practice minimum impact camping techniques when in the wilderness, including:

- a.) Camps will be located at least 200 feet off of main trails and away from popular camping sites as topography allows.
- b.) Camps will be located at least 200 feet from live water.
- c.) Horses will not be tied directly to trees for any longer than 1 hour; methods for controlling/containing horses for longer periods include, but are not limited to, high lines, temporary hitch rails, picket lines, rope corrals, portable electric fences etc. Locations of high line, hitch rails, temporary corrals etc. when used for extended periods will be located at least 200 feet from live water.
- d.) Stakes used for horse pickets lines and tents will be pulled and properly disposed of when the camps inside the wilderness are not being used.

- e.) Small pit latrines will be used and properly covered after each use.
- f.) Green trees will not be cut or marred.

#### **4. Monitoring**

Long-term monitoring of representative key areas for ground cover and species composition will be conducted every 5 years to determine meeting or moving toward Revised Forest Plan desired conditions. Annual monitoring of forage utilization will continue as part of the overall 10% of Allotments in Revised Forest Plan Objective 5d. (RFP 2003, pg. 4-32).

##### **2.2.4 Alternative B – Discontinue Grazing of Unit 4**

Alternative B responds to concerns about the effects of grazing on the vegetation and soils of the alpine benches as well as conflicts with recreation within this area by discontinuing permitted grazing within Unit 4. Grazing would not be allowed in Unit 4 of the Allotment with the exception of the sheep trailing to allotments in the Ashley National Forest. In this Alternative, grazing would continue to be authorized for the lower three units under a deferred rotation grazing system incorporating Revised Forest Plan direction as listed above. Under this alternative approximately 875 ewes and their lambs could graze from approximately July 6 to September 15.

