

# SNAPSHOT: MULTIPLE USES

## Grazing, Timber, Hunting, Fishing

### 1 Status

- There are 216 active and 18 vacant livestock grazing allotments consisting of approximately 658,000 acres of primary rangeland suitable to livestock grazing which is 22% of the CGNF. 199 permit holders have grazing permits in nine counties and two states.
- There are roughly 36,200 head of cattle, 550 horses and 400 bison permitted to graze at various times throughout the year on Forest lands and associated private lands, totaling 210,200 Animal Unit Months (AUMs).
- Sixty allotments have been closed on the Gallatin portion of the Forest since 1986. Closures were generally based on allotment viability of very small allotments, logistics and economics of operations, limited access, ownership changes from land exchanges, failing infrastructure, grizzly bear conservation, and other wildlife considerations.
- On a landscape scale, the current rangeland conditions are considered to be satisfactory, given general site capabilities. At more site-specific scales, there continues to be actions implemented to improve conditions.
- Timber harvest accomplished for the past 5 years (2011-2015) on the Custer portion was an average volume of 3,195 (MBF). For the Gallatin portion there was an average volume of 5,436 (MBF).
- About 5 percent of Forest visitors list hunting and another 5 percent list fishing as their primary purpose for visiting the Forest. Five percent of Forest visitors is about 15,000 people.

### 2 Trends

- For a variety of reasons, AUMs permitted on the CGNF have decreased 23% since the 1986 Forest Plan timeframe.
- Since 1980, the volume of sawtimber sold has decreased on the Gallatin NF, and remained relatively flat on the Custer NF. The 1986 Custer Plan assigned an annual timber sale quantity of 3.5 million board feet and the average sold from 1980 to 2015 was 4 million board feet. The 1987 Gallatin Plan assigned an annual timber sale quantity of 21 million board feet and the average sold from 1980 to 2015 was 10.5 million board feet
- Since 1980, the number of Christmas tree permits sold has been increasing. The volume of firewood decreased from the mid 1980's through the mid 2000's and then began to increase. By the mid 1980's, the volume of post and poles sold dropped from early 1980's levels and remained at the lower levels through the next two decades.

### 3 Need to Change Existing Forest Plans

- Allow flexibility to manage for sustainable ecosystems. Focus on adaptive management.
- Update existing plan components to be relevant and consistent across the Forest and include direction on developing management tools through future AMPs and/or through permit administration to be based on desired conditions, site-specific needs, and potential.
- Provide management direction for permitted livestock grazing that incorporates adaptive management toward ecosystem-based desired conditions, with particular emphasis on management in times of drought, wildfire, or other extreme weather-related events.
- Minimize conflicts between domestic and wild animals (e.g. bighorn sheep, predators, elk, etc.).

### 3 Need to Change Existing Forest Plans

- The current Forest Plans use "Assigned Sale Quantity". There is a need for the revised Forest Plan to estimate "projected wood sale quantity (PWSQ)" which includes timber and other wood projects, and the "projected timber sale quantity" per the current planning regulations.
- Do a timber suitability analysis on approximately 73,000 acres of acquired lands.
- Map potential timber suitable areas as the current plans timber suitable areas cannot be mapped.
- Provide direction for management and accommodation of the removal of miscellaneous products for commercial, noncommercial, and tribal and land grant use, such as grass seed, plants (used for food, fuel, medicine, or crafts) or other materials.