USDA
Forest Service

Intermountain
Region

Sawtooth
National Forest

Ketchum Ranger
District

Decision Notice
And
Finding of No Significant Impact
for the
Limekiln and Shaw Mountain Sheep &
Goat Allotments, and Kelly Mountain-
Greenhorn Cattle and Horse Allotments

September 26, 2013
DECISION NOTICE

BACKGROUND
The project area is located five to ten miles from the City of Ketchum, Idaho in the Big Wood River watershed. The project covers just over 22,000 acres in Townships 3 and 4 North, Ranges 15, 16, and 17 East, Boise Meridian within the Ketchum Ranger District, Sawtooth National Forest, Idaho.

The Ketchum Ranger District currently authorizes the following Term Grazing Permits:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 1. Existing term grazing permits</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Allotment</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Limekiln S&amp;G</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shaw Mountain S&amp;G</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kelly Mountain/Greenhorn C&amp;H</td>
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**Limekiln S&G Allotment**
The Limekiln Allotment grazing authorization is 850 Ewe/lamb and 5 horses from June 1 to July 5 for a maximum of 978 HM. The allotment comprises approximately 3,600 acres of National Forest System land. Sheep typically enter the allotment at the Greenhorn Gulch/Forest boundary the first week of June and are herded up the Cow Creek drainage to the higher elevations of Limekiln Gulch. By July 2 they’re trailed back down the same general path they grazed initially. Within the allotment there is only one developed water source, remaining water sources are streams or undeveloped springs.

**Shaw Mountain S&G Allotment**
The Shaw Mountain Allotment Term Grazing Permit authorizes 1,350 Ewe/lamb and 5 horses from June 20 to August 15 for a maximum of 2,530 HM. The allotment comprises approximately 10,750 acres of National Forest System land. Sheep typically enter the allotment in Cabin Gulch the 3rd or 4th week of June, and are herded clock-wise along the boundary periphery. In the first week of August they’re gathered in the Placer Creek corrals where they’re trucked off the allotment. Water sources for this allotment are streams or undeveloped springs.

**Kelly Mountain/Greenhorn C&H**
The Kelly Mountain/Greenhorn allotment consists of two pastures; Kelly Mountain and Greenhorn. Originally, each pasture was an individual allotment; they were merged in 1992. Up to 172 cow/calf pairs were permitted for 35 days with a variable season of use on the Kelly Mountain pasture and up to 226 cow/calf pairs for 26 days on the Greenhorn pasture. In 2005 the Kelly Mountain/Greenhorn permit was reissued and modified as a forage reserve with permittee preference. This permit expired in 2009, was waived back to the Forest Service in
2010, and the allotment is now vacant. No cattle have grazed the Kelly Mountain/Greenhorn allotment since 2001.

Two sheep bands trail through portions of the Kelly Mountain/Greenhorn allotment to facilitate trailing to and from the adjacent Warm Springs and Deer-Creek/Curran sheep and goat allotments. Trailing access by sheep through the cattle allotment on both the Kelly Mountain and Greenhorn pastures has been authorized through the Warm Springs and Deer Creek/Curran Annual Operating Instructions (AOI). Sheep that are permitted to graze the Deer Creek/Curran allotment are authorized to trail through a small portion of the Kelly Mountain unit at the beginning and end of the grazing season. This trailing use has been limited to one day in order to enter the Deer Creek/Curran allotment, and 1 day when leaving, for a total of approximately 56 HM. Trailing through the cattle allotment by sheep in order to access and leave the Warm Springs sheep allotment has varied and occurred in both the Greenhorn and Kelly Mountain pastures. This trailing has been limited to a total of two days, or approximately 72 HM.

THE DECISION

I have decided to implement Alternative 3 (Proposed Action), as described in the 2013 Limekiln and Shaw Mountain Sheep and Goat, and Kelly Mountain-Greenhorn Cattle and Horse Allotment Livestock Grazing Analysis - Environmental Assessment (EA). The Proposed Action authorizes continued livestock grazing on the Limekiln and Shaw Mountain S&G allotments, and trailing through a portion of the Kelly Mountain-Greenhorn C&H allotment. See Figure 1 below, for a map of the Proposed Action.

The proposed action provides for grazing a maximum of 535 HM on the Limekiln S&G Allotment. The number of sheep and season would vary up to 535 HM; grazing would not occur outside the season of June 1 to July 5. The proposed action provides for grazing a maximum of 997 HM on the Shaw Mountain S&G Allotment. The number of sheep and season would vary up to 997 HM; grazing would not occur outside the season of June 20 to August 15.

The Kelly Mountain/Greenhorn Allotment encompasses a total of 7,735 acres. Trailing would be authorized on approximately 153 acres. The remaining 7,582 acres would be closed to grazing.

