

Decision Notice & Finding of No Significant Impact Franklin Basin Allotment

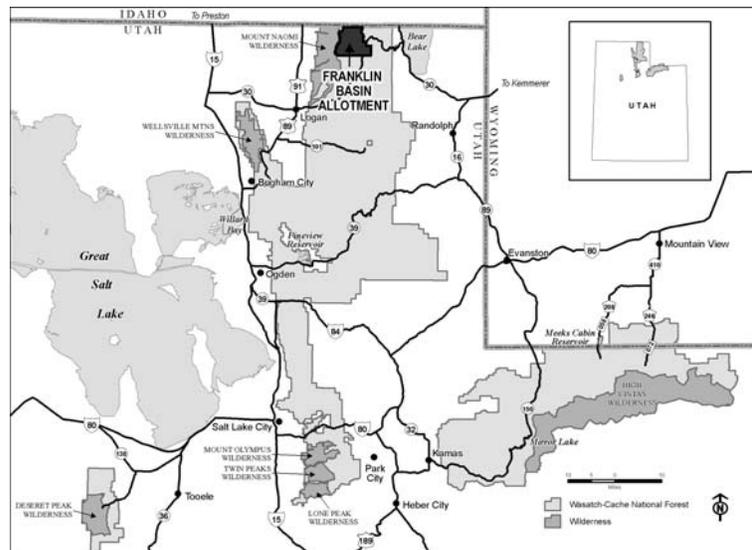
USDA Forest Service

Logan Ranger District, Uinta-Wasatch-Cache National Forest
Cache County, Utah

Introduction

This document details my decision regarding the authorization of grazing on the Franklin Basin Allotment. My decision is based on an environmental analysis for the proposal documented in an Environmental Assessment (EA) and released concurrent with this decision. The Franklin Basin Allotment is located in northern Utah, approximately 25 miles east of Logan, Utah, in the northern portion of the Logan Ranger District (Figure 1).

Figure 1. Franklin Basin Allotment Vicinity Map



Background and History

The lands that comprise the Franklin Basin Allotment were managed by the State of Utah until 1998 when the land was transferred to the USDA Forest Service in an exchange with the State per the “*Utah Schools and Land Exchange Act of 1998*”, Public Law 105-335. This law also incorporated an “*Agreement to Exchange Utah School Trust Lands between the State of Utah and the United States of America*” which provided for the Forest Service to administer the remaining 10 years of the State’s 15-year Term Grazing Permit. This permit expired in 2008, and the Forest Service subsequently initiated this environmental analysis.

In the following sections, this document outlines my decision regarding authorization of grazing on the Franklin Basin Allotment, summarizes the rationale for my decision, lists

mitigation measures that will be applied to implement the decision, and includes alternatives that were considered in the environmental analysis and in reaching my decision. In addition, this Decision Notice summarizes the public involvement effort that was an important part of the EA process; describes why no significant environmental impacts would occur; documents how the decision would be consistent with applicable laws, regulations, and policies; and provides information about the administrative review (appeal) opportunity that is available.

Decision

After a thorough review of the environmental analysis, I have decided to implement Alternative 1 (the proposed action) as described in the Franklin Basin Allotment EA. My decision authorizes grazing in a manner designed to maintain or move vegetation and watershed conditions toward desired conditions and improve unacceptable resource conditions where they exist on the allotment. My decision implements an adaptive management strategy and incorporates the benefits of deferred rotational grazing into the management system. It responds to issues dealing with unsatisfactory range conditions where they exist on some upland sites and riparian areas within the allotment. The adaptive management strategies focus on conditions as affected by current grazing (rather than on unsatisfactory areas resulting from historic grazing). My decision assumes proper permit administration.

My decision does not authorize grazing in the following areas:

- White Pine Lake (southwest quarter of T14N R3E Section 30) – This area has never been authorized for grazing and my decision will continue this direction. White Pine Lake is an extremely popular destination for many recreation users. Any authorized grazing in this area would increase the conflicts between livestock and human uses in this alpine lake setting.
- Irregular parcel on Highway 89 (northwest quarter of T14N R3E Section 36) – This approximately 70-acre irregular parcel was acquired during the land exchange with the State of Utah in 1998 and has not previously been grazed as part of the allotment. This parcel has previously been identified for consideration as part of future land exchange or conveyance proposals. It is not in the public interest to allow any new/additional encumbrance on this parcel that would need to be resolved in the event of a future change of ownership. Therefore, my decision will not authorize any grazing of this parcel.
- Allotment east of Highway 89 (adjacent to private land) – At the current time, there is no reliable water source located on National Forest land east of Highway 89. Although there is some water available in the upper reaches of Rigby Hollow and Brush Canyon on National Forest, the steepness and intermittent nature of the water supply make the water sources on the gentle slopes of private land much more attractive to livestock. The cows being naturally drawn to an easy water source creates a situation where the private landowner's ability to maintain a fence is unlikely. Even though it is a landowner's responsibility to fence unwanted livestock off private land in the State of Utah, I find the current situation to present an undue hardship for these landowners. Therefore, I will not authorize grazing of this parcel at this time. However, if a suitable solution can be found to improve a water source on

National Forest land or develop an agreement with an adjacent landowner to allow use of a private water source, I may reconsider authorization of grazing in the portion of the allotment east of Highway 89 in the future.

My conclusions are based on the scientific analysis in the EA (and supporting project record) that demonstrates a thorough review of relevant scientific information, a consideration of responsible opposing views, and the acknowledgement of incomplete or unavailable information. The analysis identifies techniques and methodologies used, considers current and accurate science, and references scientific resources relied upon. The analysis includes a summary of the creditable scientific evidence relevant to evaluating reasonably foreseeable impacts. My decision is consistent with FSH 2209.13, Chapter 90, section 92.21 Decision Framework.

Details of the Decision, including Mitigation and Monitoring

The decision includes an adaptive management strategy and incorporates the benefits of deferred rotation grazing into the management system. Grazing intensity is regulated by utilization standards and not solely by the number of livestock. The Forest Service uses forage utilization monitoring to determine whether stocking is within capacity or whether adjustments are necessary.

Currently, 607 cattle are permitted on the allotment and follow the utilization standards described in the Forest Plan. Utilization levels and desired resource conditions (e.g., rangeland vegetation condition and trend) are specified and monitored to ensure plant vigor and productivity are maintained and/or improved. Forage utilization monitoring is the basis upon which determinations of whether adjustments in management or stocking rates should be made. If livestock use is consistently within forage utilization levels, and soils and vegetation conditions and trends are acceptable, then stocking is considered to be within capacity. If livestock use results in having to consistently accelerate scheduled rotations through the allotment or requires livestock to be removed early, it is considered to indicate that stocking is outside of capacity, and a need for change in the grazing capacity is appropriate.

Site-Specific Desired Future Conditions

Desired future conditions (DFC) for the Wasatch-Cache National Forest and the Cache Box Elder Management Area are described in the Forest Plan (USFS 2003, LRMP p. 4-5 thru 4-15 and 4-128 thru 4-138). Components of the DFC that are applicable to the Franklin Basin Allotment project area are summarized in Section 1.5.1 of the Franklin Basin EA. In accordance with direction in the Forest Plan (p. VII-3), the interdisciplinary team (ID Team) reviewed and in some cases refined or supplemented the Forest Plan prescribed DFC to be more specific to the project area. Appendix A of this decision contains the project specific DFC for the Franklin Basin Allotment.

Adaptive Management

My decision for the Franklin Basin Allotment employs an adaptive management strategy. This strategy allows for the adjustment of the timing, intensity, frequency and management of grazing on the allotment as needed to meet Forest Plan standards and guidelines, and continue to meet or satisfactorily move forest resources toward desired conditions.

Monitoring is the basis for determining the need and frequency for administrative adjustments in the timing, intensity, frequency, and/or management of grazing. My decision sets the following adaptive management principles and limits to allow for maintenance and improvement of range conditions on upland and riparian sites on the allotment.

