



United States  
Department of  
Agriculture

Forest  
Service

Mt. Adams  
Ranger District

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**File Code:** 2210

**Date:** March 26, 2009

Dear Interested Citizen:

The Mt. Adams Ranger District is in the process of identifying issues, concerns, and/or opportunities associated with domestic livestock grazing within the Mount Adams Cattle Allotment. As part of our public scoping process, we would like your comments on our current grazing program within this allotment. Based on your comments, the interdisciplinary planning team will look at alternative ways to address your issues and concerns. The resulting alternatives, their respective environmental consequences, and any applicable mitigation measures will be published in an environmental analysis (EA). We expect to complete the EA and make it available for public review and comment in early 2011. This analysis will provide a basis for making an informed decision about the number of animals, and season of use that is consistent with the Gifford Pinchot National Forest Land and Resource Management Plan (LRMP) and other legal requirements.

The Forest Service administers grazing on National Forest System Lands under authority of the Organic Administration Act, Granger-Thye Act, Forest and Rangeland Renewable Resources Planning Act, and the National Forest Management Act. The Mount Adams Cattle Allotment has 32,998 acres within its boundary, and is located on the south slope of Mt. Adams. It generally extends from the east bank of the White Salmon River on the west to the Forest boundary on the east. The northern boundary of the allotment extends into the Mount Adams Wilderness on the northwest side, and the northeast boundary lies south of the Wilderness boundary and the Round-the-Mountain Trail #9. The southern boundary of the allotment is the Forest boundary just north of the town of Trout Lake, WA.

The grazing permit is currently for 516 cow/calf pairs (1,035 animal unit months), and the season of use authorized in the permit is from August 1 to September 30. In addition to the National Forest System Lands within the allotment, the permittee leases adjoining land from the Yakama Nation, Hancock Timber, and the Washington State Department of Natural Resources. The cattle are turned out on these lower elevation lands first, and they drift up to higher elevations, including onto the National Forest as the grasses and other forage plants become palatable.

Utilization standards are established and managed through the annual operation plan for the allotment. When thresholds for the degree of forage utilization are met, the Forest Service representative(s), with input from the permittee, determine the necessary cattle movement. Cattle movement has included the redistribution of cattle within the allotment or, if deemed necessary for the protection of the soil, water, animal and plant resources, removal of the domestic livestock from the allotment.



The Forest Service and the Yakama Nation have identified an issue with cattle grazing in the Bird Creek Meadows and Gotchen Creek Meadows area northeast of the allotment. Efforts to exclude cattle from this area have been made by the permittee and by the Yakama Nation by constructing drift fences that are designed to be let down during the winter. The effectiveness of these fences has been variable, and at times the trail gate on the Forest Service section has been left open.

Ultimately, I will use the analysis to decide one of the following:

- Determine if the proposed project would cause significant impacts, which would require an environmental impact statement.
- Approve an alternative that will meet the objectives of the National Forest Management Act and Forest Service policy to permit grazing on National Forest System Lands and establish management standards and mitigation measures for the grazing allotment that will assure compliance with the standards and guidelines of the LRMP.
- To not permit grazing on the Mount Adams Cattle Allotment because developed management standards and mitigation measures could not assure LRMP compliance.

The following list of preliminary issues has been developed by the interdisciplinary team:

- What management standards and/or mitigation measures are necessary to sustain Mardon Skipper (*Polites mardon*) butterfly habitat (Washington State endangered species)?
- What management standards and/or mitigation measures are necessary to minimize the introduction and spread of noxious weeds?
- What additional measures may be necessary to avoid use of Bird Creek and Gotchen Creek Meadows?
- Can additional reliable water sources be developed on the allotment to achieve improved livestock distribution?

We appreciate your interest in this proposal and although we will accept comments at any stage in the analysis, to be of most use in the development of the alternatives, we would like to have your written comments by May 31, 2010. Please submit your comments to Mitch Wainwright, Mount Adams Cattle Allotment Project Leader, 42218 NE Yale Bridge Rd., Amboy, WA 98601 or by e-mail to [mwainwright@fs.fed.us](mailto:mwainwright@fs.fed.us). If you have questions or would like to discuss this proposal, you may contact Mitch Wainwright by email or by phone: 360-449-7857. Thank you for your interest in the management of Gifford Pinchot National Forest.

Sincerely,

**/s/ NANCY RYKE**

NANCY RYKE

Mt. Adams District Ranger

Enclosure Allotment Map

cc: Mailroom R6 Gifford Pinchot