A new term grazing permit consistent with the current Forest Plan direction will be issued as a result of this decision. There are no changes to the exterior of the allotment boundaries. Season of use and permitted numbers will be modified as described above.
Figure 1. Map of the Limekiln, Shaw Mountain, and Kelly/Greenhorn Allotments
RATIONALE FOR THE DECISION
I received a total of 67 comments on this project during the two public comment periods. These comments reflect the diverse interests of the public regarding use of National Forest System lands. The analysis is not a voting process, but I have sought to carefully and objectively assess public comments; the EA, including the purpose and need; issues; and alternatives and their effects in reaching my decision.

I believe my decision provides a good balance between the various social and resource needs within the project area at this time. I have considered the values and interests of the livestock permittee as well as the values and the experiences desired by other members of the public.

The Proposed Action – (Alternative 3) is different from Alternative 2 – Term Grazing Permit, in the elements described below, and these differences were important in my decision-making:

a. Alt. 3 - Proposed Action permitted numbers are based on a combination of factors which include overall trends from field monitoring along with review of general distribution patterns, and updated capability assessment using the most recent Rangeland Environmental Analysis (REA) data and current Forest Plan protocol.

b. Alt. 3 - Proposed Action limits the total number of days the sheep band may graze within the annual grazing season of use for each allotment to not exceed total HMs.

Table 2. Differences between Alternatives 1-3

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Alternative 1 – Grazing Eliminated After Two Years</th>
<th>Alternative 2 – Term Grazing Permit</th>
<th>Alternative 3 – Proposed Action</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Head Months</td>
<td>Eliminated after two years</td>
<td>Limekiln: 978 HM</td>
<td>Limekiln: 553 HM</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Shaw Mtn: 2530 HM</td>
<td>Shaw Mtn: 997 HM</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Kelly/Greenhorn: Vacant</td>
<td>Kelly/Greenhorn: 56 HM (used for trailing)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Season of Use</td>
<td>Eliminated after two years</td>
<td>Limekiln: June 1 – July 5</td>
<td>Limekiln: June 1 – July 5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Shaw Mtn: June 20 – Aug 15</td>
<td>Shaw Mtn: June 20 – Aug 15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Kelly/Greenhorn: Vacant</td>
<td>Kelly/Greenhorn: Closed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(trailing occurs through 153 acres)</td>
<td>(trailing occurs through 153 acres)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Allotment boundary</td>
<td>Eliminated after two years</td>
<td>Limekiln: unchanged</td>
<td>Limekiln: unchanged</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Shaw Mtn: unchanged</td>
<td>Shaw Mtn: unchanged</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Kelly/Greenhorn: unchanged</td>
<td>Kelly/Greenhorn: unchanged</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trailing</td>
<td>Limekiln: N/A</td>
<td>Limekiln: N/A</td>
<td>Limekiln: N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Shaw Mtn: N/A</td>
<td>Shaw Mtn: N/A</td>
<td>Shaw Mtn: N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Kelly Mtn. /Greenhorn: N/A</td>
<td>Kelly Mtn. /Greenhorn: Trailing</td>
<td>Kelly Mtn. /Greenhorn: Trailing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>occurs on approximately 153 acres</td>
<td>authorized on approx. 153 acres</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Closures</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>Limekiln: None</td>
<td>Limekiln: None</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Shaw Mtn: None</td>
<td>Shaw Mtn: None</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Kelly Mtn. /Greenhorn: None</td>
<td>Kelly Mtn. /Greenhorn: None</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
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<td>- allotment is Vacant</td>
<td>- allotment is Vacant</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Limekiln: None</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Shaw Mtn: None</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td>Kelly Mtn. /Greenhorn: 7,582</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>acres are closed.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>After 2 years not needed</td>
<td>No standards set for willow browse</td>
<td>Willow browse 20%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Willow Browse</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Streambank alteration standard</td>
<td>After 2 years not needed</td>
<td>No streambank alteration standard</td>
<td>Streambank alteration 15 - 20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Forage utilization of woody species, such as willow, alder, birch</td>
<td>After 2 years not needed</td>
<td>No woody species utilization standard</td>
<td>Will not exceed 20% of current years growth on 80% of the plants evaluated</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Forage utilization of aspen suckers</td>
<td>After 2 years not needed</td>
<td>No aspen utilization standard</td>
<td>Will not exceed 20% of current years growth on 80% of suckers in a stand.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| Once-over grazing only; maximum upland allowable utilization | After 2 years not needed | Forest Plan utilization standards | Maximum upland allowable utilization of approximately 25%.