Grazing Season

The specific grazing season will vary from year to year, but would generally fall between June 25 and October 10. Annual adjustments would be planned and authorized by the District Ranger in the Annual Operating Instructions (AOI's). Turn out would not occur before *range readiness*—that point in the plant growth cycle at which grazing may begin without permanent damage to vegetation or soil (Heady and Child, 1994).

Grazing Strategy

Livestock grazing will be managed to incorporate a grazing management system, such as deferred grazing and/or other adaptive management strategies, that ensures the time and timing of grazing use is altered on an annual basis. Because the allotment does not have any interior pasture fences, direct management of cattle will increase. The deferment will be for the entire allotment or specific areas within the allotment (rotation), as determined in the corresponding Allotment Management Plan (AMP) and reflected in the Annual Operating Instructions (AOI). The deferment cycle will be based on the phenology of key forage species, as follows:

- 1) At *range readiness* (as defined above under Grazing Season)
- 2) Defer grazing until the “fast growth” period for native grasses is complete. This period is generally recognized when the leaves have completed growth and the seed head is well established and full. This allows key species to complete their growth and minimize grazing impacts to the growing plants when their carbohydrate root reserves are at their lowest levels.
- 3) Defer grazing until 2 weeks following “fast growth.” This allows for completion of the grass growth cycle and lets the plant begin to restore carbohydrates into their root systems and accumulate plant biomass.

Intensity

The intensity of grazing (utilization) will be according to grazing utilization standards and guidelines described in the Forest Plan (USFS 2003, p. 4-51 to 4-52, and included in Appendix B of this decision). Research and information substantiating these requirements are found in the Forest Plan and FEIS (USFS 2003) and Rangeland Health EIS (USFS 1996). The following table summarizes applicable utilization standards for grazing use under this decision.

Type	Condition (Standard/Guideline)	Percent Utilization or Stubble Height at End of Growing Season
Uplands, aspen, riparian Class I (away from greenline)	Satisfactory Condition (S24)	50% use
Uplands, aspen, riparian Class I (away from greenline)	Unsatisfactory Condition (G71)	30-40% use
Riparian Class I, II, and III (greenline stubble height)	All (S25)	No less than 5”, 4” and 3” stubble height, respectively
Woody species	All (S26)	50% current growth

Some riparian areas in the allotment show signs of use in excess of the Forest Plan standards indicating a need for better cattle control. Implementation of the decision will require cattle to be moved out of Class I riparian areas before the 5-inch maximum stubble height is reached (4-inch maximum for Class II and 3-inch maximum for Class III). In addition, upland, aspen, and riparian areas (away from the greenline) identified as being in unsatisfactory condition are restricted to 30-40% utilization.

Annual forage utilization is measured by averaging the use of key species in key areas based on the measurement of typically 50 to 100 individual plants. Key areas are defined as “a relatively small portion of rangeland which because of its location, grazing or browsing value and/or use, serves as a monitoring and evaluation site” (FSH 2209.21). The decision identifies the following “key areas” (at a minimum) to be monitored for annual utilization.

- 1) The Logan River riparian area just north of the Beaver Springs riparian enclosure
- 2) An area of upland sagebrush directly to the east of the Beaver Springs riparian enclosure
- 3) The riparian area in Steep Hollow
- 4) An aspen stand in lower Steep Hollow

Frequency

The frequency of grazing any certain area will be one time per season. Cattle will not be allowed to re-graze an area where utilization had already been met. This means that cattle will be managed to ensure that grazing of re-growth of native perennial grass species during the same grazing season does not occur. This applies to both riparian and upland sites.

Adaptive management strategies

Implementation of this decision with regards to the time, timing, and frequency of grazing will likely require a more intensive level of herding than is currently practiced. Other adaptive management strategies to achieve the objectives of the decision include:

- Rotating turn-on/off locations (rotation)
- Utilizing temporary electric fencing
- Salting
- Adjusting permitted number of livestock according to utilization patterns, as explained above
- Constructing short drift or protection fences*
- Developing alternative watering sites*
- Vegetation manipulation projects*

*Requires additional environmental analysis

Mitigation and Management Requirements

My decision includes mitigation measures and management requirements designed to prevent or diminish adverse effects of management actions on the human environment. These actions will diminish resource impacts and maintain healthy rangeland and riparian conditions, water quality, productive soils, and wildlife habitat. The mitigation and management requirements discussed in the EA are included in my decision and are listed in Appendix B of this decision.

Monitoring

Monitoring is a critical element of this decision and implementation of an adaptive management strategy. Monitoring activities discussed in the EA and included in my decision are described in Appendix C.

Decision Rationale

In making the decision to authorize grazing on the Franklin Basin Allotment, I have reviewed the existing environmental conditions and the direct, indirect, and cumulative effects for all the actions included in each of the alternatives. I have also considered comments received from the public. I gave careful consideration of how well each alternative met the 1) purpose and need, 2) responded to the issues, and 3) addressed public concerns, as follows.

1) Purpose and Need

Reviews of data collected on the Franklin Basin Allotment (2006-2008) indicate the majority of the Franklin Basin Allotment is in satisfactory condition and moving towards desired conditions. However, the coarse inventories of rangeland conditions (as detailed in the EA, Sections 3.3.5, 3.3.6, and 3.3.7) indicate that approximately 500 acres are in unsatisfactory condition, lacking in diversity of desirable species composition and complex plant community structure, and not moving towards desired conditions. This indicates the need for some type of deferred use or rest from grazing. Coarse inventories provide representative information. They are extensive surveys that involve a sampling of the allotment; not every acre of every vegetation type is visited in the field.

Satisfactory rangeland condition, as defined in the Revised Forest Plan (page GL-17) exists “when the desired rangeland condition is being met, or short-term objectives are being achieved to move rangeland toward desired conditions; either meeting or moving toward desired conditions.” Unsatisfactory rangeland conditions exist when the above is not being met.

A majority of the 500 acres of unsatisfactory rangelands do not support a plant species composition similar to the habitat type for the area. The coarse inventory data indicates sites that are unsatisfactory commonly are dominated by species such as: western coneflower, western groundsel, sawtooth butterweed, western yarrow, and lupine. These plants and others like them (including small forbs such as starwort, wild strawberry, and tarweed) increase under heavy grazing pressure. Photos taken during a field reconnaissance on August 22, 2008 (available in the project file) illustrate the dominance of western coneflower on some of these unsatisfactory areas of the allotment.

In addition, in some areas, heavy grazing has reduced the desirable perennial grass and grass-like species such as: blue wild rye, slender wheatgrass, mountain brome, elk sedge, great basin wild rye, and Columbia needlegrass. These changes in species composition were the primary basis for determining that sites were unsatisfactory.

Field observations on August 22, 2008 indicate successful regeneration of aspen in the majority of aspen stands on the allotment. Although some areas identified as unsatisfactory on the map have less diverse species composition than desired, most aspen stands have

adequate ground cover and successful aspen regeneration. Photos illustrating successful aspen regeneration on the allotment are available in the project file.

Some riparian areas, such as in Steep Hollow, show signs of heavy use of annual forage exceeding Forest Plan standards, which indicates the need for better livestock movement and distribution. Field observations in August 2007 and 2008 indicate portions of Steep Hollow have been utilized to the degree that unacceptable levels of compaction, soil erosion, and sedimentation are occurring. This has resulted in decreased plant vigor, decreased structural and species diversity, and high amounts of compaction, with a resulting loss of site productivity and quality habitat for wildlife, especially wetland-dependant species.

My decision (Alternative 1 – Proposed Action) best addresses the stated purpose and need by improving resource conditions on the Franklin Basin Allotment through implementation of an adaptive management strategy, authorizing grazing in a manner that will improve unsatisfactory conditions (through deferred grazing, strict adherence to Forest Plan utilization standards, and comprehensive monitoring).