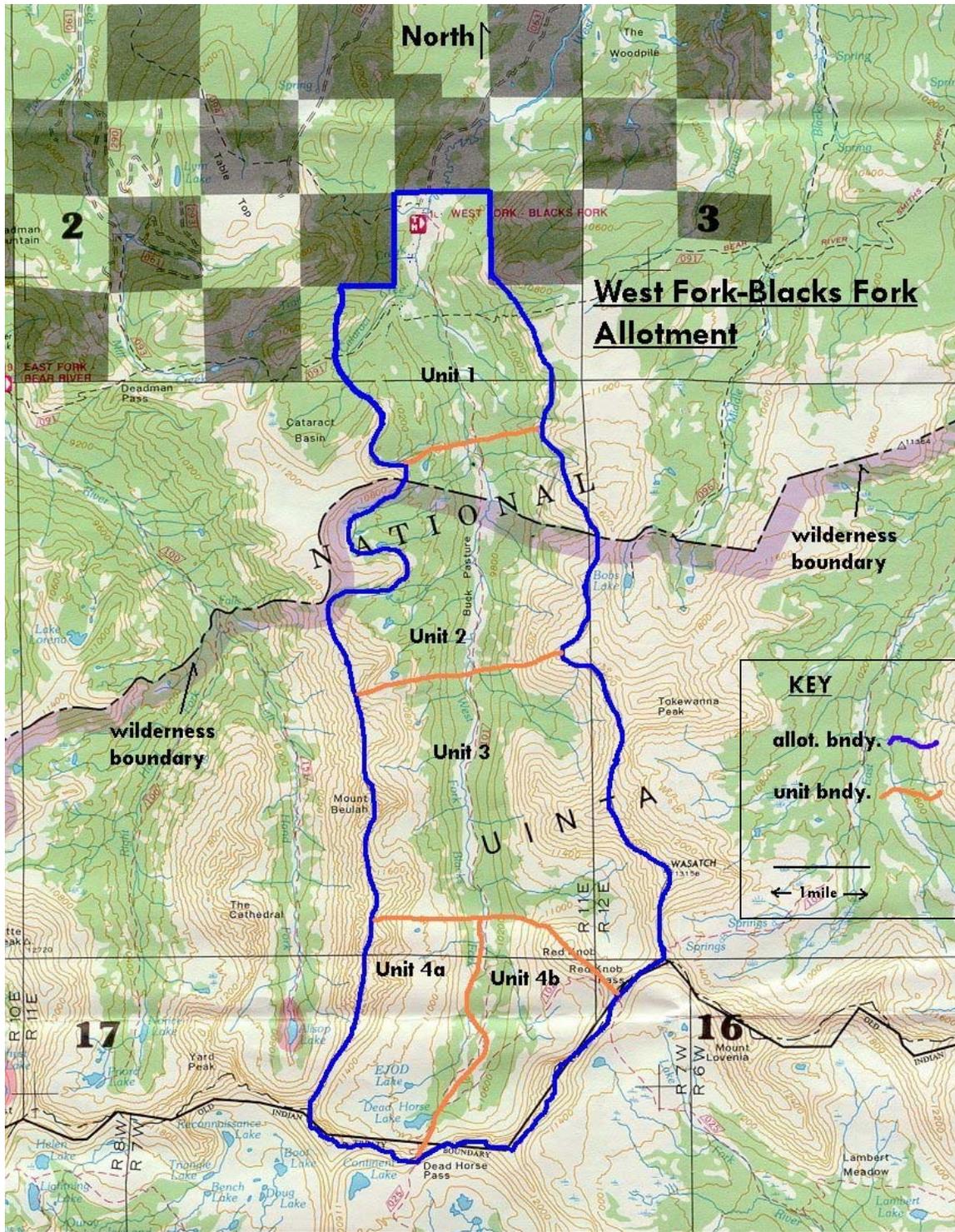


### **2.2.5 Alternative C – Proposed Action**

Alternative C responds to concerns about the effects of grazing on the vegetation and soils of the alpine benches as well as conflicts with recreation in the area of Dead Horse Lake by providing for periodic rest of the alpine unit and by closing the area around the lake to sheep grazing. Alternative C would authorize grazing to continue on the whole Allotment and would continue with modifications begun in 1999. Half of the alpine unit is rested each year, and each half receives rest for two consecutive years. Under this alternative approximately 1075 ewes and their lambs are grazed from approximately July 6 to September 15 under a deferred rotation system with planned rest for one half of the the alpine area, and incorporating Revised Forest Plan direction as listed above.

### **Additional Mitigation and Management Requirements**

To reduce conflicts with recreational users the area around Dead Horse Lake, 200 yards from the edge of the lake, will be closed to sheep grazing.



Map 2-4. Alternative C.

## 2.3 Alternatives Considered, but Not Analyzed in Detail \_\_\_\_\_

Two additional alternatives were considered, but not analyzed in detail for reasons explained below.

### **Alternative D**

This alternative would return to the management of the Allotment that existed between 1965 and 1999. Prior to 1999 grazing management followed the direction in the 1965 Allotment Management Plan. A four unit deferred grazing system was used with the sheep starting in the lowest unit at the beginning of the grazing season and ending up in the highest unit (alpine area) towards the end of the grazing season. The number of days planned for grazing in each unit was based on tentative capacity estimates for each unit. However, the actual number of days grazed in each unit was dependent on the actual forage production for that year.

This alternative is similar to the Proposed Action, Alternative C except that the alpine area (Unit 4) is grazed every year. This Alternative does not address concerns about effects of annual grazing on the alpine benches and does not adjust grazing to increase the potential for improved ground cover/soil conditions in these areas thus not meeting the purpose and need for action. NEPA does not require a separate analysis of alternatives which are not significantly distinguishable from alternatives actually considered, or which have substantially similar consequences.

### **Alternative E**

This alternative, suggested in public comments, would phase out domestic sheep grazing over the next decade in order to emphasize the natural values of the allotment area.

Alternative A incorporates the phasing concept and discloses those effects. The deciding official has the flexibility to determine the timing of implementation if the decision is not to authorize grazing.

Another suggestion was to eliminate grazing only within the wilderness boundary. This would eliminate most of the suitable range in the allotment. Section 4(d)(4)(2) of the Wilderness Act states: "the grazing of livestock, where established prior to the effective date of this Act, shall be permitted to continue subject to such reasonable regulations as are deemed necessary by the Secretary of Agriculture."

## 2.4 Comparison of Alternatives

This section provides a summary of the effects of implementing each alternative where differences among Alternatives can be distinguished quantitatively or qualitatively.

