G. Livestock Grazing.

1. Continuation of Livestock Grazing. Grazing of livestock, where established prior to the effective date of the Act designating the area as wilderness, must be permitted to continue subject to this policy and the BLM grazing regulations 43 CFR 4100. Existing grazing may include not only the utilization of the forage resource, but also the use and maintenance of livestock management improvements and facilities associated with the grazing activity at the time of designation and which are in compliance with an approved Allotment Management Plan.

2. Congressional Grazing Guidelines. Congressional guidelines regarding “Grazing in National Forest Wilderness Areas,” published in House Report 96-1126, dated June 24, 1980, must be implemented in all BLM-administered wilderness with pre-existing grazing. These guidelines are applied using the normal planning and environmental assessment process and are integrated into all management plans for the wilderness area.
Rangeland Management.

A. Livestock Grazing Operations.

1. Continuation of Existing Grazing. Section 4(d)(4)(2) of the Wilderness Act provides for continued livestock grazing where established prior to designating the area as wilderness. The objective of livestock management in wilderness is to utilize the forage resource in conformity with established wilderness objectives for each area and the BLM grazing regulations (43 CFR 4100), and through practical, reasonable and uniform application of the congressional guidelines and policy.

2. Established Grazing. The term “established” means livestock grazing authorized by permit or lease at the time an area is designated as wilderness. The level of livestock grazing at the time of designation will be the active preference.

3. Congressional Grazing Guidelines. Further insight on the subject is in the Conference Report on S.2099 (House Report 96-1126) under the heading “Grazing in National Forest Wilderness Areas.” These congressional guidelines and policy are to be considered in the overall context of the purposes and direction of the Wilderness Act and are applied nationwide. They are reprinted verbatim as an excerpt from House Report 96-1126 in Appendix 2.

a. Management Plans. The congressional guidelines and policies must be applied in accordance with the environmental analysis process. Management prescriptions are determined through the BLM resource management planning process and implemented by the allotment management plan. Planning for livestock grazing operations in designated wilderness is through the normal BLM resource management planning process.

(1) Resource management plans establish:

(a) Objectives and prescriptions for management of wilderness. These are based on resource inventory data which includes, but is not limited to, ecosystem identification, rangeland conditions, existing uses, and areas of existing or potential conflict.

(b) Use levels of the rangeland resource and its relationship with other uses.

(2) Allotment management plans, within the direction established by the resource management plan, prescribe:

(a) The manner and extent to which livestock grazing will be conducted to meet wilderness objectives, rangeland resource needs, desired conditions of ecosystems, and other resource values.

(b) Direction and scheduling for accomplishing goals and objectives on individual allotments, including the development of rangeland improvement schedules and grazing system to be followed.

b. Permits. Grazing operations within wilderness areas will be authorized by grazing permits. Permits for livestock operations may be issued only in areas where grazing was established at the time the wilderness was designated.

c. Rangeland Analysis.

(1) Rangeland analysis in wilderness areas must follow the normal BLM standards.

(2) The development of the allotment management plan determines the need for and standards of rangeland improvements and prescribes the grazing system to be followed.

(3) Where an approved allotment management plan exists at the time an area is designated as wilderness, it must be reviewed in context with the congressional guidelines and policy. Necessary modifications are integrated into the resource management plan and the allotment management plan.
(4) Allotment management plans for allotments partially or entirely within designated wilderness must specifically identify the following:

(a) The use of motor vehicles, motorized equipment or other forms of mechanical equipment including specific equipment, where it is to be used, when it is to be used, and what it is to be used for.

(b) Rangeland improvement structures and installations to be maintained, constructed, or reconstructed in achieving rangeland management objectives, including maintenance standards.

(c) The means to handle emergencies. In bonafide emergencies or urgent situations, decisions are based on all relevant factors and use of good judgment.

(d) **Rangeland Improvements.**

(1) The following criteria should be considered in determining whether to use motor vehicles, motorized equipment or mechanical transport in constructing, maintaining or applying rangeland improvements and practices.

(a) Minimize threat to or loss of property.

(b) Minimize use of motorized equipment within wilderness.

(c) Develop and manage the rangeland resource in a cost-effective manner.

(d) Achieve least amount of impact by non-conforming uses on wilderness values through: Scheduling during periods of low use; harmonizing improvements to surrounding landscape; and, locating improvements to achieve maximum screening and fully utilize natural feature opportunities.

(e) Type of practice or construction material.

(f) Timeliness, including frequency and time of year.

(g) Need to deal with emergency or urgent situations that develop through acts of nature, such as drought, heavy snow.

(h) Location of nearest ranch facilities in relation to the project.

(i) Availability of primitive transport, e.g., team and wagon, saddle and pack stock, etc.

(j) Length of time to complete a project by alternative methods.

(k) Availability of temporary camp and feed sites.

(l) Age and health factors of permittee.

(2) Documentation of the environmental analysis which considers the authorization of rangeland improvement construction and/or maintenance, and the use of motor vehicles, motorized equipment, and mechanical transport must be made in an environmental assessment.