I did not select Alternative 2 (No Grazing) which would eliminate livestock grazing from Franklin Basin because livestock grazing is an appropriate and permitted use within active allotments and no compelling data supports closure of this allotment.

I did not select Alternative 3 (Current Management) which would continue single pasture, season-long grazing on the Franklin Basin Allotment. This alternative was not selected because it would do nothing to improve degraded conditions as described above. There is no systematic rotation or deferred grazing in place; the 500 acres of unsatisfactory rangelands would show little increase in vigor or species composition and degraded riparian areas would see little improvement.

2) Response to Issues

Based on comments received during scoping, the Forest Service Interdisciplinary Team developed the list of issues for the proposed project. The issues were then used in development of alternatives, to prescribe mitigation measures, and in the analysis of environmental effects. In making my decision I considered how well each of the alternatives address and resolve the issues. The issues raised during scoping included the following:

- **Aquatic Resources**

An issue was raised about the impacts of grazing on fish habitat (particularly related to Bonneville cutthroat trout) suggesting that spawning habitat is severely impaired on the LRD, including Franklin Basin. Given the deferment of grazing, every two out of three years, under the proposed action, spawning habitat would not be significantly affected by continued livestock grazing. Although some redds may be impacted by grazing livestock, it appears cattle grazing has had little effect on BCT populations. As indicated by the current abundance of BCT and diversity of age classes (see EA, Section 3.2.5), grazing would continue to have little effect on the overall BCT population. Because the impact would likely be small, both the Logan River and White Pine Creek would continue to support large numbers of fish per mile. Therefore, under my decision, this project “may impact individuals but is not likely to cause a trend to federal listing or a loss of viability” for Bonneville cutthroat trout (EA, Section 3.2).

- **Rangeland Resources**

Issues were raised concerning capability and suitability for grazing, stocking rates, grazing systems, vegetation/site productivity, and grazing utilization levels. For this environmental analysis, GIS technology, field reconnaissance and vegetation cover type mapping were used as the basis to validate and refine capability mapping in the Forest Plan and to validate the ability to produce 200 lbs/acre. The EA included a discussion of the current grazing management and rangeland conditions, including identification of the approximate 500 acres of unsatisfactory rangelands within 5,160 capable acres. My decision includes an adaptive management strategy to bring about improvement in unsatisfactory rangeland conditions where they exist on the allotment. The deferment of grazing is expected to allow for a gradual improvement in species composition and a measurable upward trend to occur. An upward trend would be based on desirable native species seeding into interspaces of bare ground, and plant species that have increased under current and historic grazing pressures to begin to decline. The decision requires grazing according to Forest Plan utilization standards designed to achieve desired conditions on the land (EA, Section 3.3).

- **Recreation**

An issue was raised regarding livestock grazing in popular recreation sites, such as the White Pine Lake area and sites along the Logan River in Franklin Basin. My decision does not authorize livestock grazing in the White Pine Lake area, a heavily used backcountry camping area. Livestock grazing along the Logan River in Franklin Basin would be managed by grazing utilization standards; the area would be grazed to no more than the standard, then cattle would be moved on, not to return to that area again during that grazing season (EA, Section 3.4).

- **Soil**

Resource concerns regarding bare ground, soil productivity, and erosion were raised during scoping. The EA included a detailed analysis of the effects of grazing on the soil resource and found that apparent ground cover trend is either stable or slightly upward. Under my decision it is expected that litter, as a component of ground cover, would increase slightly. This is the result of vegetation being ungrazed or lightly grazed because grazing is deferred to later dates. Reductions in bare soil from increased live vegetation and litter would be more dramatic and consistent where effective cattle control is implemented. It is expected that vegetation ground cover will improve on bare soils in Steep Hollow through the effective movement of cattle. No loss in soil productivity is expected because soil quality is currently meeting all direction within the Revised Forest Plan and would continue to do so with implementation of any of the alternatives (EA, Section 3.5).

- **Water**

The impairment of streams and riparian areas as a result of livestock grazing was raised as an issue. The EA analyzed potential impacts of livestock grazing on water features within the Franklin Basin Allotment. Under the proposed action, it is expected that deferred grazing and cattle control will bring about improvements in specific areas of the allotment that have water resource concerns from cattle trampling. It is expected that vegetation ground cover will improve in lower Steep Hollow by trailing cattle around the steep, v-shaped, narrow part of the canyon when moving cattle to the upper part of Steep Hollow. Water in Logan River is

expected to continue to meet State water quality standards; vegetation is expected to improve and adequate ground cover with implementation of deferred grazing and adherence to Forest Plan utilization standards (EA, Section 3.6).

- **Wildlife**

An issue was raised regarding the effects of livestock grazing on wildlife, including the loss of plants needed by wildlife and the effect on the regionally important wildlife corridor. The EA included a thorough analysis of wildlife resources and the impacts from livestock grazing, including a review of Management Indicator Species suitability and capability. Implementation of the proposed action will generally provide some additional forage and cover during early summer for wildlife species in the years in which deferred grazing is implemented. The deferment would gradually lead to improvements in species composition, thereby, benefiting wildlife species (EA, Section 3.7).

Other Issues

Evaluation of the project indicated effects on the following would not vary between alternatives and there would be little to no effect on these resources. Therefore, the following are not covered in detail in the EA, but are discussed briefly below to add to the overall understanding of the project.

- **Heritage Resources**

A cultural resources investigation was conducted for this project during August 2007 and three cultural sites were identified. The Forest Service made the determination that the authorization of grazing will result in No Historic Properties Affected [36CFR 800.4(d) (1)] because grazing does not appear to be having an adverse effect on the previously recorded sites within this area of potential effect (APE). The Utah State Historic Preservation Office concurred with this determination in a letter dated October 2, 2007 and recommended no further action. Additional concurrence on a determination of “no effect” was received on December 12, 2008. Therefore, my decision to authorize grazing will have no effect on heritage resources in the area (EA, Section 1.8.3.2).

- **Rare Plants**

Field surveys in 2006 and 2007 identified no potential habitat for the Maguire’s primrose within areas utilized for grazing. Therefore, my decision will have no effect on any threatened or endangered plant species, including the Maguire’s Primrose. Given the small overlap of cattle grazing and the occurrences of rare plants in the Franklin Basin Allotment, it is not likely my decision to authorize cattle grazing will have any effect on rare plants on this allotment (EA, Section 1.8.3.3).

- **Noxious Weeds**

My decision is in accordance with the Record of Decision for the WCNF Noxious Weed EIS. Weed mapping in the Franklin Basin vicinity indicates previously mapped infestations have not expanded over the past several years. This area will continue to be inventoried and monitored. The Record of Decision for the WCNF Noxious Weed EIS outlines procedures for weed identification, mapping, and treatment.

- **Private Lands**

A concern was raised by landowners adjacent to Highway 89 that cows repeatedly come on to their private land for watering. One landowner had constructed a fence to allow access to the water, but yet keep the cattle off the rest of his land. However, the cattle repeatedly got on to the private land. The land owners would prefer not to have cattle graze throughout their private land, but they are drawn there because that is the only readily available source of water. Because there is no reliable, readily accessible water available on NFS land, livestock grazing will not be authorized on the portion of the Franklin Basin Allotment east of Highway 89.

Another of the private parcels, a 160-acre in-holding located in lower Steam Mill Canyon is owned by 4 separate land owners. There has been no construction on any of these lots, there are no fences, and there is no motorized access. One landowner expressed desire to keep cattle off their private land. The Utah open range law requires the private land owner to fence cattle off their property if they do not want grazing to take place on their land. It is the responsibility of the private land owner, not the Forest Service or the permittees, to fence the private property in-holdings.

