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Organization:

Title:

Comments: if I could submit this revised version of the original letter I sent I would prefer you keep this one. I've had to do the letter on my phone as we have been traveling without a computer so I know it is not edited in the format, I would like it to be, but this letter is a bit more polished. Thank you so much.

To whom it may concern,
Regarding the Forest Service grazing revision management plan,

We wanted to write a letter of our questions and concerns regarding the new grazing management plan.

First off to give you a little history, our ranch, Iron Springs Ranch, a part of the Hall ranches at Delhi, together were homesteaded in 1916. We are the fourth generation of Halls to own and manage the ranch properties that are intermingled with Forest service Comanche grazing land.

Our families have run on grazing permits with the US Forest since the Comanche national grasslands were developed into a grazing permittee program in 1960.

Our heritage is on the land in Southeast Colorado, and we believe our ranching legacy is also how we have loved, lived and managed the land successfully for generations.

We have won conservationist of the year awards as well as for years participated in multiple programs for wildlife habitats, and grass monitoring programs.

You probably won't find people who love the land and want to see it flourish more than the cattle producers families who have lived on it for generations. So the health of the grass and land goes our livelihood and lifestyle goes.

Our Hall families, 110 year history on the land, sets the framework for the deep care and interests our family has for the grasslands being productive and sustainable.

I shared this lifelong history to help give context for our comments.

Our first area of concern in the plan would be regarding the terminology used to talk about private land being in intermingled or "fragmented" within the public FS land, and referenced as being a deterrent to efficiently managing the ecosystems.

This comment is incorrect and false. Cattle grazing practices and land and grass monitoring systems are used every single day by cattle producers, and they only help sustain, grow and improve the grass land's ecosystems.

Another comment would be on the 50+ species of plants and varying wildlife reportedly found on the grasslands. While it's been stated that biologist and others have explored these species at random points throughout our grasslands, it is a question to us as why permittee's haven't been included in the research? We live on the land and participate every day of our lives across the grasslands, why wouldn't we have been asked if some of these species even exist currently on these lands? After looking at the species list, we know several that do not. We are truly the feet on the ground who manage, care for, love, and in-depth see the different ecosystems presented most every day of the year.

Another concern would be the use of the word "urbanization" used throughout the perspective plan. Urbanization is not happening on the Comanche grasslands. Or surrounding areas. If anything, we have lost the presence of people and communities as witnessed by the multiple old homestead ruins and old schools and communities that

are now abandoned. There's less people and urbanization on the Comanche grasslands and intermingled private lands than there ever has been. So urbanization does not pose any type of threat to the ecosystems of the Comanche grasslands nor is it even a topic of discussion because it's simply not happening.

We understand the need for looking over a new land management plan for the forest service. But we feel one of the wisest questions asked at the recent webinar meeting was -what is not working from the old plan? Why don't we start there. So many practices have been successful with the partnership of the cattle producers who have held permits and helped manage them over the last 65 years. The grasslands are growing and being productive because of ranching practices and management.

Let's focus on what works well and add to it instead of using threatening language towards our livelihood, good practices and partnerships in the proposed plan.

Another concern of ours would be the fact that it seems like the Ag industry and beef industry is under attack in our beautiful state. Agriculture produces a lot of economic impact, as well as provides food for our nation. Beef keeps our nation sustainable on its own food source. It is vitally important to encourage the cattle industry across America and help with growth as cattle numbers are down as well. We need cattle producers, and beef to keep the food industry for our nation stable.

Yet, it feels like things of much less importance like prairie dogs and prairie chickens are being elevated over beef cattle that actually feed our nation. We truly ask that we work as a partnership together with the FS to promote agriculture and wildlife, and the best grass monitoring practices that help both flourish as they are vital to sustainability as a community, state and finally a nation.

Last concern we would like to voice is in regard who is helping in developing "the plan". It seems as if the ranchers have had to take a backseat to the process while other groups/people, some of whom are not native to Colorado, do not know the south east area of the state or our treasured grasslands, are making decisions for our area with no specific expertise here.

We apologize for skepticism or a defensiveness from our group as a whole, but there is not much trust in government systems who have previously discouraged agriculture. It's very hard, knowing that while agriculture truly is the backbone of our nation, and sustains our food supply, that we are still the first ones to be pressed from state and federal sources.

It is vital for us to be able to continue our years of good partnership and productiveness with the FS, that benefits the grasslands at the highest level.

Thank you for your time and consideration. We look forward to more discussion and collaboration on this land management plan as it moves forward.

Sincerely,
Gary and Havilah Hall
Iron Springs Ranch

Monk Hall Delhi Ranch