My decision to implement Alternative 3 is also based on the following considerations:

- **Allotment Management**: Based on allotment administration records and monitoring, the grazing permittee is managing most of the Limekiln and Shaw Mountain capable range effectively and meeting most of the management direction and use standards set forth in the Forest Plan with the exception of soil cover. There are several areas across the allotments needing improved soil cover for protecting watershed stability where soil cover requirements are not being achieved (Project Record)¹. There are several areas not meeting desired conditions for effective soil cover, which was a key factor in my decision.

- **Forest Plan Direction**: The analysis of the Proposed Action (Alternative 3) shows it to be consistent with the Forest Plan. Monitoring supports that this alternative will be effective in meeting or supporting trends toward the achievement of objectives of the resources affected by livestock grazing.

This decision contributes toward accomplishment of the Sawtooth Forest Plan Desired Condition of providing a sustainable level of forage, consistent with other resource management direction, through the Forest Service grazing permit system. In addition, rangeland forage quality will be maintained or improved in areas where vegetation and range management actions occur. (Forest Plan, p. III-44) This decision also contributes to the Forest Plan goals:

- “develop sustainable land uses and management strategies that contribute to economic development goals” (Forest Plan - p. III-78).
- providing “a predictable supply of Forest goods and services within sustainable limits of the ecosystem that help meet public demand” (Forest Plan, p. III-78).

¹ The reduction in capable acres has resulted in reduced capacity for grazing Head Months. The capable acres reduction is due to the updated Forest Plan capability analysis protocol. Specifically, the upper capability slope percentage lowered from 60% slope to 50% slope, production limits were increased from 50 to 200 lbs. per acre, and areas with less than 60% soil cover were removed affecting approximately 15% of Limekiln Allotment (reduction from 1,256 capable acres to 1,092) and 42% of Shaw Mountain capable acres (reduction from 3,310 acres to 1,915) previously considered capable on the Limekiln and Shaw Mountain S&G Allotments.
The Sawtooth Forest Plan recognizes the continuing need for providing forage production and has determined that the Limekiln and Shaw Mountain Sheep and Goat Allotments are capable and suitable to support grazing by domestic livestock (Forest Plan Project Record).

- **Vegetation & Noxious Weeds:** This decision will facilitate utilization of herbaceous uplands in a manner that balances numbers of sheep with available forage supply. Effective ground cover would increase as the amount of plant litter should increase which will protect soil, retain moisture, and enhance grass forb production. Forest Plan direction would be met. Sagebrush density would continue to increase over time until disturbance (such as fire) occurs. Due to reduced grazing authorizations, the amount of area susceptible to cheatgrass and weed invasion as a result of grazing is reduced.

- **Wildlife:** Allowing sheep grazing under the Proposed Action would not change current habitat conditions for elk, deer, or bighorn sheep. Although conversion of the Kelly-Greenhorn allotment from cattle to sheep was initially considered, it was dropped from further consideration because the initial analysis showed that it has low sheep capacity. Further, although it is not occupied bighorn sheep habitat, each of the LSKG Allotments contain some modeled potential bighorn sheep habitat.

- **Recreation:** Utilizing pro-active grazing management (e.g. avoiding campgrounds, notifying public of sheep locations, trail reports, etc.), impacts under this decision should result in compliance with Forest Plan direction regarding the number of days when recreational user conflict with sheep and/or guard dogs could occur. The Visual Quality Objectives (VQOs) would be met under this decision. Grazing practices have not altered Recreation Opportunity Spectrum (ROS) designations or VQOs within either allotment.

In a recent 2012 study of visitor and resident trail use, the non-profit organization *Sustain Blaine* determined that the Greenhorn trail system receives approximately 13,000 visits each summer, making it the second most frequented trail on the Ketchum Ranger District after Adams Gulch (Wood River Valley Trail Study, January 2013). Five outfitter & guide special-use permits authorize guided hunting, hiking, mountain biking, horseback riding, shuttle services, and helicopter skiing within the allotment. Guided use is high relative to other drainages within the Ketchum Ranger District.

Reintroduction of grazing in the Kelly Mountain/Greenhorn Allotment however would lead to increased conflicts between recreationists and livestock especially when considering how use of the Greenhorn Trailhead and all its connected trails has increased over the last ten years. Reintroducing grazing on the Kelly Mountain/Greenhorn Allotment would also increase the potential for trail tread damage from livestock utilizing trails within this allotment. These considerations were key in my decision to close the Kelly-Greenhorn Allotment and only allow trailing on it.

- **Fish/Aquatics:** Where not already at desired conditions, general aquatic habitat on and downstream of the allotments and throughout springs and seeps should improve as herbivorous
riparian vegetation utilization is monitored and managed and streambank erosion from sheep-caused bank alteration is monitored and managed.

