

Ironwood Forest National Monument
Draft Goals and Objectives on Livestock Grazing
July 21, 2004
Comment Summary

The following are summarized comments from the public meeting conducted Wednesday, July 21, 2004 at the Pima County Parks and Recreation Center in Tucson, Arizona regarding the draft goals and objectives for livestock grazing within the monument.

The meeting included an introduction by Larry Shults and three presentations on grazing: (1) Darrell Tersey of BLM on grazing management practices, (2) Cindy Coping (private rancher) on grazing history and grazing practices within the monument, and (3) Steve Lehning (private rancher) on the cultural importance of ranching within the monument.

The meeting attendance included 27 individuals from the general public and agencies (outside of BLM). Attendees worked in one discussion group and discussed the draft goals and objectives.

General Items and Comments:

- Develop a new goal that states livestock grazing be consistent with the Proclamation.
- Question: Have all areas of the monument been evaluated by the BLM and other agency experts? Answer: No, but all have been reviewed by an interdisciplinary team of BLM staff.
- BLM should establish a team of BLM and non-BLM people (“ranchers, scientists, bureaucrats”) to evaluate each allotment within the monument to assess range condition and to develop management recommendations.
- Develop a goal that incorporates language on “stability” and “diversity,” not just the Good/Excellent language.
- “Good” is not defined in the glossary or Standards and Guidelines. [D. Tersey explained that this is somewhat dated terminology and that the objective(s) could be rephrased to modernize terminology to account for new science].
- Shouldn't we be striving for restoration/better conditions? Isn't the goal to achieve a healthy landscape?
- Question: Does range health = land health? Answer: No.
- Develop a new goal stating, “Monitor and manage to the best possible condition based on past disturbance, and where needed, manage to improve ecological condition.”
- Develop a new objective to state, “Monitor and assess condition of rangelands regularly.”
- BLM was asked how it handles grazing requirements concurrently with the Arizona State Land Department (e.g., when changes must take place on BLM land that abuts State Land). Answer: It is done in coordination with ASLD.

- Develop a new objective to state, “Respond to drought conditions via livestock number allowed on allotments, etc., based on adaptive management strategies.” [Some individuals asked whether this was covered already by managing toward the best possible condition.]
- Develop a new objective to state, “Acknowledge the cultural, historical and economic values of ranching through interpretive efforts.”
- Develop a new objective to state, “Increase the number and variety of exclosures to represent various ecosystems, and monitor these regularly.” Additionally state, “Within two years BLM will develop and implement a monitoring plan.”
- BLM needs to identify natural exclosures (e.g., areas isolated from cattle grazing because of elevation, topographic features like rocks, vegetation like cactus fields, etc.).
- Monitoring of rainfall at each exclosure needs to be conducted as well as examining the successes and failures of other plans.
- “Monitor” always should be included with the word “manage.”

Based on the above-described comments regarding development of a new goal and objectives, the comments were summarized back to the group orally as follows:

- Suggested new goal:
“Manage grazing and range resources toward best possible ecological conditions for the local area.”
- Suggested new objectives:
 - 1) “Determine/assess the best possible ecological conditions for rangelands.”
 - 2) “Monitor range condition regularly.”
 - 3) “Implement measures to improve conditions, as needed, to progress toward the best possible conditions.”

The group concurred with the summary of discussion above, noting that this really focuses on adaptive management strategies.

Livestock Grazing Comments:

GOAL NUMBER 1: Manage livestock grazing consistent with the *Arizona Standards for Rangeland Health and Guidelines for Grazing Administration* (Standards).

- Revise the existing goal to read: “Manage livestock grazing consistent with the *Arizona Standards for Rangeland Health and Guidelines for Grazing Administration* and with protection of monument objects.”

Objective 1: *Remedy non-compliance with Standards prior to the next grazing season.*

- Revise this objective to read, “*Remedy non-compliance with Standards and/or allotment plans before the next grazing season.*”

Objective 2: *Manage all allotments to a “Good” ecological condition and no worse than a “Stable” trend ecological condition.*

- BLM needs to define “Good” and “Stable.”
- Modify this objective to reflect new terminology and approaches to describing range/ecological condition and trends.
- Remove the word “all.”
- Manage all allotments to an excellent condition.
- Delete this objective.

Objective 3: *Where range improvements are necessary and/or permitted, access and activities will be located and implemented to minimize additional disturbance to resources.*

- What constitutes a range improvement? Definitions are important because “improvements” could mean various things to different people.
- Remove the word “additional.”

Objective 4: *Eliminate trespass grazing.*

- Remove this objective entirely. BLM noted that trespass grazing can be handled administratively, rather than with a decision in the Resource Management Plan (RMP), as it is already against BLM policy and regulations to graze without proper approvals.
- Rephrase the objective to state, “Enforce against trespass grazing.” And move it to the Law Enforcement section of the RMP.
- Delete this objective; the only trespass grazing are occasional strays from the Tohono, which isn’t an intentional trespass.

Objective 5: *Classify allotments (i.e., open or closed; and if open, perennial, perennial-ephemeral, or ephemeral), based on ecological condition, species composition, and values and needs of other resources.*

- BLM was asked how rangeland assessment is conducted in relation to other resources (e.g., visual resources).
- BLM needs to define, “open or closed; and if open, perennial, perennial-ephemeral, or ephemeral.”
- Reword this objective to read, “*Classify allotments as open or closed; and if open, perennial, perennial-ephemeral, or ephemeral, based on ecological condition, species composition, and values and needs of other resources.*”
- Question: Are these management terms used anywhere else? Answer: D. Tersey indicated that these were BLM terms.
- This objective is redundant with the goal.
- This objective is not redundant; it helps clarify the meaning of the goal.
- The classifications are not part of the Standards and Guidelines.
- Question: What is meant by ‘values and needs’ in this objective?

Objective 6: *In areas categorized as closed to grazing, existing range improvements may be removed if they are not necessary for management or conservation of other resources (e.g., cultural resources, recreation, etc.).*

- Concern was expressed regarding the removal of water, which would change the habitat. The question was asked whether water could be excluded from this.
- The group expressed that there was no reason to designate any allotments as closed, and that there currently are no “closed” allotments in the monument. Some individuals commented that they have requested information on the potential buy-out program, but that they likely would not be interested in participating.

New Objective: Develop a new objective to state, *“Within five years, every ranch will have an allotment management plan.”*

- All allotments should have Allotment Management Plans regardless of an “Open” or “Closed” designation so that BLM will have direction to monitor rangeland health and implement other management actions.

Terms that need to be defined more clearly (relating to livestock grazing):

- Open
- Closed
- Perennial
- Perennial-ephemeral
- Ephemeral
- Excellent, Good, Fair, Poor and any terminology used in lieu of these terms