**Table 2-3. Comparison of Alternatives.**

Issue	Alt. A Discontinue Grazing	Alt. B Discontinue Grazing Unit 4	Alt. C Proposed Action
<p><b>1. Vegetation and Soil Conditions</b></p>	<p><b>Alpine Soils</b> – Gradual reduction in erosion from increases in ground cover on sites not currently meeting standards (depending on geomorphic processes). Areas not expected to regain productivity for an indeterminate period of time. Expected to meet Revised Forest Plan soil quality Guideline 4. <i>Cumulative effects:</i> Minor soil disturbance (compaction and erosion) will continue.</p>	<p><b>Alpine Soils</b> – Gradual reduction in erosion from increases in ground cover on sites not currently meeting standards (depending on geomorphic processes). Areas not expected to regain productivity for an indeterminate period of time. Expected to meet Revised Forest Plan soil quality Guideline 4. <i>Cumulative effects:</i> Minor soil disturbance (compaction and erosion) will continue.</p>	<p><b>Alpine Soils</b> – Areas of soil disturbance due to grazing and inherent processes are stable and not growing. Expected to meet Revised Forest Plan soil quality Guideline 4. Slight reduction in organic matter in surface soil horizons. Vegetation communities would have somewhat less available nutrients and physical stability than Alt. A. Areas with high vegetative ground cover, intact soils, and moister sites remain in good condition. <i>Cumulative effects:</i> Minor soil disturbance (compaction and erosion) will continue. Existing areas of soil disturbance across benches may continue to enlarge due to inherent geomorphic processes.</p>
	<p><b>Alpine Plant Communities</b> – Effects from recent grazing will be negligible after a few years. Ground cover expected to recover to potential in 1-20 years. <i>Cumulative effects:</i> Small areas along the trail not expected to return to potential ground cover. Localized vegetation trampling in popular areas and trail stream crossings. Activity area expected to</p>	<p><b>Alpine Plant Communities</b> – Effects from recent grazing will become negligible after a few years. Ground cover expected to recover to potential in 1-20 years. <i>Cumulative effects:</i> Small areas along the trail not expected to return to potential ground cover. Localized vegetation trampling in popular areas and trail stream crossings. Activity area expected to</p>	<p><b>Alpine Plant Communities</b> – Potential to maintain higher ground cover on Dead Horse Bench and Red Knob Bench than grazing without rest. Ground cover expected to remain at 85% or more of potential. Light utilization on benches conducive to maintaining/improving ground cover conditions. <i>Cumulative effects:</i> Maintain or gradual improvement of</p>

Issue	Alt. A Discontinue Grazing	Alt. B Discontinue Grazing Unit 4	Alt. C Proposed Action
	meet Revised Forest Plan Guideline 4 for soil disturbance.	meet Revised Forest Plan Guideline 4 for soil disturbance.	vegetation conditions. Natural integrity may be increased. Ground cover conditions not expected to improve on small areas along trail. Localized vegetation trampling and use of alpine forage in popular areas and where trail crosses stream.
	<b>Upland Soils</b> – Some recovery of vegetation and litter in bedding areas. Soils may become more productive as organic matter builds. Areas of compaction will break up. <i>Cumulative effects:</i> Stabilization of soils in some areas. Loosening and movement of topsoil in the Dry Meadow GU will continue. Little improvement in ground cover in areas where Ashley herd crosses. Areas of bare compacted soil in popular areas. Expected to meet Revised Forest Plan Guideline G4.	<b>Upland Soils</b> – Soil movement by wind and water expected to continue. Minor effects on soil related elements of natural integrity. <i>Cumulative effects:</i> Soil disturbance from pocket gophers and recreational traffic will continue. Expected to meet Revised Forest Plan Guideline G4.	<b>Upland Soils</b> – Soil movement by wind and water expected to continue. Minor effects on soil related elements of natural integrity. <i>Cumulative effects:</i> Soil disturbance from pocket gophers and recreational traffic will continue. Expected to meet Revised Forest Plan Guideline G4.
	<b>Upland Plant Communities</b> – Ground cover would increase or be maintained at site potential with Revised Forest Plan ground cover standard (85% potential) being met or exceeded. Plant composition not expected to change significantly. <i>Cumulative effects:</i> Some increase of plant vigor of species preferred by sheep. Small areas along trail not expected to return to potential ground cover due to Ashley herd. Vegetation trampling in popular areas and areas where trails cross streams.	<b>Upland Plant Communities</b> – Expected to meet or exceed Revised Forest Plan Standard of 85% potential. Species composition would not change. <i>Cumulative effects:</i> Some increase of plant vigor of species preferred by sheep within non-alpine uplands of Unit 4. Small areas along trail not expected to return to potential ground cover due to Ashley herd. Localized areas of vegetation trampling in popular areas and where trail cross streams. Within non-alpine uplands of unit 4, could be gradual	<b>Upland Plant Communities</b> – Expected to meet or exceed Revised Forest Plan Standard of 85% potential. Species composition would not change. Increase in ground cover when salt is moved. Watering spots continue to receive trampling. Short-term impacts in wet meadows. Reduced ground cover in trailing across dry meadows. <i>Cumulative effects:</i> Small areas along trail not expected to return to potential ground cover due to Ashley herd. Recreation livestock continues to compact bare