- **Water Quality**: Due to water quality concerns in the Big Wood River watershed, Idaho DEQ and the Environmental Protection Agency have assigned Total Maximum Daily Load requirements to several streams in the project area. Sheep grazing management in the Allotment complex should maintain existing conditions in the near term, with the potential for improved water quality conditions in the long-term. Under my decision, which includes aquatic Best Management Practices and permit conditions, the Forest Plan Standards and Guidelines for water and aquatic resources will be met under this alternative.

**PURPOSE AND NEED**

National Forest System lands provide an important source of forage for livestock during parts of the year. Livestock operators desire to graze on public lands and have invested in base properties, livestock handling facilities, and range developments in order to do so.

Public Law 104-19, Section 504(a) states: Establish and adhere to a schedule for the completion of NEPA, Act of 1969 (42 U.S.C. 4321 et seq.) analysis and decisions on all allotments within the National Forest System unit for which NEPA is needed (PL 104-19 section, General Provision 1995). In addition, the existing Allotment Management Plans (AMP) were approved in 1992 for Limekiln, 1984 for Kelly Mountain-Greenhorn, and 1984 for Shaw Mountain; since that time a number of changes have occurred and new direction issued with the current Forest Plan (Amended 2012), directing the need to update the AMPs.

The Forest Plan recognizes the continuing need for livestock forage production and has determined that the Limekiln and Shaw Mountain Allotments are capable and suitable to support grazing by domestic sheep. Livestock management direction needs to be evaluated and if necessary updated to ensure that it is consistent with the following Forest Plan management goals and objectives RAGO01 (p. III-44), SEGO03 (p. III-78), and SEOB01 (p. III-78).

**PUBLIC INvolvEMENT**

The proposal was listed in the Sawtooth Forest Schedule of Proposed Actions (SOPA) starting in October 2012. The proposal was provided to the public and other agencies for comment during scoping on November 13, 2012 (Fifty eight comments received) and during the formal 30-day ‘Notice of Proposed Action’ comment period, July 24 – August 23, 2013. (Nine comments received.)

**Tribal Consultation**

Scoping letters were mailed to the Shoshone-Paiute Tribes of Duck Valley, the Shoshone-Bannock Tribes of Fort Hall, and the Nez Perce Tribe of Idaho in November 13, 2012. This project was included in the Sawtooth NF Schedule of Proposed Actions and each of the above tribes was included on the mailing list for this Schedule. No comments were received related to this project by any of the Tribes. (Project Record)
Public Concerns
The public comments addressed a number of concerns. Two issues – wildfire and allotment capacity were raised in several comments and are addressed in detail here. (Please see ‘Response to Comments’ in the Project Record for a detailed analysis of all comments.)

Wildfire - Some commenters stated that implementation of alternatives that eliminate grazing or significantly reduce livestock grazing levels (Proposed Action-Alternative 3) will lead to increased fine fuel loads which will greatly increase the likelihood of future stand-replacement wildfire events. Because of the impacts fuels have on fire characteristics, moderate levels of grazing probably increase the efficiency of fire suppression activities (Davies et al. 2009).

In response to increased fire hazards from reduced grazing, regardless of whether livestock grazing occurs across forested environments, in times of drought and circumstances involving insect killed/stressed timber, stand-replacing wildfire is inevitable. Much of the Beaver Creek wildfire burned under extreme fuel and weather conditions that likely overshadowed livestock grazing as a factor influencing fire extent and fuel consumption. Fire modeling has shown that moderate intensity grazing in grassland vegetation can reduce surface rate of spread and fire-line intensity to a greater extent than in shrubland types. Under extreme fire conditions (low fuel moisture, high temperatures, and gusty winds), grazing applied at moderate utilization levels has limited or negligible effects on fire behavior. However, when weather and fuel-moisture conditions are less extreme, moderate levels of grazing use may reduce the rate of spread and intensity of fires allowing for patchy burns with low levels of fuel consumption. (Launchbaugh, et. al., 2007) The Beaver Creek fire burned under extreme fire conditions.

Resource concerns regarding livestock grazing across the Kelly Mountain-Greenhorn, Limekiln and Shaw Mountain areas are tied to the instability of the soil resources and lack of adequate ground cover needed to stabilize the soils. Many of the unstable slopes have slopes that are greater than 50%, consist of decomposed granitic soil, and contain annual forb and cheatgrass components. Sheep grazing standards in these areas call for light intensity, once-over grazing. It is unlikely that the levels of sheep grazing which are allowed under these conditions have any significant effect on reducing the spread or intensity of wildfire events, especially during extreme fire weather events.

Conversely, others wrote to say that grazing should be eliminated due to the dramatic changes in vegetation from the recent Beaver Creek wildfire.