A third parcel of private land is located at the far north end of the allotment. This 720-acre parcel belongs to a previous grazing permit holder who no longer grazes livestock on the Franklin Basin Allotment. No comment was received from this landowner. However, as indicated above, the open range law would require the landowner to fence cattle out, if they did not want them to come onto their property. (EA, Section 1.8.3.1).

- **Roadless Areas**

The Franklin Basin Allotment is located within portions of the Gibson, Mount Naomi, and Temple Peak roadless areas (Revised Forest Plan, pages C1-13 through C1-18, C2-9 through C2-15, and C2-86 through C2-88). The Gibson and Mount Naomi roadless areas were included in the 1983 inventory. Temple Peak roadless area was added in the 1999 inventory (Revised Forest Plan, pages C1-1 through C1-6). Sheep and/or cattle grazing are permitted on all or portions of all three roadless areas. Livestock grazing has been a part of these landscapes since the late 1800's.

Since there is no construction activity associated with the decision (no road construction, no timber harvest or vegetation treatments, and no range improvements) no adverse effects on roadless character or roadless values for any inventoried roadless area are expected. Outstanding recreation opportunities, both motorized and non-motorized, would continue to be provided and would be unaffected by continued livestock grazing. Under my decision there would be no loss of roadless characteristics and values.

3) Response to Public Concerns

In reviewing the comments received during the notice and comment period, I believe my decision addresses the concerns raised by the public. The response to comments is available in the EA, Chapter 4. The primary concerns involved the following subject areas:

Aquatics – a comment was made suggesting spawning gravels are impaired by sediment caused from livestock grazing. The Forest relies on fish counts to assess populations and trends. The counts document viable populations of Bonneville cutthroat trout in all fish-

bearing streams on the allotment. The decision to allow grazing within Forest Plan standards (and an adaptive strategy to fence additional riparian areas if monitoring so indicates) would maintain these conditions.

Forage production and site productivity – comments were received suggesting that livestock grazing has impaired the productivity of the allotment and that forage production is below its potential. For this environmental analysis, GIS technology, field reconnaissance and vegetation cover type mapping were used as the basis to validate and refine capability mapping in the Forest Plan and to validate the ability to produce 200 lbs/acre. Certain cover types (e.g., non-range (dense) conifer, timber harvest units, and low sagebrush) do not produce this amount of forage and are not considered “capable”. Forage production studies conducted on the Forest in the past and information from Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) rangeland productivity and plant composition guides (by soil type and ecological site) were used to evaluate forage production relative to potential in the field. Using this information, an estimate of capable acres on the allotment totals approximately 5,160 acres. Inventories indicate approximately 500 acres of the capable rangelands are “unsatisfactory”. The decision would authorize grazing under a deferred rotation system which is expected to improve species diversity overtime.

Recreation – A few letters suggested that livestock grazing interferes with the ability to have a quality camping experience in Franklin Basin because of heavy use of riparian areas by cattle. Some of the more popular dispersed recreation sites include areas along the Logan River and White Pine Lake. The decision would not authorize livestock grazing in the White Pine Lake area. Regarding the Logan River dispersed camping areas, although it would not be feasible to exclude cattle entirely from Logan River riparian areas, dispersed sites along the Logan River would benefit from deferred rotation grazing. Because grazing would be delayed every two out of three years, there would be some time early in the summer to camp before livestock come on to the allotment. Also, the decision implements utilization standards for riparian areas which would limit livestock use and require prompt movement when the standard (5 inch stubble height) was reached.

Private land – a comment was made regarding cattle grazing on private land east of Highway 89, especially around the water sources which are on private land. My decision would not authorize livestock in the area east of Highway 89 because there is no readily accessible water available on National Forest System land in this vicinity.

Alternatives Studied in Detail

In addition to the proposed action, the EA analyzed the no action (no grazing) alternative and the current management alternative, as described below.

No Action (No Grazing)

The “no action” alternative is included to meet requirements of the National Environmental Policy Act [40 CFR 1502.14 (d)] and the Grazing Permit Administration Handbook, FSH 2209.13, Chapter 90, Section 92.31 which stipulates that “in addition to the proposed action, the no action alternative shall always be fully developed and analyzed in detail.” “No action” is synonymous with “no grazing” and means that livestock grazing would not be authorized within the project area.

Under this alternative, livestock would no longer be permitted to graze on the Franklin Basin Allotment. This pertains to sheep and cattle. If this alternative were selected, grazing would not be authorized after a two-year notification to the permittee from the date the decision is made. Non-permitted recreational horse use would still occur. Selection of the “no action” alternative would require an amendment to the Forest Plan.

Current Management

This alternative would allow for the current level of permitted grazing and the current management of the allotment to continue. The permitted number of livestock and grazing season would be as has been authorized for the past several years, under Forest Service administration, which permitted 607 cow/calf pairs and a grazing season of 105 days, June 25 to October 10.

The allotment is currently managed under a single pasture, season-long grazing system with no deferment or rest incorporated into any specific area or pasture within the allotment. There are no interior fences to provide control of cattle within the allotment. The southern boundary of the allotment is unfenced between the Logan Canyon Cattle Allotment to the south and the Franklin Basin Allotment. Cattle grazing currently occurs and would continue on the portion of the allotment east of Highway 89.

Cattle are managed during the grazing season primarily through riding and herding. The season-long system allows for some areas to be delayed from grazing by the nature of the seasonal progression as cattle are herded through the allotment by rider. Grazing use is subject to grazing standards described in the Forest Plan (pages 4-51 to 4-52).

Alternatives Considered and Eliminated from Detailed Analysis

The following alternatives were considered but were eliminated from detailed study as recommended by the Interdisciplinary Team with concurrence from the Responsible Official. They were eliminated from detailed study because they do not meet the purpose and need or because of other considerations as disclosed below. A brief discussion of the reasons for their having been eliminated is given.

- **Rest rotation grazing system with fenced pastures**

An alternative that would use fencing to divide the allotment into pastures was considered but eliminated from detailed study. A rest rotation system is not warranted at this time. The proposed action would accomplish similar results, (improved conditions on about 500 acres of unsatisfactory rangelands ~ 10% of the allotment) without construction of fences. Because of the steep topography, difficulty of access due to the area’s geographic features, and the fragmented nature of suited rangeland, it would be difficult to construct and maintain a pasture fence across the allotment to divide it into pastures. Consideration of this at some time in the future would require additional NEPA analysis.

- **Authorize grazing east of Highway 89**

The private land located east of Highway 89 in the Brush Canyon and Rigby Hollow area is divided into several 40-acre parcels. A few cabins and recreational homes have been constructed and portions of some of them have been fenced. Some of the landowners commented that cows repeatedly come on to their private land for watering. One landowner constructed a fence to allow cattle access to the water, yet keep them off the rest of his land. However, cattle pushed through the fence and grazed throughout his private land.

An alternative to authorize grazing east of Highway 89 was eliminated from detailed study because there is no readily accessible, reliable source of water on National Forest System (NFS) land within the Brush Canyon and Rigby Hollow area east side of Highway 89 (report available in the project file). There is only intermittent water in the steep upper part of the canyon, and cows do not readily graze these steep slopes in the upper canyons.

The only reliable, accessible water sources in the area east of the highway are located on private land. The cows are naturally drawn to these water sources located on the gentle slopes of the private land. Since there is no readily accessible water on NFS land, this alternative was eliminated from detailed study.

2.3.3 Grazing practices that are within the Forest Service budget

This alternative, as suggested by a scoping respondent, would rely on grazing practices “that can function with almost no Forest Service staff time”. As stated in the comment letter, “in the past, the preferred alternative called for range projects, maintenance, monitoring, and analysis that was not fiscally possible”. This alternative calls “for grazing management that is within the Forest Service budget resources to be modeled over conditions that are expected during drought periods”.

This alternative was not considered in detail because fiscal feasibility is already incorporated into all of the alternatives. The management activities in the alternatives considered in detail are expected to be implemented within anticipated Forest Service budgets. This consideration is already given in the development of the proposed action and alternatives to it, so an additional alternative specifying fiscal responsibility is unnecessary.