(e) **Structural Rangeland Improvements.** Rangeland improvement alternatives must be developed and evaluated through the environmental analysis process, including consultation with grazing permittees and other interested publics. Alternatives which utilize a practical and reasonable approach to meet rangeland and wilderness management objectives must be selected.

(f) **Modification of Permits.** The construction of new rangeland improvements or replacement of existing rangeland improvements must be in accordance with BLM grazing regulations. Special consideration must be given to construction standards and techniques to achieve the most practical and reasonable approach considering the wilderness resource. Specific consideration must be given to:

(1) Costs of using natural materials.

(2) Alternative means of construction which harmonize to the extent possible with the wilderness resource.

(3) Use of motor vehicles, motorized equipment, or mechanical transport needed for construction of improvements.

(g) All rangeland improvements must be listed in the allotment management plan along with maintenance schedules.
(1) Maintenance.

(a) The maintenance of existing necessary rangeland improvements may be allowed to continue. Those determined unnecessary through an environmental analysis must be phased out and removed on an agreed upon schedule.

(b) The techniques used to maintain rangeland improvements and other related grazing activities require careful study, consideration of options, and a practical and reasonable solution. Existing use and requests for new use of motor vehicles, motorized equipment, or other forms of mechanical transport, including during emergencies, must be reviewed and congressional grazing guidelines applied. The occasional use of motor vehicles, motorized equipment, or mechanical transport may be permitted where practical alternatives are not available.

(c) The guidelines address occasional use of motor vehicles, motorized equipment, or mechanical transport where practical alternatives do not exist, with application only to those portions of a wilderness where they occurred prior to wilderness designation. It is important to look at all options and their impacts. Good judgment is necessary in the decisionmaking process.

(2) New Improvements. The construction of new rangeland improvements is permissible if necessary for resource protection (rangeland and/or wilderness) and the effective management of these resources, rather than to accommodate increased numbers of livestock. The rangeland analysis may indicate that a reduction of use is necessary for rangeland protection, or new rangeland improvements are necessary for improved management or protection of wilderness values. New improvements cannot be justified solely on the basis that they will aid intensive management resulting in increased grazing.

(3) Types of Materials.

(a) When permitted, new or existing improvements should be of materials which harmonize with the wilderness character of the area to reduce the impact of artificial objects on the natural environment. Natural (native) materials for improvements must be used unless costs are unreasonable or they do not harmonize with the wilderness.

(b) When replacement of an existing range improvement is contemplated, the following must be considered:

i. The necessity of the rangeland improvement for livestock grazing operations, resource protection, or enhancement of wilderness values. Some improvements may no longer be needed or should be relocated. Existing rangeland improvements may be necessary for management of the rangeland and wilderness resources. Other alternatives for meeting needs must be explored.

ii. Design, location, and type of materials feasible to serve the purpose and yet be harmonious with natural features of the wilderness must be considered. A steel post and wire fence may be less obstructive than a native pole fence. A redwood water trough may be less noticeable than a steel one. A windmill may better harmonize with wilderness values than an earthen stock pond.

iii. Material and labor costs for natural materials versus artificial materials. Good judgment, in consultation with permittees, provides the basis for determining what is reasonable for the permittee’s livestock grazing operation and the particular wilderness values involved.

h. Non-Structural Rangeland Improvements. Non-structural rangeland improvement practices can be approved where they were part of the management at the time the wilderness was established and where their continuance is necessary to maintain livestock grazing operations. The need for non-structural rangeland improvements and practices must be carefully analyzed using the following criteria:

(1) Seeding. The need for seeding must be carefully analyzed. Seeding will be approved only for:

(a) Areas where human activities have caused the loss or threaten the existence of indigenous species.

(b) Areas where human activities have denuded or caused loss of soil, providing the actions or activities responsible for the deterioration have been corrected and natural vegetation is insufficient and ineffective.
(c) Maintenance of livestock grazing operations where seeding was practiced prior to the designation of wilderness. Species seeded must be those that are native or naturalized to the area. Seed may be broadcast, except in special situations where other seeding methods are necessary.

(2) Plant Control. Plant control must be approved only for:

(a) Native plants when needed to maintain livestock grazing operations where practiced prior to the designation of wilderness.

(b) Noxious farm weeds by grubbing or with chemicals when they threaten lands outside wilderness or are spreading within the wilderness, provided the control can be effected without serious adverse impacts on wilderness values.

(3) Irrigation. Artificial irrigation or water spreading may be done only to maintain livestock grazing operations where practiced prior to the designation of wilderness.

(4) Fertilizing. Fertilization may be used only as an aid to revegetation of disturbed areas approved in item (1) or to maintain livestock grazing operations where practiced prior to the designation of wilderness. Liming is considered a fertilization practice.

(5) Prescribed Burning. Prescribed burning can be approved for rangeland management purposes only where it was practiced prior to the designation of wilderness and is necessary to maintain livestock grazing operations; such use must be approved in a fire management plan. (Prescribed burning may be permitted for other purposes, under guidelines in 34B. and 35, such as in cases where reestablishment of natural fire regimes is desired. Rangeland management objectives may be achieved through such prescribed burns and through management of natural fire as prescribed in fire management plans.)