In response to the 2nd comment that grazing should be eliminated due to the 2013 Beaver Creek fire, we follow Sawtooth Forest Plan guidelines for addressing wildfire and grazing. In compliance with Forest Plan guidelines VEGU05 and VEGU06, the burned areas of the allotments have been evaluated to determine if rest from livestock grazing is necessary for recovery of desired vegetation conditions and related biophysical resources. A burned area emergency response (BAER) evaluation was completed for the Beaver Creek Fire for the burned portions of the allotments. Criteria were set for streambanks, aspen, and effective ground cover to identify when grazing could resume on burned rangelands in the allotment (BAER report 2013). In areas of the allotments where it was determined that resting from livestock grazing was necessary, the thresholds established by the BAER assessment will be met before livestock
grazing resumes. The Beaver Creek fire burned approximately 94% of the Shaw Mountain Allotment and 14% of the Limekiln Allotment.

The Beaver Creek fire affected vegetation, but did not significantly change the underlying soil classification. Soil is ultimately what determines the extent and type of vegetation to return after a wildfire. Lack of fire on the allotment in the sage/grass community has, to some extent, converted areas where grass was the primary ground cover to sagebrush. Generally, sage/grass communities that have not had a fire disturbance in more than 35-100 years, are converting to sagebrush with canopy covers exceeding 30%. The fire has reduced the sagebrush competition and will allow grasses to reestablish in locations where it had previously been declining. On slopes where protective woody cover has been greatly reduced, revegetation will occur more slowly. In other areas, vegetative responses may exceed initial expectations. Overall, we expect the regeneration to be similar with a generally natural, characteristic disturbance.

**Allotment Capacity** – We received comments that stated the allotments have not burned to this extent in many generations. These commenters felt that the landscape has greatly changed and the yield of forage, for both wildlife and livestock, will greatly increase in production in the future years. They also felt that three of the four factors used to determine capacity have all been completely changed due to the Beaver Creek fire.

1. The area of capable range open to livestock grazing has changed.
2. Recalculation of the total acres opened to grazing needs to be reanalyzed.
3. Calculating the total forage production needs to be reevaluated in the capable areas, due to the increased forage productions caused by fire regeneration. There are many new acres that will produce over 200 pounds of forage per acre and should be included in the allotment grazing base.
4. The recalculation of these capacity parameters will show a new allowable level of grazing that the current term permit will easily compliment.

In response to this comment, capacity calculations and stocking rates are determined for the long-term grazing of an allotment, not over the course of a 10-year Term Grazing permit. The majority of what were forested lands would now be considered transitory range - meaning the forage base lasts for a short duration, and then will be crowded out by trees and shrubs.

A more reasoned approach is to rely on existing analyses in combination with the BAER assessment and resume grazing consistent with BAER findings and Forest Plan direction. The amount of grazing use allowed by my decision is not determined solely be available forage, but it also considers other resource needs and concerns relating to ground cover, slope, and watershed stability. The ground cover was already inadequate in areas of concern before the Beaver Creek Fire. The fire will likely increase the amount of time required for those areas to reach Forest Plan minimum ground cover requirements.

**KEY ISSUES**
Scoping input was condensed to form key issues that guided the analysis documented in the EA. Key issues identified (as shown in Chapter 1 of the EA) include:
Alternatives

Alternative 1: No Action – No Grazing Alternative

“No action” is synonymous with “no grazing” and means that livestock grazing would not be authorized within the project area. (FSH 2209.13 – 92.31) Grazing would be eliminated on all three Allotments and livestock grazing permits would be cancelled. In accordance with agency regulations (36 CFR 222.4), grazing would cease two years after notice of cancellation. Allotment management would not change during this two-year interval from the current management.

Alternative 2: Livestock Grazing – Current Management

Alternative 2 is based on continuing the current management of all three allotments as described in the Term Grazing Permits. Current management direction for the allotments is contained in the Forest Plan, term grazing permits, Allotment Management Plans (AMP), and annual operating instructions (AOI). (FSH 2209.13 – 92.31)

Alternative 2 would continue to permit 850 Ewe/lamb and 5 horses from June 1 to July 5 on the Limekiln S&G Allotment for a maximum of 978 HM; it would continue to permit 1,350 Ewe/lamb and 5 horses from June 20 to August 15 on the Shaw Mountain Allotment for a maximum of 2,530 HM; and the Kelly Mountain/Greenhorn C&H Allotment would continue to be administered as a vacant allotment. When it was grazed the permit allowed 391 Cow/calf HMs/516 AUMs.

