Strategy V. Modify Type of Use and Visitor Behavior

TACTIC 29: DISCOURAGE OR PROHIBIT STOCK

PURPOSE
Generally, stock cause more impact—both social and ecological—than humans (Cole 1987; Stankey and Schreyer 1937). Limiting or eliminating stock use will reduce many types of problems. On the other hand, it will also eliminate or reduce opportunities for a traditional use of wilderness that some visitors value highly.

DESCRIPTION
Either use a variety of communication techniques to persuade visitors to not use stock or establish and enforce a regulation prohibiting stock.

CURRENT USAGE
Rare. Only a few wildernesses prohibit stock use. Prohibition of stock in certain parts of the wilderness (discussed in more detail under tactic 16) is common, however. It is unknown how many areas discourage stock use; this is probably rare.

COSTS TO VISITORS
Low to high. Costs depend on the number of visitors affected. Overall costs are low because few wilderness areas have much use by packstock. Costs to stock users would be very high, however, and overall costs could be high in those areas with considerable stock use. Such costs could be reduced by allowing stock use in some parts of the area or by providing opportunities elsewhere for recreation with stock of a similar kind and quality.

COSTS TO MANAGEMENT
Low to high. In many places the political costs of such an action would be extremely high. Outfitters offering horseback trips would be eliminated if stock use was prohibited. Other costs include dissemination of information and enforcement. Such costs would be offset by less need for facility development and maintenance, particularly of trails.

EFFECTIVENESS
This tactic would be highly effective in dealing with packstock impacts on the environment and visitor experience. Again, this benefit must be weighed against the high cost of lost recreational opportunities for stock users.

COMMENTS
Increased stock use in other places where stock use is not discouraged or prohibited must be considered. Selective prohibitions on stock will generally be more easily defended than a complete ban. Visitors tend to accept closing some areas to horses, even in areas that receive a considerable amount of horse use. Wilderness-wide prohibitions on horse use were less acceptable in one study (Hendee and others 1968). Adoption of low-impact horse use techniques (tactics 25, 26, and 27) and efforts to modify hikers attitudes about horses (tactics 32 and 33) could also help avoid limitations on stock.

SOURCES