Issue	Alt. A Discontinue Grazing	Alt. B Discontinue Grazing Unit 4	Alt. C Proposed Action
		decrease in the area impacted depending on vegetation and terrain.	soils and trample vegetation. Some erosion along main trail.
	<p><b>Riparian Plant Communities</b> – No change in species composition. Desirable plant composition and vigor maintained. <i>Cumulative effects:</i> Reduction in the potential for late seral vegetation in sections of stream below avalanche path will continue. Riparian vegetation in wet meadows will continue to be knocked over. Small areas at stream crossings will continue to have early seral vegetation. Vegetation will be affected at wet meadow and stream crossings. Forest Plan Guideline for riparian vegetation will continue to be met.</p>	<p><b>Riparian Plant Communities</b> – No change in species composition. Desirable plant composition and vigor maintained. Riparian vegetation in Units 1-3 will continue to be knocked over. Ecological processes in association with avalanches would continue to affect riparian plant communities. <i>Cumulative effects:</i> Reduction in the potential for late seral vegetation in sections of stream below avalanche path will continue. Riparian vegetation in wet meadows will continue to be knocked over. Vegetation will be affected at wet meadow and stream crossings. Forest Plan Guideline for riparian vegetation will continue to be met.</p>	<p><b>Riparian Plant Communities</b> – No change in species composition. Ecological processes in association with avalanches would continue to affect riparian plant communities. <i>Cumulative effects:</i> Reduction in the potential for late seral vegetation in sections of stream below avalanche path will continue. Riparian vegetation in wet meadows will continue to be knocked over. Vegetation will be affected at wet meadow and stream crossings. Forest Plan Guideline for riparian vegetation will continue to be met.</p>
	<p><b>Wet Meadow Soils</b> – Expected to remain in properly functioning condition. <i>Cumulative effects:</i> Small areas of short-term, detrimental disturbance where trails used by the Ashley herd and recreational traffic cross wet meadows. Continued properly functioning of these areas. Soil disturbance expected to continue to meet Revised Forest Plan Standard G4.</p>	<p><b>Wet Meadow Soils</b> – Isolated areas of detrimental disturbance will continue adjacent to recreation trail. Isolated areas of sheep trampling should recover year to year with herding. Other small areas of disturbance are expected to continue as the herds cross wet meadows to get to water. <i>Cumulative effects:</i> Isolated pockets of detrimental soil disturbance adjacent to recreation trail and near streams. Expected to continue to meet Revised Forest Plan Standard G4.</p>	<p><b>Wet Meadow Soils</b> – Isolated areas of detrimental disturbance will continue adjacent to recreation trail. Isolated areas of sheep trampling should recover year to year with herding. Other small areas of disturbance are expected to continue as the herds cross wet meadows to get to water. <i>Cumulative effects:</i> Isolated pockets of detrimental soil disturbance adjacent to recreation trail and near streams. Expected to continue to meet Revised Forest Plan Standard G4.</p>