Alternative 3: Proposed Action

Authorize continued domestic livestock grazing only on the Limekiln S&G and Shaw Mountain S&G Allotments consistent with existing management while meeting or moving toward desired resource conditions. The Proposed Action would authorize continued grazing on both allotments and considers a variety of factors including Forest Plan direction, current grazing management, actual use data, updated tentative capacity estimates, livestock distribution patterns, grazing standards and resource trend data. Kelly Mountain/Greenhorn C&H allotment would be closed to all further grazing, except for a small portion in which sheep will be allowed to trail through.
The proposed action provides for grazing a maximum of 535 HM on the Limekiln S&G Allotment. The number of sheep and season would vary up to 535 HM; grazing would not occur outside the season of June 1 to July 5. The proposed action provides for grazing a maximum of 997 HM on the Shaw Mountain S&G Allotment. The number of sheep and season would vary up to 997 HM; grazing would not occur outside the season of June 20 to August 15.

The Kelly Mountain/Greenhorn Allotment encompasses a total of 7,735 acres. Trailing would be authorized on approx. 153 acres as described in the initial scoping notice released in November 2012. Refer to Figure 1 below. The remaining 7,582 acres would be closed to grazing; the remaining 7,582 acres includes the 441 acres proposed for grazing in the initial scoping notice.

**FINDINGS REQUIRED BY OTHER LAWS**

*Consistency with Forest Plan*
This decision, as designed with required mitigation and management requirements, is consistent with Sawtooth Forest Plan goals and objectives and standards and guidelines.

*National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA)*
The Environmental Assessment, Decision Notice, and Finding of No Significant Impact documents are in compliance with NEPA and the Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ regulations (40 CFR 1500-1508) for implementing NEPA.

*Federal & State Permits Required*
No State or Federal (other than Forest Service) permits are required to implement the Proposed Action or any other alternative. The Forest Service issues a Term Grazing Permit to authorize livestock grazing on the National Forest System lands.

*Endangered Species Act*
This Act (ESA) provides for the protection and conservation of threatened and endangered plant and animal species. A biological assessment/evaluation consistent with the requirements of this act was prepared based on the preferred alternative. Concurrence on the determination of effects for ESA listed species was received from the USDI Fish and Wildlife Service on July 19, 2013. (Project Record)

*National Historic Preservation Act*
The National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA) of 1966, as amended through 2006, provides for the protection of prehistoric and historic archaeological sites (cultural resources) on Federal lands that are determined to be eligible for inclusion on the National Register of Historic Places. Concurrence from the Idaho State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) was obtained on April 9, 2013 for the Kelly Mountain/Greenhorn C&H allotment and April 22, 2010 for the Shaw Mountain and Limekiln S&G Allotments as “No Effect” activities. (Project Record)

*Migratory Bird Treaty Act*
This Act and subsequent Executive Order and Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between
the USDI Fish & Wildlife Service and USDA Forest Service provide for the protection of migratory birds. Based on the analysis, the Proposed Action is consistent with this Act (see Wildlife Specialist Report, project record).

**Environmental Justice**
In accordance with Executive Order 12898, all action alternatives were assessed to determine whether they would have disproportionately high and adverse human health or environmental effects, including social and economic effects, on minority or low-income human populations. This assessment considered such programs, policies, and activities. The Proposed Action and Alternatives do not result in any identifiable effects or issues specific to any minority or low-income population or community. The agency considered all public input from persons or groups regardless of age, race, income status, or other social/economic characteristics. The Proposed Action, which is to authorize continued livestock grazing, does not have a disproportionate effect on environmental risks to sheepherders. The profession of sheepherding has risks inherent with it – however the Proposed Action does not alter those inherent risks in any way. No significant adverse environmental or health effects on sheepherders have been identified that would appreciably change as a result of the proposed action. Evidence indicates that the grazing operations as described in the proposed action do not pose a significant risk to human health. Exposures to other environmental hazards associated with the sheepherder profession in general (e.g. proximity to wildlife, exposure to natural environmental factors from working outdoors, etc.) are also not expected to change appreciably under the proposed action.

**Inventoried Roadless Areas / Idaho Roadless Areas and Recommended Wilderness**
The Idaho Roadless Rule was promulgated on October 16, 2008 (73 FR 61456) and supersedes the 2001 Roadless Rule for National Forests in Idaho. The 2008 Idaho Roadless Rule establishes management direction for designated roadless areas in the State of Idaho and provides prohibitions with exceptions or conditioned permissions governing road construction, timber cutting and discretionary mineral development. The Limekiln, Shaw Mountain, and Kelly Mountain-Greenhorn allotments project area includes portions of the Buttercup Mountain and Smoky Mountain Idaho Roadless Areas (IRA).

