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Organization:

Title:

Comments: My wife and I moved to the Grand Junction area 5 years ago from Alaska. We are so happy the GMUG is such a great place and so close. We are non-motorized recreationists.

Grazing--We have seen a great deal of damage to the forest from excessively large number of cattle grazing in and around streams*, lakes and forests. We believe that the cattle are reducing the diversity of life** that would be more abundant if they were not there in such numbers.

* "Particularly on western rangelands, the main share of forage consumed by cattle in mid- and late summer may come from the riparian zone. "

Source: https://www.nrcs.usda.gov/Internet/FSE_DOCUMENTS/nrcs142p2_046597.pdf (p. 35)

** a recent summary article concluded, "In many regions of the world, grazing has reduced the density and biomass of many plant and animal species, reduced biodiversity, aided in the spread of exotic species and disease, altered ecological succession and landscape heterogeneity, altered nutrient cycles and distribution, accelerated erosion, and diminished both the productivity and land use options for future generations" Source: "Kauffman JB Pyke D . 2001. Range ecology, global livestock influences. Pages. 33-52. in Levin S, ed. Encyclopedia of Biodiversity, Vol. 5. San Diego: Academic Press." (p. 34).

The diverse strands of the food web formerly occupied by decomposers and scavengers dependent on large animal carcasses-wolves, carrion beetles, ants, vultures, and countless others-are not only missing, their absence is unmentioned. The decomposers themselves, which were also recycled in situ, no longer contribute to the ecosystem.

Water Quality--We have seen water quality greatly impacted by cattle stomping through stream and lakes. These riparian habitats should be given a high level of protection.

Two water-related factors are central to ranching in the arid West: provision of drinking water for livestock and irrigation of hay meadows for winter feed. It is well documented that the biota of small streams is negatively impacted by congregation of livestock and that irrigation has led to the conversion of native marshes, willow thickets, and wet meadows into ubiquitous hay meadows (Buckhouse et al. 1981, Marlow and Pogacnik 1985, Belsky et al. 1999).

Diversity--Many people recognize that humans have treated land as a commodity for sale to the highest bidder. We believe that increasing the diversity of life can only be a good thing for those who will inherit the world we leave behind.

With climate change in mind, there should be fewer cattle in the world, not more. We can help with this effort by reducing the acreage available to ranchers. I eat beef but I am also willing to pay more for beef that is not subsidized by benefits of grazing in the GMUG.

I reviewed the referenced article: "Livestock Grazing On The National Forests - Why continue to do it?" (April 2002) and found it be outdated and extremely biased in favor of continued grazing.

Logging--With climate change in mind, we think that leaving more trees in the forest can only be a good thing.

Motorized Vehicles--While hiking and camping, we have often been disturbed by ORV noise, particularly the riders who view the forest roads and trails as a race track to throw mud and make noise.

Oil & Gas--Fossil fuels should be left in the ground. The planet cannot tolerate more extraction and burning of the fuels that are no doubt making our home (planet earth) less hospitable and less habitable.