Issue	Alt. A Discontinue Grazing	Alt. B Discontinue Grazing Unit 4	Alt. C Proposed Action
<p><b>2. Native Wildlife and Fish Habitats</b></p>	<p><b>Terrestrial Wildlife</b> – More forage for big game (although summer range is not limiting). More hiding cover for small game and small mammals, which serve as prey species. No effects to migratory birds. No species removed for predator control. Will not affect the trend for MIS. Goshawk’s prey would have slightly more cover. Minimal benefit to snowshoe hare habitat and beaver. May affect, not likely to adversely affect Canada lynx. No impact on Forest Service sensitive species and wolverine. Prey species for lynx, wolverine, and raptor would have additional cover. Three-toed woodpecker would not be affected. <i>Cumulative effects:</i> recreational use and trailing of Ashley herd could displace wildlife.</p>	<p><b>Terrestrial Wildlife</b> – Negligible impact on big game because summer range is not limiting. More available summer forage for big game than Alt. C. Less hiding cover for small game and small mammals in Units 1-3. Slightly more hiding cover in Unit 4. No effects to migratory birds. Fewer species removed for predator control than Alt. C, but still negligible impacts. Will not affect the trend for MIS. Goshawk’s prey would be more vulnerable due to less cover. Minimal effects to snowshoe hare habitat and beaver. May affect, not likely to adversely affect Canada lynx. No impact on Forest Service sensitive species and wolverine. Prey species for lynx, wolverine, and raptor would have less cover. Three-toed woodpecker would not be affected. <i>Cumulative effects:</i> Recreational use and trailing of Ashley herd could displace wildlife.</p>	<p><b>Terrestrial Wildlife</b> – Negligible impact on big game because summer range is not limiting. Less hiding cover for small game and small mammals. No effects to migratory birds. Number of species removed for predator control is negligible. Will not affect the trend for MIS. Goshawk’s prey would be more vulnerable due to less cover. Minimal effects to snowshoe hare habitat and beaver. May affect, not likely to adversely affect Canada lynx. No impact on Forest Service sensitive species and wolverine. Prey species for lynx, wolverine, and raptor would have less cover. Three-toed woodpecker would not be affected. <i>Cumulative effects:</i> Recreational use and trailing of Ashley herd could displace wildlife.</p>
	<p><b>Aquatic and Semi Aquatic Species</b> – No threatened or endangered species in project area. No impacts to streams, riparian areas, or spawning habitat from WFBF sheep. Stream banks and greenline vegetation would improve. Less direct impact to amphibians or mollusks from WFBF sheep, but still some from other activities. <i>Cumulative effects:</i> Aquatic resource conditions expected to</p>	<p><b>Aquatic and Semi Aquatic Species</b> – No threatened or endangered species in project area. Unit 4 - impacts to 150 feet of stream and 300 feet of riparian habitat eliminated and impacts to amphibians and mollusks would be eliminated. Units 1-3 – direct impacts to 375 feet of stream and 750 feet of riparian vegetation and stream banks will continue. Fish spawning areas (4,394 ft<sup>2</sup>) continue to be</p>	<p><b>Aquatic and Semi Aquatic Species</b> – No threatened or endangered species in project area. Adverse impacts to 450 feet of stream and 900 feet of riparian vegetation and banks will continue. Greenline vegetation would remain the same. Fish spawning areas (4,394 ft<sup>2</sup>) continue to be impacted. Direct and indirect impacts to aquatic insects, amphibians, and mollusks would</p>