There are no new roads or trails proposed, nor are there any improvements to existing roads or trails proposed. Timber cutting and mineral development is not part of the proposed action. Thus, there are no actions which would ‘trigger’ the Idaho Roadless Rule. Under the Proposed Action, the livestock permittee will primarily follow the Sawtooth Forest Motorized Vehicle User Map (MVUM). However, the permittee is authorized for some incidental motorized cross-country use to maintain range facilities. The Proposed Action and alternatives to the Proposed Action would not affect the status of IRAs. (Recreation Report, 2013)
APPEAL RIGHTS AND IMPLEMENTATION

Decision Subject to Appeal
This decision is subject to appeal pursuant to Forest Service regulations at 36 CFR 215 and 36 CFR 214. As per 36 CFR 215.1(b), certain parties may be eligible to appeal projects under either the 215 regulations or the 214 regulations, but must select one and may not appeal under both.

36 CFR 215 Appeal Regulations
Those who provided comments during the formal 30-day comment period (July 24 – August 23, 2013) for this project may be eligible to appeal the decision under the 36 CFR 215 regulations.

Appeals must meet the content requirements of 36 CFR 215.14. Only individuals or organizations who submitted comments or otherwise expressed interest in the project during the 30-day formal comment period may appeal. Appeals must be postmarked or received by the Appeal Deciding Officer within 45 days of the publication of the legal notice of the decision in the Ketchum, Idaho ‘Idaho Mountain Express’ newspaper. This date is the exclusive means for calculating the time to file an appeal. Timeframe information from other sources should not be relied on.

The Appeal Deciding Officer is the Sawtooth Forest Supervisor. Appeals must be sent to: Appeal Deciding Officer, Intermountain Region USFS, 324 25th Street, Ogden, Utah 84401; or by fax to 801-625-5277; or by email to: appeals-intermtn-regional-office@fs.fed.us. Emailed appeals must be submitted in rich text (rtf), Word (doc) or portable document format (pdf) and must include the project name in the subject line. Appeals may also be hand delivered to the above address, during regular business hours of 8:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Monday through Friday.

36 CFR 214 Appeal Regulations
Pursuant to 36 CFR 214, holders of written instruments to occupy and use National Forest System lands, including grazing and livestock use permits issued under 36 CFR part 222, wishing to appeal this decision, must submit a written notice of appeal. The notice of appeal, including the reasons for appeal, must be postmarked or received by the Appeal Reviewing Officer (Sawtooth National Forest Supervisor) within 45 days of the date of this letter.

The notice of appeal should be filed with: Forest Supervisor, Sawtooth National Forest, 2647 Kimberly Road East, Twin Falls, ID 83301-7976. Appeals must meet the content requirements of 36 CFR 214.8.

IMPLEMENTATION
If no appeals are filed within the 45-day time period, implementation of the decision may occur on, but not before, five 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 36 CFR 215 appeal disposition or following final disposition of the 36 CFR 214 appeal process, whichever concludes last.
CONTACT PERSON
For further information on this decision, contact Robert Garcia, Ketchum Ranger District Range Staff. The Ketchum Ranger Station is located at 206 Sun Valley Road in Ketchum, Idaho and is open during normal business hours from 8:30 am to 5:00 pm, Monday through Friday, excluding federal holidays. Telephone: (208) 622-5371
FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT

I have reviewed the Council on Environmental Quality regulations regarding determination of the significance of environmental impacts (40 CFR 1508.27), and I have determined that this decision is not a major Federal action that would significantly affect the quality of the human environment. This determination is based on the thorough environmental assessment process completed for this project and was made considering the following factors.

A. Context
The effects of the proposed project are localized with implications for only the immediate area. Cumulative effects of past management, combined with the current proposal, ongoing activities and reasonably foreseeable actions are displayed and discussed in Chapter 3 of the 2013 Limekiln and Shaw Mountain S&G, and Kelly Mountain-Greenhorn C&H Livestock Grazing Management Analysis EA and in the project file. These effects were considered in my determination. The selected alternative is consistent with the management direction and the standards and guidelines outlined in the amended 2012 Sawtooth National Forest Plan.

B. Intensity
The following were considered in evaluating intensity:

1. Environmental Effects - I considered beneficial and adverse impacts associated with the alternatives as presented in Chapter 3 of the EA and in the project file. These impacts are within the range of effects identified in the Forest Plan. The overall impact of the selected alternative (Alt. 3) will be beneficial, with no significant adverse impacts. Impacts from the selected alternative are not unique to this project. Previous projects involving similar activities have had non-significant effects. On this basis, I conclude that the specific and cumulative adverse effects of the selected alternative are not significant.

