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First name: Ian

Last name: Nelson

Organization: Pacific Crest Trail Association

Title: Northern CA/Southern OR Regional Representative

Comments: RE: Pacific Crest Trail Association Comments on the Oak Knoll Grazing Allotment

Dear Kaleigh Maze,

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the Oak Knoll Range Environmental Assessment. I am writing on behalf of the 14,000 member Pacific Crest Trail Association (PCTA). PCTA is the Forest Service's primary private partner in the management, maintenance and protection of the Pacific Crest National Scenic Trail (PCT). The foundation for this private-public partnership in the operation of National Scenic Trails dates back to the 1968 National Trails System Act. Section 11 of the Act states, "[hellip] the head of any Federal agency administering Federal lands, are authorized to encourage volunteers and volunteer organizations to plan, develop, maintain, and manage, where appropriate, trails throughout the Nation." As such, it is PCTA's role to advocate for the best possible protection of the PCT and the experience it offers to PCT hikers and equestrians.

As you are aware, the Pacific Crest National Scenic Trail traverses the northern boundary of the East Beaver Allotment for approximately 16 miles along the Siskiyou Crest. This is a spectacular section of PCT with sustained views, mixed coniferous forests, and high mountain meadows. Of particular interest and concern specific to this project are the many important water sources along the PCT. During my 15 years working on the PCT along the Siskiyou Crest, I have often encountered cows along the trail on the Siskiyou Crest.

The two main water sources within the allotment area include Donomore Creek just south of the Oregon state line and Sheep Camp Spring on the Siskiyou Crest near Jackson Gap. In my experience, Donomore Meadows is where I have often encountered the largest groups of cows. And, I understand they could have been from allotments on either the Klamath National Forest or the Rogue River-Siskiyou National Forest. That said, I would ask that the Forest consider setting up photo points to monitor potential impacts within the meadow complex with a particular emphasis on the area near the PCT footbridge over Donomore Creek. At the Sheep Camp Spring location, the fact that the spring is piped from the hill side should minimize impacts on the water source. However, there is potential for impacts in the area around the spring and a photo point there as well could be quite informative.

I appreciate that the Forest included the following statement in the EA: Should PCT condition information become available which indicates any substantial resource impacts from the proposed action which are outside of legal or Forest Plan requirements, then adaptive management or administrative actions such as fencing or corralling would be implemented to minimize possible impacts. Photo points could prove useful in monitoring such PCT conditions. In addition, I stand ready and willing to work with Forest staff and share information received from PCT users as well as PCTA volunteers who help maintain the PCT along the Siskiyou Crest.

I thank the Klamath National Forest for the opportunity to comment and look forward to working with Forest staff as the planning process moves forward.

Sincerely,

Ian Nelson

Northern California/Southern Oregon Regional Representative

Pacific Crest Trail Association