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Comments: Please accept the following comments and suggestions on the proposed updates to the Forest Service's rangeland management directives.

To my knowledge, the United States currently allows domestic livestock to graze on something close to eight million acres of National Forest designated wilderness in the lower 48 states. Most of that territory is watershed regions not particularly well suited for grazing. The proposed changes put forward for grazing guidelines represent a potentially ecologically disastrous expansion and are the opposite of a good idea for lands held in the public trust. Livestock grazing has a nasty tendency to severely degrade water quality and soil, spread invasive plants and weeds, and destroy otherwise viable habitat and ecosystems.

Please understand that I am not speaking as an Earth First type or a radical vegan or anything like that. I love beef, lamb, and fish. I adore the sport of fishing, although to be honest I have little skill or luck at freshwater fishing, only saltwater. I am saying that I understand the wilderness can only take so much overuse from humanity before things get too broken to repair, and then neither the wild nor the domestic can prosper.

If this country and the Forest Service wish to preserve American wilderness territory in anything resembling a meaningful condition, impacts from grazing must be fully examined and addressed through a transparent, public process that complies with federal laws, including the National Environmental Policy Act. Any revisions to Forest Service grazing policies should encourage and prioritize voluntary grazing permit retirement to reduce permitted livestock grazing across the National Forest system, including within Wilderness, so as to protect Wilderness, other public lands, and wildlife.

The proposed changes represent a reversion to the grotesquely excessive levels permitted in the 1960s, which should never have been allowed to happen in the first place. The recovery of imperiled or threatened species needs to be prioritized on National Forests and livestock grazing managed so as not to jeopardize species' recovery. The Forest Service must develop policies that ensure the agency will maintain authority for grazing management decisions and hold grazing permittees accountable for the impacts their livestock has on public lands.

Ryan Zinke and his ilk are no longer in charge in Washington. The current form of the proposal feels very much as if he wrote it while riding his horse in to the Department of the Interior that infamous first day. It would not only fuel livestock grazing's contribution to the climate and biodiversity crises, but runs directly counter to the Biden Administration's 30x30 land conservation agenda by sacrificing what could be protected lands to the commercial livestock industry.

If the Forest Service wishes to amend its directives, the Forest Service must undertake a more comprehensive rulemaking process that complies with the National Environmental Policy Act. The Forest Service must do the right thing for Wilderness, other public lands, and wildlife by dropping its proposed Rangeland Management Directives and coming up with something better.

Thank you.