Public health or safety - I find there are no known effects on public health and safety. This project does not involve national defense or security. The potential health effects of Alternatives 2 & 3 were evaluated since they both authorize continued livestock grazing on the allotments and thus, would have the same potential health risks. Alternatives 2 & 3 do not have a disproportionate effect on public health or disease transmission. The profession of shepherding has potential health risks inherent with it, as does any recreational or outdoor activity. However Alternatives 2 & 3 would not increase those inherent risks in any measurable amount.

In reviewing information about human health risks from sheep disease, the proposed action does not change policy relative to the shepherder’s job. The Proposed Action does not change guidelines relative to health standards (e.g., the need to handle or manage sheep in a certain way) that increase exposure, nor does it change management conditions such that the frequency of sheep disease or exposure might increase. By authorizing livestock grazing, there is no increase in the incidence of disease above what would occur typically without the authorization.
No significant health effects on recreationists or other users of public lands have been identified that would appreciably change as a result of the proposed action. Evidence indicates that the grazing operations as described in the proposed action do not pose a significant risk to human health. (Tengelsen, 2013)

2. **Unique characteristics of the area** - Based on field reviews, literature research, the Forest Plan and information in the EA and project file, I find there are no significant effects on unique characteristics such as historic or cultural resources, park lands, prime farm lands, wetlands, or wild and scenic rivers. Based on field reviews, literature research, the Forest Plan, and information in the EA and project file, I find there are no significant adverse effects anticipated to any environmentally sensitive or critical resource. I conclude the selected alternative will have no effect on these unique resources (EA Chapter 3).

3. **Controversy** - I find the effects on the human environment are not highly uncertain, are very unlikely to involve unique or unknown risks and are not likely to be highly controversial because there is no known scientific controversy on the impacts of the project. There are opposing opinions regarding the proposed action; however, there is no substantiated controversy over the effects themselves. The EA documents and discusses the effects in Chapter 3 and there is additional documentation on effects in the Project Record. Public comments and opinions are contained in the Project Record and summarized in the EA, Chapter 1, Issues and the Response to Comments.

4. **Uncertainty** - I find the effects analysis shows the effects are not uncertain and do not involve unique or unknown risk (EA - Chapter 3). The selected alternative is well defined and located over a limited area. The project has little potential to present unknown risks to the human environment. The livestock grazing activities do not involve unknown risks and the effects would be less than those experienced in past years of this activity. Livestock grazing on the National Forests has occurred for about a century and the effects are well-known and understood. The EA discloses the effects to the environment and no effects were considered unknown or uncertain (Chapter 3).

5. **Precedent** - The selected alternative is similar to other projects on the Sawtooth National Forest and on the National Forest System and does not set a precedent. Any future decisions will need to consider all relevant scientific and site-specific information available at that time. All proposed actions are allowed under the Forest Plan. This decision does not preclude the consideration and advancement of other proposals in the area.

6. **Cumulative Impact** - I find the cumulative impacts are not significant. This action is unrelated to other actions with the potential to cumulatively contribute to significant impacts. Cumulative effects are addressed in each resource section in Chapter 3 of the EA. Past, present, and foreseeable future projects that interact with the selected alternative are few, and the combined effects are not significant. Impacts due to the selected alternative will not contribute to negative, long-term cumulative effects to any
threatened, endangered, or sensitive species on the Ketchum Ranger District or Sawtooth National Forest.

7. **National Register of Historic Places: Significant scientific, cultural or historic resources** - I find the action will have no adverse effect on districts, sites, highways, structures, or objects listed in or eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places. The project area was surveyed and there are no known sites currently being affected by grazing activities. I find the action will not cause loss or destruction of significant scientific, cultural, or historical resources.

8. **Endangered or Threatened Species** - I find the action will not adversely affect any federally listed or proposed endangered or threatened species or Forest Service listed sensitive species or their critical habitat. A biological assessment/evaluation consistent with the requirements of this act was prepared based on the proposed action. Concurrence on the determination of effects for ESA listed species was received from the USDI Fish and Wildlife Service on July 19, 2013 for the *Biological Assessment and Evaluation of the Effects of Permitting Livestock Grazing on Shaw Mountain and Limekiln S&G Allotments on Fish, Wildlife, and Plant Species*.

9. **Legal Requirements for Environmental Protection** - I find the action is consistent with Federal, State, and local laws and requirements for the protection of the environment. Applicable laws and regulations were considered in the EA. The action is consistent with the Sawtooth Forest Plan. This action does not threaten to violate Federal, State, or local law or requirements imposed for the protection of the environment.

Based on the above, I find that there are no significant impacts and therefore an environmental impact statement will not be prepared.

**SIGNATURE**

Kurt Nelson
Ketchum District Ranger

9-26-2013

**Date**

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Figure 2. Vicinity Map of the Project Area