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Comments: As someone who works with ecologists and land managers, I know that theres a lot of uncertainty over the effect that grazing has on the ecosystems of Californias central and south coasts. For instance, many experts are quite concerned over its impact on woodland regeneration (e.g., Demography and Recruitment Limitations of Three Oak Species in California by Tyler et al.).

I, therefore, see no reason to expand grazing in the Los Padres National Forest, and especially the San Rafael Wilderness, which is designated critical habitat for the California red-legged frog and steelhead. I know that the wilderness was expanded into the rangelands where preexisting grazing takes precedence, as per Wilderness Act 36 CFR § 293.7 but this environmental assessment is an opportunity to fully commit to expanding this protected area of Southern Californias wildlands.

Indeed, on page 63 you detail all the effects of a No-Grazing alternative. From the perspective of water quality, invasive plants, biodiversity, fisheries, soil stabilization, and camping these all seem like benefits. You specifically write that This would result in overall improvements to wilderness character (pp 68).

The the effects of no grazing on fuel loads can be managed with prescribed burns, which have been successfully carried out in Santa Barbara county. There would be economic impacts, but, as you note, cattle ranching has become an ever smaller part of the regions economy, and you even note that there are only three ranches that currently rely on forage from NFS land (pp 70). Our land management should reflect this reality.

I urge the Forest Service to reconsider its choice to adopt Alternative 1 as outlined in the environmental assessment, as the findings therein are reason enough to pursue less intensive grazing.

Sincerely,

Harrison Tasoff