2.3.4 Ecologically-based grazing alternative

This alternative calls for utilization levels no more than 25% in habitat, including riparian areas, with periods of use for no more than 14 days in an area. This alternative calls for grazing practices that have a score of a positive 1 or better using the grazing response index score. The Grazing Response Index was developed by Colorado State University’s Range Extension and Integrated Management Programs to help managers evaluate the effects of grazing on rangelands.

This alternative, as presented by a scoping respondent, was dismissed from detailed study because other alternatives being considered, including the proposed action, would accomplish the same objectives. It is unnecessary to consider these actions in order to move rangeland conditions towards desired since other alternatives accomplish the same purpose. There are no other issues this alternative addresses that are not already addressed in other alternatives being considered (i.e. vegetation response to grazing). The proposed action, which would implement a grazing system (e.g., deferred grazing and/or other techniques) that ensures the time and timing of grazing use is altered on an annual basis, is an

ecologically-based alternative, considers the principles of the grazing response index, and would move unsatisfactory conditions towards desired (as defined in Section 1.6 of the EA).

2.3.5 Grazing as is permitted and reported in grazing permit payments

This alternative was suggested by a scoping respondent, recommending that “the analysis reflect the impacts that would occur should grazing at this higher level occur”. The suggestion apparently is based on the belief there are fewer cows actually grazing on the allotment than are paid for (authorized) annually, giving the impression of lighter grazing (less impact) than would occur with a larger number of cattle. This alternative suggests that it would consider the effects of grazing at the “authorized” number (which is thought to be higher than what is “actually” grazing).

There is no need for this alternative because Alternative 3, Current Management, already analyzes the authorized number of grazing cows (and the number that are actually grazing on the allotment). The effects analysis for the current management alternative shows the impacts of grazing the authorized number of cows (which is the actual number grazed). Annually, for each allotment, “authorized use” (including stocking rate and season of use) is determined and specified in the Annual Operating Instructions (AOI). This determination is based on a number of things including resource and climatic conditions. Permits holders are billed annually based on their “authorized use”. The current management alternative discloses the effects of grazing at the authorized use of 607 head of cattle for a season of 108 days, under a season-long grazing system, using Forest Plan standards and guidelines to determine proper use. There is no need to consider an additional alternative because Alternative 3 already analyzes the current authorized number.

Public Involvement

The Logan District Ranger mailed a scoping letter on June 4, 2008 to 154 individuals and organizations on the District mailing list. The scoping letter was posted on the Wasatch-Cache National Forest website. In addition, the project was first posted in the summer 2007 quarterly Schedule of Proposed Actions (SOPA). A brief article was included in the June 20, 2008 edition of the Logan Herald Journal. The District received 7 responses to the scoping efforts. A complete listing of individual comments is available in the project record.

The public was given notice and an opportunity to comment on the preliminary EA beginning August 30, 2008 when a legal notice was posted in the Logan Herald Journal. A letter (or e-mail) was sent to 35 individuals (including all of the permittees), groups, and agencies who had shown interest in the project or who had previously commented during scoping. The letter notified recipients that the preliminary EA was posted on the Wasatch-Cache National Forest website at: <http://www.fs.fed.us/r4/uwc/projects/wcnf/proposed> and hard copies of the preliminary EA were available at the Logan District Office.

A brief article was included in the September 5, 2008 version of the Logan Herald Journal noting that the preliminary EA was available for review and comment. In January 2009, the Forest Service met with Franklin Basin Allotment permittees to discuss management of the

allotment. A detailed listing of public comments, along with the Forest Service response, is included in the EA, Chapter 4, Response to Comments.

Field visits to the Franklin Basin Allotment were made during the summer in 2009 to discuss range conditions with the Franklin Basin Allotment permittees (notes from the field visits are available in the project file).

Finding of No Significant Impact

After carefully considering the environmental effects described in the EA, I have determined that my decision will not have a significant effect on the quality of the human environment considering the context and intensity of impacts (40 CFR 1508.27). Thus, an environmental impact statement will not be prepared on this action. I base my finding on the following:

1. The beneficial effects of the action do not bias my finding of no significant environmental effects.
2. There will be no significant effects on public health and safety.
3. There will be no significant effects on unique characteristics of the area. A survey was conducted and the Forest archeologist made the determination this decision will not significantly affect cultural resources in the project area. There will be no impact on historic or cultural features (EA, Section 1.8.3.2). There are no permanent effects to parklands, prime farmlands, wetlands, ecologically critical areas, or wild and scenic rivers (EA, Section 3.6).
4. The effects on the quality of the human environment are not highly controversial. There is no known scientific controversy over the impacts of this project (EA, Chapter 3).
5. The environmental analysis shows the effects are not uncertain (EA, Chapter 3), and do not involve unique or unknown risk. The Forest has authorized livestock grazing on other allotments on the Forest with no uncertain or unique risk.
6. This decision will not establish a precedent for future actions with significant effects (EA, Chapter 3).
7. The cumulative impacts are not significant (EA, Chapter 3).
8. This decision will have no significant adverse effects on districts, sites, highways, structures, or objects listed in or eligible for listing in the National Register of Historical Places. This action will also not cause loss or destruction of significant scientific, cultural or historical resources (EA, Section 1.8.3.2).
9. This decision will not adversely affect any threatened or endangered species or its habitat that has been determined to be critical under the Endangered Species Act of 1973 (EA, Section 3.2 and 3.7, as well as the Biological Assessment and Biological Evaluation available in the Project Record).
10. This decision will not violate Federal, State, and local laws or requirements for the protection of the environment.

Findings Required by Other Laws and Regulations

Numerous laws, regulations, and agency directives require that my decision be consistent with their provisions. My decision is consistent with all laws, regulations, and agency policy relevant to this project. The following discussion is intended to provide information on the regulations that apply to issues raised and comments made by the public or other agencies.

National Forest Management Act of 1976 (PL-94-588) – The National Forest Management Act directs that management activities be consistent with the Forest Plan. Based on the discussions provided in the EA, I have concluded my decision is consistent with provisions of the 2003 Revised Land and Resource Management Plan for the Wasatch-Cache National Forest (Forest Plan), including Goals, Management Prescriptions, and Standards and Guidelines (see EA, Chapter 3 and Appendix B).

Clean Water Act – The Clean Water Act requires each state to implement its own water quality standards. The State of Utah’s Water Quality Anti-degradation Policy requires maintenance of water quality to protect existing in stream Beneficial Uses on streams designated as Category 1 High Quality Water. All surface waters geographically located within the boundaries of the Wasatch-Cache National Forest whether on public or private lands are designated as Category 1 High Quality Water. Based on the management requirements and mitigation measures included in my decision (Decision Notice, Appendix A) and the analysis presented in the Water Resources section (EA, Section 3.6) I have concluded that my decision will maintain water at existing high quality and is consistent with the Clean Water Act.

Executive Order 11990 of May 1977 – This order requires the Forest Service to take action to minimize destruction, loss, or degradation of wetlands and to preserve and enhance the natural and beneficial values of wetlands. In compliance with this order, Forest Service direction requires that analysis be completed to determine whether adverse impacts would result. As disclosed in the EA, my decision will have no adverse effects to wetlands located within the Franklin Basin Allotment and therefore is in compliance with EO 11990 (see EA, Section 3.6).

Executive Order 11988 of May 1977 – This order requires the Forest Service to provide leadership and take action to (1) minimize adverse impacts associated with occupancy and modification of floodplains and reduce risk to flood loss, (2) minimize impacts of floods on human safety, health and welfare, and (3) restore and preserve natural and beneficial values served by floodplains. My decision will have no adverse effects on floodplains (see EA, Section 3.6).

