

MITIGATING WILDFIRE RISK THROUGH ACTIVE MANAGEMENT & TARGETED GRAZING



Fire is a normal part of an ecosystem, but decades of reduced fuels mitigation and a “hands-off” policy approach has left federal forests, grasslands, and rangelands in jeopardy of irreversible damage from catastrophic wildfire. **The precipitous decline of grazing and timber harvest over the last 30 years is directly linked to the skyrocketing fire impacts.**

“Active management” is the only way to reset the fire cycle and reduce the cost and damage of these fires. Active management includes:

- ◆ Normal grazing as part of existing, approved permits on federal land
- ◆ Targeted grazing on lands that may not set aside for grazing, but need fuels mitigation or fuel breaks
- ◆ Strategic timber harvest and fuels mitigation projects
- ◆ Prescribed fire and other mechanical fuels treatments

Grazing reduces invasive species that increase fire risk two ways.

Invasive annual grasses, like cheatgrass and ventenata, are some of the earliest grasses to emerge each spring. They need little water to grow, and form thick thatched mats on the ground. **Cattle and sheep eat this grass, reducing the immediate wildfire risk. They also decrease future risk because as they eat the grass and the seeds, their digestion process makes the seeds inert: Incapable of sprouting.** For invasive annual grasses, this inability to reseed ends the cycle of the grass and reduces future fire risk.

Grazing can be targeted to reduce the buildup of fine fuels—the grasses that make fire ignition so fast.

Targeted grazing is a popular way to quickly reduce fuels in high-risk areas, and public lands ranchers already do this on a broad scale. Through the use of short-term contracts or new technology, livestock can be strategically directed to graze fuel breaks through dense grasses.

Grazing helps ecosystems recover post-fire.

In the wake of catastrophic wildfire, landscapes are vulnerable to encroachment from invasive species and loss of topsoil. Grazing keeps invasive species at bay, allowing time for native grasses to take hold. The hoof action from livestock also incorporates organic matter into soil that is important for topsoil health and retention. **Grazing permittees are often barred from returning to an allotment after fire, straining their operation and putting the land at risk.**

LIVESTOCK GRAZING REDUCES THE RISK OF
WILDFIRE IGNITION BY 45-50%.

TARGETED GRAZING IN HIGH PRIORITY LAND-
SCAPES REDUCES THE BURN PROBABILITY BY
MORE THAN 80%.

PLC RECOMMENDS:

- ◆ Support H.R.1110, the Grazing for Wildfire Risk Reduction Act (LaMalfa) - *expands role of targeted grazing*
- ◆ Support H.R.471, the Fix Our Forests Act (Westerman) - *expands role of targeted grazing*
- ◆ Support S.211, the Resiliency for Ranching and Natural Conservation Health Act (Barrasso) - *allows temporary use of vacant allotments for permittees during fire/disaster*
- ◆ Support S.140, the Wildfire Prevention Act of 2025 (Barrasso) - *expands role of targeted grazing*

