PROTECTING BALANCED & FLEXIBLE
MULTIPLE USE

PUBLIC LANDS COUNCIL EST. 1968

Federal land management agencies manage public lands according to a principle of "multiple use": many different uses of the land should be balanced to generate the best value for the American public. Both the Federal Land Policy and Management Act (FLPMA) and the Multiple Use and Sustained Yield Act (MUSY) outline specific uses that agencies must consider and outline that the value is not required to be monetary, but many uses of public lands, like grazing, generate important revenue for the Treasury and for local BLM and USFS units. **Grazing protects lands so other multiple uses remain possible on the landscape.**

Multiple-use management is undermined by restrictive land designations, overreaching federal regulations, and initiatives that pick winners and losers between uses. Responsible multiple-use management results in conservation of public lands and stable public investment in Western landscapes.

SPECIAL USE LAND DESIGNATIONS

Public lands are managed according to a complex series of requirements under NEPA, FLPMA, MUSY, and more. When Congress institutes restrictive designations like Wilderness Areas, primitive areas, Natural Conservation Areas, and others, the uses in these areas are restricted. Management tools are also constrained, often leading to compromised land health, increased fire risk, and lost local revenue. **PLC generally opposes new land designations because they compromise water rights, exclude management tools like grazing, and threaten the health of neighboring landscapes.**

NATIONAL MONUMENTS

The Antiquities Act directed that the White House could set aside the "smallest area compatible" to achieve protection of a certain artefact. Over time, that direction has been ignored. Today, more than **778 million acres** are set aside in monuments. This is the same area as 33 Maines, 7 Texases, and more than 2 Alaskas. **Monuments routinely exclude historic grazing access, despite the protective fuels reduction and ongoing management grazing performs. Special areas are more at risk after grazing is eliminated.**

ENERGY

Public lands grazing and energy have coexisted on the landscape for decades. When grazing is interrupted by mines, transmission lines, or pipelines, agencies should find workable solutions to comply with permit conditions to maintain existing grazing levels. While most developments are compatible with grazing, utility-scale solar installations exclude all other uses by converting a multiple-use landscape into a single-use set-aside. **Solar fields require elimination of native grasses and elimination of grazing, causing long-term conversion of an area.** At a minimum, **BLM should revise the updated Western Solar Plan to direct avoidance of existing grazing allotments and should prioritize areas that cannot be grazed in the future.**

REGULATORY OVERREACH

BLM and USFS regularly create regulatory burdens that disadvantage specific uses. BLM's ability to unilaterally create designations like the **Areas of Critical Environmental Concern (ACEC)** should be constrained as should USFS's ability to create zones that exclude grazing. These processes should be subject to public comment and NEPA requirements. Further, federal agencies should not be allowed to create federal wildlife migration corridors—wildlife management is the responsibility of the state, so federal agencies should take the states' lead.

RECREATION

Grazing protects lands from damage from wildfire and supports key infrastructure used by recreation, however grazing permittees bear the burden of damage caused by recreational access. Cut fences, damaged water tanks, trampled forage, and disturbed streambanks are all possible with high recreational traffic and grazing permittees are the only use that is required to account for these impacts. **Congress has invested heavily in recreation over the last decade and should invest in landscape management going forward.** BLM and USFS routinely allocate massive sums to increasing recreation, while failing to change regulations that would fairly account for and assign responsibility to recreation. **BLM should update grazing regulations and make all uses subject to land health standards.**

CONSERVATION

In 2024, the BLM finalized the "Public Lands Rule", also known as the "Conservation and Landscape Health" rule. The effort ignored clear direction from Congress to manage for specific uses and instead created a new use—without the approval of Congress—so the agency could monetize "conservation". **Grazing is conservation, so PLC opposes BLM's past efforts to separate conservation from existing, responsible management. BLM must withdraw the rule.**

PLC RECOMMENDS

- Limit scope of Antiquities Act in size and process.
- Oppose use of Wilderness Act as large-scale tool.
- Require allocation of alternate grazing allotments or alternate forage when agency cannot fulfill agreements in existing permit or lease
- Eliminate agencies' ability to designate federal wildlife migration corridors.
- Make BLM's Land Health Standards for grazing applicable to all multiple uses.

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