Endangered Species Act – This Act directs that all Federal departments and agencies shall seek to conserve endangered, and threatened (and proposed) species of fish, wildlife and plants. This obligation is further clarified in a National Interagency Memorandum of Agreement (dated August 30, 2000) that states our shared mission to “...enhance conservation of imperiled species while delivering appropriate goods and services provided by the lands and resources.”

Based on the information disclosed in the EA (Sections 1.8.3.3, 3.2, and 3.7) and the Biological Assessment (available in the project file) I have determined my decision will not significantly affect populations of endangered, threatened, and candidate species of fish, wildlife and plants. This is because there is no suitable habitat within the project area, the species are not found within the project area, and/or the effect of cattle grazing relative to populations is minor and will have no effect on populations or trends. A determination of “no effect” was made for the yellow-billed cuckoo and the Maguire’s primrose. A determination of “may affect individuals, but is not likely to adversely affect the lynx or their habitat” was made for the Canada lynx. Concurrence from the US Fish and Wildlife Service was obtained on September 2, 2008 (letter in the project file).

Executive Order 13186 of January 10, 2001 – Chapter 3, Section 3.7.6.5 of the EA discloses the effects of cattle grazing on migratory birds, primarily as related to the effects on their habitats, including sagebrush communities and riparian areas. My decision will lead to improved species diversity over time, through deferred grazing and increased livestock control. Based on this information and information in the project file concerning migratory birds, my decision is in compliance with this Executive Order for the Conservation of Migratory Birds.

Executive Order 13112 – Invasive Species – This Executive Order directs that Federal Agencies should not authorize any activities that would increase the spread of invasive species. My decision includes aggressive noxious weed management to effectively reduce the spread of existing and new infestations of noxious weeds and invasive plant species in accordance with the Record of Decision for the WCNF Noxious Weed EIS (EA, Section 1.8.3.4). Therefore, my decision is consistent with this order and will not increase the spread of invasive species.

American Antiquities Act of 1906 and the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 – A survey was conducted and the Forest archeologist made the determination livestock grazing will not significantly affect any cultural resources in the project area; no historic or cultural features will be impacted (EA, Section 1.8.3.2). Therefore, my decision is in compliance with these Acts.

Prime Farmland, Rangeland and Forest Land (Secretary of Agriculture Memorandum 1827) – My decision does not make any changes to boundaries of grazing allotments or forest lands found within the project area.

Civil Rights – Based on comments received during scoping and the comment period no conflicts have been identified with other Federal, State or local agencies or with Native Americans, other minorities, women, or civil rights of any United States citizen.

Executive Order 12898 of February 16, 1994 “Federal Actions to Address Environmental Justice on Minority Populations and Low-income Populations” – This order requires federal agencies to the extent practicable and permitted by law to make achieving environmental justice part of its mission by identifying and addressing as appropriate disproportionately high and adverse human health effects, of its programs and policies and activities on minorities and low-income populations in the United States and territorial possessions. In compliance with this Executive Order the Wasatch-Cache National Forest through scoping and public involvement attempted to identify interested and affected parties, including minorities and low-income populations for this project. A comment period was held for 30 days following the publication of the legal notice in the Logan Herald Journal. No minorities and low-income populations were identified during scoping.

Violating Federal, State and Local Laws – My decision does not violate any Federal, State or local laws or requirements for the protection of the environment.

Administrative Review or Appeal Opportunities

This decision is subject to administrative review (appeal) pursuant to 36 CFR Part 215. The Appeal Deciding Officer is Forest Supervisor Brian Ferebee. Appeals must be sent to: Appeal Deciding Officer, Intermountain Region USFS, 324 25th Street, Ogden, Utah 84401 fax 801-625-5277. The office business hours for those submitting hand-delivered appeals are: 8:00 to 4:30, Monday through Friday, excluding holidays. Electronic appeals must be submitted in a format such as an email message, portable document format, rich text format (.rtf), and Word (.doc) to appeals-intermtn-regional-office@fs.fed.us. In cases where no identifiable name is attached to an electronic message, a verification of identity will be required. A scanned signature is one way to provide verification. Only individuals or organizations who submitted comments during the comment period specified at 215.6 may appeal this decision. The notice of appeal must meet the appeal content requirements at 36 CFR 215.14.

Appeals, including attachments, must be filed within 45 days from the publication date of the legal notice in the Logan Herald Journal, the newspaper of record. Attachments received after the 45-day appeal period will not be considered. The publication date in the Logan Herald Journal is the exclusive means for calculating the time to file an appeal. Those wishing to appeal this decision should not rely upon dates or timeframe information provided by any other source.

Implementation Date

If no appeals are filed within the 45-day time period, implementation of the decision may occur on, but not before, 5 business days from the close of the appeal filing period. When appeals are filed, implementation may occur on, but not before, the 15th business day following the date of the last appeal disposition.

Contact

For additional information concerning this decision or the Forest Service appeal process, contact Jennefer Parker, District Ranger, 1500E, Hwy 89, Logan, UT, 84321, phone 435-755-3620.

/s/Jennefer Parker

September 4, 2009

JENNEFER PARKER

DATE

Logan District Ranger

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Appendix A

Table 2.4.1.1: Additional Site-Specific Desired Conditions

Resource Ecosystem Community Type	Applicable Component of the Forest Plan Prescribed Desired Future Condition	Additional Site-Specific Desired Condition
Soil, Water, Riparian, and Aquatic Resources (soil productivity)	<p>Most soils have at least minimal protective ground cover. Soils have adequate physical properties for vegetative growth and soil-hydrologic function. Degradation of soil quality and loss of soil productivity is prevented. Soil productivity, quality, and function are restored where adversely impaired and contributing to an overall decline in watershed condition.</p>	<p>Minimal protective ground cover is defined by Forest Plan standard S7 as at least 85% of potential. In tall forb communities minimum ground cover is defined by Forest Plan guideline G14 as at least 90% of potential. (see S7 and G14 in Section 2.5 of this EA) Applying this, for this allotment the desired condition is to maintain at least the following average ground covers (% of potential) in vegetation communities impacted by livestock grazing:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 78% in aspen, silver sagebrush and mountain brush communities. • 69-82% in few-flowered sagebrush • 60% in low sagebrush and curleaf mountain mahogany • 73% in mountain big sagebrush (range is 81 to 96%, as reported in the North Rich Allotment FEIS potential there was 86%. The potential for these communities on the Franklin Basin is similar). • 67% in subalpine tall forbs (90% of potential per LRMP Guidance G14) • 85% in mesic riparian vegetation types.
Soil, Water, Riparian, and Aquatic Resources (riparian areas)	<p>Riparian areas have a range of vegetative structural stages that are at or moving toward properly functioning condition, provide a transitional zone between upland terrestrial habitats and aquatic habitats, and have the features necessary to promote stable stream channels and diverse habitat conditions. Desirable riparian vegetation occupies the historical floodplain. Riparian areas provide for fish, wildlife, and water quality requirements.</p>	<p>Class I riparian areas within the project area listed in the Forest Plan are: Logan River, Beaver Creek (ID border to mouth) and White Pine Creek (lower perennial flow source to mouth). (USFS 2003, LRMP p. VII-6 to VII-7)</p> <p>In addition to the riparian areas identified in the Forest Plan and listed above, in accordance with Forest Plan direction (p. VII-3) the ID Team has identified the following Class I riparian areas: Steep Hollow (lower perennial source to mouth), Steam Mill Canyon Spring, Hells Kitchen Canyon (lower perennial source to mouth), from the source to the mouth of Bunchgrass Creek, Brush Canyon, and Rigby Hollow. (see Map in Appendix C)</p> <p>No Class II riparian areas within the project area are identified in the Forest Plan (USFS 2003, p. VII-7).</p>

