

From: katie fite katie@wildlandsdefense.org

Subject: Forest service administered grazing south of Hinkey Summit

Date: June 28, 2021 at 10:02 AM

To: Garrotto, Joseph -FS joseph.garrotto@usda.gov, Clarke, Douglas R -FS douglas.clarke@usda.gov, Winfrey, James -FS james.winfrey@usda.gov

KF

Hi,

I visited the Santa Rosa RD lands south of Hinkey Summit in the Indian Creek watershed on Monday June 21 and Sunday June 27. I was disgusted by the condition of lands for several miles as one ascends down along the access route, as well as the fact that the FS was allowing cattle grazing to take place on top of the moist snow pockets at higher elevations, ensuring they are devoid of vegetation so they maximally erode in wind and water - as well as having there livestock grossly trampling and polluting the very headwaters of the stream networks with their dying flows. These soils are highly erodible and the area is already severely damaged from just this type of long-running 1800s type grazing. As I drove down the main Forest access road (#0840) descending from Hinkey Summit, it reeked of livestock manure for mile after mile. The cows had stripped the flowers and gnawed back the basin wild rye on any deeper soil sites. The cows had grossly trampled and every accessible wet area - hastening site drying and longer term desertification and acidification processes too.

The jeep trail that ascends to the west toward Granite Peak right at Hinkey summit comes very close to the fence line on the severely grazed south side of the Summit. This area stunk too. You have to work really hard at nesting lands to death to get the entire grazed area far from water reeking of livestock manure. When I visited yesterday, many more cows were up at higher elevations denuding the minimal veg that had grown near in newly melted snow areas. This is the WORST possible management imaginable -the cows basically follow the green up slope - hitting all the native grasses and forbs when they are maximally vulnerable to grazing impacts and damage, and desiccating drainage network areas all the way to the top of the mountain.

It also appeared that an extraordinary number of cattle were being grazed here in 2021.

How many cows are allowed to be grazed in this area in 2021? For how long? What are the head months? What are the standards of use? Is there an available map of monitoring sites? How does this compare to cattle actual use levels over the past decade?

I will be sending you additional e-mails and photos of concern.

Please place these in the record for the appalling Santa Rosa Rangeland EA, which I urge you to abandon and instead embark on a sound and honest science-based analysis of grazing impacts in the era of the megadrought and climate stress.

Sincerely,

Katie Fite
WildLands Defense
PO Box 125
Boise, ID 83701
208-871-5738

PHOTOS of cow impacts south of Hinkey Summit



