Issue	Alt. A Discontinue Grazing	Alt. B Discontinue Grazing Unit 4	Alt. C Proposed Action
	<p>improve. Natural processes will continue to have negative and positive impacts. System will slowly adjust to natural conditions. 490 feet of stream channel and 980 feet (28%) perennial stream riparian habitat will continue to be impacted. Access roads will continue to deliver sediment. Non-native fish will continue to reproduce and likely interbreed.</p>	<p>impacted. Impacts to amphibians or mollusks would continue. <i>Cumulative effects</i>: 865 feet of stream habitat and 1,730 feet (0.49%) riparian habitat will continue to be impacted. Access roads will continue to deliver sediment. Non-native fish will continue to reproduce and likely interbreed.</p>	<p>continue. <i>Cumulative effects</i>: Sediment in streams would continue. Riparian impacts continue at 940 feet (0.53%) of perennial stream channel and 1,880 feet of perennial stream bank vegetation. Access roads will continue to deliver sediment. Non-native fish will continue to reproduce and likely interbreed.</p>
<p><b>3. Wilderness</b></p>	<p><b>Natural integrity</b> slightly improved because of gradual increase in ground cover and soil organic matter as well as reduction in impacted riparian, but this effect minor compared to historic activities' impacts to natural integrity.</p> <p><b>Apparent naturalness, remoteness, and solitude</b> not impacted during travel or at destination by sheep trailing, vegetation removal, and sight, sounds, and smells of sheep except for the on and off trailing of the Ashley herd.</p> <p><b>Primitive recreation opportunities</b> not impacted by sheep impacts or presence except for the on and off trailing of the Ashley NF herd.</p>	<p><b>Natural integrity</b> slightly improved because of gradual increase in ground cover and soil organic matter as well as reduction of riparian impacts in Units 4a and 4b. However, this is relatively minor compared to historic impacts (tie hacking, early heavy grazing, non-native fish stocking) on natural integrity.</p> <p><b>Apparent naturalness, remoteness, and solitude</b> impacted by visible evidence of trailing, sights, sounds, and smells of sheep, during travel time up the drainage but not during recreation activities within important destination areas in Units 4a and 4b. The exception is when the Ashley herd trails through these units twice annually.</p> <p><b>Primitive recreation opportunities</b> impacted by sheep presence in lower portions of Allotment but not in Units 4a and 4b which are the destination</p>	<p><b>Natural integrity</b> improves very slightly where ground cover increases in alpine areas with rest from grazing. However, this is relatively minor compared to historic impacts (tie hacking, early heavy grazing, non-native fish stocking) on natural integrity.</p> <p><b>Apparent naturalness, remoteness, and solitude</b> impacted by visible evidence of trailing, sights, sounds, and smells of sheep, during travel time up the drainage during recreation activities within important destination areas in grazed portion of Unit 4. Rested portion would not have these impacts.</p> <p><b>Primitive recreation opportunities</b> impacted by sheep presence in different parts of the Allotment at different times based on sheep movement. Most impact is in the grazed portion of Unit 4, which is</p>

Issue	Alt. A Discontinue Grazing	Alt. B Discontinue Grazing Unit 4	Alt. C Proposed Action
<b>4. Recreation</b>	Greatly reduced impacts (visible evidence of trailing, sights, sounds, and smells of sheep, during travel time and during camping at lakes) to recreation experiences throughout the Allotment and throughout the recreation seasons. Impacts of Ashley herd trailing up and down once per year continue.	for many recreation users. Impacts (visible evidence of trailing, sights, sounds, and smells of sheep, during travel time and during camping at lakes) reduced in Units 4a and 4b where most non-travel recreation time is spent. Impacts of Ashley herd trailing up and down once per year continue. Impacts on Units 1-3 continue same as current.	destination for many recreation users. Impacts (visible evidence of trailing, sights, sounds, and smells of sheep, during travel time and during camping at lakes) continue. Reduction in these impacts within the rested portion of Unit 4. Slight reduction in impacts around Dead Horse Lake because of 200-yard closure around the lake.
<b>5. Economic/ Social Values</b>	No economic stimulus to Uinta County and Wyoming economy from sheep grazing of WFBF Allotment. A 100% decrease of gross revenues by about \$118,250. A 22% reduction in rancher's gross revenues, one of three families may need to seek other economic support.	Uinta County economic stimulus from sheep grazing of WFBF Allotment reduced approximately \$36,000 or 19% from current. A 4% reduction in rancher's gross revenues.	Uinta County economic stimulus from sheep grazing of WFBF Allotment same as current (\$180,000-\$205,000 per year). No reduction in rancher's gross revenues.

## **2.5 Identification of the Environmentally Preferred Alternative**

It is required by CEQ (Council on Environmental Quality) regulations for implementing NEPA that one or more environmentally preferable alternatives be disclosed (40 CFR 1505.2 (b)). The environmentally preferable alternative is the one that best meets the policy section (section 101) of NEPA (42 U.S.C. Sec. 4331). It is not necessarily the alternative that will be implemented nor does it have to meet the underlying purpose and need for the project. It does, however, have to cause the least damage to the biological and physical environment and best protect, preserve, and enhance historical, cultural, and natural resources. The environmentally preferable alternative is Alternative A – Discontinue Grazing.