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Comments: The Proposed Action will continue the alternating years grazing use in the Sweetwater Allotment. The permit for this permittee is 120 head during the period 7/10 through 9/25 for an average annual use of 200 aums. For a number of years, the Forest Service has authorized use on alternating years only, but with additional AUMs on the use years to average 200 aums per year.

In the scoping documents, the permittees on the Sweetwater Allotment requested use every year rather than every other year. The permittees on the Sweetwater Allotment also own the BLM Gold Creek Allotment. The 5-pasture deferred rotation management on the Gold Creek Allotment has two pastures which adjoin the Sweetwater Allotment. The Sweetwater Allotment works well as a single pasture in the deferred rotation grazing scheme on the BLM Gold Creek Allotment because the permittees use the two BLM pastures which adjoin the Sweetwater Allotment during the July to September time frame. The Sweetwater Allotment is essentially a sixth pasture on the alternating years.

The Forest Service discounted the permittees' request for use every year by stating that the permittees also requested additional AUMs. The permittees may have requested additional AUMs as a part of a proposed alternative, but the primary request for use every year in conjunction with the pasture rotation on the Gold Creek Allotment, with cattle numbers to be flexible and part of the analysis.

The specific alternative which the permittees request on the Sweetwater Allotment is for up to 200 AUMs every year between July 10 and September 25 rather than limiting use to alternating years. This would likely mean that the Sweetwater Allotment would receive short duration grazing annually. For example, 400 head of cow-calf pairs could be grazed for 15 days or 200 pairs for 30 days. This alternative should have been analyzed in the Draft EA and should be included now.

In summary, the Sweetwater Allotment permittees request the Forest Service to analyze an additional alternative in which livestock would use the Sweetwater Allotment every year during the July 10-September 25 time frame with up to 200 AUMs.