

Data Submitted (UTC 11): 8/23/2023 5:00:38 PM

First name: Paul

Last name: Busch

Organization:

Title:

Comments: I strongly oppose the status quo and strongly support an end to grazing in the high Uintas.

I grew up in Idaho Falls, and had the great joy of visiting the Uintas on summer break after high school graduation for a 4-day backpacking trip. That the Uintas are one of Utah's finest wild places is (unfortunately) common knowledge at this point. What remains to be common knowledge is the length to which management agencies continue to plunder the land of its resources, its wildness, and its character.

The subalpine meadows of the Uintas are delicate ecosystems. Bogs and meadows, even at high elevations are especially carbon dense, and grazing damages this natural system that benefits the planet's atmosphere. These are also great summer ranges for all sorts of wildlife, including elk, moose, and bighorn sheep. Bighorn sheep are uniquely susceptible to the diseases of domestic sheep and more directly compete for resources, and that should be reason enough to keep grazing out of the high country. Wolves, which are an endangered species in 95% of Utah, including the Uintas, need all the wild country they can to recover in the Beehive State, and the Uintas are ground zero for wolf recovery. Sheep presence, especially without serious protection from cattlemen and dogs, will inevitably lead to conflict, which is almost always deadly for wolves.

Water resources for fish and wildlife are also affected by livestock. Climate change is rapidly changing eastern Utah's climate, and this region has already seen 2 degrees C of warming from industrial pollution and land conversion.

<https://www.washingtonpost.com/graphics/2020/national/climate-environment/climate-change-colorado-utah-hot-spot/>

Because of this additional warming, snowpack is more volatile, stream temperatures are higher, and forbs struggle to flourish. Climate change is here, the earth is hotter, and the Uintas are ground zero. It should be obvious that our obligation (and the agency's obligation) as stewards of wild places in a time of overlapping crises should be to secure more wild country, decrease our impact in the cirques of the Uintas, and make right a world gone pretty darn wrong.

Please consider, for the reasons above, to end grazing in the 10 allotments in the High Uinta Wilderness.