

SE Utah Grazing Improvement Program

c/o Sandy L. Johnson , Secretary – Telephone 435-459-1269
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Congressman Rob Bishop

The Southeastern Utah Grazing Improvement Board would like to take this opportunity to respond to the letter you sent to the Utah Cattlemen dated 15 February 2013. Our Board has met and discussed your letter and below are the issues we have identified and listed in order of importance to us a board representing Ranchers and Grazers in Carbon, Emery, Grand and San Juan Counties in Southeastern Utah. We appreciate the opportunity that you have provided to us to share with you the issues that are important to us.

1. We want no more wilderness designation. Multiple use is what has made this country great and provides opportunity, why does this generation think it can make the right decisions moving on in to the future? Why not maintain all of the options instead of locking land up for one special use group (Recreation). We would also like to see the issue of Wilderness Study Areas (WSAs) addressed and those lands released from this decades long misuse of law on public lands, much of which does not qualify for Wilderness under the Wilderness Act stipulations.
2. Protect water rights that belong to the State of Utah. Clarify in federal law that water rights are state controlled and not federal. Also we would like to see something in law that prevents the Forest Service and BLM from pressuring permit holders to give up water rights to the government in order to have permits renewed. We strongly oppose the pursuits of the National Park Service and their filing for and requesting that **all** water rights within four miles of a park boundary be granted and held by the DOI/NPS to maintain a buffer from development and multiple-use.
3. We need to maintain scattered state sections. These lands are often the only lands that are available to feed supplementally, install new

corrals etc. These lands provide the needed flexibility to be successful on federal land permits. If the federal government is going to maintain ownership of the federal estate in Utah, State lands interspersed within these lands are critical to provide the needed flexibility to make the federal lands work. The interspersed pattern of these state lands also gives the state a stronger position for influence in the management of the surrounding federal lands and requires access be granted to the state lands.

4. We need to address the turnover of Federal agency personnel, which has become a large problem in managing the land with any consistency. How can one manage resources that one has never even seen? Many federal land managers are responsible for millions of acres at a time, how in 2 or even 5 years could they possibly have the ability to understand the issues on these lands? Managers that have worked themselves up in one place would be much better suited to make resource management decisions on land they had occupied and had input on for 20 years or more. Also this would provide more consistent interpretation of federal law, which provides additional certainty to the people using the land to make a living and to the communities that depend on the land for their survival.
5. The economic sustainability that has been created by family ranches is critical for rural western communities. In many rural Utah communities agriculture and particularly ranching is the backbone of the local economy, these ranches allow other industries to have a base from which they draw their income. Studies by Utah State University show that each cow in a county equates to approximately \$500 dollars in economic activity per year with no economic multiplier used.
6. The Loss of timber industry, due to litigation by special interest groups and management decisions mandated from the judicial bench, has led to a loss in management flexibility and loss of another rural economic base. We no longer manage timber and thus are having ever more devastating wildfires that are increasing in both size and intensity.
7. Water development and new reservoirs are critical for people on the land to be able to sustain themselves, while providing an excellent clean renewable energy source.
8. The Endangered Species act needs to be changed, instead of a tool to restore species it is used as a weapon to take away private land rights and to reduce multiple use on public lands. The latest example is the Sage Grouse, which is now being used as the spotted owl for grazing lands. Instead of a regulatory system, the act should move to a system

that will provide incentives for the conservation of species instead of the regulatory disincentive that it currently is.

9. Taylor Grazing Act: The principles in the Taylor Grazing act remain important today, and management of federal and state lands should be required to maintain compliance with this act and the guidelines laid out therein as well as continue to allow the allocation of rangeland resources that came as a result of the Taylor Grazing Act of 1934. Adherence to such would stop and reverse the reallocation of livestock grazing lands to wildlife, wild horses and burros and/or conservation only.
10. We are also concerned with the trend to create and expand more and more national parks and monuments. Once ground has been deemed a park or monument it is no longer available for mineral development, grazing, or timber uses. The only use allowed relates to recreation.
11. Stop the closure, retiring, and reallocating of grazing allotments. Rural communities need as broad an economic base as they can have for sustainability, for western communities to put all their eggs in one basket is a recipe for disaster, look at logging in the northwest as an example of what can happen in one resource focused communities. The same thing can happen with recreation.
12. Encourage 20 year or longer term grazing leases. This would reduce workload for the agencies and 20 year or more leases would provide much greater certainty for the ranching community and the economies of rural communities. Revisiting the NEPA process in general is greatly needed. This act has been and continues to be used as a tool to stop management , and costs the American public millions every year. It gives one who has never seen the land in question as much, if not more, say in management as the one who lives on or around and makes a living from that land, and even the professional hired to manage the land.
13. Wild horses and burros are another issue that needs to be addressed in the Western United States. BLM needs to be given authority by congress to take the measures necessary to protect the rangelands from wild horses and burros, where the population has exceeded carrying capacity of the range. In addition something needs to be done to prevent these animals from being held indefinitely at tax payer expense in government holding facilities. Adoption hasn't worked and we may need to put horse processing back in business in the United States.

Again we would like to thank you for the opportunity you have provided for us to have input. If we can be of any further assistance as you move forward in your efforts please let us know

Sincerely,

Southeast Region Grazing Improvement Board
Don Holyoak, Chairman