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BLM continues scoping meetings to identify potential improvements to administration of grazing regulations on public lands

BLM seeks to identify possible revisions to regulations covering 18,000 permits, leases on 155 million acres

WASHINGTON – The Bureau of Land Management continues to listen to the public, grazing leaseholders and other stakeholders as part of the initial scoping process to consider proposed revisions to the agency’s grazing regulations. The BLM currently manages livestock grazing on 155 million of the 245 million acres of public land and administers nearly 18,000 grazing permits and leases.

“Sustainable livestock grazing on public lands is a part of the history and culture of the West. We’re seeking input on specific aspects of the current regulations which may be in need of revision or that could be improved, in order to keep public land livestock grazing viable for the future,” said Casey Hammond, Acting Assistant Secretary of the Interior for Land and Minerals Management. At this point in the process, we are asking the public, the agricultural community and other stakeholders for their ideas, in order to develop specific proposals.”

Revisions identified through the scoping process will be incorporated into a proposed rule that will be subject to additional public review and comment. The agency published a Notice of Intent in the *Federal Register* to prepare an Environmental Impact Statement evaluating alternatives for potential changes to grazing regulations on January 21, 2020.

The BLM seeks to identify potential changes that will update, modernize and streamline the grazing regulations and provide greater flexibility for land and resource management. Through this rulemaking process, the BLM seeks to improve existing land-use planning and grazing permitting procedures, while simultaneously promoting public lands conservation. The BLM hopes to improve its stewardship of the nation’s rangeland resources by strengthening controls to prevent unauthorized grazing, enhancing environmental protections across various non-grazing land-use programs, and improving public input opportunities.

The BLM has three remaining scoping meetings after the first was completed on February 6 in Miles City, MT. These meetings are being held to get feedback and ideas about what—if anything—should be changed in the BLM’s grazing regulations. Remaining dates and venues are below:

- **Las Cruces, New Mexico:** February 11 at the Las Palmas Grill, 201 East University Ave., from 4:30-7:30 p.m.;
- **Elko, Nevada:** February 18 at the Elko Convention Center, 700 Moren Way, from 4:30-7:30 p.m.; and
- **Casper, Wyoming:** February 20, at the Casper Events Center, 1 Events Dr., from 4:30-7:30 p.m.

All of the scoping meetings are being conducted in an open house format in which members of the public can come and go at any point during the event.

The BLM is currently managing 11 demonstration projects in six states as part of our outcome-based grazing authorizations initiative. These demonstration projects provide BLM, working in partnership with ranchers and other partners, with opportunities to improve our guidance and best management practices to use when issuing grazing permits. Lessons learned from developing cooperative monitoring plans and land health evaluations under this initiative may also be incorporated into this regulatory process.

Comments on potential regulation revisions may be provided at the scoping meetings, or submitted in writing until **March 6, 2020**. Meeting information, announcements, instructions on how to provide comments, and pertinent documents can be found at the BLM website at <https://go.usa.gov/xyMqb>.

For more information, contact Seth Flanigan, BLM Project Manager, at 208-384-3450 or sflanigan@blm.gov.

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The BLM manages more than 245 million acres of public land located primarily in 12 Western states, including Alaska. The BLM also administers 700 million acres of sub-surface mineral estate throughout the nation. Diverse activities authorized on these lands generated \$96 billion in sales of goods and services throughout the American economy in fiscal year 2017. These activities supported more than 468,000 jobs.