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First name: Abby

Last name: Indreland

Organization:

Title:

Comments: [External Email]Public Comment on FS-Lolo Plan Revision

[External Email]

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To whom it may concern,

This public comment is in regards to the overall Lolo National Forest multi-use plan and a request for continued grazing on public land. The Indreland family in particular has maintained a grazing lease on the Lolo National Forest for the last 80+ years. Grazing is critical to maintaining agricultural heritage in an ever-growing community where open space is being taken over by development. There are no longer the grazing and hay fields available that have been historically utilized.

Grazing has numerous benefits for public land including fire mitigation when livestock utilize undergrowth that would otherwise be vastly overgrown. For the Indreland Lolo grazing lease in particular, our family and several volunteers helped to recently install a new wildlife friendly fence to better contain the lease area and protect riparian habitat from livestock influence. The fence has several gates that are opened for wildlife passage when the lease is not being utilized. We have also removed fence that was part of an old, unused lease area.

The Indreland Ranch is pursuing a conservation easement on private property to further protect and conserve the family ranch, which borders the Forest Service. Without a grazing lease, the purpose of the ranch and continuing to run livestock in an economical fashion is infeasible. The Indreland Ranch provides habitat for wildlife including but not limited to elk, deer, black bear, grizzly bear, wolves, and more that utilize both private and public land. The connectivity of the Forest Service to the Ranch is critical. We realize there are also many other areas that rely on grazing leases to sustain generational agriculture operations and maintain open space. Without agriculture and ranches, there would be less overall habitat for wildlife.

Thank you for your consideration,

The Indreland Family