Resource Ecosystem Community Type	Applicable Component of the Forest Plan Prescribed Desired Future Condition	Additional Site-Specific Desired Condition
		<p>In accordance with Forest Plan direction (p. VII-3), the ID Team has identified the following Class II riparian areas: White Pine Creek (White Pine Lake to lower perennial flow source), Steam Mill (Steam Mill Lake to mouth), Hells Kitchen (source to lower perennial flow source), and Crescent Lake Canyon (source to mouth).</p> <p>All riparian areas not identified above as Class I or II are Class III riparian areas.</p>
Soil, Water, Riparian, and Aquatic Resources (springs and wetlands)	Spring sources and associated wetlands in the Cache Box Elder Management Area will be protected from excessive use and will be restored to proper functioning. Riparian areas will be protected from overuse and trampling from livestock grazing and recreation uses. Spring sources will be fenced and provide water for livestock.	<p>Existing livestock spring/wetland enclosures will be maintained in order to protect vegetation, water quality and habitat associated with these areas.</p> <p>Riparian areas will have adequate deep-rooted vegetation or armoring along banks to allow for sediment filtering and erosion prevention.</p> <p>Proper function of wetlands and riparian areas associated with springs will be maintained by managing Beaver Spring and Steam Mill Canyon Spring as a Class I riparian area, and other springs as Class II riparian areas to meet or exceed conditions outlined in Forest Plan standards and guidelines S24, S25, S26, G4 and G7 (see Section 2.5 below).</p>
Aquatic Habitats	Habitats will be managed to maintain cool, clear water and well-vegetated stream banks for cover and bank stability. Cool water temperatures will be preserved through well-vegetated banks.	<p>Undisturbed stream banks exist on at least 80% of Class I riparian areas.</p> <p>Pool-riffle ratios are approximately 1:1 in fish-bearing streams.</p> <p>Summer water temperatures in fish-bearing streams average 13°C ± 4°C.</p>
Vegetation (aspen)	Associated herbaceous and woody vegetation in aspen communities is highly variable and is dominated by desired perennial grasses and forbs with a	At least 10% of the understory cover in aspen communities is comprised of desired tall forb species ¹ .

¹ Plant species listed as moderate or high value rating for erosion control/watershed protection in the Region 4 Forest Service Handbook 2209.21 – Range Management Resource Value Ratings Guide.

Resource Ecosystem Community Type	Applicable Component of the Forest Plan Prescribed Desired Future Condition	Additional Site-Specific Desired Condition
	range of shrub cover.	
Vegetation (upland vegetation and big game winter range)	<p>Maintain upland (sagebrush, mountain brush, grassland) plant communities are dominated by desired perennial grasses, forbs, and have a range of shrub cover. Associated herbaceous and woody vegetation provides for plant communities that are diverse in seral status and structure and provide food and habitat for wildlife, forage for livestock, and a variety of recreational opportunities and aesthetic values.</p>	<p>A wide variety of sagebrush canopy closures exist, with a maximum closure of 35%.</p> <p>Most (greater than 50%) vegetation canopy in sagebrush stands are desired grass and forb species.</p> <p>A variety of shrubs such as snowberry, serviceberry, chokecherry, and elderberry are present in mountain brush communities.</p>
Vegetation (riparian)	<p>Riparian areas have a mix of seral and climax vegetation that is at or approaching PFC. Trees, willows, dogwood, birch, alder, sedges, rushes and hydric grasses, depending on stream substrate, gradient, and elevation, dominate riparian areas. These areas provide healthy self-perpetuating plant communities.</p> <p>Riparian plant habitats and rare riparian species will be protected from trampling and overuse by livestock grazing and recreational uses.</p>	<p>Adequate vegetative cover (as defined by the heights prescribed in Forest Plan standards S24 and S25) provide filtering of runoff, protection of the soil, and habitat for wildlife in riparian areas.</p> <p>Riparian shrub and trees are perpetuated by retaining at least 50% of annual growth of these plants (i.e., as provided for in Forest Plan standard S26 [see Section 2.5 of this EA]).</p>
Rangeland/Livestock Grazing:	<p>Livestock grazing is a permitted use. Grazing levels will be adjusted and managed with up-to-date Allotment Management Plans (AMPs). AMPs prescribing rest and deferred rotation grazing systems and riparian pastures will be in place. Structural improvements such as fences and water developments will be constructed or reconstructed and maintained to improve animal distribution and control. Structural improvements that are not needed will be removed from the forest. Grazing permit holders will move livestock as needed to meet management objectives for the ground. Ongoing ecosystem</p>	<p>Grazing levels will be adjusted and managed with an up-to-date Allotment Management Plan (AMP) that prescribes grazing systems and establishes management that ensure the time and timing of grazing is altered annually. When and/or if needed, structural improvements such as fences and water developments will be constructed or reconstructed and maintained, to improve animal distribution and control.</p> <p>The number of term grazing permits will be reduced by the formation of grazing associations and the issuance of grazing agreements instead of individual term grazing permits.</p>

Resource Ecosystem Community Type	Applicable Component of the Forest Plan Prescribed Desired Future Condition	Additional Site-Specific Desired Condition
	<p>monitoring will be used to refine standards. Permit holders will share responsibility with the Forest Service for monitoring use, and will hold full responsibility for movement and control of livestock. Excess and unauthorized livestock use will be minimal. The number of term grazing permits will be reduced by the formation of grazing associations and the issuance of grazing agreement permits instead of individual ones.</p>	
Recreation	<p>A variety of recreational opportunities will be provided. Livestock management conflicts with other uses will be minimized consistent with management direction for the area.</p>	<p>High value camping areas, such as White Pine Lake, are free from cattle and their impacts, but cattle may be seen in the distance away from popular campsites and trails. Visitors experience a natural appearing landscape, with little development except what is needed for resource protection or safety. Visitors are satisfied with their experiences which meet or exceed their expectations.</p>

Appendix B

Mitigation and Management Requirements

Mitigation measures, Best Management Practices (BMPs), and Forest-wide standards and guidelines included in all action alternatives are listed below. Research and information substantiating these requirements are found in the Forest Plan and FEIS (USFS 2003).

Mitigation

The stream in the steep, V-shaped, narrow canyon of Steep Hollow between the Franklin Basin road and the Steep Hollow road crossing must be avoided, by herding cattle around this area when moving cattle to the upper part of Steep Hollow. Cattle must be herded such that riparian utilization standards are not exceeded (as indicated in Section 2.4.1).

Management Requirements

The Forest Plan (USFS 2003, p. 4-36 thru 4-56 and 4-58 thru 4-78) contains standards and guidelines (see LRMP, p. 3-36 for definition of these 2 terms) including some applicable to livestock grazing. Those pertinent to the Franklin Basin Allotment project area and this environmental analysis are summarized in the following tables:

Table 2.5a: Forest Plan (LRMP) Standards (S) that apply to this project.

(S4) Place new sources of chemical and pathogenic pollutants where such pollutants will not reach surface or ground water. (LRMP, p. 4-36)		
(S7) Allow management activities to result in no less than 85% of potential ground cover for each vegetation cover type. (LRMP, p. 4-37). (See LRMP, Appendix VII for potential ground cover values by cover type).		
(S14) Allow no net decrease in areal extent of tall forb communities. (LRMP, p. 4-39)		
(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:		
Table S24: Percent utilization of key grass or grass like vegetation, by vegetation type, for rangelands in satisfactory condition.		
Vegetation Type	Condition	Percent Utilization of Key Grasses 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 <i>greenline</i> species in Class I, II, and III riparian areas (see Appendix VII) in satisfactory condition are as follows: (Key species being grazed include water sedge, Nebraska sedge, and and/or wooly sedge.)		
Table S25: Greenline stubble height at the end of the growing season, by riparian class, for rangeland satisfactory condition.		
Vegetation Type	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). (LRMP, p. 4-52)

Table 2.5b: Wasatch-Cache NF Guidelines (G) that apply to this project.

