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COUNTY OF SISKIYOU
COUNTY ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICE

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RE: Middle Tompkins and Lake Mountain Grazing Allotments Scoping

Stephanie and Daniel:

I want to extend my appreciation for the opportunity to attend the Middle Tompkins and Lake Mountain grazing allotments tour. It provided excellent insight to the challenges facing the National Forests as well as the permittees in the grazing program. In addition, I want to compliment the Klamath National Forest (KNF) team for its diligence and excellent work in complying with its mandate to respond to public concerns on the management of federal lands.

As to the proposals relative to the allotments that were outlined on the field trip on the ground and in the discussions, I feel that the KNF is more than adequately insuring that public resources are sustainably managed. In fact, I am more than a little concerned that the KNF is going overboard on the monitoring and mitigations. My worry on this account is
rooted in the fact that monitoring and mitigation come at significant expense that is often not justified by a corresponding beneficial effect on the landscape.

Superfluous costs added to the KNF and the permittee have a negative effect on both of their bottom lines that neither can afford. The grazing program is too important to allow it to fall victim to extravagant extraneous costs that needlessly render the program financially unsustainable. It is no secret that otherwise sound natural resource management projects have been abandoned thanks to willful efforts by project opponents to increase project costs far beyond the project’s ability to incur the expense.

Thus it is with regard to these and other grazing leases that I urge the KNF land managers to bear in mind that all

monitoring and mitigation proposals should result in a substantive salubrious effect on the landscape. If there is likely to be no such measurable outcome, then a more pragmatic adaptive approach should be taken that relies on the judgment and experience of the KNF grazing specialists and the permittee to achieve a mutually agreeable, feasible solution. There is sufficient knowledge and awareness of the challenges of public land grazing that both parties can be relied upon to address any hiccups that develop without the need for cost-prohibitive precautionary measures to be put in place up front of any demonstrably negative impact. After all, the field trip was nothing if not testimony to the resiliency and evolutionary propensity of the natural world.

Siskiyou County's interest in these matters is certainly on behalf of our economy and the environment. However, when it comes to a mere 25 pairs of bovines ranging across thousands of acres for about three months, the economic and environmental impact is negligible. Rather, the County's concern on this issue is far more tied to the necessity to inculcate in our communities and younger generations the ethos and skillset required to perpetuate grazing as the sound management tool that modern range science has shown it to be. Certainly, the KNF demonstrated its recognition of this reality on the tour.

Nevertheless, there is only so much tolerance for mind-numbing, gratuitous bureaucracy that the sort of person needed to babysit cows in the mountains can be expected to endure. As well, there is limited tolerance for federal bean-counters and the public to absorb unjustifiable red ink. The requisite compromises needed to keep these parties from pulling the pin on this essential land management tool will not come at long term expense to the environment. Rather, any impact that low-budget practical compromises might have will not only be very short term, but will be repaid with interest in the benefit grazing has to the Klamath National Forest and the people and communities within its boundaries.

Thank you for the opportunity to participate and comment in the development of this project. Sincerely,

Ric Costales, Natural Resource Policy Specialist
County of Siskiyou