(G3) Proposed actions analyzed under NEPA should adhere to the State Nonpoint Source Management Plan to best achieve consistency with both Sections 313 and 319 of the Federal Water Pollution Control Act. (LRMP, p. 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. (LRMP, p. 4-37)
(G7) Manage Class 1 Riparian Area Greenlines for 70% or more late-seral vegetation communities as described in Intermountain Region Integrated Riparian Evaluation Guide (USFS, 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. (LRMP, p. 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. (LRMP, p. 4-38)
(G11) Use Best Management Practices & Soil & Water Conservation Practices during project assessment/ implementation to ensure maintenance of soil productivity, minimization of sediment discharge into streams, lakes and wetlands to protect designated beneficial uses (LRMP 4-38)
(G12) Locate new actions (such as incident bases, fire suppression camps, staging areas, livestock handling facilities, recreation facilities, roads and improvements) outside of Riparian Habitat Conservation Areas. If the only suitable location for such actions is within Riparian Habitat Conservation Areas, sites will be located to minimize resource impacts (LRMP, p. 4-38)
(G14) Manage vegetation for properly functioning condition at the landscape scale. Desired structure and pattern for cover types of the Wasatch-Cache National Forest (from USFS 1996) ... are as follows ... (USFS 2003, LRMP p. 4-39 thru 4-42)

Table G14. Desired Structure and Pattern for Cover Types

Cover Type	Landscape Structure	Landscape Patterns
Aspen	<p>Balanced Range: Grass/Forb and Seedling/Sapling = 40 % Young, Mid Aged and Mature forests = 30% Old Forests = 30%</p> <p>Stand Density Index > 300 and Basal Area < 140.</p>	Patterns are within historical ranges. Pattern sizes, shapes and corridors are maintaining processes. The role of fire is to influence distribution of structural classes and patterns across landscapes.
Pinyon-Juniper	<p>Balanced Range: Grass/Forb about 10% Seedling/Sapling about 10% Young Forest about 20% Mid Aged Forest about 20% Mature Forest about 20% Old Forest about 20%</p>	Patterns are within historical ranges. Pattern sizes, shapes and corridors are maintaining processes. Pinyon-Juniper is primarily limited to habitats that offer protection from fire such as bare ridgetops and rock outcrops.
Mountain Mahogany	<p>Balanced Range: Grass/Forb about 10-20%</p>	20-40% of acres are in mid-seral or later structural stages

	Early Seral about 20-40% Mid Seral about 20-40% Late Seral about 20-40%	in patches of >25 acres. Pattern is more or less heterogeneous mosaic of structural classes.
Tall Shrub (Mountain Brush)	Multiple vegetation layers with alternating vertical dominance.	Acreages and dispersion within historical ranges.
Tall Forb	Minimum ground cover of 90% leading into the winter season.	Patterns within historical range on area still suitable for tall forb dominance
Sagebrush(Big)/Grassland	Balanced range of structural stages. 40% of area with 15% or more crown cover; measured by line intercept	Patterns are within the historical range.
Riparian	Amount and type of vegetation types present that maintain riparian-dependent resources and provide a high rate of recovery following disturbance.	Plant community type compositions and accompanying riparian ecosystem functions maintain proper ground water recharge, storage, delivery, water tables, channel morphology and bank stability.

(G15) In goshawk habitat, design management activities to maintain, restore, or protect desired goshawk and goshawk prey habitats including foraging, nesting, and movement. (LRMP, p. 4-42)

(G23) Avoid actions on the Forest that reduce the viability of any population of plant species classified as Threatened, Endangered, Sensitive or recommended sensitive. Use management actions to protect habitats of plant species at risk from adverse modification or destruction. For species that naturally occur in sites with some disturbance, maintain the appropriate level of disturbance. (LRMP, p. 4-43)

(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, maximum allowed forage utilization will be 30-40%. (LRMP, p. 4-52)

(G72) Modify grazing practices that prevent attainment of desired future conditions for vegetation and/or aquatic resources. (LRMP, p. 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. (LRMP, p. 4-52)

(G2.6-2) Grazing is allowed on open allotments to meet site-specifically defined desired conditions. (LRMP, p. 4-67)

(G3.1A-2) Livestock grazing is allowed with the utilization standard for Riparian Class 1, and to meet site-specifically developed desired conditions. (LRMP, p. 4-69)

(G4.4-2) Grazing is allowed on open allotments to meet site-specifically defined desired conditions. (LRMP, p. 4-69)

Appendix C

Monitoring Activities Included in the Decision

The following monitoring activities would be conducted by the Forest Service under the decision to evaluate range conditions for adaptive management and to ensure compliance with the grazing permit and management requirements listed above.

1) Livestock management

What: Monitor livestock distribution to ensure cattle are in areas authorized for grazing.

Why: To protect unauthorized areas from cattle grazing to help achieve desired conditions.

How often: Throughout the grazing season

How the results will be used: Information would be documented and shared with the permittees to ensure cattle are in the proper locations. If cattle are found in an unauthorized area it would be considered non-compliance and appropriate administrative action would be taken according to Forest Service Handbook direction (FSH 2209.13, Chapter 10, section 16).

2) Annual upland and riparian utilization and use

What: Annual monitoring will include collecting and recording the following information:

- a. Utilization on upland and riparian key areas, including:
 - 1) Logan River riparian area near the Beaver Springs fenced area
 - 2) An upland sagebrush area to the west of Beaver Springs
 - 3) Steep Hollow riparian area
 - 4) An aspen stand in lower Steep Hollow

Why: To maintain proper cattle distribution and ensure utilization standards are not exceeded, in order to maintain satisfactory conditions, improve unsatisfactory conditions, and help move toward desired conditions.

How often: Utilization and cattle distribution during and at the end of the grazing season.

How the results will be used: The information will be used to determine when livestock must be moved from one area to another or off the allotment after all areas have been grazed, and to make any necessary adjustments to numbers and/or season of use.

(3) Annual ground cover in lower Steep Hollow

What: Annual monitoring will include collecting and recording ground cover at the end of the season.

Why: Ground cover indicates how well vegetation near the stream channel is able to reestablish and to what degree erosion is being reduced.

How often: Annually for the next 3-5 years or until average ground cover conditions in Steep Hollow are meeting or moving toward DFC.

How the results will be used: This information will be used to determine when conditions in this area have improved sufficiently and grazing here no longer needs to be avoided.

(4) Long-term upland condition and trend

What: Long-term trend monitoring will be conducted on the upland sagebrush and aspen sites identified above under (2). Additional sites may be determined through field assessment. Long-term sites will include:

- 1) An upland sagebrush area to the west of Beaver Springs
- 2) An aspen stand in lower Steep Hollow

Why: To evaluate vegetation conditions and identify whether or not they are at or moving toward desired conditions in riparian and upland areas.

How often: About every 10 years.

How the results will be used: Information will be used to determine if the area is meeting or moving toward desired conditions. Long-term trend data will be used to evaluate timing, intensity, frequency and management of grazing. As necessary, annual triggers affecting the timing, intensity, frequency and management of grazing would be adjusted to meet long-term desired resource conditions.

(5) Riparian area/water/aquatic habitats

What: Multiple Indicators Monitoring System (MIMS) on the following:

- 1) Logan River riparian area near the Beaver Springs fenced area
- 2) Steep Hollow riparian area

Why: To ensure that riparian environments are protected from trampling and vegetation loss and that water quality and aquatic habitats are maintained.

How often:

- Annual protocol: Stream-bank alteration and green-line utilization
- Every 5-10 years: other MIM protocols, as needed, for long-term monitoring of riparian areas/water/aquatic habitats

How the results will be used: The information will be used to evaluate movement toward desired conditions in riparian areas. If monitoring indicates that degraded riparian areas are developing and/or existing degraded riparian areas have not improved in condition (using indicators such as increased riparian vegetation diversity and structure, streambank disturbance, and channel width) then an alternative management strategy such as fencing key riparian areas would be implemented. Fencing would require further NEPA analysis on the site-specific environmental effects of the fencing.